



FREE

Santa Monica Daily Press

May 14-15, 2005

A newspaper with issues

Volume 4, Issue 157

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

2 5 21 25 38
Meganumber: 11
Jackpot: \$10 Million

FANTASY 5

2 21 22 29 30

DAILY 3

Daytime: 8 3 0
Evening: 3 9 7

DAILY DERBY

1st: 05 California Classic
2nd: 04 Big Ben
3rd: 06 Whirl Win

RACE TIME: 1:44.05

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

Beverly Fisher, 48, was arrested in Smyrna, Ga., in February for allegedly throwing cans of beer at one son and beating another because he had refused her request to roll marijuana joints for her. And police in New York charged in February that when Christopher DiMeo robbed the jewelry store in Glen Head and murdered a salesperson (one of an alleged string of brutal jewelry store robberies and murders), his mom, Maryann Taylor-Casey, was driving the getaway car.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 134th day of 2005.
There are 231 days left in the year.

Fifty years ago, on May 14, 1955, representatives from eight Communist bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, formed the Warsaw Pact in Poland. (The Pact was dissolved in July 1991.)

In 1904, the first Olympic games to be held in the United States opened in St. Louis, as part of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

In 1942, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was established.

In 1948 (according to the current-era calendar), the independent state of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv.

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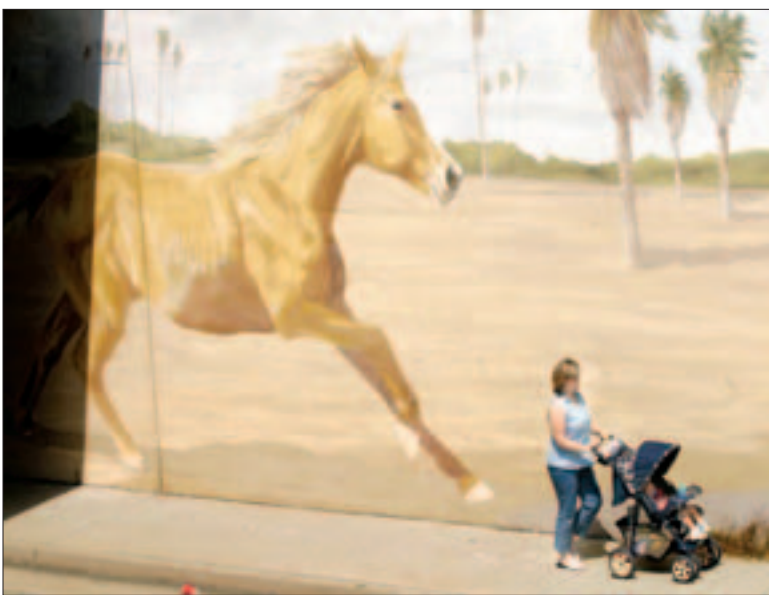
Rap reformation



Fabian Lewkowicz/Special to the Daily Press

The Coalition for the Revolution of Corporate Rap protests outside of Universal on Friday. They call for a boycott of all Universal music artists until the company signs an agreement to diversify the images of black men and women in rap.

Stampede



Crill Hansen/Special to the Daily Press

A woman and her child become part of the landscape of one of many outdoor murals in Santa Monica.

Marijuana advocates ignite their reform efforts at gala

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

PICO BLVD. — Hundreds of pot advocates, dressed to the nines, gathered in Santa Monica this past week to feast on a three-course dinner with free-flowing wine while celebrating the successes of the nation's largest marijuana reform organization.

Those who attended the Marijuana Policy Project's 10th Anniversary Gala weren't your average pot smokers, who have typically been cast in society as underachievers and slackers who wear tie-dye T-shirts and pony-tails. Supporters of the group, with more than 17,000 dues-paying members and 150,000 e-mail subscribers nationwide, insist they be



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Actor Tommy Chong, a longtime advocate for reforming marijuana laws, was in Santa Monica this week promoting the cause.

taken seriously.

