

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

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FANTASY 5

05, 14, 17, 22, 26

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 8, 2, 0

Evening picks: 6, 4, 8

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 07, Eureka

2nd Place: 09, Winning Spirit

3rd Place: 11, Money Bags

Race time: 1:47.14



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

■ Jerry Thomason, 41, was charged with aggravated assault in San Antonio, Texas, in April after police found his 45-year-old wife at home with a heavy chain and padlock around her neck. According to a witness, Thomason said he loves his wife and so regularly chained her at home to keep her from leaving.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Happy is the child whose father died rich."

— Jean Paul Marat



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Getting their kicks



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

A class of kids in the Police Activities League martial arts program practice sidekicks Thursday afternoon at Virginia Avenue Park.

Alert system could give brief, advance notice of quakes

BY ANDREW BRIDGES

AP Science Writer

Scientists have proposed a means of interpreting the initial, feeble tremors that herald the arrival of a large earthquake to give residents of Southern California advance warning of more violent shaking to come.

The system theoretically could give anywhere from seconds to tens of seconds of advance notice — enough time to send school children diving below their desks or to cut the flow of gas through pipelines vulnerable to rupture, scientists said.

Details appear today in the journal *Science*.

The alarm system would not predict or forecast earthquakes. Instead, it would exploit the staggered way in which energy trav-

els from the underground source of quakes to the surface.

The first indication at the surface that a large earthquake has occurred is typically the jolt caused by the arrival of a fast-moving but low-energy wave called the primary or P wave.

It is followed by the more energetic but slower moving shear, or S wave, that causes far more violent shaking.

Richard Allen of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Hiroo Kanamori of the California Institute of Technology developed a way to determine the location, origin, time and — most importantly — magnitude of an earthquake from as little as four seconds of measurements of the frequency of the energy in the P wave. The system

See QUAKES, page 7

Death penalty may be sought for man accused of killing local woman

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

Officials will determine in the next month whether to seek the death penalty for a convicted felon who is accused of murdering a Santa Monica woman nearly five years ago.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office last year charged David Thomas Wright, who was homeless and living on the streets of Santa Monica, with capital murder for allegedly killing Aviva Labbe on June 14, 1998.

Labbe's murder had been classified as a "cold case" and remained unsolved for nearly four years.

There were no suspects in the homicide until a sampling of Wright's DNA linked him to the murder through the U.S.

Department of Justice's database system, police said.

Wright, 48, was found in the California state prison system serving a 6-year sentence for battery of a Santa Monica police officer during an unrelated incident, authorities said.

In January of 2002, a jury found Wright guilty of battery and resisting arrest. He also failed to register himself as a sex offender stemming from a prior conviction in another state.

The murder case against Wright is considered a "special circumstance" and eligible for the death penalty because Labbe was sodomized.

Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney Ellen Aragon

See CHARGES, page 7

Fourth of July celebration canceled in Santa Monica

Fireworks latest victim of SMC's budget deficit

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

There will be no fireworks in Santa Monica this Fourth of July.

Santa Monica College announced Thursday that a looming budget deficit has forced the cancellation of this year's "Celebrate America" Independence Day festival.

The event, which for more than a decade has been the only Fourth of July celebration in Santa Monica, attracted 20,000 people last year. It has been held every year since 1982 and has grown into a community-wide celebration and festival complete with music and other entertainment.

"This is not the year," said Herb Roney, chair of SMC's board of trustees. "We're just going to hold off and next year hopefully bring it back bigger and better."

"I just loved it," he added. "It's been a wonderful program."

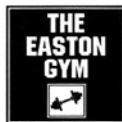
"We're facing historically high cuts. In the face of that, it just wouldn't be right to be launching a celebration."

— BRUCE SMITH
SMC spokesman

The celebration at SMC's Corsair Stadium has been one-of-a-kind since the city canceled its popular Fourth of July event in 1991, citing liability concerns. Controlling the hundreds of thousands of revelers that converged each year on Palisades Park and the beaches became too difficult, they said.

SMC spokesman Bruce Smith said the school simply can't afford to put on the \$50,000 event this year, even though much of the bill

See BUDGET, page 7



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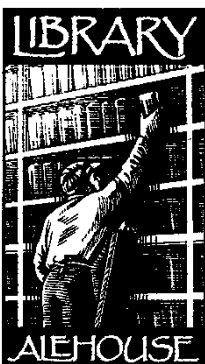
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The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, May 2, 2003:

Evaluate and consider what needs to happen in order to make your life work this year. You have power, charisma and the planets all working on your behalf. What more could you ask for? You are strongly directed, and you get results. You might consider your boundaries — what is too much to give or what is not enough. Your creativity emerges at work. If you are single, you will meet someone who might not be there for you. Be careful, as there is someone else coming along of significance. If you are attached, a relationship will need tending to in order to maintain its quality. GEMINI helps you make money.

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ Deal with finances. Follow through on a suggestion or an idea that comes to you in a dream. You will find answers. Your efforts draw a positive response as long as you remain authentic. You have a lot to offer. Your charisma speaks loudly. Tonight: Celebrate. Let it all flow.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ What you say is knowledgeable and comprehensive. Others respond to your insight, especially a boss. Step forward and accept your laurels. Ask for what you want, and stay on top of it. Tonight: Roll into the weekend.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Step back, but take your time with work. A friend does all he or she can to distract you. Clear your desk. Get your work done. Put on some music, and you will accomplish more. Once you start your weekend, you won't want to even think about work. Tonight: Nap and then decide.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ A round of meetings gives you direction. Listen to what someone offers. Give up being proud and ask for the help you need. A partner gives you important feedback and support. Take this person up on his or her offer. Tonight: Where people are.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Review recent events. You might need another game plan to make what you need work. Help others feel resourceful. News comes from a distance. Find experts if you have a question. Tonight: You might get a late start.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Visualize more of what you want from a project. Let others help you extend your imagination. What you might not have thought of could be a surprise. Your openness delights a partner. He or she feels that you are the cat's meow. Tonight: Take in a movie.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Experiment with ideas, listening to what someone wants to share. Your perspective could change substantially because of an associate or partner. You might have feelings that are far stronger than you realize. Be honest with yourself first. Tonight: Make nice.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ Sort through your many invitations. Surround yourself with people right now, and you'll gain. You might not be as much of a force as you would like to be right now. Stay open. Schedule one-on-one time later in the weekend. You do best with crowds. Tonight: Join co-workers.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ All work and no play might have you on edge. Yet you might be driven by what looks like a great idea. Test the waters with associates. You might be driven to make this concept work. Do a better job of listening. Clear your desk and return calls. Tonight: Don't be surprised if it takes you a while to get out of the office.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Experiment and play with ideas. Lighten the atmosphere wherever you are. Be careful with a flirtation that could become a lot heavier. Flow with present events, but try not to mix work and play. Build on your security. Tonight: Live for the moment.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Realize more of what you would like from a child or loved one through an open discussion. You have a very special way of energizing others. Share more of your dreams. Make them real. Start to talk about them. Tonight: Run errands on the way home.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★★ Keep communications rolling. You might not agree with everything you hear. Take a needed risk, if need be. You might want to talk about something that you would generally hold back. You will gain in many ways if you do. Buy a card or token of affection on the way home. Tonight: Hang at a favorite spot.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Spend Cinco de Mayo at the SM Pier

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Pier is celebrating Cinco de Mayo weekend with music.

