

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

20, 28, 32, 34, 36

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 1, 3, 6

Evening picks: 9, 0, 9

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 06, Whirl Win

2nd Place: 09, Winning Spirit

3rd Place: 10, Solid Gold

Race Time: 1:49.44



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

■ A 73-year-old retired electronics specialist sat for a long interview in December in the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, patiently explaining that the \$300,000 nest egg he had just lost on a familiar Nigerian scam was really the fault of "corrupt governments" and not the dishonesty of his Nigerian "friends" who had no choice but to ask him to pay ever-escalating investment amounts. The man repeatedly insisted that his "friends" couldn't possibly be scammers, but toward the end of the two-hour interview, finally remembered that they "never did really explain how they got my name."

Parents drop their lawsuit against LAPD

Daughter died from an overdose while in custody, being questioned about stabbing

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

The parents of a 17-year-old girl who died in police custody after fatally stabbing a Santa Monica High School sophomore have dropped their lawsuit against the Los Angeles Police Department.

After speaking with detectives, Angelique Bernstein and Sarkis Sarkissian, the parents of Katrina Sarkissian, decided not to pursue wrongful

death charges against police, their lawyer said. Katrina Sarkissian overdosed on antidepressants the day after she stabbed 15-year-old Deanna Maran in November of 2001.

"My clients wanted to find out what had happened and the city refused to provide the information, and we had to get into litigation to discover it," attorney Gary Cassleman said. "And once my client heard from one of the detectives, she determined that there was no basis to continue to pursue the LAPD."

"We couldn't prove any (liability)," he added. "And, of course, you have to proceed with evidence."

With that case dropped, See NO SUIT, page 5

Heeding the call



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

Emergency response technicians work to remove an injured passenger from the scene of a three-car accident at the intersection of 11th Street and Santa Monica Boulevard on Tuesday afternoon. Two people from separate automobiles were hospitalized as a result of the crash.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The only thing better than singing is more singing."

— Ella Fitzgerald

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Crunch time cometh for city bean counters

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — With less than a month before they have to present a proposed budget for the upcoming year, city officials are scrambling to cut \$2 million from 10 departments.

For city financiers, the end of the fiscal year is much like tax time for accountants — the final push must be made before the deadline draws near. Making final tweaks to the massive budget will require plenty of overtime and weekends spent at work for many in City Hall, who must prepare thousands of pages for the City Council by the end of next month.

Department heads first submitted their proposed budgets in late

See BUDGET, page 6



CITY HALL: DOLLARS & SENSE

A month-long series examining the Santa Monica City Hall finances

We're in the money: City sees record revenues

By Daily Press staff

CITY HALL — Led by a surge in business at local car dealerships, City Hall raked in more than \$24 million in sales tax revenue last year — making 2003 the most lucrative year in Santa Monica history.

"This is the highest year ever," said David Carr, City Hall's treasurer. "The thing that's been driving it more than ever is new car sales ... a lot of luxury car sales."

Revenue from new car sales was up 21.6 percent over 2002, accounting for \$5,007,307. Almost all other categories fared well too — from specialty stores to home furnishings — with only department stores and liquor sold at grocery stores taking a hit from 2002 levels.

"Most categories are up," noted Carr. "The

See TAX RECORD, page 6

Paying the price

City Hall garnered \$24,114,833 in sales tax revenue, a 7.8 percent increase over 2002. Here's how receipts broke down in the top 14 business categories, which accounted for \$16,861,440. The percentage change over 2002 is also included to the right.

■ New cars	\$5,007,307	+21.6 percent	■ Department stores	\$778,261	-2.5 percent
■ Auto lease	\$1,195,599	+13.3 percent	■ Women's apparel	\$714,094	+7.2 percent
■ Restaurant — liquor	\$1,637,098	+12 percent	■ Service stations	\$714,114	+3.1 percent
■ Family apparel	\$1,452,729	+7.8 percent	■ Home furnishings	\$539,564	+10.1 percent
■ Specialty stores	\$1,431,097	+28.4 percent	■ Business services	\$521,149	+9.2 percent
■ Fast food	\$1,079,722	+0.6 percent	■ Hotels — liquor	\$487,089	+14.5 percent
■ Restaurants — beer/wine	\$831,275	+4.9 percent	■ Grocery stores — liquor	\$472,342	-1.4 percent

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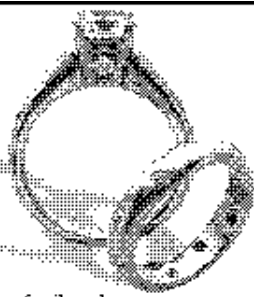
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Leo, what appeals to you?

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)
★★★★ Your charm works miracles. Why not use your unique Aries style to your advantage? Express your wit and sense of humor. Others seek you out for a new perspective, as well as a little more lightness. Allow your imagination to rock and roll. Tonight: Have a good time wherever you are.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Don't get locked into an untenable position. Give yourself the space to move. You'll discover a lot if you ask key people for advice. Demonstrate a willingness to brainstorm and sleuth through a problem. Tonight: At home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Listen to your sixth sense as well as information that comes forth. You discover that others are more willing to open up and brainstorm. A sense of direction and being grounded draws others. Be direct with that special person. Tonight: Catch up on a pal's news.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Expenses could halt a goal or project, though you might be able to figure out a way to the same end with some information-gathering. Your questions zero in on what is important. Discern and seek out new priorities. Tonight: Fun doesn't have to cost!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Your smile proves to be a winner. Use your innate abilities to make money and creatively find answers. Be careful with a changeable, moody person, even if he or she comes on steady as a rock. Know that this person can flip in a New York minute. Tonight: What appeals to you? Do just that.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Know when to act and when to lie back and absorb information. Hold off on a decision as long as you can. When you act, it will be with assertiveness. Your ability to seek facts and do research plays into the decision-making process. Tonight: Take your time. Check in with an older relative or friend at a distance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Focus on end results. Ask questions. Return calls. Your sixth sense comes into play with an emotional matter. What you see could change with time. Visualize more of what you want from a child or loved one. Tonight: Where the crowds are.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Your take-charge attitude has its limits. Work with diplomacy and understanding. You might get a consensus and agreement this way. Not everyone has to agree with you, but wanting certain things is normal. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Visualize and let ideas flow. Through making calls and/or finding experts, you decide to expand your horizons. Some will decide to travel, and others will decide to take a workshop or class. A boss favors you. Tonight: Movie night.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Work with an associate carefully, and you might be delighted with what the two of you come up with. Investigate what needs to be done. You might have a strong feeling or hunch. Follow through. Tonight: Build a relationship.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Note the winning ideas of others. You might want to follow through as a team, even though generally you are most independent. A partner comes up with the missing piece. Go as a duo. Expand your ability to relate. Tonight: Just don't be alone.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Plunge into your work. Many different people emerge as the day gets older. You might find that a question simply falls into place. You might feel like someone has more to offer than you do. Experiment with working as a team. Tonight: Do something healthy.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Minnesotan named outstanding teacher at SMC

By Daily Press staff

There is an outstanding teacher in our midst. Santa Monica College Spanish professor Rebecca Anderson — who has been praised for her “dynamic, engaging and eclectic” teaching — has been named “Outstanding Teacher” for 2004 by the California Language Teachers Association.

