

FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Initiative politically motivated, councilman says

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

It's an election year and in Santa Monica, that means issues are used to pit one group against another in a battle for power.

That's the take from some elected officials who believe a movement to fight historic designation of private homes north of Montana Avenue is nothing more than political maneuvering.

"Homeowners for Freedom of Choice" formed after the city paid \$29,000 for a historical survey of homes north of Montana Avenue, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the city. The report recommended creating six historical districts within the area.

Arguing that historical designation would limit their rights as property owners, the group is attempting to place an initiative on the November ballot that would require the city to get permission from every homeowner affected before bestowing landmark status or creating a historical district.

Councilman Herb Katz asked other council members on Tuesday to instruct senior city staff to look into possible revisions to the current landmarks ordinance as part of a compromise with the homeowners. Katz is politically aligned with some of the group's members and is in minority on the council, which is dominated by Santa Monicans For Renters Rights supporters.

Katz, who said he does not support the initiative, was instrumental in founding a

group with a similar membership called Santa Monicans for Responsible Government.

"I would like to see us avoid a ballot initiative if at all possible," Katz said.

Councilman Richard Bloom said the city has been discussing making procedural changes to its landmarks ordinance for years, and chided the group for skirting the public process with the initiative.

"It's really a politically motivated device," he said. "This whole idea of personal choice is some kind of campaign theme. I can't understand the motivation of this initiative other than it stems out of political motivation."

Council members said staff was overwhelmed with budget preparation and would not be able to address the issue for at least two weeks.

Mayor Mike Feinstein said he was disappointed the group did not try to work through a public process of making changes to the ordinance before trying to put an initiative on the ballot.

"Instead there has been this confusion over an early, preliminary process of looking over a historical survey," Feinstein said. "Instead of coming to the city council or working through a public process, they went straight to the initiative."

Some homeowners feel the city is infringing on their property rights and fear the city council will create historical districts, which are entire neighborhoods of landmarked buildings, without their consent.

The residents also believe the status would prevent them from making neces-

See INITIATIVE, page 3

City advances with \$120 million civic center plan

Officials vow residents will still have a chance to make changes

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

Despite the objections of many residents, the city council voted Tuesday to proceed with a \$120 million redevelopment project that will create a new civic center.

Nearly 50 residents asked the council to delay giving approval to the current version of the plan, which includes one athletic field and extends Olympic Boulevard through the civic center, which is where City Hall and the Santa Monica Courthouse are located on Main Street.

Residents had strongly argued last month for the inclusion of two fields, more cultural facilities and a small performing arts theater.

"This plan is disappointing. It lacks both creativity and imagination."

— JACK EPPS
Santa Monica resident

"This plan is disappointing," said Santa Monica resident Jack Epps. "It lacks both creativity and imagination."

Another resident said he was surprised

See CIVIC CENTER, page 3

Practice makes perfect



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

The Santa Monica Fire Department practiced Tower Crane Rescues Wednesday afternoon, utilizing the 150-foot crane which is being used to build the new Public Safety building behind city hall. The drill consisted of lowering a mannequin from the cab of the crane to the ground using a variety of rope techniques.

Saturday night carjacking

By Daily Press Staff

A man stole a Range Rover at gun-point Saturday night in a troubled eastside neighborhood.

Two people were sitting in a white 1991 four-door Range Rover on the 1600 block of Michigan Avenue around 10:15 p.m. when a man approached the driver's side window and brandished a handgun.

He aimed it at the driver, and ordered the driver and passenger to get out of the sport utility vehicle, said Lt. P.J. Guido, a Santa Monica Police Department

spokesman.

The two individuals complied with the carjacker's order, and the suspect drove the vehicle — which police said had paper plates — south down 17th Street.

Police describe the suspect as a black male between the ages of 20 and 25, weighing approximately 225 pounds, and having a dark complexion. At the time of the incident, police said the man was wearing a black T-shirt.

Anyone with information about the incident should call the SMPD's Robbery/Homicide Unit at (310) 458-8451.

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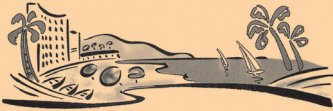
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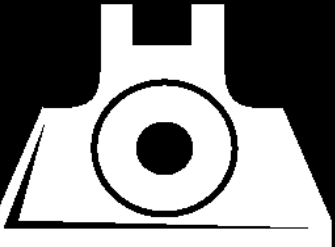


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**Check Out the Question of the Week
on Page 3 and Call Us with Your Opinion!**

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Aquarius, be impulsive tonight



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

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Your efforts blossom into what you had imagined. Communication flows, and someone puts exactly what he or she is thinking on the table. Understanding flourishes as a result. Take this approach and attitude into other realms of your life. Tonight: The only answer is "yes."

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★ Another proves his or her willingness, even if you don't always see issues eye to eye. Remain gentle and sensitive when dealing with those who surround you. Use an innate talent or ability for financial gain. You offer much more than you're aware of. Tonight: Put up your feet.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Venus moves into your sign, adding to your allure and attractiveness. Your timing and creativity dance together and enhance your abilities to succeed both professionally and emotionally. You have time. If possible, don't scatter your energy. Tonight: Decide to do something romantic.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Do something special for a family member. Your efforts come back in multiples. Recognize your limits and be especially caring with someone close to you. Carefully consider options that surround a new friendship. Time works in your favor. Get to know this person. Tonight: Make it easy.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ A friend goes out of his or her way for you. A meeting tumbles in your favor. Expect more of these positive happenings in the next few months. Carefully think through a decision that involves a friendship. Tonight: Munchies and dinner out.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Manage your finances with your customary strength. A must appearance brings positive and long-sought-after results. A boss will acknowledge you. Ask for the raise or that bonus you want. Don't get shy right now! Tonight: Spring shopping.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ See to someone with your customary style. In fact, use that Libra charm and you'll get positive feedback. Arrange the world according to you, at least for now. Use your ability to read between the lines with others. Ferret out the facts. Tonight: Ask.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Slow down some. You often steamroll others around you. If you kick back, you might be delighted by what a close associate does for you. Use this time to let others speak about what they want, and act on their wishes. Tonight: Just don't make the first move.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ If you're expressive, you might be clapping your hands in glee or jumping up and down with joy. Certainly after recent flack, you could be thrilled by another's attitude. Focus on aspiration. Network within present constraints. Tonight: Where your friends are.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ You gain professionally. You have many reasons to be pleased by news at work. Use care when dealing with an associate. This person might have stronger feelings about you than just friendship. Be more aware! Tonight: Burn the midnight oil.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Your vision and ability to read between the lines help you with others. Your intellectual responses head you down the correct path. Do not overthink, but, rather, consider alternatives that surround you. Tonight: Try impulsiveness.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Work closely with someone. How you feel about yourself comes out in your ability to trust someone. Financial negotiations could be instrumental to the end results. Consider an expenditure for the family. Improve the quality of your life. Tonight: Go along for the ride.

