

FREE

MONDAY, MAY 5, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 148

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

00000

FANTASY 5

04, 06, 19, 33, 36

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 7, 2, 0

Evening picks: 4, 8, 7

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 06, Whirl Win

2nd Place: 10, Solid Gold

3rd Place: 12, Lucky Charms

Race time: 1:40.29



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

A 17-year-old boy lost sight in both eyes in a "potato gun" accident in Denton, Texas, in April. The "gun" (a length of pipe in which a household explosive is ignited, propelling a potato out the other end, although in this case, it was not a potato but a frog) was being experimented with by several teenagers but failed to fire, and the victim, who had been a mere bystander, stepped up to have a look down the pipe to see what might have gone wrong, just as the gun finally fired.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I don't really trust a sane person."

— Lyle Alzado



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Measure S campaign launches into action

Supporters canvas local neighborhoods

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

The campaign for a school parcel tax on properties in Santa Monica and Malibu kicked into high gear Saturday with door-to-door canvassing in local neighborhoods.

Titled "Save Our Schools," the event attracted dozens of volunteers, who distributed voter registration materials and explained the proposal to voters.

Volunteers split into groups and hit different precincts throughout Santa Monica, hoping to find parents and supporters, as well as to get non-registered voters to register. Some of the volunteers were students and others were teachers who will be laid off in July.

The group strategized on how to educate citizens about the proposal and how to counter argu-

ments against it. The tax proposal has widespread community support — schools, city government, the chamber of commerce and businesses all back it. It is fairly uncommon in Santa Monica for all entities to agree on a ballot measure, officials said.

Campaign organizers plan to go door-to-door every weekend until June 3, which is the day for the special election to decide the measure.

The parcel tax, called Measure S, would generate about \$6.5 million annually for the ailing school district by levying a flat \$225 tax on each piece of property in Santa Monica and Malibu. It requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District is struggling to fill a \$13 million shortfall in state funding that has forced it to cut more than 200 positions, including 91 teachers and a host of school programs.

See MEASURE S, page 6



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Dan Sena, a political consultant from Burn Side and Associates, strategizes with volunteers on Saturday morning before they head out door to door to spread information about the upcoming school parcel tax measure and distribute voter registration material to hundreds of Santa Monica citizens.

Santa Monicans party for Cinco de Mayo

By Daily Press staff and wire services



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

David Horo, one of Mexico's celebrated singers and songwriters, performs in front of a large crowd at the Santa Monica Pier last weekend as part of the Cinco de Mayo celebration. The pier hosted family-oriented celebrations both Saturday and Sunday, complete with authentic Mexican music and food.

There were plenty of parties and celebrations in Santa Monica over the weekend to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, which officially is today.

However, most people at those parties probably weren't too sure just exactly what they were celebrating.

Many mistakenly believe Cinco de Mayo is Mexican Independence Day.

Actually, it commemorates the victory of a small, ill-equipped Mexican army over French troops on May 5, 1862.

In Mexico, the holiday is a relatively minor one that is not as widely celebrated as the real Mexican Independence Day, on Sept. 16.

But on this side of the border, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a "uniquely American phenom-

non" similar to St. Patrick's Day — a holiday embraced with an exuberance not historically seen back in the home country, said Lisa Navarrete, spokeswoman for the National Council of La Raza.

In the 1960s, the Chicano movement adopted Cinco de Mayo as a symbol of pride in Hispanic culture and identity. Beer and liquor companies have been heavily promoting it in recent years.

Corona, the most popular Mexican beer in the United States, has previously pitched itself as the "drinko for Cinco." This year, it calls itself "the original party beer of Cinco de Mayo."

"Every holiday of the year represents a promotion opportunity for brands and retailers," said Don

See CINCO DE MAYO, page 6

Faults off SoCal coast may have caused tsunamis

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Researchers have discovered faults and undersea landslides off the coast of Southern California that likely created massive sea waves, known as tsunamis, in the past and suggest that other seismic events

could occur in the future, a University of Southern California researcher said.

"Our modeling predicts tsunami waves and flooding of up to five feet along the coast of Orange County, with surges of up to eight feet in the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach,"

Jose Borrero told scientists at a meeting of the Seismological Society of America in Puerto Rico.

He said the studies, conducted over the last five years, also show parts of San Diego

See TSUNAMI, page 5



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★★-So-so ★-Difficult

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Monday, May 5, 2003:

