

FREE

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2004

Volume 3, Issue 155

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

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FANTASY 5

6, 18, 23, 32, 33

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 5, 0, 5

Evening picks: 5, 2, 3

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 10, Solid Gold

2nd Place: 06, Whirl Win

3rd Place: 07, Eureka

Race Time: 1:40.25



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

NOT MY FAULT:

■ In Cleveland in March, John Struna won his lawsuit against a convenience store owner who had sold him Ohio Lottery tickets, claiming that the man ought to have explained a Lottery rule to him (even though the rules are printed on every ticket). Struna had bought 52 tickets playing the same numbers in a game that pays \$100,000 per winning ticket, but somehow he never noticed that the payout would be capped at \$1 million, meaning that his 52 winning tickets would be worth only \$19,230 each. Despite being a heavy lottery player (spending \$125,000 a year), Struna said it was up to the store owner to explain that rule to him, and the jury agreed.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It is unpleasant to go alone, even to be drowned."

— Russian Proverb

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Illegal greens flourishing in Santa Monica



John Wood/Daily Press

A jogger passes the hedge in front of Bobby Shriver's house on Adelaide Drive. City Hall has demanded the hedge be cut or the Shrivvers could face up to \$500,000 in fines.

Governor's brother-in-law among residents told to clip their greens or pay hefty fines

(Editor's note: This is the first article in an ongoing series examining City Hall's hedge law.)

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

ADELAIDE DRIVE — There is something criminal going on here — the hedges are too tall.

Residents of this street lined with multi-million dollar homes overlooking Santa Monica Canyon and the Pacific Ocean recently were mailed notices demanding that they clip their greens or be fined \$25,000 a day, with a maximum penalty of \$500,000.

Among those targeted was 27-year local resident Bobby Shriver,

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's brother-in-law. Shriver's front hedges are about six inches over the 42-inch limit.

"The city, they say, doesn't have the money to hire teachers, but they apparently have money to hire a huge compliance staff. Why? There's got to be a reason," said Shriver, 50, an attorney who works in Beverly Hills. "It seems kind of like a waste of time."

Shriver and his neighbors — some with hedges towering 20 to 30 feet high — received notices late last month giving them 30 days to manicure their yards. Local law dictates hedges be kept at or below 42 inches in front of houses, and at or below eight feet in side yards and back yards.

Residents wonder why City Hall has decided to enforce the law now, especially on a street that regularly attracts walkers, joggers

See HEDGES, page 5



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

(Left to right) The surface lot off of Ocean Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard, and the lot at the corner of Second Street and Santa Monica Boulevard, could become the site of a new parking garage.

City Hall driving for more parking downtown

By Daily Press staff

SANTA MONICA BLVD. — More public parking in downtown Santa Monica might be on the horizon. City Hall is eyeing two properties here that could be turned into parking garages.

City officials and elected leaders tonight are expected to discuss possible negotiations to buy two pieces of land — one at 101 Santa Monica Blvd. and the other at 129 Santa Monica Blvd. Both are currently surface parking lots.

The properties could be used for a variety of purposes, but city officials are leaning toward using them as public parking structures.

The City Council in 2002 adopted the Downtown Parking Plan, which calls for the replacement of three parking garages. While those structures are demolished and rebuilt to accommodate more parking spaces and to meet seismic standards, the city has to create interim and alternative parking facilities, according to city documents. While viewed as temporary, the garages on Santa Monica Boulevard could become permanent, officials said.

New park, new bus barn total \$752K

(Editor's note: This is part of an ongoing series that tracks the city's expenditures which appear on the upcoming Santa Monica City Council consent agenda. Consent agenda items are routinely passed by the City Council with little or no discussion from elected officials or the public. However, many of the items have been part of public discussion in the past.)

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Officials here are expected tonight to spend nearly three-quarters of a million dollars on pre-construction work for a new bus facility and a new park.

The big ticket item — \$650,000 — will be spent on pre-construction services to expand the Big Blue Bus campus between Sixth and Seventh streets, and Colorado Avenue and Olympic Boulevard. The expansion plan calls for an administration building with underground employee and visitor parking, which will be linked to a new maintenance facil-

ity. There also will be on-site parking to accommodate 235 buses.

The City Council in April approved the project in concept, which includes a natural gas fueling and bus wash facility; demolition of a building that offers free showers and lockers to homeless people; demolition of the old administration building at 612 Colorado Ave. and the construction of a new one; a new underground parking structure, a new bus maintenance facility and the demolition of the old maintenance building. A new homeless shower and locker facility will be built at the OPCC Access Center next door to the bus yard.

The entire project — which is expected to cost \$152 million paid for in transportation funds — will be done in phases over the next few years.

Another \$102,300 is expected to be spent to design Euclid Park, which will be between Colorado Avenue and Broadway. City Hall purchased the site on Euclid

See CONSENT, 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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Use the daylight hours and your charm to zero in on what you want. You have an unusually pleasant manner that draws others to your camp. Brainstorm; ideas will flourish in this atmosphere. Groups work for you. Tonight: Take some private time.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Use today for your highest good, be it professionally or personally. Your leadership characteristics come out. You express a deeper understanding of someone in charge than he or she has of him- or herself. Tonight: A meeting proves to be lucky.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Do your research, and others will be taken by your abilities and knowledge. A meeting helps you get others on your team. Work as late as necessary. Be ready to make the needed choices. Your laughter helps others relax. Tonight: Work late.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ A partner clearly wants to chip in and help. Your concerns could be overwhelming. Share them with a partner you trust. You will feel that the load has become lightened. Detach as well. See other ways around the problem. Tonight: Relax your mind. Watch a movie, listen to music or hop on the computer.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Others seek you out, but understand that you are in the position where you might want to say little and listen a lot. You might not want to do this, but you will gain ultimately. Be gentle with someone at a distance. Tonight: Opt for togetherness.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Plunge into work with the full expectation of getting the job done. Still, a flirtation in the office or workplace could be a touch distracting. Do you really want to mix the two? Others seek you out later in the day. Tonight: So many options, so little time.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Ever playful, you might have difficulty settling in and listening to someone's issues. Try very hard to do just that, as this person needs your time and attention. Postpone work as long as you can. Ultimately, people are more important. Tonight: Now, dig into work.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Family comes first. Because of this, you might opt to bring your work home or finally make that decision about a home office. Your ability to find solutions emerges later today. Use this skill for yourself as well as for others. Tonight: You could become quite naughty.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Keep conversations going and don't drop the ball. Your imagination and openness to others help make (nearly) anything possible. You do need to take the initiative. Return calls. Schedule meetings. Tonight: Get some extra zzz's.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ You might want to think before you leap into action right now, especially if the matter involves home, real estate and/or daily life. Adding to the quality of your life might be just what the doctor ordered. Tonight: Price this item or talk it through with family.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ You have the right words to draw out someone who sometimes wants to hide away. Others pitch right in and add their support. Know that you are on a winning streak. Act accordingly. Others will respond accordingly as well. Tonight: Ask. Don't get shy now.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Hold your tongue and listen more. A money arrangement could work for you if you stop trying to put in your two cents. Besides, nothing is a go without your permission or your OK. You can afford to lie back and have others put their cards on the table. Tonight: Nap first, then decide.

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1427 Third Street Promenade, Ste. #202 • Santa Monica, CA 90401 • www.smdp.com

PUBLISHER Ross Furukawa ross@smdp.com EDITOR Carolyn Sackariason sack@smdp.com STAFF WRITER John Wood wood@smdp.com CHILD DEVELOPMENT COLUMNIST Margie Altman margiealtman@yahoo.com ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER Rob Plubeni rob@smdp.com ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Mitch Troy mitch@smdp.com	Georgia Chudoba georgia@smdp.com ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Rob Schwenker schwenker@smdp.com PRODUCTION MANAGER Alejandro C. Cantarero II alex@smdp.com PRODUCTION ARTIST Rick Reynolds rick@smdp.com ADMINISTRATIVE TRAFFIC MANAGER Heather Rich heather@smdp.com CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE Mitch Troy mitch@smdp.com	CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE Kitty Seeger kitty@smdp.com CIRCULATION MANAGER Mike Aviles mike@smdp.com CIRCULATION Keith Wyatt keith@smdp.com CIRCULATION Glenn Bolan glenn@smdp.com SPECIAL PROJECTS Dave Danforth dave@smdp.com MASCOT Maya Furukawa maya@smdp.com
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LOCAL



Samohi sports teams have their sights set on next year

Local Sports



THE HOT CORNER

By Jonathan Lee

In the upcoming 2004-2005 season, Santa Monica High School sports teams that are not already in the Ocean League will realign to it, facing opponents like Beverly Hills, Culver City, Hawthorne, Inglewood, and Morningside.

Before moving to the Ocean League, the spring sports teams tried to enjoy their final seasons in their respective leagues and notch victories against opponents they might not meet in the near future.

With three wins in its last five games, the softball team is hoping to build upon the consistency it has shown throughout the season. Sophomore pitcher **Tyra Maxwell** is back from an injury and looking to regain her previous form. The girls have just two games left in their regular season schedule, hosting the Redondo Seahawks today at 3:15 p.m. and Hawthorne on May 13. In the only other match-up this season between Samohi and Redondo, the Seahawks won 2-3. However, with a home-field advantage and the support of a growing crowd, the girls are confident that they can finish the regular season strong and head into the playoffs.

