

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

00000

FANTASY 5

7, 12, 18, 31, 35

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 6, 6, 3

Evening picks: 4, 2, 6

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 09, Winning Spirit

2nd Place: 11, Money Bags

3rd Place: 02, Lucky Star

Race Time: 1:42.31



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
by Chuck Shepard

LEAST COMPETENT CRIMINALS:

■ Keep a Low Profile? Sandy L. Warren, 43, was arrested in March and charged with stealing an 8-ton cherry-picker from a construction equipment dealership in Redmond, Wash.; a dealership employee had spotted the cherry-picker parked in Warren's front yard in Redmond with a for-sale sign on it ("\$28,990 OBO").
■ Ronald Plaster, 21, and Amber Plaster, 20, were arrested in Meadville, Pa., in February after an investigation of sexual assault against two teenagers; the investigation was started when Amber walked into a police station and asked, out of curiosity, whether it was legal for a 21-year-old man to have sex with a 15-year-old girl.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I'm on the Zolof to keep from killing y'all."

— Mike Tyson



INDEX



Horoscopes

Go with the flow, Taurus 2



Local

Running on the Fast Track 3



Opinion

Is Wal-Mart really that bad? 4



State

Big box store not giving up 7



Entertainment

Get a life 8



National

Town mourns shark victim 9



International

Madrid eyed for another attack 11

Hotel workers' strike on the horizon?



John Wood/Daily Press

A referee declares victory Wednesday for the local union of hotel workers after "the boss" falls in a theatrical interpretation of a pending labor dispute throughout Los Angeles. The play was staged by union organizers during a rally at the Unitarian church on 18th Street.

Union leader leads rally in Santa Monica

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

MID CITY — With contracts for more than 4,000 workers at stake, leaders of a powerful hotel and restaurant worker union met in a Santa Monica church Wednesday to rally support for what may become yet another drawn-out labor dispute.

Heartened by a Tuesday victory against the non-unionized Wal-Mart chain in Inglewood, officials from the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11 said they are preparing for a possible hotel strike. But organizers said they hope to avoid it.

Labor contracts at 17 luxury hotels in downtown Los Angeles and throughout the Westside expire April 15. The terms of the

contracts are especially important because they're seen as a bellwether for the industry. The contracts also have implications for union and non-union workers throughout Los Angeles, organizers said.

"This council of hotels sets the standard," said Maria Elena Durazo, president of HERE Local 11 and the keynote speaker at the event. "And it sets the standard for all the workplaces, frankly, union or non-union."

Though continued medical benefits and increased pay will be key union demands, officials said they expect hotel managers to contest the length of union contracts. Organizers hope to set up labor contracts in major tourist cities across North America so that they all expire at the same time in 2006. The last time labor contracts were negotiated in LA

See UNION, page 6

Man busted for stealing local newspapers

By Daily Press staff

POLICE HDQRTS. — Maybe he just ran out of toilet paper.

Miguel Martinez, 37, of Los Angeles was arrested Thursday for stealing more than 800 copies of area newspapers, including the Santa Monica Daily Press.

After receiving a tip last week from a worker at another newspaper who noticed copies suspiciously disappearing, Santa

Monica detectives set up a surveillance team to catch the paper thief.

At 5:50 a.m., the surveillance team saw Martinez allegedly remove two armloads of the Santa Monica Mirror newspapers from the news rack located in front of the Santa Monica Courthouse. The surveillance team followed Martinez and watched him steal newspapers at six different locations in downtown Santa Monica.

Whether he hates the media, or

was looking to capitalize on reselling area newspapers, is unknown. But Martinez is in the Santa Monica Jail and faces petty theft charges, as well as possession of slugs — fake coins used to open vending-type machines. His bail was set at \$1,000.

Detectives stopped Martinez at Seventh Street and Montana Avenue. When Martinez was arrested, he was in possession of 400 copies of the Santa Monica Mirror,

213 copies of the Daily News, 160 copies of the Santa Monica Daily Press, 26 copies of the City Beat, 16 copies of the UCLA Daily Bruin and 11 copies of La Opinion. Police also found 192 slugs in Martinez's possession. His late model, black truck was impounded.

Anyone with any additional information regarding this incident or prior incidents is asked to call the SMPD at (310) 458-8491.

Speak no Español? School district could change that

BY LAUREN BONIFACIO

Special to the Daily Press

DISTRICT HDQRTS. — "What do you call a person who speaks two languages?" the joke goes.

"Bilingual."

"What do you call a person who speaks one language?"

"American."

It's a tongue-in-cheek jab at the perceived English-centrism of those living in the United States, even while students in many other foreign countries learn two languages, at least.

But in Santa Monica and Malibu, some school officials want to change that image.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board voted March 25 to establish a task force that would explore the possibility of teaching Spanish to students district-wide, starting with sixth graders.

"You can't live ... in Los Angeles ... without being proficient in Spanish," said schools superintendent John Deasy, whose two

See SPANISH, page 5

English catching on with many foreign students

BY LAUREN BONIFACIO

Special to the Daily Press

Students learning English in the school district have made significant progress toward becoming proficient in the language, school officials recently announced.

Many of the more than 1,600 English learners in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District made the transition last

year from basic to more advanced fluency levels, according to results from the California English Language Development Test.

"We are extremely pleased with the progress demonstrated by our students for whom English is a second language," said schools superintendent John Deasy in a press release.

See ENGLISH, page 5

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Aries, revamp your plans

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)

★★★★★ Reach out for others in your life. You could be surprised by what you hear, but that seems like the vogue right now. Share more of your dreams with those close to you. By stating your desires, you are on the path to making them happen. Tonight: Revamp plans, especially if offered a special opportunity.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Go along with a partner's suggestion, even if it means throwing a get-together or doing some extra work. Continue working with a boss who might be a bit airy-fairy or ungrounded (in your opinion). Go with the flow and be willing to adapt. Tonight: Happy with one special friend.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Others are in control. Don't fight the inevitable, and go with changes and perhaps a bit of uproar. Your mind might not be on work, but rather on the upcoming weekend. Touch base with someone at a distance. Tonight: Accept an invitation, even if you think it is a bit odd.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Keep up the hard work, but confirm facts and figures. Check your change, as well as your paychecks. Decide on a long-overdue exercise program. Stress will melt away while you get ready for a hot summer. Tonight: Put your feet up and veg.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ You cannot suppress your enthusiasm as you enter a wild and woolly weekend (or at least Friday). If attached, use a great deal of care with a devoted partner. If you don't, the reaction you get won't be pleasant. Include him or her. Tonight: Get into spring fever.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Take your time and make sure you complete various details and projects. Be the Virgo everyone knows and loves! You might be thinking of a greater commitment within the work arena, or doing something more meaningful. Tonight: Head home.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ What you say makes all the difference, but choose your words with care. Those in your day-to-day life could be quite high-strung. Work with unpredictable reactions. Keep your sense of humor, and you'll fly through the day. Tonight: Out at a favorite place.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Deal with finances directly before you go out the door. An unexpected expense around your domestic life needs to be dealt with first. You find that paying close attention to your responsibilities is critical in the next few days. Tonight: Buy a favorite munchie or two on the way home.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ You might not see what others are doing right now. Your ability to flex and adjust could make a big difference in how your day proceeds. Deal with others more directly, and you'll get a strong response. Tonight: Keep on smiling.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Take your time. Your instincts come out on top with a money issue. Do research on your own. Decide to spend some time alone handling key issues. You might need to make inquiries. Calls and responses have an unpredictable quality. Don't internalize what is happening. Tonight: Happiest by yourself.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You could be jolted by the cost of getting together with others or joining in on a summer vacation. Make no decisions right now; flex and play with different ideas. Brainstorm with your pals. Tonight: Just don't be alone, please.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★★ Others expect a lot from you, which you naturally give. Don't be surprised if you are left holding the bag while others merrily leave for the weekend. Ultimately, your path draws its own rewards. Trust that. Tonight: Think "Saturday." Think "fun."

Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday
Phone: 310.458.PRESS(7737) • Fax: 310.576.9913
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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Runners on the Fast Track

By Daily Press staff

Thousands of runners will converge on Griffith Park next weekend to help a local hospital get people in and out of the emergency room quicker.

The 23rd Saint John's Jimmy Stewart Relay Marathon is scheduled for April 18 and funds raised by the event will be used to support medical programs at Saint John's. This year, one of the programs supported is the emergency department's Fast Track.

Fast Track, which relieves ER congestion and improves the time in which patients are treated, was introduced by Saint John's in 2001 and expanded in 2002. After they have been assessed by a triage nurse, patients presenting less urgent symptoms are directed to Fast Track where they can be treated and discharged in less than an hour without waiting for other more emergent patients to be seen. Fast Track treats as many as 600 patients each month.

"Fast Track has helped relieve the ER and improve patient care and service for everyone," says Russ Kino, M.D., medical director of the emergency department at Saint John's Health Center. "Patients in the ER are seen on the basis of the severity of their injury. Without Fast Track, a patient with a minor injury might have to wait while more emergent or acutely ill patients are seen. When the wait is long, it can add to everyone's level of stress and anxiety. With Fast Track, minor injuries can be seen and treated immediately."

Patients who are brought to the ER by paramedics do not go to Fast Track, neither do children under 2 years old, or anyone with chest pains or a potentially infectious disease. An ER physician is always available to help the triage nurse make patient assessments, doctors say.

All proceeds from the Saint John's Jimmy Stewart Relay Marathon support programs and services at Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica. Since its inception in 1982, the marathon has raised more than \$8.2 million.

The largest five-person team relay race in the United States, this year's Jimmy Stewart Relay Marathon will be hosted by actors Robert Wagner and Chris O'Donnell. The race is comprised of over 20 divisions, according to age, gender and corporate/industry affiliation. Each individual will run 5.2 miles before passing the baton for a total of 26 miles.

For more information call (310) 829-8968 or find out more from the Web site, at www.stjohns.org.

Santa Monica architect moving up

By Daily Press staff

Orthopaedic Hospital's League for Crippled Children recently honored a Santa Monica resident for her dedication and planning of the hospital's expansion.

Sarah Meeker Jensen, AIA, project manager and founder of Jensen + Partners, oversaw the completion of the Outpatient Medical Center and the 40,000-square-foot Outpatient Medical Center, which houses the hospital's outpatient clinics.

The new center doubles Orthopaedic Hospital's service capacity and allows more children with crippling disorders to receive care and treatment, officials said.

In an effort to meet the growing demand for accessible healthcare, the League for Crippled Children has contributed more than \$5 million to enable Orthopaedic Hospital to treat children with crippling disorders, regardless of their family's ability to pay.

check out
your forecast in
today's horoscopes ...
page 2

surf report

Bring on some surf. This morning, the better exposed NW breaks of the South Bay see solid head-high waves.

OUTLOOK: The swell will likely begin losing energy in the afternoon and then continue a slow fade through Saturday.

Write us at wood@smdp.com and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.

Today the water is:

61°

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	8:40	1.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SUNDAY	10:25	0.8	N/A	N/A	1:02	4.1	N/A	N/A
MONDAY	11:29	0.4	11:01	3.0	3:01	4.0	7:10	3.4
TUESDAY	12:10	0.1	11:52	2.6	4:33	4.2	7:12	3.7
WEDNESDAY	N/A	N/A	12:42	-0.1	5:32	4.6	7:22	3.9
THURSDAY	12:28	2.0	1:09	-0.3	6:18	4.9	7:37	4.2
FRIDAY	1:03	1.5	1:35	-0.4	6:58	5.1	7:55	4.6

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The Q Line

The Santa Monica City Council recently passed a law forbidding the public from smoking on the beach. Add this to prohibitions against alcohol and dogs on the beach, and some citizens are beginning to feel as though an unreasonable amount of their freedoms are being taken. So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Do you think it is OK for smoking to be prohibited on the beach in the

name of public health, or do you think this unfairly violates the freedom of Santa Monica's citizens?"

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

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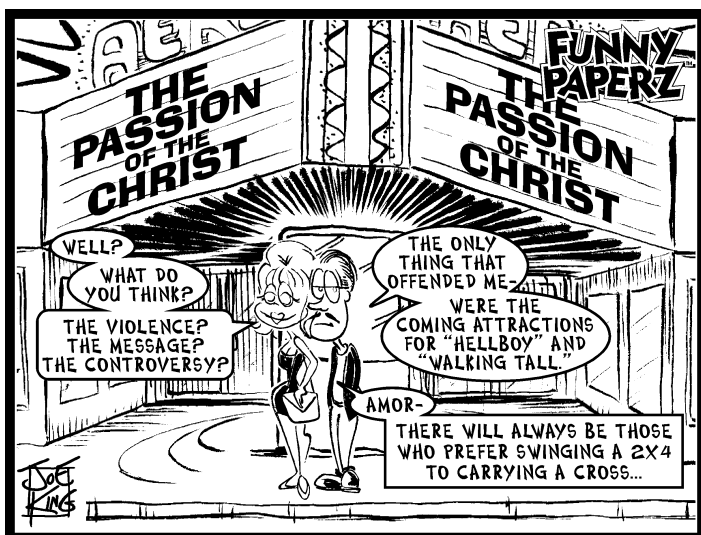
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OPINION

LETTERS



GOOD PASSOVER & HAPPY EASTER!

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Smoking ban a law leading to another one

Editor:

Regarding Bill Bauer's April 2 column on the City Council whimping out on key issues. The reason why politicians opt for easy solutions is that the tough ones offer more "resistance."

Looking back, it was easier and cheaper to get an ordinance through requiring no smoking seating areas in restaurants. They tried it and it didn't work because it was not well thought out.

But, at least the subject was broached, the public bought the "no smoking concept" and they moved on to the next step: No smoking in restaurants and bars. Later, no smoking in public buildings.

The same is true with gun control in Los Angeles. They really wanted to ban guns, but started with a ban on small "hide-a-guns," and now require gun owners to sign for their purchases, even give their fingerprints.

It's a bureaucratic red-tape-law that's unlikely to catch a criminal who can do his or her shopping in an adjacent city. It is, after all, a prime example of wasting taxpayer's dollars on policing an ill-conceived law that punishes the legitimate store owner and shopper.

I agree with Bauer on fireplaces. They should be banned. So, banning smoking on the beaches is just the first step along that path.

However, what they are doing is not disingenuous or inconsistent. While it may be what you call cowardly and hypocritical, it's just plain politics and for most voters, less controversial. When things get controversial, they get expensive because all sides of the issue call in lobbyists, advertise, and try to persuade voters on the issue at hand.