The association, which represents language teachers statewide in both kindergarten through 12th grades and community colleges, gives the award based on nominations from colleagues throughout California and letters of recommendation.



Rebecca Anderson

“This is a great honor for SMC and for professor Anderson, who clearly deserves it,” said John Gonzalez, SMC’s dean of academic affairs, who wrote one of the letters of recommendation for Anderson.

In his letter, Gonzalez — who served on Anderson’s evaluation committee and has observed her in the classroom — said Anderson is an “outstanding, creative, eclectic, high energy instructor who uses a variety of techniques to ensure that her students acquire the grammatical concepts and nuances of a modern language.”

In addition, Gonzalez said Anderson has been invaluable in her assistance to fellow teachers, conducting teaching demonstrations and developing printed and online materials for classroom use. She also has been involved in campus organizations that include the Academic Senate and Faculty Association. She is currently advisor to the Spanish language and culture club.

Anderson has been teaching at SMC since 1996 as an adjunct professor and as a full-time instructor since 1999. Before coming to SMC, she taught at high schools throughout the Los Angeles area, as well as in Seoul, Korea and in her native state of Minnesota.

A resident of North Hollywood, she received her bachelor’s in Spanish and social studies from Winona State University in Minnesota in 1977 and a master’s in education from USC in 1988.

Stars will be shining at antique weekend

By Daily Press staff

Power-shopping and name-dropping are combined when the Los Angeles Antiques Show returns to Barker Hangar at the Santa Monica Airport for its ninth year this weekend.

A gala preview will kick off the festivities on Thursday evening. The show runs Friday through Sunday.

Honorary chairs for the 2004 Gala preview Thursday evening are Tonight Show Host Jay Leno and his wife Mavis, and prominent Los Angeles philanthropists Geri and Richard Brawerman. Each year, the Women’s Guild of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center mounts the glitzy antiques show’s opening featuring a cocktail reception and buffet dinner with tickets starting at \$250. The gala supports patient care, medical programs and equipment, biomedical research and education projects focusing on women’s health issues. The gala and the show itself are attended by hundreds of celebrities and leaders from the film industry and the Los Angeles business community.

Celebrity regulars include Steve Martin, Jack Nickolson, Martin Sheen, David Hyde Pierce, Emilio Estavez, Carol Burnett, Barbi Benton, Candi Spelling, Cindra Ladd, David Hyde Pierce, Dietrich Bader and Duley Rogers, Elizabeth Wyatt, Jamie Tisch, Tony and Tracy Danza, Valerie Perrine, Wendy Stark, Dean Kootz, Rita Wilson and Jaclyn Smith.

The Women’s Guild also organizes a lecture series, free with show admission, adding even more sparkle to the show. Friday’s 1 p.m. lecture features author Suzanne

See BRIEFS, page 5

Wow — swell. Look for a mix of steady SW swell and small NW wind/ground swell today. The good summer breaks in Northern LA through the north half of the South Bay see waist-to-head-high surf along with some occasionally bigger sets at top breaks. Standout areas with great exposure will be going a couple of feet overhead on sets. Winds will be light and variable to light SE in the morning and will build out of the SW in the 6-12 knot range through the afternoon.

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

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	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	8:45	-0.3	7:04	2.8	12:45	5.4	4:22	3.0
SUNDAY	10:16	-0.3	9:28	3.1	1:57	5.0	6:09	3.4
MONDAY	11:34	-0.4	11:30	2.7	3:36	4.8	6:55	3.8
TUESDAY	NA	NA	12:33	-0.5	5:11	4.8	7:27	4.2
WEDNESDAY	12:41	2.1	1:18	-0.5	6:24	4.9	7:56	4.6
THURSDAY	1:32	1.4	1:55	-0.4	7:21	5.0	8:22	4.9
FRIDAY	2:15	0.9	2:27	-0.2	8:09	4.9	8:47	5.2

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The Q-Line

There has been a lot of speculation recently that terrorists will once again attack the United States. And it’s supposed to happen relatively soon. Before the presidential election, some predict. As we witnessed in Spain several weeks ago, the devastating attack on the train dramatically changed the outcome of that country’s elections.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know,

“If we have another terrorist attack, will it change your view on the politics of Washington and possibly change your vote in the presidential elections?”

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

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OPINION

Current events beg the question: Have we no decency?



POLITI-GIRL

By Beth Solomon

WASHINGTON — In "The Russia House," a Glasnost-era spy movie based on the book by John LeCarre, Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer outwit American and British intelligence services to protect something more precious than political ideology — love.

Set in Russia in the 1980s, the film is a walk down Red Menace Memory Lane — grim apparatchiks hiding around every corner, tiny East German autos spewing black smoke, gray tenement blocs, sulfurous air, and everyone complaining about the food as they chug vodka and smoke like chimneys.

Ah, the good old days.

Yes, the threat of Communist domination looks almost inviting when you compare it to today's evening news. Nuclear annihilation, ICBMs, "two minutes to midnight" and the Cuban Missile Crisis might not be your idea of a Sunday picnic.

But how about dirty bombs in subways, millions of radicals wielding grenade launchers shouting "Death to America," and a global transportation network that makes loose nukes easier to get in many places than Hostess Twinkies.

Welcome to the 21st Century. You are free to move about the ... bomb shelter?

How did we get here from there? The 1964 documentary "Point of Order," a gritty black and white look at the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954, offers some surprising comparisons to today's technicolor politics.

McCarthyism threw many Americans into a maze of fear, paranoia and hate. McCarthy convinced much of America that the threat of Communism was everywhere. He said individual evil-doers could be eliminated to destroy the menace. He said we must all be vigilant. He had a list.

The only problem was the list was used to destroy people for holding political views that differed from McCarthy's. McCarthyism became a weapon in American politics that was used to destroy dissent.

McCarthy was fond of saying that the trouble with Communists was that they had no freedom. "A Communist is not free

— he's not a free agent," McCarthy said. That characteristic put America at risk.

Funny, but that's the same argument our current ideological leader, President George Bush, uses to justify the War on Terror and the War on Iraq.

Our duty, he says, is to spread freedom — what he thinks is freedom — to everyone on earth. In fact, Bush says, it's our duty to God.

At his recent press conference, President Bush explained it this way: "Freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman in this world. And as the greatest power on the face of the Earth, we have an obligation to help the spread of freedom."

With bombs, guns and tanks, that is — if the natives don't get the concept right away.

It's insulting. It's rude. And it's terribly frightening. Especially when those words are beamed live to other fundamentalists who do their violence in the name of a competing God.

Freedom is a great idea, don't get me wrong. But the concept of freedom that was used by McCarthy and seems to motivate George Bush can become a dangerous ideology — or an immoral cause for

war. Imposing it on others should carry a warning: "Could be foolhardy. Could be fatal."

And sure enough, today's post-Cold War ideology, including a "manifest destiny" policy of global freedom, has attracted a hail of bullets from many of those we're trying to "save."

When you're imposing your beliefs behind the barrel of a gun, fundamentalism — no matter what its motivations — is a dangerous thing.

To ignore the humanity of the people one is trying to save — or those caught in the crossfire — is as wrong in Iraq as it is wrong at the World Trade Center.