Expect only the best this birthday year. Sometimes you might become a bit uptight about your finances, but you will gain if you continue to put your best foot forward. Your ability to relate wins many favors from others. Network. You might get a sudden offer professionally that could impact your career for the rest of your life. If you are single, you will meet someone key this year. If you are attached, you will need to be less touchy about domestic issues, allowing feelings to flow between the two of you. This could take practice. CANCER draws your personality out.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ You try to be the voice of reason, but others seem to tune you out. Use your unusually innovative streak to open doors. Use shock tactics to get the end results you desire. Unexpected developments take you in a new direction. Tonight: Happy at home.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Make an effort to get past an immediate snafu or insecurity. Self-expression helps you conquer a problem. Review a situation more carefully that involves others. Brainstorming will bring results if you express your ideas, even if you think they are silly. Tonight: Out at a favorite spot.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Use the morning to accomplish a serious and demanding project. Think in terms of success and greater communication. You cannot back a money matter too quickly. Unexpected developments might have you thinking about your options. Tonight: Go for a positive experience.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You could feel down until you take action. Once you get moving, you feel empowered. Don't worry that it's Monday. An associate could surprise you with his or her actions. Not everything is as it seems. Think positively, opting for the unusual. Tonight: As you like it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Use the a.m. to accomplish what you must. If you must schedule a meeting, do so in the morning. In the afternoon, close your door in order to accomplish what you need. A private conversation could be instrumental in achieving your goals. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Yes, a boss is stern. If you don't like the situation, consider moving on. You're capable of networking and making waves if you need to. Be positive about your alternatives. A co-worker has a novel way of approaching problems. Take a lesson from this person. Tonight: Where the gang is.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You might want to rethink a decision but get stymied on the way. Your sources might not help. Also, any gossip you hear might not be 100 percent accurate. Realize what you expect from those in charge. It makes it easier to ask for just that. Tonight: Work late.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Deal with someone you care a lot about. To a stern associate, your rationale doesn't seem to follow a logical sequence. Don't cause yourself a problem; simply move on. Experiment with different ideas, and you'll find unique solutions. Tonight: Hop on the Internet.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Others test your limits in the a.m. Just don't let them get your goat, OK? You discover a surprise once you get together with a close office buddy or friend in the p.m. Everything changes quite quickly for you. Deal with others on a closer, more direct level. Tonight: Dinner for two?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Handle as much work as you possibly can. What you plan might change considerably during the day because of a surprise. You pull the wild card! If you feel lucky, act like you're lucky. Just don't do anything outrageous — for now. Tonight: Accept an invitation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You might not be sure about a loved one or child besides the fact that he or she can be very difficult. Understand your limits with this person. Put your energy where it counts, where it makes a difference. Dig into work as if there is no tomorrow. Tonight: Pace yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Yes, a family member is being difficult, and there might not be a whole lot you can do to change his or her direction. Don't keep charging into a brick wall. Hop over it and do something constructive. Add a touch more amour to your life. Tonight: Let it happen.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

AIDS expert to speak at SMC

By Daily Press staff

The medical researcher who first identified the AIDS epidemic will give a free lecture Thursday, May 8 at Santa Monica College.

The lecture by Dr. Michael Gottlieb, entitled "Twenty Years of AIDS," is part of SMC's Distinguished Scientists Lecture Series, sponsored by the SMC Associates, a private community support organization that funds speakers and special programs on campus.

The talk will be held at 11:15 a.m. in Lecture Hall 145 of the SMC Science Complex, 1900 Pico Blvd. For information, call (310) 434-4003.

Gottlieb was catapulted to scientific fame with his 1983 paper, published in the Centers for Disease Control newsletter, identifying the epidemic. At the time, he was in his first research position as assistant professor of medicine at UCLA.

Despite the medical profession's initial refusal to acknowledge the AIDS crisis, he pursued early immune deficiency cases and urged the publication of his findings. Since leaving UCLA in 1987 to open a private practice, he has devoted his career to treating AIDS patients and fostering AIDS research.

Along with actress Elizabeth Taylor, he is co-founder of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, a scientific advisor for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation and a member of the AIDS Advisory Committee of the State of California.

Gottlieb has written two books and many publications on AIDS and has been honored with the Lifetime Science Award from the Center for the Study of Immunology and Aging. He is now considered one of the world's preeminent AIDS doctors and researchers.

District attorney's office offers help to bad check recipients

By Daily Press staff

In an effort to combat the negative impact of bad checks on the local economy, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office reorganized the Bad Check Restitution Program in 1999 to provide better service to recipients of bad checks and discourage bad check writers from repeating their offense.

This has been accomplished without cost to county taxpayers because the district attorney's office has partnered with American Corrective Counseling Services to create a unique program that combines the resources of both the public and private sectors. Bad check victims benefit because they can report checks directly to the district attorney and have what rightfully belongs to them paid back through the program. In addition, bad check writers can avoid prosecution if they pay restitution and attend a special eight-hour intervention class. If a failed case is determined to be prosecutable, the local police will provide further investigation.

From its reorganization in September 1999 through February 2003, the Bad Check Restitution Program has recovered more than \$9 million in restitution for check victims and diverted more than 30,000 bad check writers from further participation in the criminal justice system.

Bad checks plague businesses all over L.A. County and the problem is growing. In fact, at the national level, over 1.2 million checks bounce every day. While most checks clear the bank eventually, many do not and the cost to merchants in terms of time, money and hassle spent tracking down bad check writers is enormous. Consumers are hit hard too because banks charge "bounced-check" fees. According to the Consumer Federation of America, returned check fees cost up to \$30 or more and banks make more than \$6.2 billion a year in profit from them. While banks claim returned check fees are used only to deter people from writing bad checks, they are actually a huge source of revenue.

