

FREE

THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 145

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

0000

SUPER LOTTO PLUS

9-12-21-26-36

Megamillion: 27

Jackpot: \$16 million

FANTASY 5

14, 22, 33, 35, 37

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 0, 7, 1

Evening picks: 1, 8, 9

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 01, Gold Rush

2nd Place: 07, Eureka

3rd Place: 06, Whirl Win

Race time: 1:43.94



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

■ Luis Chavez, 33, was arrested in Cypress, Calif., in February after he allegedly set off aerial fireworks in his condominium bedroom (motive unknown), leading to a \$135,000 fire.

■ Patricia Martin burned down her Kings Mountain, N.C., house in February after she lit a piece of paper, then extinguished the flame, to create smoke to get rid of a nest of spiders in the house but failed to completely extinguish it.

■ A Massapequa, N.Y., high school student inadvertently set a fire that gutted the second story of the family home in January after he, in frustration, tried to burn some school papers on which he had done badly (and tossed them out a window, but an ember blew back in).



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"God has always been hard on the poor."

— Jean Paul Marat



INDEX

Horoscopes

Stay out of trouble, Capricorn. . .2



Local

Festivals abound 3



Opinion

Church and state 4



State

Hollywood needs help 6



National

Bush an ace of spades 7



International

Bombs land in Mideast . . .7



Sports

Lakers find their man 8



Classifieds

\$3.50 a day 10



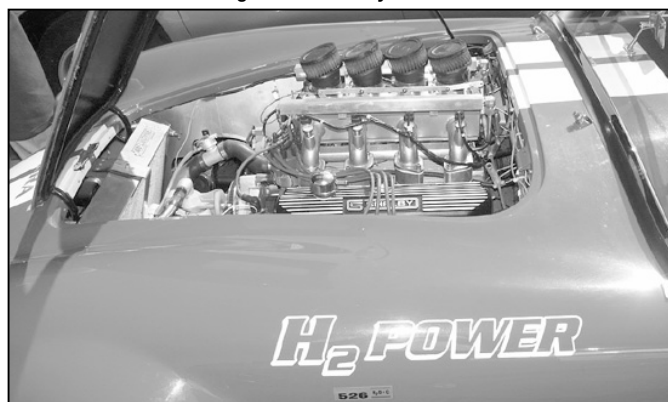
Calendar

Movie listings 12



John Wood/Daily Press

Above: Gerherd Hopf, on vacation from Ohio, checks out a hydrogen-powered Shelby Cobra at the Santa Monica Pier Wednesday morning. A fleet of energy-efficient cars began a two-week trek to Washington, D.C., to lobby for energy alternatives. Below: The engine of the Shelby Cobra.



A drive for the environment

By Daily Press staff

A fleet of alternative-energy cars launched into a cross-country drive for the environment Wednesday from the Santa Monica Pier.

The two-week trip, dubbed the "Drive to Survive," will promote cutting-edge vehicles powered by hydrogen, electricity, natural gas, bio-diesel, methanol and ethanol.

Wednesday's send-off attracted about 50 car enthusiasts, environmentalists, community leaders and members of the press.

"We're going to change the world," said actor Dennis Weaver, who founded the Institute of Ecolonomics, the organization sponsoring the event. Weaver,

dressed in a cowboy hat and jeans, starred in "Gunsmoke" and the television show "McCloud."

The train of environmentally friendly cars will stop in 18 cities on its way to Washington, D.C., its final destination.

On May 14, Weaver will deliver to Congress a petition asking legislators to make a "declaration of energy independence" by increasing fuel efficiency, promoting alternative fuels and decreasing dependence on foreign oil.

Six cars will make the trip, including a hydrogen-powered Shelby Cobra, a bio-diesel-powered Dodge Ram and a handful of solar-powered and hybrid vehicles.

Pavilions trial thrown out

Judge rules store didn't overcharge customers as city attorney alleges

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

Criminal charges levied by City Hall against Pavilions on Montana Avenue was thrown out of court Wednesday, ending what was expected to be a two-day jury trial.

A Malibu judge dismissed the case before defense attorneys presented any evidence to the 12-person jury. He ruled the city failed to build a strong enough argument for a conviction.

The consumer protection unit of the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office filed charges against Pavilions for allegedly charging more at the checkout register for "value plus" items than what was advertised on tags in the aisle.

"It's a very sad day for consumers," said Deputy City Attorney Eda Suh after the mid-trial dismissal, a rare occurrence in criminal proceedings. "The law is pretty clear — if you post a price, you should be responsible for honoring that price."

Lawyers for Pavilions admitted tags are sometimes left up after the sale expires, but said it's impossible to keep up with the 10,000 offers made every week. To cover that lapse, expiration dates are printed beneath sale prices, lawyers said.

See PAVILIONS, page 5

Surfer rage ends in consequences

BY DAVID KRAVETS

AP Legal Affairs Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — A surfer was sentenced Wednesday to 150 days home confinement and ordered not to surf around San Francisco for three years for brutally beating another surfer.

A second surfer was sentenced to three years probation for his involvement in a videotaped beating that has been described as a classic case of surf territorialism — a mentality akin to street gangs that don't want others treading on their turf.

The victim, who suffered a broken nose, bruises and lacerations as he was about to paddle out to a surf spot under the Golden Gate Bridge last year, decried the sentences issued by a federal judge here as too lenient.