Which is not lost on those angry young men with rocket launchers ... or their mothers, sisters and wives.

The Army's special counsel, Joseph N. Welch, pierced the veil of McCarthy's ideological plague when he famously asked, "Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"

The same question is relevant today.

(Beth Solomon is a Left Coast writer based in Washington, D.C. who can be reached at bethsolomon@earthlink.net.)

Curb City Hall before quality of life goes up in smoke



INCITES

By Ed Silverstein

Santa Monica has traditionally offered an excellent quality of life due, in no small part, to the efforts of the City Council. But occasionally the council seems to engage in quixotic crusades that leave us scratching our heads and wondering if they might need to up their meds. A few cases in point:

UP IN SMOKE (1)

Taking their lead from the Prohibition-era temperance movement, Santa Monica leaders have expanded their ban on smoking from public buildings to parks, beaches and the pier with even stricter rules on the horizon. All this, much to the relief of the homeless population that can now soil those areas without having to smell nasty cigarette smoke over their own eye-tearing body odor.

Such over-reaching legislation seems less like an effort to protect our health than a chest-thumping competition against other excessively intrusive liberal governments for anti-smoking bragging rights.

UP IN SMOKE (2)

Santa Monica, where the approval process for new construction or a business renovation requires going through more

hoops than a Siegfried and Roy show (and often leaving the applicant as bloodied); the same city that went to the Supreme Court to force a resident to take down his kid's playhouse; a town that makes it harder to get a liquor license than it was for Robert Downey Jr. to successfully complete a 12-step program, didn't blink twice — nor provide any public notice or comment — before approving my neighbors' fireplace addition that leaves the end of their chimney scant feet and a prevailing breeze away from my open living room window.

Yes, according to the code compliance department of Santa Monica, it is perfectly OK to belch the toxic smoke from a small forest fire into my living room and cause me to inhale more second-hand smoke than a Parisian stripper, but God forbid I light up a cigarette on a beach.

But it's not so bad. I can always go live in the park.

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL

I recently received a certified letter from the city of Santa Monica. The letter stated our condo building had run afoul of the Anti-Waste Measure 7.16.020 c3. We were accused of excessively watering our lawn, and unless we ceased and desisted immediately, the building would be slapped with a \$250 fine. It included a nice photo of our wet sidewalk.

Let's look at the cost. We have an inspector with a camera. He has to drive around until he finds these heinous violations, then snap a picture and record all the site information. From there, I assume, he hands off the information to a clerk.

The clerk will need to enter the information and the photo into a computer, look up the name of the occupants, address the envelope, fill out a certified mail receipt and a return receipt, enter all of this into the computer, mail the letter, receive the return receipt, file it, enter the new information and provide this information to the inspector so they can follow up. Including coffee and bathroom breaks, this probably takes about 20 man-hours, plus \$3 postage per letter.

Add to this the lost productivity, not to mention inconvenience, caused to the "offending" resident that has to drive their polluting vehicle to the main post office and wait in line for the privilege of being threatened by their city.

Now, maybe you're saying, "he's an excessive waterer, he deserves anything he gets." Or maybe you're progressive and feel I should be forced to enroll in 12-step for water wasters.

Let me go on record that I don't have an over-watering problem. No, it's not denial. Our sprinkler valve malfunctioned and became locked in the open position. And, for the record, the leak was discovered the day it occurred. The sprinkler was turned off and the repair was made ... all over three weeks before I received the city's very expensive threat.

This is something they might have learned had they picked up the phone and called. More importantly, had we been unaware of the malfunction, the 19 days it took to cite us could have resulted in well over 100,000 gallons of pristine water making its way to the sea.

So what is the motivation for such a policy? Maybe it is that Santa Monica is

no longer satisfied with the tens of millions (extorted) collected as a result of parking (racketeering) enforcement and is using the excuse of water conservation to create additional (taxes) revenue for the city so that they can build more homeless (enabling) shelters and knock down perfectly functional (boondoggle) libraries to build expensive new ones.

Or maybe the city is guilty of violating the Anti-Waste Measures because there is no question that this is an excessive use of city funds.

CURB APPEAL

Much thanks to the Santa Monica City Council for finally acknowledging the danger presented by the Wilshire Boulevard center islands. As previously reported, the islands encroach into the traffic flow, are not easily visible and, as a result, are often struck by cars. This fact had been evidenced by the numerous black tire impact marks that marred the leading edges of each and every island.

But no more. The city, grasping the problem, swung into action and painted the ends of the islands with a highly visible yellow paint. Within a few mere days the success of this operation was evident. Thanks to the high-vis yellow paint, the brand new tire marks are far more easily seen.

(Ed Silverstein is a freelance writer living in a Santa Monica park. You can give him your comments at the free lunch line or e-mail him at edsincites@aol.com.)

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LOCAL



Parents want apology from Sarkissian family

NO SUIT, from page 1

there remains one outstanding lawsuit relating to Maran's death. Maran's parents settled a lawsuit against Angelique Bernstein for \$300,000 in November. They are now pursuing Sarkis Sarkissian, her ex-husband, in appeals court. Sarkis Sarkissian was let off the hook by a judge because he didn't have custody of Katrina Sarkissian at the time of the stabbing.

"We're in this because they don't want to claim any responsibility — they don't want to accept that they raised a daughter this way," said Harriet Maran, Deanna Maran's mother. "Why can't they say, 'We're sorry. We're very sorry' ... Say you're sorry and we can go on with our life."

Katrina Sarkissian stabbed Deanna Maran on Nov. 17, 2001, at an unsupervised teenage party in Westwood, after Deanna Maran got into an altercation with Sarkissian's 15-year-old half sister. Harriet Maran said her daughter's death was the result of Katrina Sarkissian and her half-sister not accepting responsibility for provoking the fight in the first place — and added Sarkis Sarkissian also wants to skirt responsibility.

"Now it continues and the parents don't say they're sorry and that's why we're in this mess, that's why the whole world is in this mess," said Harriet Maran. "How can you expect these children to have any responsibility when their parents don't accept responsibility?"

Bernstein and Sarkis Sarkissian's lawsuit against the LAPD alleged their daughter would have survived had detec-

tives immediately summoned paramedics when she collapsed during questioning. It also alleged the detectives should have observed odd behavior from the teenager as the drugs kicked in, especially since Bernstein told police that her daughter was prescribed the pills.

Katrina Sarkissian and her half-sister were picked up by police at 1:55 p.m. on Nov. 18, the day after Deanna Maran's murder. Paramedics were called within 45 minutes after she collapsed in police custody. Katrina Sarkissian allegedly told detectives that she felt sleepy during the interview. The Los Angeles County Coroner's Office ruled that Sarkissian had overdosed on antidepressant capsules taken before she left her Brentwood home with detectives. Sarkissian took 43 capsules — twice the average fatal dose — of Nortriptyline, a prescription antidepressant, an autopsy showed.

LA Deputy City Attorney Geoffrey Plowden said police possess certain immunities when responding to life and death situations, particularly because of possible lawsuits. If they didn't have immunity, paramedics and police would be hesitant to attempt to save anyone's life for fear of being sued, Plowden added.

