

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

12 15 17 19 44
Meganumber: 18
Jackpot: \$12 Million

FANTASY 5

12 13 22 27 39

DAILY 3

Daytime: 9 2 2
Evening: 2 0 5

DAILY DERBY

1st: 10 Solid Gold
2nd: 07 Eureka!
3rd: 02 Lucky Star

RACE TIME: 1:43.27

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Train conductor Patrick Phillips, 52, won \$8.5 million in an out-of-court settlement in February with Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway, which was involved in a collision with a freight train in 2002. Phillips suffered a mild concussion in the crash, which he said then triggered his sudden desire to become a serious alcoholic (leading to his eventual dementia), whereas he said his drinking had previously been under control.

■ Jimmy Dean Watkins pleaded guilty in Fort Worth, Texas, in January for shooting his estranged wife to death and wounding her boyfriend, and was sentenced to four months in prison for the killing and 15 years for the wounding. (The jury found that he had acted against the wife with partially excusable "sudden passion" after discovering her with the boyfriend, but that shooting the boyfriend was more deliberate.)

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 104th day of 2005.
There are 261 days left in the year.

On April 14, 1865, President Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth while attending the comedy "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater in Washington. (Lincoln died the following morning.)

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.

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MTBE attorneys confront Council

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — The legal team that helped City Hall win hundreds of millions of dollars in a landmark water-contamination settlement demanded payment from the City Council on Tuesday, bringing into public light a case headed for court if parties can't agree on how much they should be paid.

Lawyers Fred Baron, Duane Miller and Vick Sher have hired Santa Monica-based lawyer Marshall B. Grossman to help them recover more than \$60 million they claim City Hall owes for work they did helping to secure a new water-treatment plant and a multi-million dollar cash settlement for Santa Monica from oil companies. Those were the spoils procured in an MTBE case

launched after the city's water supply was tainted by errant oil companies.

City Hall in 2000 sued 18 oil companies that allowed methyl tertiary-butyl ether, a gasoline additive, to seep into the groundwater in 1996. The contamination forced the closure of five of Santa Monica's 11 drinking-water wells.

All of the oil companies agreed to settle the lawsuits rather than go

to court, paying City Hall more than \$120 million. Three of the major oil companies also agreed to pay for the design, construction and maintenance of a water-treatment plant at Charnock Well Field, the city's main water source, located in West Los Angeles. The plant has not been valued, but sources estimate it

See **LAWYERS**, page 6

Homicide trial set to resume in late April

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN LA — The Santa Monica homeless man representing himself in a murder trial has had his case postponed until April 29 so he may attempt to provide the court with documents proving he had an alibi.

David Thomas Wright was charged with murder for allegedly killing Aviva Labbe, a then-20-year-old woman who authorities found dead on June 14, 1998. Labbe was found lying face down in a walkway on the 200 block of Hill Street at a vacant Santa Monica home.

Labbe's murder had been classified as a "cold case" and remained unsolved for nearly four years until a sampling of Wright's DNA linked him in 2002 to the murder through the U.S. Department of Justice's database system, authorities said. Convicted felons are required to give a DNA sample, which puts them in the database for authorities to periodically check.

Wright, 49, was found in the California state prison system serving a six-year sentence for the battery of a Santa Monica police officer during an unrelated inci-

See **TRIAL**, page 7

Growing season



Kim Calvert/Special to the Daily Press

The majority of Christine Emerson Reed Park at 1133 Seventh St. has been fenced off until the first week of August to re-seed the lawn areas. Temporary fencing surrounds the north and south areas of the park, as well as a circular lawn near the community rooms. All buildings, tennis courts and walkways are still accessible to the public.

\$6 million school funding deal approved

SM residents to take part in Sacramento rally April 28

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — A controversial and precedent-setting agreement between city officials and school supporters that will guarantee tens of millions of dollars for local schools is a done deal.

Nearly a year after City Council members promised to

dedicate at least \$6 million to the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, the agreement was approved on Tuesday. The agreement obligates City Hall to give the school district \$6 million annually for the next five years.

"This (agreement) is, in many ways, one of our crowning jewels," said Councilman Richard Bloom. "But I do see a truly dark

side to doing this. There are districts all throughout the state which can not do it. We have haves and have-nots, and the difference is dramatic and depressing. If we are truly a progressive community, we must believe in good public education, not only in Santa Monica, but all over the state."

Under the agreement, City Hall

See **AGREEMENT**, page 8

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A brisk walk works, Aquarius

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)
★★★ Let down your anchor this morning, as surprising news could shake up the status quo. Call upon insight and solitude to find answers. You might not understand where others are coming from. You aren't the only one. Tonight: Mosey on home.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ What starts out as topsy-turvy reverses itself given space and time. In fact, you might be quite delighted by the outcome. Stay forthright and direct. Return calls. Listen to the other side. Surprises will happen if you relax. Tonight: Socialize.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ Know when to take an inactive role. You still might need to say "no" or establish boundaries. Financial wheeling and dealing could only cause trouble. Seek different types of solutions. Find an expert if need be. Tonight: Listen to another's vision.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Despite an early misunderstanding, you emerge all smiles and ready to conquer your world. Others give you some unusual feedback. You might not have all the answers. Loosen up and lighten up. More people depend on you than you realize. Tonight: As you wish.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★ Put a stop to confusion and gossip by not playing a role in what is going on. You could see a situation very differently given time and space. Let a partner give you his or her side of events. Whether you agree or not might not be important. Tonight: Get some extra R and R.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Visualize more of what you want from a personal situation. Make sure you get what you desire through sharing. Sometimes a close associate might not understand what you are saying. Be creative in sharing. Tonight: Off to a ballgame.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ In order to accomplish what you want, you must no longer delegate but assume the reins of control. You might be delighted by what the mix of flexibility and ingenuity could bring. Allow others to share more with you. Tonight: Out and about.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Listen to another perspective. Better yet, evaluate many different points of view. What happens and how you see your life could change dramatically if you are open. Ask for an expert. Demand thoroughness. Tonight: Where there is music.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Sometimes you don't have all the answers, even if you would like to. Think before you jump to a conclusion. In fact, you'd be smart to wash your hands of a situation. Others believe they know better. Tonight: Play it low key.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ You can be sure to encounter confusion when you least expect it. Confirm opinions. Ask questions. Know what you are looking for. Others want to lead. Why not? You get to see another's true colors. Tonight: Say "yes." Don't make anything complicated.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ You will be told that you don't know everything. Perhaps you might have been acting a lot surer of yourself than you realized. Allow others to take the lead. Put your feet up, if only symbolically. Tonight: A brisk walk works.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ You are all smiles. You seem to have answers, solutions and energy. Help others through momentary confusion by sharing more of yourself. Add a touch of lightness through helping someone see the humor of a situation. Tonight: Be more playful.



Santa Monica Daily Press

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Venice considers secession

By Daily Press staff

How can Venice control development, maintain a mix of incomes and ethnic groups, promote the arts, and remain a unique and vital community?

