



FREE

Santa Monica Daily Press

April 9-10, 2005

A newspaper with issues

Volume 4, Issue 127

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

21 22 26 29 39
Meganumber: 16
Jackpot: \$10 Million

FANTASY 5

7 11 26 28 33

DAILY 3

Daytime: 8 2 3
Evening: 4 8 3

DAILY DERBY

1st: 01 Gold Rush
2nd: 08 Gorgeous George
3rd: 04 Big Ben

RACE TIME: 1:43.14

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

In January, police in Hong Kong arrested two men on suspicion of stealing a boatload of spiritually regarded pine trees, which they allegedly intended to sell to feng shui practitioners; the scheme failed when their boat, apparently lacking feng shui's "harmony" and "positive energy," broke down. Also in January, the Hong Kong company Life Enhance introduced briefs and boxer shorts that it says will bring harmony by virtue of the dragon on the front (which gives balance in this, the "year of the rooster"). Said a Life Enhance spokeswoman, "If you have a dragon on your underpants, you will be protected."

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 99th day of 2005.
There are 266 days left in the year.

On April 9, 1865, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

If quitters never win, and winners never quit, then who is the fool who said, "Quit while you're ahead?"

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Teen contends he's not guilty of murder rap

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

LAX COURTHOUSE — A Santa Monica teenager charged with the murder of Jalonnie Carter pleaded not guilty in court Friday.

Several family members and friends showed up at the Los Angeles Superior Court Airport Courthouse on Friday for the arraignment of Matthew Felix Vargas, 17, following his arrest by the Santa Monica Police on Thursday.

The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office charged Vargas with first-degree murder; one count of personal use of a firearm causing bodily injury; two counts of the intentional discharge of a firearm and one count of gang enhancement that contributed to the furtherance of gang activity.

Vargas, who authorities say is also known as "Lil Rooster" among gang members, was picked

See **MURDER CHARGE**, page 10

Malibu misnomer: Film fest a SM event

BY KIM CALVERT
Special to the Daily Press

It may be called the Malibu Film Festival, but it takes place right here in Santa Monica.

Now in its sixth year, the festival kicks off on Thursday, April 14, with an opening night party at Santa Monica's Viceroy Hotel, followed by screenings of more than 30 films at the Aero Theater, a premiere party at Santa Mon-

ica's The Victorian, and finally — in a nod to Malibu — an awards night party at Wolfgang Puck's Granita Restaurant.

"We do 99 percent of the festival in Santa Monica and only 1 percent in Malibu," said Richard Katz, the festival's founder.

Katz said since it had the name "Malibu," the closing night awards party — when the festival

See **FILM FEST**, page 11

What goes up ...



Kim Calvert/Special to Daily Press

A group of children take the 'plunge' recently on a new ride at Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier.

More than 5,000 kids draw inspiration from above



Photo courtesy

The Soaring Dreams Airship flies over Los Angeles this week.

BY LESLIE ANNE JONES
Special to the Daily Press

Santa Monicans weren't dreaming this week when a 40,000-square-foot rainbow colored blimp cruised overhead. But for the more than 5,000 kids who painted the world's largest piece of airborne public art, it was a dream come true.

Originally slated to take off

from the Santa Monica Pier on March 30, the launch was delayed because of high winds. It finally took off from Los Angeles and soared overhead throughout the week, passing over Santa Monica for the first time last weekend.

The Soaring Dreams Airship set sail in celebration of innovation and achievement. The brightly decorated mural that adorns it is the product of 72 painting sessions in 50 different

towns across California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. All of the art was done by youth through a community volunteer project made possible by Ameriquist Soaring Dreams and Projects of Hope.

The final product took six months, 450 gallons of paint, and a tarp that now weighs approximately 1,400 pounds to make the Soaring

See **BLIMP**, page 12

GABY SCHKUD

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Happy Birthday, Tere Gutierrez

Santa Monica Daily Press



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)

★★★ Make an adjustment when dealing with your finances. Change your plans in order to curb your spending. Do your taxes if you haven't already. Make calls to distant relatives and friends. Catch up on news. Log onto e-mail. Tonight: Gather your bills.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ You might be disappointed by someone you really care about. Your personality bowls others over. Use your magnetism to dress up your day and the day of others. Relate closely to a special friend or loved one. Tonight: Ask, and you shall receive.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Play it low-key. In fact, you might want to choose your company carefully. Experiment with different ideas without actually moving on them. Read, hop on the computer or take a walk. Schedule some downtime. Tonight: Add mystery.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Find your friends and make plans. Some of you might want to enjoy a baseball game or other fun spring outing. Act on a long-term desire; you can make it happen. Others join and support you in creating more happy times. Tonight: Find the party.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ Others look to you for answers and solutions. You might not be ready for the attention and demands. Organize a fun get-together. Others want more feedback. Your opinions count. Tonight: In the limelight. Lead the night's festivities.



VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Be willing to take a leap of faith. Investigate new ways of thinking. The more you see life from an evolved perspective, the easier your days will be. Hop into the car for a day trip. Explore a favorite spot. Tonight: Opt for a very different evening.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ A special someone in your life wants to be a greater part of your day, if not life. Give in to a request, and in the future, you will make this type of event a regular happening. Exchange your fondest desires. Tonight: Togetherness is your theme.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ Survey your choices carefully. Decide who and where. Your popularity flows, presenting many new people and opportunities. Don't close off anyone, if possible. Let your social personality emerge. Enjoy your life. Tonight: Where the fun is.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Jump into some spring cleaning or a gardening project. Christen the season with a barbecue or some other seasonal adventure. You could feel pushed by a child or loved one. Know when to say "enough." Tonight: Don't keep pushing so hard.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Your intense creativity bubbles over into different areas of your life. Many will be delighted by your suggestions. You could be in the midst of a whirlwind of fun and adventure. If you are single, you might not believe who struts into your life. Tonight: Ever playful.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Sometimes slowing down and putting your feet up helps the high-strung Aquarian. Often, you might want to relax, but you find it hard to unwind. Use the present aspects to catch up on much needed R and R. Tonight: Order in.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ Don't hang back. Organize your calls and head out the door as soon as possible. If visiting with friends, getting errands done first becomes a high priority. Choose to be social. Choose to catch up on news. Tonight: A good time is had by all.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Property owners on the clock

By Daily Press staff

They've come to collect: Property taxes are due.

Mark J. Saladino, Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector, is reminding Santa Monica property owners that the second installment of the 2004-05 property taxes becomes delinquent if not paid by Monday, April 11. Payments must be received by 5 p.m. on April 11 or United States Postal Service (USPS) postmarked before midnight on April 11.

To ensure proper processing of payments, checks should be made payable to the Los Angeles County Tax Collector. Checks should include the appropriate second installment payment stub marked "2," along with the payment. Substitute bills can be obtained from the County Treasurer and Tax Collector's office or through the local assessor's office.

American Express, MasterCard and Visa payments are accepted. No pre-registration is required and property owners can call toll-free at (888) 473-0835. A service fee is charged by a third-party vendor to utilize the service. When property owners have completed the transaction, a confirmation number will be provided as verification of payment.

To determine the amount due on any parcel, taxpayers may access the Web site at <http://ttax.co.la.ca.us>, or call toll-free the Los Angeles County Property Tax Information Line at (888) 807-2111, where automated information is available 24 hours a day.

Payments can be made in person at the following location:

Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector 225 North Hill Street, First Floor Los Angeles, CA 90012	Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday
--	--

Through April 11, treasurer and tax collector personnel will also receive payments at the Lancaster branch of the assessor's office. Payments must be made by check or money order and accompanied by the payment stub. No cash payments can be accepted at this location

Assessor's Office
251 E. Avenue K-6
Lancaster, California

Office Hours:
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Liberty director stepping down

By Daily Press staff

She tripled revenue through grant-making, added a fund that supports lesbian and gay projects, and launched a democracy-building low-income voter registration and mobilization program.

