

FREE

SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 153

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

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FANTASY 5

06, 26, 27, 29, 34

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 4, 8, 9

Evening picks: 1, 0, 6

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 03, Hot Shot

2nd Place: 09, Winning Spirit

3rd Place: 02, Lucky Star

Race time: 1:48.12



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
by Chuck Shepard

Hopeless Recidivists:

■ Eduardo Rivera, 43, in court awaiting a hearing on a charge of receiving stolen property, was rearrested after he carved his name into a courtroom bench (Reading, Pa., February).

■ David Joe White Jr., 32, having just pleaded guilty to 42 burglary charges, was rearrested after swiping his lawyer's portable tape recorder from the defense table (Attalla, Ala., February).

■ Chan Kwok-keung, 34, was sentenced to four months in jail for stealing a court interpreter's purse; he was in the courtroom at the time on theft charges (but had just been cleared) (Hong Kong, March).



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I want to be the white man's brother, not his brother-in-law."

— Martin Luther King, Jr.



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Feinstein censured over missing funds

Green Party asks councilman to 'withdraw' until matter is settled

BY JASON AUSLANDER AND JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writers

The California Green Party on Friday asked Santa Monica City Councilman Mike Feinstein to stop participating in party business until he accounts for \$10,000 in missing funds.

"Since 2001, the (Green Party of California) has urged and continues to urge that Mike Feinstein make public all expenditures from a \$10,000 check intended for the Green Party of Los Angeles County but apparently deposited into a credit union account he controlled," the party said in a press release.

Calling Feinstein a "long-time Green Party organizer whose past efforts have been significant and appreciated," the release

states that "...the GPCA has strongly requested that Mike Feinstein temporarily withdraw from Green Party activities and committee work."

"...the GPCA has strongly requested that Mike Feinstein temporarily withdraw from Green Party activities and committee work."

— CALIFORNIA GREEN PARTY

Feinstein didn't return phone calls on Friday seeking comment. He has refused in the past to speak with the Daily Press on the matter.

See FEINSTEIN, page 5

Wedding photographer must provide photos in order to stay out of jail

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

After spending 12 days in jail, a local wedding photographer pleaded no contest to four counts of grand theft on Friday.

Juli Anne Armitage, who allegedly took money from more than 30 couples but didn't deliver their wedding photos, was ordered freed immediately after the hearing.

She will not serve any more jail time or pay any money in fees and penalties if she abides by the parameters of her plea, which demands that she work with the city attorney to return all the images in question.

"It was important to us that every penny that was available

go back to the couples and not to the court system," said Adam Radinsky, head of the consumer protection division of the city attorney's office. "It is very sad that so many couples have been in limbo for so long about their priceless wedding pictures."

Armitage will return to court May 14 to begin the process of returning all images to the couples that hired her. She will

be assigned a probation officer and will be asked to complete 180 days of psychiatric counseling, according to the terms of her sentence.

She will also be asked to pay restitution to the couples, which Radinsky said would be in the neighborhood of \$50,000.

See ARMITAGE, page 5



Juli Anne Armitage

Celebrity signing



John Wood/Daily Press

NBC News journalist Maria Shriver signs a copies of her books for Santa Monica resident Carole Stornetta-Laks at Room With A View on Montana Avenue on Friday.

Scientists fear return of sea mammal-killing toxin

BY ANDREW BRIDGES

AP Science Writer

LOS ANGELES — Two dozen sick or dead sea lions and dolphins have washed ashore in Southern California in recent weeks, heralding the apparent return of a naturally occurring toxin that last year caused the second largest marine mammal die-off in U.S. history.

The California sea lions and common dolphins have been found on beaches between Santa Barbara and San Diego, the apparent but still unconfirmed victims of domoic acid poisoning. Last spring, the nerve toxin killed roughly 800 of the two species over a three-month period.

"We're seeing the same sort of pattern we experienced last year," National Marine Fisheries Service wildlife biologist Joe Cordaro said.

Domoic acid is produced by blooms of microscopic algae. The toxin is concentrated in filter-feeding animals, such as anchovies, sardines and shellfish, which are in turn eaten by marine mammals.

The toxin also causes a human illness, amnesic shellfish poisoning, which can be deadly. The state Department of Health Services has warned Californians not to eat

sport-harvested species of bivalve shellfish as it monitors the situation.

Lab results that would confirm the presence of domoic acid in animals that have died so far this year are pending. But the behavior of some sea lions, including head waving and seizures typically brought on by the toxin, suggest it is the culprit.