Plowden has decided not to pursue attorney fees, which he estimated were between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

"It's over," he said. "We, I suppose, could have pursued trying to recover costs for defending the lawsuit, but we chose not to because the plaintiff decided to voluntarily drop the lawsuit."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

Slesin, with "Over the Top: Helena Rubinstein's Extraordinary Style in Beauty, Art, Fashion & Design." Saturday at 1 p.m., "The World of Hermes: From Saddle Bags to Kelly Bags" will be explored by Francine Bardo, vice president of Retail Stores of America and Barbara Blankstein, regional manager of Hermes of Paris. Sunday's lecture "Jewels of The '50s ... The Women Who Wore Them" is presented by Lisa Hubbard, executive director of Sotheby's International Jewelry, also at 1 p.m.

The Antiques Dealers Association of California (ADAC) organizes the show, carefully selecting 66 experts in fine art antiques from the U.S. and abroad. The works sold on the show's floor range from a few hundred to a few million dollars. Treasures carried out of the Los Angeles Antiques Show in recent years include major oil paintings by Sargent, Picasso and Hassam; jewelry by Tiffany, Cartier and Van Cleef Arpel; furniture by Chippendale, Stickley and Wright and silver by Jensen and Knox.

The Los Angeles Antiques Show, produced by Caskey-Lees, the producers of major antiques shows in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix and New York City, is vetted by panels of experts so that show customers can purchase with confidence.

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■ ANTIQUES SHOW AND LECTURES

Friday, April 30

Show hours: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. (\$15 per person)

Lecture at 1 p.m.: "Over The Top, the extraordinary style of Helena Rubinstein," by Susan Slesin

Saturday, May 1

Show hours: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. (\$15 per person)

Lecture at 1 p.m.: "The World of Hermes," by Francine Bardo, vice president of Retail Stores of America, and Barbara Blankstein, regional manager at Hermes of Paris

Sunday, May 2

Show hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (\$15 per person)

Lecture at 1 p.m.: "Jewels of The '50s ... The Women Who Wore Them" by Lisa Hubbard, executive director, Sotheby's International Jewelry

For more information, call (310) 455-2886.

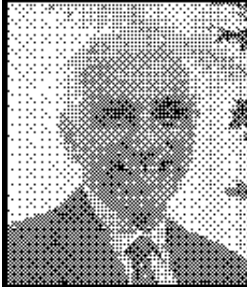
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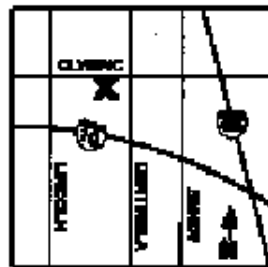
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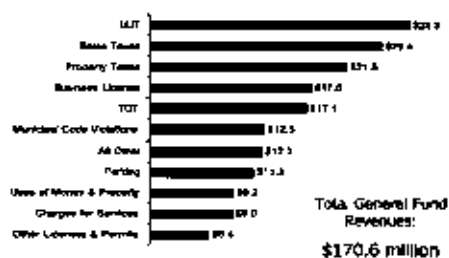
LOCAL

City Fund Revenues

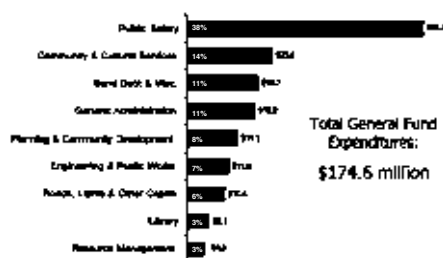


In total Santa Monica has 49 Funds

General Fund Revenues



General Fund Expenditures



City Hall's bank balance hovers around \$1.6M

BUDGET, from page 1

February to City Manager Susan McCarthy, who gave them a target figure to obtain based on the City Council's direction. Since then, she has reviewed those proposed cuts and has sent some department heads back to tweak where necessary. As those proposals come back within the next two weeks, McCarthy will review the numbers and prepare a proposed budget for the council to examine on May 25. A public hearing on the proposed budget is scheduled for June 15, which also is when the City Council will formally adopt the budget.

The City Council held a public hearing in February during the mid-term review of the budget, which was laid out by City Finance Director Steve Stark. Council members gave a general list of their priorities — with most saying vital services like police and fire had to remain at current levels — and sent staffers to work on how to close the gap.

This year, City Hall faces a \$4 million deficit. Officials plan to shave \$2 million in operating costs and take \$2 million out of the capital improvement projects budget. Nineteen positions within City Hall have been identified for possible elimination if more cuts need to be made, according to City Hall spokeswoman Judy Rambeau.

This will be the third consecutive year of budget deficits within City Hall — totaling \$28 million. In 2002, City Hall faced an \$8 million shortfall, and was able to cut \$2.2 million in operating costs and \$6.6 million in capital improvement projects. In 2003, City Hall plugged a \$16 million shortfall by cutting expenses and increasing revenues. Thirty-one positions were eliminated as part of the cuts.

There's been a hiring freeze citywide since 2002, as well as a hold on all cost of living increases for office supplies and expenses in every department.

The public will get a chance to pour over the city's

\$353 million budget during three study sessions, scheduled for May 25-27. The proposed budget is expected to be available on the city's Web site (santa-monica.org) by May 18. The study sessions are designed to give citizens a chance to better understand the budget process and learn in more detail where the money comes from and where it goes.

Of the \$353 million, the City Council is able to control spending for about 44 percent of it, or \$174 million.

"The one we spend the most time on is the general fund because it's the dollars with the fewest strings attached," Stark said.

The remaining \$179 million is earmarked in 48 other accounts that have stipulations on how the money is spent. That's because the money comes from the federal and state governments, as well as grants, that dictate where the money should go. Those funds include the Big Blue Bus, the airport, the Redevelopment Agency, as well as the water, the solid waste and the housing departments, to name a few. (See chart above for further information).

"It's the source of those funds that put restrictions on that money," Stark said.

General fund revenue comes from a host of sources, with the largest being utility user taxes, which generate \$28.3 million. Sales taxes are the second largest generator — \$25.4 million — and property taxes bring in \$21.5 million. (See above chart).

Most of that money is spent on salaries for city workers — it accounts for 68 percent of City Hall's expenditures.

"When you cut budgets, you can't cut far before you cut into personnel," Stark said.

The second-largest expenditure is for public safety, at \$65 million, while community and cultural services cost City Hall \$23 million. (See chart above).

Property tax income is distributed for a variety of uses

— 14 cents of every dollar goes back to City Hall's general fund, while 17 cents of every dollar goes to the local school district. The rest of it goes to the state for an education reimbursement program and Los Angeles County for services, Stark said.

As of Monday, City Hall had \$1.6 million in the bank, which doesn't include its investments.

Sales, bed taxes may be raised

TAX RECORD, from page 1

exception would have been department stores. Santa Monica Place is not doing so well."

Carr feels the economy is finally recovering from 9-11.

City Hall earned \$23 million in sales tax revenue in 2000, but sales slid slowly through 2001 and 2002. The \$24,114,833 earned last year tops 2002 by 7.8 percent, and 2000 by 2.36 percent.