QUOTE of the DAY

"I am a deeply superficial person."

— Andy Warhol

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LOCAL



Council made very few changes to civic center plan

CIVIC CENTER, from page 1

at the city staff's lack of response to residents' suggestions.

"I am extremely frustrated at the staff report," said Greg Spots, who sits on the city's arts commission. "We were hoping to see some creative solutions to balancing the competing uses residents want, but instead we're told changes can't be made to the plan. Instead of working with us, all they did was argue against us."

After nearly seven hours of deliberation, the council voted 4-2, to loosely follow the city staff's recommendations. Mayor Mike Feinstein and Councilman Herb Katz voted against the plan, and Councilman Bob Holbrook left the meeting at 1 a.m. — an hour before the council took its formal vote.

Council members decided one athletic field should be included in the plan and located somewhere near the corner of Pico Boulevard and Fourth Street. They decided not to increase the number of

affordable housing units from 300 to 550, as the city's housing commission advised. And calls for moving parking underground were not heeded.

The only change made was rounding out a 90-degree angle formed by the intersection of Second Street and Main Street to allow automobile traffic to flow easier through the civic center.

Main Street business owners want the streets better connected to bring shoppers from downtown to their Ocean Park shops, but city officials want the sharp turns to remain to slow down motorists as they drive through the park-like setting.

"All we are suggesting to you is that there are simple ways on how to take the sharp turns out of this plan," said Josh Needle, chair of the Main Street Merchants Association. "We are not for a speedway, just a parkway that isn't confusing to people."

Several council members said the plans are by no means final, adding that there

would be multiple public hearings which would allow for changes.

The civic center, located on Main Street between Colorado Avenue and Pico Boulevard, is the city's symbolic geographical point. It serves as an integral part of town because of its proximity to downtown, Santa Monica Place, Palisades Park, the Santa Monica Pier, the Ocean Park neighborhood and Main Street.

The city purchased the 11-acre site from the RAND Corporation in 2000 for \$53 million with the intention of completely overhauling the civic center area so it would better connect to downtown Santa Monica.

Based on recommendations from a "working group," which created the cur-

rent proposal, the area would have a town square, a garden walk with botanical and sculpture gardens, plenty of open space and bicycle paths, as well as a child development facility and a revamped City Hall.

Originally the plan did not call for athletic fields, which outraged many coaches, parents, students and sports enthusiasts, who believe such amenities are necessary in the city's civic area.

The Santa Monica-Malibu School District lobbied for fields to be included so their students, particularly from the adjacent Santa Monica High School campus, could use them.

City and school district officials have said they may enter a joint partnership to split the cost of the new field.

SM city council could revise landmark policies

INITIATIVE, from page 1

sary changes to their homes without going through an extra layer of bureaucratic red tape.

The group needs to get 6,000 signatures to have its initiative on the ballot, and after three weeks of petitioning, a group member said they had collected more than 1,000.

One homeowner, who lives in a Santa Monica historical district along Third Street in Ocean Park, warned residents to read between the lines of the group's proposal.

"The initiative as proposed is slick and appealing, but at its base is superficial," said Bea Nemlaha. "Protecting our remaining historical resources is critical at this time."

Supporters of the initiative said there could not be a compromise unless the city was willing to make great changes to the landmarks ordinance.

"To me, this is simply a matter of personal freedom," said Tom Larmore, a local property rights attorney and an organizer of the initiative. "What we're telling people is that they can't change the exterior of their homes without going to

the Landmarks Commission."

He added, "I feel you are stepping on people's basic rights. There can't be landmarking without consent. That's just how I feel about it."

"The petition process stirs debate. As these people go around seeking signatures they get people to start thinking about the issue."

— BEA NEMLAHA
Third Street Historic District resident

Nemlaha urged the council to allow the petition process to move forward and not to compromise with the group.

"The petition process stirs debate," she said. "As these people go around seeking signatures they get people to start thinking about the issue."

The Q Line

Last week, the city won its bid to close the 50-year-old Boathouse restaurant on the Santa Monica Pier to make way for Bubba Gump Shrimp, a movie-themed chain restaurant. Some suggest that the Boathouse needed to be replaced with something that would liven up the pier. However, others think the move is another example of Santa Monica selling out to the highest bidder, drawing it closer to a

"chain gang" town.

This week, Q-line wants to know, **"If you had to choose from any merchant in the land to occupy the pier, whom would it be and why?"**

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response. We'll print them in Friday's paper. Please limit your comments to a minute or less; it might help to think first about the wording of your response.

Common Ground opens Santa Monica center

By Daily Press Staff

A westside organization that provides AIDS-related services opened a new center in Santa Monica Wednesday evening.

Common Ground — the Westside HIV Community Center opened a new facility at 2010 Lincoln Boulevard. To commemorate the opening, Ron Hanson, Deputy to Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, presented the group with a scroll.

The clinic will deliver case management and social services to men and women living with HIV/AIDS and provide life-saving prevention education and outreach to teens, street youth, gay youth, women, and other at-risk groups.

In 1992, in order to provide access to

vital AIDS-related services on the westside, Common Ground was founded by a group of local citizens whose friends were too ill to travel the distance to the nearest service providers.

At that time, the westside also lacked in HIV-prevention education. In the ten years that followed, Common Ground has grown to become a well respected agency with a \$900,000 budget.

Common ground annually provides services to 220 men and women and provides essential AIDS prevention education to over 6,000 teens and street youth.

For additional information about Common Ground, please call (310) 314-5480 or visit www.commongroundwestside.org.

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OPINION LETTERS

A Rhode Island connection

Editor:

Andrew H. Fixmer's well-written front-page article re: "Local Schools get by with a little help from their PTAs" caught my eye when I picked up your newspaper.