"It's basically a slap on the wrist," Adam Browning, a 32-year-old surfer from Berkeley, said outside Magistrate James Larson's courtroom.

Browning, who said his attackers tried to drown him, was severely beaten at Fort Point, part of a federal park underneath the famed span that can produce excellent surfing waves. Browning said his attackers shouted

See SURF & TURF, page 5

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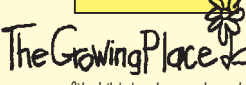
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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, May 1, 2003:

Your year could be unusually significant and dynamic, as your birthday occurs on a New Moon. Your creativity and ingenuity will be highlighted in an unprecedented manner. You might be a fountain of imagination and solutions if you use this energy constructively. You also might be unusually me-oriented. If you are single, no one can deny your magnetism, but you might hear, "You don't understand where I am coming from." Develop a greater sense of empathy. Walk in another's shoes. If you are attached, be more sensitive to your sweetie. September on could be unusually romantic. TAURUS understands you.

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ The New Moon on Monday could charge your finances if you decide to use the energy properly. What might be a problem is the manner in which a friend or associate presents an issue. This person's thinking could be distorted or highly imaginative. Use your sources. Tonight: Stick to your budget.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ A New Moon in your sign encourages the Bull to make a needed resolution or do something that might benefit you. What is it you want? Let your dreams speak, and you will be much happier. Confusion surrounds a boss or someone in charge. Tonight: Just ask.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You might need or want some quiet time. Your discomfort comes out in your dealings with someone at a distance. You might genuinely wonder just how anchored this person is. Refrain from making a judgment. Tonight: Vanish. Rest. Do your thing.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Your happiness comes out when dealing with loved ones and friends. A meeting could be instrumental. You find that a community decision will be quite significant in the long run. Keep your eye on the big picture and work with the available assets. Tonight: Where the gang is.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Make a decision and stick to it. You can move your career in a new direction if you so choose. Use your ability to motivate others to get the job done. A partner might not exactly understand what you are saying, but he or she could be enthusiastic anyway. Tonight: Work late.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Reach out for others. If you have been dreaming about going back to school, now is the time. You might want to increase your expertise in your field. Trust in your abilities. Tonight: Think vacation.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You will make a needed decision involving a partnership. Even by making no decision, you're making a decision. Defer all you want if that is what you want to do. An emotional or financial risk might not be as clear as you think. Tonight: Go for some closeness.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You don't have control over others. That is clear. Let others put their cards on the table first, as it might be best not to reveal what you think. Your mind could drift from one topic to another. Just jot down what appears to be a good deal. Tonight: Accept a loved one's offer. He or she is for real.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Find a better way to promote a work project. You'll like what happens as you get to the bottom of a problem or find a more efficient way of handling your work or day-to-day life. Talk about what you want and expect from others. Tonight: Clarify plans.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ An unusual option comes forward that, whether single or attached, could affect your love life. You might think or feel one thing, but a pal might have a totally different thought about what is happening. Verbalize and stay out of trouble. Tonight: So what if it's Thursday?

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You can be sure that you're not getting the whole story. Of course, if you walk around with rose-colored glasses on, you might misjudge. Make a resolution, especially concerning your home and personal life. Not everything is as you think it is. Tonight: Put your feet up.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ How you say what you think might have more to do with how this information is received. You might want to pay more attention to this area of your life. Make a phone call to a sibling. Take off your rose-colored glasses, and you'll see life in a different way. Tonight: Yip up a storm.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BOARD

Plays on the pier

By Daily Press staff

The Rusk Group Theatre Company, a local company of actors, directors and writers dedicated to bringing new and classical plays to the forefront of the community, will be performing Molière's Sganarelle, or the "Imaginary Cuckold" weekends at the Santa Monica Pier throughout May.

The group will stage the play at the far western end of the pier to take advantage of the beautiful Santa Monica Bay sunsets and the natural amphitheater-style seating.

Sganarelle is an Italian farce where every coincidence becomes conclusive proof to both husband and wife. It is widely considered to be one of Molière's finest and most often produced works.

Performances start at 7 p.m. every Friday and Saturday evening throughout May at the pier (near Mariasol restaurant and Harbor Patrol offices).

Support local families at festival

By Daily Press staff

Proceeds from a festival this weekend will give low-income families an opportunity for child care.

The "Dino Fair," a free family festival benefiting low-income families who need scholarships to attend the non-profit Growing Place child center in Santa Monica, is scheduled for Saturday, May 3.

Pony rides, games, a petting zoo, volcano arts, face-painting and a moon bounce are among the features of the annual festival which will run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The school is located at 401 Ashland Avenue.

The Growing Place is a non-profit child-development center with a mission of providing quality child care for working families. The festival's activities are aimed especially at children aged 3 to 7 years old. Fees collected from the various booths and games are earmarked for scholarships for low-income families and for educational materials.

The Growing Place provides partial scholarships to approximately 20 percent of its families, who can enroll their children for pre-school on weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. year-round. Parents volunteer to run all the booths at the festival, which is one of Santa Monica's most popular family events, organizers say.

The mission of The Growing Place is to offer an emotionally secure and challenging educational environment for pre-school children aged 2 1/2 to 5 years old. The Dino Fair is the school's main community fund-raiser of the year. The sponsors for this year's event include The Foley Family, Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy, Technicolor, Verizon and Wells Fargo.