"We want to be professional," said Rob Kampia, the group's executive director, who added that

See GALA, page 12

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Kick up your heels, Aries

Santa Monica Daily Press



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)

★★★★ A difference this morning in how you want to spend your money impacts the remainder of the day. Being playful is one matter; taking high risks is another. Still, lighten up and enjoy an important person in your life. Don't get hung up on negatives. Tonight: Kick up your heels.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You might need and want to slow down in order to deal with your family and a domestic situation. Defer to a roommate. Ultimately, you want the same thing — more luxury in your life. Tonight: Entertain at home.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ You have a way of saying things that often floors others. Why would today be any different? You will add that touch of drama that your sign is so well known for. Breeze around and visit with others. Enjoy the moment. Tonight: Out with a favorite person.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Sometimes you view your possessions as a direct reflection of who you are. Don't get into that competitive mode with others. What you do and what you choose needs to reflect the authentic you. Don't get caught up in keeping up with the Joneses. Tonight: Treat yourself well.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ You have what it takes, even if you hit an obstacle or someone disagrees with you. How dare someone challenge the Lion? Because of your charm and way with words, possibilities soar. Don't let a mini-problem grow into a major issue. Tonight: Where you want to be.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Know when to let your mind wander and allow your body to stay put. You need to give in to your imagination and dynamic ideas. You just might want to work out the details on your own. How much you spend could be an issue. Tonight: Play ostrich.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You are heading in the right direction. You get strong feedback from a partner, which gives you a definite sense of what is workable. Allow more playfulness into your Saturday. Please give up being so serious. Tonight: You'll have a good time wherever your friends are.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Fortunately, you don't have a difficult time taking charge. You might want to tune in to your sixth sense in order to figure out how to handle a wayward authority figure. This person could also be a parent. Tonight: Out late.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ You, of all signs, are encouraged not to get wound up in a story or some other drama. Remember, you cannot control others, but you can learn to understand them. Tonight: Go to a concert or movie.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Realize that right now you are caught up in someone else's whirlwind. Enjoy this person's happiness and that he or she wants to share so much with you. Let this bond build. You could be quite delighted by what it offers you. Tonight: Go along with another's plans.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Take some much needed time to yourself, perhaps in the morning. Before you know it, others will be clamoring at your door, creating uproar, or at least wanting you to join in their plans. Feel free to be spontaneous. Tonight: Share a dream.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Know when to chill out. Understand that you don't need to entertain at every moment of the day. In fact, right now, getting into a project could prove far more rewarding. Not every second needs to be romantic. Tonight: Play it easy.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Man's best friend needs rescue

By Daily Press staff

Residents are being asked to support the underdog this weekend. Walk for the Underdog, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, is holding its first annual walk this weekend. Walk for the Underdog will raise funds to help a number of foundations get more dogs out of shelters and to find them permanent homes. Those who want to rescue a dog from a shelter need \$75 — and they get to help man's best friend.

Walk for the Underdog is organized like an AIDS Walk: Walkers get sponsors to raise money. But this is not only a walk — it's a huge dog party complete with live music, celebrities, staged events, prizes, a silent auction and dogs of every spot and stripe up for adoption, organizers say.

Vendors will display their wares and offer their services such as acupuncture, non-medical healing arts and an "Ask the Vet" booth where questions about canine companions will be answered.

The walkers will include rescue groups who will be walking with dogs available for adoption. Among these rescues, Walk for the Underdog is sponsoring: The Bill Foundation, The Amanda Foundation, Marley's Pit Stop, Ace of Hearts, Boxer Rescue LA, Southern California Siberian Husky Rescue and Forte Animal Rescue.

People who want to join the party can register online for the walk — come with or without your dog. Dog walkers will meet on the Santa Monica Pier parking lot alongside the PCH. Then they will go up the stairs and into Palisades Park where the walk will take place.

LA is a dog town, but 700 dogs are euthanized every week. Walk for the Underdog calls on everyone to come and help make a difference to the homeless dogs of LA.

This event will take place on Sunday, May 15. Registration opens at 10 a.m. and the walk begins at 11 a.m. Contact Helena Kriel at (310) 455-7030 or Rene Breier at (858) 452-1179 for more information. Visit www.walkfortheunderdog.com for details about the event.

Publicist educates SMC students

By Daily Press staff

SMC gets a glimpse into the world of the entertainment in May. The Santa Monica College Academy of Entertainment & Technology's Mary Pickford Speakers series continues in May with Rosalind Jarrett, award-winning publicist and founder of the Entertainment Publicists Professional Society. She will discuss pre-show media events and special marketing promotions for such events as the Screen Actors Guild Awards Show.

The event is free and begins at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 23, at SMC's Academy of Entertainment & Technology's screening room, 1660 Stewart St., Santa Monica. Seating is on a first-arrival basis. Call (310) 434-3777 for more information.