Seeing as Mr. Deasy, my son and I all come from Rhode Island, I thought it my duty to respond.

Mr. Deasy is like a fresh stream of water in a desert filled with "Gimme-this-Gimme-that" serpents and "My child beat your child" bumper stickers. Take the kids to their 18 hour scheduled days. God forbid they should have nothing to do for four hours while mommy and daddy are out earning money, more money and more money to send their kids to the best colleges, the best camps, and give them the best vacations. Why?

Maybe it's because the economy requires that both parents work. Maybe it's because, in single-parent households, there is no way around it. Maybe it's because the educational system, the welfare system and the political system need a complete overhaul.

Is all this going to happen in my lifetime? It might. It could. One can not get the greed and avarice out of the Santa Monica school system without getting it out of Santa Monica City Hall, the Los Angeles County City Hall, the Governor's office, the Senate and Congress. And then of course please get rid of that man in Washington who obviously never had a good English teacher while he was "comin' up" in Taxes ... whoops! ... I mean Texas.

Good Luck, Mr. Deasy. My prayers are with my grandchildren and you.

Libi Warren
 Santa Monica

Fare increase is not fair

Dear Editor:

Now is not the time for the city of Santa Monica to even consider granting a fare increase to the once-excellent Big Blue Bus.

Instead, the focus should be on issuing credits, rebates or a temporary fare reduction to the many thousands of riders, especially seniors and the handicapped, who have been for the past year grossly inconvenienced or prevented from even riding because of the Big Blue Bus's arbitrary and ill-conceived, daily, unannounced route changes and elimination of many major route stops and connection points.

Some of these haphazard bus re-routings stem from the ongoing construction in downtown Santa Monica, which as a long-term project surely could have been addressed in a more coherent fashion.

Other changes, such as the bus company's troubling shift of Line 9 away from the downtown area, reflect Big Blue Bus's lack of concern for its riders.

Over the past 43 years, I've often used Santa Monica's buses and found them to be quite reliable. These days, I have a car and rarely ride Big Blue.

However, my senior, handicapped mother does not drive and tells me horror stories daily of her anguish in trying to accomplish simple tasks by bus because she doesn't know from one day to the next where it will stop, which street it will take, or where connections can be made.

Although she lives adjacent to Line 3 stop north of Wilshire Boulevard, she has learned to travel in opposite directions to her usual routes. For example, she now patronizes the Pacific Palisades Post Office, not Santa Monica's; she shops at the Rancho Park Trader Joe's, not Santa Monica's, to avoid the uncertainty and serious inconvenience of taking the bus into her own downtown.

Hardly selling points for a bus company that wants to earn a fare increase!

With more construction yet to come, the Big Blue Bus should be planning better to avoid such wanton destruction of its riders' lives and should retract its request for a fare increase in favor of a program of credits and reduced prices to compensate for its massive mistakes that are resulting in such poor customer service.

Rufus Baker
 Santa Monica

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 530 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

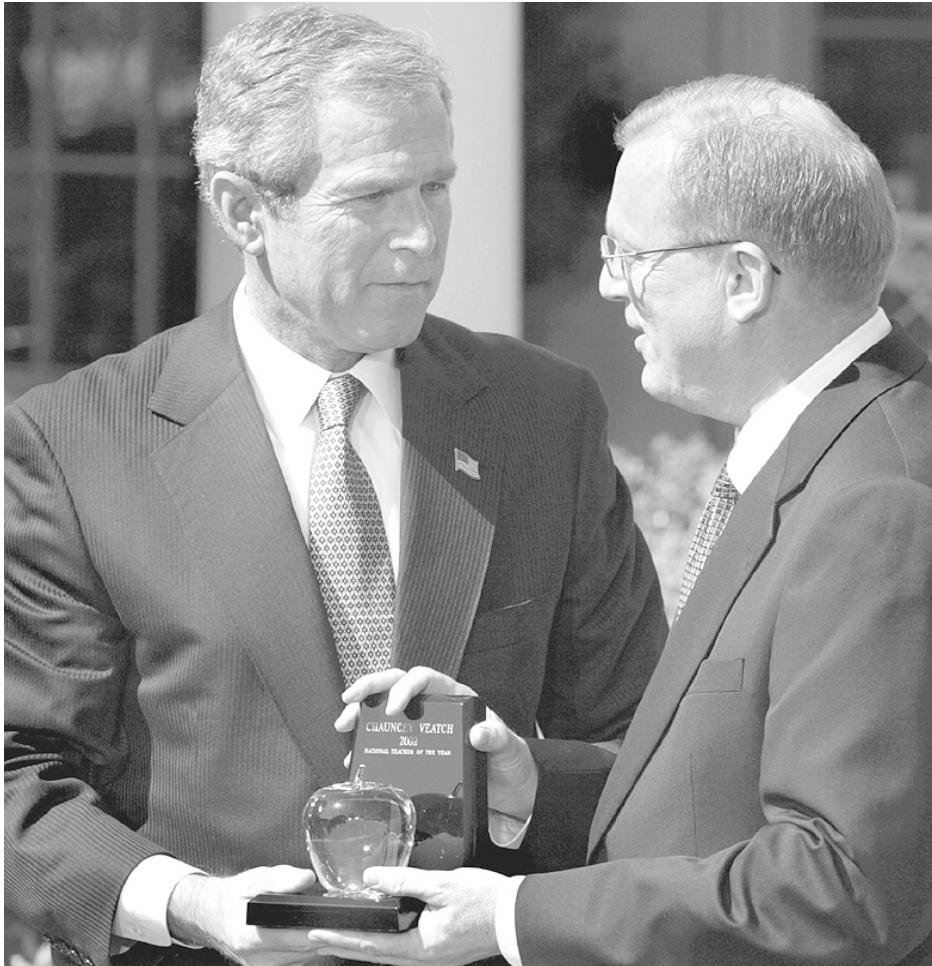
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STATE



Teacher of the year



Ron Edmonds/Associated Press

President Bush presents Chauncey Veatch, a social studies teacher at Coachella Valley High School in Thermal, Calif., Wednesday with the 2002 Teacher of the Year award in the Rose Garden of the White House. Many of his students are from families of migrant farm workers tending and picking grapes near Bakersfield and Fresno. Veatch is fluent in Spanish.

