

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

4 6 17 29 31
Meganumber: 8
Jackpot: \$33 Million

FANTASY 5

10 15 18 19 26

DAILY 3

Daytime: 4 1 3
Evening: 6 3 4

DAILY DERBY

1st: 07 Eureka!
2nd: 05 California Classic
3rd: 03 Hot Shot
RACE TIME: 1:42.60

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

According to Transportation Security Administration officials, New Jersey psychiatrist Esha Khoshnu, in a stopover in Phoenix en route to a professional meeting in San Diego in February, got "mouthy and snippy" with Mesa Airlines agents who wanted to examine her luggage, reportedly saying, "(Even if) I had a bomb, you wouldn't find it." Agents, following TSA protocol, detained her, causing her to miss her flight, and her luggage, loaded onto another flight, was eventually detonated on the tarmac at Lindbergh Field in San Diego.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 118th day of 2005.
There are 247 days left in the year.

On April 28, 1945, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were executed by Italian partisans as they attempted to flee the country.

In 1967, heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali refused to be inducted into the Army, the same day Gen. William C. Westmoreland told Congress the U.S. "would prevail in Vietnam."

In 1974, a federal jury in New York acquitted former Attorney General John Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans of charges in connection with a secret \$200,000 contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign from financier Robert Vesco.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

"The world does not require so much to be informed as reminded."

HANNAH MORE

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Police crack open opium ring

SM man dubbed as 'boss of bosses' in international ring

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN LA — Authorities on Wednesday arrested a Santa Monica man who they say was the head boss of an international opium ring which brought millions of dollars worth of drugs to Los Angeles.

Mehrdad Lari, 47, was arrested at his home on the 300 block of 11th Street shortly after 6 a.m. for

possession with intent to distribute opium. His wife, Marjan Sarshar, 47, of Santa Monica, was also arrested at their home, located between San Vicente Boulevard and Georgina Avenue, for loan fraud. Mehdi Ilkani, 58, of Santa Monica, was arrested on Bentley Street in the Ocean Park neighborhood. Ilkani was booked on money laundering charges and is considered by authorities to be a mid-level opium distributor.

Authorities allege Lari bought and sold millions of dollars worth of drugs to various mid-level opium distributors throughout Los Angeles from 2001 to as recently as March, according to an affidavit filed with the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Lari allegedly purchased opium from Gholam Hassan Nasserijafar, who supplied the drug organization even after he was arrested in December of 2003 by the German State Police, according to the affidavit.

A DEA special agent had been investigating Lari and several individuals involved in the ring since 2003. The U.S. Attorney's Office, which is prosecuting the case, allege the money laundering and opium distribution ring involved more than a dozen people, with Lari being described as the "boss of the bosses."

Also arrested on Wednesday for possession with intent to distribute opium was Lari's employ-

See **OPIUM**, page 5



David Hume Kennerly/Special to the Daily Press

Teachers, public school supporters and students prepare to take to the streets in front of the Santa Monica Civic Center on Wednesday, en route to Sacramento to protest Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's education cuts.

School supporters hit road

Education advocates are turning up the heat on Schwarzenegger

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Santa Monica parents, students and school representatives have begun a counterattack to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's education cuts.

More than 100 local public education advocates joined thousands more from across California on Wednesday, demanding Schwarzenegger restore Proposition 98 funding and make the failing public school system a top priority. Two coach buses departed from the Civic Center for the two-day rally entitled

"Caravan for Kids," which included a pit stop at Schwarzenegger's office in Los Angeles Wednesday, to be followed by a planned statewide protest on the Capitol steps in Sacramento today.

Santa Monica public education advocacy groups — such as the Community for Excellent Public Schools and the Santa Monica-Malibu PTA — sponsored the local event and have been an integral part in organizing the statewide effort, organizers said.

A recent report published by the RAND Corp., a Santa Monica-based international

See **CARAVAN**, page 8

Students tired of taking a hike

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

MAIN STREET — Hundreds of college students decked out in graduation caps and gowns they fear they may never get to wear marched to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's Santa Monica restaurant on Wednesday to protest tuition hikes.

More than 300 California State University college students and faculty members marched from the Victorian House on Main Street to Schatzi's, a restaurant owned by Schwarzenegger, to protest three years of budget cuts, rising tuition costs and slashed course offerings for the California State University school system. Students from Cal Poly, Long Beach, Bakersfield and Northridge all participated in the protest.

Just a few hours earlier, and a few blocks away, local school advocates headed for the steps of the State Capitol building in Sacramento to protest Schwarzenegger's cuts to public education. (See related story.)

Members of the California Faculty Association, the teachers union which helped organize the event, said Schwarzenegger intends to slightly increase the CSU budget next year, but another \$181 million is needed

See **PROTEST**, page 8



Ryan Hyatt/Special to the Daily Press

College students march on Main Street Wednesday to protest Gov. Schwarzenegger's increases on tuition fees.



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Santa Monica Daily Press

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS The stars show the kind of day you'll have:
★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★★-Positive ★★-Average ★★-So-so ★-Difficult



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Take the lead, knowing that the end results, for better or for worse, will fall on you. You might be surprised at how you see a changeable situation. Laugh and relax with someone pivotal to your image or well-being. Tonight: Could be late.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Spontaneity surrounds friends and associates. Go with it, and have a very special day. Responsibilities might be important, but so is having a good time. Seek out the facts and only the facts, my dear Bull. Tonight: Use some of your high-powered energy.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Someone clearly has his or her own agenda. Hopefully, you will agree with him or her. Don't buck the status quo publicly, but on an individual level. A difference of opinion might be best kept quiet. Tonight: Nice and easy.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Recognize what must be done, though convincing others of that fact could be close to impossible. Honor unusual information by saying "thank you" to the giver. Still, check out the facts. Your perspective could radically change. Tonight: Go along with another's plans.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ Get down to the facts. Finances, especially involving loans or other people's funds, could be subject to change. Listen to the other side of an issue, but don't feel you must go along. Focus on your errands and projects. Tonight: Exercise.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Allow your imagination to take off. Creativity and interpersonal dealings come together. You can use charm and wit to get others to go along with your ideas. Curb a tendency to spend way too much or to overdo it. Tonight: Think "fun."



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ You might go way overboard without intending to. Try to keep your long-term priorities in mind. Be willing to adapt your plans and procedures in order to make your day work. Give up rigidity, but know what is good for you. Tonight: Entertain from home.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ You have a way of letting others know what you are thinking without confusing them or hurting their feelings. Work with an unusual solution or idea. Your instincts guide you no matter what you do. Listen to your inner voice. Tonight: Be spontaneous.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Your financial interests need to come to the forefront. Something that seems unexpected actually has been brewing in the background. Don't worry about a domestic matter or real estate investment. Do what you must. Tonight: Pay bills first.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ The Moon in your sign gives you unusual drive and energy. Know more of what you want and expect from others. A surprise might reflect how off-base you have been in a judgment. Incorporate new information. Tonight: What first might seem like a burden turns out to be fun.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ Know when to pull back and say little. Your ability to understand others might be necessary. Information and news could easily overwhelm you. Retreat if you need to. You pull the wild card financially. Tonight: Get some extra R and R.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ You might come off much wilder than you realize. Although you think of yourself as dependable, others view you as unpredictable. Understand what a partner expects from you. Do your best. Everyone appreciates your efforts. Tonight: A good time is had by all.



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LOCAL



Perfection



Lisa Winick/Special to the Daily Press

Scott Heineman, 12, pitcher of the White Sox and son of Santa Monica Police Sgt. Steve Heineman, pitched a perfect game against the Mets in the Santa Monica Little League this past Saturday.

The White Sox won the game 10-0 to up their record to 9-1. Heineman, also known as “The Rocket.” He struck out the first 11 batters he faced before the Mets’ Zack McMillan grounded a ball to Sox shortstop Zack Tinker to end the inning. Heineman came back strong to strike out the final six Mets for a total of 17 strikeouts of the 18 batters he faced to complete his perfect game.

The Santa Monica Little League plays at Memorial Park, 16th Street and Olympic Boulevard. Game time schedules can be seen at SMLL.com.

Inning	1	2	3	4	5	6	final score
Mets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sox	4	2	1	0	3	X	10

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Less gangs, more paychecks

By Daily Press staff

It’s time to work off gang violence in Santa Monica.

And the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce is trying to get the job done by finding work for youth.

