

FREE

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 147

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

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FANTASY 5

07, 08, 21, 27, 28

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 0, 7, 0

Evening picks: 5, 7, 0

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 06, Whirl Win

2nd Place: 05, California Classic

3rd Place: 01, Gold Rush

Race time: 1:47.23


**NEWS OF
THE WEIRD**
by Chuck Shepard

■ An April Wall Street Journal report highlighted several states' elementary school "anti-bully" policies that have banned roughhousing, name-calling, and even "mean looks" and pointed gossip, and encouraged teaching the little kids a language of sensitivity and tolerance. However, one problem some kids fear from such training and language is that, as they move up to middle schools and run into other kids who will be baffled by such sensitivity, the tolerance-trained kids are even more likely to get beaten up.

**QUOTE OF
THE DAY**

"We're all in this alone."

— Lily Tomlin

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Neighborhood markets targeted by City Hall

Ocean Park's shops struggle with new city-imposed restrictions

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

When Ocean Park's three neighborhood markets were built 80 years ago, there was little concern in City Hall that they would be disruptive to the area.

But today, some officials on the Santa Monica Planning Commission believe the stores should be more regulated.

City Hall is demanding that the shops shape up and adhere to a spectrum of new guidelines and ordinances.

Market owners and workers are fearful that the required changes could put them out of business.

Residents of Ocean Park, who've grown attached to the little corner markets, want the stores to stay exactly as they are. They say the shops are the anchors of their neighborhood, which many feel still reflects the laid back lifestyle of Santa Monica's beach mentality.

"It's Kafka-esque," said Dana Cuff, an Ocean Park resident and UCLA professor of architecture and urban design. "We're going to go through the bureaucracy to end up with something worse than we already have."

"If we had a sophisticated system," she added, "you'd treat them as individual cases and help them survive."

VICTIMS OF THE SYSTEM?

Planning officials have demanded the stores shorten their hours, take down signs and, in one case, do major architectural work to the facade of the market, according to planning department documents.

Nazmul "Hawk" Haque, owner of the Fair Market, located at Fourth Street near Pacific Street, has lived in Ocean Park for 16 years and said he doesn't understand why he has to close his store early. Haque chalked the situation up



John Wood/Daily Press

A man walks by the Fair Market near Fourth and Pacific streets on Friday. The store is one of three in the Ocean Park neighborhood that are struggling to conform to city guidelines.

to bureaucracy.

"That's their book," he said. "They go with the book."

The city has deemed Haque's store, widely known as "the best little wine shop in Santa Monica," a liquor store because more than 20 percent of his shelf space is devoted to alcoholic beverages.

Liquor stores are not allowed in residential areas, according to city law. Haque, who has no backroom storage for his extensive wine offerings, has not purchased any new wine for more than a month in order to reduce his stock and meet the city's requirements.

What's worse, Haque said, is that the city is making him shorten his hours. For years, the Fair Market has opened at 7 a.m. and closed at midnight. Now, City Hall has set the store's

hours from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

While residents rue the missed morning coffee and late-night candy bars, Haque said he's seen a 25 percent drop in revenue.

And he's not alone.

For years, the Budget Market at the intersection of Fourth Street and Hollister Avenue has stayed open until midnight on weekdays and 1 a.m. on weekends. But if it wants to continue operating, city officials said it's going to have to conform to a new zoning law, which mandates it closes its doors at 9 p.m.

Nadir Ladak, a clerk at the Budget Market, said the reduction in hours could spell the end for the little corner market — and keep him from making his rent payments.

See MARKETS, page 5

Ad campaign puts squeeze on panhandlers in SF

BY LISA LEFF

Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — The advertisements that showed up on taxis and buses in San Francisco this week are meant to be as provocative as they are purposeful.

"Today we rode a cable car, visited Alcatraz and supported a drug habit," reads one, featuring a loudly dressed tourist couple at Fisherman's Wharf.

Another depicts a girl in pig-tails: "Today I adopted a cat, gave some change and shut down my

"Today we rode a cable car, visited Alcatraz and supported a drug habit."

— SAN FRANCISCO ADVERTISEMENT

corner grocer," she says, smiling against a backdrop of Victorians.

Sponsored by the Hotel Council of San Francisco, the attention-grabbing ads represent the latest effort to put the squeeze on panhandling.

With its \$65,000 We Want Change campaign, the council hopes to break residents, workers and visitors of the habit of tossing coins into all the outstretched cups and open hands that greet them at cable car stops, outside shops and

museums and at nearly every major downtown intersection.

The problem has been a part of the city-by-the-bay since the Barbary Coast days, but hoteliers say San Francisco has gained a reputation for being such a soft touch in recent years that homeless people come from all over to beg on its streets, spoiling the city's image as a world-class travel destination.

The ads — another shows a man in Washington Square saying

See PANHANDLERS, page 6

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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 Saturday, May 3, 2003:

Learn to ask for advice and feedback from superiors. You find that others are a source of unusual and dynamic ideas, though you might be uncomfortable with what you hear. You will have an opportunity to increase your security and financial stability, especially in the first half of your birthday year. In the second half, allow your creativity and risk-taking more leeway. If you are single, in the fall you might come across someone who could cause you to stop in your tracks. Get to know this person. If you're attached, plan on a romantic trip during the fall. GEMINI values your efforts.

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ Play leader of the gang. Get out there and energize your friends, family and loved ones. Use a little more imagination, and everyone will smile. Whether scheduling a picnic or a day trip, you'll have a great time. Make sure to add a little music to the mix. Tonight: Hang out.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Get in touch with others' expectations. Before you know it, you might find that you've blown your budget in order to make someone happy. Think before OK'ing an expense or major indulgence involving a family member or your home. Does this increase the quality of your life? Tonight: Your treat.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ You're all smiles, as the Moon greets your sign. A growing friendship could punctuate single Gemini lives. If attached, conversations help draw the two of you together. Confusion surrounds your intimate or personal feelings. Flow with the moment. Tonight: Whatever makes the Twin smile.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Take your time and review your ideas before launching into action. You might want to discuss your financial limits. Someone needs to hear more from you about what you want. You might be facing a decision between a friend and a loved one. Tonight: Go on a retreat.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Visualize. Timing works as you zero in on what you want. You could easily go to extremes in order to make your presence noticed. A loved one comes through for you big-time. You might be surprised by what goes on. Tonight: A loved one creates hazy situations.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Take charge, whether it's bringing your friends together or deciding on plans. Others will more than happily follow your lead. Evaluate a project before you decide you can do it. You might not be able to perform to your expectations. Tonight: Paint the town red.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Plan a trip. Detach from an emotionally charged situation by changing the scenery and gaining a new perspective. How you see a child or loved one might need to be revised. Understand another by listening and walking in his or her shoes. Tonight: Try something exotic.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ A partner wants and needs your time. Do nothing halfway right now. Share yourself and your affection. Remember which side your bread is buttered on. Honor the key people in your life. You might need to curb some of your socializing and playing. Tonight: Let someone else choose.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ Choice eludes you this weekend. Go along with plans and what others might need or want. You could be confused by what a friend says when his or her actions are exactly the opposite. Observe and give this person the space to declare his or her intentions. Tonight: Follow a partner's ideas.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Pace yourself as you handle the desire of a loved one or friend to spend way too much. You could feel pulled in different directions. Recognize your limits, knowing when to say you have had enough. Grab a nap or vanish with a good novel. Make this your day. Tonight: Take it easy.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Whatever you do with a loved one, friend or child is perfect. You might encounter a little flak with a roommate or partner. Juggle these two different interests, and you'll meet success. Permit more laughter; cut negativity. Tonight: Be wild.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★★ What you hear and what might actually be said could be distinctly different issues. In the long run, this distortion could affect a relationship or communication. Lie low and close to home if possible. Catch up on mail. Call a friend at a distance. Tonight: Say what you feel.

Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday
Phone: 310.458.PRESS(7737) • Fax: 310.576.9913
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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Noted doctor joins Saint John's Health Center

By Daily Press staff

Dr. Ronald Thompson has joined the radiation oncology team at Saint John's Health Center.

For the past 30 years, Thompson served as the chairman of radiation oncology at Cedars-Sinai. A published author and professor, Thompson is also a fellow of the American College of Radiology, an elected position that only 10 percent of practicing radiologists receive.

"We are pleased to welcome Dr. Thompson," said Dr. Robert Wollman, the medical director of oncology at Saint John's. "He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge along with a commitment to caring and compassionate patient care, all of which add to our already strong program."

The radiation oncology department at Saint John's offers advanced radiation treatment for all types of treatment.

SM Chamber honors local businesses, organizations

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce and the City of Santa Monica recently announced this year's Sustainable Quality Award winners. For eight years, the SQA program has honored local organizations and businesses that make extraordinary contributions to the community.

This year's four winners will be honored at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon at 11:30 a.m., on May 6 at the Four Points Sheraton at 530 Pico Blvd.

The SQA winners include The Library Alehouse, ZJ Boardinghouse, The Real Earth Environmental Company and Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center.

The Library Alehouse, a Main Street restaurant, incorporates organic ingredients into its menu and composts its kitchen waste. The restaurant also sponsors community programs such as the Ocean Park Cleanup.

ZJ Boardinghouse features environmentally friendly organic fibers and non-toxic materials among its surf, snow and skate equipment. Environmental initiatives also include energy saving retrofits and eco-friendly procurement policies.

The Real Earth Environmental Company sells a wide variety of earth-friendly cleaning supplies, ranging from tree-free paper to non-toxic cleaning supplies.

The Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center has implemented a chemical waste reduction program that has reduced its medical waste by 45 percent in 2 years.

Four other companies received excellence awards for stewardship of the natural and environment for their commitment to the environment. They are, Real Foods Daily, Vidiots, Mani's Bakery and Duke's of Malibu. The 18th Street Arts Complex and Seashore Motel will also receive honorable mention for its effort in addressing environmental issues.

L.A. County budget cuts to be felt by public

By Daily Press staff

Further cuts in services and resources will be required to balance the Los Angeles County 2003-04 budget according to David Janssen, chief administrative officer.

Janssen released a \$16.5 billion proposed budget on April 14, saying cuts necessitated by the \$804 million shortfall will be felt by the public in many areas.

All departments will be impacted, but the most heavily hit will be the sheriff, probation, public social services and library. Beach lifeguards would be reduced, pools shut down earlier, job training reduced, and construction and maintenance of local streets cut back.



Saturday's forecast: Beware of the wind.

Conditions stayed clean Friday morning as the storm lingered a bit off the coast. By afternoon, it was hurting.

Good news: The SW swell continued to build and the Saturday lineup should see some size.

Bad news: None of that will matter if the storm is too brutal, so stay tuned to your local weather channel and keep your eye on the sky.

Outlook: Expect the size to back down Sunday. Stay tuned for another swell early next week.

The Water Today Is:

60°

Location	Saturday	Sunday	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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SM Elk's Ritual Team wins district competition

By Daily Press Staff

The Santa Monica Elk's Ritual Team won first place in the District Competition on April 26.

The team will now represent the South Central Coast District at the California Hawaii Computation in May. It is the team's 6th district championship in a row.

The competition required a lot of hard work, according to team members. The Esquire and the Exalted Ruler each had to memorize more than 2,000 words.

Exalted Ruler Raedean Kiesz gave a lot of credit to the coaches, which include the head coach, word accuracy coach and movement and impressiveness coach.

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OPINION

Selected recent California newspaper editorials

By The Associated Press

APRIL 22

San Jose Mercury News: Scott Peterson trial needs a change of venue.

A welcoming committee of sorts greeted Scott Peterson at the jail ... in Modesto — people waving signs and shouting “murderer.”

If Peterson is going to get a fair trial for the deaths of his wife, Laci, and their unborn son, it won't be in Modesto. The court of public opinion there has convicted and sentenced him.

The strange case of Laci Peterson attracted national attention as soon as she disappeared on Christmas Eve. It would be hard to find any town in America where potential jurors haven't seen photos of the smiling, pregnant woman, or haven't heard that her handsome husband had been having an affair. The press conference Friday after her body was recovered was carried live on CNN.

Although Attorney General Bill Lockyer said on TV that the case is a slam-dunk, prosecutors have yet to release any evidence linking Scott Peterson to the crime.

Still, every action he has taken in recent weeks, from selling his wife's car to dying his hair and growing a beard, has been seen by the public, particularly in Modesto, as proof of guilt.

On Monday, people in Modesto stood in line for hours just to get in to see Peterson's arraignment. Across town, strangers still stop at the house Scott and Laci shared to say prayers and leave flowers. The people of Modesto are emotionally invested in this case.

It's obvious that this trial needs to be moved out of Modesto, in fairness to the defendant and for the good of the community.

APRIL 24

North (San Diego) County Times: Defending the honor of California.

Of all the nerve. California doesn't get it?

The Economist, the respected, conser-

vative news weekly from England, has described us as “the left-out coast.”

“A state that used to be a trendsetter is stuck in a time-war,” the article begins. “Consider a horrible possibility: that now it is the ‘new America’ in the West that just doesn't ‘get it’ (in the infuriating phrase of the 1990s’ cyber-gurus) and the ‘old America’ in the East that is grappling with the future.” ...

These are the main points driven home — or halfway home — by its editorialist:

1. That Sept. 11, 2001 “opened up a psychological gulf between the two coasts ... (that) has grown bigger with time.”

2. That the cyber revolution is over and computers have become “just another commodity.”

3. That California has become a one-party state, driven by the “most extreme elements” of the Democratic Party.

4. That the California Republican Party has imploded, and that “given the Neanderthal nature of many of that organization's members, it is tempting to say good riddance.” ...

Let us examine these points to humor our British cousins, who probably were out of sorts because of their weath-

1. The tragedies of Sept. 11 may have opened a psychological gulf between the United States and other parts of the world, but between the East Coast and the West? That's simply not the case.