Columnist discusses two world powers

By Daily Press staff

Looks like America and China are having some trouble in paradise. Thomas Plate, syndicated columnist and adjunct professor of speech and communication studies at UCLA, will speak on "America and China — Odd Couple Or Fatal Attraction?"

The event will take place Saturday, May 28, at 8 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica, 1260 18th St. Admission is free.

Rock climbing film goes to new heights

By Daily Press staff

It's time to go to the movies, but don't look down.

See BRIEFS, page 14

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SURF REPORT

Saturday is when our next SW swell is due, but that's not saying much. This will increase on Sunday however. Saturday afternoon can expect to see somewhat stronger afternoon onshores, and Sunday can expect onshores picking up early as an onshore flow develops and high pressure breaks down.

Today the water is:

57°

Write us at alex@smdp.com and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	9:17	0.4	8:14	3.3	12:45	4.5	6:04	4.0
SUNDAY	10:20	0.6	10:41	3.1	1:56	4.1	6:17	3.6
MONDAY	11:11	0.6	11:57	2.6	3:31	3.8	6:33	3.9
TUESDAY	11:51	0.7	12:46	2.0	4:57	3.7	6:50	4.3
WEDNESDAY	12:46	2.0	12:25	0.8	6:06	3.7	7:07	4.6
THURSDAY	1:25	1.4	12:55	1.0	7:04	3.7	7:27	5.1
FRIDAY	1:45	0.9	12:26	1.2	8:02	3.4	7:47	4.9

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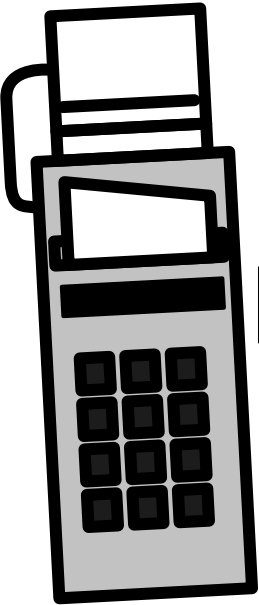
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RESPONSES ON PAGE 6.



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LOCAL

RAND: Asbestos still costs billions in claims

By Daily Press staff

More than 730,000 people in the United States filed compensation claims for asbestos-related injuries from the early 1970s through the end of 2002, costing businesses and insurance companies more than \$70 billion, the RAND Corp. reported this week.

Claimants have received about 42 cents of every dollar spent on asbestos litigation, according the new study by the RAND Institute for Civil Justice. Another 31 cents has gone to defense costs, and 27 cents has gone to plaintiffs' attorneys and other related costs. The research notes that there is no published research comparing the compensation received by asbestos plaintiffs with their economic losses.

Asbestos is a group of silicate minerals used in many industrial processes because of their fire-retardant properties. Asbestos fibers, which are easily inhaled, can cause a number of injuries including a fatal, incurable cancer called mesothelioma. Asbestos can also impair lung function without causing cancer.

Researchers said the number of asbestos claims has increased sharply through the 1990s and into 2002, driven primarily by people who claim non-cancerous injuries. These cases now account for 90 percent of all new claims, according to the study.

"We found that the cost of asbestos claims continues to increase at a steady pace," said Stephen J. Carroll, a RAND senior economist and lead author of the study.

The number of claims made by people with mesothelioma has increased sharply in recent years — doubling during the period from 1994 to 2002. However, cases based upon mesothelioma remain a small proportion of all asbestos claims.

Researchers said an increasing share of the claims are being brought by workers exposed in industries such as textiles, paper, glass and food — where workers did not routinely handle asbestos, but asbestos was present in the workplace. Previously, most claims were from workers exposed through activities such as asbestos mining and manufacturing.

The litigation is concentrated in eight industries, but at least one defendant company can be found in 75 out of the 83 different industries that make up the two-digit Standard Industrial Classification, a

system designed by the U.S. Department of Commerce to help group companies within categories.

Some evidence suggests that most of the non-cancerous claimants have not suffered an injury that has so far affected their ability to perform daily activities, although they may show symptoms such as lung abnormalities that suggest an asbestos injury has occurred.