To learn more about the Bad Check Restitution Program, please call (800) 842-0733 or visit <http://da.co.la.ca.us/badcheck.htm>. Bad Check Complaint Forms and brochures are available at all law enforcement agencies throughout Los Angeles County.



On Monday morning look for NW wind swell to put many spots in two-to-three foot surf.

A new SW'er will continue to build throughout the day, with some overhead set waves at standpoint breaks by the late afternoon, and should peak Tuesday. The storm that created this swell sat in the shadow of Tahiti for almost the entire duration of its life so expect that it will produce very inconsistent surf as it builds into Southern California.

A strong NW wind gradient is forecast to set up over the next couple of days as high pressure builds into the coast. Monday morning should see light NW wind for most spots with strong NW flow setting up by the afternoon, which looks like it will hold through most of the day on Tuesday and possibly into Wednesday.

The Water Today Is:
59°

Location	Monday	Tuesday	Water Quality
County Line	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	N/A
Zuma	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	N/A
Surfrider	1-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	N/A
Topanga	1-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	N/A
Breakwater	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	N/A
El Porto	2-4'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	N/A

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The Q-Line

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District is in desperate need of money. It must find ways to make up \$13 million a year, which used to come from the State of California.

During last year's election, voters defeated Measure EE, which would have provided some relief for the beleaguered district.

Now, the district has come up with another solution: Measure S. If passed by voters in a special election on June 3, the measure would levy a \$225 tax on every parcel of land in Santa Monica

and Malibu, thereby providing \$6.5 million a year for six years to the district.

So, this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Do you plan to vote for Measure S? Why or why not? If not, what else could the district do to generate the much-needed money?"

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

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OPINION

LETTERS

'No, you can't do that'

Editor:

Ellen Drury (letters, April 28) spoke for many frustrated library users when she pointed out that library services were available for only five days a week in April. Even when the interim library is finally opened, extending service by one to two days, it will hold only one-third of the books and other unique resources held in the late Main Library. A full two-thirds of that material will be housed in storage for two or more years.

This is why when city council candidates appear before you next year, you should question whether they will strip the library of its sacred cow status and get tough with administrators by asserting, "No, you can't do that."

Joanne Gamlin
Santa Monica

Break SMRR's hold on city

Editor:

After reading the article in SMDP on May 3 entitled "Neighborhood Markets Targeted By City Hall," I realized how much had been lost in the last election. Six months ago we had a chance to change the way government is elected in Santa Monica. On the ballot was a proposition (VERITAS) that would have given us district representation instead of the at-large selection we have now.

That means that Santa Monicans would have had someone from their own neighborhood to fight for their local causes. In Ocean Park, where long-standing neighborhood markets are threatened, they would have had someone to stand up to the city's attack. They also would have had someone in their corner to stop the madness of the mammoth affordable housing project being built on Main.

In North of Montana there would have been a dedicated council person to reason with the city's Historic District committee over the landmarking of the unworthy older properties in that district. If that had been done and handled properly, there never would have been a need for an expensive special election and all the rancor it produced.

Instead what the gullible North of Montana residents got were at-large, SMRR council hopefuls like Pam O'Connor pledging their support at a meeting at Franklin School prior to the election. However once O'Connor got elected she turned her back on the NoMo district and the chasm between homeowners and renters widened. That could not happen if the VERITAS proposition had passed.

If you go on and look at the troubling issues in the last six months, each one has a direct impact for one of the seven districts in Santa Monica. Wouldn't those mid-city residents near Madison School feel a lot more protected if they had a dedicated council person in their corner for their fight against SMRR legacy Dennis Zane and his proposed Madison Performing Arts Theater being built in their front yard? As it is they have no one and they'll shoulder the burden.

Next time we have a chance to change the way representatives are elected do not be fooled by the rhetoric spun against it. District-wide representation is grassroots democracy pure and simple. It's time we get back to those roots and break the "at-large" SMRR hold that controls the city.

Larry Mollin
Santa Monica

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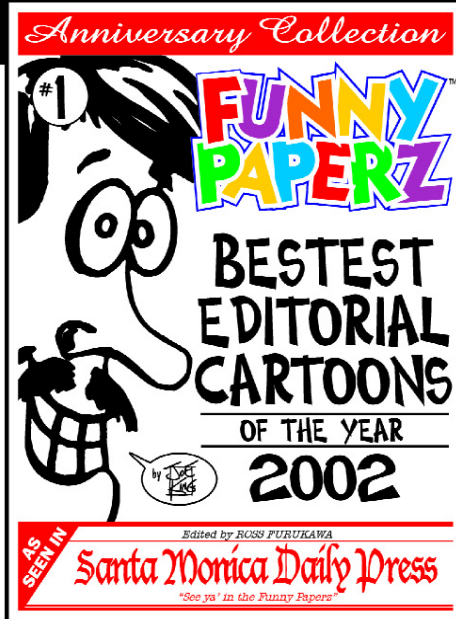
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--The Publicist

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--The Councilman

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What does it mean to be executor of a will?