2. Computers are just another commodity in the same sense that gold is just another element.

3 and 4. Unfortunately for California, both major parties are being driven by their most extreme elements — a point The Economist concedes. This polarization is paralyzing lawmakers' feeble attempts to deal with the state's budget crisis — which The Economist mercifully omitted from its analysis. Both parties share the blame for preferring ideological trash talk to productive compromise.

All 35 million Californians are paying the price for this. As the majority party, the Democrats shoulder most of the blame, but given Gov. Gray Davis' unpop-

ularity, this may not be a one-party state for long. ...

Unfortunately, California may still be the state that points the way to our nation's future. Our state is facing a budget deficit of \$26 billion to \$35 billion over the next 14 months, and our Legislature has done perilously little to deal with it. But the deficit in Washington, D.C., is 10 times greater, and Congress is not doing much to address that either. Who is leading whom? And why should anyone want to follow Sacramento or Washington? Surely someone in one of those other 49 states must have a better idea.

Because the English are our good and true allies, we shall refrain from criticizing their government. It wouldn't be sporting. Their editorialist probably just wanted an excuse to come to California. And who can blame him, living as he does in a country that considers bacon fat on white bread a perfectly ripping breakfast?

APRIL 27

Orange County Register: Arbitration ruling makes fiscal sense.

Finally, something has put the brakes on efforts by police and firefighter unions to dramatically boost their salaries and benefits on the backs of the state's taxpayers.

Last week, the California Supreme Court overturned one of the most outrageous power plays by public safety unions — legislation mandating that cities and counties use binding arbitration to resolve labor disputes under many circumstances.

In an unanimous ruling, the state's top court said that binding arbitration cannot be used unless the local governments approve of it.

Upholding a Court of Appeal decision, the court ruled that Senate Bill 402 “deprives the county of its authority to provide for the compensation of its employees and delegates to a private body the power to interfere with county financial affairs and to perform a municipal function.”

This is a wonderful decision. The unions had used their clout in Sacramento to impose an enormous financial burden

on localities. It clearly was unconstitutional, in that it stripped these localities of their ability to determine the cost of labor contracts. It took away power from localities that the Legislature would never give away for itself.

Under the arbitration law, pushed forward mainly by Democrats, peace officers had every incentive to make overly aggressive salary demands. When cities or counties would balk, the matter often would be settled by an arbitrator, whose decision was final. Arbitrators often split the difference, which could lead to a constant ratcheting-up of salaries and would leave cities at someone else's mercy.

“My reaction: Hallelujah!” said former Mission Viejo Mayor Sherri Butterfield. “One of the several reasons the Orange County Professional Firefighters did not like me and did not support my candidacy was my failure to support binding arbitration. The reason ... was that public safety constitutes at least 50 percent of most municipal budgets, and I could not, in good conscience, support a bill that required cities to relinquish decisions affecting 50 percent of their budgets to someone who was from outside, did not know the needs and wants of local residents, and was not answerable to voters ...”

Unfortunately, other costly benefit enhancements pushed forward thanks to newfound union clout in Sacramento will have equal effects on local budgets and local control. One example is the generous “3 percent at 50” retirement plan for public-safety officers, which allows union members to retire with 90 percent of their pay. Payout of these benefits usually relies on stock market investments. When markets decline, as they have in recent years, these plans sometimes aren't able to pay for themselves with investment income, which means that governments — i.e. taxpayers — have to make up the difference. Unless the Legislature slows down on granting such privileges, the state economic crisis will grow ever more severe.

All I need is crisp, clean sheets and my HBO



MODERN TIMES

By Lloyd Garver

When we went on a trip last week, my wife surprised me by booking us into a bed and breakfast, rather than an ordinary hotel.

The owners were a friendly family, the room was tastefully decorated and the grounds were picturesque. We had real maple syrup with our French toast at breakfast. In other words, I hated the place and couldn't wait to leave.

I know it's not hip or in to say this — and you can call me an uncultured boor with no taste or class — but I would rather stay in a cookie-cutter, charmless chain hotel than in an “adorable” B and B.

I've never understood their appeal. Why would I want to stay at some

stranger's house so I could have the privilege of eating breakfast with other strangers? I like to meet people, but I like to meet them when I'm standing up, not at the breakfast table.

And at that breakfast table, you don't get a menu or a choice of items. They place food in front of you and they expect you to eat it. Of course, nobody forces you to eat whatever they give you, but if you don't like it, you feel just as uncomfortable as you would at your Aunt Shirley's house. So, you're given food that you may or may not want to eat with people you may or may not like. Does that sound like a vacation to you?

At a B and B, if the dresser drawer happens to be broken — as it was in our room — they just stick it back in the dresser and you're supposed to consider it “charming.” You'd think a creaky bed and breakfast would at least be a bargain. Think again. It was more than twice as much as the uninteresting but comfortable hotel we stayed in the night before.

At a hotel, you don't have to choose between hot or cold water. You can actually get a combination, something called “warm.” I also like having that store in the hotel lobby, even though it outrageously sells two aspirin for 75 cents and a mug with a monkey's face for 19 bucks. It's nice having an ice machine down the hall. I like those incredibly crisp hotel sheets and the little light on the phone that tells me if I have any messages. I even like the little bar of soap that only takes me five or 10 minutes to unwrap.

Am I such a bad person because I enjoy having a newspaper waiting outside my door in the morning instead of the owner's cat? I like a place with room service, even if I don't end up using it. And of course, there's the Biggest Perk of All — you can have as many fluffy, white towels as you want.

You'd never think of disturbing the owners of a bed and breakfast to ask for more towels. They might be sleeping or trying to calm that cute, screaming baby.

I don't care about being in a room where George Washington or Jackie Onassis slept. I just want to sleep in one that's clean and gets HBO.

So, what is it about bed and breakfasts that some people like so much? They must enjoy them because they're homey. The thing is, if I want homey, I can stay at home. When I go on a trip, I want hotel-y. I want something different from my home when I'm away from home.

So, there's only one logical conclusion I can draw about those who consider it a special treat to stay in an old house when they travel: When they're not traveling, they must live in hotels.

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from “Sesame Street” to “Family Ties” to “Frasier.” He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the “Modern Times” column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and can be reached at smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.com.)

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LOCAL



Shorter hours make life hard on Ocean Park mini-markets

MARKETS, from page 1

"I live in Santa Monica," he said. "How are we going to do it when we have to close four or five hours early?"

The Budget Market is still operating at its old hours for now while owners consider whether to appeal the Planning Commission's decision to the City Council. Haque is complying because the city is monitoring his store for potential alcohol violations, workers said.

NEIGHBORS FIGHT FOR MARKETS

Perhaps the most substantial changes the city is demanding pertain to the Marine Market on Seventh Street.

Though it already complies with the city's hours of operation requirements, the Planning Commission ordered the Marine Market to implement a series of upgrades, including restoring its original windows that were boarded up for structural reasons after the 1994 earthquake.

Neighbors say the cost of the work, which would eliminate two murals on the side of the building, would be extensive and could threaten the livelihood of owners Hong and Young Ahn, known in the neighborhood as "Kim" and "James."