David Haro, one of Mexico's celebrated singers and songwriters, will be giving a free performance on Saturday, May 3 at 2 p.m. on the pier. Joining Haro are Southland-based Veracruzano duo El Son de Pueblo and the Grupo la Rosa folkloric dancers.

On Sunday May 4, the Pier's Sunday Concert Series features traditional Mariachi music.

The Sunday Concert Series is presented by the Santa Monica Pier Lessee's Association. The May 3 concert is produced by Betto Arcos, the Madison Performance Series and the Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corp.

Cinco de Mayo commemorates General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguin's victory against the French at Puebla on May 5, 1862. The victory halted the French invasion of the country.

It is traditionally celebrated with lively dances and games accompanied by traditional music. Occasionally, the festivities include a reenactment of the Battle of Puebla. A traditional Cinco de Mayo festival also often includes speeches by officials, bullfights, piñatas for children, colorful decorations and fireworks.

SM residents honored by Angeles Girl Scout Council

By Daily Press staff

The Angeles Girl Scout Council recently honored 33 adult volunteers for their commitment to scouting and the girls in their community. Five of the honorees are Santa Monica residents.

Award recipients were nominated by fellow Girl Scout volunteers.

Troop Leader Cindy Pearson received the Outstanding Neighborhood Volunteer Award, which recognizes superior service to a Girl Scout neighborhood.

Susie Johansen, a Girl Scout volunteer for 40 years, received the Adult Service Award for her continuous service to the organization.

Jacqueline Pal, Margaret "Peggy" Brewer and Karen Erickson all received Outstanding Leader Awards for their troop leadership.

Pal also received the Angeles Award, an award given for special service beyond the neighborhood which benefits the Council.

Grant Elementary School also received the Community Award for its assistance to the Santa Monica Girl Scouts. For the past eight years, the school principal has ensured that Santa Monica troops have a safe place to hold meetings and neighborhood activities.

Kiwanis Club offers scholarships to talented students

By Daily Press staff

The Kiwanis Club of Santa Monica is offering more than \$15,000 in scholarships for local students.

The local organization, whose goal is serving the community while placing children first, is currently accepting applications for scholarships. Finalists will be selected in May and awards will be announced in early June.

The \$2,000 Robert Zeibarth scholarship will be awarded to a senior from either Santa Monica High School, Saint Monica's Catholic High School or Crossroads High School. The award is based on academic achievement, community service, financial need and a one-page essay outlining the candidate's academic and career goals.

One student from SAMOHI and one from Saint Monica's Catholic High School will receive the Ray Carriere and Alice Carriere Scholarships, valued at \$1,500 each. The scholarship is awarded based on academic achievement and leadership activities.

The Kiwanis Club also is offering music scholarships for both middle and high school students in the local school district. Twenty-four scholarships will be awarded to students performing in official school bands, orchestras or the chorus.

Santa Monica College students also can compete for nine scholarships based on community service achievements and/or academic areas of study. Awards range between \$875 and \$1,500.

Potential scholarship candidates are encouraged to contact their guidance counselors. Applicants and schools can contact Janie Jones Harding at (310) 434-4599 for more information.



Good morning Santa Monica, this is your Friday surf report.

The good news is there's a little SW bump in the water sending waist-high-plus sets our way. The bummer is there's also a lot of wind.

Expect the swell to build throughout the day, along with the wind. If we're lucky, a late-season cold front sitting off the coast will steer clear and let us enjoy this small swell.

But it doesn't look good.

Anyway you take it, early morning sessions are going to be the safest bet. Don't bet on the glass off, though you might get lucky.

The Water Today Is:

A little on the chilly side at:

56°

Full body suit should suffice.

Location	Friday	Saturday	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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OPINION

LETTERS

Video, DVD missed at library

Editor:

I am in accord with Ellen Drury in her opinion letter which appeared in the SMDP on April 28 regarding the closing of the Main Library for construction. In addition to the issues which she raises, both the Fairview and Montana Branch libraries are sorely missing in the video and dvd sections. There are no videos at the Montana Branch, and only a skimpy selection of dvds, and while the Fairview Branch has a larger selection, it is still meager. The Main Library had a wonderful selection of videos, and an ever-growing collection of dvds, and I in particular, being an avid movie fan, have greatly missed access to this aspect of the Main library.

Julia Reeves
Santa Monica

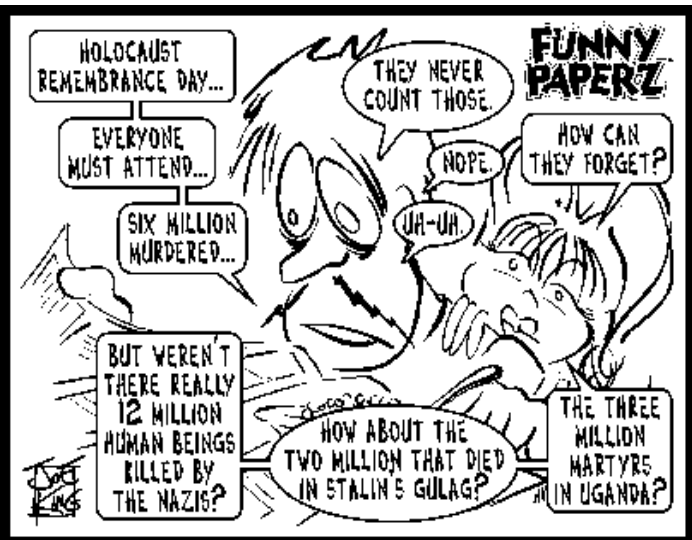
Affordable apartments not for the greedy

Editor:

The conclusion in your recent article ("Rental Roulette," April 29) that affordable apartment units in Santa Monica have been and are still being lost is misleading. The article completely fails to mention the "affordable" units were being rented to and occupied by tenants with high incomes. There is ample anecdotal and empirical evidence of this, and it is borne out by census data and a community profile commissioned by the City of Santa Monica in the 1990s.