Find out from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 16, at the United Methodist Church, 2210 Lincoln Blvd.

The day will be filled with short panel presentations followed by questions and discussion.

Panelists and topics include:

- Arnold Springer — City of Venice and secession and annexation movements
- Suzanne Thompson — Neighborhood councils
- Michael Feinstein — Creating a Santa Monica County
- Bill McNally — Recent efforts to restore Venice cityhood
- Jim Smith — Presenter

Professor Arnold Springer is a Venice historian and author; Suzanne Thompson was elected president of the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council in 2004; Michael Feinstein is a former mayor of Santa Monica; William McNally is an activist/writer/publisher and cityhood advocate; Jim Smith is the treasurer of the Venice Neighborhood Council.

Call (310) 399-8685 for more information on the event, or e-mail jsmith@freevenice.org.

Family-oriented Earth Day celebration on the Promenade

By Daily Press staff

In honor of the 35th anniversary of Earth Day, the Promenade between Broadway and Santa Monica Boulevard will transform into an EcoFest April 16 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. with 60 exhibits, plus a solar-powered stage featuring children-oriented programming and award-winning musicians.

Activities for kids include demonstrations of the Yo Stick, face painting and exotic wildlife.

Exhibits include Star Eco-Station's wild animals, Whale Alliance's model whale, Heal the Bay and Ballona Wetlands nature exhibits, plus kids will have a chance to sit in the driver's seat of a Big Blue Bus powered by natural gas.

An estimated 15,000 people on the Promenade will see Toyota Prius and Honda hybrid vehicles, solar-energy systems, environmentally responsible investing, organic gardening, energy-efficient appliances, hemp and organic cotton clothing displays, and much more.

For more information or to volunteer, see www.EarthDayLA.org or call (888) 295-8372.

Church youth group heading to the hills

By Daily Press staff

The First United Methodist Church will host a dinner and musical featuring its youth group April 23 at 6 p.m. to support senior high youth group members who are planning a work team project. The production will include songs from Disney productions.

Proceeds from the event will go to support 10 youth traveling to Lee County, Va., this summer to serve with the Appalachia Service Project and repair homes in the Appalachian Mountains.

Suggested donations are \$35 for adults, \$10 for children and \$80 for a family. Tickets are available by calling (310) 393-8258 before April 21.

CORRECTION — In the April 12 edition of the Santa Monica Daily Press, there were errors in the story regarding Santa Monica High School band director Carl Stephen Hammer. Hammer is on unpaid leave during his court proceedings. The alleged sex crime with which he is being charged took place on June 6, 2004.



SURF REPORT

Thursday we have a swath of NW wind swell from the Gulf of Alaska due to fill in across the region, and it will build more on Friday. Thursday should only be a waist-high day almost everywhere; however, west-facing breaks are expected to see the best size, although with peakier conditions.

Today the water is:

57°

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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The Q Line

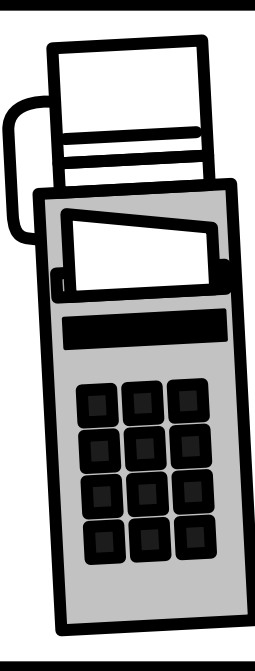
It appears that all is quiet this week here in this city by the sea. So, this week, the Q-Line question is: "What's on your mind? What is the biggest issue facing Santa Monica and how should it be handled?"

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



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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Victim's wife not pleased with coverage

Editor:

I am writing this letter to express my discontent with the comments that I continue to read in the Santa Monica Daily Press regarding the murder of my husband, and father of three, Hector Bonilla. In various stories you continue to refer to Hector and Jonathan as "gang members" or victims of a "gang-related" act of violence. This portrayal of my husband is damaging to his character. I do not want my children or anyone who knew Hector to remember him by this negative portrayal.

It saddens me to have my son come home from school asking, "Who is Limpy?" In a report dated March 15, 2005, in the Santa Monica Daily Press, my husband Hector was referred to as "Limpy." In my home, Hector was never referred to as "Limpy." Hector was always known as "dad" to his three children, and I occasionally called him "Hec" for short. My family never called him "Limpy," and I detest your portrayal of him in the press in this way.

I understand that it is more sensational for the media to categorize the murder of both Hector and Jonathan as a "gang-related" homicide. By doing this it sends the message that somehow, somehow Hector and Jonathan did something to deserve being killed. The impact of labeling this crime as "gang-related" not only hurts my family, it also sends the message that only gang members are affected and the rest of the community should not be concerned. This news angle misses the fact that many children, youth and adults have been affected by this crime and some of us will carry the pain and trauma for the rest of our lives. Would our society care more about the violence that has affected us if the newspaper headlines read, "Two innocent youth gunned down at a party?"

In addition, the negative portrayal of both Hector and Jonathan as "gang members" is a racial stereotype that is damaging to my family. Unfortunately, many Latino and African American youth die violently in our county, but many of these youth are not gang members. In 1998 a series of shootings took the lives of youth in Santa Monica but most of those victims were not gang involved. In a double homicide in 1998, Anthony and Mark Juarez were killed and they did not even live in Los Angeles, much less belong to a gang. But their murders are still labeled as "gang-related." This desensitizes the general public from the crisis that plagues low-income communities who suffer because of the neglect of youth violence.

The fact of the matter is that my husband Hector was an innocent victim to violence that has affected this community for a long time. Hector was not "gang banging" and was not armed with any type of weapon at the time of the incident, as verified by police. Both Hector and I attended the 40th birthday party of a family member and never in our minds did we think something so terrible could happen in our own community. It is hard enough to have to witness the murder of my husband in cold blood. I should not have to be dealing with defending the character of my husband in the press.

The murder of Hector and Jonathan raises the total to 31 of youth that have been killed as a result of gun violence since 1989 in Santa Monica. Most of these murders have been of Latino and African American youth who were residents of the Pico neighborhood. Many in the community feel that the lives of low-income youth of color are not as important to city leaders. To this day our city government has not offered a reward for witnesses to come forward with information and to help bring closure to this crime. As a mother of three who will have to deal with the pain of losing Hector for the rest of my life I have a few requests:

Please treat Hector and Jonathan fairly in the press. Both of these individuals were not committing any crime when they were murdered. Our families are directly affected by how you characterize our loved ones. We expect the police to provide the same amount of attention to this crime as it has to the murder of tourists and victims who are not young Latino or African American. I want to acknowledge the Santa Monica Police Department for not categorizing the murder of Hector as "gang-related."