Massage school fund-raiser gearing up

By Daily Press staff

The Shiatsu Massage School of California is hosting its 20th anniversary celebration this week in Santa Monica with dinner and entertainment.

The school is a non profit, state approved, post-secondary education institution offering a variety of complementary healing arts classes. The celebration also will serve as a kick-off fund-raiser for the purchase of a building to house the school and a free shiatsu clinic to the community.

The celebration will be held at 6 p.m., Friday, May 2, at the Victorian House, located at 2640 Main Street. Parking is free.

The celebration includes a four-course buffet dinner, Taiko drumming, martial arts performance, music and dancing. A raffle and silent auction will be held. A massage table is included in the items to be auctioned. Tickets are \$125 or \$400 for a table of five. Tickets are available at Tao Healing Art, located at 2309 Main Street, or by calling (310) 396-4877. Visa, Mastercard and checks are accepted.

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surf report

Information compiled by Jesse Haley

Today northwest swell starts to back down, and we'll see a transition with some southwest swell coming in for Thursday. Expect chest-high surf on average at north-west exposures.

Southwest swell should put those exposures in waist to chest-high waves as it builds.

On Thursday, a southwest swell from the Southern Hemisphere increases size to waist- to chest-high, smaller at west facing breaks as the northwest swell peters out.

Things look pretty clean as far as winds. Best conditions should be during dawn patrol.



Today's Tides:

Low- 3:49 a.m. 0.04'
High- 9:46 a.m. 3.93'
Low- 3:24 p.m. 1.06'
High- 9:28 p.m. 5.18'

Location	Thursday	Friday	Water Quality
County Line	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A
Zuma	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A
Surfrider	1-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	B
Topanga	1-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	A
Breakwater	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A
El Porto	2-4'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A

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The Q Line

There has been much in the news recently about local rent control laws, tenants and landlords. A new law passed in March now allows landlords to increase tenants' rents if they are found to be using their rent-controlled apartments for something other than living full-time.

Many tenants at the Shores Apartments, the 17-story towers at the beach near Hill Street, will have to prove to City Hall officials that they are using their units as their primary residences or be forced to pay thousands of dollars more in rent. Some tenants admit they own property elsewhere and use the units as

secondary residences or as offices. Some Shores residents pay as little \$600 a month for the same size apartment as someone who pays \$1,600.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Is it fair for a person to own property or live somewhere else and still be able to secure a rent-controlled apartment in Santa Monica? Why or why not?"

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

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OPINION

LETTERS

SMRR hides behind protection of poor people

Editor:

Regarding "Rental roulette, SMDP, April April 29)
More NewSpeak from the SMRR rent control board.

In Tuesday's paper, Tracy Condon labels 1,900 rent-controlled apartments as "affordable to low income tenants." Anyone with half a brain knows that even absent vacancy decontrol, no apartment owner is ever going to rent one of those units to a "low-income" tenant. But SMRR's fraudulent claim of "preserving affordable housing" goes unchallenged.

This SMRR party rhetoric exists only to justify the continued illegal taking of property by the government for the benefit of SMRR's elitist middle-class membership, most of whom could afford to pay today's market rates, but cowardly hide behind the facade of "protecting low-income tenants."

And shame on Jodi Summers for calling this a "rich-man's market." Individuals making \$60,000 are not wealthy. Does she court only "rich" clients for the \$300K+ condos she sells to middle-class families?

James Imhoff
Ocean Park

Springer is confused

Editor:

(This letter was originally addressed to Charles Springer, SMDP columnist.)

In your column (SMDP, April 27), in the last paragraph, you say, "There should also be an amendment to the constitution calling for a separation of corporation and state." Yet in the very next sentence, you say, "This would give the ruling government control over the corporations..." (emphasis added). You separate corporation and state, and then have government control the corporations, a contradiction. I think that you are confused.

John Watts
Malibu

FUNNY PAPERZ

National
Day Of Prayer
to be observed
on steps of City Hall.

-News Item

"IF GOD
REALLY IS
A WOMAN"

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LORD, WHAT
MUST I DO TO
BE SAVED?



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Religious freedom will be challenging but welcome in Iraq

TITTINGER'S
TAKE

By Michael J. Tittinger

Tensions continue to mount in Iraq amid the power vacuum left behind by the recent conflict involving the United States and the deposed regime of Saddam Hussein. A nation stands in limbo, on the precipice of its biggest reformation in decades, maybe centuries.

The United States is not only grappling with patrolling and safeguarding a nation — a nation growing increasingly restless as it awaits its fate — but also is combating influences from both within Iraq and outside its borders that would see the newly installed government linked to its constituents' religious tendencies.

U.S. officials have openly worried, with good reason, that the majority Shi'ites might attempt to forge an Islamic republic akin to the one governing the nation's longtime rival — Iran. Thankfully, the United States has remained steadfast on two conditions for the new national governance of Iraq —

the government will be a democracy and there will exist a separation of church and state.

In the long run, the Iraqis will likely be grateful for such a separation.