All three markets also have been told to take down signs, clean up surrounding vegetation, repaint walls, maximize parking and institute a variety of small upgrades.



John Wood/Daily Press

Farooq Shah, a clerk for the past eight years at the Budget Market on Fourth Street, pets "Disco" and talks to a local resident early Friday morning. Neighborhood markets in Ocean Park are under fire from the city to shorten their hours and adhere to a variety of city requirements.

month, when the Planning Commission met to discuss the future of Ocean Park's markets.

The issue came up as a matter of housecleaning in the planning department and didn't stem from resident complaints. The applications for renewal of the permits went before the Planning Commission last month. The applications were approved contingent upon a list of upgrades and restrictions.

Though the markets have been operating outside the law for many years, the city's building officer, Tim McCormick, said the markets haven't received any complaints. Enforcement of building code violations is complaint-based, he said.

"Under the current system, we wouldn't know about it and we wouldn't deal with it," he said.

In 1988, a strict new set of zoning ordinances governing neighborhood markets went into effect. Among other things, the ordinances limited the hours of operation of local markets.

The Planning Commission recommended extending the markets' permits in perpetuity, but only if the stores meet the legal requirements.

The issue is scheduled to go before the City Council this summer.

Darrell Clarke, chair of the Planning Commission, said he doesn't want to see the markets go under.

"To meet the (legally mandated) requirements, you'd have to tear the places down," he said. "It's absurd."

Clarke doesn't agree with his colleagues and said many of the recommended restrictions — which passed on a contentious 4-3 vote — are too limiting.

He said he would support an appeal to the City Council on some of the restrictions, including forgiving the window remodel at the Marine Market and relaxing the hour restrictions at the Budget and Fair markets.

"Ocean Park is a very special place," said Clarke, who lived in the neighborhood for years. "It feels like you're somewhere else — not in L.A., where you have to get in your car to do everything."

**"It's not like it's AM/PM
Mini Mart where people
are going to come off of
Lincoln to find the place."**

— **ABBY ARNOLD**
Ocean Park resident and
former City Council candidate

Dozens of neighbors converged on a meeting of the Planning Commission last month to stand up for their markets.

"It's not like it's AM/PM Mini Mart where people are going to come off of Lincoln to find the place," said Abby Arnold, an Ocean Park resident who ran unsuccessfully last fall for a City Council seat. "'Neighborhood friendly' should be determined by the neighborhood."

NEW TIMES, NEW MEASURES

Despite appearances, city officials said they are working hard to bring the buildings up to code so they can remain in the community.

The markets have been in violation of the law for years, said Bruce Leach, a city planner. When the buildings were originally constructed in the 1920s, there were no zoning laws. When the codes were put into place in 1948, the markets were given 25 years to change into residential use.

But in the early 1970s, the store owners argued they needed more time to convert and they were granted another 10 years to comply with the laws. Then in the 1980s, residents went to bat for the little markets and they were given conditional use permits that expired in 2000.

The owners' applications for renewals of those permits had been sitting in City Hall for more than two years until last

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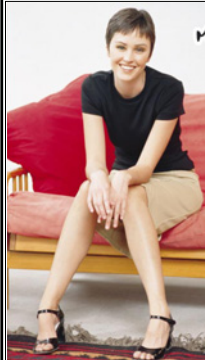
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STATE

Company shuts down oil rig after toxic chemical emission

By The Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS — A company that runs an oil rig at Beverly Hills High School said it has temporarily shut down the operation because the toxic chemical benzene was being emitted in amounts exceeding those allowed under air-quality regulations.

Tests done earlier by the South Coast Air Quality Management District found no evidence of high levels of toxic pollutants. However, benzene levels that are more than the state allows were found on a new piece of the rig's equipment that is designed to strip carbon dioxide from natural gas, said Barry Wallerstein, the district board's executive officer.

As a result, the agency denied a permit for the equipment to Venoco Inc., which operates the rig.

The rig's effect on the environment is part of two dozen claims filed earlier this week by Erin Brockovich and attorney Ed Masry against the Beverly Hills school system. They allege that the rig has caused a high rate of cancer among former students.

Brockovich, whose crusade on behalf of the residents of a small California desert town was the basis of the Julia Roberts movie "Erin Brockovich," and Masry presented a report that showed oil byproducts benzene, toluene and h-hexene exceeded government safety standards at Beverly Hills High by 400 times the accepted levels.

Without the piece of equipment called into question by state officials, Venoco can't produce natural gas that meets the specifications of Southern California Gas Co., said Venoco vice president Michael Edwards. The company decided to shut down the operation and reapply for a permit for its so-called amine unit.

The agency noted that allowable cancer risk for cancer-causing compounds such as benzene is 10 in 1 million. The standard assumes that an individual breathing the contaminants 24 hours a day for 70 years would have a 10 in 1 million risk of contracting cancer.

The cancer risk from the benzene emanating from the piece of equipment at the rig was found to be "in the neighborhood of 40 in a million or so," Wallerstein said.

Some homeless people resent hotel ad campaign

PANHANDLERS, from page 1

"Today I did Tai-Chi, donated some change and helped spread STDs" — all conclude with this message: "Giving to panhandlers doesn't help, it hurts."

Mayor Willie Brown, who criticized the hotel council last year when it sponsored billboards questioning the city's efforts to deal with homelessness, believes the campaign is misguided. "Negative publicity is just a poor way to drum up business, and this seems to be falling on one's own sword," said his spokesman, P.J. Johnston.

But the hotel executives say tourists already know the city's streets are crowded with beggars.

"It's been a major complaint of groups coming in, saying, 'Why don't you do something about this?'" said Robert Begley, the hotel trade group's executive director. "When we're on sales trips, the first question we normally get today is, 'What has happened to San Francisco?'"

The spots, which will continue rolling out for the next six months, were created by Ad Lib Creative's Brooke Rorer. She said she wanted the campaign to be "controversial enough that it would be something people would talk about" without coming off as an attack on the city's down-and-out.

With the number of people attending conferences in San Francisco declining to its lowest level in more than eight years in 2001, the last year for which statistics are available, there is little doubt the city's hospitality industry is hurting.

But the hoteliers may be among the city's worst critics. For 10 years in a row, San Francisco has been named the best U.S. city to visit by the well-heeled readers of Conde Nast Traveler. Along with New York, it consistently ranks among the top two destinations in Travel & Leisure magazine's annual reader poll.

"It has so much to offer travelers there is no way it really could be in decline," said Nancy Novogrod, Travel & Leisure's editor-in-chief. "What I have heard is that the Four Seasons is doing well, the Nob Hill Spa gets better all the time, and I hear a lot about the restaurants and the food shops. But I certainly haven't heard anything about panhandlers."

Others wonder whether it's fair to blame panhandlers for hotel vacancies when so many other factors — the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the nation's weak economy — have led to similar declines in other U.S. cities.

Panhandlers have "always been a feature of San Francisco," notes Teddy Witherington, who runs one of the city's biggest tourist draws, the annual Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Pride Parade. "It existed when times were good in 2000 and people were so busy making money they never thought to do anything about it. It's very easy when things are tough and you are looking for excuses why to look at all those things."