But beginning in January of 2006, the executive director of the Liberty Hill Foundation, Torie Osborn, will step down from her position of the past eight years. She will serve the organization in a part-time capacity.

"Torie Osborn has expanded and strengthened every aspect of Liberty Hill's work," said Lanny Gertler chair of the Liberty Hill Foundation's board of directors. "Because of her outstanding leadership, Liberty Hill is recognized nationwide as one of the country's philanthropic institutions to watch."

Liberty Hill grants support for social change rather than social services, consistent with its motto "Change, not charity." The Los Angeles Times called Liberty Hill Foundation "the most effective organization of its type in the country."

INTERESTED IN YOUR DAILY FORECAST?

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SURF REPORT

A strong NW flow will be causing some problems on Saturday. Although Sunday is a turnaround day, the coming week will be seeing a smaller mix of SW ground swell and some NW wind swell.

On Saturday, we're expecting the last, shorter, lagging periods to arrive, with size potential dropping to chest-high or so around west-facing breaks. Winds could still be problematic however.

On Sunday, it looks like the NW will continue to fade, and this is also when our next SW swell is due. However, not much of this SW will be making it to our coast from the southern hemisphere.

**Today the
water is:**

56°

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

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	4:23	-0.5	4:09	0.7	10:32	4.7	10:22	6.0
SUNDAY	5:05	-0.5	4:36	1.3	11:18	4.2	10:50	5.9
MONDAY	5:49	-0.4	5:00	1.9	12:09	3.6	11:19	5.6
TUESDAY	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
WEDNESDAY	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
THURSDAY	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
FRIDAY	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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YOU HAVE THE ANSWERS.
CHECK OUT THIS WEEK'S Q-LINE
RESPONSES ON PAGE 4.**

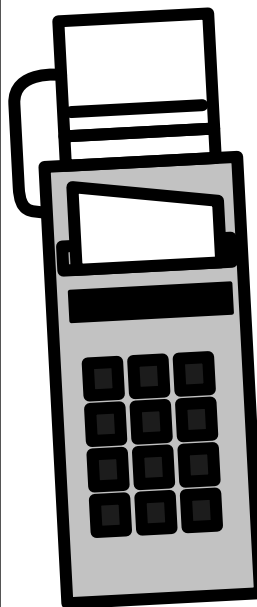


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OPINION

The QLine

CITY SHOULD TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

This past week, Q-line asked:
Should City Council accept SMC's offer to finance the building of Airport Park
 Here are your responses:

① "If there was ever a high-priced, troublesome entity, it is the Santa Monica school district. The district creates a constant stirring. It is my suggestion that the students use beach parking during the winter months when the lots are mostly empty. The lots south of the pier should easily serve their needs."

② "Santa Monica College has to have more parking. There's just no place to park, it's all full of cars — so it's sort of a Yogi Bear situation there. But the residents in the area say they don't like it because the streets are full of student cars, but they have to have restrictive parking and so the solution would be to build a big parking structure in the Santa Monica Airport area and shuttle them in. Instead of getting a park, just have more parking. A park will just be taken over by the bums because the Santa Monica City Council will let the bums take it over and this way a parking structure would actually be useful to somebody instead of being useful just to the bums."

③ "The first thing I'd say was what they shouldn't do is continue passing laws restricting people's freedoms. For example: The beach and the park — you can't smoke, and things like that. And then doing stuff or passing laws that make people clean out the alley ways from people who are able to go in and out of the alley ways and scream and shout and make all sorts of loud noises."

④ "I believe truly that we can build the parking structure underneath the park. There's no reason for it not to occur. We think too much with horizontal building in Santa Monica as it is. We need to focus more on vertical building

to create both a balance between the park, the airport, and the Santa Monica College students who depend on the area for parking. Parking is horrendous."

⑤ "Grab the money and run. This is terrific income that nobody predicted. This money could be utilized for other parks — for taking care of the park at 14th and Colorado, formerly the Fisher building. Great improvements, and keep it in — what would be cool — a park fund. Definitely allow Santa Monica College to utilize parking space underneath the park so it can shuttle students from its airport campus to the main campus on Pico. This is a win-win situation."

⑥ "Just one word to say: Resign."

⑦ "The City Council should see that Santa Monica College covers every cent of the cost. And that's what the agreement should be."

⑧ "SMC is like a huge black hole sucking in taxpayer money. Another \$32 million, and for what? Big is not necessarily better. Between the school district and SMC over the last 15 years, they have scammed the taxpayers out of \$400 million. Are we better off educationally? For that kind of money, every student in this city should be able to navigate and pilot Starship Enterprise. Instead, we have a lot of \$80,000 a year plus bureaucrats, just like that at City Hall — which is the biggest spender of all. As Mel Brooks said in his movie 'Blazing Saddles,' 'We've got to protect our phony-baloney jobs' Are we better off now then we were 25 years ago? I think not."

CLARIFICATION — A letter to the editor written by Lisa Kanoff in the April 6 edition regarding public funding for Santa Monica High School students to travel to Hawaii to compete in a national choir competition was not intended for publication.

Creating a diversion is the best of escapes



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

North Carolina defeated Illinois Monday night, officially becoming the best men's college basketball team in the country and ending March Madness. I know it was already April, but that's the nature of this madness — it's so mad that March can't contain it.

For two weeks, millions of people entered office pools, watched game after game on TV, cheered for colleges they never even heard of, and maybe even went to some games and cheered even louder. And for two weeks, those who didn't care about the tournament just shook their heads and wondered, "How can they care so much about something as insignificant as a game with all the serious problems going on in the world?" Perhaps the reason we care so much is precisely because of the problems in the world.

March Madness is a great escape from the real world. For a little while, people had some relief from thinking about family and work problems, the war, social security, and kids shooting up their schools. Maybe the relief was only for a couple of hours or even just a few minutes at a stretch, but this kind of escape from reality is a good thing for all of us. While you're screaming wildly because some 19-year-old kid jumps over another kid to dunk the ball, it's very hard to wonder if you'll be able to afford medical prescriptions in a few years. When you're watching a player somehow defy gravity and fly across the court to make a steal, you're not worried about that weird kid that's dating your daughter.

Am I suggesting turning away from reality, sticking our heads in the sand, and just not paying attention to things that upset us? Yes, I am. Not all the time. Just now and then, and for short bursts. I think it recharges our batteries and makes us stronger to go back and face the real world. Besides, it's fun.

So many of us had such a good time

during the tournament that those who don't care about sports should be able to get the same benefits. Everybody should have their version of March Madness.

It doesn't really matter what you do, as long as you find something that you feel passionately about that you can lose yourself in. Choose something other people find frivolous or just don't get. If the people around you aren't thinking, "You've lost your mind, wasting so much time on something so unimportant," you probably chose the wrong thing. You might feel passionate about your children, religion, or politics, but you're going to need something else for this kind of diversion. Otherwise, before you know it, you'll be thinking about serious stuff again.

It can be reading, the theater, playing an instrument, sumo wrestling, glass blowing, or pollinating the perfect petunias. But it has to be something that you can't do while you're watching the news on television. Knitting and crossword puzzles are supposed to be good at warding off Alzheimer's, but it's too easy to be distracted by bad news while you're making a scarf or trying to think of a four-letter word for a baby marsupial.

For this to work, you have to get so involved in something that you can't imagine why anyone in the world would dare to call you while you're doing it. You have to get so immersed in this activity while you're doing it that you can't think about anything else. That's why I recommend always turning off the stove before you start doing your thing.