I've always agreed with Bauer on the "homeless" situation. At some point, the council has to get serious about the situation. In my mind, it's the one thing that tells me "not to visit Santa Monica" — especially the Third Street Promenade — when there are so many other popular venues available.

Ron Tansky
Sherman Oaks

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

There's more than Wal-Mart, Target in local union's gunsite



MY WRITE

By Bill Bauer

The defeat on Wednesday of a Wal-Mart Supercenter by Inglewood voters has parallels with a similar development in Santa Monica nearly four years ago.

Target, a division of Dayton-Hudson, proposed to build a discount store on almost half of a city block at Fifth Street and Santa Monica Boulevard.

Both Target and Wal-Mart said their projects would be good for the community. Both chains are famous for quality merchandise and low prices. Both stores would have provided substantial economic benefit for their respective communities.

Inglewood's Wal-Mart Supercenter would have employed up to 1,200 people. The Santa Monica Target would have employed 400 people. A limited number of employees of both chains are represented by bargaining units but the stores are generally regarded as non-union shops.

In Inglewood, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union and the Teamsters led the charge against Wal-Mart. The UFCW is the union that totally mishandled the disastrous five-month supermarket strike involving Ralph's, Albertsons and Vons/Pavilions.

In Santa Monica, the retail clerks union, among others, opposed Target.

Local Democrats and other liberals followed suit. Affordable housing advocates, led by Santa Monica for Renters' Rights co-chair, Denny Zane, opposed Target because the project contained no housing element.

Traffic was a big issue, too. There was no question that the store would generate traffic trips. But despite that some council members approved projects like the downtown Transit Mall and parking meters on Fourth Street, which create just as much traffic as Target would have, they still thought Target would be "too much." Those who advocate no growth bemoaned further erosion of what they perceived as a "quiet, seaside community."

Unlike Inglewood, where voters rejected Wal-Mart, here it was the City Council who killed the proposed Target. Since then, approval has been granted for four, massive, five-floor, market-rate, mixed use, apartment buildings on the site.

Concerns about traffic congestion and pollution that a large commercial development brings to neighborhoods are valid. But there also are many benefits that accrue to a community.

Inglewood voters said no to desperate-

ly needed local jobs, \$5 million in tax revenue and a mall where the 87 percent of Inglewood shoppers who now shop out of town could shop locally.

Santa Monica also lost local shopping and employment, millions in tax income, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in support for local arts, schools and charities.

What confounds me is that the same old crowd that cries for jobs, equal rights, social justice, clean and safe working environments, fair wages and full employment almost always opposes these projects.

Labor unions fight them strictly because they involve non-union retailers. In other words, "If we don't represent employees, nobody works." Forget noble causes. The shortsighted union movement today is about protecting only its members, and maintaining big union boss' salaries and perks. If you don't believe me, ask any grocery clerk.

Even the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy donated to and supported the anti-Wal-Mart effort. LAANE has been and still is behind the "living wage" movement here and is a strong political ally to pro-union SMRR and Santa Monicans Allied for Responsible Tourism.

Hired gun, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, jetted into town and was carted by limousine from press opportunity to press opportunity, crusading against Wal-Mart, the creation of jobs and the value priced shopping so vital to the survival of those in minority neighborhoods on limited or no incomes. These days, Jackson isn't a civil rights leader. It seems that he's a mouthpiece for the highest bidder.

In communities like Inglewood, you'd think anything that provides employment and income to those with limited education, experience or training would get enthusiastic support, and that a stepping stone to higher wages and a career would be well received. But, like others, 35th District Congresswoman Maxine Waters also fought Wal-Mart tooth and nail. I guess they would all rather have grinding poverty, welfare, unemployment and crime.

With our local elections approaching, you can bet various labor unions will once again co-opt SMRR and its cronies with money and campaign workers — in exchange for pushing their pro-union agenda. But don't let them fool you.

While they'll talk workers' rights, living wages and social justice, they really mean only union members have the right to work here, union bosses deserve "living high" wages and social justice is a business with a union contract.

(Bill Bauer is a longtime Santa Monica resident and freelance writer).

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sack@smdp.com

LOCAL



Spanish may give students an academic advantage

SPANISH, from page 1

daughters speak fluent Spanish. "It's just so pertinent to our world."

Acquiring Spanish proficiency would help students in their day-to-day lives and in the future, Deasy said.

"We want kids to be successful," he said. "We want them to have the edge."

While still in the "beginning stages" of its work, the task force will evaluate the different options for a Spanish proficiency plan and address possible roadblocks to it, such as finding funding and adequately trained teachers, said district chief academic officer Linda Kaminsky, who will oversee the group.

"Those are the kinds of questions that we would be wrestling with," she said.

The task force is expected to present its findings to the school board in January. If support from the school board continues, the Spanish classes could start in the 2005-06 school year.

"I think it's going to pass," said school board member Oscar de la Torre, one of three board members fluent in Spanish. "I think people in the school district want this."

Of about 12,000 students in the school district, 27 percent are Hispanic and 58 percent are white.

Regardless of the white majority, school officials say parents in the district know that Spanish is an advantage.

"Parents are begging for it," Deasy said.

Mothers waiting outside John Adams Middle School in Santa Monica last week agreed that being bilingual is important.

"I think definitely, they should all learn more languages here," said Karen Goldman, whose sixth- and seventh-grade daughters voluntarily take Spanish classes at the school.

Learning Spanish "just opens up their minds," said Isabel Alegre. After recently moving to Marina del Rey, Alegre and her sixth grader, Samantha, chose John Adams specifically because the school offers a Spanish immersion program.

Local students can take some of their classes in English and some in Spanish at Edison Elementary School, John Adams or Santa Monica High School.

"I don't know why, especially in LA, there were no other middle schools that offered it ... parochial, public or private," Alegre said.

School data shows that students in the immersion program earned better grades than their uni-lingual peers across the board, Alegre said.

"It's cool because it seems better that I know two languages," said 11-year-old Samantha Alegre, who speaks Spanish fluently. Sometimes Samantha serves as her mother's translator at the grocery store.

But some parents said they would not support a district immersion program.

"I don't like it," said Leticia Lua, who pulled her 12th grader, a native Spanish speaker, out of the immersion program when he was at Edison. Lua's sixth-grade daughter is not in the immersion program at John Adams.

After speaking Spanish with her children at home, Lua said she wanted them to learn and practice English when they

were at school. Since Lua's son did not have as much time to practice English, he started having problems in his English math classes at Edison, Lua said.

Educators should be careful to address situations like Lua's when creating a Spanish program, said Michael Genzuk, a University of Southern California professor of education and former adviser to the LA Unified School District Office of Bilingual-ESL Instruction.

"The benefits depend a lot on the proficiency of your first language," Genzuk said. "Research shows that proficiency in the first language really expedites second language acquisition."

Students need to reach age-appropriate levels in their first language and learn how to listen to and comprehend their second language before being rushed into new programs, Genzuk said.

However, gauging the requirements for the program would be difficult without the task force's results. It appears school officials have not come to an overall consensus about what "Spanish proficiency" means.

Deasy said students would be required to obtain a level of proficiency that would allow them to do basic writing, reading and speaking.

"It doesn't mean you can read Cervantes," Deasy said.