Last year, domoic acid was implicated in the deaths of 685 sea lions and 98 dolphins in Southern California, although some may have died of other causes, Cordaro said. Another 500 sea lions were sent to rehabilitation centers for treatment; approximately 60 percent survived.

While dramatic, the numbers hardly dented the overall populations of the species, which number in the hundreds of thousands.

The toxin may play a small role in the recent uptick in deaths among the far smaller population of California sea otters, said Michael Harris, an environmental scientist with the state Department of Fish and Game. About 2,100 of the threatened species are known to live in state waters.

See TOXINS, page 6

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★★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★★-Positive ★★★-Average

★★-So-so ★-Difficult

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Saturday, May 10, 2003:

Allow your playfulness to come out but recognize that you could be inadvertently distancing yourself from others with your devil-may-care attitude. You might feel pulled in two directions. What you want might not coincide with a loved one's desires. Allow your creativity to flow. You come up with a lot of ideas, though they don't necessarily go in the direction you think. If you are single, your love life will be unusually exciting, especially after August. Your lively nature attracts many to you. You could meet the right person. If you are attached, your relationship might heat up, but it will sometimes take some strange twists and turns. Get into the excitement. VIRGO is playful.

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Put your feet up and relax. The planets offer you an opportunity to do nothing, if you want. Many of you will get into spring projects. Perhaps doing something atypical will help renew your perspective. Tonight: Gather the troops and go to the movies.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ You sense a change in the air. New information comes your way that could startle and surprise you. Friends provide excitement. A new face on the scene could add a lot of activity to your life. You might find that you're stepping onto a roller-coaster ride. Tonight: Where your friends are.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ A boss or parent might do the unexpected. Expect others to go more than 100 percent of the way for you, but in their own way. Think success, and you'll cruise through the roller coaster that lies ahead of you. Keep on smiling. Your charisma runs high. Tonight: A must appearance.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Plans rapidly change, allowing a whole new group of possibilities to come forward. Worry less about what might be happening with someone at distance. Just accept what is. Think through a decision with care. Evaluate and move in a new direction. Tonight: Surprises abound.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Consider a long-term purchase. You might wonder if it really is necessary. Use discretion, not upsetting a loved one or partner. His or her reaction is slightly off the wall. Rethink a decision carefully, not expecting support from those around you. Tonight: Follow the music.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ You might not have much choice about what happens. Clearly someone wants something different than you do. At this point, you can have what you want, so don't hem and haw. Let your smile and magnetism draw more of what you want. Tonight: The world is your oyster.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ You might not be sure about a project. You might need some time to anchor yourself and make the right decision. Your instincts serve you well, but sometimes you need to know what motivates you. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ If you want excitement, you'll certainly get it. If you want more out of your day-to-day life, you will get that, too. Don't hold yourself back, but opt for more spontaneity. Get together with friends or throw a spontaneous party. You won't go wrong. Tonight: What will make you happy?

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Others look to you. You might want to fly the coop or dump your responsibilities. If you can do it for the day — why not? You make anything possible. Know just how far you can push a roommate or family member. Tonight: In the spotlight, whether you like it or not.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Unexpected developments point you in a new direction. The fact that you might have pushed someone too far becomes quite apparent in your dealings. Detach, then imagine what it would be like to walk in this person's shoes. You'll understand a lot more then. Tonight: Take in another perspective.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You need to hold a steady course financially, or else you could greet a problem most unexpectedly. The unanticipated seems to be heading your way, but, of course, it might not be a problem. A partner paves the way for you, if you'll listen. Tonight: Get together with a loved one.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ You might not have as much control as you would like. Your actions are spontaneous. As a result, you might want to pull back and go on your merry way. Don't try to convince others. Tonight: Go your own way.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Measure S rally scheduled for this morning

By Daily Press staff

Hotel workers, labor leaders and living wage activists will gather on Saturday for a rally and precinct-walking in support of Measure S, the Santa Monica school funding ballot proposition on the June 3 ballot.

The rally will take place at 10 a.m. at 525 Colorado Ave. Speakers will include Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Superintendent John Deasy, school boardmember Mike Jordan, Harry Keiley, president of the California Teachers Association's Santa Monica/Malibu chapter and a worker from the Doubletree Guest Suites. Following the rally participants will go door-to-door encouraging voters to support Measure S.

Measure S has been endorsed by both Santa Monicans Allied for Responsible Tourism, principal backers of the city's living wage campaign and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union Local 11.