The numbers are so good that City Hall upped its revenue estimate from sales tax earlier this year, and Carr said that estimate is likely to go up again this summer, towards the end of the fiscal year. Sales tax revenue is a key source of money for City Hall, along with property and utility taxes.

Steve Stark, City Hall's finance director, said the sales tax returns are encouraging, but cautioned against making any quick conclusions that sales tax revenues would continue their upward trajectory. Stark said City Hall drafts its budget based on five years of economic trends.

"The goal with long-term forecasting is you don't overreact to a short-term situation," he said.

Local officials are considering putting a sales tax increase on the ballot this November, along with an increase to the local bed tax which is charged on all hotel rooms. But Stark said there's concern among officials statewide that too many incremental tax hikes will be placed on the ballot.

"I guess the fear among local agencies is the voters are going to look at (the ballot) and say, 'I don't understand. No to all of these,'" Stark said.

— John Wood

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STATE



What's in store for bully Wal-Mart still unclear

BY ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — When Wal-Mart sought to open one of its stores near Los Angeles this year, it tried to counter opposition by donating thousands of dollars to a local civic group and spending hundreds of thousands more for a ballot initiative to bypass local government.

It didn't work. Voters in Inglewood, worried that the company would drive out local merchants and offer only low-wage, low-benefit jobs, defeated it.

Despite their victory, community activists said they were surprised by the amount of money the nation's largest retailer spent and the tactics it employed to woo Inglewood's support.

"I have not witnessed the kind of bullying that I saw in Inglewood by any other corporation or business that wanted to come in," said the Rev. Norman Johnson, executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Los Angeles.

Critics of Wal-Mart said the company is increasingly using aggressive, campaign-style tactics to win approval for its stores across the country.

Such tactics may become more commonplace as the Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer moves to open or expand scores of stores nationwide during the next 10 months. That includes plans for up to 240 of its 200,000-square-foot Supercenters — discount store-supermarket hybrids which many communities have sought to block.

"People support and want Wal-Mart Supercenters," Wal-Mart spokesman Peter Kanelos said. "We're going to do everything in our power to make certain that Wal-Mart customers are heard."

He declined to say how much money the retailer typically spends when it identifies a

community for expansion and said the company treats every situation individually.

Other big-box retailers such as Target and Costco typically do not run into the kind of opposition that Wal-Mart does, so they don't have to employ the same tactics, said Carl Steidtmann, chief economist for Deloitte Research in N.Y.

"They're basically dealing with planning commissions and the people in charge of land use, or they're dealing with developers," Steidtmann said. "They're not having to address what's really a political issue, which Wal-Mart, in some instances, does have to deal with."

The opposition has been more pointed in recent months as the company has sought to expand into its last major arena, large U.S. cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago that also have established labor unions. The unions have put manpower and money behind efforts to keep Wal-Mart out.

A recent strike and lockout involving three national supermarket chains and 70,000 grocery workers in Southern California centered on threatened competition from Wal-Mart, which has lower labor costs than the union grocery stores.

Wal-Mart has responded to the opposition by aggressively selling itself to communities, both urban and rural.

In Hood River, Ore., the company recruited employees to speak at city meetings and collected signatures of supporters even before any public hearings were held on its proposed store, said Stu Watson, one of the residents who fought against the retailer's expansion plans.

"They approached it as if there was a political fight to be won," Watson said.

In California, the company has 145 stores and plans to open 40 Supercenters over the next five years.

In some cases, the company has spent

money to promote its own initiatives, appealing directly to voters instead of enduring the lengthy local planning debates that can kill or restrict its plans.

Since 2002, Wal-Mart spent more than \$1.1 million in contributions to political action committees to promote its stores or combat ballot initiatives designed to block massive retail warehouses, according to state records.

By some estimates, the retailer spent more than \$1 million in Inglewood alone, when you add in television commercials and other ad spending.

In Calexico along the California-Mexico border and Contra Costa County in the San Francisco Bay area, Wal-Mart championed voter initiatives to repeal local ordinances that had blocked its expansion. It won both times.

On the east side of San Francisco Bay, Alameda County officials rescinded rules aimed at stifling new developments by the retailer after Wal-Mart threatened a ballot initiative.

Wal-Mart also spends money in other ways. In Los Angeles, the company has donated \$65,000 over the past two years to the Los Angeles Urban League, organization President John W. Mack said.

The company's involvement coincided with the opening of a store in the Crenshaw district of south Los Angeles, a traditionally black community. The three-story store was featured in a national Wal-Mart television commercial highlighting the positive effects its stores can have on communities.

Mack said Wal-Mart later asked him for his support in its campaign in Inglewood, but he opted not to get involved.

"I just didn't feel comfortable with the strategy in Inglewood of going the initiative route in a way that it would bypass the city government's policies," Mack said.

Despite the outcome of the Inglewood vote, Wal-Mart Chairman S. Robson Walton attended the organization's gala honoring former NBA star Magic Johnson a week later.

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DAYS ON THE MARKET

By Jodi Summers

Everyone should have plants in their homes. Greenery brings nature back into our over-urbanized existence, adds some color to our day and, more profoundly, plants are part of the cycle of life. Scientifically speaking, plants give off oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. Humans breathe in oxygen and expel carbon dioxide, thus plants provide a fresh supply of air and absorb the dangerous gases we exhale. Man and plant: It's a very balanced relationship.

"Any tree — whether in the forest or the city — removes CO₂ from the air through photosynthesis. Typically, a tree sequesters a few kilograms of carbon per year in its wood," according to a study by the U.S. Department of Energy. "A tree in Los Angeles can save an additional 3 kilograms of carbon

per year by lowering the city's overall need for air conditioning, plus 15 kilograms more if it directly shades a building."

A study conducted by the U.S. Forest Service estimated that the air pollutant uptake by Santa Monica's tree canopy cover is 10.7 metric tons or .8 pounds per tree. Santa Monica has approximately 33,600 trees, with more than 200 different species, including 4,300 fan palms and 3,200 ficus. According to Santa Monica community forester Walt Warriner, the "ficus is actually the dominant tree in terms of canopy size."

As energy shortages have been known to be a problem, think plants for cooling. "Solar friendly" deciduous trees fill out in the spring to shade your home during summer, then drop leaves to let warming sun pass through in winter. Heating and cooling bills can be reduced by as much as 30 percent if trees and shrubs are placed to control sunlight and block winds.

If you keep your plants happy, it will make you happy as well. To get your lawn looking and feeling fabulous, take a soil sample to one of the local nurseries or, on a government level, to the Cooperative

Extension County Office of Los Angeles (323 260-2267) at 4800 Cesar Chavez Ave. Learn what fertilizer is best and what kind of grass seed you need. Find out what grass best suits your home's soil — options may include Bahiagrass, Bermuda grass, carpetgrass, St. Augustine or Zoysiagrass.

Lawn maintenance secret: Don't mow too low. Cutting grass too short can lead to root damage, which makes your lawn more susceptible to plant diseases, insects and the heat of scorching sun.

"As a rule of thumb, never trim off more than a third," said nationally recognized home care experts James Carey and Morris Carey.

Let's talk water: More plants die from over-watering and over-fertilization than anything else. Roots left to soak in muddy water eventually will rot and cause your plant to suffocate. Experts advise that an inch of water once a week is enough. Need to check when to water? Use your finger. Stick your finger into the soil near the base of the plant. If the soil is moist about an inch beneath the surface, it doesn't need water.