The chamber of commerce is committed to a number of efforts related to job development and employment, including an upcoming job fair for youth.

At the Job Fair, Santa Monica business owners will recruit motivated youth, ages 14-24, for summer, seasonal and permanent jobs. Participating youth need to bring a driver’s license or school ID as proof of Santa Monica residency.

The Job Fair is being coordinated for the Chamber of Commerce by the WorkSource Center in West Hollywood operated by Jewish Vocational Services. The city and local non-profit agencies are assisting with youth outreach for the Job Fair and with job preparation workshops, aimed particularly at Pico neighborhood youth.

The youth job fair will be held May 25 from 3:30 to 7 p.m. at the Santa Monica High School Cafeteria, 601 Pico Blvd.

The Earth-friendliest of Santa Monica

By Daily Press staff

Do you clean with recycled cloths and print with soy ink?

The City of Santa Monica and Chamber of Commerce announced this year’s winners of the Sustainable Quality Awards (SQA). The SQA program, an outreach effort of the Sustainable City Plan, is celebrating its 10th anniversary and honoring local organizations and businesses that make extraordinary contributions to our community. This year there are two grand prize SQA winners.

One grand prize winner is Heal the Bay’s Santa Monica Pier Aquarium, a non-profit organization that provides an educational experience for children, families and anyone interested in marine life. Through interactive exhibits and hands-on experiences with tidepool animals, visitors learn the importance of protecting and preventing pollution from entering Santa Monica Bay. Heal the Bay took over management of the aquarium in 2003 and has since served 21,000 students from Los Angeles County and beyond. Heal the Bay’s recycling efforts include: Staff and volunteers bringing in reusable mugs, handing out materials that are laminated and loaned to visitors, and using recycled and reusable cleaning cloths. Heal the Bay offers an excellent benefit package that includes matching employee contributions to an IRA. Heal the Bay encourages staff to contribute to the community by allowing them to volunteer for organizations during paid work hours.

The other grand prize winner is Urth Caff . Established in 1989, Urth Caff  only



SURF REPORT

Today is looking like a NW wind swell day as aftermath from the cut-off low that is diving down towards the coast with a precipitation chance keeps some 8-10 second periods in the water. Size is small, knee- to waist-high. No significant SW is expected. Conditions are highly questionable, as winds and weather are not expected to be favorable.

Mostly cloudy with showers likely. A slight chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the lower to mid 60s. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph. Chance of rain 60 percent.

Today the water is:

64°

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

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	3:31	-0.1	3:10	0.9	9:35	4.3	9:25	5.7
SUNDAY	4:08	-0.5	3:36	1.2	10:18	4.1	9:51	5.9
MONDAY	4:49	-0.7	4:03	1.6	11:06	3.8	10:22	6.1
TUESDAY	5:35	-0.8	4:32	1.9	12:00	3.5	10:58	6.0
WEDNESDAY	6:28	-0.8	5:03	2.3	1:08	3.2	11:40	5.8
THURSDAY	7:31	-0.6	5:43	2.7	2:40	3.0	N/A	N/A
FRIDAY	8:07	-0.4	6:24	2.9	3:02	2.8	12:35	5.4

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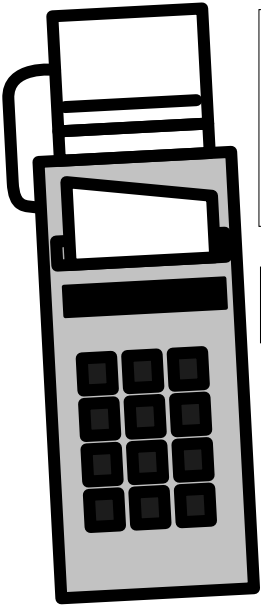


Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger apologized last week for suggesting that California’s border with Mexico be closed in an effort to solve the nation’s illegal immigration problem. Schwarzenegger insisted that he misspoke to newspaper editors and publishers, intending to say the border should be secured.

The comments thrust the issue of illegal immigrants in the United States back to the fore, so this week, Q-Line wants to know:

What steps, if any, should the United States take to quell the rush of illegal immigrants into the United States via the southern border?

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



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Get the facts now...before it's too late!



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

purchases coffee from farmers that pay workers a fair wage and practice organic agriculture. Urth Caffé policies also include purchasing only natural or certified organic teas and food items, unbleached recycled paper products and printing with soy inks. Urth Caffé was strategically built on an empty lot in the less developed part of Main Street, with the aim of helping strengthen the local business economy. The business has an advanced solar system which exclusively powers their hot water heater and feeds back into the main power grid. Urth Caffé covers costs for staff that commute using public transportation. By paying above minimum wage, offering health insurance, vacation time and profit sharing, they boast an extremely low staff turnover. Urth Caffé demonstrates that implementing sustainable practices leads to a successful business.

Other businesses and organization that received environmental awards include: Bubble Beach Laundromat, Liberty Hill Foundation, Getty Images, Gladstein, Neandross & Associates LLC, Lululemon, California Recycles, and Pugh and Scarpa.

Winners will be honored at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon on Tuesday, May 3, at the Doubletree Guest Suites located at 1707 4th Street from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is open to the community, pre-paid tickets are \$25. Reservations are required. Call (310) 393-9825, ext. 10 to reserve seating by Friday April 29.

May mischief at the library

By Daily Press staff

There's something mischievous amidst the May flowers at the Santa Monica Public Library.

The Ocean Park Branch of the Santa Monica library is putting on a program of stories that includes a puppet show for young Santa Monicans, aged 3 to 7.

Shows will take place Tuesday, May 3, at 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Tickets are free, but they must be picked up by noon on Tuesday May 3. Space is limited, tickets are given out on a first-come, first-served basis. No phone reservations. For information, call: (310) 392-3804.

Jazzing up the church

By Daily Press staff

Need a jazz fix this Sunday?

The Peter Stenshoel Quartet is performing a mix of spirituals and jazz standards at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church. Concerts are held the first Sunday of every month. Admission is free. The next concert will be this Sunday, May 1, at 5 p.m.

Mt. Olive Lutheran Church is located at 1343 Ocean Park Blvd.



LOCAL



Alleged opium ring had SM connections

OPIUM, from page 1

ee Ali Mojaddam, 32, of Los Angeles. Lari owns and operates a jewelry and design company called Mallery Design, located in the jewelry district in downtown LA. The affidavit alleges Lari used his business to sell opium, purify it from its raw form and launder the proceeds from its sale.

The DEA and the FBI allege Lari and Mojaddam distributed the opium received from Nasser-Jafar in Germany, and wired the sale proceeds to various international locations. Additionally, Lari used the proceeds to acquire property and high-valued vehicles, as well as set up limited liability corporations and refinance real property and homes.

The defendants are being held at the Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles. They appeared in U.S. District Court, Central District of California on Wednesday. They will make a plea once they have been indicted, according to U.S. Assistant Attorney Peter Hernandez.

Multiple criminal complaints filed in U.S. District Court on Monday and Tuesday indicate that in December 2003, German State Police and the DEA in Frankfurt seized about 271 kilograms of opium — worth about \$5.4 million — from a drug organization run by Nasser-Jafar. Nasser-Jafar and his associates were arrested, and further investigation uncovered an international drug ring, where the opium was obtained from Iran, passed through Germany and shipped to Los Angeles, according to the complaints.

Lari's and Mojaddam's business cards from Mallery Design were found in Nasser-Jafar's apartment in Dusseldorf, Germany, in October of 2002, when German police served a search warrant there, according to the affidavit.

During the investigation in LA, authorities obtained telephone records, bank records, property loan records and other information relating to the organization, all of which led a special agent to believe Lari and Mojaddam continued to allegedly sell opium and launder money even after Nasser-Jafar's arrest, the affidavit said.

Confidential informants aided authorities in tracking the smuggling of drugs, which were carried into the United States in false-bottomed suitcases.

"Prior to and immediately after the opium had been smuggled and delivered to Lari and Mojaddam, Lari's bank accounts would receive large amounts of cash and checks from individuals who were purchasing opium from Lari ...," the affidavit states. "Lari and Mojaddam were involved in obtaining cash and check proceeds from the sales of opium ... and subsequently structuring deposits and conducting wire transfers into Nasser-Jafar's bank accounts to pay him for quantities of imported opium."