"Our schools are in crisis, and we need to come together to support quality education in Santa Monica," said Vivian Rothstein, director of SMART. "Nothing less than our children's future is at stake."

Living wage and labor leaders also expressed concern over proposed cuts that would lead to layoffs for as many as 90 teachers, as well as other district employees such as librarians and nurses.

The district is facing a \$13.5 million deficit that has resulted in layoffs for more than 200 district employees. Many programs are threatened with drastic reductions or elimination, including music and art classes, advanced placement courses and pre-school programs for low and moderate-income children, while class size will increase dramatically.

"All Santa Monica children attending public schools will suffer if these cuts are made, including the kids of low-wage workers who depend on the pre-school programs provided by the district," said Kurt Petersen, director of organizing in Santa Monica for HERE Local 11.

If approved, Measure S will provide the district with \$6.5 million a year. It requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

"Santa Monica's unique and progressive school district is at risk unless something is done to alleviate this crisis," said Rev. Sandie Richards, minister at The Church in Ocean Park and a prominent living wage leader. "The passage of Measure S is critical if we are to preserve the quality of education for the children of this community."

Kuehl's healthcare bill passes Senate committee

By Daily Press staff

A bill that would guarantee health insurance to all Californians passed a state Senate committee earlier this week.

Senate Bill 921—the Health Care for All Californians Act—passed the Senate Insurance Committee by a vote of 5-3.

The measure, sponsored by Sen. Sheila Kuehl, now moves to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. At no new cost to the state, the bill would provide all Californians with stable and affordable access to health care at a lower cost than the premiums consumers and California employers now pay. The reform integrates current healthcare spending into a streamlined system and eliminates premiums and other out of pocket expenses, replacing them with a low percentage income and payroll tax that together are lower than average health insurance premiums.

Sen. Kuehl's plan gives every consumer the freedom to choose their own health care provider and returns healthcare decision making to providers and consumers. The plan will feature a simple and efficient claims and reimbursement system to be administered by the state of California and overseen by an elected commissioner and statutorily limits administrative costs to 5 percent of the system budget.

The reform would create the Healthcare Fund, the Office of Medical Practice Standards, the Health Policy Board, the Office of the Consumer Advocate, and an Office of Medical Practice Standards. The plan will cover medical, dental, optical, mental health and prescription drugs services, among other healthcare services.

"Steeply rising health insurance costs are outpacing the ability of consumers to afford secure high quality health care," said Kuehl, who represents Santa Monica in Sacramento. "A single-payer health care system that deals with the administrative waste in our system will help all Californians and all employers."

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

Please send letters to:

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surf report

It looks like a fairly windy weekend but conditions look better than they've been lately. For Saturday morning expect mainly NW wind swell to go along with some slowly building SSW swell. Northern L.A. County spots should see surf in the 2-foot-to-3-foot range at most spots with some chest-high sets at best NW exposed breaks. South Bay breaks see waist-high surf at many spots with some shoulder-high and occasionally bigger sets at best NW breaks. The SSW swell will fill in more during the afternoon and show mostly in the north half of the county with waist-to-chest high surf at many exposed spots and some shoulder-to-head-high sets at stand-out breaks by sunset. Those waves increase a touch more into early Sunday.

Today the water is:

58°

Sunrise: 6:00 a.m.
Sunset: 7:55 p.m.

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	11:50	0.1	N/A	N/A	4:41	4.2	6:44	4.3
SUNDAY	12:22	1.9	12:31	0.1	5:57	4.3	7:08	4.8
MONDAY	1:12	1.1	1:10	0.2	7:00	4.5	7:36	5.4
TUESDAY	1:58	0.2	1:47	0.4	7:57	4.5	8:07	6.0
WEDNESDAY	2:44	-0.6	2:24	0.7	8:52	4.5	8:41	6.4
THURSDAY	3:31	-1.2	3:02	1.1	9:47	4.4	9:17	6.7
FRIDAY	4:19	-1.6	3:40	1.5	10:43	4.1	9:56	6.7

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OPINION

LETTERS

Disney vs. Christopher Robin

Editor:

Let me get this straight: Disney, Inc., is lobbying in federal court to change the copyright laws in order to extend the lifespan of their own rights over the creations of Uncle Walt — while simultaneously suing the heirs of A.A. Milne to terminate their own rights as creators of our favorite Pooh bear?