High expectations and optimism surrounded the baseball team throughout the year. Although the Vikings have not done as well as they could have, considering the wealth of talent and depth at skill positions, they are still looking forward to playing the West Torrance Warriors at home today and at West Torrance on Thursday. The Warriors present a daunting task to the Vikings, who lost 0-6 to the Peninsula Cougars on May 5 and 4-9 on May 7. West Torrance won once and lost once against Peninsula, so it seems that the Vikings will have their hands full. Next season, senior pitchers **Anthony Arreola, Kyle Johnson, Tim Livingston, Danny Nova, and Brandon Schwartz** will be gone, but talented junior pitchers **Spencer Knox and Mike Walsh** are expected to claim their spots in the rotation.

The track and field team faced numerous challenges this year that included facing exceptionally talented opponents and injuries to critical athletes. In the final meet of the season against Mira Costa on April 29, the boys and girls lost 55-75 and 61-75, respectively. However, with many powerful performers returning next year, especially with juniors in the jumps and sprints, the Vikings are looking forward to facing their new Bay League competition.

(Jonathan Lee is a sports editor at The Samohi and enjoys being Homecoming Duke, writing, playing sports and hanging out with his homeboys and homegirls. He can be reached at jleebroadcast@yahoo.com)

A 'step up' on education

By Daily Press staff

Step Up on Second has announced the dates of its Community Education Lecture Series.

The schedule is as follows:

May 11 — "Understanding Mental Illness: All About Bipolar Disorder, Depression and Schizophrenia" by Dr. Michael DiPaolo.

May 18 — "Medications Update 2004: A Discussion About Medications for Mental Illness" by Dr. Alex Kopelowicz.

May 25 — "What is Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Why is it the State of the Art Treatment" by Dr. Alex Kopelowicz.

All lectures are free and will begin at 7

p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1220 Second St. Parking is available across the street in parking structure No. 2.

Reserve a space by calling (310) 394-6889, ext. 22, or by e-mailing iris@stepuponsecond.com.

DiPaolo is a clinical psychologist in private practice in West Los Angeles. He's the staff psychologist at Jump Street, a program operated by the Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center and is a consultant at UCLA.

Kopelowicz is the medical director of the San Fernando Mental Health Center. He's also associate professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine and a member of the Step Up board of directors.

surf report

Look for a very slow fading mix of SSW swell and NW wind swell. For the good summer breaks look for chest- to shoulder-high waves. For the winter spots, the wind swell will be good for waist- to chest-high waves. Overall, the spots that pick up the combo of swells will be best, although S winds again look to be a problem in the morning.

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	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	7:20	-1.1	6:09	2.7	NA	NA	2:28	3.3
SUNDAY	8:31	-0.8	7:40	3.0	12:35	5.6	4:03	3.5
MONDAY	9:45	-0.5	9:44	2.9	1:48	5.1	5:15	3.8
TUESDAY	10:52	-0.4	11:23	2.4	3:20	4.6	6:04	4.2
WEDNESDAY	11:48	-0.2	NA	NA	4:50	4.4	6:41	4.6
THURSDAY	12:31	1.7	12:33	0.1	6:05	4.3	7:12	5.0
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The QLine

The draft of the 2004-05 budget is nearly complete. It will be released to the public within days. The Santa Monica City Council will hold a series of workshops open to the public at the end of this month. And while the budget is pretty much set, it is an opportunity for residents to understand where and how their money is spent. The final budget must be adopted by July. So this week, Q-Line wants to know,

"If you had your way, where do you think the City Council should spend your money?"

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

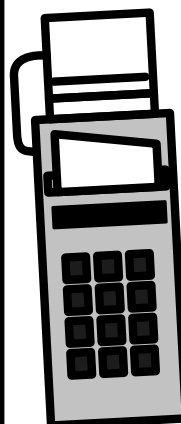
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OPINION

'Tree huggers' cloud Earth in search of greenbacks



DOSE OF REALITY

By Matthew Glasser

I stopped by the Santa Monica Festival two weeks ago. The official theme was protecting the environment. Which, in Santa Monica speak means "who can we blame for our problems?" Apparently, despite years of progress on environmental issues, the sky is still falling and we are all to blame for the sorry state of the environment.

It was quite endearing to see 6- and 7-year-olds carrying large banners, signs, and posters exclaiming that "UNOCAL has dirty hands" and "I pollute. I have dirty hands." With all of these large props to carry and transport to the festival, it's a good thing that the children's parents drove them to the park in their gas guzzling SUVs. They needed the cargo room to bring their "BMW has dirty hands" signs home after the fair.

My favorite part of the festival was visiting the booth hosted by an environmental research group called, Redefining Progress. The City of Santa Monica hired this group to determine that Santa Monica residents use more of the planet's resources than they should. Bad Santa Monicans.

At the festival, the group set up a booth to "educate" young people about the misuse, overuse, and improper use of environmental resources. Redefining Progress measures how people and cities use their resources by creating an "ecological footprint." Apparently ours is bigger than that

of the legendary Big Foots. According to this group, the average Santa Monican uses 20.5 acres of the earth's resources. Redefining Progress says we are supposed to be using only 4.5 acres.

To illustrate its point, the group set up a computer at the festival so kids could determine their exact footprint. It seems that all of our footprints are larger than what the group feels is acceptable. I found it amusing to see the group's representatives try to explain what "unsustainable" means to children. I know some adults who don't know what that word means.

Here's my problem with groups like Redefining Progress. Despite years of success in improving the quality of our environment, these organizations consistently claim that we are on the verge of ecological Armageddon. Do we still have work to do when it comes to the improving the environment? Absolutely. But we have made great strides over the last three decades and we should celebrate our successes as well as our failures.

For example:

■ Environmental activists love to complain about our air quality. But according to data from the Environmental Protection Agency, air quality, while far from perfect, has actually improved significantly over the last 20 years. Those gas guzzling SUVs may use a lot of gas but they give off significantly lower emissions than the cars and trucks of previous generations. And thanks to new and improved technology — a factor not considered in the long-term calculations pontificated by groups like Redefining Progress — emissions from factories and industries also has been reduced.

■ Environmental groups spend a lot of

time arguing that we are in danger of running out of forested land. But according to environmental researchers Michael Sanera and Jane Shaw, authors of the book "Facts Not Fear: A Parent's Guide to Teaching Children about the Environment," "the United States is not in danger of running out of forested land. There is more wood grown in the U.S. than is cut each year, and the number of acres planted with trees goes up nearly every year."

■ How about all of those calls for increased water conservation? You would think we are in danger of running out of water any day now. But you would be wrong. The amount of water in our ecosystem will always be the same because water is constantly recycled through evaporation and precipitation. Michael Sanera and Jane Shaw explain that the Earth "has more than enough water to meet human demands ... (the problem is that) water is often found in the wrong place at the wrong time."

I could go on and on debunking environmental myths but I would run out of room.

So why do all of these environmental groups continue to cry wolf when it comes to environmental issues? It has as much to do with money as it does with saving the planet.

If you've ever received a fundraising solicitation from one of thousands of environmental organizations seeking your money, you would be led to believe that we are making zero progress in confronting our environmental problems. That's because these groups believe that they must maintain a permanent "it's the

end of the world as we know it" philosophy or risk a reduction in donations.

Sacramento Bee reporter Tom Knudson, in his investigative report entitled "Environment, Inc.," found that "salaries for environmental leaders have never been higher. In 1999 — the most recent year for which comparable figures are available — chief executives at nine of the nation's 10 largest environmental groups earned \$200,000 and up, and one topped \$300,000."

Knudson goes on to explain that "money is flowing to conservation in unprecedented amounts, reaching \$3.5 billion in 1999, up 94 percent from 1992. But much of it is not actually used to protect the environment. Instead, it is siphoned off to pay for bureaucratic overhead and fundraising, including expensive direct-mail and telemarketing consultants."

That's something to think about the next time an environmental group tells your 6-year-old that he or she is to blame for the world's problems. Rather than using scare tactics, can't we teach our children about our environmental successes as well as our shortcomings?

If all they hear is how poorly we are doing when it comes to improving the environment, they will be overwhelmed with feelings of hopelessness and the belief that nothing can be done to make the world better. At that point, there is a real risk of them saying "why bother?" And that would be the greatest threat to our environment.

(Matthew can be reached at media-matthew@yahoo.com).

Slow government is slowly killing Santa Monica



LEGAL VIEWS AND NEWS

By David Pizarra

In the book Fahrenheit 451, the protagonist is a fireman whose job it is to burn books. The science fiction story is a commentary on the damage done to society by an oppressive government — the annihilation of the human spirit caused by a government more concerned with staying in power than changing lives.

The bookstore Midnight Special has announced that it is closing permanently. This is yet another death that is directly attributable to local government. It would be unfair to say that the bureaucracy is the sole source of the destruction of yet another local business. But city officials certainly have their role in the mix.

The problems involved in moving a business are gigantic. The logistics of moving a retail store go far beyond finding a new location, calling the movers and opening up shop.

In a city as encrusted with rules and regulations as Santa Monica is, moving a business is just like opening a new one. And opening a new business in Santa Monica is a task of monumental proportions these days.

There are many reasons why a slow moving government is a killer to a business owner. In order to secure a new location, one will usually have to sign a lease. Landlords are curious creatures — they actually expect a tenant to pay rent, even if they are not yet allowed to operate a business.

It is the rare landlord who would allow a new tenant to move into a space, begin to make tenant improvements, such as bookshelves or a new kitchen, and not expect rent to be paid. A landlord might be willing to give a 30-day and possibly a 60-day hold on rent while construction is in process, but that is unlikely and very rare. For a business owner who is either starting anew or moving, this drain on his cash supplies before he has any income is frequently fatal. The longer this drain goes on, the more likely it is that the business will open in an undercapitalized manner, which effects how much inventory it can have on hand for sales. A store without any inventory is not likely to last long.