For things like the basketball championship, there can be a letdown once it's over. The person suddenly feels lost: "What am I going to act completely irrationally about tomorrow? Will I have to wait another year before I find something to divert me from all the painful things in life?" For those going through this "post-tournament depression," I've got good news: The baseball season started this week.

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier." He also has read many books, some of them in hardcover. He can be reached at smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.com.)

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

Walking to the nearest newsstand increases circulation.

Santa Monica Daily Press

COMMENTARY



GUEST COMMENTARY BY THOMAS A. BOWDEN

Proposed legislation permitting assisted suicide threatened

John Ashcroft may have resigned from the Justice Department, but the former Attorney General's conservative legacy lives on in a lawsuit that threatens to scuttle Vermont's chances of enacting a physician-assisted suicide bill.

The pending Vermont bills are modeled on an Oregon law that permits physicians to prescribe a lethal dose of drugs to a mentally competent, terminally ill patient who makes written and oral requests, consults two doctors, and endures a mandatory waiting period.

Back in 2001, Ashcroft decreed that any doctor prescribing such a dose would violate federal law against dispensing controlled dangerous substances without a "legitimate medical purpose." So far, Ashcroft's position has been rejected by the courts, but the Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case, and an adverse outcome would doom Vermont's budding legislation.

The real issue, however, is not whether medicine should be controlled by federal government or the states. Rather, the issue is whether an individual has a right to commit suicide.

Hopefully, the Supreme Court will revisit its 1997 decision in Washington vs. Glucksberg, which held that individuals have no constitutionally protected right of suicide, and hence no right to obtain assistance in that act. The Glucksberg case looks increasingly vulnerable to being overruled, especially in light of the legal uncertainties surrounding Terri Schiavo's death and the court's newfound willingness to uphold individual rights, as demonstrated in its 2003 decision decriminalizing private homosexual acts despite objections from religionists.

What the courts must grasp, if they are to justly resolve the debate over assisted suicide, is that there is no rational, secular basis upon which the government can properly prevent any individual from choosing to end his own life. Rather, it is religious mysticism that energizes the Bush administration into intimidating doctors who dare to defy God's divine plan.

The conservatives' outrage at the Oregon law stems from the belief that human life is a gift from the Lord, who puts us here on earth to carry out His will. Thus, the very idea of suicide is anathema, because one who "plays God" by causing his own death, or assisting in the death of another, insults his Maker and invites eternal damnation, not to mention divine retribution against the decadent society that permits such sinful behavior.

When religious conservatives use secular laws to enforce their faith in God, they threaten the central principle on which America was founded. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed, for the first time in the history of nations, that each person exists as an end in himself. This basic truth — which finds political expression in the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness — means, in practical terms, that you need no one's permission to live, and that no one may forcibly obstruct your efforts to achieve your own personal happiness.

But what if happiness becomes impossible to attain? What if a dread disease, or some other calamity, drains all joy from life, leaving only misery and suffering? The right to life includes and implies the right to commit suicide. To hold otherwise — to declare that society or God must give you permission to kill yourself — is to contradict the right to life at its root. If you have a duty to go on living, despite your better judgment, then your life does not belong to you, and you exist by permission, not by right.

For these reasons, each individual has the right to decide the hour of his death and to implement that solemn decision as best he can. The choice is his because the life is his. And if a doctor is willing to assist in the suicide, based on an objective assessment of his patient's mental and physical state, the law should not stand in his way.

If George W. Bush were to contract a terminal disease, he would have a legal right to regard his own faith in God's will as paramount, and to instruct his doctor to stand by and let him suffer, just as long as his body and mind could endure the agony, until the last bitter paroxysm carried him to the grave. But the Bush administration has no right to force such mindless, medieval misery upon doctors and patients in Oregon, Vermont or elsewhere, who refuse to regard their precious lives as playthings of a cruel God.

In the end, only the Supreme Court can thwart the designs of conservatives who, by injecting religion into the bloodstream of American law, seek to assist in our own national suicide.

(Thomas A. Bowden is an attorney and a writer for Ayn Rand Institute in Irvine. The institute promotes the ideas of Ayn Rand, best-selling author of "Atlas Shrugged" and "The Fountainhead" and originator of the philosophy of Objectivism.)



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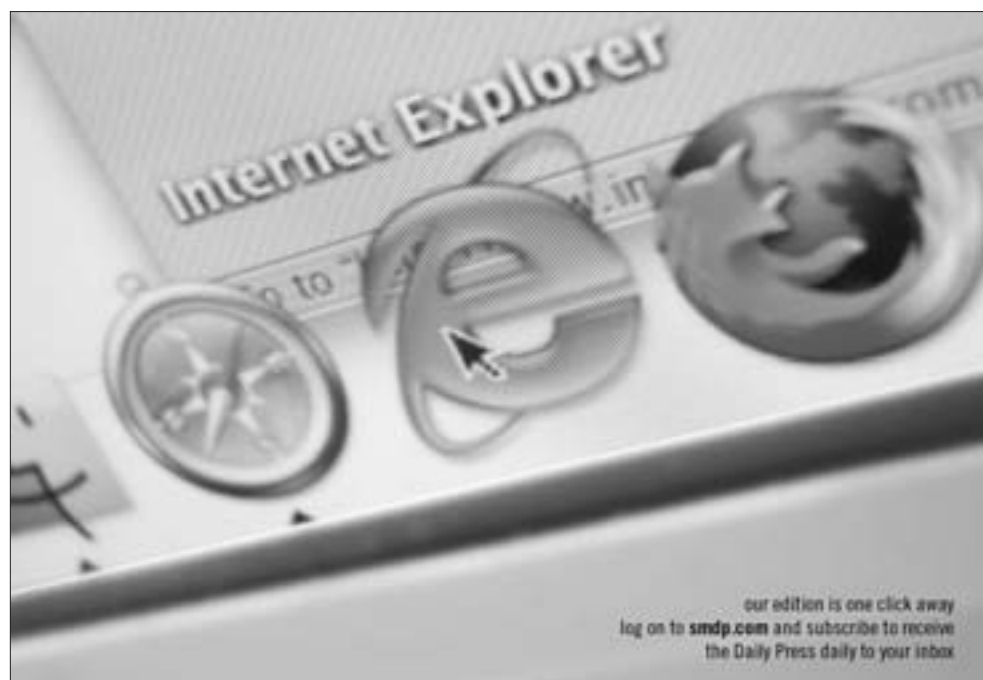


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LOCAL

SANTA MONICA CITYWIDE READS

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica Citywide Reads is a program that encourages people to read the same book and come together to discuss it in public book clubs and related events held citywide, which takes place April 12 to May 21.

The selected book, "The Kite Runner" is set in Afghanistan and California over a period of three decades. The novel is a story of the relationship between two boys of different social statuses and the complicated relationship between a father and son. The first Afghan novel to be written in English, "The Kite Runner" provides insights into the turbulent, recent history of Afghanistan and the rich cultures of the people of Afghanistan and Afghan-Americans. The author, Khaled Hosseini, was born in Kabul in 1965, and immigrated with his family to northern California in 1980, where he has been a practicing physician since 1996. Dr. Hosseini is making a special appearance at Santa Monica College on May 21.

Those who already belong to a book club are encouraged to participate by reading "The Kite Runner" and discuss it with their group using a Citywide Reads Resource Guide, available at all Santa Monica Public Library locations and on the Citywide Reads Web site: www.smpl.org/cwr.

The Santa Monica Daily Press will print a chapter of the book each day from April 4 through April 9.

The Kite Runner

by Khaled Hosseini

Chapter six:

We hopped the fence that surrounded the barracks, skipped over a little creek, and broke into the open dirt field where old, abandoned tanks collected dust. A group of soldiers huddled in the shade of one of those tanks, smoking cigarettes and playing cards. One of them saw us, elbowed the guy next to him, and called Hassan.