In total, 11 arrests were made by the DEA and the FBI. However, one suspect remained at large as of Wednesday afternoon, said DEA spokesman Jose Martinez. Also arrested on Wednesday for their alleged roles in the opium drug ring that stretched from Iran and Germany to Boston and Los Angeles, were Kamran Atarzadeh, 53, and Faramarz Bokhour, 55, both of Los Angeles. They were arrested for possession with the intent to distribute opium. Individuals arrested for money laundering include Bijan Kohanzad, 43, of Brentwood; Houshyar Babelpour, 44, of Woodland Hills; Benham Azimi, 45, of Pasadena; Fariborz Ahl, 44, of Los Angeles; and Moussa Abadijah, 55, of Beverly Hills. All of the arrests were conducted in the Los Angeles area.

On April 2002, an opium transaction occurred at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica, according to the affidavit. A confidential informant traveled from Germany to Santa Monica with two of Nasser-Jafar's employees. The three of them transported 11 suitcases, each containing four kilograms of opium. Once at the hotel, four suitcases were delivered to Mojaddam in the lobby. The informant said stacks of money were piled on top of Nasser-Jafar's table in his hotel room — estimated to be about \$100,000, according to the affidavit.

Through surveillance, the DEA special agent tracked at least 10 transactions and deliveries that involved either Lari or Mojaddam between April 2002 and January of 2005, according to the affidavit.

The IRS, the Glendale Police Department and the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office assisted the DEA and FBI in the arrests.

In addition to the arrests, search warrants related to the investigation were executed at 13 locations in the Los Angeles area, including Lari's 11th Street home.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Samohi visit was peacekeeping mission

Editor:

"Every human being has etched in his personality the indelible stamp of the Creator." — Martin Luther King Jr.

There has been a lot of confusion and misinformation that has been put out in the media regarding a mediation session that was going to take place at Santa Monica High School on Wednesday, April 20. I believe it is important to provide accurate information regarding my role in this incident. To truly end violence we must begin with establishing mutual respect and not engage in the type of divisive attack that has prompted me to write this letter. As a lifelong resident of Santa Monica, former student body president of Samohi (1989-90), former counselor at Samohi (1998-00), founder/director of the Pico Youth & Family Center which serves at-risk youth and current member of the school board, I have a unique perspective that I hope can inspire a new vision for peace, unity, academic excellence and social justice at Santa Monica High.

On April 15, Santa Monica High experienced a few fights that were misconstrued as "race riots" and exaggerated in the press. I was made aware that violence occurred on campus after the school had been placed on lockdown. I was not on campus when the violence occurred but offered my support to the school and administration on various occasions, and even months before tensions escalated on campus.

On Monday, April 18, I was called on by school superintendent John Deasy to mediate tensions between students at Santa Monica High. I mediated tensions that resulted from Friday's violence between two students and I also met with several Latino and African American student leaders to brainstorm ideas to promote unity on campus. One house principal told me that my presence was needed and welcomed the support from the community on campus. I did not communicate with Dr. Deasy or Samohi's administration after Monday and this lapse in communication and coordination contributed to a confrontation between police and I that SMPD Chief James T. Butts exploited for political reasons.

On Wednesday, April 20, I went on campus to continue the mediation process and I was accompanied by two individuals that are successful business pioneers in the hip hop industry. We made sure to check-in and sign-in at the front gate. Both of the peace mediators in question are committed to uniting youth of all ethnicities. One of these individuals made mistakes in his past, paid his dues to society, and is committed to giving back positively to his community. Their story of struggle, transformation and triumph in the face of poverty and marginalization is exactly what our youth facing similar social dynamics need to hear.

From my many years of working to address youth violence in the community I understand that the youth directly involved in the violence will listen more to people who they can connect with. In fact, this approach was called for by experts, parents and youth at the first "community workshop on gang violence" that was sponsored by the city of Santa Monica and Sen. Sheila Kuehl on Feb. 26. Our plan on Wednesday was to speak to youth of all backgrounds about the need for peace and reconciliation. In our own lives, hip hop culture has taught us to cross the racial divide that is so prevalent in almost every aspect of society.

Unfortunately, because of miscommunication and negative stereotypes we were unable to continue the mediation process. The manner in which the police approached us caused a scene and a group of African American students began to gather around to see what was happening. I spoke to the youth in the group, many who I have relationships with, and suggested that they disperse to avoid any further conflict with the police.

The students were respectful and cooperative. The police report stated that my behavior could have resulted in a "riot" from black students. This statement is more than an exaggeration. It indicates how the person who wrote the police report perceives our children. Although police can deter a fight between students they are not trained to resolve intercultural conflict. I acknowledge and respect the role of law enforcement on Samohi's campus but a long-term solution to violence requires much more than deterrence.

Youth violence is a symptom of a larger crisis that has its root in social and economic inequality. To build peace we must have a space at the table for every individual in our community that is committed to spreading the message of unity and non-violence. As a former alumnus of Samohi, I care deeply about our students and the schools that I was elected to protect. I have made a lifetime commitment to ending youth violence and I look forward to working collaboratively with school administrators, community leaders, students, parents and the police to sustain the peace and promote unity in our community.

Oscar de la Torre

School board member

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District

de la Torre the solution, not the problem

Editor:

First of all, I want to commend the students who are raising their voices and getting active about solutions, especially the joint MEChA and Black Student Union five-point plan. The parents and community activists need to be heard, supported and joined in their organizational efforts.

I am concerned primarily with some racist attitudes of letter writers towards black and Latino youth, the reactionary and ignorant impulse on behalf of some is to "get rid" of troublemakers (Mayor Hahn had the same response at a Jefferson High meeting). This view is short-sighted, criminalizes youth and relies on police officers to solve complex and deep-rooted social problems.

As a native and former Samohi English teacher, I am familiar with racial tension and have worked and continue to work with youth, volunteering at the Pico Youth & Family Center. The article slanderizing Oscar de la Torre's visit to Samohi over relied on Joaquin Vega's police report (SMDP, April 23, page 1). The police it seems "have nothing better to do" than attack people that are directly involved with youth of color in a positive/constructive way. To treat a Chicano

See **LETTERS**, page 7

The Iraq thing: Try as we may, it won't go away

NEWS ON THE EDGE

BY RON SCOTT SMITH



Where have all the flowers gone? You know, the ones they were supposed to affectionately throw at the liberating forces?

Well, give it a few more years. The New York Times reports that the Pentagon predicts by 2010 only 40,000 GI's will be needed in Iraq — in case you wondered where all the good news that's fit to print has gone, along with the flowers.

What with Michael Jackson, the price of gas, the Pope, Social Security, DeLay, Bolton, Terri Schiavo and all the rest dominating the front pages in past weeks, you may have almost gotten yourself to forgetting Iraq and its attendant mayhem. Nice try.

Fact is, there are still some 400 insurgent attacks every week, and about 60 people are injured or killed daily in the bombings, shootings and rocket attacks. Yes, but only a handful of the casualties are our own and we call that, as the Who would say, "a bargain, don't we, the best we ever had." And so the story goes, a

mere one premature death at a time, dropping ever more out of sight, out of mind, to a nation that seems to have sighed the heavy sigh and moves on from caring.

Last week, as chance would have it, I had the privilege of meeting two Americans who recently returned from Baghdad.

A young Marine whose job it was — and probably will be again — to defuse and disable those deadly little roadside bombs that light up the highways there, told me that from his front-line vantage point, "Things will get much worse before they get better." As he spoke, his eyes darted up and down the safe Santa Monica street we stood on. He was noticeably — painfully — jittery, and with good reason. Imagine waking up each morning — brushing the teeth, combing the hair — then heading out onto the mean streets of occupied Baghdad to stick your well-groomed face into any manner of home-made explosive device to determine that it's live, then to disarm it with painstaking, life-and-death caution, if you're lucky.

The demolitions expert said he has already done two full tours of duty in Iraq, and while far from thrilled, remains fully aware that he will most likely be called up for a third, because nobody's enlisting. Who would? It's gotten so bad that military recruiters are routinely setting up

tables on high school campuses, where the name of every eligible student has already been forwarded to the Pentagon, unless parents have sent in special requests to be opted out of this obscure provision in the Bush "no child left behind" education program that's beginning to look more like "no child left unrecruited."