Finally, I want to thank all of you in the community that have made a financial contribution to help my family in this time of need. I have set up a trust fund to assist my three children in attaining the future educational support that both Hector and I were working hard to provide. Please send contributions to:

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That's me in the corner, still losing my religion

NEWS ON THE EDGE

BY RON SCOTT SMITH



Editor's note: Ron Scott Smith is on vacation. This column originally ran in the Sept. 22, 2002, edition of the Santa Monica Daily Press.

I had to see what the fuss was about, so the other day that was me in the corner, the corner of Temple and Grand downtown, getting a firsthand look at the new monument to the life and works of Jesus. The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels occupies two full city blocks, but there's something about it I can't quite put my finger on. It's all straight lines and strong walls. They proudly announce that the elements making up the structure total 151 million pounds, with each of the magnificent bronze doors weighing in at 25,000 pounds. What an amazing and transcendent life Jesus lived, to be revered by millions of us — 25,000 pounds per door and 2000 years later. To be honored with such monumental opulence, I wonder what he'd say.

The church opened for business on Sept. 2, and the timing was probably not the best, this being not so good a year for Catholics. The \$200 million spent to build it has suddenly become money that may have been better used settling lawsuits brought by countless faithful, who as innocent children were sexually violated by robed men of God in the back rooms of parishes across this nation. And now scores of social workers on the LA Catholic payrolls are being laid off in an effort to close the huge debt rung up by said lawsuits and said building costs. Hopefully none of those newly unemployed will end up with the thousands already sleeping in the imposing shadows of the new church in cardboard boxes on the street.

Houston, we have a problem. New York, LA, Boston, too. Cardinal Law, your Boston. Name a city, any city. Miami, Kabul, London, Ramallah, Paris ... we have a problem. Baghdad, you don't even want to know. What's the problem? It's the religion, stupid.

It's been a bad year for religion everywhere on earth.

Things like guys flying commercial jetliners into buildings in the name of Allah. Things like terrorist boys and girls strapping bombs to their chests and blowing themselves — and anybody else who may have happened to be enjoying a slice of pizza at any given moment in any town in Israel — to smithereens — in the name of the same Allah. These lost young humans do this because the bad guys on the other side — in the name of their own holy Moses — have stolen their homeland, so they say, and use the even more

lethal state-sanctioned violence to hold onto it. Meanwhile, Indian Hindus and Pakistani Muslims aren't being real neighborly or divine, as they sit with fingers on triggers of fully loaded nuclear arsenals aimed at each other to protect and defend self-assured visions of their respective Gods.

But this worldwide mayhem in the name of religion isn't anything new, as Christians, not without their share of shame and blame, can attest. The blood they spilled and walked through in the crusades long ago is not yet forgotten and in fact still motivates the radical part of Islam in their holy Jihad to destroy the "infidels." How does it feel to be an infidel?

Bush has declared the current global crisis as a battle between good and evil, setting the stage for the kind of intercivizational holy war that Muslim leaders like Bin Laden appear to be longing for. The true-believing Al Qaeda suicide soldiers don't need fuel added to their fire by the true-believing Texan.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, Christian leaders and prophets like Falwell and Robertson preach to millions of followers in their own Taliban-like style. In the name of God they lash out at any lifestyle deemed to be outside their parameters, their God-given parameters. In fact, they claimed the 9/11 atrocities were brought on by the decadence befalling our left-leaning campuses and our barely leaning inner cities. God was mad at the adulterers and the gays, the thieves and the shiftless, and so this was His response. Under public fire, those hateful words were taken back, but how far back?

Somewhere tonight, Jesus and Muhammad, Moses and Buddha too, may be weeping for their righteous, good-intentioned minions for the sorry mess they're making out of this planet in their name. They, if anyone, know where the road paved with good intentions too often leads.

My road led me home from that grand new cathedral last Sunday, past an old auto repair shop on Pico. Instead of 25,000 pound bronze ones, it had those cheap metal rollup doors where broken-down cars once pulled in for new water pumps or timing chains. Those doors were painted over with these words: "Iglesia de Dios." It was a church. Every bit the church as the bigger one a few blocks back and would Jesus have loved it every bit as much?

It made me think about the giant new Cathedral one last time, and now I could put my finger on what was bothering me about it.

It looked for all the world like a fortress, ready for battle.

(Ron Scott Smith can be reached at edgeofthewest@aol.com. His folk-rock band, Earth to Joe, appears at Rusty's on the Pier on Friday, April 15, at 8:30 p.m.)



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Business

The hidden cost in your mutual funds



GUEST COMMENTARY

BY ROB JUPILLE

Mutual funds are arguably one of the best ways for small investors to participate in the stock market. They provide access to professional money managers, allow smaller dollar contributions than would be required to build a diversified portfolio of individual stocks, and are typically very liquid, providing flexibility.

All of the advantages of mutual funds do come at a cost, however. One cost, in particular, can have a major impact on your fund's performance but is invisible to many individuals and, quite frankly quite a few "professional" financial advisors. This is the cost associated with the trading done by the fund manager.

In order to generate returns, mutual fund managers buy and sell stocks during the year. Fund managers, just like individuals, pay brokerage fees when they trade. What might surprise you is that, because of the large number of shares they trade, mutual funds often pay more in trading costs than you or I would.

Here's an example: If XYZ stock is selling for \$60 and you want to buy 200 shares, you call your broker and you'll get 200 shares of XYZ at \$60 each.

If a fund manager, managing a multi-billion dollar fund, wants to buy XYZ, he or she may need to purchase 1 million shares. When that order gets put into the market for that many shares, what do you think happens to the price of XYZ? That's right, because the fund is buying so many shares, the price of the stock goes up. It's a case of basic supply-and-demand economics.

So if XYZ is selling at \$60 and the manager needs 1 million shares, as the market climbs, he or she may get a few at

\$60, some more at \$60.50, a few more at \$61, etc. John Bogle, chairman of Vanguard Funds and a noted mutual fund expert, estimates that each time a fund buys or sells a stock, the average cost of this price increase is 6/10 of one percent.

So what does that mean in actual dollars, and how can you check the costs of the funds you own? Actually, it's a pretty simple process. If you have access to a service such as Morningstar, look for your fund's "turnover ratio." This number tells you how many times the manager essentially bought and sold the entire portfolio over the course of the year.

Since each purchase and sale incurs .6 percent in costs, that means that for every 100 percent turnover in a fund, the cost to you, the investor, is 1.2 percent. Since the average U.S. stock fund carries approximately a 110 percent turnover ratio, you will pay 1.32 percent per year in transaction costs over and above the other expenses listed for a fund, according to Bogle.

In order to be a successful mutual fund investor, you need to be aware of not only the return on your funds but equally important, the costs associated with your funds. That means that when researching mutual funds, if the returns are the same for the funds you are interested in, look for the fund with the lower turnover rate. After all, at the end of the day, it's about not how much your fund made, it's about how much you got to keep after expenses.

As for whether there are specific funds that I can recommend because they have lower expenses, the short answer is yes. But which ones would depend on your individual situation. What should you stay away from? That's a little more difficult because that depends on your entire portfolio and your individual goals.