"Hey, you!" he said. "I know you."

We had never seen him before. He was a squatty man with a shaved head and black stubble on his face. The way he grinned at us, leered, scared me. "Just keep walking," I muttered to Hassan.

"You! The Hazara! Look at me when I'm talking to you!" the soldier barked. He handed his cigarette to the guy next to him, made a circle with the thumb and index finger of one hand. Poked the middle finger of his other hand through the circle. Poked it in and out. In and out. "I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her real good. I took her from behind by that creek over there."

The soldiers laughed. One of them made a squealing sound. I told Hassan to keep walking, keep walking.

(Excerpted from THE KITE RUNNER by Khaled Hosseini Copyright © 2003 by Khaled Hosseini. Excerpted by permission of Riverhead Books, a division of Penguin Group Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher. Brought to you in cooperation with DearReader.com.)

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RECREATION



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BY THADDEUS REICHLEY

I have figured out why the dinosaurs went extinct. One word — teamwork.

It might sound crazy, but stick with me and I'll paint you a picture. Imagine a lone caveman armed with a stick. We'll call him "Hank." Hank is out hunting and stumbles upon a woolly mammoth. What ensues is not pretty, and ends with one less hunter named Hank. Now picture Hank with a crew of his buddies. Armed with the same sticks, they head out on a similar expedition and stumble upon yet another woolly mammoth. This time the odds are slightly better, and Hank and his pals end up with full bellies and new woolly mammoth Uggs. It's my theory that this joining of forces, or working as a team, is the reason we are still around today, and conversely, why there are no woolly mammoths to be found.

I feel like I owe much of who I am to team sports. I grew up playing soccer, baseball, basketball and anything else my parents would let me join. I had some great coaches and some really bad ones, and was on some winning teams and some teams that never really had a chance. Luckily, through it all, my parents were sticklers and made follow through with all of the teams I wanted to join, no matter how bad I was or how much I pleaded to quit. They realized the importance of finishing what you commit to, and did their best to instill this in me. It took me seven years of complaining about baseball practice to realize that it wasn't my thing, but I stuck with every season, thanks to my parents. I never learned to hit the damn ball, but I learned the importance of commitment.

When you play team sports the goals, runs, and baskets are what lead to winning, which often becomes the most important goal, even for young children. It's not too often that you hear a coach in a huddle psyching a team up by yelling, "Let's go out there and finish this game." You train together and work hard to win. And, when you don't win you wonder, "Why?" Unfortunately, this wonder too easily leads to blame. Nobody wants to take the blame, and soon the loss becomes the fault of the umpire, that guy who missed the last shot, or the unfamiliar playing field. It's always much easier to point fingers than it is to admit that maybe you had something to do with a loss. Once you let those ideas seep into your thought process, it's very hard to get back to what it means to work and compete as a team, win or lose. I think that this is one of the reasons that I was originally drawn to running.

Running is a beautifully simple sport. I have always loved the fact that you can do it anywhere with nothing but a little time, some shoes and an open path. More than this, I love that when you run there is nobody else involved but you. At the end of the day, the measure of your success is determined by a clock, and time doesn't lie. There are no excuses, and you can't pin the blame on anyone but yourself if things don't end well. Because of this, I have spent the last several years solitarily training and racing. That is until this past

weekend.

I was approached a few weeks ago by a buddy looking for a fourth member of a co-ed relay team in a 12-hour mountain bike race. My skills on the mountain bike are still in the developing stages. The guys I ride with tease me because I go uphill faster than I go down. I'm pretty sure that I got the call because everyone else already had plans. Regardless, I was excited for two reasons. First, because the race was in Orange County and as a new transplant to the area I hadn't been there yet. More importantly however, I was going to be a part of a team, something I had not experienced in several years.

When you join a team, you immediately have other people counting on you. There is nothing like collective energy to keep you motivated and push you to new levels. We have all experienced it, whether on the final climb of a race, or in the last quarter of a game. It's this energy that pumps you up, keeps you going, and allows you to take your body beyond the limits you dreamed were ever possible. It also helps to keep you on track when you are not competing. As I thought about having another beer the night before the race there was a little voice that said, "Hey dummy, you are already the slowest one on the team, the beer isn't helping." Stupid, lousy voices.

The second thing that I was reminded of as a part of a co-ed team was that there are some really amazing athletes out there. Luckily for me this time, the woman who was matching my times every lap was on my team. It was awesome having her breathing down my neck, motivating me to ride as hard as I did. She made me hurt something special that day, and probably could have easily lasted another 12 hours.

The final and most important thing I re-discovered was that being part of a team is fun. It's exciting to cheer for other people, and to have them cheer for you. Adrenaline I found is even better when shared, and pain is always easier to bear with a little help. Some people might think that riding your bike in a circle for 12 hours is a little strange. True. But so is hitting a little ball with a stick. Still, we have all participated in these games because humans are competitive and social beings. It is easy to forget this as you plug away at the gym, or go for your daily runs. I know that I have personally been athletically anti-social for too long. This race was just what I needed to put a little fun back into sports for me. Working on a team motivated me to be a better individual athlete and added some incentive to my training.

There are endless opportunities to become a part of a team these days. You can do a run as a relay, be part of a triathlon team, try an adventure race, or join a recreational sporting league. Whatever your interest or competitive drive, there is something for you. If you have not been on a team in a while, or ever, give it a go. You might be surprised at how much fun it is. You might also be surprised at how much you improve.

(Thaddeus is a teacher and pro triathlete living, working, and training in Santa Monica. Look for his column on the weekends, and send comments to thadsthoughts@yahoo.com.)

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STATE

Sierra members want to limit U.S. population

Immigration at issue in Sierra Club election

By The Associated Press

IMMIGRATION QUESTION: In addition to filling five openings on the 15-seat board, 750,000 members are being asked to vote yes or no on whether the Sierra Club should push for tighter limits on U.S. immigration.

A PEOPLE PROBLEM: Advocates believe U.S. overpopulation is the biggest

environmental threat. Opponents say taking a hard line on immigration won't stop the world's population explosion, and would alienate Sierra Club allies such as labor unions and civil rights groups.

OTHER SOLUTIONS: Sierra Club leaders say better answers to overpopulation are family planning education, access to birth control, fair trade and empowering women, especially in poor countries.

BY TERENCE CHEA

Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — One year after failing to win control of the Sierra Club in a bitterly contested election, advocates for stricter immigration limits are back, arguing that the venerable conservation group can best protect the environment by reducing U.S. population growth.

The club's 750,000 members are voting this month on whether the 113-year-old organization should push for tighter restrictions on immigration. Five seats are open on the 15-member board of directors, which sets club policy and commands the \$100 million annual budget.

Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization, club activists seeking to limit immigration, are backing five candidates and pushing a "yes" vote, asserting that Americans are the world's biggest consumers, and that when immigrants come to this country they significantly increase their consumption.

"The issue of escalating population growth in the United States is the single most important environmental issue in the nation," said board member Paul Watson, who also heads the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. "We've got to address this problem. We can't continue to have our heads in the sand."

But opponents, including many current and former club leaders, argue that wading into the politics of immigration will alienate allies such as labor unions and civil rights groups and won't slow population growth worldwide.

"Just to focus on building more walls, and focus on immigration into the United States, does nothing to address the global population problem," said Sierra Club President Larry Fahn, who is urging members to reject the ballot question. "It would be damaging to the club and its alliances around the country."

Voting, now under way, will end at noon on April 25, when the election results will be announced.

Last year, a record number of members voted in the group's most contentious election yet after club leaders warned members that outside anti-immigration and animal-rights groups were trying to seize control of the influential organization.