A couple nights later, an employee of the Baghdad division of Reuters, just off the plane, home for a two-week hiatus from hell, told me of the armed compounds in which foreign journalists are sequestered, with checkpoints at both ends of the street secured by military, and private security. Every time someone has to leave to cover an explosion, it is a carefully planned operation that requires bodyguards and armed vehicles. When I asked him about the general consensus of the Iraqi citizenry about the American occupation, he said they are fairly unanimous in the opinion that it's the Americans who stabilize the torn nation, and the Americans who destabilize it.

But the president doesn't seem to mind. When he addressed a group of soldiers at Fort Hood on the two-year anniversary of the fall of Baghdad, he fairly gushed as he began working on the

legacy thing by predicting a sweet spot in history for his war, "For millions of Iraqis and Americans, it is a day they will never forget. The toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue will be recorded, alongside the fall of the Berlin Wall, as one of the great moments in the history of liberty."

Iraqis, who apparently don't view it as one of their greater moments, liberty or no liberty, took to the streets of Baghdad by the tens of thousands on the very day Bush spoke to the troops in Texas. Demonstrators shouted "Death to America," in what Iraqi police called the biggest anti-American protest since the statue fell. One protester, carrying an effigy of Bush that he presumably was about to set on fire, declared in the strong, clear, new-found voice of freedom, "The American people need to know that they can't suppress us anymore, even with all their strength and power."

American soldiers dutifully secured the perimeter of the demonstration aimed directly at them. There were still no flowers or candy for the GI's in the hands of the protesters, hands that instead were fully occupied with signs that requested, in all of new-found freedom's glory, "Death to America."

(Contact Ron Scott Smith at edgethewest@aol.com.)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS, from page 6

school board member this way is racist. Would they do this to the other Anglo school board members, who have not even visited the campus or worked directly with students of color?

Samohi administration should have brought de la Torre into the process from the very beginning. They have a bad record of being scared of black and Latino leadership. The principal specifically seems better suited commanding a troop in Iraq: She treated Latino parents disrespectfully at the community forum the Monday after the disturbance, and was generally closed to ideas. She over relies on police for solutions. Any ideas that referred to her duties were met with a defensive verbal assault. Her attitude connotes denial, her ideas lack vision.

Some of these letter writers have a lot to say about black and Chicano youth tension. My question to them is “what the hell are you doing besides adding ignorant insult to the tension?” It is about time we start hearing from black and Latino voices that are directly involved in constructive solutions.

Elias Serna
Professor, Cal State University Northridge

Police chief should take action

Editor:

I commend our chief of police for his restraint in asking the SMMUSD School Board for clarification of his officers’ duties when called to police local campuses (SMDP, April 23-24, page 1).

However, I believe that the chief is being entirely too gracious in his dealings with the board and its errant member.

May I offer a few suggestions?

1. Arrest Oscar de la Torre immediately for interference with a police officer in the line of performing his duty.
2. Has the City Council cut off any further funding of his financial and political base at the “Youth and Family” center?
3. Investigate and implement whatever process for impeachment of a school board member that is in their by-laws.

De la Torre has a long history of demeaning police and education employees in Santa Monica for his own political gain. Cut him off from his city funded gravy train and see how long he’ll survive.

Yes fellow Santa Monica taxpayers, you are paying him \$60,000 per year to mock your most cherished institutions.

Nate Cohen
Santa Monica

Fighting each other is not a winning model

Editor:

I’ve read many of the accusations and angry statements made on both sides of the

controversy surrounding Oscar de la Torre’s visit to Santa Monica High School. Intelligent people can agree to disagree on either side of this issue and the issues certainly are complex. A quiet and humble reminder to you all — we are all members of this community.

As long as we choose to fight against one another, we all lose. As long as we choose to point the finger at the other and say it’s their fault, we lose. As long as we choose to write one another off as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution, we all lose.

As soon as we learn to reach out to one another, no matter how hard that is to do, and extend a hand in friendship, we all win. As soon as we choose to reach out and include our neighbors (and I mean all of our neighbors from Montana to Pico) in the process of healing racial and economic struggles, we win. As soon as we learn to close our mouths, push aside our preconceived ideas about one another, and truly listen to one another, we win.

If we stop and listen to one another, I think we’ll find that we all have many common goals and ideals. Let’s work together to build on what we have in common. If we, the adults in the community, can model this for our children, think about the message that would send to the children in this community of ours. Think about how things might look today at Samohi if we had always done this.

Jeff Rohwer
Santa Monica

De la Torre should be commended

Editor:

This letter is to advise all those concerned with the so called “poor judgment” of Mr. de la Torre. Please be extremely careful as to what you allow yourself to believe coming out of the mouths of individuals who take the freedom to assassinate people’s character by lying and making statements that have no credible evidence and are inaccurate. Shame on you. This, in turn, has incited ignorance in those who choose to believe lies and allow themselves to rush judgment on those individuals who are truly trying to improve the quality of living for all of our children in Santa Monica. What ever happened to the old saying “Don’t judge a book by its cover?” Why don’t we just accuse every single individual with tattoos and baggy clothes of being “gangsters and shot-callers?” These so called “gangsters” are actually law-abiding citizens who are trying to give back to the community by talking to the youth about the dangers of gangs. Finally, Oscar de la Torre should be acknowledged for his hard work and dedication in the community he grew up in, and not be a victim of a witch hunt by those who love to abuse their positions of power. If we are going to start pointing fingers and placing blame, let’s start by blaming ourselves, because what happened at Samohi last week is not a black versus brown issue, It involves the whole community of Santa Monica.

Luis Brizuela
Santa Monica

GUEST COMMENTARY BY JANET BRIDGERS

Coast is clearer after Geffen settlement

At least David Geffen himself had the sense not to comment on the recent settlement of the lawsuit filed by the Coastal Commission over the public’s right to access the beach near his Malibu home. When a Los Angeles TV newscaster asked one of his neighbors if she thought private property rights of beachfront homeowners should extend into the water, she replied, “They should extend to the middle of the Pacific Ocean.”

Such arrogance shows why the Coastal Act and the Coastal Commission are so important. Imagine the problems that would be created for maritime commerce and California’s \$61 billion beach-related tourism industry (California Beach Restoration Study, 2002) if these “my-money-makes-me-special” attitudes formed the basis for managing the state’s coastal activities.

Even the deliriously successful of this state must have respect for its laws, whether or not they find them convenient. The battle with David Geffen dates back to an agreement that he made with the Commission in 1983 to open a path-

way to the beach in exchange for receiving permits to begin building his beachfront compound over multiple lots. He reneged on the agreement when he erected two sets of locked wooden gates to close the access walk.

The settlement will help provide increased public access to the beach through the otherwise impenetrable wall of oceanfront homes that stretch for nearly four miles in eastern Malibu. The right to access the wet sand, however, is guaranteed by California’s Coastal Act and as former Coastal Commissioner Ellen Stern Harris has said, “you shouldn’t need a row boat to get there.”

As the decision-making body that rules on all development permits along the coast, the Coastal Commission is always controversial. Both developers and environmental activists generally regard the rulings of the Commission as too lenient toward the opposing side. In that balance can be seen the wisdom of the authors of the Coastal Act and the voters of the state who passed the 1972 initiative that created it.

Without it there would be no coastal wetlands, no habitat for birds and other shore-dwelling species, and few public access points to beaches other than in crowded metropolitan areas. Unfortunately, there are still more than 100 other blocked access routes to the shore through residential communities in Laguna Beach, Santa Barbara, Mendocino and San Mateo counties. Coastal Commission Executive Director Peter Douglas said that the Geffen settlement “should send a signal to other hold-outs. We are going after them with equal vigor that we did in Geffen’s case.”

Anyone who has attended a Coastal Commission meeting understands that the work of the Commission can be extremely complex. Dozens of permit applications are considered at each monthly meeting, each with its own set of complexities. The commissioners must assess a large amount of detailed information before voting. Agendas are long and sessions frequently stretch into late evening. The unpaid commissioners only receive reimbursement for travel

expenses as their meetings are held in different coastal cities each month. State budget cuts have whittled away at the Commission’s staffing resources, increasing the current staff’s workload at a time when such major issues as the federal government’s efforts to expand oil drilling off the coast demand immense staffing resources.

Many Californians list our beautiful coast as a primary reason they live here. Those who feel this way can do something of real importance to protect it. Call, write or e-mail the offices of those who appoint our Coastal Commissioners — the governor, the Senate pro tem and the Speaker of the Assembly. Tell them we need not only commissioners who will continue to act vigorously on behalf of the public and the environment, but also an adequate budget for Commission staff to do their job.