Some homeless people resent the way the ads paint all panhandlers as alcoholics and drug addicts.

"I think that's really cold. I know a whole bunch of people who aren't on drugs or alcohol," said Carol Oyama, 60, from her customary perch on Market Street. "People give me \$20s, \$5s, \$10s and they give it to me because they want to, not because they have to. That's what makes me feel good, when a person thinks enough of me to stop."

According to Witherington, the city risks losing something more than panhandlers if people take the hoteliers' message to heart, because "one of the reasons people visit San Francisco in such large numbers is because of the culture of acceptance and tolerance we have."

STATE



Eric Risberg/Associated Press
President Bush meets Steve Houck, right, a local volunteer with Salesforce.com after arriving at Moffett Field in Mountain View, Calif., on Friday.

Protesters gather during president's Santa Clara visit

BY MAY WONG
Associated Press Writer

SANTA CLARA — About 1,000 anti-war protesters tried to greet President Bush for his brief Friday stop here — but his motorcade bypassed their gathering on its way to the defense contractor where he delivered a speech on the economy.

About 150 police officers in riot gear and on horseback watched the crowd, which was loud but generally peaceful. Two protesters were arrested, one for allegedly hitting a police horse with a sign.

Tensions sometimes ran high as several dozen Bush supporters stood — vastly outnumbered — by the anti-war protesters.

Among those on hand waving large American flags and red-white-and-blue balloons was Alice Hoglan, of Redwood Estates. Her son, Mark Bingham, was among the 40 people who died on Sept. 11, 2001 when Flight 93 crashed in a Pennsylvania field.

"We're happy to stand here with them even though we have different political views," Hoglan said of the president's critics.

Protesters came from throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, considered the epicenter of the West Coast's anti-war movement. They banged drums, chanted, and even did yoga to state their opposition to the Iraq war. Some wore masks of Bush and other top defense officials to ridicule the administration's policies.

One waved a sign that read "Unemployment up, Stock down, Surplus gone, Deficit growing, Bush out 2004." Many signs decried Bush as a "war criminal."

Eighty-year-old Bernice Belton, of Santa Cruz, held a cane as she marched with the group despite her arthritis pain. A peace activist also during the Vietnam War, she said, "I've never been so personally and politically frightened as I am now. There are totalitarian aspects of this administration that I've never seen before."

Telcom giant Qwest pays fine for anti-consumer practices

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Qwest Communications this week paid \$20.3 million to the state's General Fund, after the state Public Utilities Commission determined that the telecommunications giant violated state statutes protecting consumers from unauthorized charges and changes in service.

The Public Utilities Commission ordered the payment after investigating Qwest's practices beginning in November, 2000.

The commission determined that the Denver, Colorado-based company inadequately supervised its sales agents, resulting in thousands of cases of "slamming," where customers' long distance service was switched without their permission. The PUC said the incidents of slamming were highest among the company's Spanish and Asian language residential customers.

The PUC also determined that Qwest was placing unauthorized charges on thousands of customers' telephone bills, a practice known as "cramming."

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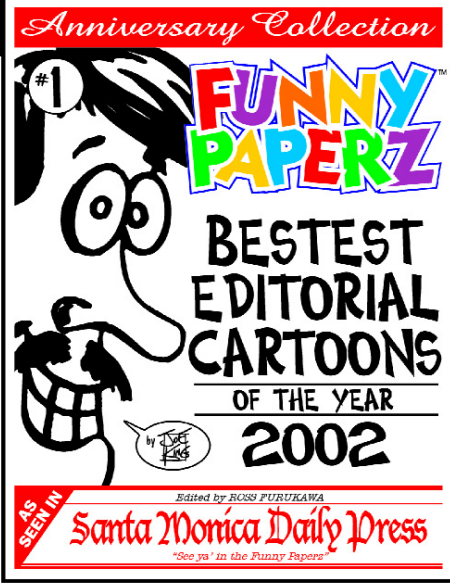
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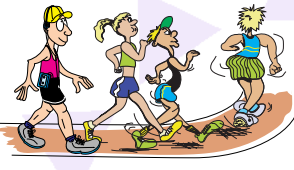
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NATIONAL

Climber was a 'six million dollar man,' rescuer says

BY COLLEEN SLEVIN
Associated Press Writer

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — A climber who amputated his own arm to free himself from in a narrow, remote canyon in Utah was a "six million dollar man" who wanted to survive, a rescuer said Friday.

Aron Ralston, 27, of Aspen was hospitalized in serious condition Friday after his six-day ordeal in Blue John Canyon near Canyonlands National Park in southeastern Utah.

The experienced outdoorsman would have died if he had stayed in the canyon, just 3 feet wide and 100 feet tall, said Sgt. Mitch Vetere of the Emery County, Utah, sheriff's office.

"He said that was the only way out," said Vetere, who helped rescue Ralston. "He's a six million dollar man. He was way good for what he went through. He had a will to live."

In a statement, Ralston's mother, Donna Ralston, said her son survived because of his strong physical and mental condition.

"During this incident, he was able to rationally consider alternatives relative to his situation," the statement said. "His spirits are high and he anxiously looks forward to returning to his love of the outdoors."

Donna Ralston declined to comment and the family asked friends not to speak to reporters.

Officials at St. Mary's Hospital said the prognosis was good for Ralston and he was expected to recover fully.

Friends say Ralston's expeditions have been known to trigger awe. He has climbed 49 of Colorado's 14,000-foot peaks. He was preparing for a climb on Mount McKinley in Denali National Park, Alaska, when the accident happened.

"To be honest, sometimes we get pret-

ty scared with some of the things he's doing," said Brion After, manager of the Ute Mountaineering store in Aspen, where Ralston works.

Ralston, 27, began what was to be a day hike April 26 by riding a mountain bike seven miles before he began hiking into the canyon. He was canyoneering, where a hiker uses rock-climbing gear to negotiate through slot canyons.

Ralston pushed his right arm into a wide crack in the canyon wall and an 800- to 1,000-pound boulder shifted, pinning his arm, said Steve Swanke of Canyonlands National Park. He tried to use his ropes and anchors to free himself, but couldn't.

On Tuesday, Ralston ran out of water. By Thursday, he decided he had no choice but to use his pocketknife to amputate his arm just below the right elbow, Vetere and Swanke said.

He applied a tourniquet and administered first aid before he rappelled 60 feet down the canyon wall to the floor, where he began walking to safety.

He encountered two tourists from Holland and was about two miles from his car when a rescue helicopter spotted him, still bleeding, Vetere and Swanke said.

Vetere said rescue teams began searching for Ralston on Tuesday after friends called police when he failed to report to work.

During the helicopter ride to a hospital in nearby Moab, Utah, Ralston's only request was water. He was obviously tired, Vetere said.

He climbed out of the helicopter and walked to the emergency room, his bandaged arm in a makeshift sling that he supported with his left arm, Swanke said.

Ralston matter-of-factly explained what had happened and that he had lost a lot of blood, Swanke said. He later was transferred to the hospital in Grand Junction.