(If you'd like a free report of mutual fund expenses, call 310-587-3370 or e-mail at rjupille@rtjfinancial.com, and reference this article. Rob Jupille is the president of RTJ Financial in Santa Monica.)

SANTA MONICA BUSINESS BRIEFS

Parachini to head RAND intelligence center

By Daily Press staff

John Parachini, a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, has been appointed director of the RAND Intelligence Policy Center, RAND President and CEO James A. Thomson announced this week.

The center conducts research and analysis on international political, cultural and military developments to help decision-makers in the defense and intelligence communities better understand emerging and continuing threats. It was created in 2001 and is part of the RAND National Security Research Division.

"John Parachini's extensive experience in counterterrorism, intelligence and nuclear proliferation research will prove invaluable to RAND's national security clients," Thomson said.

Parachini's research at RAND includes reports on: the 9/11 Commission's recommendations to combat terrorism and promote national security strategies; the threat of chemical and biological warfare following the anthrax attacks of 2002; and the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups.

Before joining RAND, Parachini served as executive director of the Washington office of the Monterey Institute of International Studies' Center for Nonproliferation, where he led and conducted research on terrorism, nonproliferation, arms control and Asian security.

Parachini holds a M.B.A. from Georgetown University and received a master's degree in international relations from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

Parachini replaces Greg Treverton, who has served as acting director of the Intelligence Policy Center since last October. Treverton is associate dean for research at the Pardee RAND Graduate School and a RAND senior policy analyst.

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world.

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LOCAL

City hired oil-company attorneys for defense

LAWYERS, from page 1

might be worth more than \$220 million.

Grossman came to City Hall on Tuesday and spoke for three minutes during the public comment portion of the City Council meeting. He had several large display boards intended to disclose to the public “A Tale of Two Cities,” where the firm in which he is a name partner — Alschuler, Grossman, Stein & Kahan — is alleging City Hall has used his clients’ services in the record-breaking settlement and then refused to pay them for their work.

According to the lawyers’ contract, City Hall was to pay the lawyers 25 percent of the value of the settlement, up to \$250 million. The attorneys were entitled to another 5 percent of the next \$100 million, and 10 percent of any portion of the settlement in excess of \$350 million, attorneys said.

City Hall admits the outside lawyers who helped in the case have not been paid for their involvement in the settlement, but not because the city has refused to pay them.

City Attorney Marsha Moutrie said she sent the attorneys a letter after the settlement inviting them to bill City Hall at an hourly rate for their work in the case and clearly indicated it would not bar them from their fight to secure more through the courts.

“The city has offered to pay its former counsel the reasonable value of services without prejudice to their contingency claim, which means they could receive reasonable value and continue their court fight to obtain more,” Moutrie said. “I’m disappointed that Mr. Baron and the city’s other former lawyers are attempting to bully and disparage their former client (City Hall).

“However, I trust that the matter will be resolved based on the law and the facts through the judicial process.”

Baron previously said that since his clients agreed to work on a contingency basis, meaning they would collect from the settlement, they had no intentions to charge for hours and rates.

City Councilman Richard Bloom on Tuesday asked how much exactly Grossman’s clients wanted to settle the case. Grossman didn’t respond with an exact amount.

Grossman said part of the reason he couldn’t give an exact amount is because the water-treatment facility has not yet been appraised. He added that part of the his clients’ payment was based on the

Big money

Since levying the suit in 2000, City Hall has negotiated more than \$120 million in separate settlements related to MTBE contamination in its drinking-water wells. Here’s a breakdown of the significant pay-outs:

- Ultramar Ltd. — \$4.5 million
- Atlantic Richfield — \$9.75 million
- Conoco Phillips — \$6 million
- Conoco Inc. — \$4.5 million
- Lyondell Chemical — \$3.55 million
- WinAll Oil Co. — \$350,000
- Shell, ChevronTexaco and ExxonMobil — \$92.5 million, plus an undetermined amount to build a new water-treatment plant in West LA, which the city owns. It’s estimated to cost as much as \$220 million.

value of the water-treatment facility, according to the lawyers’ contract.

Meanwhile, the same law firm that helped defend the oil companies in the water-contamination case has now been hired by City Hall to defend it in the legal-fee case.

“The city has created a terrible conflict situation by hiring the same lawyers to fight with my client who represented the oil companies against the city in the underlying litigation,” Grossman said. “In doing so, they have a road map on how to do battle with every other city in America facing MTBE contamination.

“Those documents will now be used to defend claims of MTBE contamination filed by dozens of other cities across the state.”

Andrea Sheridan Ordin — an attorney with Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, one of the firms that worked on behalf of the oil companies during the water-contamination case and is now helping City Hall defend itself — said Grossman’s claim that city records could be used to help her firm defend oil companies is not true.

“It is one of the great strengths that law firms can represent a wide range of clients,” Ordin said. “Our firm represents nonprofits as well as oil companies.

“Every client has a right to confidentiality.”

Moutrie said on Wednesday that Ordin was hired on her merits as an attorney.

“We hired her not because she works for an oil company, we hired her because of her background in public service and her ethics,” she said.



CITY OF SANTA MONICA
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Youth Planning Forum

Thursday, April 21, 2005, at Santa Monica High School
6:30 p.m. Open House in Cafeteria
7:30 p.m. Program in Barnum Hall



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Padres: Estan invitados al foro de planificación de juventud el jueves, 21 de Abril, 2005, a las 6:30 p.m. para una recepción de proyectos de los estudiantes y a continuación una presentación a las 7:30 p.m. Este evento es parte del proyecto de la ciudad *Shape the Future 2025*, planeando el desarrollo de Santa Monica para los próximos 20 años. Para mas información, llame a Carmen Gutierrez al número (310) 458.8341.

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Dear Parents,

By now you have probably heard about and maybe been involved in the City of Santa Monica’s *Shape The Future 2025* and *Motion by the Ocean* projects. Over a two-year period, these projects are creating a community vision for the next 20 years and developing it into policies, known as the Land Use and Circulation Elements, that will guide building activity and influence how people get around the City in the future. An exciting component of the project is a special youth planning program involving Santa Monica children at all grade levels in every part of the City. Over 500 students are participating in the youth planning program citywide.

Please join us at the Youth Planning Forum on April 21 to view the display of students’ projects and hear what some of the students have to say about the City’s future. More information about *Shape the Future 2025* and *Motion by the Ocean* will be available at the Forum. We look forward to meeting you there!

Bitch!

Whine!

Complain!

Check Out the Question of the Week on Page 3 and let us hear what you have to say



LOCAL



Attorney: Murder suspect doing poor job of defending self

TRIAL, from page 1

dent, authorities said. In January of 2001, a jury found him guilty of battery, resisting arrest and failing to register himself as a sex offender. If proven guilty of Labbe's murder by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Ruth Ann Kwan, who is trying the case, Wright faces life in prison.