Now onto feeding. Gardeners advise that you should never fertilize a plant that is dry.

Water first, then fertilize. When you bring home a plant from the nursery, be careful not to fertilize it right away. Most companies use slow-release fertilizer that will last for quite a while. Chemical fertilizers can burn, so monitor your quantities and avoid fertilizing during the winter, or when a plant is dormant. Fertilizer can build up in the soil and become toxic.

We will conclude with two good bits of advice offered by a woman on Fifth Street:

■ When the leaf is brown, the plant needs water. When the leaf is yellow, it needs food.

■ Pouring hot water on the weeds that grow in between the bricks in your garden wall will kill them and they won't come back.

The University of California Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles County (<http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/>) develops and implements community-based educational programs in regards to local agriculture.

(Have any home and garden tips you'd like to share? E-mail Jodi Summers at jodis@boardwalkrealty.com, or call (310) 309-4219.)

SANTA MONICA RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

SOLD	740 21ST PL SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	938 16TH ST #4 SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	930 20TH ST #2 SANTA MONICA 90403
Date Sold	SqFt: N/A List Price: \$2,195,000 Bed: 4	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,156 List Price: \$549,000 Bed: 2	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,894 List Price: \$995,000 Bed: 2
04/22/2004	Lot Size: 8,940 Sold Price: \$2,180,000 Bath: 4	04/23/2004	HOD: \$180 Sold Price: \$601,000 Bath: 1.5	04/21/2004	HOD: \$400 Sold Price: \$995,000 Bath: 2.5
SOLD	404 GEORGINA AVE SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	922 16TH ST #2 SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	1222 CHELSEA AVE SANTA MONICA 90404
Date Sold	SqFt: 2,015 List Price: \$2,495,000 Bed: 4	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,212 List Price: \$569,000 Bed: 3	Date Sold	SqFt: 2,320 List Price: \$1,245,000 GI: \$42,264
04/19/2004	Lot Size: 13,510 Sold Price: \$2,485,000 Bath: 4	04/22/2004	HOD: \$194 Sold Price: \$621,000 Bath: 2.25	04/21/2004	Lot Size: 5,305 Sold Price: \$0 GRM: 33.00
SOLD	1440 23RD ST #107 SANTA MONICA 90404	SOLD	939 15TH ST #9 SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	1226 CHELSEA AVE SANTA MONICA 90404
Date Sold	SqFt: 0 List Price: \$339,000 Bed: 1	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,419 List Price: \$635,000 Bed: 2	Date Sold	SqFt: 3,038 List Price: \$1,345,000 GI: \$52,896
04/19/2004	HOD: \$225 Sold Price: \$360,000 Bath: 1	04/21/2004	HOD: \$225 Sold Price: \$687,000 Bath: 2.5	04/21/2004	Lot Size: 5,305 Sold Price: \$0 GRM: 28.30
SOLD	843 21ST ST #6 SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	1330 STANFORD ST #A SANTA MONICA 90404	SOLD	2267 31ST ST SANTA MONICA 90405
Date Sold	SqFt: 785 List Price: \$359,000 Bed: 1	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,868 List Price: \$655,000 Bed: 3	Date Sold	SqFt: 0 List Price: \$699,000 GI: \$0
04/22/2004	HOD: \$150 Sold Price: \$386,670 Bath: 1	04/22/2004	HOD: \$250 Sold Price: \$690,000 Bath: 3	04/19/2004	Lot Size: 7,196 Sold Price: \$699,000 GRM: 0.00
SOLD	1141 26TH ST #A SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	1411 WASHINGTON AVE SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	2441 ARIZONA AVE SANTA MONICA 90404
Date Sold	SqFt: 647 List Price: \$389,000 Bed: 1	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,547 List Price: \$769,000 Bed: 3	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,392 List Price: \$950,000 GI: \$26,808
04/19/2004	HOD: \$200 Sold Price: \$410,000 Bath: 1	04/22/2004	HOD: \$300 Sold Price: \$757,500 Bath: 2.5	04/20/2004	Lot Size: 5,306 Sold Price: \$825,000 GRM: 35.40
SOLD	1141 26TH ST #A SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	1172 CENTINELA AVE #4 SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	1814 OCEAN PARK BL SANTA MONICA 90405
Date Sold	SqFt: 647 List Price: \$389,000 Bed: 1	Date Sold	SqFt: 2,000 List Price: \$769,000 Bed: 2	Date Sold	SqFt: 4,200 List Price: \$1,300,000 GI: \$0
04/19/2004	HOD: \$200 Sold Price: \$410,000 Bath: 1	04/23/2004	HOD: \$300 Sold Price: \$775,000 Bath: 2.5	04/22/2004	Lot Size: 10,000 Sold Price: \$1,288,000 GRM: 0.00
SOLD	1301 17TH ST #208 SANTA MONICA 90404	SOLD	1214 14TH ST #204 SANTA MONICA 90404	Jodi Summers at Boardwalk Realty: 310.309.4219 jodis@boardwalkrealty.com Information received as per the MLS. Not all transactions may have been represented by Boardwalk Realty / Jodi Summers.	
Date Sold	SqFt: 1,606 List Price: \$539,000 Bed: 3	Date Sold	SqFt: 2,264 List Price: \$824,000 Bed: 3		
04/22/2004	HOD: \$250 Sold Price: \$550,000 Bath: 2	04/23/2004	HOD: \$250 Sold Price: \$800,000 Bath: 2.5		
SOLD	1508 BERKELEY ST #C SANTA MONICA 90404	SOLD	201 OCEAN AVE #1601P SANTA MONICA 90402		
Date Sold	SqFt: 1,339 List Price: \$495,000 Bed: 2	Date Sold	SqFt: 1,235 List Price: \$830,000 Bed: 2		
04/21/2004	HOD: \$200 Sold Price: \$587,000 Bath: 2.5	04/22/2004	HOD: \$670 Sold Price: \$850,000 Bath: 2		

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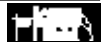
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REAL ESTATE



New developments will make impact felt in SoCal



IN YOUR SPACE

By Christina S. Porter

Four, new large master-planned communities are about to break or have broken ground in Southern California.

Collectively, these projects will have a significant impact upon the basin's real estate market, just like the master-planned communities that have preceded them, including the Irvine Ranch, Mission Viejo, Aliso Viejo, The Foothill Ranch and Valencia.

The new communities are Newhall Ranch (to the west of Valencia), Playa Vista (in West Los Angeles, adjacent to Marina del Rey), the former Tustin Marine Corp Air Station (MCAS) and the former El Toro MCAS (both in Orange County). These four projects will add about 35,000 residential units (approximately the equivalent of the City of Simi Valley or of Newport Beach) and 25 million square feet of commercial space. They also will provide land for three colleges or universities, as well as 9,700 acres of open space — the equivalent of more than two Griffith Parks. Here's a look at two of them. Next week, we'll profile the other two.