The study also found at least 8,400 entities had been named as defendants in asbestos claims through 2002. At least 73 companies named in a substantial number of asbestos claims filed for bankruptcy through mid-2004, researchers determined. The trust funds created following the bankruptcies of asbestos manufacturers and other major asbestos defendants pay only a small fraction of the agreed-upon value of individual's claims against those defendants.

RAND researchers summarized several proposals that have been put forth as alternatives to the current system, including one that would allow claims to remain in the legal system, but limit compensation only to those people whose injuries meet certain medical criteria. Such a system would require the fewest changes, but it would prevent many asbestos-exposed workers from seeking compensation.

Another proposal would create a universal trust fund to make payments to injured workers who meet certain criteria, including medical criteria, by pooling payments from defendant corporations and insurers. But such a proposal must address difficult issues such as how much is needed to pay future claims and how much each contributor should pay, according to researchers.

Since 1983, researchers from the RAND Institute for Civil Justice have studied asbestos litigation, publishing a series of reports that have documented the growing cost and number of asbestos injury cases.

For the latest report, RAND researchers gained access to confidential data gathered by a large number of individual defendants, insurers, and plaintiff and defense attorneys. They also reviewed court records and interviewed more than 60 key participants, including plaintiffs' attorneys, corporate counsel, outside defense attorneys, insurance companies, investment analysts and court-appointed neutral participants.

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Santa Monica Daily Press



Think about taking workouts in intervals



**EXERCISE
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BY THADDEUS REICHLEY

can increase your mileage, intervals and weekly sessions.

Once you have determined that you are ready to start adding intervals to your training, you need to start thinking about duration and frequency. The mistake that many people make is in thinking that if some interval training is good, then a lot of interval training is better. Wrong. As you map out your schedule, it is important to keep in mind that any workout that is the same amount of time as your normal workout, and includes intervals, is going to be more work. If you are on a track or in the pool, it is easier to keep track of how far you are going because you can count laps and lengths. However, out on the roads or trails it is a little more difficult. You will cover more miles in the same amount of time that you usually workout, and your body will notice the difference. Because of this, you need to be aware of how much you are increasing your workload. Along with this, you need to watch your frequency. Interval training only works if you give your body time to rest. Proper rest between sessions will allow your body to recover and keep making gains. Not enough rest and you risk just beating yourself up until your body can't take it anymore and you either get sick or injured. Beginners should shoot for once a week with intervals, while more advanced athletes can work up to several sessions of various length, intensity and muscle focus. When in doubt, always seek outside advice from a coach or trainer.

The final thing to think about when contemplating adding intervals to your schedule is, why? I was riding with a group the other day and we were planning a little interval session on a long climb. There were four of us, and as we were planning our sets, one of the guys said, "I think I am going to opt out and just ride." I asked him why, and his response is something that I have been thinking about for the last week. He said, "I work all day long, and the last thing I want to do on a ride is to think about anything." He did his thing, met us at the top of the hill and finished the ride. And, unlike the rest of us who were so focused on our watches and heart rates, he probably checked out the view along the way. There is absolutely nothing wrong with being focused and driven to achieve, but sometimes that can get in the way of the pure enjoyment of the sports we love.

(Thaddeus Reichley is a middle school teacher and elite triathlete, living and training in Santa Monica. Look for his columns on the weekends and send comments to thadsthoughts@yahoo.com.)

Interval training — what's the point? I have heard a lot of talk lately about intervals, and it seems many people are working them into their training regimens.

Most of us are familiar with the basics of interval training. It is a training session that involves repeated bouts of exercise, separated by rest intervals. Depending on the length of the exercise period and the intervals, it can either be aerobic or anaerobic training. In essence, it is a workout meant to boost performance by increasing strength, endurance and the body's ability to deal with lactic acid production. Sounds good, right? I know that I do a few interval-training sessions a week, both biking and running. And swimming — unless you are one of those loonies who is out there at the crack of dawn doing those pier to pier swims — is usually done as an interval workout. For serious athletes, interval training can be the key to shedding a few seconds on a 10K. For the weekend warrior, it can be a great way to mix up a weekly routine and wake up some of those fast-twitch muscles that have been dormant for too long. However, there are a few things to think about before you start tacking on interval training to your current training load.