ENGLISH, from page 1

In Santa Monica and Malibu, the five languages most frequently spoken by English learners are Spanish, Farsi, Russian, Japanese and Korean, officials said.

The statewide test divides students into five categories based on proficiency levels. Students measuring in the first three categories — beginning, early intermediate and intermediate — are considered to have less than reasonable fluency. Students at the early advanced or advanced levels of proficiency are considered to have reasonable fluency.

From 2002 to 2003, the portion of Santa Monica-Malibu students considered reasonably fluent in English rose by 9 percent, to 64 percent of students. And the portion of students classified at the beginning proficiency level, which is the

lowest level of fluency, fell from 7 percent in 2002 to just 2 percent the following year.

The district's middle school students showed marked improvement, with more than 72 percent of English learners considered reasonably fluent in 2003, compared with 60 percent in the previous year.

"Their performance underscores the district's diligence and effectiveness in responding to our responsibility to provide appropriate services and access to our students who require linguistic support," Deasy said.

The California English Language Development Test, which measures English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing, is administered each fall to about 1.3 million public school students learning English in the state.

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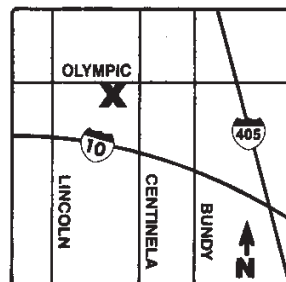
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LOCAL

Reserve fund set up in case union negotiations fail

UNION, from page 1

was more than six years ago.

"Each city has had to fight for a different duration of contract, so we could all fight together," said Durazo, adding hotel managers have promised to oppose the effort.

Durazo also said the union should operate with the same amount of power and unity as employers do.

"You're a national corporation, we have a right to act as a national union," she said.

So far, HERE chapters in Hawaii, Chicago, Toronto, New York and Boston have aligned their contracts so they expire in 2006. Durazo said if Washington, D.C., San Francisco and LA could do the same, HERE would be able to bargain more effectively for worker benefits. She anticipated hotel managers may offer better wages and maintain health benefits, but contract lengths would be met with resistance.

A strike reserve fund has been set up — workers are paying an extra \$5 each month in union dues in case the two sides aren't able to reach an agreement.

Durazo said the key union negotiating goals will be to keep family health insur-

"This council of hotels sets the standard ... And it sets the standard for all the workplaces, frankly, union or non-union."

— MARIA ELENA DURAZO
President, HERE Local 11

ance for workers free, secure a good wage increase, safeguard worker protections and rights, acquire sick days, ease excessive workloads and set contract length.

She said the LA area is behind San Francisco in terms of union density — 31 percent as opposed to 86 percent — but pointed to areas like Santa Monica, where labor organizers have been aggressively fighting for unionization. Currently, the Viceroy, Fairmont Miramar and the Four Points Sheraton are unionized. The Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel has agreed to let labor organizers campaign for presence there.

"Santa Monica used to be maybe 1 percent," Durazo said.

Local organizers have turned their efforts toward the Doubletree Guest Suites. They said they will continue their campaign until all the luxury hotels in Santa Monica are unionized, including Shutters on the Beach, Casa Del Mar and Le Merigot.

Santa Monicans Allied for Responsible Tourism, an organization pushing for an increased minimum wage, helped organize the event — which attracted about 60 people and was held at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church on 18th Street.

To "present a light-hearted look at a heavy subject," a troupe of church and SMART officials staged a play detailing

the fight ahead for hotel workers in the form of a boxing match with "the boss." Each North American city first fought the boss one-on-one. Then, when it came to 2006, the group issued a group pummeling.

Hotels included in the bargaining are the Bonaventure, Century Plaza, Hyatt Regency, Hyatt West LA, Millennium Biltmore, Regent Beverly Wilshire, Sheraton Universal, St. Regis, Wilshire Grand, Bel Air, Beverly Hilton, Holiday Inn, Luxe Summit, Radisson Wilshire, Renaissance Hollywood, Sportsmen's Lodge and The W.

Though contracts expire on April 15, officials agreed earlier Wednesday to extend them indefinitely while negotiations are ongoing. Durazo said she hoped to avoid a strike, adding the recent grocery store battle provided a good lesson.

"I think that the lesson that was reaffirmed to us is that you cannot negotiate fairly if the corporations are national and international in scope and the union is local in scope," said Durazo, who also serves as vice president of HERE International.

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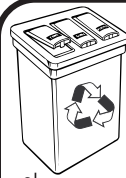
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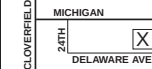
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STATE



Wal-Mart not giving up on bid to expand in Calif. despite setbacks

BY ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — Wal-Mart officials said this week the retailer remains undeterred from its goal of expanding its business in California, despite a string of setbacks and potential hurdles at the hands of union-backed opposition groups and some elected officials.

The world's largest retailer spent more than \$1 million to try to sway residents in the Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood to approve its ballot initiative clearing the way for a new store, but it lost the vote.

Tuesday's defeat represents at least the second time a majority of voters in a California community has blocked Wal-Mart's efforts. Last month, residents in San Marcos, outside of San Diego, forced a referendum on a City Council decision to approve a new Wal-Mart store, and ultimately overturned it.

On Wednesday, the company downplayed the outcome of the Inglewood vote, saying it would not affect its strategy to open 40 of its hybrid grocery store and Wal-Mart Supercenter stores in California over the next four-to-six years.

"We've got a lot of things going on in the state. Inglewood was not our only interest," said Bob McAdam, Wal-Mart's vice president of corporate affairs. "That program continues moving forward. ... I don't see this deterring us from reaching our goal."

Critics of Bentonville, Ark.-based Wal-Mart Stores Inc. say the company's stores, particularly its roughly 200,000 square-foot Supercenters, lead to jammed roads and worsen suburban sprawl. Others, specifically labor unions, say Wal-Mart stores only create low-benefit, low-wage jobs and its low prices drive smaller competitors out of business.

The company rejects those criticisms, saying its stores help drive competition to the benefit of consumers and help attract other businesses, which leads to more jobs.

Wal-Mart has faced steady opposition throughout the United States and California has been no exception, particularly since the company announced in 2002 its intention to expand its Supercenters here.

"We have challenges across the country, but I would say that it's perhaps more pronounced here in California," McAdam said.

The 4 1/2-month-long labor dispute by Southern California grocery workers focused unabashed public criticism by the workers' union and the supermarkets against Wal-Mart.

That sentiment lingers in union-strong areas of the state and remains an influential issue with many elected officials. In Los Angeles and other municipalities city officials are considering or have passed ordinances to block the warehouse-sized stores.

"There is something brewing here, which is about holding Wal-Mart accountable," said Madeline Janis-Aparicio, executive director of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, which helped lobby residents of Inglewood to reject the Wal-Mart ballot initiative.

"The effort to stop them cold has not been successful. The effort to hold them accountable is gathering steam," Janis-Aparicio said. "They're in California, but they're not in firmly with both feet."

Despite opposition, Wal-Mart has managed to gain some ground in California.

In Calexico and Contra Costa, Wal-Mart was able to organize a referendum on ordinances passed to block its expansion and succeeded in turning out the vote in its favor. In Alameda County, the company merely threatened a referendum and county officials rescinded an ordinance also aimed at stifling new developments by the retailer.