The answer to helping to house people in the lower income brackets is through rent subsidy programs similar to the Section 8 program, which will help the truly needy, not the greedy.

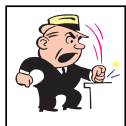
Joseph E. Fitzsimons
Santa Monica



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Santa Monica Pier's problems need a lot of fixing



**MY
WRITE**
By Bill Bauer

Has anyone been down on the Santa Monica Pier lately? It looks like the entire venue has suddenly become one big billboard for the restaurant at the pier's end.

Even from the ramp at Colorado Boulevard and Ocean Avenue, the large bunker-like structures at the western end seriously compromise what was once a stunning vista.

The Santa Monica Harbor Patrol Office is in the eastern bunker. Mariasol Restaurant is on the western side with the bright yellow awning and "Mariasol" signage affixed to the rooftop parapet two floors above the main deck.

So where are the stewards of the pier? An army of city staff and numerous city commissions and boards exercise control over various aspects of the pier's operation.

The Planning Commission OK'd enclosing Mariasol's open rooftop public deck that has resulted in even more mass and bulk to impede the view in February

of 1999.

The Landmarks Commission agreed with the Planning Commission and also said OK. Surprisingly, a couple of weeks ago, it even approved unauthorized, post-facto changes to approved plans by Mariasol's owners including an encroachment on the public deck, installation of doors limiting public access and non-opening windows. (An appeal of approval of the non-operable windows will be heard by the City Council on May 20).

The Pier Restoration Corp. is a non-profit public benefit agency controlled, financed and supervised by the city, whose mission it is to oversee pier operations. The PRC also approved Mariasol's changes and even amended its lease because of the enclosed deck.

With the addition to Mariasol, the Harbor Patrol Office's view to the West has been severely compromised. It will probably only be a matter of time before the city asks for and receives permission to add another level onto this structure, too.

All of this is just a drop in the bucket compared to the real problems on the pier.

Those in charge have turned the pier and its ocean vistas into a carnival midway, just like the Third Street Promenade. A friend and his date visiting from the

Midwest ventured onto the pier to see the sunset last week. They said there were so many performers and vending carts, they could barely get to the railing, let alone enjoy the view.

For years, the pier has had a reputation for being a gang hangout, especially at night. Public safety in and around the pier became national news with the Fourth of July shoot-out between the Santa Monica Police and a wanted felon in the Playland Arcade two years ago. This followed numerous incidents involving fights between gang-bangers drawn to parties hosted by promoters in the now closed Boathouse.

The beaches and area around the pier share an even more fearsome reputation. There is a lengthy and ample history of crime including robberies, rapes and assaults.

Complaints about the transients, vagrants and alcoholics that congregate around the pier and camp on the beaches continue. On April 13, a transient tried to molest a 12-year-old boy in a pier restroom. The boy got away and the perpetrator was arrested by Santa Monica Police within minutes of it being reported, according to news reports.

On top of it all, the pier loses about

\$400,000 annually. It appears that even with city staff and all those boards and commissions there's a lot that still isn't right.

The announcement of a Bubba Gump Shrimp Restaurant on the Boathouse site is a step in the right direction. The pier needs a reasonably priced, family style restaurant or two. Bubba Gump owned by Viacom, the parent company of Paramount Pictures, should do a good job and fill a need. Now, if we could also get a couple small cafes ...

However, the real goal should be to clean up the pier and make it suitable for one and all.

To start, I'd cut way back on the performers and the vending carts. They do nothing to enhance the seaside experience. The swap meet atmosphere reeks of cheapness and tawdriness. I'd also increase security in and around the pier.

Members of the PRC in the past have been critical of the SMPD's drunk driver checkpoints near the pier during summer holidays. But this is exactly the kind of proactive police work that tells potential troublemakers to fly straight or suffer the consequences.

(Bill Bauer is a longtime Santa Monica resident and a freelance writer.)

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OPINION

The QLine

Residents believe rent control law 'absurd'

This past week, Q-line asked:

"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?"

Here are your responses:

■ "People who are not living in their apartments full time as tenants under the SMRR should be charged a higher rent. This is a blatant abuse of the rental code and it should not be allowed. These people live out in the valley and they probably live in their apartments two days out of the week, and I think that this is an affront to people who are paying higher rents and the city should not allow it. These people should not be allowed to live someplace else and to also use their rent-controlled apartments for an office. And the city needs to do something about it, and they did pass the law and now they need to investigate whether these people are living in their apartments full time, or not. Thank you."

■ "The Santa Monica Shores apartment towers are sorely deteriorated, old gray elephant eye sores with tattered draperies attempting to block the sunlight behind dirty windows. The building owners are fortunate that there are tenants, due to the housing shortage who are willing to reduce themselves and reside in those towers. Fairness dictates that the tenants win their case."

■ "I'm giving my two-cents worth here on the rent control issue. It really has become in Santa Monica a matter of equity build-up. Say a guy who was fortunate enough to have rented way back when rent control was in. And I'm a real-estate broker, I've sold property all over the westside. It's a two edged sword. But in this issue right here in front of me, I would say that establishing residency is a requirement for a person that is going out to get a loan, he has to prove that he is going to live in that house, and that is done by various bank entities and appraisers and what not. And I don't really see that much difference in establishing residency for tenancy, because there's all kinds of rules, and what not, that are there to govern that. And if the guy's got a pad on the beach

that he uses on weekends, you know, I think there's a lot more needy people out there, that you know, have never even rented an apartment before. And the rents are so sky high now that if there was a way to pass these rent controlled units onto section 8 housing or some other entity, that might be something to look at. But it's a tough question and I understand both sides of the fence."

■ "Of course it's 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 not? They were there first, they're probably hard-line SMRR voters, they deserve it."

■ "My answer is no (it's not fair). And rent control has a long history as you're well aware of. But rent control was enacted so that people could afford to still stay and live in Santa Monica. If a person is not a full-time resident, or is using their unit as a business office, then it definitely does not apply for them. Fair is fair. There is nothing wrong with the resident of the Shores paying only \$600 a month rather than \$1,600. It just means rent control is working. And again rent control has a long history here, I play a role in this with the Shores and everything, but that's not the question you're asking. The answer is not, he's not a resident, you should not be able to have a rent controlled apartment."

■ "No it is not fair, nor is it proper for a person to have a second residence, for example a home some place else, and then rent a rent-controlled apartment in Santa Monica, and also then complain that actually we are noticing that and that it's a problem. Of course that's ridiculous. There's an affordable housing crisis as it is, and everyone's scrambling for affordable housing, and here are these people who have two residences or more. It's absolutely absurd."