As it is written in my official Mickey Mouse (TM) Bible (R), "Who is like unto the Eisner? Who can make war with him?"

Joe King
Santa Monica

Tittinger, the antichrist, school funding

Editor:

Revelations 13:14 reminds us that Satan is the great deceiver of the world. One day the antichrist will rise up and proclaim himself to be God. Columnist Michael J. Tittinger warns of that in his column this week.

Others refer to what he wrote about as revisionist history. Revelations 6:4 always reminds me about the crusades. Could you imagine a history book that included the following in place of what really happened during the crusades: The crusaders rode their horses to the cottage. They dismounted and surrounded the house and begin to pray and teach the inhabitants about God. The inhabitants becoming aware of the error of their ways repented and then slashed their wrists to go and be with God.

A far cry from what really happened and the very subject that Tittinger spoke so passionately about in his column this week.

There is a special election coming up soon in Santa Monica regarding funding for public schools. We need to do what we can to give children the right information when they are young. This becomes the bedrock for their lives going forward. We need to do what we can to insure quality in education so make-believe fiction like that described above or by Mr. Tittinger don't become reality.

Steve Roberts
Santa Monica



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

New automobile blues (with a midnight blue interior)



**MODERN
TIMES**
By Lloyd Garver

My car is 12 years old.

That's not that old. Okay, in dog years, it's 84, but my dog doesn't drive the car.

However, I've been getting a lot of pressure from family and friends to get a new one. They're probably right. More and more expensive things are starting to go wrong with it. So every once in a while, I test drive a few cars and seriously think about buying one. But whenever I feel myself getting really tempted to get a new car, I get my old one washed instead. It looks shiny and I forget about a new car for a while.

I hate the process of buying a car.

They let you drive around the block while the salesperson is jabbering away about emissions and service packages,

and then you're supposed to decide if you want to buy something that costs twice as much as the house you grew up in. I don't want to hear about the alleged gas mileage, which parts of the engine are made of aluminum or that the interior colors are called "shale, taupe and biscuit."

And I certainly don't want to hear, "I'll have to talk to my manager about this."

Deep down, I must know that it's time for me to get a new car. I've noticed lately that sometimes I'll leave it unlocked. I've also taken to parking it in that dangerous foul ball territory during my daughter's softball games. And I no longer think it's cute that I can't always open the rear driver's side door.

So, what's really stopping me from buying a new one? I hate to bargain. I really hate to bargain.

Why can't buying a car be like buying a shirt? An expensive shirt with cup holders. Why can't they treat it like every other product — just put a price tag on new cars and let that be what it really costs?

All I can think of while the salesperson is going through the motions of writing all

those figures on that white pad is, "Just tell me the price. I know you already know!"

I'm not good at pretending that I'm going to leave and never come back unless they give me the car for a dollar less. And I can't stand them asking me, "Are you prepared to buy it today at this price?" They don't ask me that in the shoe store.

I know some people love to negotiate and are thrilled when they think they've gotten a bargain. They view the deal as a battle with a winner and a loser. For them, it's fun. Not for me.

I assume the salesperson is better at selling than I am at buying. I also assume that I'm probably better than he or she is at some other things. So, it's not about my ego. I don't feel I have to vanquish the car dealer. I don't feel any more manly if I get them to throw in free floor mats.

In fact — don't tell the car dealers in my area — but if it would get me out of the showroom a couple of minutes faster, I'd probably be willing to pay a few extra bucks. I know that's not how you're supposed to play the game, so I keep postponing the game.

But that's silly.

I'll bet I can be just as good a bargainer as anybody else. I can pretend I'm interested when they talk about overhead cams and torque. I could tell them with a straight face that I've gotten prices from five different dealers.

It will be worth it, because, let's face it, there's nothing like a new car. It smells fantastic, everything works and it's fun to drive. You feel good just looking at it. The more I think about it, there's absolutely no reason for me to put it off anymore. Tomorrow I'm definitely going to go shopping for a new car — first thing in the morning.

Or maybe I'll just go get my old one washed.

(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



Party asks councilman to 'temporarily withdraw'

FEINSTEIN, from page 1

The disputed \$10,000 check was written to the L.A. County Green Party on Jan. 13, 2001 by Silver Lake resident Bill Pietz. The check was later deposited into an unofficial Green Party account under Feinstein's name at the Hughes Aircraft Employees Credit Union, Pietz said.

Feinstein has previously said that more than \$30,000 in Green Party donations, including Pietz's check, was deposited into the account. Most of that money was used for rent and supplies for a Green Party office located at 2809 Pico Blvd., according to official minutes from party meetings.