First, you need to think about your current fitness level. There is no way around it. Interval training is taxing on your body. It is the good old-fashioned hard work that many athletes consider the bread and butter of their training. If your body is ready for it, this training can be the next step in a solid fitness program. On the flip side, if you don't have a solid base, it can actually be detrimental to your overall fitness and health. There is nothing like a pulled muscle to set you back a few months in your fitness goals. So, be careful. Make sure that you have put in the time before you start timing your output. If you are a beginning runner struggling to run 15 miles a week, it is probably not a great idea to hit the track for repeat 800s with 30 seconds rest. Get a solid base under you and then start small. Remember that an interval session can be something as simple as picking up the pace between telephone poles on a bike climb, or trying to run the middle section of a run a few seconds faster than normal. As you get more comfortable with the efforts, you

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OPINION

The Q-Line

SMALL-TOWN SANTA MONICA IS HISTORY

This past week, Q-line asked:

"Should Santa Monica strive to maintain a small-town atmosphere and, if so, how can this be accomplished?"

Here are your responses:

© "It's really too late to preserve the small-town atmosphere that we once enjoyed and treasured so much here in Santa Monica, thanks to the mayors, City Council and city planners of recent memory, but let's please try to preserve what we have left. Stop the overbuilding and the pseudo-sophistication that is being encouraged. Clean up the blight of homelessness, vagrancy and skid-row atmosphere. That at least would be a start. I'm trying to preserve what's left."

© "In my estimation, the only way that Santa Monica could strive to preserve a small-town atmosphere is to get rid of all — and I mean all — of the big chain stores on the Promenade, and put back the smaller ones. Let's have a Target. Let's have a Penny's. Let's have a Woolworth's. We had some good bookstores — there all gone. Let's get rid of all the chain stores on the Promenade — every single one of them. This town will never become a small town because we have all those stores there. What can we do about them? And I say, 'Get rid of them.' Bring in small-town restaurants, chains and stores."

© "It would be very hard to make Santa Monica into a small town again. One thing they could do is to stop building all these high-rise building and buildings that bring in too many cars. If they tear down something, just replace it with something the same size. And we have too many chain stores. We should get rid of most 'em — and have the so-called mom 'n' pop

stores, which just have the one business. If there's a chain store that has so many stores all over the country, what's the point of having it here? They could have it somewhere else. Another thing we should get rid of is all the bums. Small towns don't have a lot of bums. They all come to Santa Monica. We need to send them back where they came from."

© "I think the way to make Santa Monica maintain a small-town atmosphere is to have more bus services to preserve the uniqueness of this lovely little town by sea. And no sky-rises please. And more family-friendly housing. On this, Frank Lloyd Wright — more Spanish-style architecture as well — this is California, and I think California deserves to have more Spanish-style buildings and less of these scary buildings. I know he's an award-winning architect, but I personally cannot stand his architecture. Make it more urban friendly, more family oriented. I like the Cape Cod style, or mission style. No Tudor style, because that doesn't particularly work here. He should even think about a more Japanese style because it integrates the elements. The city should be more pedestrian friendly and plantings of beautiful jacaranda trees, magnolia trees, California poppies, lavender, whatever. Santa Monica is a beautiful town, so let's preserve it."

© "I think Santa Monica lost its small-town beach identity long ago. Through poor planning, Santa Monica is a little of

this and a little of that, which adds up to no identity at all. Big business and the almighty dollar is hard to overcome, so I hold out little hope for a small-town atmosphere in Santa Monica."

© "The city of Santa Monica should stop allowing the demolition of small buildings to put up huge ones. An example is at 26th Street and Santa Monica Boulevard, a very busy intersection where a small one-story community center is turning into a large housing complex. There was talk of changing the Shakey's Pizza on the corner of Berkeley and Santa Monica Boulevard into a housing complex as well. It wasn't long ago that there was talk of changing the small one-story businesses at Stewart and Colorado into a three- to five-story complex with greater than 100 housing units and businesses. Thank God that project was stopped, at least for now. And when you look at the proposed plans for the Santa Monica Place property, it was stunning to hear them speak of the density they want to allow. I think they should leave the density of that property as it is. This is not rocket science, by the way."