LEGAL VIEWS AND NEWS

By David Pissarra

The executor of a will gathers all the assets owned by the decedent and, depending on whether or not a probate is being opened, they are to distribute the property according to the terms of the will.

Not all wills have to be probated. For estates under \$100,000, according to California Probate Code, if 40 days have passed since the death, and upon the presentation of an affidavit in proper form, an executor may administer an estate without the court's intervention. The savings to the estate can be tremendous, filing fees, attorney's fees and publication fees for a probate can run into thousands of dollars.

Probate is simply the term for the process by which the court takes control of all the property of a decedent and dis-

tributes it according to the terms of the will by way of the executor. It is a public process and anyone who wants to know the extent of the decedent's estate can look at the probate filings.

The executor, or more likely their attorney, opens up probate and throughout the process collects all the outstanding assets, lists the debts, income and property so that he/she can pay the debts, determines who gets what, files the last tax return and distributes the money or property to the various beneficiaries.

This process can take from three months to 20 years, depending on if there are will contests, the amount of the estate and if there were class gifts, which are gifts to an identified group of people who must meet certain criteria.

In order to open a probate, the will must be filed with the court, the application for probate must be filed and letters must be issued which allow the executor to begin to act. Letters are the formal document that let a bank, stock brokerage firm or anyone else know that the person asking for information about assets is acting as an executor.

Probate is simply the term for the process by which the court takes control of all the property of a decedent and distributes it according to the terms of the will by way of the executor.

Once a probate is opened, there will be a hearing regarding the extent of the assets, the terms of will and, if necessary, the court will make orders about the distribution of the property to the beneficiaries.

Unless the will provides otherwise, an executor will be paid according to the Probate Code, which has a sliding scale of percentages based on the size of the estate. The scale starts at 4 percent for an estate up to \$100,000, which means that the executor will be paid up to \$4,000 for distributing the estate. The next level is 3 percent of the estate up to \$200,000, which means the executor makes \$7,000, the \$4,000 on the first \$100,000 and

\$3,000 on the second \$100,000. This scale continues and only increases so that an estate worth a million dollars would pay approximately \$23,000 to the executor and to the attorney for a total of \$46,000.

The compensation paid to the executor and the attorneys is in addition to expenses for filing fees, publications, accountants and tax experts.

There are ways to reduce this amount and I will cover those next week.

(David Pissarra is a partner in the Santa Monica law firm of Pissarra & Grist. He welcomes questions and can be reached at 310/664-9969 or e-mailed at DPISARRA@PISARRA.COM.)

STATE



Seismic events could endanger L.A. coastline

TSUNAMI, from page 1

County's coastline could be at risk from future seismic events. Installing a string of buoys could give a 15-minute warning of the approach of a tsunami, Borrero told the conference on Thursday.

An offshore quake of at least magnitude-6.5 or a major undersea landslide would probably be required to cause such waves, researchers found.

A tsunami is created when a sudden undersea land shift or volcanic quake displaces large quantities of water, generating a wave.

Borrero said the research shows a tsunami off the coast could reach as high as 30 feet, jeopardizing lives as it reached shore.

He identified the Catalina escarpment off Santa Catalina Island as marking a fault that could produce a quake as large as magnitude-7.6 and generate a local tsunami.

Other potential sources of local tsunami were identified as the Palos Verdes fault running offshore between Newport

Beach and Dana Point in Orange County, and the San Mateo Thrust fault offshore of Camp Pendleton, San Onofre and Oceanside Harbor in San Diego County.

Since 1800, Southern California has had only five or six small, locally generated tsunamis. No massive waves have been identified.

Lucy Jones, scientist in charge of the U.S. Geological Survey office in Pasadena, said: "I put tsunamis well down my worry list" when it comes to prospective disasters in this area.

More damage has occurred in this century from tsunamis that originated from such distant sites as Chile and Alaska.

An Alaskan quake in 1964 created a tsunami that caused \$575,000 in damage in Marina del Rey and the Port of Los Angeles. In Crescent City on California's north coast, 12 people were killed.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has a Pacific tsunami warning system in effect that gives warnings hours in advance when tsunamis result from distant events.

CALIFORNIA BRIEFS

Golfers up in arms over proposed greens fees increase

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A proposed increase in greens fees for public city golf courses has local linksters crying foul instead of fore.

Three golf association representatives came to City Hall last week to protest a proposed \$5 spike. Mayor James Hahn wants the hike to raise \$4.2 million next year, to help the city's budget crunch.

Golfers believe the increase from \$21 to \$26 on weekdays and \$27 to \$32 on weekends would drive players to private courses and not raise the money the city hopes it will.

"I can't emphasize enough that a \$5 increase would be the beginning of the end of your system," Craig Kessler of Public Links Golf Association of Southern California told the Budget Committee.

Players in Griffith Park, one of 13 courses the city operates, had mixed feelings about the plan.

"Tell the mayor to cut back on his staff," said Nick Collatos, 65. "I'll go play somewhere else."