Student asks judge to name her district's sole valedictorian

By The Associated Press

MOORESTOWN, N.J. — Blair Hornstine's latest report card had four A-plus grades in five courses. She scored a 1570 out of 1600 on the SAT and is deciding whether to attend Harvard, Stanford, Duke, Princeton or Cornell — all of which have accepted her.

But despite her best-in-her-class grades, her school district wants to name her co-aledictorian with two other students.

Hornstine, the 18-year-old daughter of a state Superior Court judge, has asked a federal judge to intervene, saying that being forced to share with students with lesser grades would detract from what she has accomplished.

She has also filed a notice saying she plans to sue the school district in state court claiming the dispute has humiliated her. She said she would be asking for \$200,000 in compensatory damages and \$2.5 million in punitive damages.

Her school district looks at the disagreement another way: Because of an immune deficiency, Hornstine is classified as a disabled student and has taken a

class load that doesn't include physical education and involves her spending part of her school day studying at home.

The two other Moorestown High School seniors with nearly perfect grades could not match her grade-point average, officials said, because classes like gym receive less weight in calculating the GPA.

"After reviewing these issues, I was concerned about the fundamental fairness of the academic competition engaged in for the valedictorian and salutatorian awards," Superintendent Paul Kadri said in a court filing. "The level of competition ... had been compromised."

U.S. District Judge Freda Wolfson set a hearing for May 8, and the Moorestown Board of Education planned to consider what to do about the situation at a May 12 meeting.

Graduation is June 19. Hornstine, who said she plans to become a lawyer, is not the first student to sue over the right to be valedictorian of a high school class.

In the last year alone, judges have been asked to consider similar cases in Ohio, Washington and Michigan.

NATIONAL



Senators call for firing of postal inspector general

BY RANDOLPH E. SCHMID
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Charging that the post office's inspector general is responsible for more wasteful spending than she prevents, two Senate Democrats are calling for her to be fired.

Government inspector generals are supposed to monitor their agencies to prevent fraud and waste, but Sens. Byron L. Dorgan, D-N.D., and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said whistleblowers have reported wasteful spending in postal inspector general's office.

In a letter Thursday to S. David Fineman, chairman of the postal governing board, the two senators criticized retreats at which agency staff members engaged in team-building exercises, including dressing up in costumes, participating in mock trials and taping testimonials for the inspector general.

"This is outrageous behavior. When people buy postage stamps they expect that money to be used to move the mail, not to be wasted on exercise that have employees dressed in animal costumes," Dorgan said in a statement.

Postal Inspector General Karla W. Corcoran released a statement saying she was "stunned" by the senators' complaint.

In their letter, the senators said Corcoran "seems to have been too busy wasting her own agency's resources

to have been much of a watchdog for the Postal Service." They said her office had a staff of 725 people and a budget of \$117 million in 2001, but uncovered just \$56 million in waste, or about two dollars spent for every wasted dollar uncovered.

Corcoran's statement charged that the senators' letter is "riddled with misleading facts and unfair accusations."

She said her agency has identified \$2.2 billion in savings over the past six years. In 2001, she said, her office's actual spending was \$82 million and it identified \$256 million in waste.

She acknowledged that the team-building exercises used by her agency are not typical of other federal inspectors general, but she said they are used by many businesses as a way to increase productivity.

The postal governing board said it has been aware of

the allegations against Corcoran and referred the matter to the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, an organization of agency inspectors general which works to reduce fraud and waste. The council asked the inspector general from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to conduct an inquiry, and the postal board said it is awaiting that report.

Under a 1978 law, most government departments have inspectors general, with those for cabinet-level departments nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate.

At the Postal Service, the chief postal inspector also served as inspector general until Congress created the separate inspector general's office in 1996. Corcoran was named to that post by the board of governors in 1997 for a 7-year term.

Companies that inflated earnings seeking tax refunds

BY MARCY GORDON
AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON — Several big companies under investigation for accounting irregularities are seeking to recoup federal taxes they overpaid based on profits they inflated, a Senate aide confirmed Friday.

WorldCom, Enron, Qwest and HealthSouth either are pursuing or considering filing for tax refunds or credits for payments made on billions of dollars falsely claimed as earnings, the Senate Finance Committee aide said, confirming a report in Friday's Wall Street Journal. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity.

WorldCom, which plans to emerge from bankruptcy and change its name to MCI in the fall, already has collected \$300 million in tax refunds from the Internal Revenue Service.

A spokesman for WorldCom declined to comment. IRS spokeswoman Nancy Mathis said the agency would have no comment.

HealthSouth, which has not decided whether to seek a refund, said it overpaid \$300 million in federal taxes because of inflated income. "Logically, if we overpaid taxes on income we didn't have, we may seek a refund," HealthSouth spokesman Andy Brimmer told the Journal.

Now-bankrupt Enron, which paid only \$63 million in taxes between 1996 and 2001, is seeking tax credits, while Qwest is likely to seek a refund.

"We are not commenting other than to confirm we are in discussions with the IRS. I'm not going to comment on the content of those discussions," Enron spokeswoman Karen Denne said from Houston.

A Chicago-based tax attorney said corporate fraud should have no effect on the ability of companies to recoup tax overpayments. "It's not the government's money, it's the shareholders' money," Richard Lipton, the tax attorney, told the Journal.

In fact, a HealthSouth shareholders' lawsuit filed last month in U.S. District Court in Birmingham, Ala., argues that any amount the company is refunded by the IRS should go to shareholders.

Federal investigators have said HealthSouth, a provider of outpatient surgery and rehabilitation services, overstated profits by at least \$2.5 billion since 1997. Accounting irregularities at WorldCom totaled nearly \$11 billion, according to investigators.

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INTERNATIONAL

Resolution would limit U.N. role to humanitarian relief

BY MATT KELLEY
Associated Press Writer

LONDON — The United States and Britain are preparing a resolution that would give the United Nations a role in humanitarian relief but not peacekeeping in Iraq, a senior Bush administration official said Friday.

Separately, the United States has decided to divide the military and humanitarian relief mission in Iraq into three parts under American, British and Polish command, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Six European countries have agreed to contribute troops to the British and Polish sectors to create an international stability force, the official said.

The draft resolution would limit the U.N. role to helping with refugees and displaced people, reconstruction and humanitarian assistance, the official said. The United States and Britain agree on all but a few of the fine details of the resolution, the official said, though there is no timetable on when it would be introduced.

U.N. officials are already in Iraq providing humanitarian relief. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said this week that the body has no interest in policing a post-war Iraq, although it could contribute to the political resuscitation of the country.

"Take the question of security. I don't think the U.N. would want to take on that," Annan said. "There has been a suggestion that the U.N. wanted to take over the whole Iraq and run it, which was also not the case." What the United Nations could contribute beyond humanitarian assistance was "political facilitation," Annan said.