People turn to car sharing to take trips, run errands

BY KAREN GAUDETTE
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Kyle Minor doesn't usually need a car in his bustling neighborhood, where it's a cinch to find a bus, cab or train. But mass transit doesn't always cut it for those grocery runs and weekend road trips to Napa Valley.

So Minor signed up for a car-sharing service, joining thousands of Americans who need a set of wheels from time to time but are leery about shelling out money for car payments, fuel and insurance.

"I think it's fantastic," said Minor, who works in the city's opera box office and has gone carless for four years. "We've been extremely happy and we've used the cars to go all over the place."

Car sharing services operate in several cities, including New York, San Francisco, Washington, Boston, Seattle, Chicago and Boulder, Colo. The concept has grown in popularity, prompting car sharing groups to add more vehicles and expand into new cities. They've gotten help from federal transportation grants, seed money from eager communities and city-subsidized parking spots.

Members of City Carshare in San Francisco pay \$30 to join and put down a \$300 deposit in case of damage to the car. When they need to take a drive, they spend \$3.50 per hour — no more than \$35 per day — plus 37 cents per mile. The cost of gas is included.

Members receive an electronic key card and a gas card. When they need a car, they reserve time slots online or over the phone, and walk or use mass transit to get to loca-

tions where the station wagons, Volkswagen Beetles and sedans are parked. The key card gets members into cars at the locations and times they requested.

The idea may be profitable, too. Robin Chase, chief executive of Cambridge, Mass.-based Zipcar Inc., said her company broke even after three years and has expanded from Boston to New York and Washington, with 5,000 members sharing 136 cars.

Chase said she was inspired to launch the service when she realized it was exactly what she needed — to have an extra car to run errands without the hassles of owning a vehicle.

San Francisco's City Carshare, a non-profit service, began with 12 lime-green Beetles last spring, expecting 500 members. Now there are 45 cars and 1,400 members, some of them across the bay in Oakland and Berkeley, said Annie Bourdon, the group's outreach coordinator. The cars, which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, are currently used about seven to nine hours a day, according to Carshare.

Bourdon credits the enthusiasm of customers like Barbara King, a registered nurse from London staying with family in San Francisco. Buying, leasing or renting a car for three months seemed financially impractical, King said, so she turned to car sharing.

City Carshare cleans and maintains the cars and provides full insurance coverage — which Bourdon said tops \$400 per month per car, making it the organization's largest expense.



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NATIONAL

New method gives slightly younger age of the universe

BY PAUL RECER
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON — The universe is about 13 billion years old, slightly younger than previously believed, according to a study that measured the cooling of the embers in ancient dying stars.

Experts said the finding gives "very comparable results" to an earlier study that used a different method to conclude that the universe burst into existence with the theoretical "Big Bang" between 13 and 14 billion years ago.

Harvey B. Richer, an astronomer at the University of British Columbia, said the Hubble Space Telescope gathered images of the faintest dying stars it could find in M4, a star cluster some 7,000 light years away.

Richer said the fading stars, called white dwarfs, are actually burnt out coals of stars that were once up to eight times the size of the sun. After they exhausted their fuel, the stars collapsed into Earth-sized spheres of cooling embers that eventually will turn cold and wink out of sight.

Earlier studies had established the rate of cooling for these stars, said Richer. By looking at the very faintest and oldest white dwarfs possible, astronomers can use this cooling rate to estimate the age of the universe.

Speaking at a news conference Wednesday, Richer said the dimmest of the white dwarfs are about 12.7 billion years old, plus or minus about half a billion years.

Richer said it is estimated that star formation did not begin until about a billion years after the Big Bang. He said this means his best estimate for age of the universe is "about 13 billion years."

Three years ago, astronomers using another method estimated the age at 13 to 14 billion years. That was based on pre-

cise measurements of the rate at which galaxies are moving apart, an expansion that started with the Big Bang. They then back-calculated — like running a movie backward — to arrive at the age estimate.

"Our results are in very good agreement" with Richer's estimate, said Wendy L. Freedman, an astronomer at the Carnegie Observatories in Pasadena, Calif., and a leader of the group performing the universe age calculations three years ago.

Bruce Margon, an astronomer at the Space Telescope Science Institute, said both conclusions are based on "a lot of assumptions" but the fact that two independent methods arrived within 10 percent of the same answer is important.

"To find an independent way to measure the age and then get essentially the same answer is a fantastic advance," said Margon. It may not be the final answer for the universe's age, he said, but is "very, very, very close."

To get the new age estimate, the Hubble Space Telescope collected light from M4 for eight days over a 67-day period. Only then did the very faintest of the white dwarfs become visible.

"These are the coolest white dwarf stars that we know about in the universe," said Richer. "These stars get cooler and cooler and less luminous as they age."

He added: "We think we have seen the faintest ones. If we haven't, then we'll have to rethink" the conclusions.

The faintest of the white dwarfs are less than one-billionth the apparent brightness of the dimmest stars visible to the naked eye.

M4 is a globular cluster, thought to be the first group of stars that formed in the Milky Way galaxy, the home galaxy for the sun, early in the history of the universe. There are about 150 globular clusters in the Milky Way; M4 was selected because it is closest to Earth.

World's second space tourist has NASA's blessing

BY MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Another rich adventure-seeker is headed to the international space station. This time, though, the astronauts on board won't have to baby-sit him.

To the relief of the three men living on the space station, NASA has given its blessing to the visit by South African millionaire Mark Shuttleworth, who is part of a crew of cosmonauts due to lift off aboard a Russian rocket Thursday from Kazakhstan.

It is an about-face from a year ago, when America's space agency shunned Santa Monica businessman Dennis Tito, the world's first paying space tourist. The two NASA astronauts on board the space station were under strict orders not to hug Tito in front of the cameras and had to make sure he did not venture alone into the U.S. compartments.

NASA was dead set against Tito's joy ride last spring, saying a tourist could disrupt work at the space station and endanger the crew. His weeklong visit, courtesy of the Russians, triggered a battle of words between the two countries' space programs that took months to heal.

To avoid another embarrassing confrontation, NASA, the Russian Space Agency and the other countries in the space station program released criteria in January for those willing to plunk down millions for a space station vacation.

The 28-year-old Shuttleworth, who made his fortune off the Internet, meets all the criteria, including a week of training at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. NASA had barred Tito from such instruction last year.