In a city like Santa Monica, where it can easily take a year to do anything, that is a long time to be paying rent on a space that you are not doing business in. This is why businesses like Joe Pipersky's donut shop eventually die. The city takes so long to issue their building permits that all the funds which would normally be used to buy marketing and advertising, carry inventory, and pay staff, end up going to the landlord for rent. That is not the landlord's fault, it is City Hall's.

To make this personal, let me share that

my partner and I just purchased a home in the Pico district. We are intending to add on to the back of the house and put on a second story. This is completely within the general makeup of the neighborhood. There are apartments, single family dwellings, and reportedly some condos being built on our street. This should be a simple process.

I had heard horror stories from people about building in Santa Monica, and trying to get permits, but I figured they were exaggerating, as everyone is likely to embellish a story a little. So I walked into City Hall, sat down with the building and safety person and asked what my likely timeline for a building permit would be. To say I was flabbergasted is an understatement. I was told that it will be about two months for their office to review the plans. Then, because we are zoned R-2, the plan has to go to the Architectural Review Board, which takes three months. If that wasn't enough, we then go to plan check for them to review the plans, which takes between two and three months.

So at the earliest, it is a six- to eight-month process and that is assuming that no one makes any changes that have to be reviewed by anyone else.

Here's the ironic part. City Hall delays the process so as to delay development and slow the growth of the city. A laudable aim. However, since the law of unintended consequences applies to all things, in this case, the only people who would be willing and able to afford and survive this

process, are people like my partner and me, who have no kids, don't want kids, and are a double income family. Or a real estate developer who would build condominiums on the lot — precisely the people that the city is trying to stop.

In their efforts to restrict growth, the City Council has created a system that is pricing out people of modest means, and is building a city that is going to be precisely the opposite of what it wants. I have no doubt that had we not bought this property, it would become condominiums. It is a prime target for that type of dense development.

Oppressive governments don't all look like Iraq, Cuba and the former Soviet Union. They can look like an open, free flowing, love everyone, anti-growth, group of do-gooders who don't understand basic economics. Like the impending war in Fahrenheit 451 that was ignored by the population until it was too late, this city is in trouble, big trouble.

Businesses are dying, refuse to open here, or are leaving for safer pastures. The good news is that the City Council probably has an outside contractor looking into the problem, and they should have some solutions for us, but not until after the next election.

(David Pizarra is a lawyer in the law firm of Pizarra & Grist. He can be reached at (310) 664-9969 or by e-mail at dpizarra@pizarra.com. He welcomes your comments and questions).

LOCAL

City Council to discuss local hedge law tonight

HEDGES, from page 1

and sightseers who enjoy its views and landscaping.

"We have historic trees, we have beautiful trees," said Alvin Sargent, an accomplished film writer and 20-year resident of Santa Monica. "Suddenly, out of the blue, comes this order to cut down these things to eight feet ... We don't know where it started and we'd like to find out."

"They're tall," Sargent, 77, added. "They protect us from the back alley. They give us privacy. They don't interfere with anybody or anything, that I know of."

Tim McCormick, head of City Hall's building department, said newly hired compliance officers have targeted about 200 residents throughout Santa Monica whose hedges are too high. The goal is to prompt residents into complying, McCormick said, adding actual fines may be far less than \$500,000.

"We have dedicated staff now to enforce provisions of the safety codes that are focusing on things like signs, outdoor merchandise, fences and hedge heights," he said. "Both City Council, planning and (the Architectural Review Board) have all expressed concerns about enforcing our zoning regulations and they have identified those areas ... We've been adding staff for, I think, the last three budgetary cycles."

McCormick said there are two reasons to control hedge height. Hedges can cause safety problems — especially at intersections where they can limit visibility — and they can make houses look like "armed fortresses," said McCormick, who added citations are driven by



John Wood/Daily Press

Gardener Gabriel Aluizo, 28, trims a hedge on Adelaide Drive. Hedges are supposed to be kept at or under 42 inches in front yards and eight feet in side yards and back yards.

complaints.

"We are willing to work with people, but they should understand that our job is to enforce these laws," he added. "If people have concerns about the content of the laws, they should talk to their council members."

Reacting to resident complaints about the law, City Councilmen Bob Holbrook and Herb Katz have put a special item on tonight's City Council agenda, asking staff to report on the codes regulating hedge heights. Holbrook said he thinks different areas of Santa Monica should have different restrictions.

Meanwhile, a handful of people working out on Adelaide Drive and the

stairs leading into Santa Monica Canyon said they think the hedges — and their owners — should be left alone.

"People want privacy — privacy and solitude," said Santa Monica resident Cara Basso, 28, a nutritionist. "I like (the hedges) because they're vegetation. It adds oxygen, greenery around us ... I say leave everyone alone. Let them do what they want, as long as they're not hurting anybody. Let them be."

"It's hard enough that we come up here and there's so many people bombarding around their homes."

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LOCAL

City to build new urban runoff facility in Mar Vista

CONSENT, from page 1

Street in 1999, which was previously known as the Los Angeles County Mental Health Center.

The existing Spanish-Colonial-Revival style building was renovated late last year as a combined housing and community meeting space project. The project includes 13 housing units for people with disabilities operated by United Cerebral Palsy and about 1,000 square feet of community rooms operated by the city. The adjacent 15,000-square-foot parking lot will be turned into the park.

There is currently \$909,399 available for the project — \$230,000 in community development block grant funds; \$155,899 in funds from a development agreement; and \$250,000 in city general funds. City Hall also is in the process of securing \$273,500 from Los Angeles County

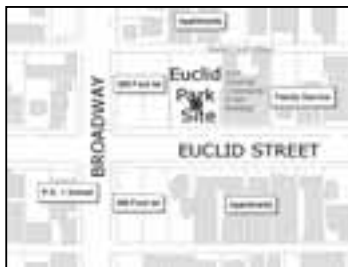
The City Council is expected to build a new urban runoff facility in Mar Vista to reduce pollution going into Santa Monica Bay.

Proposition A park grant funds.

In other consent agenda action:

■ The City Council is expected to build a new urban runoff facility in Mar Vista to reduce pollution going into Santa Monica Bay. Called the Centinela Basin Urban Runoff Mitigation Project, it will be funded entirely through grants from the state — totalling about \$1.8 million. The facility will treat storm water runoff, including dry weather flows, entering nearby Ballona Creek, which is the receiving body of water for the city's eastern border. The creek runs directly into the bay. Both areas have degraded water quality, which officials say reduces a variety of uses like swimming and fishing, and is why they are listed on a national list of impaired bodies of water.

The facility also will remove 80 percent of soluble pollutants, including oil and grease, and 100 percent of solid materials larger than 18 inches in diameter. The facility also is expected to treat up to three-quarters of an inch of storm water for the tributary area over 24 hours.



A map of the approximate location where the new Euclid Park will be built.



Photo courtesy

(Left) The Euclid Park site is adjacent to 13 new housing units operated by United Cerebral Palsy for people with disabilities. (Right) The housing and community room building has a central courtyard that the public will have access to when meeting rooms are booked. The unique character of the property provides design opportunities, officials said.

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STATE



Upcoming budget will test governor's mettle

BY TOM CHORNEAU
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — After a string of celebrated victories, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger faces his biggest challenge yet — the state budget and an estimated \$17 billion shortfall next year.

The popular Republican governor has drawn wide applause for gaining agreements with Democratic leaders who control both houses of the Legislature on a variety of issues from workers' compensation reform to approval of the nation's largest bond measure to pay off the state's deficit. But this week, the real work begins with the release of the governor's revised spending plan for next year.

"It's sufficiently clear that when he sets out to solve a problem and he focuses on it, he's been very successful," said Fred Silva, a senior adviser at the Public Policy Institute of California. "But the budget will be a lot tougher. There are so many components and interest groups. It's not like workers' compensation; this is a hundred times more complicated."

Still, given the governor's political standing and his growing skills as a negotiator, many lawmakers are optimistic they can reach a budget deal before the end of the fiscal year — something that has not been done since June 2000.

Democrats had only mild criticism for the governor's January \$99 billion budget draft, as they were relieved Schwarzenegger didn't seek deep cuts and instead relied heavily on borrowing and one-time solutions to close much of the spending gap.

Much has changed since the January draft was released, but most observers do not expect to see any major changes proposed by the administration — especially with respect to Schwarzenegger's promise not to raise taxes.

"I think he will do everything he can to avoid new taxes," said Assemblyman Herb Wesson, a Culver City Democrat and speaker until February. "I don't think he will go there unless he is forced to."

Wesson said Democrats are not necessarily drawing a line in the sand over new taxes but many are waiting to see how deep the governor's cuts go into public health, social services and higher education budgets.

There is a growing sense that Schwarzenegger's primary ambition is to get a budget deal done on time — viewed as critical for improving the state's bottom-rung standing on Wall Street and also to voters who considered late budgets a key issue in last year's recall campaign that ousted former Gov. Gray Davis.

In the past, partisan gridlock over tough budget choices has forced California lawmakers to miss the state's constitutional deadline of June 15 for adoption 17 years in a row — the last time it was done was in 1986. The Legislature has begun the new fiscal year without a plan in place nine times in the past 13 years — including last year.

But Schwarzenegger has already taken some steps to remove opponents and speed negotiations. He struck an agreement with the state's powerful education lobby in December, cutting his obligation to schools next year by \$2 billion. He is also close to a deal with cities and counties that will save him another \$1.3 billion this year and next year.

His staff says they are close to an agreement to bring in more tribal gambling profits. There have been talks with higher education representatives and even discussions about a broad tax amnesty plan that could generate hundreds of millions more next year.