Last month, Wal-Mart opened its first Supercenter location in the desert city of La Quinta. The discounter has also won the go-ahead to open two others this fall in Hemet and Stockton. And the city of Gilroy has also approved the opening of a Supercenter, McAdam said.

In Inglewood, the company decided to appeal to voters directly with its own ballot initiative after the City Council last year blocked a proposed shopping center, which would have included both a traditional Wal-Mart and other stores.

But despite collecting more than 10,000 signatures to force the vote, 7,049 votes were cast against the initiative and 4,575 in favor.

"It would have been a great win for them, but I don't think it's by any means a crippling loss," said Ken Walker, regional director at Kurt Salmon Associates, a retail consulting company.

Hurdles remain in Bakersfield, where construction has been suspended by a judge responding to a labor union-backed lawsuit. The suit alleges that an environmental impact study did not adequately account for increased traffic and "blight."

Efforts to gain access in other communities are in "various stages of approval," McAdam said.

Ulysses A. Yannas, an analyst with Buckman, Buckman & Reid Inc., said Wal-Mart is likely to continue much as it has in the past, facing opposition but eventually finding places that will welcome its stores.

"They'll win a few and lose a few," Yannas said. "It will be case by case, it was not supposed to be easy. It's about par for the course."

Still, Yannas figures the company won't meet its target of 40 Supercenters within five years.

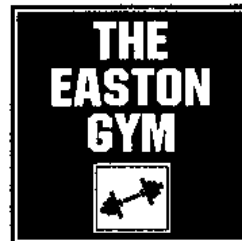
"But this will not make or break the company," Yannas said.

Shares of Wal-Mart closed at \$57.98, down \$1.04, Wednesday on the New York Stock Exchange.

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ENTERTAINMENT



"Get A Life ... A Nightlife, That Is"

BY THOMAS YOUNG & MAUREEN TOBIN
Special to the Daily Press



Review

Give 'em the old razzle dazzle, razzle dazzle 'em, give 'em an act with lots of flash in it, and the reaction will be passionate, give 'em the old hocus pocus, bead and feather 'em, How can they see with sequins in their eyes?

— Chicago

Our wish is to stimulate your senses, dazzle your taste buds and deliver enchantment.

Benvenuto, welcome to Mario's in Santa Monica on the Third Street Promenade where a glorious experience awaits you at this charismatic, old-world spot. In 1963 Mario's opened in Westwood and then on the Promenade about 12 years ago. Owner Anna Maria Angellini has been in the restaurant business more than 40 years and is the definitive restaurant owner/businesswoman, ready to cater to your every need.

Downstairs is a warm, Italian-neighborhood kind of place inside, with a terrific outside al fresco patio from which the patrons can view the throngs. But by far the most outstanding view of the Promenade is the tiny upstairs balcony. From this upstairs gallery, watch the plebeians below and let the world pass by.

We eyed this spot for years. When you call for reservations, tell them you must have the upstairs balcony. Did we say Italian food? Absolute! Start with the thick, homemade minestrone soup that only mama can make, with thick slabs of blissful bread which, with the Italian frescos on the wall, may make you yearn for the marvels of Italy. Study the menu. Pastas and Italian specialties, salads, their always-famous pizza. The linguine alla melanza — eggplant and mozzarella — is to die for. The gnocchi alla piemontese — potato dumplings in a light, perfect meat sauce — melts in your mouth. These are big portions, moderately priced and the service is first class. While having a glorious dining experience in your "private box" on that balcony, watch the Promenade artists below. While Anna is the owner par excellence, and runs this place with devotion, Tino Frago, part chef, all-around manager/overseer, keeps the moment-to-moment business running with a sixth sense. Put this place high on your list. Open seven days per week.

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When you have an undeniable urge to get out after dinner, head to Anastasia's Asylum in Santa Monica, for desserts,

coffees and easy listening live music. This little nook and cranny has been here 13 years. Anastasia's is an upscale version of the coffee houses of the '60s, owned by husband and wife Anastasia Israel and Kelly Gleason. Customers of all ages visit — college kids with their laptops studying, talking and eating, and others who just want to read or chat while they enjoy stimulating music. Dine on healthy fare, with salads, fish and chicken, have one of Anastasia's big coffees or yummy desserts. Do try one of their special smoothies. Such a unique little place with different music all the time. The bands play in an upstairs alcove where you can sit, dine, relax, and has the feel of your living room. The staff is the nicest. Anastasia's usually has a mix of jazz and folk. They also sell a variety of interesting flavors of syrups. Music every night from 8 or-9ish to 11 p.m.

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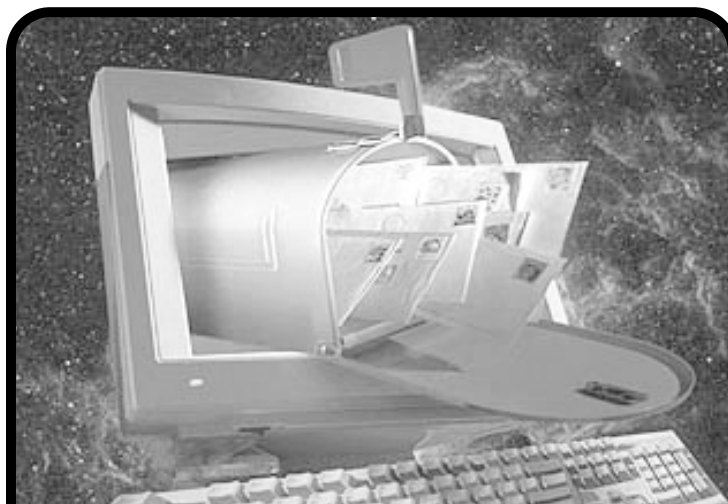
Like the blowing sands of North Africa, there is something seductive and mysterious about Koutoubia Restaurant. Innovative Moroccan Cuisine in West LA. When you enter these doors, leave the outside world behind. Let master chef and owner Michel Ohayon, a man with eminent class and cachet, help you experience something exotic, heady, striking, perfumed, slightly enigmatic.

Since 1978, this supreme restaurant and the only Moroccan place on the Westside, has been pleasing discriminating palates. Only the top restaurants, with the best service and food, have this kind of staying power. Plan a fascinating evening here as you let a dreamlike state take over

your own reality for as long as possible. You will be seated on couches with lots of pillows or cushy stools surrounded by silk-lined walls. To start, we had Les Cigars a la Viande, tip loin of beef rolled in pastry with spices, served with hot sauce, which is made on the premises. Wow. These flavors burst in your mouth. They serve this amazing crusty but steamy bread. Then we split the couscous for two, with lamb, chicken and sausage over steamed vegetables. This was indescribably succulent, with stimulating scents and flavors and spiced beautifully. Dinner is topped off with luscious almond cookies, baklava that melts in your mouth, and a sweet, fine Jasmine tea with mint leaves with honey. If your party is four or more people, we suggest the celebration menu, well worth it at \$30 per person, with many courses that go on and on. On Friday and Saturday evenings, from 7:30 p.m., you will be well entertained by an arresting belly dancer. We were mesmerized by this gorgeous creature as she swayed and shimmed to the rhythmic music in her stunning costume. It was as though we were truly transported to Morocco. This fashionable, upscale and most provocative place has an extensive liquor list and fine wine menu for every taste. What a spectacular evening. Prices for regular entrees are \$20-\$30 per person. Café Momo next door, has the same food, but a more casual atmosphere. Visit their Web site at www.koutoubiarestaurant.com.