The proposed draft resolution would probably face resistance from other U.N. Security Council members who have favored a U.N.-convened conference of the kind that helped establish Afghanistan's post-Taliban government.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld discussed the resolution with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon on Friday as Rumsfeld returned from a tour of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf region. Rumsfeld said afterward he hoped the U.N. would

play a role but did not publicly discuss the draft resolution outlining that role.

Hoon, who joined Rumsfeld in a news conference at Heathrow airport, also did not mention the draft resolution.

"We are right to be optimistic about the way forward" in Iraq, Hoon said.

International stability forces will be sent to Iraq as soon as possible, the U.S. official said, though it was unclear when that would be. Those troops will work to restore and maintain order and supervise humanitarian projects such as the restoration of water and electricity and delivery of food and medical aid.

The six nations contributing troops are Italy, Spain, Ukraine, Denmark, the Netherlands and Bulgaria, the official said. Representatives of those countries will meet with British officials May 7 and Polish officials May 22 to determine what forces each country will contribute and whether they will be put under British or Polish command.

The U.S. part of the stability force will

be comprised of American troops. While that portion is likely to consist of a military division — about 20,000 — the troop strength of the other two sectors has yet to be determined, the official said.

The international stabilization force would be under the U.S. war commander, Gen. Tommy Franks.

At least initially, the coalition stability forces will augment rather than replace the 135,000 American troops inside Iraq, the official said. The stability forces will focus on providing security and humanitarian relief while other U.S. troops focus on rooting out leftover members of Saddam Hussein's government and other armed elements in Iraq.

Rumsfeld said, however, that the more troops other countries contribute to the stability effort, the fewer U.S. troops will be needed inside Iraq.

Planning for both the U.N. resolution and the international security force left out France, Germany and Russia, three U.S. allies that vehemently opposed the

war in Iraq.

Some of the NATO members who agreed to send troops may want NATO authorization for that action, the official said. Requests for such authorization will be routed through the alliance's defense planning committee, which does not include France, the official said.

The outlines for the international stability force were decided at a conference Hoon hosted Wednesday with representatives from 16 countries, mostly NATO members. Other countries including the Philippines, South Korea, Qatar and Australia agreed to send other help such as field hospitals, engineers, explosive ordnance disposal teams or nuclear, biological and chemical weapons experts.

The U.S., British and Polish sectors will be drawn to take into account ethnic, religious, tribal and political factions within Iraq, the official said. For example, although ethnic Kurds are the majority in large parts of northern Iraq, there are also large numbers of Kurds within Baghdad.

Strikers release hostages from offshore oil rigs

BY GLENN MCKENZIE
Associated Press Writer

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria — Striking Nigerian oil workers Friday released the first of hundreds of people they have held for days on oil rigs — part of an agreement to free all the captives.

The release of the first hostage came after the Houston-based Transocean Inc. struck an accord with the strikers, who have demanded the reinstatement of fired workers and that they be transported to the rigs by helicopters, not boats.

More than 250 hostages — including 35 Britons, 17 Americans and two Canadians — have been held by approximately 100 strikers since April 19 aboard four oil installations.

Paul Baker, of Britain, was first foreigner flown to safety to Port Harcourt. His face unshaven, he alit from a helicopter with eight Nigerians, including at least two captors.

"Everybody is fine onboard, they all just

want to go home," Baker, a 25-year oil rig veteran with Transocean, told reporters.

Baker said he believed the rest of the hostages would be airlifted out during the next three days.

The veteran worker said he was chosen to be on the first off the helicopter because his wife is pregnant. "In my 25 years, I've never seen anything like this," he said.

He said logistical difficulties were preventing an immediate, massive evacuation from the rigs, some 40 miles off Nigeria's southern coast.

A pilot said several more loads of hostages and their captors would be arriving Saturday in Port Harcourt.

Baker said he wasn't hurt physically but the strikers would make threats over the oil installation's public-address system, announcing "if we don't do as they say, we're all going to die."

"It wasn't very pleasant," he said.

Transocean officials and the strikers' chosen negotiators agreed to the hostages'

release earlier Friday, although they postponed taking a decision on some of the strikers' main demands until heads cooled, according to statement signed by all parties released after the talks.

"Striking personnel are now cooperating and have granted access to the rigs, and the company has begun transporting non-essential personnel to shore," Transocean said in a statement.

The rigs are drilling wells on behalf of multinationals Shell and TotalFinaElf.

Sabotage and hostage-takings by community activists, labor groups and thugs demanding compensation for land use and alleged environmental damage are common in the southern Niger Delta, where nearly all of Nigeria's oil is drilled. Hostages rarely are harmed.

Despite the region's vast petroleum stores, most of its residents remain desperately poor. Nigeria is one of the world's largest oil exporters and the fifth-largest producer of U.S. oil imports.

Embassy opening



Niko Price/Associated Press

Iraqi children crowd around the gate to the British Embassy, which has been closed since 1991 and is now guarded by British paratroopers, in Baghdad, Iraq on Friday. The paratroopers seized the compound on Monday, and diplomats are expected to arrive within days.

Journalist killed in Gaza Strip

BY IBRAHIM BARZAK
Associated Press Writer

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — A freelance British journalist was shot dead Friday night in the southern city of Rafah along the Egyptian border, the Israeli army said.

The journalist was the third foreigner injured or killed in Rafah in recent weeks.

Witnesses said the journalist was filming a documentary on the Israeli army's house demolitions in Rafah when the Israeli tank opened fire.

The journalist, who was not immediately identified by the military, was shot in the neck and taken from the scene in an Israeli tank. He died before a helicopter sent to evacuate him arrived, the army said.

A man who said he also was a British journalist and identified himself only as Dan, said that the victim and two colleagues were simultaneously filming and waving a white flag as they walked toward the tank when the tank opened fire.

The army said a tank was on a mission to find weapon-smuggling tunnels on the border when it came under fire. The tank

returned fire, and troops later found a wounded man, the army said.

Israeli tanks routinely open fire as they patrol the border to protect against possible ambushes by Palestinian gunmen.

The Israeli army also routinely demolishes houses in the Rafah area, charging that Palestinian militants use the buildings to fire on troops and to serve as a cover for weapons-smuggling tunnels leading to the Egyptian side of the border.

Two other foreigners were injured or killed in Rafah in the last three months.

American Rachel Corrie, 23, of Olympia, Wash., died March 16 in Rafah when an Israeli bulldozer she was trying to block ran her over. The army said the bulldozer operator did not see her.

On April 11, British peace activist Tom Hurndall, 21, was shot in the head at the Rafah refugee camp. He is in a coma. Witnesses said Hurndall was shot by an Israeli soldier in a military watchtower as Hurndall stooped to pick up a Palestinian girl and carry her to safety.

The army said it is investigating the shooting.

SPORTS



Derby favorite



Ted S. Warren/Associated Press

Kentucky Derby entrant Empire Maker, with exercise rider Jose Cuevas up, rears up on the track during a morning workout at Churchill Downs on Friday, in Louisville, Ky.

Vancouver gets best review for 2010 Winter Olympics

BY STEPHEN WILSON
AP Sports Writer

LONDON — Vancouver took a key step Friday in its effort to win the 2010 Winter Olympics, receiving the best overall review in an IOC assessment of the three bids.