In Friday's press release, the party said it "has never maintained, staffed, leased or authorized leasing of any Southern California office space in the GPCA name."

Feinstein has steadfastly ignored requests for two years to turn over bank records detailing exactly how the money was spent or if it was properly disclosed under state election laws, which led to Friday's censure.

"The GPCA is committed to finding appropriate means of ensuring full transparency and accountability in the matters now under investigation by the legal and administrative authorities with jurisdiction on this matter," according to the

press release.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and the California Fair Political Practices Commission are investigating the situation based on complaints sent by Green Party members.

Bob Morris, co-chairman and secretary of the L.A. County Green Party, said Santa Monica police are conferring with the D.A. this week and may ask for a court order to open the bank account records.

"Basically what the state party did was kind of a public slap-down and long overdue," Morris said. "Mike needs to explain what he did with the \$10,000."

Morris said Feinstein doesn't currently hold a position with the county, state or national Green Party. He also said he doubts whether Friday's action will motivate Feinstein to turn over the bank records.

Feinstein said in February that he was being "denied due process by being unnecessarily tried in the press" and characterized the situation as an attack by his political enemies.

Pietz, who is no longer a Green Party member, said Friday's development probably won't change the situation because the party "isn't really in a position to do anything."

"Mike will probably just ignore it," he said.

Wedding photographer freed

ARMITAGE, from page 1

Armitage will not be barred from working as a photographer, though the court did demand she accept only a 10 percent downpayment for her jobs and take no more than 50 percent of her fee before the photo shoots take place.

"I'm giving you a life-saving rope," said Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Bernard Kamins, who told Armitage he was impressed with the quality of her work. "You can use it to climb out or you can use it to hang over your head."

Armitage, who was bound in handcuffs and dressed in a jail-issued blue jumpsuit, appeared pleased by the resolution. She shook hands with Radinsky and hugged Kerry Golub, her fill-in public defender for the past five days, after the hearing.

The charges had been outstanding for nearly half a year before Armitage's Friday plea.

"(This resolution is) nothing short of a real miracle to the community," said Kamins, who praised Golub for coming to court on Friday, her day off, to ensure the case was resolved.

Kamins said Armitage's jail time was the catalyst to resolving the case. Armitage was taken into custody April 28 on a bench warrant after being stopped by Ventura police for allegedly jay-walking, said Paul Cohen, a bankruptcy attorney who Armitage called from jail.

Cohen earlier this year represented Armitage in a hearing that got her off the hook for about \$100,000 of accrued debt.

Kamins issued the bench warrant last month after Armitage failed to appear at two consecutive hearings. Armitage was being held on \$50,000 bail at the Twin

Towers jail in downtown L.A.

Radinsky said phone calls from Armitage's past customers have been pouring in because of the media exposure.

Armitage's story was first printed in the Daily Press in December. It received heightened coverage late last month when KCAL-9 ran a segment and earlier this week the L.A. Times ran a story about Armitage. Several other news outlets have investigated the story since then, officials said.

Armitage's former clients have described her as a skilled photographer. They said she was flaky, but not malicious or criminal, and wondered how she allowed herself to get tangled in such a mess.

Cohen echoed that sentiment, saying the matter should have been pursued in civil — not criminal — court.

Armitage has chalked up her legal mess to mismanagement and said she is guilty of bad bookkeeping but nothing more.

Armitage has a long history of missed court dates that stretches back to more than a dozen small claims trials in which she's been involved. The city filed 17 counts of grand theft against her in December, saying she took an average of \$2,000 from dozens of local couples and failed to deliver their wedding pictures.

Though she pleaded to four counts of grand theft Friday, that number will be reduced to one and she will be taken off of formal probation and put on summary probation if she abides by the parameters of her plea.

If she does not follow the rules, Armitage will be taken back into custody. Golub said that outcome is unlikely.

"It's been clear to me that Ms. Armitage wants to make her customers whole," she said. "She is sincere in her efforts."



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Alleged threats land actor Tom Sizemore in jail again

BY PAUL WILBORN
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Actor Tom Sizemore, who pleaded innocent in March to charges that he hit and threatened a woman, was arrested for investigation of intimidating a witness in the case, authorities said Friday.

Sizemore was arrested Thursday after he allegedly made verbal threats to the witness between May 5 and May 7, said police Officer Adriana Sanchez.