(Janet Bridgers is the founder and director of Earth Alert. For more information, go to www.earthalert.org.)



PTA gets political in name of school funding

CARAVAN, from page 1

think tank, said California's K-12 school system has fallen from its position as the national leader it was 30 years ago to near the bottom of the rankings, above just Mississippi and Louisiana. CEPS member Rebecca Kennerly said after the local school district earlier this month secured an annual \$6 million contribution from the Santa Monica City Council for the next

five years — to offset the local impact from the state budget crisis — CEPS members have begun to focus their attention on the statewide educational financing crisis.

"We recognize funding the schools is not supposed to be a local responsibility," Kennerly said. "This is an issue that needs to be taken up at the state level."

"Caravan for Kids" organizers said they hope their efforts will prompt Schwarzenegger to make good on a

promise made last year to increase public educational funding, protect Proposition 98 school money and develop a 10-year plan to restore the greatness California's schools once enjoyed.

Calls to Schwarzenegger's office seeking comment on the state's public school budget were not returned.

Despite the \$6 million annual subsidy, plus many more millions in other funding each year by City Hall, local school officials have said that four years of educational budget cuts on the state level have cost local schools nearly \$9 million in lost services and personnel, resulting in a reduction of administrators, staff, faculty, and the support for programs. Event organizers said the problem is worse for schools without local support.

Maria Rodriguez, president of the Santa Monica-Malibu PTA Council, said her group has done everything it can to drum up local support, and that the PTA has a responsibility to all children in the state of California — many of whom belong to schools that have not had the same level of local support as the Santa Monica-Malibu school system.

"Santa Monica has initiated this movement statewide," Rodriguez said. "It used to be enough to bake cookies and throw a carnival. Right now, we're raising millions of dollars and it's still not enough to support our schools. We're just covering the basics, and that's not enough. We want excellent public education in California again."

Rodriguez said the California PTA has typically shied away from political issues, but the continuing crisis of public education has prompted its members to act.

"We are one million strong in California, and we're going to show our power," Rodriguez said.

Kathy Stanton, a West Los Angeles resident participating in the rally, said she and her husband attended public schools growing up and would prefer to put their 6-year-old son in public schools, but they are not good enough.

"I would love to be able to put our son in the public schools," Stanton said. "It is more diverse, not as much of a filtered experience. The problem is, I hear kids don't even get textbooks in some schools these days."

"What happens to all of these students whose parents can't afford to pay for the private schools?"

Students take to streets in protest of tuition hikes

PROTEST, from page 1

to begin repairing damage caused by failed state support since Schwarzenegger took office.

"The governor is committed to not raising taxes — except on our students," said Lillian Taiz, CFA vice president for Cal State Los Angeles, who explained that Schwarzenegger has overseen tuition increases for the last three years. "The governor needs to realize we are graduating the state's future police officers, firefighters and nurses, and we can't do that without state support."

California State University students said there has been a 110-percent increase in tuition for graduate students and 90-percent hike for undergraduate students during the Schwarzenegger administration. They contend that for every 10-percent increase in tuition, it prevents 2 percent of the poorest college students from being able to afford higher education. Another 8-percent hike in tuition fees is expected next year.

"We're creating a generation of uneducated people who don't understand the government, how to vote or how to think critically," said Amir Mertaban, a third-year international marketing major at Cal Poly. "We're creating zombies, which I think is what the governor must want."

The governor's office was unavailable for comment.

Todd Lininger, a third-year Cal Poly geography student, said he has been able to pay for his college education through the G.I. Bill, having served four years in the Marines.

"I have \$50,000, and I'm trying to stretch it as far it can go," said Lininger, who hopes to attend a graduate school in California. "The priorities in this country are so wrong ... all of this money going to fight the war in Iraq ... and that's coming from a Marine."

"We need to be able to provide more affordable education, not less."

Measure "S" Senior Exemption from Parcel Tax

On June 3, 2003, the voters of Santa Monica and Malibu approved Measure S, a 6-year parcel tax at \$225 per panel which contains a provision to exempt senior citizens who:

- are 65 years old by June 30
- own and occupy their property
- annually apply for exemption

A RENEWAL FORM WILL BE SENT IN MAY TO ALL SENIORS WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY APPLIED FOR & RECEIVED THE EXEMPTION. THE FORM MUST BE COMPLETED, SIGNED & RETURNED BY 7/31/05.

First time applicants:

- Call (310) 450-8338, ext. 269 to request an application to be sent in May
- print out the application from our website at: smmusd.org
 - click the Senior Exemption
 - Application for Senior Exemption

Completed & signed applications must be returned, along with required proofs of age and property ownership, to: Santa Monica-Malibu USD, 1651 16th./Santa Monica, CA 90404-3891, ATTN: Dawn, postmarked by July 31, 2005.



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Business

Diversity makes the S&P 500 more reliable

GUEST COMMENTARY

BY KIRK AGUER

Most market watchers are familiar with the popular Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) as a measure of stock market performance. While "the Dow" may be the oldest and best-known of the major stock indices, some analysts point to the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) as the more reliable and accurate of the two leading stock indices. Why? And what are the differences between them?

Standard & Poor's is a leading financial information and services corporation that has been a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies since 1966. The Standard & Poor's 500 Composite Stock Price Index, as

it is formally known, was introduced in 1923 as a series of indices that originally included 233 companies and covered 26 industries. Today's index was created in 1957 and currently encompasses 500 companies that span 122 different sub-industries in 10 sectors. The companies range in size from small industry-specific leaders to some of the largest corporations in the world.

The S&P Index Committee is responsible for establishing index policy. Companies also may be removed from the Index because of mergers, bankruptcies, restructuring or other events that the Committee deems significant. Companies are chosen based on market size, liquidity and industry group representation. The index is made up of 10 major industry sectors: Consumer discretionary, consumer staples, energy, financials, healthcare, industrials, information technology, materials, telecommunication services, and utilities. The Consumer Discretionary group is

the largest in terms of the number of companies, and the financials sector is the largest in terms of market capitalization.

Because of its diversity and size, many analysts consider the S&P 500 to be a more accurate benchmark for measuring the performance of the U.S. stock market than the DJIA. The DJIA is composed of just 30 large-capitalization blue-chip stocks that measure a very small sector of the overall U.S. stock market. In contrast, the S&P 500 includes a larger number of companies with a wider range of market size. Thus, the S&P 500 is able to take a more precise "snapshot" of the overall market's ebb and flow. In addition, all of the companies currently listed on the DJIA are included in the S&P 500.

The S&P 500 is market value-weighted. This means that each company's stock price is multiplied by its number of shares outstanding, with each company's influence on the index's performance directly

proportional to its market value. As a result, a larger company has more influence on the S&P 500 than a smaller one does. But because there are 500 companies, not just 30, the overall effect of a single company's price fluctuation is limited, giving the investor a more accurate picture of the market's activity.

If you are a market watcher who wants a more precise evaluation of market fluctuations, you will no doubt want to keep a close watch on the S&P 500 Index.

(This article is published for general informational purposes and is not an offer or solicitation to sell or buy any securities or commodities. Any particular investment should be analyzed based on its terms and risks as they relate to your specific circumstances and objectives. Kirk Aguer is a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley in Santa Monica. To reach him, call (310) 319-5220.)

IRS offers free assistance for small business owners

By Daily Press staff

In recognition of National Small Business Week, the Internal Revenue Service has announced an abundance of free resources available to assist the nation's 45 million small business and self-employed taxpayers with their tax responsibilities. And, they are all just a mouse-click away.

The small business section of the agency's Web site at IRS.gov provides a one-stop resource for information on starting and operating a business. On this site, taxpayers can learn about employment tax requirements, make tax payments, find out how to set up and distribute retirement plans, and order free tax products like a tax calendar or retirement plan resource guide.

"Running a business is a big responsi-

bility and the IRS wants to help ease the process for this dynamic group of taxpayers," said Victor Omelczenko, IRS spokesperson in Los Angeles. "In an effort to save businesses money and reduce their paperwork burden, over the last year, the IRS has implemented a number of initiatives to simplify tax forms."

For more information about the resources and services the IRS has for small business and self-employed taxpayers visit IRS.gov.

Links:

Small business and self-employed one-stop resource, <http://www.irs.gov/smallbiz>

Subscribe to the small business and self-employed division's free electronic mail service for small business owners, <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=98724,00.html>

CD helping employers set up IRAs

By Daily Press staff

Small business owners can now learn virtually everything they need to know about setting up and maintaining IRA-based retirement plans for their employees, thanks to a new, free compact disc from the Internal Revenue Service.