© "Santa Monica is now big on small-town atmosphere, thanks to the socialistic governments, past and present. Look at the cities of Santa Barbara, the carpentry of Manhattan Beach and even Pacific Palisades. No tall buildings, simple but convenient store layouts. Look at what Santa Monica has become since rent control — bums, traffic, parking, irrational devotion to low-income housing, problems that have been created and maintained by City Hall. Instead of a simplistic lifestyle where people are content with their lives, which is what a beach community is, our leaders have fostered divisiveness and anger with citizens not having it all. Rent control transfers money from landlords to tenants, and then they are taxed by City Hall to fund ever-increasing monstrosities of architectural blight. The city becomes larger but not better. City philosophy is diametrically opposed to a

small-town beach community. Look at the ever-increasing tax-exempt carriages of do-gooders: heal the bums, heal the minority students of Samohi, heal the tenants, heal the bay, heal the sick, raise the dead — this socialistic philosophy has helped destroy this town. For penance and education to the true value of Santa Monica, the City Hall members should spend every sunset on the beach pondering their failure at leadership."

© "Santa Monica's image for decades was a quiet beach town with lots of mom 'n' pop businesses, and a low-key lifestyle. The shift away from this long-time reality took place on April 10, 1979, with the renter's rights slate taking over City Hall in the form of winning the majority of City Council seats. As board seats, commission positions and school board functions came up, the SMRR-people plugged in their clowns. Now 25 plus years later, our city has become a coastal Hollywood location for the entertainment business ... Hopefully we can reverse this trend by voting out the SMRR council people next time around. Thus reversing the trend, and putting more moderate people in all the positions they took over 25 years ago."

© "My suggestions would be as follows: One: To disallow any further building of large office buildings. Two: Keeping the light industrial in town. Three: Disallowing any further building in condos that puts too many people here with space and traffic, and allow the existing signage of small buildings to remain where they are — it gives a little hometown atmosphere. Four: Fixing up what is already here. Five: Get the city out of the landlord business. They have condemned places around here and then picked them up under the promise of low-cost housing, but they keep the rents just like everyone else and don't fix them up. Six: Don't chase out the small trailer parks. I think that they are a part of a small-town atmosphere."©

You can be at the head of your class reunion



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

I went to my high school reunion last week, so now I can give you some tips on how to make your next reunion a success.

Forget the diet, forget the Botox. The key to having a successful, even a triumphant reunion, is hair.

If you're a man who still has a full head of hair, you will be a hit even if you are unemployed and have cold sores. If you happen to be bald, be proud of your baldness. Convey the attitude that, "I look great bald, and if you don't think so, you're just wrong." Do not cover up your baldness by wearing one of those things that looks like road kill. For women (and some men) who dye their hair, it's important that the color you choose at least resemble some color that is found in nature.

REUNION DON'TS

Don't assume that the people who seemed least likely to succeed have

become failures. That thug who was always getting into fights may now be a cop. That guy who always cut classes is now a doctor. And don't be surprised if that girl who always wore too much make-up and was kind of slutty, still wears too much make-up and is kind of slutty, but now's she's a member of the clergy.

Don't cover up your photo nametag and go up to people and say, "Remember me?" Several people did this at my reunion, and all it did was create an uncomfortable moment. I had no idea who they were, and then they were insulted. Finally, I came up with an answer: "Remember you? Are you kidding? You're all I've thought of since high school." Then they'd reveal their ID, and I realized why I hadn't recognized them. They didn't resemble their high school photo in any way — except perhaps being of the same species.

Don't count on romance. Some people go to their reunion, hoping that the person they always had a crush on will still look great, happen to be single, and finally realize that they were meant for each other. If you're going to travel thousands of miles hoping this will come true, you

should know that the odds of this happening are a lot greater than the airline losing your luggage.

Don't say stupid things. If you ask someone, "Whatever happened to that creepy guy you were dating?" a guaranteed reply is, "I married him." You should also avoid, "Did you meet any nice people in jail?" And no matter how much you're tempted, don't go up to that person you went out with once and say, "I'm a much better kisser now. Really, I am."

Don't pass out your resume or open your sample case. These people are your classmates, not potential customers. However, at my reunion, one guy found a way to tell about what he did rather inoffensively. He said he was an inventor in the reunion book, and each of us received one of his inventions: It's a little light that illuminates your sock drawer, so you can get dressed in the dark and not put on mismatched socks. By giving these away, he demonstrated that he really was an inventor. He also revealed that he spends way too much time thinking about sock drawers.

REUNION DOS

DO REALIZE that upon entering the reunion, everyone is having the same

thought you are: "How did everyone else get so old?"

DO RESUME old friendships without blaming each other for not calling or writing. You'll be amazed at how quickly you'll feel comfortable with old friends.

DO TALK to people you didn't know very well in high school. You may find they're having an interesting life and end up with a new friend.