Like Tito, Shuttleworth is paying the Russian space program about \$20 million for a Soyuz seat and an eight-day, seven-night space station cruise.

Under an agreement with NASA, Shuttleworth will use space station laptops for e-mail after he arrives Saturday and have limited use of U.S. communication systems to beam down video and photographs. He plans a variety of science experiments and, in fact, dislikes the tourist label.

Shuttleworth is not authorized to operate any other space station equipment. While not requiring an escort, he will be the responsibility of his commander aboard the Russian Soyuz rocket and the skipper of the space station, who is also Russian.

NATIONAL



Reno-Tahoe seeks to host 2014 Winter Games

By The Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — An Olympian-studded fund-raiser next month will launch the bid by the Nevada Commission on Sports and Reno-Tahoe Winter Games Organizing Committee to woo the 2014 winter games.

The groups are hoping to bring in \$125,000 from the May 16 event — the amount it's expected to cost to study the feasibility of hosting the Olympics and prepare a presentation for the U.S. Olympic Committee.

"I can't see any better place right now in the United States that hasn't already hosted the games," said Jack Kelly of Dallas, an Olympic-bid consultant who's working for Houston in its bid for the Summer 2012 Olympics and will seek to do the Reno study.

Guests at next month's fund-raiser at the Reno Hilton are expected to include 2002 Salt Lake City gold medal speed skater Derek Parra; Lisa Odynski of Sparks, who competed in the women's giant slalom snowboard race; and Daron Rahlves of Truckee, Calif., who competed in the men's alpine ski events.

Fourteen Olympians have been invited, including Paralympic women's giant slalom gold medalist Allison Pearl of

Reno, the Reno Gazette-Journal reported on Wednesday.

"I can't see any better place right now in the United States that hasn't already hosted the games."

— **JACK KELLY**
Olympic bid consultant

Tickets range from \$35 for dinner for a child under 12 to \$5,000 for a table of eight with an Olympian.

A 2014 Olympics would bring the Winter Games to the Sierra Nevada for the first time in 54 years. Squaw Valley U.S.A. hosted them in 1960.

No other U.S. cities have declared for 2014, Cail said.

The Winter Olympics will be in Turin, Italy, in 2006. The IOC is expected to name a 2010 site next year and bidders include Vancouver-Whistler, B.C., in Canada.

Ex-court clerk pleads guilty in plot to defraud the dead

By The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — A former courthouse clerk accused of stealing millions of dollars from the dead to finance a ritzy lifestyle that included six Ferraris pleaded guilty in exchange for a maximum 10-year prison term.

Prosecutors believe the scheme may have spanned more than 14 years, the San Antonio Express-News reported Wednesday.

They said Mel Spillman would fake papers naming himself temporary administrator of an estate, stamp them with stolen Bexar County seals and then use the documents to withdraw bank funds and take

control of houses and other properties.

The ex-clerk, who had earned \$33,000 a year from the county, lived in a \$400,000 home.

Spillman, 54, was charged with defrauding at least 65 estates out of an estimated \$4.9 million through forgery, tampering with government records and impersonating a public servant. He plead guilty Tuesday.

Debra Miller, Spillman's 51-year-old sister, pleaded guilty to charges that she helped her brother defraud at least one estate. She faces up to five years in prison on charges of securing the execution of documents by deceit.

Sentencing was set for June 4.

Federal judge rules mob boss competent to stand trial

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jailed mob don Vincent "The Chin" Gigante, once dubbed "The Oddfather" for his mumbling, bathrobe-clad meanderings, is competent to stand trial, a federal judge ruled.

In a brief order Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Leo Glasser in Brooklyn said Gigante, 74, is "found both mentally and physically fit to proceed to a speedy trial" on charges he's been running the Genovese crime family from prison.

The motion to determine Gigante's fitness was brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office and was unopposed.

Gigante's lawyers had previously claimed he suffers from incapacitating mental and physical illness. His new

attorney, Benjamin Brafman, did not make that argument, though.

"We did not raise, and do not raise, Mr. Gigante's competency to proceed," Brafman said.

Gigante, already serving a 12-year sentence on a 1997 conviction for racketeering and murder conspiracy, was indicted in January on the new charge that he was running the crime family in prison, having his son relay his orders. He has pleaded innocent.

Gigante earned the nickname "The Oddfather" for his penchant for wandering the streets of Greenwich Village in a bathrobe, and mumbling to himself. Authorities contended Gigante put on an act in public to dodge prosecution.



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SPORTS

Grizzlies' Pau Gasol named NBA Rookie of the Year

BY WOODY BAIRD
Associated Press Writer

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Memphis Grizzlies forward Pau Gasol won the NBA's Rookie of the Year Award on Wednesday as a near unanimous pick.

Gasol, a native of Spain, is the first European to win top rookie honors. He received 117 of a possible 126 votes from a panel of sports writers and broadcasters.

Richard Jefferson of New Jersey had three votes. Jason Richardson of Golden State, Jamaal Tinsley of Indiana and Andrei Kirilenko of Utah each received two votes.

Gasol led the Grizzlies and all rookies in scoring with a 17.6 point average. He also averaged 8.9 rebounds, 2.7 assists, 2.1 blocks and 36.7 minutes. He played in all 82 games and started 79 for the Grizzlies.

He finished the season ranked fourth in the NBA in field goal percentage, shooting 51 percent. He was sixth

in total blocks (169) and 10th in double-doubles with 35.

He led all rookies in total points, shooting percentage, rebounds and blocks. He ranked second in minutes played behind Grizzlies teammate Shane Battier.

The 21-year-old Gasol was drafted by Atlanta as the third overall pick in last year's draft before being traded to Memphis. The Grizzlies got Gasol, along with Lorenzen Wright and Brevin Knight, in exchange for Shareef Abdur-Rahim.

Dodgers out-pitch Pirates

BY ALAN ROBINSON
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH — Omar Daal barely gave up anything in his two starts — except, it seems, his spot in the Los Angeles Dodgers' rotation.

Daal, making another successful start for the injured Kevin Brown, held Pittsburgh to one run over six innings and Marquis Grissom drove in two runs in the Dodgers' 5-1 victory Wednesday night.

Grissom hit a solo homer in the first off Dave Williams (2-2) and a sacrifice fly in a three-run seventh as the Dodgers won their sixth in seven games. Pittsburgh has dropped two straight since winning six in a row.