Sources close to the case didn't offer why Wright opted not to be represented by an attorney and to let a judge alone decide his case, especially since it's believed such circumstances would not work in his favor.

The three-week trial began March 21 and continued until Thursday, April 7, when Los Angeles Deputy District Ellen Aragon was prepared to make her closing remarks. Judge Kwan decided to postpone the trial until April 29 so a court-appointed investigator, working on behalf of Wright, can attempt to find any documents that might help prove Wright's innocence, such as records or receipts showing Wright was somewhere else when the murder occurred.

Court officials said April 29 will be the last day the prosecution or defense may present any new evidence in the case. After that, there may be some cross-examinations and closing remarks. Judge Kwan will then make a decision.

Wright was homeless and living on the streets of Santa Monica before being arrested. Sandie Richards, a reverend at the Church at Ocean Park who testified in the trial, said she knew of Wright, who frequently laid his possessions at the church, which is located across the street from the murder scene. She told him he would have to leave.

Blood from Labbe's bludgeoned head stained a white wall where her body was found, according to the Santa Monica Police Department.

During the autopsy, LA County supervising criminalist Dan Anderson testified in an earlier court proceeding that he found a foreign object inside Labbe's body. Upon further investigation, Anderson discovered that a beeping pager had been lodged in Labbe's rectum. It is unknown whether or not the beeper is

connected to Wright.

A key at the murder scene belonged to a motel on Lincoln Boulevard, where it was determined Labbe lived shortly before she was killed.

During the investigation, Santa Monica Police detectives spoke with Labbe's cousin, Leslie Tutnick, who at the time was Labbe's only local relative. Tutnick told police she was trying to help Labbe get through emotional distress. She also described Labbe as "someone desperately trying to get her act together," according to court testimony.

Aragon has previously said the details of Labbe's activities shortly before her death are unclear, although there had been a suggestion that she was prostituting herself.

Wright's former public defender, Leonard N. Garber, has been on "stand-by" during the trial, often shifting out of frustration in one of the juror's seats as Wright attempts to defend himself. Garber said he is Wright's legally appointed attorney through the California Bar Association who Wright fired last year, possibly for disagreeing with his decision to not have a jury trial.

Garber has said outside of the courtroom that Wright has done a poor job cross-examining the witnesses during trial. Wright asked the DNA expert how he was certain the semen and saliva samples taken from Labbe were from him and not from a dog, to which the witness explained that only human DNA is registered with the Justice Department's database.

Garber said although Wright's DNA samples were found on or near the victim's dead body, it doesn't prove he was responsible for the murder, since the semen could have been inside Labbe a few days before the murder took place.

Judge Kwan has been thorough in the trial and provided Wright with as many legal opportunities as possible to defend himself within the full spectrum of the law, sources said.

Wright was evaluated by three psychiatrists to determine whether he was competent to stand trial, let alone defend himself. Garber disagreed with the panel of psychiatrists, who found that Wright is competent.

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Rally to push for better education funding

AGREEMENT, from page 1

will double for the next five years the \$3 million it gives annually to the school district in ongoing funds, with a 2 percent to 4 percent annual adjustment based on inflation. The agreement also includes loopholes for extraordinary circumstances, and options for both sides to reassess and renew the deal.

A group of school and city leaders will meet in January 2007 to reassess the agreement. That group will decide whether to adjust the base funding by \$1 million, at most.

The deal was brokered on behalf of efforts by Community for Excellent Public Schools, which gave city officials

an ultimatum early in 2004, announcing they would attempt to change the city charter through a November ballot measure that, if approved by taxpayers, would have forced City Hall to give \$6 million to the school district indefinitely.

A majority of council members felt backed into a corner, but they agreed to a compromise that was reached behind closed doors and approved publicly.

In presenting the compromise to the City Council, City Manager Susan McCarthy — who negotiated the details with superintendent of schools John Deasy — said both sides made significant concessions. School interests gave up indefinite funding that likely would have continually increased, while City Hall

interests agreed to hand over the money without designating a new revenue source, something they previously had sought.

During the Tuesday City Council meeting, councilmembers said that although City Hall managed to provide financial relief to the schools for a designated period of time, funding public education was not the responsibility of the city, but the state.

With that point in mind, Shari Davis, CEPS co-chair, said she and other education supporters across the state will take part in "Caravan for Kids," rallies to be held on April 27 and April 28 to encourage better state funding for public education. The April 27 rally will be held local-

ly. Education supporters will then take the message to Sacramento on April 28.

In addition to taking their message on the road, Councilman Bobby Shriver also encouraged CEPS members to report periodically how the money City Hall has provided the schools is being used.

"Part of being accountable is showing taxpayers how the money is being used to try to build support for those who do not want to pay for public education," Shriver said.

To find out about the statewide public education rally, visit the Web site at www.caravanforkids.org.

Survey shows support for \$3 toll crossing at Mexican border

BY ELLIOT SPAGAT

Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO — Nearly 60 percent of people who enter the United States in the San Diego area would pay \$3 for a speedier trip from Mexico, according to a survey released Tuesday.

The poll by the San Diego Association of Governments and California Transportation Department found that 59.4 percent of border crossers would pay \$3 at a proposed port of entry in San Diego's Otay Mesa district. Another 14.2 percent would pay occasionally, while 26.5 percent would avoid the toll.

The findings are part of broader survey to measure the impact of lines at San Ysidro, the nation's busiest border crossing, and two other ports of entry in San Diego County. It comes as heightened security measures are stirring fears among local government officials and businesses that the economy will suffer if waits become intolerable.

A full report that assesses passenger and cargo traffic isn't expected until late summer but preliminary results offer an unusually detailed portrait of who is crossing the border. Surveyors interviewed 3,603 northbound travelers from

November through February as they waited to enter the United States. Among the findings:

■ Americans spent an average of \$144.32 while visiting Mexico, \$215.62 on holidays. Mexicans expected to spend an average of \$142.01 on their trips to the United States, \$168.28 on holidays.

■ More than 63 percent of Mexicans were visiting the United States to shop or run errands, 17.1 percent for work or business and 12.4 percent to see family or friends.

■ Nearly 56 percent of Americans went to Mexico to see family or friends,

12.7 percent to shop or run errands and 9.1 percent for work or business.

■ All but 5.6 percent of Mexicans stayed in San Diego County during their visit. About 70 percent planned to stay in the city of Chula Vista and other parts of south San Diego County.

■ Americans expected to wait 53 minutes to return home, while Mexicans figured it would take 48 minutes to cross.

The survey is the first to ask whether people would pay to cross the border in San Diego, said Marney Cox, chief economist at the San Diego Association of Governments.

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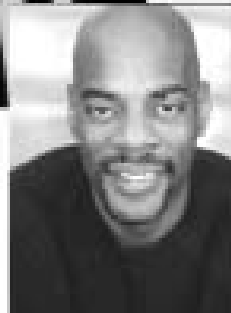
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Hang up please, and call me on the Internet

BY MATTHEW FORDAHL

AP Technology Writer

SAN JOSE — Before business trips, Suneet Tuli used to leave behind a long list of numbers where he could be reached and told important clients to ring him on his cell phone. The routine was cumbersome and cost him about \$800 a month in phone bills.