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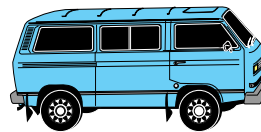
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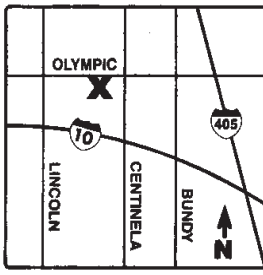
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REAL ESTATE

What you should know about landmark properties



DAYS ON THE MARKET

By Jodi Summers

Earlier this year, in a unique mail-in election, we voted on Proposition A, the Homeowners Freedom of Choice Initiative.

This vote allowed Santa Monica homeowners to choose whether to allow the city's Landmarks Commission to retain its ability to designate single family houses as landmarks (as per national standards), or whether homeowners should decide the local/national importance of their home.

More than 18,000 ballots were collected. By a margin of 53 to 47 percent, the city retained the right to designate Historic Landmarks in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs.

FYI, the definition of a National Historic Landmark is a nationally significant historic place designated by the Secretary of the Interior. Landmark properties are chosen because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. These buildings are designated under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which authorizes the Secretary to identify historic and archaeological sites, buildings, and objects which "possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States ..." and are "... recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use."

Today, fewer than 2,500 historic places bear this national distinction. Santa Monica has slightly more than 400 residential properties listed in the city's Historic Resources Inventory — 43 are official landmarks and are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The register of historically significant structures currently contains almost 50,000 listings representing more than 750,000 properties across the country.

The history of historic preservation in this

country can be traced through key dates:

■ 1813 — Philadelphia State House (Independence Hall) saved from demolition.

■ 1872 — Yellowstone National Park made a federally protected area, leading to interest in protecting southwestern adobe dwellings.

■ 1931 — Charleston, South Carolina establishes its "Old and Historic District," the country's first designated historic district.

■ 1935 — The Historic Sites Act, declaring that it is a national policy to preserve historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance, becomes law.

■ 1966 — The National Historic Preservation Act passed, establishing preservation roles for federal, state and local levels of government. It also established the National Register of Historic Places, the concept of historic districts, and the Advisory Board on Historic Preservation.

■ 1976 — The City of Santa Monica passes its landmark ordinance, giving the city the right to designate which properties are of historic significance.

Since Santa Monica passed its first landmark ordinance 27 years ago, 18 houses had been declared city landmarks. The most recent designation is a newly restored craftsman located in Ocean Park. The single-family home, which was built between 1911 and 1913, is located on street full of newer apartment buildings and condominium units. The application for landmark status was filed by the homeowner, who describes the property as "a little house in a wood full of big buildings."

Currently in Santa Monica, the benefits of owning a historic home are potential increases in property values (Don't all Santa Monica homeowners share that perk?), up to a 50 percent property tax cut (which can be transferred to new buyers), and no city permit fees for remodeling.

The city's Landmark Commission is a proponent of increasing incentives for homeowners to include their houses in Santa Monica's inventory of landmarked buildings. Local legislators claim that Santa Monica's current policy is "out of step" with similar commissions around the state.

(If you have local real estate questions, please e-mail them to Jodi Summers at jodis@boardwalkrealty.com, or call at (310) 309-4219.)

Regulations targeting property 'flipping' take effect in June

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Department of Housing and Urban Development issued new regulations Thursday that will ban property "flipping" involving the FHA mortgage insurance program.

Predatory "flipping" is when recently acquired property is resold within days for an artificially inflated value in a deal between a lender and appraiser. Most flipping occurs with only minor improvements made to properties, if any.

The new regulations, which take effect June 2, prohibit government-insured mortgage financing for any property sold within 90 days after being acquired by the seller.

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Santa Monica Daily Press





LOCAL □ STATE



Suspect in murder case has extensive criminal history

CHARGES, from page 1

said the DA's office has written a recommendation about whether the state should seek the death penalty, however that report will remain confidential until a panel reviews the case against Wright.

Wright pleaded not guilty to the murder charge last year. He is scheduled to appear in Los Angeles Superior Court on June 11, after the panel makes a recommendation on the death penalty issue.

"The committee must make the recommendation before a trial," Aragon said. "He could enter a new plea in Superior Court. When he is arraigned again he has a chance to admit guilt or not admit guilt."

Wright was officially charged with the murder on June 13, 2002, one day before the 4-year anniversary of Labbe's death, who was 20 years old when she was found sodomized and murdered in a walkway of a vacant home in Santa Monica.

Police said Labbe had just moved to Santa Monica shortly before she was murdered. Police did not know where Labbe

had moved from or where her family was located.

Authorities are not revealing circumstances surrounding the murder so the investigation won't be compromised.

Court proceedings have moved slow since the charges were filed nearly a year ago. But because the case was considered "cold," a significant amount of evidence has to be collected and there is no rush to trial because Wright already is in custody, Aragon said.

"All the continuances were for his benefit," she said. "If he wants to, when he is arraigned, he can have his trial within 60 days."

Wright's public defender, Paul Golub, declined to comment.

Wright was a twice-convicted felon before the murder and has an extensive arrest record, according to the DA's office.

Wright's rap sheet goes back to at least 1990 when he pleaded no contest to petty theft. In 1993, he was convicted of possessing a dagger and given probation.

In 1994, Wright was sentenced to two

years in prison for assault with intent. In 1999, Wright was acquitted for possessing a deadly weapon.

In 2002, he was sentenced for assaulting a police officer and failing to register as a sex offender.

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BUDGET, from page 1

is footed by private donations and a \$15,000 check from the city.

"We're facing historically high cuts," he said. "In the face of that, it just wouldn't be right to be launching a celebration."

SMC cut \$13 million from its budget and 7.5 percent of its classes in the 2002-2003 school year. It faces an additional \$15 million in cuts and 30 percent reduction in classes for 2003-2004, Smith said.

SMC's entire budget is about \$115 million and 85 percent of it is state funded, he added.

As entire departments are eliminated because of the economic crisis, outraged students have organized in protest. Last month, about 200 SMC students joined

8,500 in Sacramento to ask the state for more money.

Gov. Gray Davis is expected to issue a revised budget May 15. Smith said California's community college students have already been successful in bringing the statewide cuts for community colleges down to \$161 million from Davis' original proposal of \$288 million.

"The students have galvanized," Smith said. "They've really been organized and I think it's had an enormous effect."

Though SMC will be quiet July 4, celebrations in neighboring communities are expected to go on as scheduled. Last year, several West-L.A. cities, including Marina del Rey, sponsored events featuring fireworks.