For an interlocked church and state is an ideal ... as long as humanity stays out of it. And since humanity has to be involved, since it is for humanity, it's a paradox. Not knowing if your neighbors share the exact same beliefs and live by the exact same moral doctrine that we do, a religion-tied government is the absolute worst strategy, even for those wishing to hold true to the most extremist of tenants.

History has shown time and again the inherent problems that arise in such a state whereby no true separation exists. So now we have a true separation of the two codes of law in most nations — the only possible successful alternative solution because it does indeed involve humanity.

Forgive me as I wax theology on y'all.

The only way that the church and state union could possibly work is if we all had the same spiritual needs and views, which we obviously do not, and if no one contained within them the terribly human tendency to go to extremes or lust for power. Two pretty big "ifs."

This need for separation of which I

speak does allow for differences and extremes, which, consequently, also allows for such variations that the people in church-state unionized countries think are our ticket to hell. But in the end, it makes for an environment more suited for us to rightly claim our divine nature, or true happiness.

If a wealthy man is asked to donate to an established UCLA scholarship fund, he may feel good that he was able to help a would-be student achieve his life-long dream. But if a working-class man toils tirelessly to help someone achieve his or her life-long dream, he would feel a sense of fulfillment you can't put a price tag on. Even though the poorer man would be all the more poor, in monetary terms, he would have a greater understanding of things like love, community and sacrifice — the very elements that the church-state union regimes hope to synthetically instill in people.

Cognizant that no man is an island, we know that if we give or sacrifice on our volition it is much more rewarding than if we are forced to do so. So we are left with this imperfect system that permits all those evils of the world to creep in. It allows its people to worship Satan, the sun or the almighty dollar if they wish, but it

also gives us each the chance to be good little boys and girls on our own. This is in stark contrast to those people in the world who are told to be good, and stick to the straight and narrow mostly out of fear for repercussions.

The moral of the story is that a separation of church and state unwittingly allows us an even greater opportunity to achieve a divine nature (the goal of church) than the union of church and state, for we must choose to do so on our own ... free will.

Thankfully, upon closer scrutiny, the new Iraq seems less and less suitable to a government that would not make that distinct separation. The leading Iraqi ayatollah, Ali al-Sistani, believes that a separation of church and state is in the nation's best interests, and unlike Iran, there exists a substantial secular middle class in Iraq.

Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi admitted as much last week, noting that Iraq's religious and ethnic diversity made it unsuitable for a true Islamic state, an unsuitability the Iraqis will no doubt be thankful for down the road.

(Mike Tittinger is a freelance writer living in Santa Monica. To reach him, e-mail to toorroam@aol.com).

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



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LOCAL □ STATE



Vons faces seven additional criminal court proceedings

PAVILIONS, from page 1

It's illegal to charge more for an item than the posted price, according to state law. Because the tags include expiration dates, defense attorneys argued that the posted price is accurate.

"As consumers, you've got a responsibility to read the whole thing," said Fred Dibbernardo, a lawyer for Vons Company, Inc., the owner of Pavilions. "The (city is) really irresponsible in filing these charges."

Lawyers for Pavilions asked Malibu Superior Court Judge Lawrence Mira to dismiss the city's lawsuit immediately after Suh presented her case to the jury Tuesday. They described their request as a "so what?" response to the prosecution's case, challenging the legal strength of the city's argument.

Suh responded to their request Wednesday morning. She said a common sense, literal interpretation of the law demands Pavilions be found guilty of overcharging customers.

Judge Mira disagreed. He granted the dismissal, saying that once an offer expires, the normal price is technically the posted price and not the "value plus" discounted price, even if it's still posted in the aisle.

Judge Mira didn't return phone calls Wednesday. It's unclear why he waited until mid-trial to dismiss the case.

The city cannot appeal Mira's ruling. Suh said the next step is to push the state legislature for a stronger consumer protection law.

In the meantime, county officials said all stores have a responsibility to their customers to keep sale tags current.

"There's an expectation when you go to shop that the price indicated is the price that's going to be charged," said Pastor Herrera, director of the L.A. County Department of Consumer Affairs. "It's a good consumer practice and it's a good business practice."

But Herrera said consumers need to be vigilant, too.

Though the responsibility lands on both consumers and merchants, it's the merchants who ultimately have more to lose, he added.

"The majority of businesses want to get that customer back to that store," Herrera said. "If they're not truthful then the consumer always has an option to go elsewhere."

"The marketplace is competitive and consumers do have a choice," he added.

Pavilions faced six counts of charging more than the posted price and one count of false advertising. If convicted, the grocery store could have been charged more than \$20,000 in penalties and fines, officials said.

The charges were filed after an October 2001 undercover investigation conducted by Larry Godwin, an L.A. County weights and measure official, revealed that Pavilions had overcharged him.

Godwin, who purchased 20 items, was overcharged on six of them by as much as \$2.90 each — including Taglio Primo Brie cheese, Vons brand spaghetti, A&H Peroxicare toothpaste and Hungry Jack Waffles.

Dibbernardo said the store does its best to keep current with special offers. When customers do find discrepancies, the items are given away for free, he said.

He maintained the store's innocence and pointed to five other trials alleging similar infractions by government agencies that have been either tossed out or found in Vons' favor. Seven more criminal proceedings are currently pending in cities throughout Southern California.

"The jury has spoken and they still don't get it," he said. "This is not a criminal violation, for God's sake. Why are they trying this?"