NEWHALL RANCH

Newhall Ranch is to the west of Valencia and Magic Mountain, approximately 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. It straddles Highway 126 to the Ventura County line and consists of 19 square miles. Newhall Ranch is under the same ownership as Valencia (Newhall Land). Its specific plan and environmental impact report were approved by the Los Angeles County Board

of Supervisors in May 2003. The EIR was ruled sufficient by the Kern County Superior Court in October 2003. However, that ruling is currently under appeal. Assuming that the appeal is resolved over the next nine months, ground breaking is scheduled to take place by 2007.

When complete (approximately 20 to 25 years after ground-breaking), Newhall Ranch will contain approximately 21,000 housing units, 60,000 residents, 10 million square feet of commercial space and 19,000 employees. For comparison purposes, the residential component will be roughly the same size as Valencia, which currently has approximately 16,000 housing units and 48,000 residents (and, upon completion, will have 23,000 housing units and 69,000 residents). However, its commercial and industrial development will be less intense. Valencia currently has 20 million square feet of commercial space (and another 15 million square feet yet to be built) and 48,000 employees. About 6,100 acres will be set aside for open space, and a trail system with approximately 50 miles of trails will be developed.

PLAYA VISTA

After more than 25 years of planning and extensive entitlement work, Playa Vista finally broke ground in 2002. As of April 2004, 1,500 residential units had been completed, including 900 rental units and 600 owner-occupied units, as well as 220,000 square feet of office space. In the remainder of 2004, an additional 350 rental units and 600 for-sale units will come on line. Build-out of Phase I (3,200 units total and an additional 35,000 square feet of retail space) is expected in 2007. Playa Vista is the first new community to be established on the Westside of Los Angeles in more than 50

years, and the response from the market has been immediate. Established apartments are now 90 percent occupied and are commanding \$2 to \$2.50 per square foot in rents. The for-sale units sold quickly, and of the 600 units delivered to date, only 40 are unsold. The price range of the units sold was from the low-\$200,000's to over \$1 million, with a median price of \$550,000.

On a per-square-foot basis, the units sold for \$275 to \$400 per square foot, with a median of \$325. The vast majority of the housing is attached product. Land prices ranged from \$3 million to \$6 million per buildable acre, significantly exceeding proforma expectations. A high percentage — about 50 percent — of the buyers were former renters, indicating that the project tapped into a large pool of pent-up demand. This was reinforced by the low mortgage rates of the early 2000s. A high percentage — 90 percent — do not have children living at home, and it is estimated that there are more pets in the community than there are children. In fact, the planners of Playa Vista anticipated this, and a "bark-park" is included in Phase I. The buyers also tend to belong to two cohorts: Young professional adults, ages 25-35, and older professional adults and empty-nesters, ages 45-60.

The builders in the community include some of Southern California's leading firms, including Standard Pacific, Greystone/Lennar, K.B. Homes, D.R. Horton/Western Pacific and Shea Homes. Many of these builders see Playa Vista as an opportunity to gain

experience in building higher density, infill housing. Phase II is scheduled to start in 2007 and to be completed by 2010, assuming approval of the project's tentative map and EIR. An additional 2,600 residential units will be completed in that phase, as well as approximately 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of local-serving retail space. Playa Vista also has entitlements for 3.2 million square feet of office space, primarily in the eastern-most portion of the community in the area surrounding the "Spruce Goose" hangars. The exact timing on this space is still to be determined. Playa Vista will provide approximately 700 acres of open space, including a restored wetlands area. Prime parcels of land adjacent to the wetlands and to Marina del Rey, which had been planned for development, have recently been sold to public interest groups for parkland.

(Christina S. Porter specializes in the leasing and selling of office and industrial buildings on the Westside of Los Angeles and beyond. You can contact her at cporter@naicapital.com.)



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NATIONAL

Supreme Court takes up presidential secrecy case

BY GINA HOLLAND
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Constitution gives presidents and vice presidents power to gather advice and make decisions without being forced to reveal every detail of how those decisions are made, the Bush administration's top Supreme Court lawyer argued Tuesday.

"This is a case about the separation of powers," Solicitor General Theodore Olson told the justices at the start of lively arguments about privacy in White House policy-making.

The nearly three-year fight over access to records of Vice President Dick Cheney's work on a national energy strategy came to the high court after a federal judge ordered what Olson called a broad, unconstitutional release of White House documents.

The White House is framing the case as a major test of executive power, arguing that the forced disclosure of confidential records intrudes on a president's power to get truthful advice. Environmental and other interest groups claim the records will show whether the energy industry got special access or favors.

Justices were told that former Enron chairman Ken Lay and others were players, but until the government produces records, it won't be clear if they actually drafted the government's policies.

"The question is what happened at those meetings," said Alan Morrison, the attorney for the Sierra Club.

"The big deal is Scalia.

It was dumb that he went on the hunting trip. It was stupid, but it wasn't illegal."

— PETER STOCKBURGER
Law student
Austin, Texas

The legal issues in the case have been almost overshadowed by a political controversy involving Justice Antonin Scalia. He has refused to step down despite a controversy over a hunting trip he took with Cheney, an old friend, weeks after the high court agreed to hear Cheney's appeal.

Scalia took his seat behind the court's high bench as usual Tuesday, and almost immediately posed a hard question to the administration lawyer. Since the case concerns whether outsiders influenced the outcome of the task force's work, why not release voting records of the energy task force, Scalia asked.

Told that such a disclosure would raise privacy concerns, Scalia sounded skeptical.

"All I'm saying is, why would that be such an intrusion ... just to know whether anybody who voted on any of the recommendations was a nongovernment employee?" he asked.

Later, Scalia fired question after question at Morrison, at one point telling him his arguments were implausible.

The high court is expected to rule by July. The case began in July 2001 when a government watchdog group sued over Cheney's private meetings. The case has never gone to trial, but a federal judge ordered the White House to begin turning over records two years ago.

The Bush administration has lost two rounds in federal court. If the Supreme Court makes it three, Cheney could have to reveal potentially embarrassing records just in time for the presidential election.

Most of the talk among spectators who began lining up the night before was about Scalia, not the case.

"The big deal is Scalia," said 23-year-old law student Peter Stockburger of Austin, Texas. "It was dumb that he went on the hunting trip. It was stupid, but it wasn't illegal."

Watchdog group Judicial Watch and the environmental group Sierra Club sued to get the task force papers. The Sierra Club accused the administration of shutting environmentalists out of the meetings while catering to energy industry executives and lobbyists.

Olson told the justices in court filings that no energy industry officials participated improperly in meetings.

The Supreme Court also is known for private meetings.

"The court utilizes the process of confidential deliberation just as the executive branch does. Memos are drafted, deliberations occur and drafts of opinions are circulated ... all behind closed doors," said Kris Kobach, a constitutional law professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. "In both branches, deliberation is more candid, honest and valuable if it sometimes is sheltered from public scrutiny."

Martin Shapiro, a Supreme Court expert at the University of California, Berkeley, said while the court engages in private consultation, "the justices are used to themselves making decisions on the basis of what they hear from two sides publicly."

The case requires the court to clarify a federal open-government law. Scalia had said he did not discuss the case with Cheney when they flew together on a government jet to Louisiana for the duck hunt at a camp owned by an oil rig services executive.