Similar system used in Japan to provide early warnings

QUAKES, from page 1

would rely on a network of seismic instruments already deployed across the greater Los Angeles region.

"If we can detect this P wave and use the information contained in it to estimate the hazard associated with an earthquake, then there is the potential to issue a warning before any significant ground motion reaches the surface," Allen said.

The amount of forewarning would depend on the distance of the sensors from an earthquake's epicenter.

If directly above the epicenter, there would be no time for a warning, since the S wave would arrive almost immediately after the P wave. At 37 miles from the epicenter of a major quake, the system could give a magnitude estimate 16 seconds before the arrival of the S wave and the strong ground motion that accompanies it, Allen said.

A similar system is already in use in Japan, where individual sensors are used to provide early warnings.

Following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake that rocked the San Francisco Bay area, seismologists tracked P waves to warn rescue workers on a section of collapsed freeway about oncoming aftershocks. And a Nevada company has sold siren devices triggered by P waves to sev-

eral fire stations in California.

Other systems in place in Taiwan and Mexico rely on measurements of the peak ground motion associated with the S wave to relay warnings to locations far from an earthquake's epicenter but still vulnerable to shaking.

Allen and Kanamori used data from past earthquakes to simulate how their system would work. They are now testing it on the regular earthquakes that shake the Los Angeles region to determine if it can provide accurate magnitude estimates in real time. There are no immediate plans to go on and develop an actual warning system.

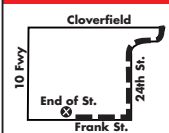
If developed, it would work best if plugged into a region's infrastructure, allowing it to automatically prompt shutdowns of everything from trains to factories during major quakes, Allen said.

Such a system would allow a utility to quickly cut power to its grid, minimizing but not eliminating damage, said Philip Mo, a structural engineer with Southern California Edison, a Rosemead, Calif., utility.

The study may settle the question of whether earthquakes of different magnitudes begin in different ways, said Lucy Jones, scientist in charge of the U.S. Geological Survey office in Pasadena, Calif. The study suggests they do.

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STATE

CALIFORNIA BRIEFS

City out of surfer dispute

By The Associated Press

PALOS VERDES ESTATES — The city and its Police Department were dropped as defendants in a lawsuit involving a surfing territory dispute between a Hermosa Beach surfer and a locals-only group of wave riders.

Police Chief Timm Browne was notified this week by the city's attorney that the city had been dismissed from a lawsuit filed by Timothy Banas, who claimed the city catered to a culture of beach localism and ignored alleged locals-only standoffs by peninsula surfers known as the Dirty Underwear Gang.

The battle for prime waves escalated to blows in a January 2002 incident at Indicator in which Banas, 20, attacked a surfer with a large rock after the surfer and another man allegedly attacked his 45-year-old father.

Criminal charges against Banas were dropped after the victim refused to cooperate with prosecutors. Banas' attorney agreed to drop the city from the suit in exchange for assurances from the city that it will not go after Banas for attorney fees and costs, Browne said.

"Consistently, we acted in a professional and straightforward manner with Mr. Banas," Browne said. "We will continue to deal with surfing localism as we always have in a very straightforward, efficient manner."

"Our job is to ensure safety at all levels and we will continue to do so."

Peninsula beaches have had a "locals only" reputation for years, with residents allegedly backing up their policy with physical skirmishes, vandalism to cars and rock throwing.

In his lawsuit, Banas claimed violations of his civil rights by the Police Department, including his constitutional right to peaceable assembly, to receive equal protection and "to surf." The Superior Court suit names six other surfers and trial will proceed May 28 in Redondo Beach.

Hundreds held for terrorism while FBI builds cases

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Police Department's effort to root out terrorist cells believed operating out of Los Angeles has led to about 189 arrests on charges that allows them to be held while the FBI and others try to build federal cases.

Police said Wednesday they were using forgery, credit scams, identity theft, and marriage fraud allegations to hold suspects while trying to develop evidence linking them to terrorism.

"The point of it is to arrest them, disrupt their activities, get them off the street and obtain evidence as result of the arrest," said Cmdr. Mark Leap of the LAPD's Counter-Terrorism Bureau. "This may lead us in other directions and to other people."

John Miller, the bureau's civilian chief, said his team has identified associates affiliated with al-Qaida who have set up support networks and raised money for terror attacks around the world.

"We've taken out a lot of people who we have high suspicions of or were involved somehow in terrorist funding or support," Miller said. "But is there a cell we don't know about? We don't know what we don't know."

Police have received more than 1,200 tips on a phone tip line set up in January. The LAPD is lobbying for an additional \$5 million in its fiscal 2003 budget to help fight terrorism, with some of the money spent on 86 officers to work as intelligence agents and emergency planners.

Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's Office, said there has been a renewed and improved level of cooperation among local and federal law enforcement agencies since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Students settle file-swapping suit with music industry

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Four college students who were sued by the recording industry for operating computer networks that allegedly offered thousands of songs for illegal downloading settled the lawsuits by agreeing to pay damages of between \$12,000 and \$17,500 each, music industry officials said Thursday.

The settlements were reached separately in the past two days, according to a prepared statement by the Recording Industry Association of America, the music industry's trade group.

None of the students admitted any wrongdoing under the terms of the agreement. All agreed to cease the illegal distribution of copyrighted music.

The lawsuits marked an aggressive first step on the part of the industry to go after individuals engaging in what the industry sees as online music piracy. It had previously only sued file-sharing services where most of the illegal copying and swapping of copyright works takes place.

The RIAA said the networks were being run by students at Princeton University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Michigan Technological University. The schools were not named in the lawsuits.

"We believe it's in everyone's best interest to come to a quick resolution, and that these four defendants now clearly understand the seriousness with which we view this type of illegal behavior," said Matt Oppenheim, senior vice president of business and legal affairs for the RIAA.

The group originally sought damages of \$150,000 per song.

STATE



Associated Press

President Bush lands in a U.S. Navy S-3B Viking on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln, in this image from video on Thursday, in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California. The S-3B Viking is dubbed Navy One because of its presidential passenger.

President Bush: 'Difficult work' remains in Iraq

BY SCOTT LINDLAU
Associated Press Writer

ABOARD THE USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN — President Bush, on an aircraft carrier homebound from the war, told the nation Thursday that “we have difficult work to do in Iraq” to rebuild the country and promote democracy — and to find Saddam Hussein and any weapons of mass destruction.

“Our coalition will stay until our work is done,” the president said.