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NATIONAL



Beach community mourns for shark attack victim

BY MATT SEDENSKY

Associated Press Writer

KAHANA, Hawaii — They gathered before sunset to join hands, a circle of misty-eyed mourners praying for one of their own.

Near the dozens gathered at Maui's Pohaku Beach Park, a bench served as an impromptu memorial of tropical flowers with a lei-draped cross and photos of a fallen friend.

All was in tribute to Willis McInnis, the 57-year-old Kahana man who died after being bitten by a shark earlier Wednesday, the first confirmed shark attack fatality in Hawaii in nearly 12 years.

"Anyone who knew him knew he was a lovable person," said Pat Sanchez, 55, of Lahaina, a member of the Hui O Pohaku Park surf club with McInnis.

The shark attacked McInnis' right leg around 7 a.m. about 300 yards off Pohaku Beach — a favorite West Maui surf spot with clear views of the islands of Molokai and Lanai.

Curtis Kaiwi swam out to help McInnis and said he found the surfer face down in water clouded with his blood.

"I just grabbed his waist and lunged him up on the top of the board," said Kaiwi, 45, of Honokowai. "I saw his leg

was mangled."

McInnis suffered injuries to his leg and had severe blood loss, police Capt. Charles Hirata said.

It was not immediately known how large the shark involved in the attack was. Wildlife authorities will try to determine that by the bite marks, which were 12 to 14 inches across, Hirata said.

Kaiwi and others helped the victim out of the murky morning water.

He died on the beach despite efforts by bystanders who used towels and T-shirts as tourniquets before police and paramedics arrived, authorities said.

News of the tragedy spread fast through this small town and many put responsibilities aside to gather in the place McInnis enjoyed his life and suffered his death.

Some said it seemed like McInnis foretold his own death.

At a religious service Sunday on shore near the waters where he was attacked, McInnis had read a Bible passage and preached about the uncertainty of life, one friend, Suzie Stebbins, 30, of Lahaina, said.

In the same spot, watching the sun set with some tourists Friday, he spoke of the ocean as the shark's domain and said humans had no control over the beast.

"If the shark's hungry, the shark's

going to eat," his friend, Kanamu Balinbin, 35, of Kahana, recalled McInnis saying.

One witness told police McInnis missed catching a wave, turned back out and was paddling when the attack occurred, said police, who were called at 7:08 a.m. Hawaii time.

McInnis didn't scream but managed to signal that he had been bitten, witnesses said.

State officials and lifeguards closed Kahana beach a mile in each direction and posted shark warning signs along the coast. State Department of Land and Natural Resources boats cruised along the coast looking for sharks.

Surfers were banned from the water for at least 24 hours.

Fellow members of the Hui O Pohaku Park surf club said McInnis was retired and divorced with a son in Oregon. He first came to Maui in the 1970s, they said.

There were four shark attacks reported in Hawaii last year, including an Oct. 31 incident off the North Shore of Kauai in which then-13-year-old surfer Bethany Hamilton lost her left arm.

In 1999, the husband of Nahid Davoodabadi, 29, of Sunnyvale, Calif., said his wife was killed by a shark while the couple was kayaking in the waters off West Maui. Her body was never recovered.

ered.

The last confirmed shark attack death in Hawaii was in 1992 when 18-year-old surfer Aaron Romento of Pearl City was attacked off West Oahu. In 1991, a woman swimming near her Maui home was killed by a 15-foot shark.

Randy Honebrink, spokesman for the Shark Task Force of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, said there are an average of about four shark attacks off the Hawaiian Islands every year.

He said tiger sharks are the most common in Hawaii.

"It has to be a fairly good sized shark to do that damage," Honebrink said of McInnis' wounds.

"They do feed an awful lot at things at the surface," Honebrink said. "They have a nonspecific diet. They'll eat just about anything."

Details of the tragedy were put aside by mourners, who said they would simply remember McInnis as a man full of love.

Makalapua Kanuha said she would remember McInnis' last words to her as she walked by the beach, minutes before he entered the water.

"He said 'What a beautiful way to start my day,'" said Kanuha, of Honokowai. "That is the way he always is."

John Kerry unveils plan to control federal spending

BY NEDRA PICKLER

Associated Press Writer

MILWAUKEE — Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry said Thursday that President Bush should appeal to other nations to share the decision-making and responsibility in Iraq as violence surges in the Middle Eastern country.

"I believe it is the role of the president of the United States to maximize the ability to be successful and to minimize the cost to the American people, both financially and in lives," Kerry said.

"That's common sense. And here today, once again, we are asking the question, why is the United States of America almost alone in carrying this burden and the risks which the world has a stake in? We ought to be engaged in a bold, clear, startlingly honest appeal to the world to see the interest," he said.

As Kerry spoke, U.S. forces were battling Shiite Muslim militants and Sunni insurgents in Iraq. The violence has claimed nearly three dozen American

lives since last weekend.

Kerry said he honors the U.S. troops fighting in Iraq, "but leadership also requires that we ask the right questions and that we put forward the right policies for our country."

Kerry spoke on Iraq before touting his economic plan at a town meeting with Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle. The trip was his first visit to the battleground state since he won its presidential primary in February.

Portrayed by Republican critics as a tax-and-spend Massachusetts liberal, Kerry is promising to hold the line on federal spending if elected president.

In a speech Wednesday, Kerry said he would cut the deficit in half in four years and cap spending at the rate of inflation, except for homeland security, education and the Social Security and Medicare entitlement programs. He acknowledged that he will have to cut some of his campaign promises to meet the goal.

"I don't like that. But those are the hard calls that a president has to make," Kerry said at Georgetown University.

Kerry's pledge to abide by spending caps could open him to criticism that his campaign promises cannot be trusted.

He has promised to explain how he would pay for every new campaign proposal without raising taxes on the middle class or increasing the deficit, but he has yet to provide such detail. In the speech, he emphasized that his spending plan would cut taxes for 98 percent of Americans and for 99 percent of U.S. businesses.

Kerry said with the deficit growing, he'll have to "slow down" some of his promises or phase them in over a longer period. He cited proposals for early childhood education and to provide tuition to students at state colleges in exchange for two years of national service. He didn't say by how much they would be scaled back.

A cornerstone of Kerry's plan is his proposed repeal of Bush's tax cuts for people earning more than \$200,000 a year. Policy director Sarah Bianchi said that alone would pay for his education and health care proposals, but that other

spending programs will have to be financed by trimming existing initiatives.

Existing programs that Kerry described as nonessential and targets for trimming include the federal travel budget, oil royalty exemptions for drilling on federal lands, the number of federal contractors and the government's electricity use. Those cuts alone would generate \$90 billion over 10 years, his campaign said.

Bush's re-election campaign said third-party calculations of 44 of the Massachusetts senator's proposals show they would cost about \$1 trillion over five years — an amount they contend he cannot pay without raising taxes.

Bush campaign spokesman Steve Schmidt said Kerry's emphasis on fiscal discipline contrasts with his Senate record and his spending promises on the campaign trail.

"His speech failed to address the mystery of his own budget gap — which taxes will he raise and which federal spending programs will he cut?" Schmidt asked.