Now, he has local numbers for New York, London and Mexico City despite no permanent presence in any of those cities. The lines automatically forward to another number that seamlessly transfers to a cell phone with the best rates for wherever he happens to be.

Because Tuli's calls are routed mainly over the Internet instead of the traditional voice network, he can make changes to the elaborate setup simply by visiting a Web site. And he's cut his phone bill by about 80 percent.

"Even though it seems a little complicated, in my mind it's all straight," said Tuli, chief executive of DataWind Inc., a Montreal company that makes handheld Internet-browsing devices.

Tuli is in the Voice-over-Internet vanguard, relying ever more on a technology that is transforming what it means to make a phone call by converting our conversations into little packets of data that traverse the Internet.

After a decade of promises about how it would forever change communications, Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, is finally beginning to nudge the 130-year-old traditional phone network toward obsolescence.

It's inexpensive and, beyond mimicking traditional telephony, makes possible a wide range of new digital revolution-bestowing features and flexibility that people like Tuli are seizing on.

Yet the fact that Voice over Internet relies on data networks is both its greatest strength and biggest liability. Because it piggybacks on top of existing services, companies offering it need not dig up streets, roll trucks to homes or pay the same amount of regulatory fees as traditional telcos.

VoIP's amazing features and low costs come paired with questions of reliability and regulation that the industry and government are only beginning to address. And you need a broadband Internet connection, which is far from ubiquitous though more than half of U.S. households that go online now have one.

Mainly marketed as a supplement or replacement for traditional phones, VoIP is already used by millions worldwide, most of them in Japan. In the United States, the numbers are expected to grow from about 3 million today to some 27 million by 2008, according to the research firm IDC.

Vonage Holdings Corp., Tuli's VoIP provider, now serves more than 600,000 customers, adding 200,000 so far this year. And Skype, a European-based phenomenon that offers free PC-to-PC calling, says more than 2 million people use its service at any moment.

In just six months, Cisco Systems Inc.'s Linksys sold 1 million Internet phone kits that turn broadband connections into Internet phone jacks — a pace that beat the past launches of home routers and Wi-Fi devices.

VoIP startups with names like BroadVoice, SunRocket and VoicePulse now number in the dozens, joining market leader Vonage. Cable companies and traditional telephone companies are also scrambling for your VoIP business. Even standalone Internet providers such as America Online Inc. are jumping into the game.

In Voice over Internet's early days, hobbyists with microphones plugged into their PCs used to gab with other geeks. Reliability was shaky, call quality even worse.

Now, Voice over Internet users can chat through conventional telephones, paying about \$20 to \$30 a month for unlimited domestic long distance and add-ons that would cost extra in the traditional phone system. Most importantly, they can call, and receive calls from, the traditional phone system.

"As more homes have broadband, the odds are the user market will go up in proportion," said Jeff Pulver, an Internet telephony pioneer. "The question is who becomes the dominant providers: Is it going to be the incumbent cable operators, the incumbent phone companies or start-ups?"

Whether there's a broad public appetite for this new-

fangled phony remains unclear. Are current VoIP offerings attractive enough for people to want to unplug their reliable traditional phones for generally cheaper but more unreliable Internet telephones? A lot more convenience can be built into the technology.

Tuli says the quality of the VoIP calls has improved dramatically since he first tested out Internet telephony.

"Today, most people who call me have no idea," he says.

But reliability is a major issue for some who have switched. Because the calls ride over broadband connections, the phone is only as reliable as that service. And Internet phone companies have had their share of service outages.

Ed Ho, a Palo Alto entrepreneur who subscribed to Vonage to save on long-distance costs for his startup, ended up canceling the service because even occasional unreliability was unacceptable. He returned to his old phone company.

"The problem was when people tried to call, it's not like they get your voice mail. It would be a weird dead connection," he said.

"With all new technologies, we're going to go through some growing pains as an industry, and there are going to be problems," said Jeffrey Citron, Vonage's chief executive.

In fact, the majority of current Internet telephoners aren't too bothered by the uncertainties. But most haven't snipped their old phone company yet.

According to a 2004 Forrester Research survey, only 37 percent of VoIP subscribers canceled their traditional service. Sixty-three percent said they retained the line for either personal or business use.

New Jersey information technology worker Cliff Alligood kept his old line when he subscribed to AT&T Corp.'s CallVantage service. Now, he uses the Internet primarily for long distance calls — paying about \$35 a month for what previously cost him about \$150 monthly.

Alligood is also attracted to some of the service's more advance features — like being able to set up ad-hoc conference calls from a Web site — something he uses when his fantasy football league is holding its draft.

Still, it appears the industry could do a better job of communicating why the average person should care. A Forrester survey of 6,200 people in North America found 78 percent didn't know about VoIP even after it had been defined for them.

Another problem is that most services position themselves as replacements for regular phones — which are already inexpensive for most households. In one Forrester survey, 60 percent of respondents said they were satisfied with their existing service.

"People don't know about it. People don't necessarily care about it. And there's not necessarily a need for it," said Maribel Lopez, a Forrester Research analyst.

That's why the fledgling industry should focus on features, said Charles Giancarlo, chief technology officer at network equipment maker Cisco.

But the ultimate killer application that will draw tens of millions of people into the fold has yet to appear.

"The whole VoIP industry's been talking about 'It's the application, stupid' since 1998, and we've never delivered on that as an industry," said Bryan Martin, 8x8's chief executive. "I feel a little embarrassed still saying the same thing, but we're starting to see it happen."



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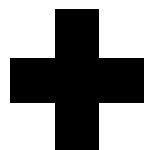
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INTERNATIONAL

Karzai wants a long-term security partnership with U.S.

BY ROBERT BURNS

AP Military Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan — President Hamid Karzai said Wednesday he is preparing a formal request to President Bush for a long-term security partnership that could include a permanent U.S. military presence.

At a joint news conference with U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, Karzai said he had consulted many of his country's citizens in recent weeks about "a strategic security relationship," with the United States that could help Afghanistan avoid foreign interference and military conflicts.

"The conclusion we have drawn is that the Afghan people want a long-term relationship with the United States," Karzai said. "They want this relationship to be a sustained economic and political relationship and most importantly of all, a strategic security relationship to enable Afghanistan to defend itself, to continue to prosper, to stop the possibility of interferences in Afghanistan."

Karzai said he has previously discussed this with Bush, but is now planning to formalize the request, but did not say when.

Rumsfeld was asked about America's willingness to offer security guarantees to Afghanistan and to establish permanent military bases here. He said this was a matter for President Bush to decide.