Bush flew out to the carrier on a small jet and made a screeching stop as his plane was snagged by a cable stretched across the deck. The ship was about 30 miles from San Diego. Bush, a former pilot, apparently got a turn at the controls on the way. He emerged in a flight suit and shouted to reporters, “Yes I flew it! Of course I liked it!”

In a speech prepared to be delivered from the deck of the ship, Bush said, “We have difficult work to do in Iraq. We are bringing order to parts of that country that remain dangerous. We are pursuing and finding leaders of the old regime, who will be held to account for their crimes. We have begun the search for hidden chemical and biological weapons, and already know of hundreds of sites that will be investigated.”

Bush added, “We are helping to rebuild Iraq, where the dictator built palaces for himself instead of hospitals and schools for the people. The transition from dictatorship to democracy will take time, but it is worth every effort. Our coalition will stay until our work is done.”

The president sought to give the nation a close to the fighting while avoiding a sweeping claim of victory. Thursday morning brought fresh reminders that the hostilities had not ceased: Seven U.S. soldiers were wounded in a grenade attack in Fallujah, Iraq.

Moreover, central questions remain unanswered. Saddam is unaccounted for, no weapons of mass destruction have been found and there is no new evidence that Saddam's government had ties to al-Qaida.

The president cast the Iraq war as but one phase of the overall fight against terrorism. Indeed, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld announced during a visit Thursday to Afghanistan that major combat activity in that country had come to an end, long after U.S.-led forces drove the Taliban regime from power.

“From Pakistan to the Philippines to the Horn of Africa, we are hunting down

al-Qaida killers,” Bush said. “The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We have removed an ally of al-Qaida and cut off a source of terrorist funding.”

Bush spoke to Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia earlier Thursday about the road map the administration offered a day earlier for ending Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

Bush arrived on the carrier aboard a Navy jet that landed on the deck at more than 125 miles an hour and was stopped in seconds by a stretched cable. He had crossed the country on Air Force One, exchanged his business suit and tie for a flight suit and got a refresher course on ejecting from a jet. He took his place up front in the S-3B, next to the pilot, for the flight to the carrier 150 miles off the coast of San Diego.

It was an apparent presidential first. Presidents traditionally use helicopters to visit aircraft carriers.

Bush toured the carrier's operations center, watched jets take off and met with F-18 pilots and with Capt. Kendall L. Card. After his speech, he was having dinner with about 150 enlisted sailors.

The Lincoln, which was commissioned in 1989 by Dick Cheney, then defense secretary and now the vice president, was returning from a 10-month deployment, the longest by a nuclear-powered carrier in history.

Its aircraft dropped nearly 1.2 million pounds of ordnance on Iraq, about 40 percent of the firepower that U.S. carriers and their jets rained down.

The bombs and missiles destroyed Iraqi air defense units, tanks, government and military buildings, fuel and ammunition stores, and provided cover for U.S. and British troops, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

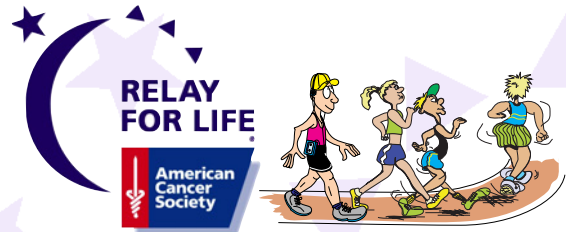
The president was spending the night in the quarters that the ship's captain usually uses when the carrier is in port.

Overnight, the carrier was heading close enough to its San Diego destination that Bush could helicopter back to land on Friday morning.

In keeping with his practice in recent weeks, Bush was using a defense contractor as the setting for a speech Friday on both national security and the economy. He was visiting the Silicon Valley offices of United Defense Industries, developer of the Bradley fighting vehicle.

The valley is on the fringe of the strongly Democratic San Francisco bay area, one of the cradles of the anti-war movement.

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INTERNATIONAL

U.S. intelligence reviewing N. Korean nuclear claim

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence agencies are trying to figure out if North Korea can secretly make plutonium for nuclear weapons, as it has claimed, U.S. officials said Thursday.

The Bush administration sought the review after North Korean officials said they had reprocessed some 8,000 rods of spent nuclear reactor fuel into weapons-grade plutonium.

U.S. intelligence has no evidence the North Koreans have conducted any recent reprocessing work, although it is known Pyongyang possesses those rods.

Reprocessing typically puts out signatures that can be detected by American sensors.

Because no such signatures have been detected, U.S. officials are wondering if they have developed a clandestine capability to make weapons-grade plutonium, officials said. It is also possible the North Koreans are lying.

The CIA estimates that North Korea made enough plutonium in the late 1980s

and early 1990s to make two nuclear weapons.

New reprocessing would give Pyongyang the ability to make up to eight more weapons. They would also be able to sell the plutonium to other countries seeking nuclear weapons, U.S. officials said.

"Our intelligence community still cannot give us any validation or confirmation of what North Korea has said at various times and at various places with respect to reprocessing," Secretary of State Colin Powell said this week.

The new intelligence effort was first reported in Thursday's New York Times.

Last week, the chief North Korean negotiator in talks with American officials in Beijing acknowledged that Pyongyang had nuclear weapons and could test them, depending on U.S. actions. The negotiator also claimed the 8,000 rods, from its nuclear facility in Yongbyon, had been reprocessed.

Earlier this week, Powell said the United States was reviewing an offer by North Korea to give up its missiles and nuclear facilities in exchange for substantial U.S. economic benefits.

Amid SARS fears, villagers in outskirts throw up road blocks to keep city folks out

BY CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

Associated Press Writer

JIJEZISHI, China — Zhang Qiulian usually welcomes tourists to her bed-and-breakfast in the Lianhua mountains, an hour's drive north of Beijing. But with SARS spreading in China's capital, she sat beside a makeshift roadblock Thursday with a hand-lettered sign saying, "Terribly sorry, no access to outsiders."

The same sentiments were found throughout Beijing's outskirts, where people are sealing off villages to keep out the SARS virus. They've thrown up roadblocks of dirt, boulders, logs and sometimes just an old man waving a stick.

"People are scared of us. We're scared of people. It's a scary time," Zhang said, turning away visitors at her stone home with a resigned smile.

Those fears are likely to remain as long as the death toll from severe acute respiratory syndrome continues to rise. The Health Ministry reported 11 more fatalities Thursday — seven of them in Beijing — bringing China's death toll to 170. There were 187 new infections, raising the number of cases to 3,647.

Throughout China, millions were staying home for the May Day holiday after the government cut the weeklong vacation to five days and banned travel in hopes of containing the disease. Beijing's tourist sites from Tiananmen Square to the majestic Great Wall were nearly empty. Shopping centers were quiet and many restaurants closed down.