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NATIONAL

Rice acknowledges nation not alert at time of attacks

BY HOPE YEN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Under contentious questioning, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice testified Thursday “there was no silver bullet that could have prevented” the deadly terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 and disputed suggestions that President Bush failed to focus on the threat of strikes in advance.

Bush “understood the threat, and he understood its importance,” she told a national commission investigating the worst terror attacks in the nation’s history.

In nearly three hours in the witness chair, Rice stoutly defended Bush when Democrats on the commission raised questions about the administration’s attentiveness to terrorism. Her appearance, televised nationally, also contained a series of implicit and explicit rebuttals to a series of politically-damaging charges made two weeks ago by former terrorism aide Richard Clarke.

Unlike Clarke, Rice offered no apology for the failure to prevent the attacks. Instead, with relatives of the Sept. 11 victims inside the packed hearing room, she said, “as an officer of government on duty that day, I will never forget the sorrow and the anger I felt.”

Rice said the president came into office determined to develop a “more robust” policy to combat al-Qaida. “He made clear to me that he did not want to respond to al-Qaida one attack at a time. He told

me he was ‘tired of swatting flies,’” she told the commission delving into the attacks that killed nearly 3,000, destroyed the twin World Trade Center towers in New York and blasted a hole in the Pentagon.

She also said, “Tragically, for all the language of war spoken before Sept. 11, this country simply was not on a war footing.”

Her comment about swatting flies drew a sharp response from former Democratic Sen. Bob Kerrey, who noted the administration made no military response to a 2000 attack on the USS Cole that took place before Bush took office.

“Dr. Rice, we only swatted a fly once ... How the hell could he (Bush) be tired,” Kerrey asked. That was a reference to a 1998 missile strike Clinton ordered against suspected terror training camps.

“I think it’s only a figure of speech,” she replied, adding that Bush felt that the CIA was “going after individual terrorists.”

She later said a further “tit for tat” attack may have emboldened the perpetrators, and American interests were better served by a broader response designed to undermine al-Qaida.

Rice also clashed with Richard Ben Veniste and former Democratic Rep. Tim Roemer when they pressed her to say how much the president had been informed of the threat of terror activity.

She said a classified briefing paper prepared for the president on Aug. 6, 2001

was a “historical” document despite its title: Bin Laden determined to attack inside the United States. She said it contained no “actionable” intelligence, meaning it lacked information that would have alerted agencies to a specific threat at a specific time and place.

Thomas Kean, the commission Republican chairman, said at hearing’s end that he would ask the White House to declassify the document.

Rice was emphatic on one point — that the threat of terrorism had been building for years, and the administration was only in office 233 days before al-Qaida struck.

“The terrorists were at war with us, but we were not yet at war with them,” she said.

“For more than 20 years, the terrorist threat gathered, and America’s response across several administrations of both parties was insufficient,” Rice acknowledged.

“In hindsight, if anything might have helped stop 9/11, it would have been better information about threats inside the United States, something made difficult by structural and legal impediments that prevented the collection and sharing of information by our law enforcement and intelligence agencies,” she said.

Rice’s testimony, under oath and on live national television, came after weeks of White House resistance. Bush yielded in response to repeated public requests from members of the commission — as well as quiet proddings of Republicans in Congress — that an on-the-record rebuttal was needed in response to Clarke’s explosive charges.

The former White House aide testified last month that the Bush administration gave a lower priority to combatting terrorism than had former President Clinton, and that the decision to invade Iraq undermined the war on terror. In addition to raising questions about administration attention to the threat of terrorism, his remarks implicitly challenged a key underpinning of Bush’s campaign for reelection.

Rice’s appearance first turned contentious when Ben-Veniste pressed her on what was known about the terrorist threat in advance of the Sept. 11 attacks.

They interrupted one another repeated-

ly, the interrogator and the witness.

“I would like to finish my point,” she said when he began speaking while she was.

“I didn’t know there was a point,” he replied.

Under questioning, Rice acknowledged that she had spoken too broadly once when she said that no one had ever envisioned terrorists using planes and crashing them into buildings. She said that aides came to her within days and said there had been reports or memos about that possibility, but that she hadn’t seen them.

Pointing a finger of blame, she said that senior officials “have to depend on intelligence agencies to tell you what is relevant.”

She also directly challenged one of the claims made by Clarke, who said earlier that the administration had moved slowly on some of the recommendations he and others made before the attacks.

“I’m now convinced that while nothing in this strategy would have done anything about 9-11, if we had in fact moved on the things that were in the original memos that we got from our counterterrorism people, we might have even gone off course,” she said.

Asked to rebut Clarke’s claim that Bush pressed him to find an Iraq connection to the suicide hijackings, Rice said she did not recall such a discussion but that “I’m quite certain the president never pushed anybody to twist the facts.”

She added, “It is not surprising that the president would say ‘What about Iraq?’” But she said that when Bush’s top advisers met after Sept. 11, none recommended action against Iraq before taking military action against Afghanistan.

In her prepared testimony, Rice said confronting terrorists competed with other foreign policy concerns when the president came into office, but added that the administration’s top national security advisers completed work on the first major national security policy directive of the administration on Sept. 4. The subject, she said, was “not Russia, not missile defense, not Iraq, but the elimination of al-Qaida.”

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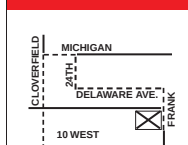
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WORLD BRIEFLY

Officials: Palestine awaits U.S. aid package

By The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The Palestinians expect a large aid package from the United States and other donor countries to help rebuild the Gaza Strip after an Israeli withdrawal, the Palestinian foreign minister said Thursday.

The foreign minister, Nabil Shaath, is traveling to Washington later this month to discuss Israel's unilateral withdrawal plan with top U.S. officials.

In Gaza, the Palestinian Authority and various militant factions are to hold a new round of talks this weekend on a possible power-sharing arrangement after an Israeli withdrawal.

The two sides are nowhere near a deal which would require major concessions, including agreement by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to give up some of his power and an implicit recognition of Israel by Hamas. The Islamic militant group, which has killed more than 300 Israelis in attacks since 2000, seeks Israel's destruction.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has said he expects to withdraw from Gaza in the coming year. Sharon travels to Washington next week for talks with President Bush. Shaath will hold talks with senior administration officials a week later.

Officials: Easter attack on Madrid planned

By The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — Suspected terrorists who blew themselves up last weekend as police moved in to arrest them over the March 11 bombings had been plotting an attack on a shopping center outside Madrid, a newspaper reported Thursday.

Police searching the apartment found maps of Parquesur, a retail and leisure complex, at least two backpacks and a belt, all packed

with dynamite and wired to detonators, El Mundo said, quoting police.

Interior Ministry officials were not available to comment on the report.

A court official said Wednesday that the suspects had planned another major attack in Madrid, possibly during this week's Easter celebrations, but did not give more details.

El Mundo said the attack on Parquesur, less than a mile away from the apartment in the town of Leganes, was to have occurred Sunday, a day after the police raid that prompted up to seven terrorists to kill themselves, or later in the week leading up to Easter Sunday.

The planned attack also appeared aimed at hitting the maximum number of people in the week before Easter, when millions of Spaniards are on vacation and schools are out. The shopping center has 193 stores, a hotel and a 2,500-seat multi-cinema.