With the passage of Proposition 57 in March — the \$15 billion bond measure — the governor has more than enough money to cover the state's existing deficit now estimated at \$8.6 billion and also help with next year.

The combination of spending cuts, borrowed money and a slowly improving economy means there might be more money and less of a fight in the Capitol this year over the budget.

"I think we get this budget done by June 30," said Assembly Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Bakersfield, noting that momentum from the recent agreement over workers' compensation reform "shows that we can work together and shows that this governor does not give up."

Still, some critics worry that efforts to expedite a budget deal may come at the expense of real spending reform.

"California here we come, right back where we started from," said state Treasurer Phil Angelides, a Democrat and possible rival of Schwarzenegger in 2006 who also criticized the borrowing and one-time budget solutions Davis proposed last year.

"We could be right back in July 2005 with the same size deficits that we had unless the governor proposes some real solutions," Angelides said. "That would be cuts to programs or new revenues. We should consider closing some tax loopholes. Anything that will allow the debt to shrink."

Angelides and other Democrats say they want tax increases considered along with the borrowing and the program cuts — but it is not clear yet how hard they will push.

Most expect the budget battle to be fought over public health and welfare spending — earmarked by Schwarzenegger in January for the bulk of the funding cuts.

The governor said he wants to cut about \$900 million from the state's \$11 billion share of Medi-Cal spending — a state and federal program that provides medical services to 6.8 million needy residents at a total cost of nearly \$30 billion. He has also planned to take a similar amount from state support of welfare programs administered by the counties.

The most controversial issue, however, will likely be Schwarzenegger's plans to overhaul the Medi-Cal program by shifting more of the cost of services to the patients. The governor has said he wants federal approval to cap enrollments in fast-growing public health programs — like Healthy Families, which provides subsidized insurance for the working poor. And Schwarzenegger wants to restrict care to patients who cannot pay their share of state service.

He argues that public health spending has increased more than 40 percent in the last five years and cannot be sustained. Some Democrats argue that medical services for the poor is necessary and would consider tax increases or imposing cuts elsewhere before accepting the big hits to health care.

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STATE BRIEFS

City bans plastic containers at events

By The Associated Press

SAN CLEMENTE — Foam cups and containers are now the target of beach cities pushing to reduce litter and improve water quality.

The city, the first in Orange County to ban beach smoking, spearheaded the drive to eliminate plastic foam containers from all city facilities and city-sponsored events. The ban also applies to restaurants and vendors who lease city-owned facilities.

"Styrofoam pieces and cigarette butts are a very significant part of the litter that we find on the beach, and neither is biodegradable in the natural environment," Councilwoman Stephanie Dorey said.

"Instead of decomposing and biodegrading, foam chokes the aquatic ecosystem and ultimately impacts humans who eat the food. This is a small step, but we think it can make a huge difference," Dorey said.

Laguna Hills, Huntington Beach and San Juan Capistrano have recently passed similar resolutions and Aliso Viejo, Laguna Beach, Irvine and Laguna Woods are considering resolutions.

Laguna Beach is considering an expansion of the movement with a ban on the use of plastic foam products in restaurants.

The campaign to ban plastic foam products began in March with Dorey and San Juan Capistrano civil engineer Ziad Mazboudi lobbying city officials to pass resolutions within weeks of Earth Day, April 22.

"Because of the tide and waves, Styrofoam just keeps breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces," Stephanie Barger of Earth Resources said. "It can take two kids days to clean up a 5-foot-by-5-foot area because you can't contain Styrofoam."

Gas prices continue to climb

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — U.S. gasoline prices rose by 10 cents per gallon in the past two weeks, the biggest jump since last August, an analyst said.

The nationwide average for all gasoline grades, including taxes, was slightly more than \$1.96 per gallon on Friday, according to the biweekly Lundberg Survey of 8,000 stations nationwide.

Tight gasoline supplies and rising demand were responsible for the increase, analyst Trilby Lundberg said.

The average price of gasoline has broken record highs for two months straight, although when adjusted for inflation, the average price remains about 90 cents a gallon lower compared to the peak gas price in March 1981, Lundberg said.

Crude oil prices reached a 13-year high of \$40 a barrel on Friday, the highest since Oct. 11, 1990, in the run-up to the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Prices for crude oil and gas are unlikely to decline anytime soon, Lundberg said.

Planning commissioner's residence in question

By The Associated Press

CARSON — City planning commissioner Lina Philipp allegedly lives in a Rancho Palos Verdes home blocks from the sea instead of the modest residence — a group home for kids — she lists as her primary residence.

Philipp, who was appointed by Mayor Jim Dear last month, said she sleeps at the Carson home where she serves as a caretaker for youths. She runs three group homes in Carson.

Planning commissioners are required to be Carson residents, but City Clerk Helen Kawagoe said residency isn't investigated. Philipp is registered to vote in Carson.

"She lives in Palos Verdes, no? That's what she told me," said Clemencia Ortega, who has known Philipp since she bought the house next door 15 years ago.

Neighbors next to her 2,011-square-foot Rancho Palos Verdes home said they often see Philipp. Her automobile is registered at the Rancho Palos Verdes address to earn cheaper insurance rates, Philipp said.

Philipp's husband lives in the couple's Rancho Mirage home.

City Attorney Bill Wynder said he is investigating a complaint against Philipp's resident status. Dave Demerjian, head of the District Attorney's Office Public Integrity Division, said his office isn't investigating Philipp.

Embattled priest dies

By The Associated Press

UPLAND — The Rev. Peter Covas died this past weekend, weeks after he was reinstated as a retired priest in good standing by the Diocese of San Bernardino because prosecutors said they weren't filing child sex charges against him.

Covas died Sunday morning at San Antonio Community Hospital, the diocese said in a statement. The cause of death wasn't disclosed. He was 73.

The priest was removed in April 2002 as pastor at St. Peter and St. Paul Church in Rancho Cucamonga when the abuse allegations surfaced. There are still civil lawsuits pending that claim he molested two boys nearly three decades ago.

Prosecutors completed a yearlong criminal investigation in April 2003 and announced they would not file charges against Covas and Bishop Gerald Barnes reinstated him as a retired priest.

"Bishop Barnes advises the faithful of the diocese that all civil and ecclesiastical inquiries have been concluded in the case involving Rev. Peter Covas," diocese vicar general Monsignor Gerard M. Lopez wrote in an April 16 memorandum.

As a retired priest, Covas was allowed to perform weddings, funerals and baptisms, and to help at Mass, diocese spokesman the Rev. Howard Lincoln said.

There was no immediate comment from attorney Anthony DeMarco, who represents the two men who filed suit against the diocese in December for the alleged molestations in the 1970s.

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NATIONAL



Officials ground aging arsenal of fire tankers

BY IRA DREYFUSS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Just as the 2004 wildfire season is opening, the government on Monday grounded an aging fleet of 33 former military tankers that had been among the biggest weapons in its arsenal for fighting the blazes.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Interior Department terminated contracts with private companies for use of the planes after the National Transportation Safety Board said their airworthiness could be not assured. Three such planes crashed between 1994 and 2002, killing seven crew members.

Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth said that, in the wake of the NTSB report, continuing to use the tankers posed "an unacceptable risk" to aviators, ground firefighters and communities near the blazes.

The fixed-wing planes, some of them

as old as 60 years, had been used primarily in initial attacks on fires and protecting buildings when fires were moving toward urban areas, said Dan Jiron, a spokesman for the Forest Service.

He said the government still has the use of 491 other aircraft, including smaller fixed-wing planes and helicopters. "It's serious, but we will be able to do our job," Jiron said.

The tankers were each capable of dumping from 1,700 to 2,500 gallons of water a minute.

The Forest Service grounded the fleet of tankers it had under contract after two crashes in 2002.

The planes were reactivated after a new inspection program was developed at the Energy Department's Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque, N.M., but the NTSB said last month that maintenance and inspection programs were still inadequate.

Wyo. surplus grows with higher gas prices

BY ROBERT W. BLACK
Associated Press Writer

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Higher oil and natural gas prices are continuing to fuel Wyoming's 21st century minerals boom, but Jewell Simons isn't exactly jumping for joy. The 78-year-old Casper resident knows exactly what those higher prices mean for her and her 82-year-old wheelchair-bound husband.

"That's going to make our bills higher," she said. "I don't like that."

In Wyoming, higher energy prices are always a double-edged sword. Any increase in prices for producers results in more state revenue from resource taxes, keeping down general taxes on state residents. But the flip side is higher utility bills.

To help offset anticipated strains on social services, the Department of Family Services asked lawmakers for \$6.3 million of the state's record \$1.22 billion surplus. The Legislature granted \$4.1 million, including \$750,000 to expand a program that helps struggling residents with utility bills.

"Costs are rising," said Jeff Dockter, manager of the Low Income Energy Assistance Program. "Medicaid costs, medical costs, prescription plans are rising and energy costs are rising. When you have an elderly or low-income family, those costs add up rather quickly."

In the face of continued high natural gas prices, Dockter anticipates more people applying.

"Definitely," he said. "At 150 percent of federal poverty guideline limits, it's very difficult for a family of four to live on that income."

Beginning Oct. 1, a family of four earning up to \$34,873, or 185 percent of the poverty level, will be eligible for assistance. The current threshold is \$28,275.

In Wyoming, natural gas prices have averaged \$5.04 per thousand cubic feet so far this year, compared to \$4.01 for the same period last year. Oil prices are also up, hovering around \$30 per barrel.

Prices for natural gas — which is used by

an increasing number of power plants across the country — could slip somewhat this summer but probably not dramatically, according to Rod De Bruin, oil and gas geologist for the Wyoming Geological Survey.

"We finished the heating season with storage a little bit higher than last year, so prices could moderate a little more in the summer than they did last year," he said.