Dozens of tourists still passed by Zhang's "Farmer's Family Garden," one of dozens of little farmhouse inns in the scenic area just north of the famous Ming Tombs. But she could do little more than hand out name cards and ask them to return later. How much later, she didn't know, although she said county health officials told her the

closures could last three months.

About a half-hour drive from Zhang's place, a wheelbarrow blocked off the road to the village of Houniufang. A stern-faced man with a crewcut and a red armband reading "Security Patrol" said no outsiders were allowed. A roadside stand was set up to disinfectant residents' vehicles.

It wasn't clear whether the village roadblocks were considered a violation of an order by China's central government this week banning local communities from blocking traffic from Beijing and other hard-hit areas. One township official said his local government had authorized the roadblocks.

Such measures weren't legally authorized, but police weren't going to intervene, said an officer manning a toll booth further up the road at the border with Hebei province.

"These are extreme times, so we need to take extreme measures," the officer, Wang Quanzhi, said.

Beside him, Hebei provincial health workers in surgical masks and smocks were spraying disinfectant from backpack units on trucks entering the province from Beijing. Drivers were standing at a table having their temperatures taken and being quizzed about where they'd come from and where they were headed.

Closer to Beijing, authorities dressed in white anti-infection suits began moving patients into a new 1,000-bed SARS hospital erected in just over a week by thousands of workers laboring around the clock.

The new hospital at Xiaotangshan is part of extensive efforts over the past two weeks to stop SARS from spreading in Beijing, where 82 people have died of the disease and 1,570 have been sickened.

Beijing has already shut down its schools, sending home 1.7 million students, and ordered cinemas and other entertainment sites to close.

Boy pulled from the wreckage



Burhan Ozbilici/Associated Press

Turkish rescuers carry a boy they have pulled out alive from the debris of a collapsed dormitory in Bingol, eastern Turkey, late Thursday. A powerful earthquake shook southeastern Turkey killing at least 100 people and injuring 1,000, officials said.

Blair cancels N. Ireland elections, awaits clear-cut IRA peace commitments

BY SHAWN POGATCHNIK

Associated Press Writer

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — British Prime Minister Tony Blair canceled Northern Ireland's elections Thursday, saying deepening divisions among Catholic and Protestant voters threatened to bring "complete and total chaos."

Blair said he planned to move the May 29 election for Northern Ireland's dissolved legislature to the autumn. But he warned the vote could be delayed longer if the outlawed Irish Republican Army doesn't explicitly renounce violence, cease all hostile activities and disarm.

Gaining such an IRA commitment "goes to the very soul of the Good Friday agreement," he said, referring to the 1998 pact that proposed power-sharing between British Protestants and Irish Catholics in the province. He accused the IRA's Sinn Fein party of a "point-blank refusal" to go beyond "general assurances" on future IRA actions.

Northern Ireland legislators in 1999 overcame deep Protestant divisions to form a four-party administration that included Sinn Fein.

But Britain, fearing a walkout by the main Protestant party, shut down the crisis-prone coalition last October after police implicated Sinn Fein in an alleged IRA spy ring. It was the latest in a string of scandals that raised questions about the sincerity of the IRA's 1997 cease-fire.

Blair said that without decisive IRA peace moves to reassure Protestant voters, a majority would probably back Ian Paisley's hard-line Democratic Unionist Party, which opposed the peace deal.

A Paisley victory, Blair said, would be "a recipe for complete and total chaos. So the reality is, I'm afraid, unless we get an agreement (with Sinn Fein and the IRA), we don't have a government."

The traditional No. 1 Protestant party, the Ulster Unionists, welcomed the postponement, as did the Bush administration.

But the other three parties in the mothballed coalition — Sinn Fein, the Democratic Unionists and the moderate Catholics of the Social Democratic and Labor Party — denounced the move.

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, who has worked with Blair for six months to try to achieve an IRA breakthrough, had agreed with Blair in March to postpone the election from May 1 to May 29. But he criticized Thursday's move.

"Ultimately, I believe that yet another postponement causes more problems for the process than it solves," Ahern said.

He did agree that the IRA's seven-man command — among them, according to police and historians, Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness — had the power to defuse the crisis.

In a bid to maintain peacemaking momentum, Blair and Ahern made public Thursday their governments' long-awaited plans for driving forward key goals of the 1998 deal.

The 25-page joint declaration — dramatically withdrawn from publication on the fifth anniversary of the Good Friday deal April 10 — had already been presented confidentially to Sinn Fein in the hope of spurring a maximum IRA response.

Britain pledged to reduce troop strength in Northern Ireland, currently around 13,000, to a "permanent garrison" of about 5,000 by April 2005. All but 14 army bases in the territory would be closed by then if the IRA provided "an enabling environment," the document said.

The two governments also pledged to appoint four experts — one British, one Northern Irish, one Irish and one American — to monitor the IRA and other outlawed groups, as well as Britain's pursuit of security reforms and cutbacks.

Britain also promised that about 30 fugitives wanted on outstanding IRA charges "would be free to return to Northern Ireland without risk of arrest for questioning or charge."

SPORTS



Yankees, Rockies account for scoring increase

BY JOSH DUBOW
AP Sports Writer

Jeff Nelson has a theory about why scoring is slightly up after the first month of the baseball season.

"The Yankees seem to be scoring a lot of runs every night," the Seattle Mariners' reliever said.

New York Yankees infielder Todd Zeile has his own guess.

"I know when I was in Colorado, there wasn't a lot of scoring there early last season and this year there is," Zeile said. "Maybe that's the difference."

It turns out both Nelson and Zeile are right.

Teams are averaging 9.5 runs this season, up from 9.3 through April last season, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. That 2.2 percent increase in scoring can be attributed to the Yankees' big bats and the thin air in Colorado.

Teams are combining for four more runs a game at hitter-friendly Coors Field a month into the season. Apparently, the humid air the Rockies used last season to make the balls less lively isn't working as well this season.

"Every day I come here, something different happens," Cincinnati manager Bob Boone said Wednesday after the Reds' 13-11 win over the Rockies. "I'm sure I've seen that before — I just can't remember."

The Yankees are doing their scoring everywhere, averaging 6.6 runs this season after scoring 5.1 during the first month of last season.

Home runs are also on the rise after dropping for two straight years, rising 10 percent from 1.91 last year to 2.10 this season. That's still well below the record-setting April 2000, when teams combined to hit 2.54 homers, and the 2.34 from 2001.

Last year's drop in homers could be attributed to umpires calling the high strike, which hitters are now getting used to.