Sizemore, 41, was released Thursday after posting a \$100,000 bond.

An emergency protection order was issued Thursday, barring Sizemore from coming within 100 yards of the witness or having any contact with her, said Frank Mateljan, of the city attorney's office.

Police and city prosecutors would not reveal the name of the witness but the television program Celebrity Justice reported that she is former madam Heidi Fleiss, who was once Sizemore's fiancée.

Sizemore allegedly left messages on Fleiss' answering machine threatening to

knock out her teeth, kill her and harm members of her family, Celebrity Justice reported.

At the time of his Thursday arrest Sizemore was free on \$2,500 bail, after pleading innocent to five misdemeanor charges — domestic violence, battery, violating a restraining order, making criminal threats and dissuading a witness.

A woman told police on Dec. 7, 2002, that the actor had punched her in the face and threatened her. Officers went to an address provided by the woman and took Sizemore into custody without incident.

Sizemore's attorney, Robert Barta, did not immediately return a telephone call Friday seeking comment. Fleiss' attorney, Anthony Brooklier, also did not immediately return a telephone call for comment. Sizemore's next court appearance is set for May 19, Mateljan said.

In earlier interviews, Sizemore described the woman's charges against him as "a shakedown."

Sizemore's film credits include "Saving Private Ryan," "Black Hawk Down," "Relic" and "Natural Born Killers."

Lives lost as counties fail to trace wireless 911 calls

BY DAVID B. CARUSO
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Police dispatchers could do little but listen to Reinaldo Zayas scream as he was tortured to death by a gang of kidnapers.

Somehow, the 25-year-old managed to dial 911 twice from his cell phone after his abduction Monday. One chilling call lasted 18 minutes, during which dispatchers could hear Zayas beg for his life.

Philadelphia, like most big cities, has not upgraded its phone system with equipment that can pinpoint the location of a cell phone when someone dials 911, even though the technology has existed for years.

With Zayas unable to speak, and no way to trace the calls, investigators sat helpless as he was repeatedly stabbed in the buttocks and thigh, then left to bleed to death. His body was found Tuesday inside a van.

If the kidnapers had been just a few miles away, in Delaware County, police might have been on the scene within minutes. The suburban county has one of the rare dispatch centers that have installed computer software that can tell dispatchers almost exactly where a wireless call originates.

"In some cases, we can get within five

feet," said Ed Truitt, Delaware County's emergency management director. "It's possible that we could have saved that man's life."

Police have not identified any suspects in Zayas' killing. Investigators said one of his relatives reported that someone called the family several times to demand money after the abduction, but detectives said they still had not determined a motive.

Most 911 dispatch centers have been able to trace calls made from landline phones since the 1980s, but only a few hundred of the nearly 7,000 centers nationwide have the enhanced systems that can do the same with wireless units, officials said.

That technology, known as Emergency 911 Phase II, pinpoints cell phone locations using one of two methods: global positioning system chips that communicate with satellites, or software that triangulates a phone's position using signals sent to cell towers.

Zayas' life is not the only one that might have been saved with wireless tracking.

In January, dispatchers in New York lacked the technology to trace a 911 call made by four teenagers who died when their rowboat sank in Long Island Sound. The case persuaded officials to accelerate efforts to upgrade 911 systems in New York.

Poison flushed from animals

TOXINS, from page 1

At the Marine Mammal Care Center at Fort MacArthur in San Pedro, experts were tending Friday to 18 female sea lions. Four of the 220-pound animals had been brought in just that morning.

"It was quite a big deal last year, so we don't yet know what it's going to turn into," operations manager Jennifer Sullivan said.

Caretakers treat the animals with injections of saline solution to hydrate

them and help flush their bodies of the poison, as well as anti-seizure medications, center director Jackie Jaakola said. Some also receive steroids to reduce brain swelling.

Experts warn against approaching stranded animals showing symptoms of domoic acid poisoning, since they can be more aggressive than normal. Stranded sea lions are monitored for 48 hours before they are brought in for treatment, Cordaro said.

INTERNATIONAL



Looter guards



Murad Sezer/Associated Press

U.S. soldiers keep guard of detained Iraqi looters outside of a Saddam Hussein palace in Baghdad, Iraq on Friday.