The amount of natural gas burned nationwide to generate power rose 56 percent from 1993 to 2002, outstripping the growth of coal and oil in power production, according to the Energy Department. Long-term projections are for even higher demand, so prices should generally stay higher, De Bruin said.

"If you're looking at the U.S. overall, you're to the point where you don't have a lot of excess supply, and the Canadian supplies are not there like they used to be," he said.

For consumers, that will mean more sticker shock.

Wyoming, with no personal or corporate taxes and relatively low property taxes, depends heavily on mining and drilling revenue. So far this decade, the state has been rolling in dough, and drilling activity continues at a robust pace. Sixty rigs were exploring for oil and gas last week, compared to 45 a year ago, according to oilfield supplier Baker Hughes.

The minerals revenue led to the huge surplus, and lawmakers were generous, fattening the two-year state budget by 23.5 percent. Much of that went to a backlog of maintenance and construction needs, but \$484 million was spent on schools, prisons and state buildings, while \$253 million was socked away in savings and permanent investments.

"We've spent some money on school capital construction and other one-time things that we aren't necessarily going to have to spend again, but we're also adding a lot of money to operations, so that's what you've got to watch," said Steve Sommers, staff budget manager for the Legislature.

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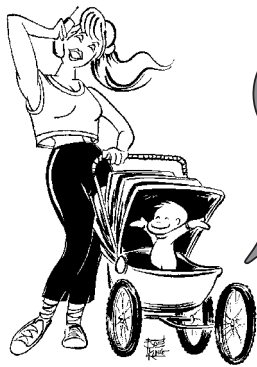
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Santa Monica

A weekly look at events and programs for

Want more peace at home? Connect before logistics

Guest Commentary

By Vickie Falcone

The logistics of parenting and modern living can feel overwhelming. As managers of the morning, meal time and bed time routines, not to mention homework, play dates, soccer practice, and more, we are busy.

One way to greatly ease the stress of daily mechanics is to practice connecting before logistics. Morning is

often the most intense part of our day. There is usually a long list of "to dos" to make it out the door on time: Pack lunch, get dressed, eat breakfast, put coats on, etc. In my own home, I began to notice that many days the kids left for school on a tense note, which left me feeling stressed and disconnected.

I asked myself the all-important question: What can I do to create more peace in the morning? The answer was to connect first. As a result, my morning practice now is to connect with my children before I utter one word about logistics. I walk into my child's room, give them a hug and a kiss, make loving eye contact, and say, "good morning." This takes all of 10 seconds, yet sets an incredibly loving and connected tone for the morning. Only after I have connected to each

child do I talk logistics like, "time to eat breakfast ... pack your homework ... brush your teeth." When I practice connecting before logistics, mornings run exceptionally well. My children are much more likely to cooperate, and I feel calmer and more connected all day long.

If you make a habit of putting logistics before connecting with your kids, it leads to disconnection. Even a small move towards connecting can offer big rewards.

A single mother of two boys, ages 9 and 11, attended one of my programs. She said she felt very disconnected and sad about the lack of communication with her boys. She claimed that the only communication in their home was related to logistics. "Did you do your homework? Where's your backpack? Dinner's ready." The boys, especially the older one, answered most questions with a single word. I encouraged her to try connecting before logistics. After finishing his homework, her older son usually retreated to his room to listen to music. She decided she would stop cleaning the kitchen and join him instead.

The next week she reported her experience. "I went into his room and just sat on the bed. He didn't quite know what to do at first, but I asked a few questions about his music and he started talking."

"What happened next?" I asked.

Choked with tears now, she said, "Every time I got up to leave the room, he said, 'don't go yet.' So I stayed in his room until 10:45 on a school night."

Often, all we have to do is move toward our children with an open attitude, a desire to connect and no agenda. As often as possible throughout the day, stop what you're doing and follow your child's lead. If she's got something special to share with you, or he's fussing for no specific reason, let go of the logistics and connect. That's when miracles happen.

(Vickie Falcone works with parents to help them create more peace at home. She speaks nationally and is the author of "Buddha Never Raised Kids and Jesus Didn't Drive Carpool: Seven Principles for Parenting with Soul" (Jodere, 2003). For more information, visit www.ParentingWithSoul.com).



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hnic Monica Mom

or Santa Monica mothers and mothers to be

CALENDAR OF MOMMY EVENTS:

SPECIAL EVENTS

The YMCA is also currently accepting reservations for the following programs: Memorial Day Family Camp at Big Bear Lake - May 29-31
Summer Keyboarding Kamp - ages 7-11. A one-week program, 4 sessions offered. These YMCA programs are available to members and non-members. Contact Audrey Meyer, program director, at 393-2721, ext. 107 for more info.
 MAY 20th - Registration begins for the summer youth programs, including Parent/Me Gym and Swim, Toddler Time and more.

The YMCA is currently accepting registration for a variety of summer programs for women and children including Mommy and Me Pilates, dance, crafts, tumbling and more. Pick up a brochure for more info. 2019 14th St, 452-3881

SATURDAY, MAY 15 - SPRING FAIR at ST. AIDAN SCHOOL, MALIBU 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Pony rides, face painting, reptile touch-and-feel and more! \$25-\$35, 28211 Pacific Coast Highway,

310-457-8899.

SATURDAYS and SUNDAYS, MAY 8 - MAY 24, 11:00 a.m. RAINBOW FACTORY in THE GOLDLOCKS CASE - presented by the Santa Monica Theatre Guild. A play by Jake Eberle, directed by William Wilday. At the Morgan-Wixson Theatre, 2627 Pico Blvd., 828-7519, \$7.

SESAME STREET LIVE - OUT of this WORLD (sesamestreetlive.com) Kodak Theatre - Hollywood - May 14 - 16, group discounts call 866-LA-GROUP Long Beach Terrace Theatre - May 20-23, group discounts call 909-988-9859 Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza - May 27 - 30, group discounts call 805-522-8010 Tickets went on sale March 29th, available thru Ticketmaster - 213-480-3232

SUMMER COMMUNITY CLASSES offered by the City of Santa Monica The city provides children of all ages with a variety of recreation enrichment activities including camps, sports, dancing, crafts and yoga. For details pick-up a brochure at Joslyn or Reed Park, or call 452-2239.

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms sponsored by: "New York Minute" showing May 11, 11:00 a.m., Loews Broadway, 1441 3rd St. Promenade - for Moms and babies newborn-1 year olds. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. www.reelmomsonurbanbaby.com Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen star as twins who spend a wild day on the streets of Manhattan. Also stars Eugene Levy. Comedy, rated PG.

Storytelling

Main Library Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 & 10:30 a.m. Stories for two year olds with adult.
Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.
Cuentos Para Pequenos - 10:00 a.m., April 27 - June 1. Six-week series in Spanish for 24 - 36 month olds with adult.
Lap Time - 11:00 a.m., April 27 - June 1. Six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant and Family Support Programs.
Twilight Story Time - 7pm - an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.
Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081.
Family Story Time - 7:00 p.m., all ages.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804.
Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30, April 13 - May 18. Music, rhymes and stories for 24-36 month olds with adult.
Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Stonypolis

Themes change weekly; for ages infant to 3. 11:00 a.m. 116 North Robertson, Plaza A, LA. 310-358-2500, www.storyopolis.com
Barnes and Noble at the Grove Storytime for ages 2 - 6. 10:00 a.m. 189 Grove Drive, LA, 323-525-0270

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info.

Itsy-Bitsy Yoga at Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Ave. **Tots (crawling to 24 months)** - 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.; Babies (6 wks. to pre-crawling) - 11:30 - 12:30 a.m. Ongoing 6-week series; \$120. Pre-register at 458-8190; visit www.khefri.net for more info or contact khefri@earthlink.net.

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; Pre-natal yoga - 7 - 8:15 p.m.

Yoga Works - 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m.; Postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me - 1:45 - 3:00 p.m.

Yoga Works - 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m.; Postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me - 1:45 - 3:00 p.m.

Yoga Works - 1170 Santa Monica Blvd., at the Dance Factory, West LA, 310-394-6711. Pregnancy Exercise - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise - 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Breastfeeding Group The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Storytelling

The Walking Stick Coffee Lounge - 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., 450-6052 10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4 at this neighborhood coffee shop.

Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.

Preschool Story Time - 10:30 a.m., April 28 - June 2; six-week series for 3-5 year olds with adult.

Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081.

Lap Time - 10:00 & 10:30 a.m., April 14 - May 19; for children ages 0-2.

Toddler Story Time - 11:15 a.m., April 14 - May 19; for 2 year olds.

Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 392-3804.

Preschool Twilight Story Time - 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Parents/children ages 3-5.

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion - 2 pm - ages 2-5 - 310-475-4144

Border's, Westwood - 11am - 310-475-3444.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; (infants only) - 1 - 2 p.m. Prenatal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45pm, \$15

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 5:30 - 6:45 p.m.

Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Breastfeeding Group The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter.

Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Other **Puppetolio** - 1:00 p.m., 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St, ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

THURSDAY

Storytelling

Babystyle, 1324 Montana Avenue, 434-9590

10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4.

Main Library - Reed Park Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 a.m.; for 2 year olds.

Preschool Story Time at Reed Park; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.

Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.

Toddler Story Time - 10:30 a.m.; April 29 - June 3; for ages 2-3.

La Hora Del Cuento - 7:00 p.m. Spanish stories, songs and rhymes for all ages.

Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081.

Toddler Story Time - 10:15 a.m., April 15 - May 20; for 2 year olds.

Preschool Story Time - 11:15 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds.

Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804.

Lap Time - 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., May 6 - June 10. 6-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant and Family Support Program.