More than 171,000 members voted — more than twice as many as in previous elections — and the five board candidates backed by the club's leadership won in a landslide. They defeated some big-name opponents, including former Colorado

Gov. Richard Lamm and Frank Morris, former director of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

The San Francisco-based Sierra Club, founded by conservationist John Muir in 1892, has debated its position on immigration for years, and voted in 1998 to remain neutral.

Still, the club's immigration control advocates have continued to push for a harder line, and forced the question onto the ballot again this year. They say the U.S. population, now about 300 million, is expected to more than double this century if nothing is done to slow its growth.

"Our population is already too large to be sustainable within our resource base," said Dick Schneider, a club member in Oakland who wrote the ballot argument in favor of lower immigration limits. "Unless the U.S. population is stabilized and eventually reduced the Sierra Club will fail in its mission."

Schneider and his allies say overpopulation has led to a variety of environmental problems, including increased resource exploitation, the erosion of wilderness and the extinction of species.

The immigration control advocates also insist that they have nothing against immigrants. In fact, they argue that limiting immigration will improve wages and working conditions for immigrant workers by reducing competition for jobs.

"Nobody wants to close the door," said Watson, who is a Canadian citizen and U.S. resident. "We just want to lower the numbers."

Opponents say the Sierra Club already recognizes overpopulation as a major environmental threat, but say the threat must be addressed globally, through family planning education, birth control access, fair trade and empowerment of women, especially in poor countries.

"Population growth has to be addressed by addressing its root causes," said Robert Cox, a former Sierra Club president who wrote the ballot argument in favor of remaining neutral on immigration. "Immigration control has done nothing to reduce family size or population pressures. It just scapegoats people who end up bearing the brunt of our trade policies and foreign policy."

Schneider said he's not optimistic the ballot measure will pass "given the array of money and forces against it," but he believes the Sierra Club will have to confront the immigration question eventually.

"The sooner we come to grips with it the better," Schneider said. "It's key to protecting the environment."



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STATE



Bill to permit hemp pending in Legislature

BY STEVE LAWRENCE
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — John Roulac wants to give California agriculture a boost and cut his transportation costs at the same time.

Roulac is the founder and chief executive officer of Nutiva, an up-and-coming organic food company that is based in California but that processes and packages most of its products in Canada. The reason: Nutiva sells bars, protein powder, seeds and oil made with hemp, a cousin of marijuana.

Hemp has only a trace of tetrahydrocannabinols, or THC, the drug in marijuana, but hemp can't be legally grown in the United States without a permit from the Drug Enforcement Administration. And the DEA has only allowed an experimental plot in Hawaii, according to Adam Eidinger, a spokesman for Vote Hemp, the lobbying arm of the hemp industry.

So Nutiva contracts with Canadian farmers for its hemp, processes it in Canada and imports the finished products.

"We pay Exxon and Chevron a lot of money for gasoline for truckers," said Roulac. "We'd rather pay that money to California farmers to grow a sustainable crop."

Assemblyman Mark Leno has a bill that could make that happen. The San Francisco Democrat's measure would allow the state Department of Food and Agriculture to issue licenses to grow and process hemp.

Bills similar to Leno's are pending in New Hampshire and Oregon. North Dakota approved hemp cultivation in 1999, and this year the governor signed a bill allowing the state university to try to develop improved hemp seeds in anticipation of the removal of the federal ban on hemp farming.

Leno's proposal has a "huge potential economic impact," said Johanna Schultz, a spokeswoman for the Hemp Industries Association, which has about 300 members, including nearly 50 in California.

"I foresee a whole bunch of new hemp businesses starting up just because of its availability," she said.

Hemp can be used to make a myriad of products, including clothing, cosmetics, food, paper, rope, jewelry, luggage, sports equipment and toys. As food, hemp is high in essential fatty acids, protein, B vit-

amins and fiber, its supporters say.

American farmers, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, grew hemp, often under government mandates or with government subsidies. Copies of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence were written on hemp paper, Leno said.

"The strange irony is that we can presently import the entire hemp plant and manufacturers can produce thousands of different products (using hemp) and then sell them," he added. "The one component which is missing out on this is the farmer."

Roulac figures he would save more than \$100,000 a year in transportation costs and could cut his prices if he could buy hemp seeds from California growers and process them into food products at a plant he wants to build in Bakersfield.

Tom Riley, a spokesman for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, said hemp farming could be used to hide marijuana cultivation by mixing the two plants in the field.

"I hope that legislators would look very carefully at this effort and see what factors there are," he said.

But the bill's supporters say there is little likelihood that a grower would try to mix marijuana with hemp. The two plants grow differently and cross-pollination could result in less-potent strains of marijuana, they say.

Marijuana growers, fearing wind-blown hemp pollen could weaken their crops, are among hemp's biggest opponents, along with the DEA, said Roulac. "It's strange bedfellows, isn't it?"

Also, the bill would require hemp to be tested in the fields to ensure that THC levels did not exceed prescribed limits. It also would bar anyone with a criminal conviction from getting a license to grow or process hemp.

Leno's bill attempts to sidestep federal jurisdiction by requiring farmers to sell hemp seeds, stalks and fibers only to California processors, avoiding interstate commerce.

"With that distinction, there's no reason why the federal government should get involved," he said.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has taken no position on the bill, said Jay Van Rein, a spokesman for the Department of Food and Agriculture.



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Color barrier



Seth Kotok/Special to the Daily Press
The early morning sun illuminates one of a series of play pinwheels for sale on Wednesday at the Farmers' Market in Santa Monica.

Vargas' mother calls son's charges 'bogus'

MURDER CHARGE, from page 1

up on Thursday by SMPD detectives at a juvenile detention facility in Sylmar, where he is serving time for an unknown crime. Because he's a minor, authorities couldn't discuss for what crime Vargas was being detained.
Vargas' mother, Belinda Ramos, also declined to say what her son was convicted of, except to say he is innocent. He has been detained since December.
"It's a bogus charge," Ramos said.
Vargas was booked on Thursday into Santa Monica Jail on \$2 million bail, according to SMPD Chief James T. Butts Jr.
The DA's office said because of the evidence prosecutors have to support their case, Vargas is being tried as an adult, which makes his identity available to the public.
"Generally, the law allows us to (charge him as an adult), especially if we believe the person was the actual killer," said DA spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons.
On Thursday, Butts said that SMPD detectives have recovered the murder weapon, but declined to provide further information on what other evidence will be brought against Vargas.

Relatives and friends of Vargas showed up at court on Friday visibly distraught by the lack of information they had about the arrest. Ramos, a member of Mothers for Justice — a group based in the Pico neighborhood with the mission of ending unfair discipline treatment and racial profiling in the local school district — said she found out about her son's arrest and arraignment through a newspaper article she read.
"I was at Ray's Restaurant, reading the newspaper when I saw my son's name," Ramos said. "You have no idea how it feels to have to find out about a charge like this in the news."
Ramos said she would have felt more confident going into Friday's proceedings if she had received a phone call from authorities — or from her son — prior to his arraignment. Instead, she said she had to make several phone calls to confirm that her son was charged with murder.
"Whatever happened to innocent until proven guilty?" Ramos said. "I'm his mother. I should have known about his arrest. He's 17."
SMPD Lt. Frank Fabrega said detectives picked up Vargas, booked him at the Santa Monica Jail and returned him to the juvenile detention facility.
"The notification was made with the county probation department," he said.
Vargas was represented by public defender Sandra Stillwater on Friday. He showed up to court in an orange jumpsuit, appearing clean, well-groomed and calm.
Stillwater made the no guilty plea for Vargas on all counts. She also requested the arraignment be continued to Monday, April 11, allowing time for Vargas' family to secure a private attorney who may review the case, which Judge Paula A. Mabrey accepted.