Dozens feared dead after plane door opens over Congo

BY EDDY ISANGO
Associated Press Writer

KINSHASA, Congo — The rear door of a cargo plane burst open over Congo, hurling dozens of soldiers, their wives and children to their deaths while others survived by clinging to the aircraft as it returned to the airport, officials said Friday. There was confusion over the death toll. Two officials at the international airport told The Associated Press that 129 people were feared dead. Later, a third official estimated the casualties were about half that, saying the exact figure may be difficult to determine because of an incomplete manifest. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

The plane, a Russian-built Ilyushin 76, lost its door at 33,000 feet about 45 minutes after takeoff Thursday night from Kinshasa, the capital of the central African nation, said government spokesman, Kikaya Bin Karubi.

Seven people were confirmed dead and military helicopters were searching the region for more casualties, the spokesman said. Karubi did not provide details but confirmed that those who died had been "ejected from the plane."

People in Africa often travel on overcrowded, modified cargo planes that have few seats, leaving most passengers to cram in among belongings in the rear of the aircraft.

"They were traumatized," said Kabamba Mbwebwe, a doctor who treated victims. "The door opened and the plane depressurized. Many were sucked out."

The flight crew managed to fly the plane back to the capital, where it could be seen the next day on the tarmac, missing a door.

Nine survivors were treated for minor injuries and psychological trauma at Kinshasa General Hospital.

It was not known how many people were on the plane or whether they had seats or seatbelts. People in Africa often travel on modified cargo planes that have few seats, leaving most passengers to cram in among their belongings in the rear of the aircraft.

The privately owned plane apparently

had been chartered to transport Congolese soldiers and their families from Kinshasa to the southeastern city of Lubumbashi, a diamond center. Soldiers regularly provide security in Congo cities, often traveling as a group between assignments.

It was not immediately known why the door came open. The weather was clear. There were no suggestion of sabotage.

The plane's owner was not immediately identified. The logo says "Ukrainian Cargo Airlines."

**"They were traumatized.
The door opened and the
plane depressurized.
Many were sucked out."**

— KABAMBA MBWEBWE
Doctor

The Ilyushin 76 is a medium- to long-range transport jet. The model was first flown in 1971. It is widely used around the world, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, as a civilian carrier.

The plane has had a checkered safety record, including 47 accidents that resulted in 668 deaths, according to the Aviation Safety Network Web site, an air safety data base.

On Feb. 19, an Ilyushin 76 crashed in bad weather in Iran, killing 275 people, including more than 200 elite Iranian soldiers. A month earlier, another of the jets crashed while landing in thick fog in East Timor, killing all six people on board.

Kinshasa residents still have painful memories of a plane disaster on Jan. 6, 1996 that left as many as 1,000 people killed when a Russian-built Antonov crashed into a crowded market at the end of a runway near a Kinshasa airport.

Congo is in the fifth year of a civil war that has led to more than 2.5 million deaths, aid groups estimate, mostly from strife-related hunger or illness. Despite a series of peace deals, fighting persists in the northeast.

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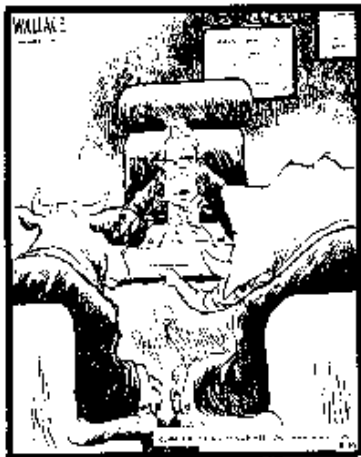
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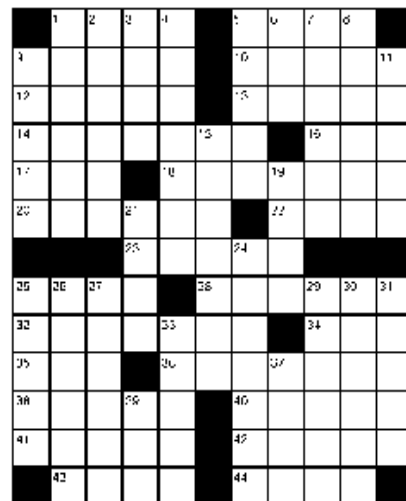
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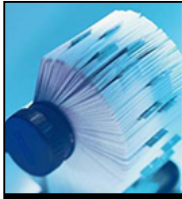
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BACK PAGE

Japan starts probe to bring back samples from asteroid

BY ERIC TALMADGE

Associated Press Writer

TOKYO — A Japanese rocket lifted off Friday on the world's first mission to collect samples from the surface of an asteroid, part of a four-year journey covering nearly 400 million miles.