Suh disagrees and said Judge Mira's ruling sets a dangerous legal precedent.

"Stores are now going to be able to do exactly what the law protected against — which is leaving out old, expired signs — and not be held responsible for it," she said.

Surfer sentenced to anger management classes

SURF & TURF, from page 1

profanities and ordered him "not to surf here anymore."

One of his attackers, 31-year-old Ryan Farrell of San Francisco, tried to apologize and shake Browning's hand in the courtroom.

"I've been beating myself up over this," he said in court. "I apologize."

Browning declined the handshake.

"He beat the heck out of me," he told the judge during the hourlong hearing.

The judge, who had received reports that Farrell had threatened other surfers in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, said Farrell was a "virtual legend out there."

The judge sentenced Farrell to 150 days home confinement and said he would have sent him to prison or a halfway house if he didn't have two kids to look after.

"You repeatedly punched him in the head," the judge said. "It's hard to imagine any reasonable circumstances that would lead to that kind of rage."

Farrell, the brawl's ringleader, also was ordered to attend anger-management classes and pass out and post fliers throughout San Francisco's federal beaches warning surfers that violence is against

the law. The judge barred him from surfing federal parks in or near San Francisco for three years.

Farrell's co-defendant, 23-year-old Yoel Gorfain of San Francisco, was sentenced to three years probation and community service — he too must distribute leaflets.

Both men, originally charged with felony assault with 10-year maximum prison terms, pleaded guilty last year to reduced charges carrying sentences of up to six months imprisonment.

A third defendant, Jeffrey Duerson, 22, went to trial and was acquitted. A videotape of the incident, taken by an onlooker, did not establish Duerson's role in the beating.

Surf territorialism has led to reports of assaults, tire slashing, verbal threats and incidents in which one surfer rides and aims his surfboard at another like a weapon.

The March 2002 issue of Surfing magazine included a layout of the Hawaii's top surf spots. The map included warnings that certain spots were for "locals only" and cautioned that other areas were prone to vehicle thefts. Another warning cautioned surfers that some locations were a "fight club."



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STATE CALIFORNIA BRIEFS

Hollywood still an eyesore

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Despite \$220 million spent in 17 years to redevelop Hollywood, the area remains significantly blighted with at least 73 percent of properties requiring repairs or major rehabilitation.

A Community Redevelopment Agency report said that crime, depressed property values and high vacancy rates also remain serious problems for the 1,100-acre area. The City Council is considering an extension of the CRA's eminent domain powers to force the sale of rundown properties.

"The project area remains a blighted area," said the CRA report, which argued for additional redevelopment authority.

CRA critics oppose the extension, saying that the agency has largely failed in its mission to revitalize the area and should not be allowed to divert more taxes from police and fire services to private developers.

"They haven't revitalized Hollywood," said resident Don Lippman. "They haven't accomplished anything that wouldn't have happened without them."

The Hollywood redevelopment project, which was approved by the City Council in May 1986, includes an area generally bounded by La Brea Avenue on the west, Serrano Avenue on the east, Franklin Avenue, the Hollywood Freeway and Hollywood Boulevard on the north, and Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard on the south.

Under state law, property tax revenue generated by increasing property values in the area can be used by the CRA to provide financial incentives to developers who build there, including the purchase of land for residential and commercial construction.

However, the power of eminent domain expired in 1998, and CRA officials are asking for restoration of their authority.

No double deck for Ventura Freeway

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — State transportation officials rejected a double-deck Ventura Freeway proposal through the San Fernando Valley and recommended widening Highway 101 from Thousand Oaks to Burbank to relieve congestion.

Widening the freeway to accommodate two car pool lanes in each direction would allow flexibility for express buses or even a rail line in the future, officials said. The cost is estimated at \$3.36 billion.

"That freeway's supposed to move, not be a parking lot," said state Sen. Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica. She was key to the \$4.5 million freeway study and said she would continue ushering it through to "make sure this goes from recommendation to reality."

The recommendation by a technical committee of transit officials said at-grade car pool lanes would be cheaper than a plan to double-deck the Ventura Freeway through the valley. The proposal includes a new regular lane between Thousand Oaks and Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

The improvements would shave 22 minutes off a typical commute, according to estimates.

"There is tremendous support overall for us to do something," said Rose Casey, deputy district director for the California Department of Transportation. "We need to focus on the short-term solutions we can implement and deliver to the public."

Millions of taxpayer cash lost by fraud

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Auditors found that poor monitoring allowed private contractors to defraud the county out of millions of dollars in taxpayer money for questionable expenses, including unallowed cars and trips.

Nearly \$4 billion of the county's \$16 billion budget is spent for 2,800 contractors that provide critical services in child protection, to senior citizens, mental health, welfare and probation programs.

Auditor-Controller Tyler McCauley said this week that the problems might have been discovered much earlier if the county had a "more expert and robust contract-monitoring program."

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to set up pilot projects to test the merits of centralizing the county's contract monitoring under McCauley's office.

"None of these departments effectively monitors its contractors to ensure that they consistently provide the services expected of them," Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky said. "This has been brought to our attention several times over the past year through the auditor-controller's spot audits of certain contractors who are not only failing to provide their contracted services, but are also defrauding the county."

Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association president Jon Coupal said the private sector frequently provides better and cheaper services than the government can.