Following Stillwater's request, Judge Mabrey also directed Vargas be allowed phone communication according to county guidelines and that a family friend, pastor Mark A. Garcia, be granted visitation rights.
Vargas, who is Hispanic and lives in the Pico neighborhood, is allegedly a member of the Santa Monica 17th Street Gang, Butts said. The 17th Street gang is frequently at odds with the city's other gang, the Graveyard Crips. One gang is black, the other Latino. The Pico neighborhood is located on the eastside of Santa Monica.

"He is a Latino and he has a right to be brown," she added. "Just because he's brown doesn't mean he's in a gang. This whole thing is wrong."

— BELINDA RAMOS
Mother

Ramos lashed out at the press and authorities on Friday for characterizing her son as a gang member, which she said he is not.
"If the other gangs thinks he's in a gang, it's going to put my son in jeopardy," Ramos said. "My son did not commit this murder. This is a wrongful arrest and it's wrong to put his name in the paper ..."
"He is a Latino and he has a right to be brown," she added. "Just because he's brown doesn't mean he's in a gang. This whole thing is wrong."
Carter, 19, was shot in the back with a .22-caliber gun in the 1800 block of 20th Street, while he was walking through an alley on Sept. 2, 2003. The bullet pierced his heart and he died a few hours later at a local hospital.
Shortly after, police arrested a neighbor in connection with the murder, but the DA's office dropped the charges due to a lack of evidence.
Carter, who authorities said was known by friends and family as "Little Bear" and "Pooh Bear," was described as a hard-working young man who was studying for a career in computers while working two jobs. He is buried at the Woodlawn Cemetery, located in the Pico neighborhood.
Vargas is described by family and friends as respectful and mild-mannered.
Sources said, as a youth, Vargas used to frequent the Pico Youth & Family Center, a City Hall-funded nonprofit organization intended to promote peace, unity and social justice in the troubled neighborhood. The center is designed to serve as a place of empowerment and education for young men and women.
"This is killing me," Ramos said, waiting for her son to appear in court.



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LOCAL



Film fest organizer 'not reinventing wheel'

FILM FEST, from page 1

honors Pierce Brosnan — would be staged in Malibu.

"Plus, Malibu is full of movie stars, something we need to promote and support the festival," Katz said.

Katz, who directs music videos and works on feature films, said he got the idea for the film festival after his project, "You Ain't Nothing In This Town Without A Shopping Cart," a love story about a homeless man in Santa Monica, was rejected by the Sundance Film Festival.

"I realized I had all these film industry resources right here in my hometown and I thought Malibu, with its film community and a name recognized around the world, would be the perfect place for an international film festival," Katz said.

However, Malibu didn't have enough venues to support an international film festival, so despite the name, the real home base became Santa Monica.

Katz's plan was to take the best ideas from other successful film festivals, like Sundance and the Santa Barbara Festival, and incorporate them into the Malibu Film Festival.

"We didn't try to reinvent the wheel," Katz said. "We're using what works — style, grace and class in a place that provides filmmakers with an opportunity to screen their films where there are lots of people in the movie business."

Katz said about one fifth of the members in the Motion Picture Academy live in the area.

"We have many of the decision makers right there in our backyard," he said. "They can participate in this festival without having to lift a finger. Plus, we have a classy package."

"The opening night at the Viceroy Hotel, the premiere party at the Victorian, the screenings at the Aero Theater — these are some of Santa Monica's gems."

Gwen Deglise, head of programming for the Aero Theater, which is now a part of the American Cinematheque, said the Malibu Film Festival tried to use their theater last year, but it wasn't ready in time. The theater, constructed in 1939, was renovated by the American Cinematheque and reopened this year.

"We've made it into a great place to watch movies," Deglise said. "There are 425 new seats, a new screen, an amazing sound system, a new concession stand and even all new bathrooms."

She said the Malibu Film Festival would be renting the Montana Avenue theater for screenings.

Jane Walker, chairperson of the Montana Avenue Merchants Association, said she was thrilled the screenings would be held at the Aero.

"It's going to bring people to our street — people who will like the artistic, eclectic stores that we have here," Walker said. "Just like the American Film Market brings people to the Third Street Promenade, the Malibu Film Festival is going to bring people to our part of Santa Monica."

Katz estimated that the film festival can boost revenues for local businesses as

much as 25 percent.

"We draw what's called 'sticky tourists,'" he said. "Those are people who come to Santa Monica and, in addition to coming to our events, spend money at local venues as well."

Katz said just as the festival supports the local economy, in turn, it needed the support of corporate sponsors.

"It costs about \$250,000 a year to run this festival," Katz said. "Just as soon as we pay this year's bills, we start looking for next year's sponsors. Fortunately, we have returning sponsors, like Paul Mitchell, who supply money, merchandise and personnel. It's a challenge, but with the generous support of our sponsors and volunteers we're making it happen."

Katz said the festival is affordable to the public. Tickets to individual screenings are \$8, or \$5 with a student I.D.

"We have a great program," he said. "Our 7:30 showings on Friday, Saturday and Sunday are just amazing."

Katz said the festival will open on Friday, April 15, with "Mad Hot Ballroom," an American film about inner-city kids who take ballroom dance classes. On Saturday, April 16, will be the screening of "Hooligans" with Elijah Wood — a film Katz said generated the most ticket sales so far. On Sunday, April 17, "Apres Vous," a French film Katz described as "very sexy" will be viewed.

He said both "Mad Hot Ballroom" and "Apres Vous" were picked up for distribution by Paramount at Sundance this year. Neither has been screened in Los Angeles.

In addition to the feature length films, the festival would present an eclectic mix of short animation, live action and documentary films.

Ten awards will be given out to festival entrants at the closing night awards party on April 18. The winners will be selected by the film festival audience, who will have voting ballots at the Aero Theater, and by the Malibu Film Festival jury, a 10-member committee appointed by the festival's board of directors. In addition, actor Pierce Brosnan will receive the 2005 Honoree Achievement in the Arts Award.

For ticket and scheduling information, visit www.malibufilmfestival.com or call (310) 452-6688.

It's showtime!

By Daily Press staff

The Malibu Film Festival will screen more than 30 films at the Aero Theater in Santa Monica in the sections of short live action films, animated short films, short subject documentary films, feature length documentary films, and narrative feature films.

The festival will feature five world premieres, nine West Coast premieres, three Los Angeles premieres and four Academy Award nominated shorts. Awards night will take place at Wolfgang Puck's Granita Restaurant in Malibu which will award the win-

See **SHOWTIME**, page 12

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SPECIAL REPORT

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BY FABIAN E. PADILLA
PRESIDENT, SAFE GAS SERVICES

CALIFORNIA— Fact: If you are reading this, you probably live in a Earthquake Hazard Zone.

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- There are over 200 Earthquake Faults in So. California that are capable of a 6.0 magnitude or greater? Most people in So. California live within 30 miles of these faults. Are you ready for the big one?

- That the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is now requiring communities in Southern California to prepare a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan? A Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is a new requirement from FEMA, which must be satisfied for jurisdiction to remain eligible for hazard mitigation funds and public assistance following disasters. Communities like Santa Monica have recently completed their mitigation plan and are requiring Earthquake Activated Gas Shut-off Valves as part of the plan.

- Los Angeles City Ordinance 174478 already mandates the installation of an activated gas shut-off valve on all new buildings built after 09-01-95. When pulling a building permit on work valued at \$10,000 or more. Prior to entering an agreement for sale of residential or commercial property and prior to the close of escrow. Any alteration of your gas service or system will also require that you install one. Yes, if you repair your roof, add on, remodel, upgrade or change title to or sell property you must have an earthquake valve installed.