Yoga & Exercise Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info.

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FRIDAY

La Leche League of LA/Mar Vista - meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Call 310-390-2529 for info. (next meeting May 14)

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works - 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m., \$15.

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Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Prenatal Breath and Movement - a Continuum Movement and Yoga-based program designed to support women through various sound and movement explorations that celebrate pregnancy and labor as powerful rites of passage. 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

With Deborah Raoult at the Continuum Studio, 1628 18th St. #7. For more info call 625-3739, www.openskymovement.com. \$108 for a six-week session.

Yoga & Exercise Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info.

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Yoga &



NATIONAL

Truck trip toward salvation turns for the worst

(Editor's note: A deadly tractor-trailer run from El Paso, Texas, to Dallas reveals the desperation and greed fueling the booming business of smuggling human beings — and the police work involved in trying to stop the increasingly sophisticated smuggling rings. This is part one of a three-part serial narrative).

BY PAULINE ARRILLAGA
AP National Writer

CHAPARRAL, N.M. — The 18-wheeler pulled off the desert highway and rumbled down a pockmarked clay road, its headlights raking a desolate hamlet of doublewides.

The big rig, making an unscheduled detour at the start of a midnight run from El Paso to Dallas, slowed as it approached a dingy mobile home. Then the headlights snapped off.

Moving as stealthily as a tractor-trailer can, it turned through a gap in a chain-link fence, backed up and stopped at the mobile home's back door.

Jason Sprague climbed down from the cab into the balmy night air and swung open the trailer's heavy cargo doors. Then he headed inside for his money.

That's when he saw them. Under a faint ceiling lamp, dozens of ragged people waited silently in two lines stretching between the kitchen and the living room, men on one side, women and little ones on the other. Some clasped small bags; others had only the clothes on their backs.

Avoiding their glances, Sprague hurried past and stepped into the bathroom where a woman was waiting. She handed him a bulging envelope. Inside was \$3,000 in cash.

"You'll get the rest when it's completed," she told him.

Sprague walked back to the cab and settled into the driver's seat as the woman and her partner loaded the human cargo.

He had been told there would be 32 of them — illegal immigrants who had made it across the Rio Grande to this drop house 20 miles outside El Paso. Now they had to be smuggled past an internal Border

For days, he'd hidden inside the crowded mobile home, where two members of the smuggling ring gouged migrants \$5 for three packages of ramen noodles, \$10 for a six-pack of beer.

Patrol highway checkpoint and dropped off at a truck stop in Dallas.

As they clambered into the freight compartment, Sprague felt the rig rock. He wasn't counting, but the rocking went on and on. How many people were they stuffing back there?

"Uno por uno," the loaders hissed. One by one. Walk fast.

In the line, inching forward, Luciano Alcocer smiled to himself, grateful to be moving again.

Eight days earlier, the carpenter from Mexico City had kissed his wife and daughters goodbye. Don't cry, he told his children as their eyes filled; this could be our salvation.

The companies that once bought the tables and desks Alcocer built had shut down. But there was work to be had in the United States. A relative already in the States made the arrangements, sending about \$1,500 to the smugglers. He gave Alcocer a number to call once he reached the Mexican border town of Ciudad Juarez.

Alcocer followed the instructions. He met a guide who led him through chest-high water across the Rio Grande. In El Paso, a car picked him up.

For days, he'd hidden inside the crowded mobile home, where two members of the smuggling ring gouged migrants \$5 for three packages of ramen noodles, \$10 for a six-pack of beer.

Now, half-past midnight on July 27, 2002, the slight, 5-foot-3, 41-year-old, carrying only his hopes and a couple of T-shirts, climbed a stepladder propped against the truck's open freight compartment.

Two of the others, Pioquinto Cabrera and Guillermo Gallo, grabbed his arms

and hauled him inside. It was dark in there, and cramped.

The 53-foot-long aluminum-walled trailer, lined with plywood, was packed almost to the roof with cardboard boxes of medical supplies manufactured in Mexico and bound for Wisconsin.

Alcocer crawled three-quarters of the way in, settling atop a box on the driver's side. Stretching his legs out in front of him, he reached up and touched the ceiling.

Others silently climbed inside — about 40 people in all. Another seven or so, all women and children, piled into the sleeping compartment behind the cab.

Inside the dark trailer, Alcocer watched the shadowy outlines of the passengers filing in.

There was Jose Gaston Ramirez, a 59-year-old shoemaker from Cuernavaca, looking very American in a red Calvin Klein T-shirt. He was bound for Chicago to reunite with his daughter.

Edson Rojas, a tall, skinny 16-year-old from Mexico City eager to join his father in Kansas, climbed up and claimed a spot. Like several others, he'd paid extra to ride in the sleeping compartment but was herded into the back anyway.

A few complained. The smugglers told them to go back to Mexico if they didn't like it.

Cabrera and Gallo were the last to scramble onto the boxes. The 28-year-old Cabrera was traveling from Veracruz to Kentucky to work the cattle farms. Gallo, 32, was on his way from Mexico City to New York for a restaurant job.

"Silencio!" the loaders ordered. Especially at the Border Patrol check-

point, everyone must be silent.

With that, the heavy doors closed and everything went black.

Alcocer thought he heard a lock click. It was as if the doors were closing on an old life of despair. Later, he would invoke a different metaphor: Las puertas a la muerte.

The doors to death.

The engine roared to life and the truck began to roll.

It was the beginning of an American journey that thousands of illegal immigrants make. But this one would end almost a year and a half later — in a federal courtroom.

A ROUGH ROAD

It was nearly 4 a.m. when Sprague picked up his co-driver, Troy Dock, in El Paso. Dock had made smuggling runs before, but this was Sprague's first, and he was jittery. With Dallas still at least 10 hours away, he wondered if they should call the whole thing off.

But there was money to be made — another \$1,200 after the migrants were dropped at the truck stop.

Dock drove on; Sprague dozed.

Dock, 30, was short and stocky with the face of a choirboy. Sprague, 27, was built like the high school quarterback he once was, with a goatee and a tattoo of his name on his arm.

"Tweedledee and tweedledum," an acquaintance called them — a couple of bumbling good ol' boys. They'd just been hired as a driving team for Boyd Logistics Inc. of El Paso when Dock's contact in Ciudad Juarez, Pat Valdes, called to say he had a load that was ready to move.

Now, as they rolled down Interstate 10, Dock's cell phone kept ringing. It was Valdes, checking their progress, asking if they'd made it through the checkpoint yet.

Dock promised to touch base when they were safely through.

Ninety minutes east of El Paso, they drew near the Border Patrol checkpoint at

See SMUGGLING, page 13

Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy

The Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy is seeking donations. Situated in a courtyard garden visible to the community, the fountain will be a respite for those seeking faith, peace and hope amongst the challenges of the world.

The fountain is a tribute to the love and joy that graced Kristi's life and the community which gave so generously during the search for Kristi prior to finding her body in the Hollywood hills.

Donations to the Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy may be sent to:

St. Augustine By-The-Sea Episcopal Church 1227 Fourth Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401
Re: Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy



NATIONAL



Searching for a better life can be a deadly prospect

SMUGGLING, from page 12

Sierra Blanca, one of a network intended to intercept illegal immigrants and drugs moving north from the border.

In the blackness of the freight compartment, the illegals passed the time talking in hushed voices, always in Spanish. Alcocer listened politely as an Argentine barber boasted of plans to ply his trade in Los Angeles.

"Tengo sed," someone said. I'm thirsty. One of the men used the illuminated dial of his wristwatch to locate a water jug.

Sometime before sunrise, Alcocer felt the truck slow. The checkpoint, he figured. Everyone fell silent.

But a thought was nagging him: The smugglers had promised the trailer would be air-conditioned, but it was stuffy. Was any air getting in?

Outside, bright lights bathed the highway. Dock pulled the rig behind a line of trucks moving slowly past the checkpoint.

The checkpoint routine was like Russian roulette. Some trucks were stopped and searched, others waved through. Dock was pushing his luck; twice before he'd made it through with loads of illegals.

His stomach knotted. But even before he came to a complete stop, the agent waved him on by.

Dock let out a breath; Sprague dozed on.

A half-hour down the road, Dock pulled into a truck stop to get a drink. Using hand signals because he spoke little Spanish, he asked those in the sleeping compartment if they wanted anything. They declined. He didn't open the trailer to ask the others because he was afraid someone might see them. Besides, Valdes' orders were to keep the doors shut.

The sun was coming up as Dock swung back on the interstate. It was still 7 1/2 hours to Dallas.

Inside the freight compartment, Alcocer licked a finger and held it up to see if he could feel any air moving. Nothing.

The temperature inside the freight compartment kept climbing. Later, police would estimate it reached 150 degrees.

Slivers of morning light squeezed through the seals of the trailer doors. The temperature outside was rising, headed toward 95 degrees.

Rojas, the 16-year-old, stripped off his shirt. Alcocer did the same.

He grew very thirsty, but there was no water left in the jugs. They were urinals now.

"No hay aire," a woman said softly. There's no air.

The word spread quickly. No hay aire, other travelers murmured. No hay aire!

Suddenly a young man vomited.

Some of the migrants began moving toward the doors, praying that a little oxygen was leaking through.

Alcocer heard ripping. Others were pulling flaps from the packing boxes and using them to fan themselves. Alcocer snatched off a piece and waved it furiously. The effort exhausted him.

Digging through the boxes, someone pulled out some plastic tubes and passed them forward. Those at the rear tugged away the gummy seals around the trailer doors in search of an airway, then forced one end of a tube through the crevice and tried to breathe through the other.

Nothing.