No matter what uniform he wears, Daal (3-0) is tough on the Pirates, winning seven in a row against them in as many starts since 1998 while pitching for three teams — the Diamondbacks, Phillies and Dodgers.

Daal began the season in the bullpen, but is 2-0 while filling in for Brown, who has an inflamed right elbow but could be ready by Tuesday. In those two starts, including a 5-2 victory Thursday over San Diego, Daal has allowed one run and

eight hits and struck out 14 in 12 1-3.

With the Dodgers' rotation pitching well, Daal is resigned to going back to the bullpen when Brown returns.

"It's frustrating, you know you can be there every five days," Daal said. "But we have five starters and there's nothing I can do about it."

Craig Wilson had an RBI double in the fourth for the only run off Daal. An inning later, Daal stranded the potential tying run at third by striking out Williams and getting Adrian Brown to ground out following Jack Wilson's one-out triple.

Williams gave up only four hits in 6 1-3 innings, but three of the four batters who got hits came around to score. Williams fell behind 1-0 in the first on Grissom's one-out homer, his second, then gave up another run on Eric Karros' run.

Karros doubled again with one out in the seventh, then was lifted for Brian Boehringer, who allowed the first four batters he faced to reach base.

With Williams out, Adrian Beltre singled ahead of Mark Grudzielanek's third RBI single in two games, and pinch-hitter Hiram Bocachica singled in another run ahead of Grissom's sacrifice fly.



National Basketball Association playoff schedule

By The Associated Press

FIRST ROUND-Best-of-5 (All times EDT.)
Saturday, April 20
Indiana 89, New Jersey 83 Sacramento 89, Utah 86 San Antonio 110, Seattle 89 Charlotte 80, Orlando 79
Sunday, April 21
Boston 92, Philadelphia 82 Boston leads series 1-0 Dallas 101, Minnesota 94 Dallas leads series 1-0 L.A. Lakers 95, Portland 87, L.A. Lakers lead series 1-0 Detroit 85, Toronto 63 Detroit leads series 1-0
Monday, April 22
New Jersey 95, Indiana 79 series tied 1-1 Seattle 98, San Antonio 90 series tied 1-1
Tuesday, April 23
Orlando 111, Charlotte 103, OT series tied 1-1 Utah 93, Sacramento 86 series tied 1-1
Wednesday, April 24
Toronto at Detroit, 7 p.m. Minnesota at Dallas, 9:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 25
Philadelphia at Boston, 8 p.m. Portland at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

Friday, April 26
New Jersey at Indiana, 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 27
Charlotte at Orlando, 12:30 p.m. Sacramento at Utah, 3 p.m. San Antonio at Seattle, 5:30 p.m. Detroit at Toronto, 8:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 28
Boston at Philadelphia, 12:30 p.m. Dallas at Minnesota, 3 p.m. L.A. Lakers at Portland, 5:30 p.m.
Monday, April 29
Detroit at Toronto, TBA, if necessary Sacramento at Utah, TBA, if necessary
Tuesday, April 30
Charlotte at Orlando, TBA New Jersey at Indiana, TBA Dallas at Minnesota, TBA, if necessary
Wednesday, May 1
Boston at Philadelphia, TBA, if necessary San Antonio at Seattle, TBA L.A. Lakers at Portland, TBA, if necessary
Thursday, May 2
Indiana at New Jersey, TBA, if necessary Toronto at Detroit, TBA, if necessary Minnesota at Dallas, TBA, if necessary Utah at Sacramento, TBA, if necessary
Friday, May 3
Philadelphia at Boston, TBA, if necessary Orlando at Charlotte, TBA, if necessary Seattle at San Antonio, TBA, if necessary Portland at L.A. Lakers, TBA, if necessary



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- 14th and Santa Monica Boulevard
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- Montana Avenue and Euclid Street
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INTERNATIONAL



Two Palestinians shot, two surrender in church crisis

BY IBRAHIM HAZBOUN

Associated Press Writer

BETHLEHEM, West Bank — Two Palestinians inside the Church of the Nativity compound were shot Wednesday and one of them died as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators gathered next door for a second round of talks to end the stand-off at one of Christianity's holiest sites.

In Washington, Secretary of State Colin Powell told Congress he had no evidence of an Israeli massacre of Palestinians at the Jenin refugee camp on the West Bank. Powell has sought to mend deep divisions between Israel and the United Nations over the composition of a U.N. team dispatched to investigate the actions of Israeli troops in the camp, where Palestinian claim there was a massacre.

"Clearly, innocent lives may well have been lost," Powell testified. But, he said, "I have no evidence of mass graves. I see no evidence that would support a massacre took place."

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has ordered the team to arrive in the Middle East by Saturday. But Israel has balked, saying it wants the mission to include people with military and anti-terrorism experience. Israel has not said what it will do if they are not added to the team.

The trouble at the church, built over a grotto where Christian tradition holds Jesus was born, began about dawn, when a Palestinian was shot and seriously wounded by an Israeli sniper. The Palestinian was standing by a window



David Guttenfelder/Associated press

An Israeli soldier takes aim at the Church of the Nativity from behind a wall of the Peace Center of Bethlehem as gunfire breaks out while Israeli and Palestinian negotiators meet inside the center Thursday. Israeli and Palestinian negotiators entered a second day of talks Wednesday trying to resolve the three week stand-off at the church.

inside the church, the army and Palestinian witnesses said. He was armed, according to the Israeli army, and was evacuated to a Jerusalem hospital.

A few hours later, two Palestinians surrendered, walking out of the church with hands up and turning themselves over to Israeli soldiers. The two men were wearing civilian clothes but were Palestinian

police, according to a Palestinian journalist who recognized them. The two men said they were ill.

The Palestinian who died was hit in shooting that erupted about 5 p.m., as the Israeli and Palestinian delegations were arriving to start the second day of negotiations at the peace center next to the church.

Afterward, one of the Palestinians

negotiators and a priest emerged from the church, carrying a badly wounded man on a stretcher. At one point, the bloodied man fell to the ground. He was taken to a Jerusalem hospital, but died a short time later, the hospital said.

After the shootout, Israeli soldiers briefly detained five journalists, including an Associated Press photographer, and confiscated their press cards.