Other golfers grumbled about the plan but said the city's courses are still a bargain.

"It's like smoking and drinking, you're still going to do it," Manny Sanchez, 56, said. "Everybody talks about fees going up. It ain't right, but hey, the counties, the states, they're all broke."

State's high school exit exam protested

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A statewide bus tour protesting California's high school exit exam stopped at Crenshaw High last week where students held signs saying, "Don't Throw Away My Future."

The Californians for Justice tour was designed to fight the test required for a diploma. The trek began Friday in San Diego, making stops in Long Beach, Riverside, Los Angeles and Lynwood.

"We have the support of all of our allies to get the message across to the state board that this exit exam is not helping us, it's hurting us," said Samantha Knox, a student at Polytechnic High School in Long Beach. "This test may prevent me from going to college."

Tenth graders have been taking the test since 2002. They must pass English and math portions, but can retake the exam until they pass. In September, scores showed half of the students failed.

Last week, Reed Hastings, president of the State Board of Education, said that use of the test should be postponed because of high failure rates.

Test supporters have warned that dropping the requirement won't help struggling students because the exam's content isn't unreasonably difficult, and students should know such concepts. But critics said the test is unfair because many students are not taught the material included in it.

"They're putting us in a position to compete with students who have resources that we don't," said Ashley Williams, 17, of Crenshaw High School, who added that she has gone weeks without textbooks in some classes and that at least four of her teachers have only emergency credentials.

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School's parcel tax campaign enters last month

MEASURE S, from page 1

Seth Jacobsen, a spokesman for the parcel tax measure, said the campaign has stepped into high gear. Saturday's walk was the first of four scheduled for May weekends.

So far, more than \$65,000 has been raised by supporters of the measure. Jacobsen said he expects \$100,000 by the middle of the month.

"It's been really positive and very heartening," he said. "Normally you would think that a parcel tax would evoke a lot of negative reactions — but when you talk to people about it, their response changes measurably."

Even business interests have stepped behind the measure, Jacobsen said, indicating a broad base of support across the city.

Opponents of the measure say the parcel tax represents another burden for taxpayers and that business has organized behind it because the measure wouldn't charge more for companies with large amounts of office space.

Because of the flat rate, all parcels are subject to the same \$225 tax, regardless of size.

Campaigning has begun for opponents too, with flyers, lawn signs and a door-to-door canvassing effort.

"It's kind of pure politics," said Don Gray, an opponent of the measure. "There is no benefit to the people (fighting against Measure S). It's just the basic unfairness."

Gray said he was hoping for a law that would adjust the tax rate based on the square footage of the individual parcels.

"I said 'You gotta make this different, you gotta do something different,'" he said. "But they said, 'We'll just keep doing it again until it passes.'"

"Everybody that voted against the last one will vote against this one."

Ralph Mechur, co-chair of the Santa Monica campaign, said residents can expect a passionate campaign all the way up to June 3.

"The main effort to date has been to just make people generally aware of the state funding crisis," said Mechur, a local architect and school parent. "Now we'll let voters know about how the measure can help save the core curriculum in our schools."

Mechur said local efforts currently include knocking on doors, manning telephones four days a week and voter regis-

tration drives.

Informational brochures will also be mailed out to residents as part of the campaign.

Laura Rosenthal, co-chair of the campaign effort in Malibu, said efforts are also taking off up north.

Committee chairs have been established in each school and supporters are launching a door-to-door campaign as well, she said. A separate phone banking effort has been set up in Malibu that will start today and operate three days a week.

"There's been a lot of enthusiasm," said Rosenthal, who has two sons in Malibu schools. "It's different than (Measure) EE. I think people are really getting it."

Cinco de Mayo holiday is not as big in Mexico

CINCO DE MAYO, from page 1

Mann, marketing general manager at The Gambrinus Company, the San Antonio, Texas-based importer for Corona. With Cinco de Mayo, "everyone's tried to get in on it. The leading domestic brands, they all have Cinco de Mayo promotions."

Activists' focus on Cinco de Mayo seems arbitrary, Mann said.

"Why would Cinco de Mayo be different than any other holiday in the U.S. or Mexico when consumers are free to drink and celebrate as they choose?" he said.

Some celebrations held over the weekend in California were purposely absent of alcohol and tobacco. They were being

hailed as a small victory by some Hispanic activists who say the alcohol industry has co-opted their holiday.

With the slogan "Our culture is not for sale," Latinos & Latinas for Health Justice held alcohol- and tobacco-free events in California and Arizona this past weekend as part of its Cinco de Mayo con Orgullo (Fifth of May with Pride) campaign.

Activists blame alcohol companies for turning Cinco de Mayo into a rowdy holiday more commonly associated with tequila shots and beer specials than with Hispanic heritage — though industry representatives say people are free to celebrate as they choose.

Now in its sixth year, the activists' campaign has caught on in 24 California cities, 12 counties and Tucson, Ariz. Latinos & Latinas for Health Justice, a

network of health, substance abuse prevention and community advocates, also is promoting the effort in seven other states.