Sigh of 'relief:' Companies may save in pensions

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate prepared to pass a bill that would relieve companies from contributing an extra \$80 billion into their pension plans after Democrats signaled they were unable to stop it.

The bill reformulates an outdated equation that companies use to calculate pension contributions. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. estimates it would save companies \$80 billion during the two years the formula would be in place.

Struggling airlines and steel companies, along with Greyhound Lines buses, also get some temporary relief from payments needed to replenish underfunded pension plans.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., said he planned to vote against the bill because it offers little aid to multiemployer pension plans, managed jointly by management and unions in con-

struction, trucking and other trades.

The pension bill replaces a contribution formula based on the 30-year Treasury bond, which the government stopped issuing in 2001. Unable to agree to a long-term fix, lawmakers decided to replace the formula for two years with a calculation based on high-quality corporate bonds.

Rumsfeld: More troops likely sent to Iraq

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More U.S. troops could be sent to Iraq and other U.S. forces could stay longer than planned to deal with the latest surge in violence, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said.

While Rumsfeld insisted Wednesday that the fighting was not spinning out of control, his remarks were the clearest signal yet that U.S. officials were likely to increase the overall number of troops in Iraq nearly a year after President Bush declared major combat in the country completed.

Gen. John Abizaid, the U.S. commander of the Iraq campaign, and his deputies have not decided whether, or how, to increase the American military presence in Iraq. The focus of discussion was on whether to extend the tours of duty for some of the U.S. troops scheduled to leave by next month after spending a year there.

"You can be certain that if they want more troops, we will sign deployment orders so that they'll have the troops they need," Rumsfeld said at a Pentagon news conference with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Richard Myers.

The military has made no final decision on troop levels. Abizaid spoke with President Bush on Wednesday and did not ask for more troops then, a senior defense official said on condition of anonymity.

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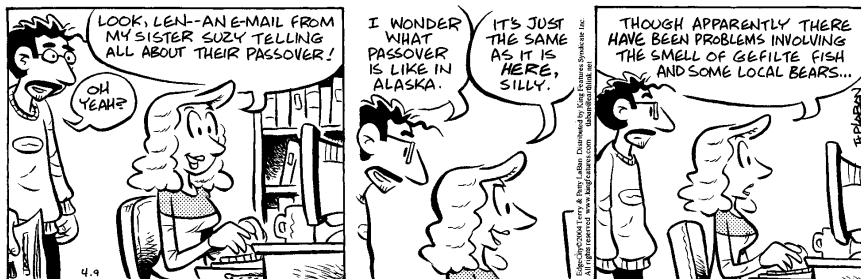
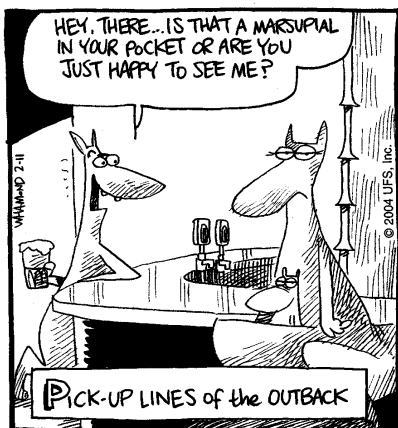
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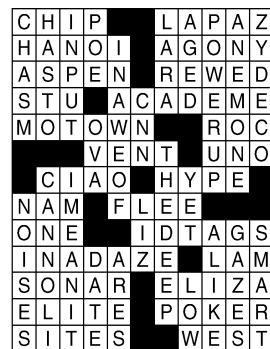
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9 "Paper Moon" star
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13 Jalopy
14 Battle site of 1836
15 Josh
16 Checked for fit
18 Watches secretly
20 B&B
21 Fund
22 Hand cost
23 Fizz ingredient
24 Barrister's topper
25 Sea dog
27 Pool need
29 — tree
30 Violets' cousins
32 Colonist's foe
34 Safari sight
35 Brother
36 Arson yield
38 Cologne
39 Reagan nickname
40 Calls on

- 41 Morales of "La Bamba"

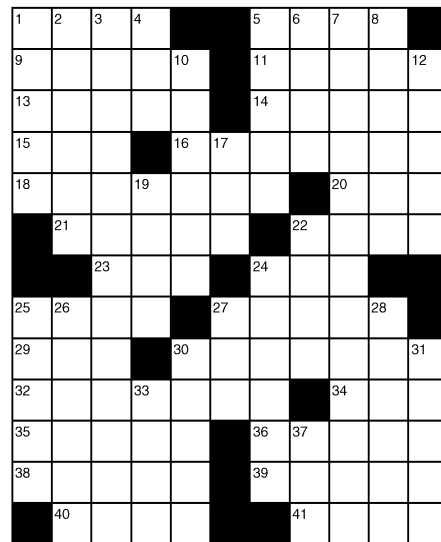
DOWN

- 1 Makes fun of
2 Green, perhaps
3 Some stars
4 Mom's order
5 Iberian nation
6 "Legally Blonde" heroine
7 Major celebrities
8 The Shadow's alter ego
10 Admits
12 Poet John
17 Tier
19 Fix a story
22 Suffers
24 It's classified
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ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP meeting. Last Wednesday of the month; at Sunrise Assisted Living, Pacific Palisades call (310)573-9545/Linda.

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Obituaries

DANIEL M. BENDIKSEN
Dan, a retired Santa Monica Fire Captain, lost a four-year battle with cancer on March 26, 2004, at Saint Johns Hospital, Santa Monica, California. Since 1985 Dan & his wife Rudi have resided in the Broadbeach area of Malibu, California. Dan was an avid surfer and surfboard shaper. He was born on February 15, 1941 and began surfing in 1953. He shaped his first board in 1954. With some technical advice from Dale Velzy, Dan followed a career as an un-renowned pioneer of long board shaping. In 1963, Dan began shaping, sanding and laminating surfboards for Bing Copeland and in 1964 he married Rudi. In 1974, Dan began a new career as a firefighter with the City of Santa Monica and was promoted to Fire Captain in 1979. Dan received the Medal of Valor award in 1992 from the California State Firefighters Association for his physical actions in the rescue of a distraught citizen. Throughout his career as a firefighter, Dan continued his love for the ocean, surfing, diving and fishing. Dan also continued making surfboards (over 4000) under his own trademark, "BENDIKSEN SURFBOARDS OF MALIBU". Dan was a true sports enthusiast who also enjoyed snow skiing with family and friends. Dan retired from the Santa Monica Fire Department after 27 years of service, on December 18, 2001. Dan will be missed by his mother Berneta (Granny), Rudi and hundreds of loving friends. A ceremony, honoring Dan, will be held on April 12, 2004 at 1:00pm at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be sent to the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation, 3600 Oceanview Bl., Glendale CA 91208

NASHNER-LOIS ODLE, age 84, died on January 14 in Portland, Oregon. She was born in Pittsburgh on March 4, 1919. She received a B.A. in Music from Carnegie Mellon University when she was 19. Her husband Sydney Nashner died in 1955, and she raised her three children Marjorie, Lewis, and Robert. At the age of 50 she earned a Master's degree in Public Administration at UCLA and worked as a Human Relations Management Consultant. She was an accomplished concert pianist and performed at chamber music and other recitals in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, where she lived for 30 years with her partner Karl Kreuter. She leaves her three children, her sisters Sylvia Lilley and Jeanne Perlman, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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