"You saw that dramatic change when they started to call that high strike, espe-

cially the high breaking ball," Mariners manager Bob Melvin said.

"At times you still see it, but not as much. The big thing they're trying to do is to get a uniform strike zone so guys know what to look for and don't have to adjust to each umpire's zone every night. That helps out the hitters and speeds up the game."

Baseball is getting closer to its goal of reducing the time of game to 2 hours, 45 minutes. Last year, nine-inning games averaged 2:52 — 6 minutes shorter than the previous season. Through April, games this season are down to 2:47.

"It's been brought to our attention — it's something they're monitoring quite specifically from the major league office," Rockies manager Clint Hurdle said. "We have a meeting with the umpiring crew before every series when I talk to the crew chief about guys that they're keeping an eye on that might warrant a little special attention about hurrying up to some degree."

"I think it's picked up a little bit and hopefully it'll work to everyone's benefit."

Walks and strikeouts, meanwhile, are pretty much even with last season as players become accustomed to the umpires' strike zones. Teams are walking 3.6 batters per nine innings, compared to 3.5 last season. There have been 6.6 strikeouts vs. 6.5 last year.

"There's some crews that are trying to stay with the plan that was implemented last year by calling the high strike," Blue Jays manager Carlos Tosca said. "Then you have other crews where each individual umpire has their own strike zone."

"I think it's mainly the younger guys that you see wanting to call the high strike more."

Average attendance dropped 4.9 percent, from 26,217 to 24,920, with 22 of the 30 teams showing losses. Much of the drop can be attributed to the weak economy and the unusually cold weather in the Northeast and Midwest.

Down the line



Tom Gannam/Associated Press

St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Brett Tomko pitches to New York Mets' Mike Piazza in the first inning on Thursday in St. Louis.

DID YOU KNOW?: The first World Series was played between Pittsburgh and Boston in 1903 and was a nine-game series. Boston won the series 5-3.

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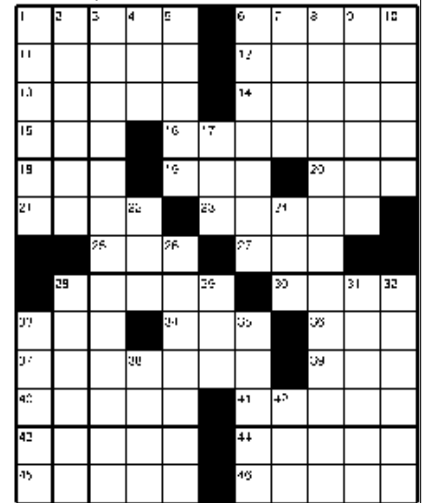
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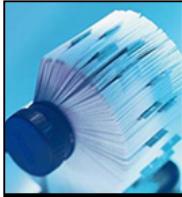
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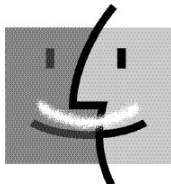
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BACK PAGE

High school students planning prom for whites only

BY ELLIOTT MINOR

Associated Press Writer

ALBANY, Ga. — A year after holding their first integrated prom, some students at Taylor County High School have decided to again hold a separate, private party for whites only.

While many whites say they still plan to attend next week's integrated prom, the decision to hold the whites-only prom this Friday saddened senior Gerica McCrary, who helped organize last year's dance.

"I cried," said McCrary, who is black. "The black juniors said, 'Our prom is open to everyone. If you want to come, come.'"

Juniors are in charge of planning the prom each year and last year they decided to have just one dance — the first integrated prom in 31 years in the rural Georgia county 150 miles south of Atlanta.

Until then, parents and students organized separate proms for whites and blacks after school officials stopped sponsoring dances, in part because they wanted to avoid problems arising from interracial dating.

This year, a small number of white juniors decided they wanted a separate prom.

"They influenced the others," said McCrary, who plans to major in biology at Columbus State University. "They didn't vote on anything. They said, 'This is what we're going to do.'"

The school has 439 students, 232 of them black. McCrary and a white friend passed out fliers informing students of all races that they would be welcome at the May 9 prom at nearby Fort Valley State University.

The private prom is Friday night 50 miles away in Columbus.

Erin Posey, a white senior, said the entire junior class

joined together in hosting last year's prom, but this year's junior class wasn't as unified.

"I think a lot of seniors were disappointed," she said. "Now we have to choose between two groups of friends."

Posey plans to attend both proms.

"I had some white friends who were not going to the other (inclusive) prom," she said. "I wanted to have time with everybody. I'll have a lot of (black) friends there, too. A lot more of the seniors are going to be at the mixed one."

After school integration, separate proms were common in the rural South, but Taylor County was among the last to cling to the practice.

Glenda Latimore, a 1972 graduate, was in the first class to have separate black and white proms. Now her 16-year-old son, Gerard, is preparing for prom night.

As the black junior class president, her son helped organize the open-to-all prom. The class also has a white president.

"I would have liked to see it together this year," said Latimore, an outfielder on the school's baseball team. "My class would have, too. It just didn't happen this year."

Glenda Latimore said relatives in Philadelphia and New Jersey laugh when they read about Taylor County's prom. She said residents here are "nice and friendly," but they still have a problem with proms.

"It seems like it's something secret," she said. "The white people are afraid to speak up against the separation."

"But I went to a black prom and I had fun," she said. "It didn't kill me, so I tell my son, 'Just go to the prom and have fun. Don't come out hating anyone.'"

Seattle woman wins lottery three times

By The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Monika Culbertson sure is lucky for someone who claims she doesn't like to wager.

The 58-year-old German-born grandmother of four has won more than \$4 million in three separate state lottery drawings.

"I'm not a gambler," she said after learning she had won in the Washington State Lottery for a third time. "There really isn't any way to explain it."

She's already receiving \$200,000

in annual payments from the \$4 million jackpot that she won in 1997. On Saturday, Culbertson won the \$50,000 Lucky for Life drawing.

She also won \$1,000 in Quinto in October 2001.

The total: \$4,051,000.

"That's a lot of luck, don't you think?" she said.

Culbertson is the first triple winner in the history of the state's lottery, which began in 1982.

For the past 10 years, Culbertson said she's spent \$20 a week on lottery tickets, buying them at 2:30

p.m. every Wednesday and Saturday at different stores.

The odds are mind boggling: 1 in 7 million to win the jackpot in 1997 and 1 in 11,000 for the 2001 Quinto, according to Washington State Lottery spokesman Eric Jones.

Lottery officials had not yet computed the odds of winning three times in a six-year span.

Having grown up one of eight children in Germany, Culbertson said she knows how to stretch a dollar. "And that's not going to change," she said.

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