"If it is reasonable to think that a Supreme Court justice can be bought so cheap, the nation is in deeper trouble than I had imagined," Scalia wrote in rejecting the Sierra Club's request that he disqualify himself.

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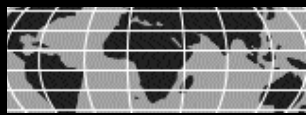
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WORLD BRIEFLY

Cotton subsidies deemed unfair

By The Associated Press

SAO PAULO, Brazil — In a decision that could have far-reaching repercussions for the American farmer, the World Trade Organization has ruled that U.S. cotton subsidies are unfair to farmers in developing nations.

Siding with a complaint from Brazil, the WTO said the subsidies boost U.S. production and exports while lowering world cotton prices.

The ruling is the first time a country has been challenged over its domestic agricultural subsidies, and the first case that looks at the effect of export subsidies on crops.

Monday's decision came in a long-awaited report by three WTO experts. A trade official in Washington, who declined to be named, said the United States plans to appeal.

"We believe U.S. farm programs were designed to be, and are, fully consistent with our WTO obligations," the official said. "We have serious concerns with aspects of the panel report."

If allowed to stand, the decision could bode ill for all U.S. farmers who benefit from government support. Curbing subsidies for cotton would mean support for other U.S. crops could be vulnerable to trade challenges.

It could also expose other industrialized nations to similar complaints.

TV station airs terrorist confessions

By The Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — State television aired a videotape of four men admitting they were part of an al-Qaida plot to attack the U.S. Embassy and other targets in Jordan using a combination of conventional and chemi-

cal weapons.

A commentator on the tape aired Monday said the suspects had prepared enough explosives to kill 80,000 people.

One of the alleged conspirators, Azmi Al-Jayousi, said that he was acting on the orders of Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian wanted by the United States for allegedly organizing terrorists to fight U.S. troops in Iraq on behalf of al-Qaida. U.S. officials have offered a \$10 million reward for his capture.

Jordan disclosed the plot earlier this month and said it had arrested several suspects. Four other terror suspects believed linked to the conspiracy died in a shootout with police in Amman last week.

The Jordanian television segment showed still photographs of al-Jayousi and nine other suspects, including the four killed in last week's clashes with security forces.

No trial date has been set in the case.

Kerry done beating around Bush

By The Associated Press

WHEELING, W.Va. — John Kerry, a decorated Navy veteran criticized by Republicans for his anti-war activities during the Vietnam era, lashed out at President Bush this week for failing to prove whether he fulfilled his commitment to the National Guard during the same period.

Conservative critics have questioned whether Kerry deserved his three Purple Hearts for battle wounds, an issue the Democratic presidential candidate sought to put to rest last week by releasing his military records. On Sunday, a top Bush adviser criticized Kerry for leading anti-war protests after he returned from the battlefield.

"If George Bush wants to ask me questions about that

through his surrogates, he owes America an explanation about whether or not he showed up for duty in the National Guard. Prove it. That's what we ought to have," Kerry told NBC News in an interview. "I'm not going to stand around and let them play games."

Kerry's direct criticism of Bush's Guard record reflected an aggressive strategy to challenge the president. It came as Vice President Dick Cheney used a speech in Missouri to question Kerry's fitness to be commander in chief, and the Bush campaign launched a \$10 million television ad campaign criticizing Kerry's Senate votes on weapons systems.

Conviction won't stop the hating

By The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Anti-discrimination groups are warning that the conviction of a white supremacist charged with seeking to have a judge murdered won't stifle those who preach hatred.

"These people simply scatter for a while until they find other groups to latch onto. The hate's always going to be out there," said Ian Sigel, Midwest director of the Jewish Defense League. "All we can do is remain vigilant."

Matthew Hale, whose gospel of "racial holy war" was linked to a follower's deadly shooting rampage five years ago, was found guilty this week of trying to have U.S. District Judge Joan Humphrey Lefkowitz killed.

Prosecutors said Hale was furious after Lefkowitz ordered him to stop using the name World Church of the Creator because it had been trademarked by an Oregon-based religious group that has no ties to Hale.

Hale's group was founded in 1973 and has had at most a few hundred members in about 22 states, experts say.

Hale's conviction comes almost five years after he first attracted national attention when a follower, Benjamin Smith, went on a deadly shooting rampage, targeting minorities in Illinois and Indiana.

Solicitation of murder carries a maximum 20 years in prison.

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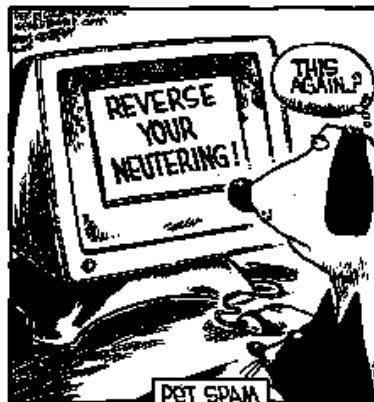
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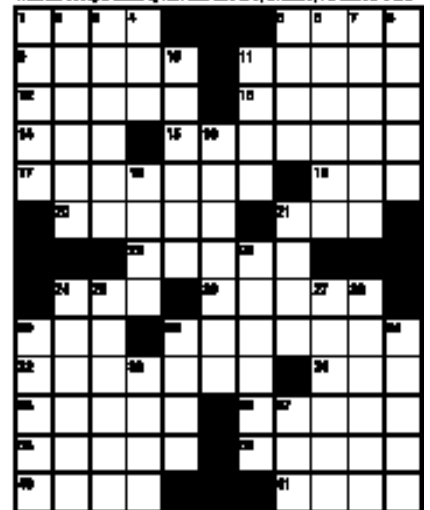
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For Rent

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For Rent

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MDR LARGE 3+2, W/D, refrigerator, fireplace, 2-car garage, steps to sand, pets ok! \$3500/mo 310-577-0015

MDR PENINSULA, Very large 2bd, 2ba with balcony, incredible canal view, fireplace, dishwasher, stove. 2 car parking, 1 year lease, no pets. 110 Hurricane St. #204 Owner: Seymour Wynn \$2000 310-466-9256

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PACIFIC PALISADES \$1995/mo Upper, 2+2, balcony, bright, spacious, totally renovated, Parking, no pets, n/s 310-471-4181

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SANTA MONICA shrd hse, pvt rm, dog ok, r/s, dwasher, near SMC, m to m, \$550 www.westsiderentals.com

SANTA MONICA Townhouse 2+1.5, 1214 Idaho Ave. Redone, 1 car garage, laundry on-site, will consider pets \$2195/mo 310-869-0468 www.howardmanagement.com

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SANTA MONICA, furn., r/s, gated, laundry, quiet, gated prking, gas & elec. incld, \$955 www.westsiderentals.com

SANTA MONICA, lower, r/s, gated, crpt, blinds, bungalow like, util incld, \$850 www.westsiderentals.com

SANTA MONICA, lower, r/s, patio, gated, crpt, laundry, m to m, util incld, \$750 www.westsiderentals.com

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**2-wheel alignment
& Tire Inspection
\$39.⁹⁵**

Check and adjust camber and toe. Check tread depth and condition all four tires. Additional parts and labor may be required on some vehicles. See Service Advisor for details.

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& Tire Inspection
\$69.⁹⁵**

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