If successful, the "Muses-C" will be the first probe to make a two-way trip to an asteroid. A NASA probe collected data for two weeks from the surface of the Manhattan-sized asteroid Eros in 2001, but it was not designed to return with samples.

The unmanned Muses-C was launched Friday atop a \$60 million M-5 rocket from the Kagoshima Space Center on the island of Kyushu in southern Japan.

Iwao Hashizume, an Institute of Space and Astronautical Science spokesman, said the Muses-C had reached its orbit heading away from Earth at 6.9 miles per second. Its solar energy panels had unfolded and its sample-collecting arm had responded to tests, Hashizume said.

The probe is to make three brief contacts with the tiny asteroid 1998 SF36, about 180 million miles away from Earth.

It's going to take the Muses-C about two years to get there, but the asteroid — only 2,300 feet long and 1,000 feet wide — is among the Earth's closest neighbors.

The plan is to gather surface samples from the asteroid in June 2005 and parachute them in a re-entry capsule that reaches the southern Australia town of Woomera two years later.

Muses-C will conduct a three-month survey of the asteroid from an altitude of about 12 miles, then move close enough to fire a small bullet into the asteroid and collect the ejected fragments.

The craft will bring back a gram (.04 ounces) or so of the football-shaped asteroid's surface, the first space rocks to be gathered since the U.S. Apollo lunar exploration program ended 30 years ago.

Japan's space agencies, though plagued by budget overruns and facing a major restructuring later this year,

have recently marked a series of successes.

In March, an H2-A rocket, Japan's main launch vehicle, put this country's first spy satellites into orbit. It was the fifth consecutive successful launch for the H2-A, which Japan hopes will one day compete in the commercial satellite launching business.

Japan launched its first M-5 in 1997 and had three successful liftoffs in a row. But the failure of the fourth M-5 rocket to put a probe into orbit in February 2000 forced

planners to postpone the Muses-C launch.

A failure in its altitude regulating system caused a further delay and swelling costs prompted NASA to shelve a project to build a tiny, wheeled robot for the probe.

To boost interest, the public was invited to submit names over the Internet to be sent into space with the probe — 877,490 were collected and etched on an aluminum-foil wrapper around a grapefruit-sized marker that will be dropped onto the asteroid's surface.

School lunches high in fat, but improving

BY EMILY GERSEMA

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — School lunches are more healthful than a decade ago, but many schools still fall short of feeding children meals with the right amount of nutrients and not too much fat, congressional auditors said Friday.

"While most schools have reduced the average percent of calories from fat in school lunches, few have met the required goal for fat content," the General Accounting Office said in a report commissioned by Sens. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, and Richard Lugar, R-Ind.

No more than 30 percent of the total calories in lunches should come from fat, according to the Agriculture Department, which oversees the national school lunch program.

Of the 22 elementary and high schools reviewed nationwide, three-fourths were serving meals containing 34 percent fat, according to the

audit of lunches served during the 1998-99 school year.

Although the fat content remains high, it's an improvement over 1991-92 when school meals were 38 percent fat, said the GAO, the investigative arm of Congress.

Schools managed to lower cholesterol levels, though. Elementary school meals had 68 milligrams of cholesterol, a 19 percent drop from 1992 levels. High school meals had 75 milligrams, a 21 percent drop from 1992.

The school lunch program is under scrutiny by consumer advocates because of concerns about obesity. The government says 13 percent of children are overweight, and the problem is growing. Activists say the lunches share the blame for putting pounds on children, but the Agriculture Department defends the program, which feeds 27 million children every school day.

Many of the 22 schools reviewed said they have trouble limiting students'

access to junk food and soft drinks, partly because of financial woes.

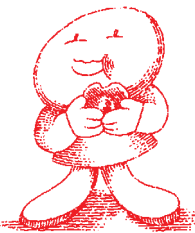
Some schools rely on revenue from school-based vending machines sales, the profits from which they split with manufacturers. School officials said "it is difficult to limit these sales because the funds are often used to pay for special activities or items not covered in the school budget," the audit said.

Auditors said they also found schools selling fattening foods like french fries and cookies.

With the school lunch program up for renewal in Congress, advocates seeking to reduce obesity are pushing for more oversight of foods sold outside of the lunch line.

Harkin said schools have made progress, "but the federal government has a responsibility to ensure that the investments we make in the school lunch program — some \$6 billion per year — are not compromised by the sales of less-nutritious food elsewhere on school grounds."

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