Gallo, the strapping man who had helped Alcocer aboard, began tearing at the plywood on the trailer walls, slicing his fingers. Alcocer tried to help, pounding the wood with his elbows. They managed to break off a few pieces, only to expose the trailer's aluminum walls.

"How do we make a hole?" someone

said.

The barber, Alcocer thought. He must have scissors!

"No, my friend," the barber said. His kit was too expensive.

Suddenly, all eyes were on him in the dim light.

"Give them to me," Alcocer demanded, his voice harsh.

Gallo grabbed the scissors. He stabbed the aluminum walls again and again, gouging a couple of small holes before the scissors bent uselessly.

They tried everything. Nothing worked.

The temperature inside the freight compartment kept climbing. Later, police would estimate it reached 150 degrees.

"I'm thirsty," Alcocer cried out.

Someone passed him a jug. He knew what was in it, but what choice did he have? He drank.

Up in the cab, the roar of the engine drowned out the noise from the cargo hold. Sprague and Dock drove on, oblivious. Cruising through the blazing prairie outside Odessa, they popped a Garth Brooks recording into the tape player and switched on the cab's air conditioner.

Back in the trailer, their passengers were swinging their arms wildly — pounding the walls, the doors, the ceiling. The sound was booming, but in Alcocer's oxygen-deprived state, it seemed oddly muffled.

They shouted: Open up! Open up!

Hyperventilating, a teenage girl

crawled toward the doors and screamed,

"Call 911! Call anybody!"

In the gloom, Alcocer watched Jose Gaston Ramirez lie down on the boxes. Back in the mobile home, he had snored when he slept, but he wasn't making a sound now.

Pioquinto Cabrera crawled by, clutching a jug of urine. Alcocer asked for another drink. No, Cabrera said. It's for one of the ladies.

Another traveler peeled off his shirt, put it in his mouth and tried to suck out the sweat.

Soon, the hallucinations started. A helicopter is flying overhead! someone shouted. The police are following! cried another. I have a gun; I'm going to shoot out the tires! another yelled. But none of it was so.

No quiero morir, someone whimpered. I don't want to die.

Alcocer whispered a prayer. "I'm in your hands, God. Take care of my family."

Then his head lolled back, and he closed his eyes.

(Editor's note: The scenes inside the truck cab are based on jailhouse interviews with Troy Dock and Jason Sprague, on transcripts and videos of their police interrogations, and on court testimony of migrants who rode in the sleeping compartment. The description of the loading is from interviews with Sprague and migrant Luciano Alcocer, and on the testimony of other migrants. The movements of the truck come from the drivers and from the vehicle's Global Positioning System, obtained from court records. The scenes inside the trailer are from interviews with migrants including Alcocer and Guillermo Gallo, and from the testimony of 10 other migrants. The migrants' backgrounds come from interviews with them and investigators, and from medical records, death certificates and court testimony. The direct quotes appear as they are remembered by those who spoke or heard them.)

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DID YOU KNOW?: Sylvia Plath's husband, Ted Hughes, was married three times, and two of the women he married committed suicide.



NATIONAL

President praises Rumsfeld in meeting at Pentagon

BY DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Bush issued a strong endorsement of embattled Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld on Monday, telling him, "You are doing a superb job."

The president was shown a "representative sample" of photos, depicting scenes of U.S. troops abusing Iraqi prisoners, that a senior defense official described as disturbing; the photos are among those not yet seen by the public.

The photos showed humiliation of prisoners and "improper behavior of a sexual nature," the official said.

On Capitol Hill, meanwhile, senators scheduled another hearing on the prisoner abuse issue that has prompted calls for Rumsfeld's resignation. Witnesses at the Tuesday hearing include Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, author of the report that found numerous "sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses" at the prison near Baghdad.

Bush's comments at the Pentagon appeared designed to head off rising speculation that Rumsfeld would resign as both men braced for the anticipated release of more pictures and video images.

The Pentagon agreed to send as-yet unreleased photos and at least one videotape to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday. Senators had not determined when or under what circumstances they would be viewed by lawmakers.

Larry DiRita, spokesman for Rumsfeld,

told reporters that the Pentagon was in discussion with the committee staff on arrangements for showing the additional photos and video "in a restricted environment."

The president acknowledged that images of Iraqi prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad had damaged America's image abroad.

"Those responsible for these abuses have caused harm that goes well beyond the walls of a prison. It has given some an excuse to question our cause and to cast doubt on our motives," Bush said.

The president emphasized that the controversy over Iraqi prisoners came while "our troops continue to face serious danger. And this government is giving them every means of protecting themselves and every means necessary to gain victory."

Bush urged Congress to approve a \$25 billion contingency reserve fund that can be used for ongoing operations in Iraq.

He said his administration would stick to its vow to turn over sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government on June 30 despite the recent rise in violence against coalition forces and civilians. "Men and women across the Middle East are watching closely. And they will see America keep its word," the president said.

With Rumsfeld at his side, Bush said his Cabinet officer was "courageously leading our nation in our war against terror... You are a strong secretary of defense and our nation owes you a debt of gratitude."

Facing indications of waning public confidence in his senior military ranks and declining credibility abroad, Bush went to

the Defense Department for what officials said was a previously scheduled briefing.

The session took on new significance because of the torture and sexual humiliation of prisoners.

Bush spoke to reporters in the executive dining room, just outside Rumsfeld's office, but declined to respond to a question of whether more images should be released.

Blinking into the cameras, Rumsfeld stood ramrod straight to Bush's left with his hands clasped behind his back. Vice President Dick Cheney, who had over the weekend called Rumsfeld the best secretary of defense ever, also was there.

Apart from those standing next to Bush and a handful of top White House aides, there was no other audience for Bush's remarks besides journalists.

Also attending the war council session were Secretary of State Colin Powell; CIA Director George Tenet; Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs; and Gen. John Abizaid, top commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East.

Twice, Bush ignored reporters' questions about whether the rest of the images of the prisoners should be released. Before climbing into the presidential limousine, he waved off reporters and gave Rumsfeld a hearty handshake and a pat on the back.

Earlier Monday, White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Bush has been briefed about undisclosed photos that Rumsfeld said depict acts "that can only be described as blatantly sadistic,

cruel and inhuman."

Bush is "very well aware of what's in those images," McClellan said. The Pentagon was weighing whether the pictures should be released.

Bush pledged that those who abused prisoners would be brought to justice.

"We will honor rule of law," he said.

Bush said that "all prison operations in Iraq will be thoroughly reviewed to make certain that such offenses are not repeated."

A Gannett Co. Inc. newspaper that reports on the U.S. military said in an editorial that responsibility for the scandal lies at the highest levels of the Pentagon, including Rumsfeld and Myers. Both men are guilty of "professional negligence," the Army Times editorial said.

"This was not just a failure of leadership at the local commander level," the editorial said. "This was a failure that ran straight to the top. Accountability here is essential — even if that means relieving top leaders from duty in a time of war."

In his Pentagon remarks, Bush said there will be a full accounting for the "cruel and disgraceful abuse of Iraqi detainees," calling it "an insult to the Iraqi people and ... an affront to the most basic standards of morality and decency."

Actions in the prison does not reflect the "character" of the more than 200,000 military personnel who have served in Iraq, he said.

Bush said Marines are maintaining pressure on Saddam Hussein loyalists, foreign fighters and other militants in the volatile city of Fallujah near Baghdad.

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WORLD BRIEFLY

Companies obtain mining rights

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Companies in Canada and seven other foreign countries have obtained hardrock mining rights on one-fifth of all current and former public lands in the United States, an environmental group's analysis said Monday.

Some 28,000 companies and individuals paid less than \$5 an acre to patent land with precious metals and minerals under terms of the 1872 Mining Law, the Environmental Working Group said, citing figures from the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management.

Those claims account for 5.6 million acres of public lands, the group reported on a Web site in a study titled "Who Owns the West?"

But, it said, just 94 companies — 82 from Canada, three each from Australia and Britain, two from Mexico and one each from Barbados, Germany, Japan and Russia — control those rights on 1.2 million acres.

The site provides public access to federal information on hardrock minerals such as gold, silver and copper, and is organized by state and county.

An analyst for the group, Dusty Horwitt, said the aim was to highlight the need to change the 132-year-old law. Environmentalists have long criticized the act, saying it gives public resources to private companies for a small fraction of their real value.

China's infants dying from formula

By The Associated Press

BEIJING — Police have detained 47 people accused of making or selling fake infant formula that led to the deaths of dozens of children in an eastern Chinese city, the government said Monday.

The deaths prompted a national crackdown on safety violations in China's food and drug markets, where phony medicines and other products regularly cause deaths and injuries.

State media say 50 to 60 children, mostly from poor farm families, died of malnutrition in the city of Fuyang after being fed the formula, which contained only tiny amounts of nutrients.

Among those detained, 24 have been formally arrested, according to a statement by the Fuyang city government. In China's legal system, nearly all suspects who are arrested are later convicted.

The detentions were announced at a public ceremony Sunday where authorities destroyed 4,425 seized boxes of counterfeit formula, according to the statement.

A marriage proposal and a million bucks

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Not a bad night for "Survivor" contestant Amber Brkich: an engagement ring and a \$1 million prize.

And all on national television. The conclusion to "Survivor All-Stars" felt more like "The Bachelor" when one of the two final contestants, "Boston Rob" Mariano, pulled out a ring and proposed to Brkich.

Since she wore a shirt proclaiming, "I (heart) Rob," the answer wasn't in much doubt.

Then she won bragging rights for the rest of their lives. When host Jeff Probst counted the votes before a live audience in Madison Square Garden, Brkich, of Beaver, Pa., beat Mariano by a 4-3 vote.

"We didn't even care who was going to win," Brkich said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We knew we both had each other for the rest of our lives."