"I would say that contracting out is successful 80 to 90 percent of the time," Coupal said. "However, it has to be done by people who understand business. And the problem in California is that very few people who are elected to public office understand business."

"The result is you have neophytes negotiating with very sophisticated individuals and they are easily taken advantage of. And quite frankly, one of the biggest areas of abuse in contracting is directing contracts not to those who can provide good services at a fair price, but to cronies of the political establishment."

Among the most egregious cases was \$22.2 million in unallowable or questionable expenses by Pico Rivera-based El Camino Children and Family Services. They include credit card purchases made during trips to the Czech Republic, Great Britain and Panama and purchases made at the MGM Grand Hotel, Luxor and Rio in Las Vegas.

Emotions run high after suicide bomb



Ricardo Mazalan/Associated Press
Gal Ganzman, 2nd left facing camera, is embraced by a friend in front of his bar "Mike's Place" in Tel Aviv, Israel Wednesday. A suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance of the bar, on the Tel Aviv beachfront, just next to the American Embassy, right, early Wednesday killing himself and three other people.

Greenpeace launches parody of America's 'deck of cards'

BY JONATHAN FOWLER
Associated Press Writer

GENEVA — In a play on the deck of cards distributed to U.S. troops in Iraq, anti-nuclear campaigners on Wednesday issued their own most-wanted list — with President Bush replacing Saddam Hussein as the ace of spades.

"It's an exact copy (of the U.S. deck) in terms of the design and layout," said William Peden, spokesman for the disarmament campaign at Greenpeace.

But while the U.S. cards were meant to help soldiers capture America's most-wanted Iraqi leaders, the Greenpeace deck is meant to focus attention on the dangers posed by nuclear arsenals, Peden told The Associated Press.

Campaigners are handing out 600 decks to delegates at a two-week meeting on the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The conference precedes a review of the 188-nation accord in 2005.

"We haven't had any negative comments — not even from the U.S. delegation," said Peden. "They're such a hot item."

Along with photographs of Bush and seven other leaders are details of the number of nuclear weapons their countries possess. The ace of spades notes that Bush has around 10,600 weapons.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is the ace of hearts in the Greenpeace deck, with around 18,000 nuclear weapons.

French President Jacques Chirac is the ace of clubs, while Britain's Tony Blair is

the ace of diamonds. The kings feature the leaders of China, Pakistan, India and Israel — all countries with nuclear weapons.

Most of the rest of the cards contain information about nuclear weapons. The two of diamonds notes that 128,000 nuclear weapons have been built worldwide since 1945.

"The idea is to provide delegates with something that's not a boring piece of paper," Peden said. "It's something interesting and innovative that they can actually learn from — so it's an educational tool as well."

"It's actually being used by delegates in their speeches and they love it because it's full of short snappy facts about the situation of nuclear weapons around the world."

Under the nonproliferation treaty, the declared nuclear powers of the 1960s — the United States, China, France, Russia and Britain — were meant to reduce their arsenals, halt the spread of nuclear weapons and ensure nuclear technology was used only for peaceful purposes. However, the accord has failed to stop other nations from becoming nuclear powers.

In 2000, during the last review of the nonproliferation treaty, participants at a conference at the United Nations identified 13 steps for wiping out nuclear weapons, including a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing, reductions in tactical nuclear weapons and greater candor by the nuclear powers in reporting on their nuclear arsenals.

Competition required for Los Alamos contract

BY ROBERT GEHRKE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — For the first time in six decades, the University of California will have to fight to manage Los Alamos National Laboratory, the birthplace of the atom bomb and the country's premier nuclear weapons lab.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, citing a string of management breakdowns at the lab, said Wednesday there would be competitive bidding for the contract to run Los Alamos when the current contract expires in 2005. He said that despite the university's aggressive efforts to fix the problems, the school must bear some blame.

Abraham had sought a report by two of his senior deputies, acting National Nuclear Security Administrator Linton Brooks and Deputy Energy Secretary Kyle McSlarrow, after two fired lab investigators raised concerns about fraud and malfeasance at Los Alamos. The report found problems with the lab's business practices.

"The fact that there was not greater fraud and theft at Los Alamos is a tribute to the character of the vast majority of men and women working there and not to the efficacy of the management systems in place," the report said.

University of California President Richard C. Atkinson said that his "instinct continues to be to compete — and to com-

pete hard" to keep the lab contract, but it would be up to the school's Board of Regents to decide.

"We believe, with every fiber of our institutional being, that continued UC management is in the absolute best interests of the nation's security," Atkinson said.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., whose husband is on the Board of Regents, said she is confident the school can prevail in a fair competition, but that "in view of the current situation, this is a logical course of action."

The University of Texas has been mentioned as a possible competitor. Major defense contractors such as Batelle, which manages or co-manages several department labs, and Lockheed Martin, which manages Sandia National Laboratories, are considering bids, according to spokeswomen. It is also possible a university could partner with a corporation to run the lab.

Energy Department officials expect to have the contract criteria worked out and request proposals by next year. The report deferred making a decision on whether to have competition to run Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, another lab run by the University of California with a contract expiring in 2005. That will also likely come next year.

The Los Alamos lab, which occupies a 43-square mile campus in northern New Mexico, has an annual budget of \$1.6 billion and employs about 7,600 people.