"Individual Retirement Arrangement (IRA) Resource Guide for Small Business Owners and Individual," contains information about both traditional and Roth IRAs. It also covers IRA-based retirement plans for employers, including simplified employee pensions (SEPs), SIMPLE IRAs, and payroll deduction IRA plans.

The CD is designed to help business owners make the right decisions about setting up a plan that is best for their business, making contributions to the plan, investing funds, and taking distributions. It also explains the rules for keeping those plans in compliance with the law, including methods for correcting errors in plan administration. To help individuals and business owners avoid scams that can threaten their retire-

ment savings, the CD highlights illegal tax schemes related to retirement plans.

Included on the CD are video clips, forms and publications, frequently asked questions, and interactive resources that help learn more about IRAs. It also includes information on the basics of investing retirement savings and checklists for business owners to use in managing their IRA-Based retirement plans.

To get a free copy of the CD, call the IRS toll-free at 1-800-TAX-FORM (829-3676) and ask for publication No. 4395. An online version is available on the newly-revamped "Retirement Plans" section on IRS.gov. In addition, the IRS urges small business owners visiting the Web site to subscribe to Retirement News for Employers, a free quarterly electronic newsletter on retirement plan issues.

Retirement information links:

IRA Online Resource Guide — www.irs.gov/ep <<http://www.irs.gov/ep>>

Subscribe to retirement news for employers — <http://www.irs.gov/retirement/page/0,,id=122751,00.html>



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Gay marriage bill clears first hurdle

BY LISA LEFF
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — A bill to legalize same-sex marriage in California cleared an Assembly committee Tuesday despite arguments that it violates a gay marriage ban voters approved five years ago.

The partisan 6-3 vote by the Assembly Judiciary Committee marked the first test this year for the measure, which would amend the state family code to define marriage as between "two persons" instead of between a man and a woman.

Even with the bill's legality in dispute, the issue percolating in the courts and its prospects for getting signed into law uncertain, supporters said it was important for lawmakers to back extending marriage licenses to gays and lesbians.

"It was not so long ago in California that you couldn't marry someone who was of a different ethnicity than yourself — that was tradition, that was the practice, that was the law and it was wrong," said committee Chairman Dave Jones, D-Sacramento. "It is equally wrong that we do not afford the right of marriage to all our citizens."

Opponents, however, claimed that lawmakers had no business even hearing the bill because it undermines the electorate's will.

In 2000, more than 61 percent of California voters passed Proposition 22,

which said the state will only recognize marriages between a man and a woman as valid. The state Constitution expressly prohibits the Legislature from amending statutes enacted by voters.

"The people of California knew exactly what they were doing," said Assemblyman Ray Haynes, R-Murrieta. "The only institutional relationship that will have legal significance in California is between a man and a woman."

But the bill's lead author, Assemblyman Mark Leno, claimed the measure does not run afoul of Proposition 22 because the initiative prevented California from recognizing same-sex marriages performed elsewhere, but not in-state gay unions. He acknowledged, though, that a court would ultimately have to decide which interpretation was correct.

"I agree this won't end the debate," said Leno, D-San Francisco. "But when we as legislators, and when I as a legislator see injustice in our state it is my job to correct it."

The question of whether Leno's bill contravenes Proposition 22 or even is needed may ultimately prove moot.

Ruling in a pair of cases seeking to overturn California's ban on gay marriage, a trial court judge in San Francisco said Proposition 22 unconstitutionally breached the civil rights of gays and les-

A Handel on things



Fabian Lewkowicz/Special to the Daily Press

Dr. Donald G. Richardson performs a Powerpoint presentation for students during SMC's Handelfest, A Tribute to George F. Handel. Tuesday's presentation was the first of a series of three performances.

bians. That ruling is expected to be appealed.

Meanwhile, two other California lawmakers have introduced constitutional amendments that would elevate the state's existing definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman from statute to the constitution. Those bills still face legislative committee hearings and would need to be passed by two-thirds of lawmakers to be submitted to voters.

Last year, the Judiciary Committee

passed legislation similar to the measure approved Tuesday, but Leno later pulled it from consideration because it did not have enough support in the full Assembly. Both times, votes split on party lines, with Democrats in favor and Republicans in opposition.

Leno said that with the backing of Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, D-Los Angeles, who signed on as a co-author

See GAY MARRIAGE, page 11



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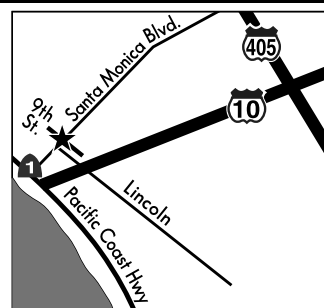
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STATE



GAY MARRIAGE, from page 10

this year, he expects the bill to make it to the desk of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. The governor has indicated he is not inclined

to sign it.

Apart from disagreement over its legality, the measure prompted debate on how gays can be denied the right to marry in a

nation that derives much of its identity from its stated dedication to equality.

"Gay people are everywhere," testified Baltimore Gonzalez of Fresno, who

was with his same-sex partner. "Voting 'No, we can't get married,' is not going to make us go away. ... Giving us equal rights will help us all live better."

The bill's opponents were just as steadfast.

"Marriage between a man and a woman, what you might call a traditional family, is the basic build-

ing block of our society," said Assemblyman Tim Leslie, R-Tahoe City. "To tamper with that causes grave concern and is a very dangerous thing to do."

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Neighboring ports duke it out for cargo containership traffic

BY RONALD D. WHITE
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Some businesses lure clients with expensive dinners or tickets to a sporting event.

The Port of Los Angeles built an island in San Pedro Bay with 58 million cubic yards of concrete, rock and muck to woo the world's largest shipping conglomerate.

And these days, more ships turn left instead of right after passing through the breakwater as they move 1 million containers of cargo a year in and out of the Port of Los Angeles instead of neighboring Long Beach.

Los Angeles' \$328-million gamble that lured Maersk Sealand paid several rich dividends. One was a lease worth \$2 billion over 25 years. Another was the dethroning of Long Beach as the nation's busiest containership port.

The ports may share San Pedro Bay, but behind the scenes on shore there's a fierce sibling rivalry. Three times over the last 20 years, one port has lost to the other the right to call itself the U.S. leader in handling cargo containers.

And if the last three months are any indication, the numbers will get a lot closer again this year, as Long Beach revs its engines to try to regain the top spot. Since December, Long Beach, aided by deeper waters that allow it to accommodate the largest containerships, has moved more than 1.5 million containers, just off the pace set by Los Angeles at nearly 1.7 million containers.

"It's like a tug of war," said Jack Kyser, chief economist for the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. "Los Angeles has had the advantage, but now Long Beach is coming back. It's getting to be a horse race again."

The Los Angeles-Long Beach matchup is unique. Although many harbors vie to receive a piece of the ever-growing international shipping traffic destined for the United States, no two major U.S. ports do it in such close proximity.

"In other parts of the country, you have ports competing," Kyser said, "but it's not like here where they are sitting on the same couch."

On the West Coast, Seattle and Tacoma share Puget Sound but are separated by 34 miles. Portland's port faces Vancouver, Wash., across the Columbia River, but the two harbors work together rather than as competitors, according to port officials.

Los Angeles and Long Beach work differently. Both are so-called landlord ports. Unable to levy taxes or oth-

erwise raise funds of their own, they depend on long-term lease agreements with shipping lines, terminal operators and stevedoring companies for their operating budgets.

Long Beach set the tone for the duel during the 1990s, when it moved ahead of Los Angeles in containership traffic with a reputation for being much more efficient and responsive, according to port experts and financial analysts. Meanwhile, two audits hammered the Port of Los Angeles for needing nearly two-thirds more employees to generate less business than its neighbor.

In an attempt to cut costs, Los Angeles closed its business office in Australia in 1997. The decision backfired: Although the port saved about \$70,000 annually, it left the door open for Long Beach, which was able to build up its Australian business from zero in 1997 to \$618 million in 2004.

Port of Los Angeles officials struck back with a bold move _ building a world-class cargo terminal and praying it would attract a world-class client. The artificial island complex, called Pier 400, reeled in Maersk in late 1999 despite a counteroffer from Long Beach for new space in two separate parcels.