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

People gather on the Santa Monica Pier on Saturday to watch the Cinco de Mayo festivities.

Skies clear after weekend storm dumps record rain

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Skies mostly cleared statewide Sunday, but damage from a Pacific storm lingered as a teenager remained in critical condition after her car spun out of control on a rain slick freeway and struck a Los Angeles County sheriff's bus.

The accident took place Saturday morning on the westbound Foothill Freeway in Sylmar. The unidentified 18-year-old was taken to Providence Holy Cross Medical Center, said sheriff's Deputy Alba Yates. Three others in the sheriff's bus also were transported with non-life threatening injuries.

Water pooled in underground garages and some storm drains remained plugged Sunday.

Record amounts of rain fell late Friday and Saturday morning in 10 Southern California locations, including Chatsworth, Long Beach, Lancaster and Los Angeles International Airport.

In Chatsworth, 1.2 inches of rain fell,

beating a May 3, 1998, record of .06 inches. At the University of California, Los Angeles, 1.38 inches fell, topping .44 inches in 1944, National Weather Service meteorologist Bruce Rockwell said Sunday. The storm brought annual totals for downtown Los Angeles to 16.38 inches, 11 percent above the average 15.14 inches that falls by that date.

In Northern California, record precipitation fell in six places, including downtown San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, Santa Rosa, Napa and Kentfield, said NWS forecaster Steve Anderson.

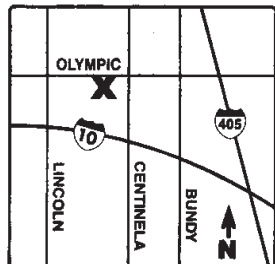
In Santa Rosa, 1.16 inches of rain fell, beating a 1951 record of .55 inches. In Napa, 1.52 inches of rain fell, surpassing a 1951 record of half an inch and in downtown San Francisco, .56 inches of rain fell, beating a 1950 record of .21 inches. Kentfield, usually the wettest location in the San Francisco Bay area, reported 1.89 inches of rainfall, beating a 1950 record for the date of .62 inches.

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Bush says banned weapons will be found in Iraq

BY JENNIFER LOVEN
Associated Press Writer

CRAWFORD, Texas — President Bush said Saturday banned weapons will be found in Iraq, and he suggested that task is getting little help from Saddam Hussein's captured confederates.

"We'll find them," Bush said of Iraq's suspected chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. "It'll be a matter of time to do so." Iraq's alleged possession of such weapons was Bush's main rationale for war, but none has been found since Saddam's government fell more than three weeks ago.

Bush and other U.S. officials had indicated that coalition troops may come up empty in their hunt, saying it is possible that weapons were destroyed before or during the U.S.-led war. On Saturday, a senior Bush aide offered another explanation, saying initial information suggests Iraq's weapons programs were geared mostly toward just-in-time production.

Bush noted that the U.N. Security Council resolution last fall that stated Iraq had banned weapons.

"Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction," Bush said in a joint appearance at his ranch with Australian Prime Minister John Howard. "It's well known."

He said the search would be difficult and lengthy, but ultimately successful.

"Iraq's the size of the state of California. It's got tunnels, caves, all kinds of complexes," he said.

Bush complained that Tariq Aziz, one of Saddam Hussein's closest deputies, is not cooperating with U.S. forces who have him in custody since April 24.

The deputy prime minister was the most visible face of the former Iraqi government other than Saddam's, and Aziz was the official who made Iraq's case before the world when it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

U.S. officials had hoped that Aziz could provide information about the deposed president's whereabouts and Iraq's weapons.

"Tariq Aziz still doesn't know how to tell the truth," Bush said. "He didn't know how to tell the truth when he was in office. He doesn't know how to tell the truth when

he's been — as a captive."

Bush did not elaborate. But officials say American intelligence agents are able to check one prisoner's claims against others, now that an increasing number of Iraqi leaders are in U.S. hands. The United States has documents that help verify responses from captives, they said.

Bush expressed no concerns about the lack of credible information, saying that lower-ranking officials and regular citizens "will come forward" and provide it.

"We'll find out a lot about the nature of the Hussein regime as time goes on," he said.

Referring to the deck of cards of wanted Iraqis, Bush said: "It may not be the aces, kings and queens and jacks that do the talking. It may be those are doing the carrying the water for the aces and kings and queens and jacks that do the talking."

Bush and Howard were together for less than a day. The prime minister and his wife, Janette, joined Bush in northern California on Friday afternoon and flew with him aboard Air Force One back to Texas. The Howards left after lunch on Saturday.

The discussions occurred mostly in social settings. The two couples had dinner together Friday night — followed by an early bedtime for all. Saturday morning, Bush treated Howard to his usual speed-walking tour of his 1,600-acre Prairie Chapel Ranch.

The visit was a thank-you to Howard, a staunch U.S. ally on Iraq who sent a small number of Australian troops to the war despite severe opposition at home.

Hundreds of thousands attended peace rallies across Australia — once forcing Howard to leave his official residence on foot when antiwar protesters barricaded the exit. But his popularity has since soared.