- The City of West Hollywood has also adopted a similar mandate. More and more cities are implementing the Earthquake Activated Gas Shut-off valve mandate. It is expected that soon the ordinance will become a statewide mandate, like water heater strapping and the installation of smoke detectors

- The last major earthquake in Southern California was the Northridge Quake in 1994. Experts say we are due for another major Quake.

Here are some facts from the 1994 Northridge Quake:

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- Over 20,000 left homeless
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- FEMA processed over 400,000 claims for water heater damage and over 700,000 claims for gas appliances

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Kids let imaginations soar

BLIMP, from page 1

Dreams airship a reality.

Young artists participated in the project from after-school programs and pediatric facilities. Organizers made an effort to include all children: Telescope brushes were used by children in wheelchairs, shoe brushes were used by children who could not use their hands, and fruit-flavored paintbrushes were utilized by kids who could not use their hands or feet.

The Soaring Dreams Airship can hold up to eight passengers, plus the pilot and co-pilot. It is about seven times the size of the Sistine Chapel, and larger than a professional basketball court. It can fly at up to 58 miles per hour and travel 13 hours without refueling. Since it is a non-rigid airship, if all power were lost, the pilot could descend the airship as if he were flying a balloon, making it one of the safest aircraft around.

Ameriquet Soaring Dreams is the philanthropic organization connected to the Ameriquet Mortgage Company. The purpose of Ameriquet Soaring Dreams is to help foster healthy communities through education and economic opportunity.

Projects of Hope was conceived in 1995 by artist Ed Massey and social entrepreneur Bernie Massey as a creative therapy program for physically disabled and seriously ill youth. Since then, the program expanded to include an array of adults and children. The primary goal since Projects of Hope's inception has been to inspire individuals through involvement and exposure to unique and high-profile art projects.

The blimp will appear above baseball diamonds and stadiums across the country this summer as an ambassador for the hopes and dreams of children everywhere.

Reel world: Over 30 films on tap

SHOWTIME, from page 11

ning films and filmmakers of this year's festival and honor Pierce Brosnan with an Award for Achievement in the Arts.

Event and screening schedule:

Thursday, April 14
Opening night party
This night of entertainment will include a fashionably loud Maui and Sons fashion show (hair and make up by Paul Mitchell), music spun by a KCRW DJ Cathy Tamkin, and drinks sponsored by Patron Tequila and Penta Water.
8 p.m.-midnight Viceroy Hotel, 1819 Ocean Ave.
Tickets: \$25, (866) 468-3399, Ticketweb.com (310) 452-6688

April 15-17
Independent film screenings
A complete list of films and detailed descriptions are available at www.MalibuFilmFestival.com. Times are 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m., 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave.
Tickets: \$8, (866) 468-3399; \$99 VIP screening pass; \$1,000 VIP all access passes, Ticketweb.com (310) 452-6688

Friday, April 15
Premiere party
The Victorian/Duck Duck Mousse Premiere Party will follow the opening night film. Hors d' oeuvres will be provided by Duck Duck Mousse and local restaurants as well as coffee, tea and dessert by Urth Caffe; DJ music by DJ Dash1; sponsored drinks by Patron Tequila, Pyrat Rum, Penta Water, and wines from Twin Fin. Twin Fin is the official wine sponsor of the festival.
9 p.m.-midnight, The Victorian, Main Street
Tickets: \$25, (866) 468-3399, Ticketweb.com (310) 452-6688

Monday, April 18
Award night party
The Granita closing night awards party will be brought to attendees in part by Twin Fin, and will be held at Wolfgang Puck's Granita in Malibu. This will be a night of awards, food, wine and spirits, sponsored by Granita, Twin Fin, Paul Mitchell, Patron Spirits and Penta Water. Music spun by a KCRW DJ Cathy Tamkin. This night honors Pierce Brosnan and the award-winning films and filmmakers of the 2005 Malibu Film Festival presented by Paul Mitchell. This event is a fundraiser for the 501-C3, Malibu Film Foundation. Tickets for the event will help ensure the future of the Malibu Film Festival. A portion of the ticket price may be tax deductible.
7 p.m.-10 p.m., Granita Malibu, 23725 West Malibu Rd.
\$500 (866) 468-3399, Ticketweb.com (310) 452-6688
The following 10 awards will be given out on April 18 at the awards party:
■ Best of Festival: Feature – (audience and jury awards)
■ Achievement in Cinematography – (jury)
■ Best Documentary – (audience and jury awards)
■ Best Documentary Short - (Audience)
■ Best Animated Short Film - (Audience)
■ Best Live-Action Short Film – (audience and jury awards)

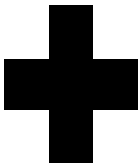
■ Pierce Brosnan – 2005 Honoree Achievement in The Arts

Independent film screenings:

OPENING NIGHT FILM
"Mad Hot Ballroom," written by Amy Sewell directed by Marilyn Agrelo (U.S.A.) – West Coast Premiere
CLOSING NIGHT FILM
"Apres Vous," directed by Pierre Salvadori (France) - Los Angeles Premiere
SHORT LIVE ACTION FILMS
"Everything In This Country Must," directed by Gary McKendry written by Colum McCann and Gary McKendry (U.S.A.) - 2005 Academy Award Nominee
"Dog Eat Dog," written and directed by Jonathan Zames (Canada) - World Premiere
"Gabriel," directed by Cherie Knott written by Janine Brchett (Australia)
"Rosbeef," written and directed by Bruce Burgess (France)
"In The Morning," written and directed by Danielle Lurie (U.S.A.)
"I?," written and directed by Wade Robson (U.S.A.)
"Premonition," written and directed by Renata Adamidov (U.S.A.) - World Premiere
"The Big Empty," co-written and co-directed by J Lisa Chang and Newton Thomas Sigel (U.S.A.) - West Coast Premiere
"The Intervention," directed by Jay Duplass (U.S.A.) - West Coast Premiere
"Show & Tell," directed by Chris Dollard written by Sean Patrick Murphy (U.S.A.) - West Coast Premiere
"The Fourth," written by Justin Varava and directed by Jared Varava (U.S.A.) - West Coast Premiere
"Replaced," written and directed by Sean Carter (U.S.A.) - World Premiere
"Morphin(e)," written and directed by Alex Ranarivelo (U.S.A.) - World Premiere
"Twitvh," written and directed by Leah Meyerhoff (U.S.A.) - West Coast Premiere
"The West Bank Story," directed by Ari Sandel (U.S.A.) - West Coast Premiere
"7:35 In the Morning (7:35 de la Manana)," directed by Nacho Vigalondo (Spain) 2005 Academy Award Nominee
"Candy Viola," directed by Fabio Simonelli (Italy)
ANIMATED SHORT FILMS
"Gopher Broke," written and directed by Jeff Fowler (U.S.A.) - 2005 Academy Award Nominee
"Lorenzo," story, production design and direction by Mike Gabriel (U.S.A.) - 2005 Academy Award Nominee
"The Meaning Of Life," written and directed by Don Hertzfeldt (U.S.A.)
"Catching Kringle," written by Adam Himoff directed by Jeff Wadlow (U.S.A.)
SHORT SUBJECT DOCUMENTARY FILMS
"Viva Morrissey!" written by Jonathan Miertschin directed by Jessica Hundley / Jonathan Miertschin (U.S.A.) - West Coast Premiere
"The Hot 8," written by Luis Macias and directed by Greg Samata (U.S.A.)
DOCUMENTARY FILMS
"Between The Bridges," written and directed by Adam Ross (U.S.A.) - World Premiere
"The Hard Straight," directed by Goro Toshima (U.S.A.)
"Sonny Boy," directed by Soleil Moon Frye (U.S.A.) - Los Angeles Premiere
TBA - Untitled Boxing Documentary, Work In Progress (U.S.A.) Special Screening
"Mad Hot Ballroom," written by Amy Sewell directed by Marilyn Agrelo (U.S.A.) – West Coast Premiere
NARRATIVE FEATURE FILMS
"Four Eyed Monsters," directed by Susan Buice & Arin Crumley (U.S.A.) - Los Angeles Premiere
"Ellecktra," directed by Rudolph Mestdagh (Belgium) – West Coast Premiere
"Apres Vous," directed by Pierre Salvadori (France) - Los Angeles Premiere
"Hooligans," directed by Lexi Alexander, written by Lexi Alexander, Dougie Brimson, Josh Shelov (USA)

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NATIONAL



Former Iditarod musher convicted of animal cruelty

By The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A three-time musher in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race has been found guilty of animal cruelty for failing to care for his dogs.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough animal control officers seized 28 of David Straub's 32 dogs in October after citizens complained. Officers described the animals as dehydrated, with some emaciated to the point their spines and hip bones showed through their fur.