At the time, Maersk accounted for nearly 25 percent of the 4.3 million containers handled by Long Beach. Los Angeles trailed with 3.7 million containers in 2001.

"Maersk was the big deal," said analyst Ann Van Praagh, who follows West Coast seaports for Moody's Investors Service. "It was driven in large part by the fact that Los Angeles had a vision for what it thought its port could look like at full build-out."

Maersk moved into its new home in August 2002, and the following year the Los Angeles port surged far ahead of Long Beach to become the nation's biggest hub for international trade and seventh in the world in container traffic, just ahead of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, the busiest port in Europe.

Art Wong, longtime spokesman for the Port of Long Beach, said that officials always assumed that some shipping line would step up to take any pier space that had been vacated, but added, "I don't think that we really wanted to test that with 25 percent of our business."

Despite the loss of Maersk, Long Beach pushed full speed ahead, assisted by an explosion of international trade and by a fortuitous consequence of oil drilling.

So much oil had been pumped out of the tidelands

See **BOAT BATTLE**, page 13

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Bush laments a lack of energy in America

BY H. JOSEF HEBERT

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Bush, facing economic and political damage from soaring gas prices, offered proposals Wednesday to speed construction of nuclear power plants and oil refineries and boost sales of energy-efficient vehicles.

Bush outlined his initiatives in his second energy speech in a week, reflecting growing concern in the White House that high energy prices are beginning to slow economic growth and undercut the president's approval rating.

Speaking to small business leaders, Bush lamented that he was powerless to cut gas prices. "I wish I could," he said. "If I could, I would."

"This problem did not develop overnight and it's not going to be fixed overnight. But it's now time to fix it," he said. Bush said the problem is that energy supplies are not growing fast enough to meet the growing demand in the United

States and in other countries.

"See, we've got a fundamental question we got to face here in America," Bush said. "Do we want to continue to grow more dependent on other nations to meet our energy needs? Or, do we need to do what is necessary to achieve greater control of our economic destiny?"

America has not ordered a new nuclear power plant since the 1970s. Bush said that France has built 58 plants in the same period and today France gets more than 78 percent of its electricity from nuclear power.

"It's time for America to start building again," he said.

Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid called Bush's initiatives "little more than half measures and wrongheaded policies that will do nothing to address the current energy crisis or break the stranglehold that foreign oil has on our nation."

He said Senate Democrats will offer a much larger package of tax incentives — double the \$8 billion approved by the House — and funnel more of the money to renewable energy sources and energy

efficiency measures.

Bush urged using closed military bases as sites for new oil refineries. The Energy Department is being ordered to step up discussions with communities near such bases to try to get refineries built. He said the United States has not built a new oil refinery since the 1970s.

Bush also called on Congress to provide a "risk insurance" plan to insulate the nuclear industry against regulatory delays if it builds new nuclear power plants. And he endorsed giving federal regulators final say over the location of liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminals. LNG terminal projects have been stymied in some regions by local opposition, even though the need for more LNG imports has been widely accepted.

As he did last week, he called on Congress to give him an energy bill by this summer.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., who is trying to put together an energy package that can pass the Senate, said he welcomed some of the president's proposals.

He is "making it clear that energy remains a top priority of this president," said Domenici in a statement.

Bush's support for giving the federal government clear authority in locating LNG terminals comes after the House included such a provision in the energy bill it passed last week. Some lawmakers strongly opposed the measure, arguing it would deprive states and communities of a say in locating LNG import terminals, even in heavily populated areas.

Nuclear power accounts for about 20 percent of the country's electricity. Some utilities have expressed interest in building a new reactor, perhaps as early as 2010, but want assurance of a smooth regulatory process to get financing.

To address their concern, the president is directing the Energy Department to develop a federal "risk insurance" plan that would kick in if there were lengthy delays in licensing a new reactor. Such a program would need congressional action, and White House officials would not speculate on its cost.

Long Beach, LA ports renew their battle for supremacy

BOAT BATTLE, from page 12

around Long Beach over the years that the seafloor in the eastern part of the bay sank as much as 30 feet in some places, according to Tom Teofilo, managing director of maritime services for the port of Long Beach. That has helped it accommodate the giant 8,000-TEU (a standard industry measurement for the equivalent of a 20-foot-long steel cargo-bearing box) container vessels headed for Southern California from Asia.

In 2003, Long Beach handled more containers than in any previous year. In 2004 the growth accelerated to a record 5.8 million containers.

The increase came largely from Maersk's biggest competitors. Hanjin Shipping of South Korea, for example, doubled its acreage at the port. And

Geneva-based Mediterranean Shipping Co., which didn't have its own terminal before, moved into Hanjin's old space.

Long Beach also did some poaching of its own, snaring Carnival Corp.'s Carnival Cruise Lines from Los Angeles by building a new cruise ship terminal. Carnival left Los Angeles in 2003 because it wanted a location that could accommodate vacationers who want to spend time seeing tourist attractions before departure.

Critics contend that the two ports aren't working together to craft solutions. Those pressures contributed to the departure of the Los Angeles port's executive director in 2004.

Bruce Seaton, interim executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, said that leading the nation in cargo traffic wasn't the harbor's sole measurement of success.

"You also have to be No. 1 in the environmental initiatives, in having enough

infrastructure, in leadership in the security area," Seaton said. "We have broadened that definition."

His counterpart at Long Beach, longtime Executive Director Dick Steinke, said that the competition between the two ports has made both facilities better than they would have been otherwise.

"It has kept us agile and nimble," he said. "We make sure we are responsible to our customers' requests. We know they have a choice."

Steinke said it didn't matter which port was on top.

Seaton couldn't bring himself to agree: "No one would ever want to lose that rating."

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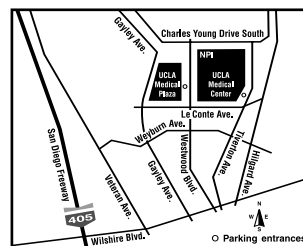
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INTERNATIONAL

Airbus makes history with its maiden flight

BY LAURENCE FROST

AP Business Writer

BLAGNAC, France — The world's largest passenger plane, the Airbus A380, completed a maiden flight Wednesday that took it over the Pyrenees mountains, a milestone for aviation and for the European aircraft-maker's battle with American rival Boeing Co.

The double-decked, 308-ton plane landed successfully to applause at 2:22 p.m. (8:22 a.m. EDT) after a flight of nearly four hours. About 30,000 spectators watched the white plane with blue tail take off and touch down, 101 years after the Wright brothers achieved the first controlled, sustained flight.

Before it landed, its front lights shining, the A380 did a slow flyover above the airport in Blagnac, southwest France, where it had taken off at 10:29 a.m. (4:29 a.m. EDT).

The plane carried a crew of six and 22 tons of on-board test instruments. It can carry as many as 840 passengers on commercial flights.

"The takeoff was absolutely perfect," chief test pilot Jacques Rosay told reporters by radio from the A380 cockpit as he flew at 10,000 feet just north of the Pyrenees mountains, about an hour into the flight. "The weather's wonderful."

The pilots checked the plane's basic handling characteristics while the on-board equipment recorded mea-

surements for 150,000 separate parameters and beamed real-time data back to computers on the ground.

Rosay, co-pilot Claude Lelaie and four fellow crew members took no chances — donning parachutes for the first flight. A handrail inside the test plane lead from the cockpit to an escape door that could have been jettisoned had the pilots lost control.

In Paris, French Cabinet ministers broke into applause when President Jacques Chirac told them of the successful start to the flight. The head of competitor Boeing's French division, Yves Galland, said he watched the televised takeoff and, just this once, "shared the emotion of the people of Airbus."

The flight capped 11 years of preparation and \$13 billion in spending.

Orville and Wilbur Wright, by comparison, spent an estimated \$1,000 developing their skeletal flyer, which stayed airborne for 12 seconds on the sands of Kill Devil Hills, N.C., the morning of Dec. 17, 1903.

Built of spruce and ash covered with muslin, the Wright brothers' flyer weighed 605 pounds, according to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington.

The A380 weighed 464 tons on takeoff, including its bulky test equipment, fittings and fuel, Airbus said. That is about 75 percent of its maximum authorized takeoff weight for commercial flights.

Spectators camped out by the airport to be there for what some said was Europe's biggest aviation event since the first flight of the supersonic Concorde in 1969. About 30,000 people gathered around the airport to watch, police said.