"Times get tough when you make tough decisions, and we both made a tough decision," Bush said. "But there was never any doubt in his mind. He was steady under fire. He stood his ground when he needed to stand his ground because he understands the difference between right and wrong."

Howard congratulated Bush "on the leadership that you gave to the world, at times under very great criticism."

"What was achieved in Iraq was quite extraordinary," he said. "The United States, I think, has sent a very important message not only to the region but to the rest of the world."

Bush told reporters he hoped to complete a free trade agreement with Australia by the end of the year and have Congress ratify it in 2004. The deal is a priority for Howard.

The Middle East came up, with Howard thanking the president for his involvement. "We see progress on this issue as being very important to consolidating what has been achieved in Iraq and building on the message of freedom that came out of the operation in Iraq," Howard said.

Iraqi to head ministry as U.N. warns of humanitarian crisis

BY LOUIS MEIXLER
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The United States picked a new head of Iraq's Health Ministry on Saturday — a Baath Party member whose appointment was so critical that U.S. officials designated the announcement "Public Notice No. 1."

The appointment of optometrist Ali Shnan al-Janabi came as the Americans started paying Health Ministry workers \$20 to return to work, and as U.N. officials warned of humanitarian disaster if quick action is not taken to restore vital services.

"Basic services have collapsed or are at the risk of collapsing if we don't bring them back quickly," said Ramiro Lopes da Silva, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Iraq. UNICEF rushed rehydration salts, milk and protein biscuits to poor Iraqi neighborhoods Saturday to help children sickened after drinking tainted water from pipes shattered in the fighting.

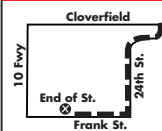
The U.S. civil administration said that by making al-Janabi's appointment the subject of its first public notice since taking charge, it was indicating that health issues are a high priority.

Even as the manhunt goes on for some Baath Party officials, U.S. officials realize that others are the only ones with the expertise to help run the country. And so they turn to men like al-Janabi, who was the third-ranking official in the ministry under Saddam Hussein.

Al-Janabi "is not associated with criminal activities or human rights abuses or weapons of mass destruction. So we are happy to work with him," said Steven Browning, the administration's representative to the ministry.

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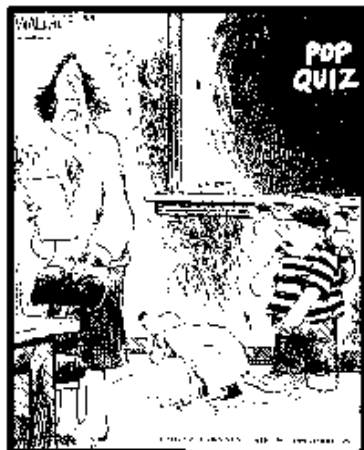
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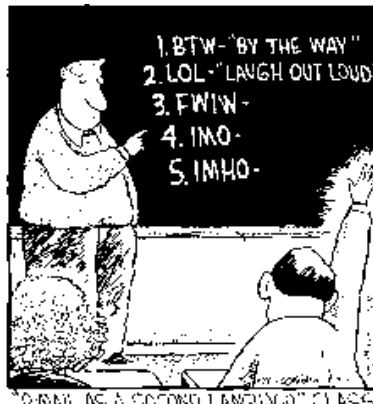
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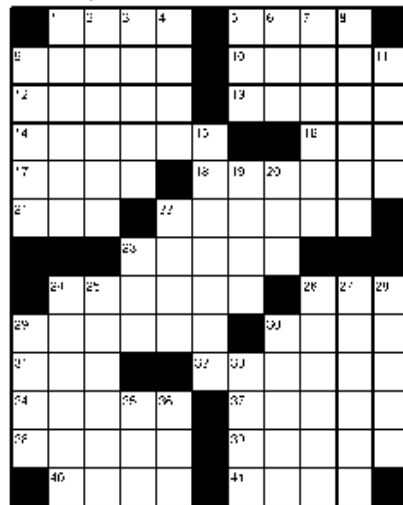
- ACROSS**
- 1 "Mem-ories" show
 - 5 Lowly chessman
 - 9 Accrued
 - 10 Detest
 - 12 Overture
 - 13 Make baskets
 - 14 Pacific island
 - 16 Sardine container
 - 17 Genesis place
 - 18 "Forget it!"
 - 21 Slouth Spade
 - 22 Wine holder
 - 23 Bakery buys
 - 24 Laments
 - 26 Upper limit
 - 29 Coped
 - 30 Challenge
 - 31 Big galoot
 - 32 Cheap
 - 34 Puccini opera
 - 37 Make blank
 - 38 Seaweed-wrapped item
 - 39 Greasy spoon
 - 40 Plane part
 - 41 Checkout act
- DOWN**
- 1 Second-largest nation
 - 2 Patriotic song
 - 3 City of Italy
 - 4 Location
 - 5 Hound hand
 - 6 Tad's dad
 - 7 Speculative question
 - 8 Beginner
 - 9 Ceremonies
 - 11 Russo of "Ransom"
 - 15 Tangled
 - 19 Mine yields
 - 20 German article
 - 22 Deck unit
 - 23 Pool need
 - 24 Plan in detail
 - 25 Black Sea port
 - 26 Beach structure
 - 27 Gotten up
 - 28 Early czar
 - 29 Porch items
 - 30 Column type
 - 33 Marries
 - 35 Greek X
 - 36 Suffer