About 200 armed Palestinians — with several dozen others — have been holed up inside the church since April 2, when they entered to escape advancing Israeli troops.

In the negotiations that opened Tuesday, Palestinians have proposed the gunmen be escorted to the Palestinian-controlled Gaza Strip. Israel insists they surrender and be tried in Israel or deported.

In other violence, at least five Palestinians were killed — two in an Israeli military raid near the West Bank town of Hebron, and three in the Gaza Strip in what appeared to be a bomb-making accident.

And at Yasser Arafat's besieged compound in Ramallah, the Palestinian leader played host to a European Union delegation led by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana. Arafat stressed "the importance of the immediate Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories," said Arafat adviser Nabil Abu Rdenah.

Israel has pulled its troops out of most West Bank cities and towns after a three-week incursion but remains encamped around Arafat's compound and is present in many parts of Bethlehem.

U.S. church leaders express regret in sex scandal meeting

BY VICTOR L. SIMPSON

Associated Press Writer

VATICAN CITY — After an extraordinary meeting sparked by a sex abuse scandal, American Roman Catholic leaders agreed Wednesday to make it easier to remove priests guilty of sexually abusing minors — but they stopped short of a zero-tolerance policy to dismiss all abusive clerics.

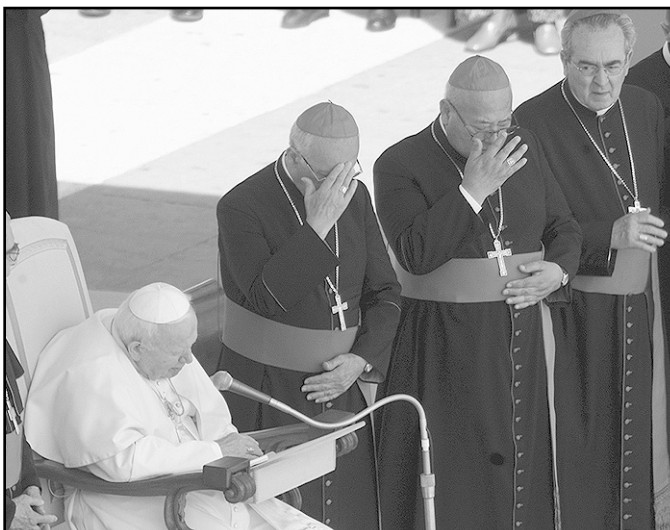
The American church leaders said they would recommend a special process to defrock any priest who has become "notorious and is guilty of the serial, predatory sexual abuse of minors." In cases that are "not notorious" they would leave it up to the local bishop to decide if such a priest is a threat to children and should be defrocked.

The statement came at the end of two days of talks between American cardinals and top bishops, with Vatican officials aiming to stem the sex abuse scandal engulfing the U.S. church. The church leaders will take their recommendations to a meeting of U.S. bishops in June to draw up a policy on dealing with abusive priests.

But the final statement was less than the blanket order for the dismissal of all abusive priests that some had sought, nor did it make specific proposals for the reporting of sex abuse crimes to authorities. Several cardinals had suggested they had wanted stronger language about the need to turn over offenders to civil authorities, indicating major battles lie ahead when all U.S. bishops gather in Dallas in June.

The reference to "serial" attacks appeared to contradict a statement earlier Wednesday by Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington, who indicated that the American cardinals meeting with Pope John Paul II reached consensus on a "one-strike-you're-out" policy that would dismiss any priest involved in a future sex abuse case.

After a marathon final session that delayed announcement of the final statement by two hours, four church officials appeared at a press briefing. Also on the panel were U.S. bishops' head Wilton Gregory, bishop of Belleville, Illinois; Cardinal James Francis Stafford, an American who is president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity at the Vatican; and Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.



Santiago Lyon/Associated Press

Pope John Paul II delivers his address as unidentified bishops and cardinals look on in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican during Wednesday's general audience. Pope John Paul II laid out the agenda at a closed-doors summit which began Tuesday with American cardinals, confronting the sex abuse scandal that has shaken the American faithful. The summit ends Wednesday.

U.S. church officials had indicated that many if not all the cardinals would attend. Monsignor Francis Maniscalco, spokesman for the U.S. bishops, said that because the meeting ran more than two hours late, the remaining cardinals had other engagements.

"In other words, we talk too much," said McCarrick.

Many of the phrases in the document were crafted from John Paul's strong message to the prelates, calling sex abuse against minors a crime and a sin and saying there was no room in the church for sex abusers. He spoke at the opening session and lunched with all the participants Wednesday.

On another issue troubling the American church following the wave of scandals, the church leaders declared that "a link between celibacy and pedophilia cannot be scientifically maintained." The group, as expected, reaffirmed priestly celibacy.

The statement, following up on the pope's speech to the cardinals Tuesday, said sexual abuse of minors is "rightly considered a crime by society," but it mentioned no specific proposal about reporting all cases to authorities.

It also drew a distinction on the age of those who suffered sexual abuse, saying "attention was drawn to the fact that almost all cases involved adolescents and therefore were not cases of true pedophilia."

Many victims' advocates in the United States said the church has never kept its promise to crack down on misconduct by the clergy and that this would be no different.

The church leaders will ask the full bishops conference to approve a set of national standards in sexual abuse cases that will be imposed on every bishop and diocese — a major break with tradition, in which bishops have great power in applying punishment.

However, the document left many matters open to be debated by the bishops in June.

Even with the proposed new special process in cases of abuse, "there are going to be a lot of provisions in there for appeal and certitude that the rights of all parties are protected," he said.

Before issuing their statement, the U.S. church leaders expressed in a letter to American priests their regret for failing to prevent the sex abuse scandal and pledging to support the priests "in every possible way through these troubled times."

"We know the heavy burden of sorrow and shame that you are bearing because some have betrayed the grace of ordination by abusing those entrusted to their care," they said. "We regret that episcopal oversight has not been able to preserve the church from this scandal."

The Vatican meeting was called in an effort to resolve a scandal that has rocked the American Church since January, leading to the resignation of one bishop, raising calls that Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston also resign and costing the church millions of dollars in legal settlements.

Asked if the pope supports Law, Navarro-Valls said he didn't have enough information to comment.

"The situation regarding Cardinal Law is a matter that belongs exclusively to the Holy Father and to Cardinal Law," Gregory said. "It is not a matter that could be judged or adjudicated in a conversation such as took place."