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page 2



SPORTS

Derek Fisher now a marked man for L.A. Lakers

BY JOHN NADEL

AP Sports Writer

EL SEGUNDO — Blame comes quickly, and credit grudgingly, to Los Angeles Lakers guard Derek Fisher.

That's the price he pays for playing with superstars Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant.

After Troy Hudson emerged as a mainstay for the Minnesota Timberwolves when the playoffs began April 20, Fisher was singled out for not doing an adequate job on defense.

And Fisher's 23-point effort in Game 3 last Thursday night went overlooked because of Minnesota's 114-110 overtime win.

There was no ignoring Fisher's latest performance — he shot 8-of-10 including 5-of-7 from 3-point range in a 120-90 drubbing of the Timberwolves on Tuesday night to give the three-time defending champions a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series.

Game 6 will be played Thursday night at Staples Center, and should the Lakers beat the Timberwolves for the third straight time, they'll advance to meet San Antonio or Phoenix in the second round.

A Minnesota victory sets up a seventh game Saturday in Minneapolis.

"You don't shoot 8-for-10 every day," Fisher said Wednesday. "If we execute offensively like that, I get shots like that, I can shoot a consistently high percentage."

He has before. Take the Western Conference finals two years ago. Fisher shot 15-of-20 from 3-point range as the Lakers swept the Spurs, beating them by 39 and 29 points in the last two games.

Fisher's 15 3-pointers were the most ever in a four-game series.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson said the lopsided win at Minnesota was remindful of the way his team played against the Spurs two years ago, and pointed specifically at Fisher.

"When it's falling, I think it helps our team," Fisher said of his outside shot. "It definitely felt good to have a major part in that game last night."

"We're definitely a better team when it's not just Shaq and Kobe."

That was certainly the case in Minnesota as all five starters scored in double figures.

"We need more than just two and I think it shows," Fisher said. "If you focus on them, we've got other guys

"You don't shoot 8-for-10 every day. If we execute offensively like that, I get shots like that, I can shoot a consistently high percentage."

— DEREK FISHER
Los Angeles Lakers guard

who can hurt you. If you straddle the fence, Shaq and Kobe can kill you."

Fisher is 19-of-30 from 3-point range in this series, making at least four more 3-pointers than anyone in the playoffs.

He is shooting 27-of-50 overall and averaging 15.4 points.

"It really opens up the defense," Bryant said of Fisher's long-range shooting. "Not only offensively, but defensively, he had a great game."

Hudson didn't score in the second half after getting 14 points in the opening 24 minutes Tuesday night. He averaged 27.3 points in the first four games of the series — nearly double his regular-season average of 14.2 points — a career-high.

"Troy's been playing really well," Fisher said. "When a good player gets into a rhythm, sometimes it doesn't matter what you do defensively. We tried to do some different things last night that might have affected him in the second half."

Jackson had another theory — that the Timberwolves have worn down because of the pressure defense they've been playing since Game 1 of the series.

Hudson didn't disagree.

"Guys are kind of tired and beat up, but you know, we'll get our rest today and be ready tomorrow," he said in Minnesota before the Timberwolves flew to Los Angeles. "We were kind of cluttered at the top of the key on our pick and rolls, so I didn't really get a clean look at the basket."

"We worked on that today and hopefully I can get some looks tomorrow. If not, I have to continue to look for the open man."

The Timberwolves have never advanced to the second round of the playoffs, failing to qualify in the first seven

years of their existence and being eliminated in the first round in the last six years.

But they're putting on a brave face.

"As I told the guys, by no means is the series over," Timberwolves coach Flip Saunders said.

"We're still close as a team, we're sticking together as a team," Minnesota's Wally Szczerbiak said. "We're down 3-2, you've got to win the fourth, the fourth is always the hardest."

The Lakers have won 12 straight playoff series since Jackson became their coach before the 1999-2000 season.

"We know what it takes," O'Neal said. "If we play like we played last night the remainder of the playoffs, there's no turning back."

"We haven't put two solid games together yet. They have nothing to lose. It's going to be fun tomorrow night."

BYU, Pepperdine top seeds in NCAA volleyball championships

By The Associated Press

LONG BEACH — Top-seeded Brigham Young and Pepperdine lead the four-team field for the NCAA men's volleyball championships.

BYU will face fourth-seeded Penn State on Thursday night after second-seeded Pepperdine opposes third-seeded Lewis University from Romeoville, Ill. The winners will play Saturday for the title.

BYU (22-6), which won NCAA titles in 1999 and 2001, had to beat Hawaii and Pepperdine in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation's tournament to reach the semifinals.

Junior hitter Jonathan Alleman and sophomore setter Carlos Moreno helped the Cougars compile a .344 attack percentage, seventh-best in the nation.

Pepperdine (24-5), ranked No. 1 in the country most of the season, seeks its fifth NCAA title and first since 1992. The Waves feature three All-Americans. They are coached by Marv Dunphy, who guided the United States to the 1988 Olympic gold medal.

Middle blocker Brad Keenan, last year's national player of the year, is a four-time All American and the national leader in blocks (1.97 a game). Outside hitter Sean Rooney, a two-time All-American, leads the Waves in kills (4.54).

Lewis (27-5), a winner in 14 of its last 16 matches, has the nation's best hitting percentage (.388) and three All-Americans.