Emergency services took no chances and stationed fire trucks at regular intervals along the runway, although aviation experts say modern computer modeling and wind-tunnel tests have made maiden flights safer than ever.

Problems are more likely, but still very rare, later in the test-flight program, when the pilots deliberately take the plane to its limits. An Airbus A330 prototype crashed here in July 1994, killing chief test pilot Nick Warner and six others as they conducted a simulated engine failure exercise.

Airbus says the A380 test-flight program is likely to take over a year and finish soon before the plane enters service for Singapore Airlines in mid-2006.

The A380, with a catalogue price of \$282 million, represents a huge bet by Airbus that airlines will need plenty of large aircraft to transport passengers between ever-busier hub airports.

So far, Airbus has booked 154 orders for the A380, which it says will carry passengers 5 percent farther than Boeing's longest-range 747 jumbo at a per-passenger cost up to one-fifth lower.

But Airbus has yet to prove that it can turn a profit on its investment, a third of which came from European governments. Some analysts say signs of a boom in the market for smaller, long-range jets like Boeing's long-range 787 "Dreamliner" show that Airbus was wrong to focus resources on the superjumbo at the expense of its own mid-sized A350 — which enters service in 2010, two years after its Boeing rival.

Just this week, Air Canada and Air India announced a total of 82 new orders for Boeing jets — including 41 787s — taking Boeing's Dreamliner order book to 237.

But Airbus CEO Noel Forgeard played down Boeing's recent orders and the 787's development lead, saying the battle for the market in smaller planes would be fought out over 20 years, not two.

"Our competitor Boeing has woken up and gets a wave of orders," Forgeard told reporters attending the A380 test flight. "Good! Competition is an excellent thing."

Forgeard, who steps down later this year to become joint CEO of Airbus parent European Aeronautic Defense and Space Co., congratulated the A380 development and test-flight team for a "fantastic collective effort" and said the plane would enter service in the "second half of 2006" — about three months behind the previous schedule.

Part of the delay is down to the superjumbo's struggle with a weight problem that consumed months of engineering time and pushed the program's cost overrun to \$1.88 billion. Competitive pressure on airlines to offer plusher, heavier business-class seating tightened the squeeze.

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INTERNATIONAL



Canadian ranchers are ready to make a deal

BY SHANNON DININNY

Associated Press Writer

YAKIMA, Wash. — Canadian ranchers, devastated by a U.S. ban on live cattle imports from their country, have a plan for ensuring their survival — one that could have repercussions for the U.S. cattle industry in the future.

So warns an official with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, who is visiting with officials and cattle producers in Washington state this week to plead his country's case for reopening the U.S. border.

"Regardless of whether the border opens or not, we have a plan to ensure we survive," said John Masswohl, director of international relations for the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, which represents as many as 100,000 Canadian cattle producers.

The United States closed the border to live cattle imports in May 2003 after mad cow disease was discovered in Canada. Efforts to reopen the border have been hampered by the discovery of the disease in a Canadian-born Holstein in Mabton, Wash., in December 2003, and by two subsequent cases in Alberta.

Before the ban, Canada had shipped about 60 percent of its cattle to the United States for slaughter. Some have estimated losses as high as \$5.6 billion for the Canadian cattle industry since then.

"The pain hasn't all been in Canada. Certainly, there have been plenty of producers and entities in Washington state that suffered as a result of the situation as well," Masswohl said.

But Canadian cattlemen have reached the point where they must control their own destiny, he said. That includes increasing Canada's slaughter capacity to reduce reliance on the border reopening.

The country only had a national capacity to slaughter 72,000 head of cattle a week before the ban. That now

stands at 84,000 head and new construction is expected to boost capacity even more by year's end.

Increasing the number of slaughterhouses in Canada could be a blow to U.S. slaughterhouses, particularly those in Washington, Utah and Minnesota that rely more on Canadian cattle.

Thirty percent of the cattle slaughtered in Utah came from Canada before the ban, followed by Washington at 18 percent and Minnesota at 12 percent.

Masswohl met with the state agriculture director Monday to discuss the situation, and planned visits with cattlemen in the state Tuesday. The visits were the first of several planned across the country to stress the impact the border closure could have on U.S. cattle producers.

"Our objective is not to create a negative impact on

jobs on the United States, but it just seems there is a natural level that the market can bear," he said. "If we're building more in Canada, it seems there would be a counterbalance here."

Jack Field, executive director of the Washington Cattlemen's Association, said Washington state cattle producers understand their counterparts' concerns in Canada.

"I don't think there's a cattleman in Washington state or anywhere in the country who doesn't understand the pain the Canadian cattlemen are enduring," Field said.

But the ban on live cattle imports from Canada should not be lifted until the United States can resume normal trade with other markets, Field said.

Dozens of countries banned U.S. beef imports after the disease was found in the United States.

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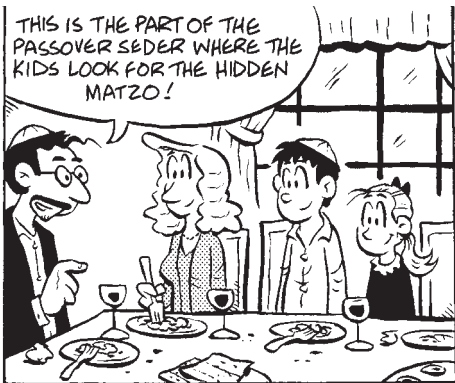


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- 42 Colors
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- 7 Work leather
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- 9 Rotation period
- 11 Team
- 15 Banana waste

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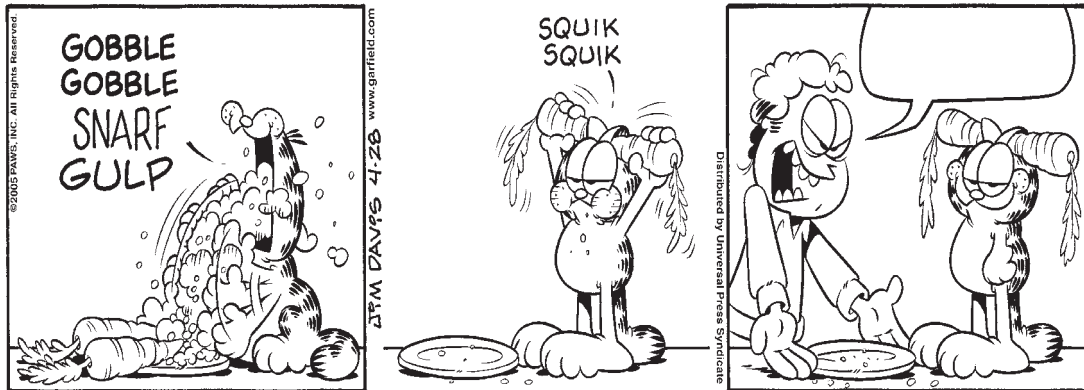
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- 18 First-rate
- 19 Party leader
- 20 Thick cut
- 21 Sound
- 22 Competent
- 25 Jury member
- 26 Browser programs
- 28 Circus animals
- 30 Pigtail
- 31 NFL team
- 33 Brainstorm
- 34 Fresh
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- 36 Wager
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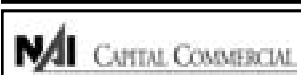
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LOST DOG, Reward!! White, long haired, fluffy. 12lbs, 2 yr. old. Lost on April 16th, San Vicente Blvd. in SM. Please call (310) 393-0701 if you have info.

; CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING CONDITIONS :REG-ULAR RATE: \$3.50 a day. Ads over 15 words add 20¢ per word per day. Ad must run a minimum of twelve consecutive days. PREMIUMS: First two words caps no charge. Bold words, italics, centered lines, etc. cost extra. Please call for rates. TYPOS: Check your ad the first day of publication. Sorry, we do not issue credit after an ad has run more than once. DEADLINES: 4:00 p.m. prior the day of publication except for Monday's paper when the deadline is Friday at 4:00 p.m. PAYMENT: All private party ads must be pre-paid. We accept checks, credit cards, and of course cash. CORRESPONDENCE: To place your ad call our offices 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, (310)458-7737; send a check or money order with ad copy to The Santa Monica Daily Press, P.O. Box 1380, Santa Monica, CA 90406 or stop in at our office located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Ste. 202. OTHER RATES: For information about the professional services directory or classified display ads, please call our office at (310)458-7737.



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