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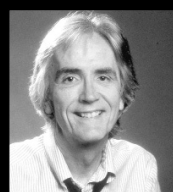
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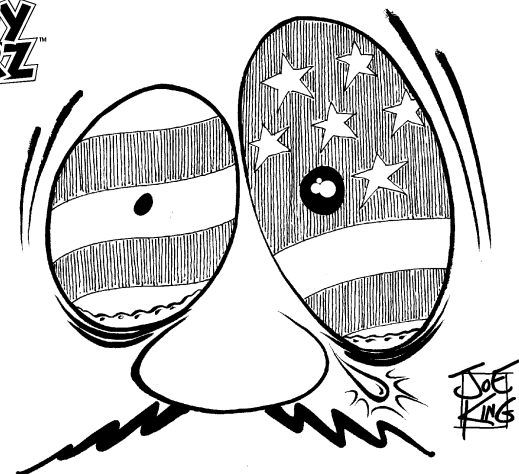
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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

In March, the cat belonging to avant-garde British artist Tracey Emin ran away, prompting Emin to create fliers to nail up around the neighborhood asking for help finding it. When neighbors realized that the missing cat was Emin's, her posters began disappearing and were being offered on the street for as much as about \$800. A spokesperson for East London's White Cube gallery, who is sometimes in the position of defending Emin from critics who deny that her work qualifies as "art" (Emin's most famous piece was a messy bed), told reporters that the poster was not art, even though the public might regard it as art.



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Houses For Rent

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W. LOS Angeles \$350.00/mo. plus utilities. 1 bdrm, 1 bath. Move in by end of May. Female preferred. Catherine (310)826-3484

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Announcements

COME SUPPORT Daybreak Designs, a grass-roots business venture for women in transition. Quality-handmade-items perfect for birthdays, Mother's Day, Graduations or just for yourself will be sold at Daybreak Shelter on May 3rd 1pm-5pm and May 4th 9:30am-3:00pm 1610 7th St. Corner of 7th and Colorado. Contact 310-450-0650.

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BACK PAGE

ODDS & ENDS

A solution to earwax embarrassment

By The Associated Press

BEND, Ore. — Justin Letlow's invention lets people peer where many don't care to look: into the ear, and upon the things that dwell there.

The 39-year-old from Bend invented the Ear Mirror, a device for inspecting and cleaning the outer ears.

Letlow has received a patent for the Ear Mirror, which resembles a dental instrument with two round, small, adjustable mirrors joined by a flexible plastic handle.

Holding one mirror close to the ear and the other in front of the eye, the user can see quite clearly into every nook and cranny.

"I invented it to prevent earwax embarrassment," Letlow says.

He hopes his invention will soon be de rigueur in toiletry kits.

"Everybody has two ears," says Letlow. "I can't think how many times I've been watching a game on TV, and they zoom in on the coach, and here's this big old piece of earwax."

Robbers hail the wrong cab

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Two burglars fleeing from an apartment with stolen goods hailed the wrong taxicab — namely, the one driven by an undercover police officer, police said.

Lt. Jagdishwar Jaskaran, on routine patrol in a yellow cab, stopped for two men who were acting suspicious as they tried frantically to hail a taxi on Tuesday. Jaskaran said they drew attention to themselves because one was on a bicycle and the other appeared to be hid-

ing behind a van.

The man hiding behind the van approached the cab and told Jaskaran he wanted to go to the Bronx. When Jaskaran identified himself as a police officer, the man on the bicycle fled.

The first suspect, a 17-year-old, was arrested carrying a video camera that was allegedly stolen, police said.

Jaskaran said the two suspects and one other had just broken into an apartment by climbing from the roof to the fire escape, where they removed an air conditioner and pried the security bars from a window.

In addition to the video camera, the burglars took a VCR, a stereo and jewelry from the apartment, Jaskaran said.

Police were looking for the two missing suspects.

Congressman gets back-up profession

By The Associated Press

LOGAN, Utah — Thirty years after enrolling at Utah State University, an Idaho dentist — who happens to be a congressman — will finally get his undergraduate degree next month.

On May 4, Rep. Mike Simpson will don cap and gown and with 3,236 other graduates will be awarded a diploma. His will read "bachelor's of science in pre-dentistry."

"I was accepted to dental school while still an undergraduate," said Simpson, 52. "I'd always intended to complete the paperwork needed to finish my bachelor's degree. But I was busy with dental school, then dental practice, family, and starting a political career, and, well, the years just flew by."

The Republican entered the Washington University School of Dental Medicine in St. Louis in 1974, and, upon graduation, joined his father and uncle in the family practice in Blackfoot, Idaho. His political career began in 1980, when he was elected to the Blackfoot City Council.

Simpson was missing some credits at Utah State, said Randy Simmons, a political science professor who learned of the congressman's situation while touring Capitol Hill to promote his school.

Simmons said transfer agreements already were in place to give Simpson undergraduate credit for classes he took at Washington University.

"No strings were pulled," Simmons said.

It's not a Yugo, but a ZMW

By The Associated Press

DETROIT — Attention bargain-basement car enthusiasts: The Yugo is back. Sort of.

A decade after the discount car was last imported to the United States from Yugoslavia, an American entrepreneur plans to import a successor to the Yugo — tentatively called the ZMW.

Malcolm Bricklin, who first brought the Yugo to the United States in 1985, said he has signed a deal with former Yugo manufacturer Zastava Motor Works of Serbia, Forbes reported on its Web site.

Bricklin, 63, said he expects to import the first ZMWs in about a year. He said his new company, to be called Zastava Motor Works USA and headquartered in New York, could sell 60,000 cars in its first year.

The ZMWs will come in a two-door, four-door, convertible and pickup truck models, ranging in price from \$5,000 to \$10,000, Bricklin said.

That would make the ZMW the cheapest car on the market, according to the National Automobile Dealers Association in McLean, Va. The lowest-priced cars currently sold in the United States cost more than \$9,000.

"This will be the first time in the last decade that someone could go out and buy a new car with a new car warranty for half the price of the lowest-priced car out there," said Bricklin.

SANTA MONICA NIGHT at Dodger Stadium



Santa Monica Night At Dodger Stadium

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Dodgers vs. Chicago Cubs

Saturday, May 4th

7:05 PM

Cost: \$6.00

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