In Washington, White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Wednesday that "discussions are ongoing" with Karzai on future security arrangements but would not comment on Bush's position on a permanent U.S. military presence in Afghanistan or other long-term partnership. "I don't want to speculate about anything beyond that," McClellan said.

Rumsfeld described the military-to-military relationship between Afghanistan and the United States as good, and said it had grown and strengthened, but he was non-committal on whether Washington hoped to establish permanent military bases.

"What we generally do when we work with another country is what we have been doing. We find ways we

can be helpful, maybe training, equipment or other types of assistance. We think in terms of what we are doing rather than the question of military bases and that type thing," Rumsfeld said.

Rumsfeld was on an unannounced, whistlestop visit to the war-torn country before flying on to Pakistan later Wednesday for meetings with President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and other leaders.

He held talks with Musharraf in Rawalpindi, a city near the capital Islamabad, and indicated his appreciation of Pakistan's "critical cooperation in the global war on terrorism," according to an official Pakistan statement. Rumsfeld "reiterated the commitment of the United States to broadening and deepening its strategic relationship with Pakistan," the statement said.

Earlier, Rumsfeld met with U.S. troops in the south-eastern cities of Kandahar and Qalat, following Tuesday's visit to Iraq.

In Qalat, where U.S. troops are running what they call a provincial reconstruction team that provides civic aid as well as security for reconstruction projects, Rumsfeld visited U.S. soldiers on a morale boosting mission mixed with official talks on the future U.S. role in Afghanistan.

U.S. commanders told Rumsfeld in detailed briefing on their operations in Zabul Province along the Pakistan border that Taliban fighters still have some sanctuaries and support among the local population, but that U.S. forces operating with newly trained Afghan troops are making steady progress in eroding that support.

Qalat is in a region about 90 miles north of Kandahar and 30 miles from the Pakistan border where the Afghan government is struggling with a counternarcotics campaign while also fighting remnants of the Taliban militia that ruled the country before U.S. forces invaded in October 2001.

Rumsfeld's visit to Qalat underscored the importance the Pentagon places on the approach of using troops to facilitate reconstruction and civil affairs work.

He shook hands and posed for photographs with a group of soldiers in Qalat and thanked them for their work before flying back to Kandahar where he spoke to several hundred soldiers and answered questions from several of them.

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INTERNATIONAL



Cardinals resume preparations for elections

BY NIKO PRICE

Associated Press Writer

VATICAN CITY — Clutching rosaries, medals and flowers, thousands of people filed past the simple white marble tomb of Pope John Paul II on Wednesday, as the Vatican reopened the grottoes beneath St. Peter's Basilica for the first time since the pope died.

Some said they had come not only to pray for John Paul, but also to pray to him. Many Roman Catholics believe John Paul, who died April 2 at age 84, was a saint.

"I'm hoping maybe for a little miracle," said Myrna Palmer, 67, of Hagerstown, Maryland, in the eastern United States. "I'm praying to him that my husband gets his eyesight back."

Pilgrims lined up in the crisp morning air as early as 4 a.m., three hours before the grottoes were reopened.

"We are Catholics, and we had to see the pope one last time," said Angelo de Tommaso, a 30-year-old accountant who traveled overnight by bus from the southern Italian town of Ginosa to be among the first in line.

Pilgrims knelt before the grave to pray, and many handed religious articles to an usher, who touched them to the grave before handing them back.

Ushers kept the crowd moving quickly, even hurrying some people who knelt in prayer. Many of the faithful were disappointed that they didn't get a chance to spend more time in reflection.

"It was very quick. They were going, 'Avanti, avanti, avanti,'" said Jim Neil, 52, of Glasgow, Scotland. "Just a quick genuflection, a quick sign of the cross, and it was, 'Move on.'"

The tomb sits alone in an arched alcove to the right of the main altar of the central nave, a leafy potted lily behind it and a small red candle burning at the front. A marble relief of the Madonna and Child hangs on the wall above.

A rectangular white slab of marble with gray streaks marks the grave. On one line it bears his name carved with gold in Latin script: "IOANNES PAULUS PP II." (PP is the Latin abbreviation for pope.) And on another line are the dates of his 26-year pontificate using the Roman numerals for the month: "16 X, 1978-2 IV, 2005."

Underneath is the interlocking X and P — the monogram for Christ.

The grave lies just steps from the tomb traditionally believed to be that of the apostle Peter, the first pope.

Some of the cardinals who will sequester themselves inside Vatican City next week to choose a new pope prayed by the grave Tuesday evening in their last homage before the grottoes were reopened to the public.

Two-by-two, in crimson robes and tall white bishops' miters, they stood at the foot of the marble slab and bowed their heads.

On Wednesday, the cardinals resumed their preparations for the conclave, which begins Monday, and they

also met the Vatican diplomatic corps, which formally presented condolences.

"John Paul II wasn't content to just issue exhortations through his encyclicals, his pastoral letters, his homilies and other papal documents, but he wanted to be personally near each man; that's why he made pilgrimages around the world," said Ambassador Giovanni Galassi, the dean of the diplomatic corps and ambassador of San Marino.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, dean of the College of Cardinals, noted in his response that during John Paul's papacy, the Vatican doubled the number of countries with which it has diplomatic relations.

The cardinals are meeting daily to pray for guidance, to manage the mundane affairs of the church and contemplate the task ahead: choosing a new pope. It will be the first conclave for all but two of the 115 cardinals who will cast ballots.

If recent history is any guide, the voting may go quickly. Of the eight 20th century conclaves, no election went longer than five days, and two of them were completed on the second day. It took just eight ballots over three days to choose the relatively unknown archbishop of Krakow, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, in 1978.

On Friday, the first rounds of swearing-in ceremonies will take place ahead of the conclave for people who will be involved but aren't cardinals: priests who will hear confessions, doctors, housekeepers, technicians who will sweep the Sistine Chapel for bugs, the bus drivers who will transport the cardinals to and from the chapel each day, even the elevator operators who will take them up and down from the chapel.

The ceremonies to mourn the pope drew a stunning assemblage of religious and political leaders to Rome, as well as 3 million pilgrims, the Vatican said. Most left within a day of the burial.

The reopening of the grottoes was expected to draw a new wave of pilgrims.

The grave satisfies John Paul's wishes, written in the margin of his last will, that he be buried "in the bare earth, not a tomb."

His plot is one of only a few dug in the ground in the central nave of the grottoes, the vast series of low-ceilinged chapels and alcoves under the basilica where popes have been buried over the centuries.

Most of the popes are ensconced in aboveground marble sarcophagi, some of them like that of Benedict XV and Pius XI elaborately carved in the images of the man inside.