First-team outside hitter Gustavo Meyer finished 12th nationally with a .435 hitting percentage. Setter Jose Martins averages 13.9 assists and Libero Ryan Stuntz placed sixth in the country in digs (2.51).

Penn State (26-5) won 11 consecutive matches and the Eastern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association tournament to make its 12th NCAA appearance in 13 years.

Senior outside hitter Carlos Guerra, the EIVA player of the year, ranks seventh nationally in points per game. Junior middle blocker Keith Kowal finished second in the country in hitting percentage (.508) and seventh in blocks (1.48).

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By THOMAS JOSEPH



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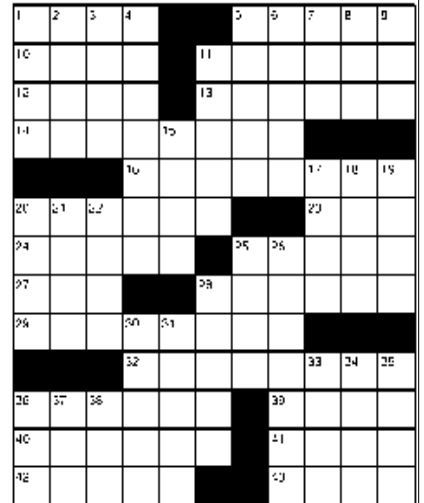
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Announcements

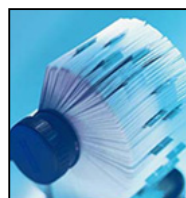
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BACK PAGE



Robot decoy is for the birds

By The Associated Press

Gaylord, Mich. — State conservation officials may ruffle a few feathers when they trot out their latest enforcement tool.

A robotic turkey that rotates its body and fans its tail is being used in some northern Michigan counties as an anti-poaching device.

Department of Natural Resources officials are planting the bird — nicknamed Robo Turkey — during turkey hunting season to see if poachers gobble the bait.

Authorities put the lifelike bird into service in response to property owner complaints about roadside hunting, said Sgt. Greg Drogowski, of the DNR's law enforcement division in Gaylord.

Robo Turkey saw duty over the weekend, but wasn't shot at, Drogowski said. The bird attracted more than one curious onlooker, though.

"We've had them stop and start using turkey calls," Drogowski said.

One driver spied the bird, stopped, roared off and came back with a friend. Drogowski expected to see a gun barrel poke out the window; instead, the occupants shot photos.

The bird cost about \$1,000 and was donated to the state by the National Wild Turkey Federation.

The fake turkey isn't bulletproof.

Loving the locks

By The Associated Press

CARLSBAD, N.M. — A teenager who recently enlisted in the Army decided he wasn't going to let his long hair go to waste.

Instead of waiting for the Army to give him a buzz cut, Kevin Berg, 18, got his hair cut a few weeks early and donated the hair to Locks of Love, a nonprofit organization that provides hairpieces to children across the United States who have lost their hair.

The organization uses donated hair to create high-quality wigs. The wigs help restore self-esteem and confidence in the children that helps them face the world and their peers, the organization says.

Berg, a 2002 Carlsbad High School graduate, is to ship out May 21 to become a health care specialist with the Army.

Berg's Army recruiters, Sgt. Jose Hernandez and Sgt. Pilar Saucedo, accompanied him for the haircut.

"This is the first time we've had someone donate their hair before enlisting," Hernandez said.

Rafts running late

By The Associated Press

NEW RICHMOND, W.Va. — Four tardy students at Wyoming East High School put a new spin on that old our-school-bus-ran-late excuse — it was their rafts that ran late.

Coben Thorn, Adam Fulford, Eric McKinney and Jarrod Brewer decided to take advantage of a two-hour class delay on April 16 and travel to school by raft.

Three of the four had previously ridden rafts on the Gauley and New rivers. McKinney was the only novice.

"It was something we'd always wanted to do," Thorn said.

Riding in two small rubber rafts, they made their way down the Guyandotte River with homemade paddles constructed from sticks, cookie sheets and duct tape.

They miscalculated the time required to make the eight-mile trip and missed their first class.

Word of their journey had spread and about 50 students and four teachers were waiting when they arrived. "The water was extremely cold," Thorn said. "By the time we got to school, we were shaking."

Convicted felon no deer hunter

By The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — A man who hunted deer on his own property will spend 15 years in federal prison because he was a convicted felon, and therefore not allowed to possess a gun.

Jack C. Altman, 43, of Beaver Falls, received the mandatory sentence Friday from U.S. District Judge Terrence McVerry.

McVerry said he had "great difficulty" in imposing the mandatory sentence after Altman said he didn't realize hunting was illegal for him.

"I wasn't in a bank with an automatic weapon. I wasn't carjacking someone ... I wasn't in a bar with a gun," Altman said. "I was hunting."

Prosecutors said Altman had two felony burglary convictions before he was seen by deputy state game commissioners hunting on property he owned in Hovey Township on Nov. 26, 2001.

Altman had pleaded guilty in November to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. He said he didn't challenge the charges for fear that he would spend more time in prison if he was convicted at trial.

Under the guidelines, a sentence of at least 15 years was mandatory.

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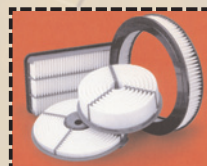


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