If Vancouver is selected as the host city in two months, it could harm New York's campaign to land the 2012 Summer Games. The thinking is that the IOC probably would not award two consecutive Olympics to North America.

The report evaluated the technical merits of the bids from Vancouver; Pyeongchang, South Korea; and Salzburg, Austria. The bids were not graded or ranked, and the report only confirmed that all three cities would host "very good" Olympics.

The west-coast Canadian city came out with the most positive and fewest negative comments, ahead of Salzburg. Pyeongchang appeared to have come in third, described as having "very good potential."

"It seems that the report has a few more question marks on Pyeongchang and Salzburg than on Canada," said British IOC member Craig Reedie, who was not involved in the assessment. "On a technical basis, it looks to me like Vancouver might be ahead."

The International Olympic Committee will choose the host city on July 2 at its session in Prague, Czech Republic.

The competition is expected to come down to Europe vs. North America. With no overwhelming favorite, the result will be decided in large part on political, geographical and other intangible issues.

With the 2004 Summer Olympics (Athens, Greece) and 2006 Winter Games (Turin, Italy) in Europe, and the 2008 Summer Games (Beijing) in Asia, Vancouver would appear to have the edge, since the IOC tends toward geographical rotation.

Friday's report was based on visits to all three bid cities by the IOC's evaluation commission. The 15-member panel was headed by Norwegian member Gerhard Heiberg, a chief organizer of the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer.

The study assesses sports venues, finances, accommodations, transport, public and government support, and other criteria.

The report stated virtually no negatives about the Vancouver bid. Previous concerns over the travel distance between Vancouver and Whistler, the mountain resort where most of the snow sports venues are located, were put aside.

The IOC noted there will be two athletes' villages meaning competitors won't have to travel far to the venues anyway.

"The concept will provide very good conditions for the athletes," the report said. "It will allow all athletes to live in an Olympic village, with limited travel time to excellent sports venues."

Besides New York, the declared candidates so far for the 2012 Summer Games are: Madrid, Spain; Leipzig, Germany; and Havana, Cuba. London, Paris, Moscow and either Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo, Brazil, are other possible contenders before the July 15 deadline.

If Vancouver loses the 2010 Games, Toronto could enter the 2012 race and become a serious North American rival to New York.



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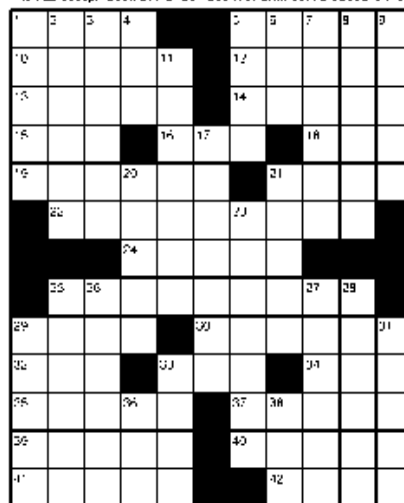
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- DOWN**
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 - Orderly
 - Be out
 - Suggest
 - Clip, perhaps
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 - Alley fans
 - Rat, e.g.
 - Perfect place
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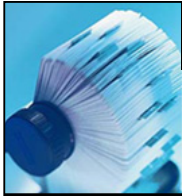
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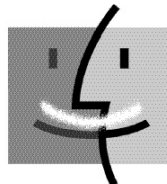
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BACK PAGE



'Ladies and Charlie' go quilting

By The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Charlie Scott is often needed for his choice of hobby.

He's the only man in the 150-member Nitetime Needlers quilt guild in Kansas City.

He makes sure his fellow Needlers keep an open mind.

"I would always have to say something because when they made announcements, they would say 'ladies,'" Scott said. "Now they make an effort to say, 'ladies and gentleman' or 'ladies and Charlie.'"

Scott joined the group about three years ago after he saw his former mother-in-law quilting.

"I was fascinated with what she was doing, so I went out and bought some fabric and made a quilt," said Scott, who at that time didn't know how to sew. "I basically just taught myself."

Immediately he was hooked.

The 30-year-old developed his hobby into a career. He began teaching beginning quilting at a fabrics and crafts store, and for more than a year now he has been the store's education coordinator.

Scott said he expects more men to take up quilting.

"It's no longer just for grandmothers," he said Thursday.

Golfer gets two holes-in-one

By The Associated Press

PORT HURON, Mich. — Getting one hole-in-one is lucky enough. Golfer Dave Ladensack scored two aces in a single round.

According to the odds, Ladensack will have to wait 335,000 years to again accomplish what he did last weekend.

Bucking odds mightier than lightning-strike proportions, the 47-year-old notched two holes-in-one in one round Sunday at the Port Huron Elks Golf Club.

"I was in disbelief," Ladensack, a golfer since the 1970s. "It really doesn't sink in right away."

Chances of pulling off the feat, while hardly scientific, are 67 million-to-1, according to a representative of the magazine Golf Digest.

That means Ladensack could play 200 rounds of golf a year and not duplicate his feat for another 335,000 years.

They were Ladensack's third and fourth career aces.

Town can't find a mayor

By The Associated Press

BOSWELL, Pa. — Maybe \$45 a month isn't enough, or the job is thankless. Whatever it is, this tiny borough is having a hard time finding a mayor.

Regina Felice resigned as Boswell's part-time mayor in March, and the council has been scrambling to find a replacement to serve out the final two years of her term.

"This is a very small town. Practically everybody knows everybody," said council President Mary Ann DeLuca, who is filling in as mayor. "Maybe people don't want to hear when people complain. I don't know."

According to Felice, it's not that being mayor of this

borough of 1,364 people about 60 miles southeast of Pittsburgh takes that much time; it just requires more than the 41-year-old woman can give. She's busy with her family and looking for a full-time job.

Nobody seems willing to step forward to assume the responsibilities, which include paperwork, oversight of the one-person police force, enforcing ordinances and casting the rare vote to break council ties.

Eventually, if the borough can't find a mayor, it could approach Somerset County officials, or the Court of Common Pleas, which could appoint one. That, however, may not be the answer either.

"If nobody wants it, you can't force anybody to take it," DeLuca said.

Solitary graduate to receive diploma

By The Associated Press

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. — Most high school seniors look forward to graduating with their classmates.

For Luke Bremer, the Heartland Lutheran High School's first commencement will be a solitary experience.

Bremer, the lone member of the Class of 2003, will receive his diploma in a ceremony Sunday at the school.

"I see it's importance. It's a big thing, the first graduation for the school," he said. "I fully realize it's important to a lot of people."

Heartland Lutheran began three years ago with five students meeting in rooms at Peace Lutheran Church. It now has 26 students, including eight juniors.

The Rev. Dan Bremer, the graduate's father and the pastor at Grace Lutheran Church, will be the commencement speaker. Luke Bremer also has some prepared remarks.

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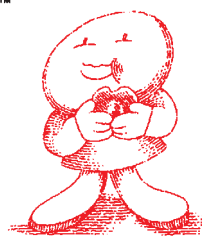
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