Saturday's answer

- 19 Mine yields
- 20 German article
- 22 Deck unit
- 23 Pool need
- 24 Plan in detail
- 25 Black Sea port
- 26 Beach structure
- 27 Gotten up
- 28 Early czar
- 29 Porch items
- 30 Column type
- 33 Marries
- 35 Greek X
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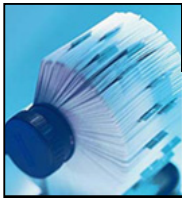
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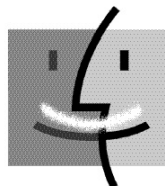
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BACK PAGE

Family, community gather to mourn Laci Peterson

BY JULIANA BARBASSA

Associated Press Writer

MODESTO — Thousands of people packed a church Sunday to remember Laci Peterson on what would have been her 28th birthday, nearly three weeks after her body washed ashore along with the remains of her unborn son.

Many mourners who had never met the young woman filled the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church in Modesto for a nationally televised service that reflected the extraordinary way in which Peterson's story has touched so many Americans.

"Even though Laci is not with us here today, she will always be in my heart and in my memories," her 13-year-old cousin, T.J. Vasquez said as he choked back tears. "Happy birthday, Laci."

In a series of eulogies, family and friends remembered Peterson as a woman who connected with people naturally and easily. There was no mention of her husband, Scott Peterson, who has been arrested and charged with killing his wife and unborn son.

"So many questions and no answers. No real answers," Laci Peterson's cousin Addie Hansberry said. "Today I come to you with a heavy heart because we know now Laci is never coming back."

The crowd overflowed the huge church, and many of the mourners ended up watching the service on closed-circuit television. But despite the long wait, mourners said they were glad they attended.

"My daughter just had a baby. I can imagine what the family is going through," said Lisa Maldonado, who drove from San Jose with her husband and two children. "It's made me feel better that I came."

Peterson was eight months pregnant when vanished just before Christmas, setting off a media frenzy in the following months as investigators searched for the body and her husband admitted to having an affair with a massage therapist.

Last month, people walking along the eastern shoreline of San Francisco Bay found Laci's body near that of her unborn son that she and her husband had planned to name Connor.

Scott Peterson, 30, was arrested April 18 in San Diego and has pleaded innocent to two counts of murder. A bail hearing is set for May 6.

His request to attend the memorial service was denied by the Stanislaus County Sheriff, said spokesman Kelly Huston.

Outside of the church before the service, two young girls near the front of one line waited to honor Laci Peterson, who served as their substitute teacher.

"She was very easy to love," said Tiffany Collins, 14, as she waited to enter with her friend Angelina Carpenetti, 15.

Danelle Herran, 24, of San Francisco helped pass out flyers when Peterson was still missing. She attended the memorial and wore several small pictures of Peterson pinned to her shirt.

"I thought it was important to be here and show respect and support for her family," Herran said.

At the Peterson house hours before the memorial service, streams of people toting small children approached the home

leaving flowers and balloons. The street is blocked with yellow cones but people parked their cars and walked to the house where they posed for family photos in the front yard.

"It's been pretty chaotic around here," said neighbor Linda Caudle.

It was a far different scene than a month ago when media swarmed the house day and night, Caudle said. Now, it's just a steady flow of onlookers.

"We're ready for it all to quiet down and be our neighborhood again," Caudle said.

She called the passers-by "tourists" and "gawkers."

"I just can't see how any good can come from walking up and looking at the house. I just cannot understand the curiosity with a house," Caudle said. "This goes on morning, day and night. It's almost ghoulish."

Legal issues cloud disabled woman's rape

By The Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — A mentally disabled woman in a group home is more than five months pregnant from a rape, but identification of her attacker has been hampered because she is unable to consent to a DNA test.

The 22-year-old woman, who has no family, is too disabled to speak. She was abandoned as a child and has lived at the small home for 19 years.

"She cannot even say yes or no,"

Detective Rick Salcedo said. "She has the verbal communications skills of an infant."

Police plan to seek DNA samples from two suspects, but without consent from the woman or a guardian they might have to wait for the baby's birth to get a tissue sample for comparison.

The state Department of Children & Families plans to ask a judge to appoint a guardian to represent the woman's interests. The agency is not the woman's legal guardian because she is over 18, said department spokeswoman Yvonne Vassel.

Because of the pregnancy, the DCF has suspended the home's license and is investigating, as are police. Authorities won't identify the group home to protect the victim's identity.

The home's caregiver, a woman in her 70s, reported the pregnancy to the department, which notified police.

Vassel said the home, which has at least seven clients, had not had any serious violations previously. It was last inspected in November.

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-Vanity Fair, April 2002



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