One dog died at the shelter in November of illness; nine more had to be euthanized.

Four-time Iditarod champion Martin Buser testified against Straub. He said Straub asked him for help after the dogs were seized, and Buser visited the shelter to see them.

"I was appalled," Buser testified. "It does not take a few days of not feeding your animals to look like that. It takes many months of neglect."

Friends said Straub tried to care for his dogs, but had money problems. Steve Heinrich and two other friends testified they gave Straub meat and money for dog food. However, they agreed that some of Straub's dogs were too thin.

"His only problem was that he was trying to have a 30-dog team on a 20-dog-team budget," Heinrich said.

At the conclusion of the nonjury trial, Palmer Magistrate David Zwink fined Straub \$300 for violating borough code.

Straub later vowed to rebuild his kennel.

A three-time Iditarod entrant, Straub finished the race for the first time in 2002, when he received the Red Lantern prize awarded to last-place finishers.

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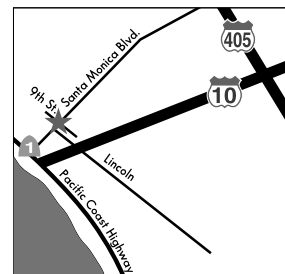
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NATIONAL

Olympic bomber avoids death penalty

BY JAY REEVES

Associated Press Writer

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Eric Rudolph has agreed to plead guilty to setting off a deadly bomb at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and three other blasts in a deal that allows the anti-government extremist to escape the death penalty, Justice Department officials said Friday.

"The many victims of Eric Rudolph's terrorist attacks ... can rest assured that Rudolph will spend the rest of his life behind bars," Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said.

Hearings have been scheduled in Birmingham and Atlanta Wednesday, where Rudolph is scheduled to admit his guilt. The plea deal calls for four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole. Rudolph had faced a possible death sentence.

Defense lawyer Bill Bowen did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

Rudolph, thought to be a follower of a white supremacist religion that is anti-abortion, anti-gay and anti-Semitic, was charged with carrying out a series of blasts in Georgia and Alabama in the late 1990s.

One woman was killed and more than 100 people were injured in the Olympic blast, caused by a bomb in a backpack. In the next two years, he allegedly set off bombs at a lesbian nightclub in Atlanta

and at two abortion clinics — one in Alabama and one in Atlanta. The Alabama abortion clinic blast killed an off-duty police officer and critically injured a nurse.

Rudolph, 38, then slipped away into the mountains of western North Carolina, where the former soldier used survivalist techniques to live off the land for more than five years — all while being on the FBI's list of 10 Most Wanted fugitives. Then in May 2003, he was captured after being seen scavenging for food near a grocery store trash bin in Murphy, N.C.

Jeff Lyons, whose wife was severely injured and left blind in one eye in the Alabama bombing, said he and his wife were "extremely disappointed" in the life sentences for Rudolph. "As they say, let the punishment fit the crime. That was a death sentence," he said.

But Lyons said he understood prosecutors' reasons for agreeing to a plea deal since Rudolph directed them to the explosives — something that likely would not have happened had the case gone to trial.

Word of the deal came amid reports that federal agents have been in western North Carolina this week detonating explosive materials in the region where Rudolph spent his time on the lam.

Under the deal, Lyons said Rudolph confirmed the location of about 250 pounds of dynamite that he had hidden in the mountains of western North Carolina.

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NATIONAL



Delta to share data to aid health officials

BY LESLIE MILLER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Although privacy experts worry about the government gathering personal information on airline travelers, Delta Airlines is handing over electronic lists of passengers from some flights to help stop the spread of deadly infectious diseases.

The lists will allow health officials to notify more quickly those travelers who might have been exposed to illnesses such as dengue fever, flu, plague, SARS and biological agents, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told a congressional panel this week.

"The government is seeing that massive amounts of data can be useful for any number of purposes," said Marcia Hofmann, an attorney for the Electronic Privacy Information Center. "There need to be some regulations or restrictions on how airlines can share passenger information like this."

Passenger lists already are sent electronically to the Customs Bureau, which checks to see if any potential terrorists are aboard flights bound for the United States. The CDC wants access to the same lists, but only for flights coming from places with an outbreak of an infectious disease or for those that carried a passenger later found to be infected.

Now, the CDC must gather passenger

names by hand from flight manifests, Customs declarations and other sources, which can take time, said Dr. Anne Schuchat, acting director of the CDC's National Center for Infectious Diseases.

Electronic access to all the information would help considerably in speeding the notification process, she told the House aviation subcommittee during a hearing about preventing the spread of diseases through the global aviation system.

Schuchat said Delta has agreed to share the information on a test basis.

Infectious illnesses have long been transported by airplanes. With the outbreak of more virulent strains of communicable diseases and the volume of international travel, U.S. health officials worry planes could greatly hasten the spread.

Last week President Bush signed an executive order authorizing the government to quarantine people to deal with any outbreak of new strains of flu, including "bird flu," a particularly lethal variation of influenza now found in Southeast Asia.

CDC aims to prevent a pandemic in the United States through surveillance, early detection and swift response, Schuchat said. Rapidly tracking down exposed airline passengers is part of that effort.

An airline representative said the industry supports the CDC's goal but has concerns about data privacy, incompatible computer systems and questions about whether other nations will reciprocate.



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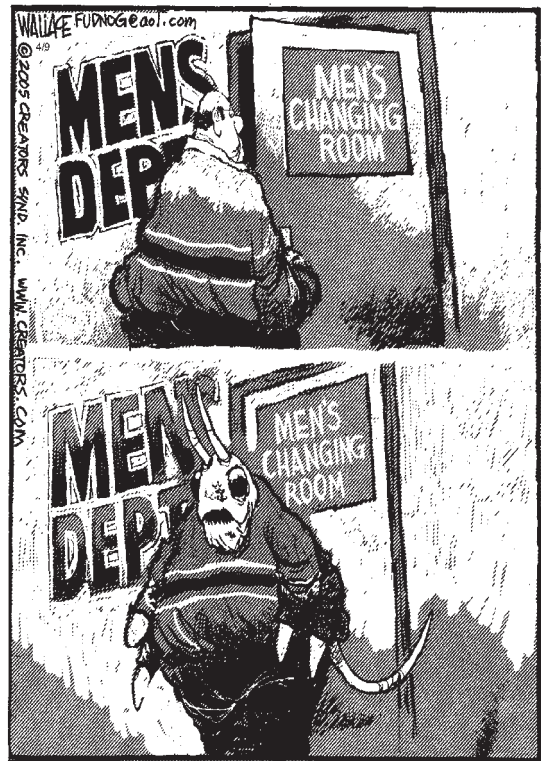


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44 Some wines

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