She revealed the two had talked about marriage in the months between the end of the game and Sunday's live vote-counting.

"But I had no idea he was going to do it in front of millions of people," she said.

It was a wild ending to the nation's most popular reality TV game.

College voucher plan in trouble

By The Associated Press

DENVER — Trouble is brewing for Colorado's first-in-the-nation college voucher plan.

State lawmakers say the \$2,400 voucher each student is expected to receive next fall will have to be cut to \$1,600 unless voters ease fiscal restraints embedded in the state Constitution or agree to use millions of dollars Colorado gets from the national settlement with the tobacco industry.

Without one of those steps, higher education and Medicaid will be on the chopping block when lawmakers have to cut an estimated \$254 million next year, said Rep. Brad Young.

The budget crisis threatens to overshadow the voucher program itself, which will give each high school graduate the annual stipend to use at any public college or university. Half-stipends can be used at three private schools: Regis University, the University of Denver and Colorado College.

The National Conference of State Legislatures said no other state has attempted a voucher program on such a scale.

Gov. Bill Owens championed the program and was expected to sign it into law Monday.

Kerry on the health care kick

By The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — John Kerry kicks off a four-day focus on health care by releasing a campaign staff study that argues health insurance premiums have risen more than \$2,700 per family over the last four years, four times the growth in income.

"It's not acceptable to do nothing while those premiums are rising four times faster than workers' earnings," the Democratic presidential candidate said in remarks prepared for delivery Monday at Pennsylvania's Edinboro University.

Kerry argues that President Bush has overseen a growth in health care costs that has left Americans paying more than residents of any other nation for coverage, with the average cost of a family policy approaching \$10,000 a year.

On the swing, the campaign is targeting key battleground states, beginning in Erie, Pa., then heading to Kentucky and Florida before wrapping up in Little Rock, Ark. At each stop, Kerry will be joined by health care workers and by those who have struggled with paying for care.

The Massachusetts senator has offered a health care reform plan that calls for repealing the tax cut that Bush pushed through Congress applying to the wealthiest Americans, and using the money that saves to bolster health care.

Russian leader laid to rest

By The Associated Press

VLADIKAVKAZ, Russia — Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov was buried Monday in his home village, a day after the Moscow-backed leader was killed by a bomb blast that cast Russia's efforts to stabilize and control the war-ravaged region into chaos.

Thousands of people came to Tsentoroi, the settlement in southeastern Chechnya that is home to Kadyrov's clan, Russian media reported.

The blast ripped through a stadium grandstand in the Chechen capital Grozny Sunday during a Victory Day parade celebrating the anniversary of the Nazi defeat in World War II.

The bombing — which thwarted the heavy security in place for official ceremonies nationwide on an important holiday — harshly underlined the difficulties Russia faces in controlling the violence in Chechnya despite a massive troop presence. It was expected to set off a new round of killing between Kadyrov's camp and his enemies, who had long pledged to eliminate him.

There was no claim of responsibility for the blast, but suspicion inevitably fell on Chechen rebels.

Chechen Prime Minister Sergei Abramov took over as acting president of the region.

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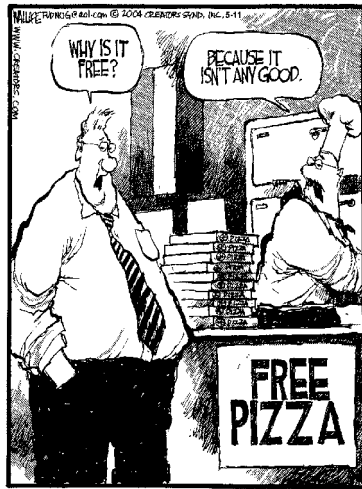
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The Dinettes Set



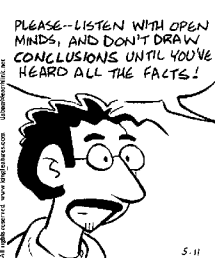
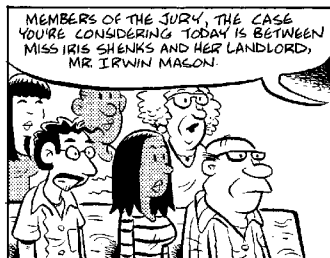
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ACROSS

- 1 Slacks
- 6 Wear down
- 11 In the area
- 12 Speak
- 13 Makeup-removing aids
- 15 Genesis name
- 16 Dollop
- 17 Boy
- 18 Fate
- 20 Undivided
- 21 Wide shoe marking
- 22 Lee of TV
- 23 Fogs
- 26 Indian lute
- 27 Pennsylvania port
- 28 Game official
- 29 Opposite of oui
- 30 Yellow raisin
- 34 Gasteyer of "SNL"
- 35 Bind up
- 36 Catch
- 37 Fair confection
- 40 Blunder
- 41 Attempts
- 42 Sordid

43 Prophets

DOWN

- 1 Showed nervousness
- 2 Up there
- 3 Jottings
- 4 Chiding sound
- 5 Smelly cigars
- 6 Elf in the Harry Potter books
- 7 Bit of history
- 8 Cry
- 9 Hawks' home
- 10 CBS sitcom
- 14 Zero
- 19 Head, to Henri
- 22 Fissure
- 23 Threatens
- 24 Magnetite, for one
- 25 "My Way" singer
- 26 Opts for
- 28 Destroy
- 30 Yarn
- 31 "Tomorrow" singer
- 32 Candidate
- 33 Deep chasm
- 38 Huck's pal
- 39 Exist

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Don Johnson leaving a trail of unpaid debt in Aspen

By The Associated Press

■ **ASPEN, Colo.** — An Aspen grocery store has accused actor Don Johnson of leaving an unpaid bill of \$5,470, according to court records.

Other Aspen businesses also are suing the "Miami Vice" and "Nash Bridges" star in Pitkin County Court for outstanding bills. A list of creditors in a bankruptcy petition include \$7,345 from Aspen Valley Hospital, \$1,228 from Iberian Rug Co., \$1,688 from Holy Cross Energy and \$2,787 from Garfield & Hecht law firm.

A spokesman for the actor could not be reached for comment.

Johnson, 54, filed for bankruptcy protection last month to secure his Woody Creek ranch and stave off a lender's attempt to auction his home.

The lender, Los Angeles-based City National Bank, filed court papers in Pitkin County District Court in March against Johnson. That lawsuit asks a judge to auction Johnson's home to recoup \$930,000 he owes the bank, according to court papers.

■ **LONDON** — There'll be no wave of the magic Harry Potter wand for the 3-year-old students of a ballet school in southern England.

Choreographer Valerie Le Serve said Monday she was forced to change a 10-minute segment based on the adventures of the boy wizard and his friends after author J.K. Rowling's agent pointed out a contract with movie giant Warner Bros. that bans rival productions.

Le Serve said she wrote to Rowling's London-based agent, Christopher Little, as a courtesy and was surprised to receive a letter banning her from going ahead with the amateur event in Worthing, West Sussex.

Warner Bros., which produces the hit "Harry Potter"

movies based on the books, has rights over any live theatrical or musical production until 2007.

"Sadly the position is that contractually we are precluded from granting the type of rights requested by the Worthing dance school unless Warner Bros. relent and waive their rights," said Neil Blair, a spokesman for Little. "It is simply not possible for us to pick and choose however worthy the cause, which in this particular case was clearly most worthy."

Le Serve's production was scheduled as part of a variety show in November to raise money for London's Great Ormond Street Hospital for children and the Cleft Lip and Palate Association.

Le Serve said she would adapt the costumes of black cats, owls and wand-carrying street traders to another story line.

"I could not believe it. Friends said J.K. and her agents would not mind, but it appears they do," she said. "I am flattered that they consider us to be such a great threat to their plans in 2007."

■ **MANCHESTER, England** — The University of Manchester is awarding honorary degrees to Robin and Barry Gibb of the Bee Gees, as well as a posthumous honor for their brother, Maurice.

The awards will be presented to the two Gibb brothers during a ceremony at the university Wednesday. They'll also receive from Chancellor Anna Ford a degree for their brother, who died in January 2003.

Born on the Isle of Man, the Gibb brothers moved to the northwestern English city of Manchester in the 1950s.

In the 1970s, they sang the soundtrack for the disco scene with hits such as "Stayin' Alive" and "Night Fever," and have now sold more than 110 million copies

of their 28 albums.

Maurice died in a Miami hospital at the age of 53 on Jan. 12, 2003. He had suffered a heart attack during emergency surgery for an intestinal blockage.

■ **SPRINGFIELD, Mass.** — Police had to break up a shoving match at a Boston club after the rapper 50 Cent and his entourage jumped from the stage during a surprise appearance and scuffled in the audience.

Two people were arrested for disturbing the peace during the incident in the Hippodrome club early Saturday morning, said Springfield Police Capt. Charles Arpin.

Police also were investigating whether a nearby shooting was related.

The crowd of 1,400 people did not know 50 Cent was there until he took the stage after the other acts. About 10 minutes after he took the stage, someone in the crowd threw water at him from a cup or water bottle, Hippodrome co-owner Michael J. Barrasso said.

"He removed his gold chain, handed it to someone on the stage next to him and jumped off the stage into the crowd," Barrasso said. The rapper's entourage, including bodyguards, also jumped off the stage.

The crowd was so dense Barrasso could not tell if there was any fighting beyond pushing. Security guards and police officers pushed the rapper — whose real name is Curtis Jackson — and his entourage back on stage, Barrasso said.

"He finished the song, believe it or not," Barrasso said. "Then the whole entourage and him just rushed for the exit, got in their cars and left."

Two men were charged with disturbing the peace.

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