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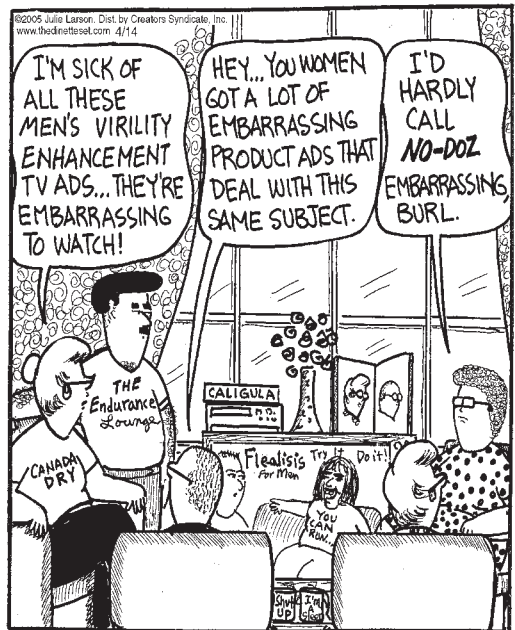
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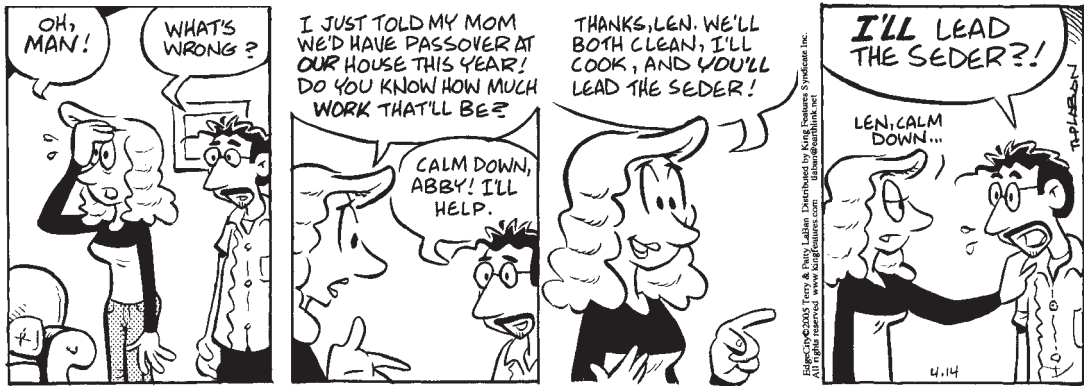


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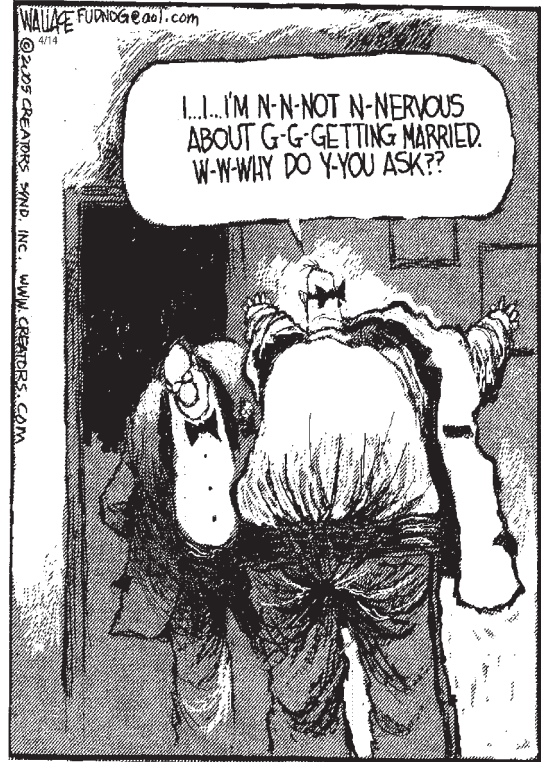


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- 42 Cartoon-based musical
- 43 Gets by

- 44 Fisherman's concern

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- 17 Banded rock

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

All charges dropped against rocker Doherty

By The Associated Press

LONDON — British prosecutors said they had dropped robbery and blackmail charges against Pete Doherty, troubled former frontman of rock band The Libertines.

Doherty, 25, sometime boyfriend of supermodel Kate Moss, was arrested in February after a reported fracas at a London hotel. He spent five nights in a police lockup before being released on bail under a nighttime curfew.

A spokeswoman for the Crown Prosecution Service said Tuesday the charges had been dropped because there was "insufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction."

Similar charges were dropped against another musician, Alan Wass, 23, who was arrested with Doherty.

Doherty, whose drug problems and brushes with the law have made headlines for months, was kicked out of The Libertines and set up a new group, Babyshambles.

He was widely reported to be dating Moss but British newspapers have carried conflicting reports about whether they were still together following his arrest.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Jeff Daniels called it a classic "Dumb & Dumber" moment.

During a live broadcast of Country Music Television's video awards show Monday, Daniels was performing a takeoff of Bob Dylan's 1965 "Subterranean Homesick Blues" film clip, arguably the

first music video, when his microphone went dead.

Viewers saw a stagehand walk out and replace the microphone while Daniels kept going with his act, in which he played a guitar and did a humorous monologue by stringing together the titles of popular country songs.

"I could hear it through the monitors, but then I see all the people who were going along with it, and they're just sitting there," said Daniels, who starred with Jim Carrey in the 1994 comedy film "Dumb & Dumber."

"All of a sudden here comes the stage manager. I'm going, 'OK, at least it wasn't my fault.' It was a 'Dumb & Dumber' moment."

Daniels, 50, whose screen credits also include "Terms of Endearment" and "The Purple Rose of Cairo," was able to finish his act with the new microphone.

NEW YORK — Who is ... Merv Griffin?

The "Jeopardy!" and "Wheel of Fortune" creator will be honored by the Museum of Television & Radio at its annual New York gala on May 26. The gala will be held at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel.

"Merv Griffin is a unique force in the world of entertainment and media, combining his talents as a singer, performer and television personality with his skill as a business leader and entrepreneur," museum President Stuart N. Brotman said in a statement Tuesday. "He's truly a living legend."

Griffin, 79, began as a 19-year-old radio singer. His pseudo-Cockney interpretation of "I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts" sold 3 million copies in 1950.

He was often a substitute host on the "Tonight Show" before Johnny Carson took over, and later had his own long-running daytime talk show.

FORT WORTH, Texas — Willie Nelson is returning to Fort Worth for his Fourth of July picnic — and he's bringing Bob Dylan with him.

His 32nd annual picnic will be at the 27-acre North Forty concert field, just east of Billy Bob's Texas. Last year's concert at the same site drew 19,000 people.

Los Lonely Boys will perform, and about 20 more acts will be announced over the next month.

"Willie takes such an interest," said Pam Minick, marketing director for Billy Bob's Texas, which helps organize the picnic. "He picks every artist according to who he likes, and he negotiates the contract. Last year he wrote on a brown paper bag how much each one was going to get."

This year's picnic will honor the memory of Rick Smith of Fort Worth-based Smith Music Group, who died in August of complications from a heart attack.

Smith, a friend of Nelson's, convinced the Texas country music singer that the picnic should be in the Fort Worth Stockyards. His brother, Randy Smith, now runs the Smith Music Group, also an organizer of this year's event.



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