DO BE A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS ABOUT ATTIRE. Unless it is specifically stated otherwise on the invitation, just dress comfortably. These are not people you need to impress by wearing fancy clothes. However, if you ask an old friend ahead of time what everybody's going to wear, he's probably putting you on if he says, "The reunion is clothing optional."

Have a good time.

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

OPINION



GUEST COMMENTARY BY RICK NEWCOMBE

Arnold's larger-than-life image will endure

(Editor's note: Rick Newcombe is the president of Creators Syndicate, whose columnists represent a wide variety of political opinions. The following is not a political statement but rather the author's recollections of personal encounters with Arnold Schwarzenegger and the strong impact they had on his life.)

LOS ANGELES — Arnold Schwarzenegger and I first met in January 1978, a meeting that had a profound impact on my life. Over the years, he has been a wonderful role model for me as I have watched him reach every goal he has ever set.

Since that first meeting, Arnold's example and encouragement have inspired me to maintain a lifetime of physical fitness, and I am in better shape today in my mid-50s than I was in my mid-20s. He inspired me to start my own business, which is now one of the largest newspaper and Internet syndication companies in the world (www.creators.com).

He encouraged me to take risks in real estate over the years, and my family and I now live in a beautiful house in Los Angeles — a house I never thought I could afford, but I went ahead and took the plunge with Arnold's optimism ringing in my ears.

And there are a half dozen other areas where his example has had an influence on my life, including family, faith, discipline, hard work, salesmanship and worldwide travel. Arnold helped me see the world as small and easily traveled.

But without a doubt, the most important example was his attitude of thinking big, of positive thinking, of always expecting the best and of seeing success in our future, no matter what difficulties we might be facing in the present.

That is how Arnold views the world, and that is how he has always seen it. I was not surprised when the Los Angeles Times ran a story last year revealing that Arnold's favorite word is "fantastic." He instinctively sees every problem as an opportunity and makes every situation fun, no matter how grueling the circumstances. He is convinced in his mind that he will conquer and succeed, just as he has in bodybuilding, acting, business, working with young people, working with the handicapped, and, in fact, everything he has tried.

Some Californians are concerned that the entrenched lobbyists in Sacramento will beat him down, but don't bet on it. In fact, despite a massive campaign against him and a recent drop in his poll numbers, I am almost positive he will prevail and that California's economy, state government and business climate will all be vastly improved by the time he leaves office.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's



Arnold Schwarzenegger



Rick Newcombe

go back to our first meeting, a breakfast when Arnold was 30 and I was 27. We had agreed to meet at a Hilton Hotel in downtown Baltimore, where I was the UPI bureau chief. Arnold was promoting his bodybuilding autobiography, which became a best seller and is still in print today.

Arnold was wearing a turtleneck sweater under a sports coat, and I was struck by how massive he looked. He was enormous, and in those days, it was an uncommon sight. I have no doubt that his impressive size, and charismatic personality, led to the current popularity of bodybuilding. Arnold also spoke English with a much thicker Austrian accent than he does today. He was instantly charming, and it took only a short while before I realized how intelligent he is.

At that point, his two big goals were to break into movies and to become fabulously wealthy. He said he would achieve both by applying lessons he had learned in the gym, including discipline, hard work, "forced reps" and, most importantly, the cultivation of a strong belief in himself.

In the book he was promoting, written long before he became a millionaire, he had said, "I'm so determined to make millions of dollars that I cannot fail. In my mind I've already made the millions; now it's just a matter of going through the motions."

And it was this subject that intrigued me most. I kept asking how he knew he would succeed, and he replied, "Because I see it with my third eye." He pointed to his forehead as he said this, adding that he creates a movie in his mind, seeing himself reaching his goals over and over.

"I learned that technique in bodybuilding," he said, "and I'm applying it to becoming a movie star — and I have no doubt that I will become the No. 1 movie star in the world."

"You mean bigger than Robert Redford or Paul Newman?" I asked.

"Oh, much bigger than those guys. I'm talking about becoming bigger than

Charles Bronson!" he said, smiling that infectious smile.

Since he's known for his sense of humor, I wasn't sure if he was kidding, but then I realized he was dead serious. At the time, I did not know much about Charles Bronson, but when he died last year, I read that 30 years ago, he was indeed the No. 1 movie star in Europe, so there was a rational basis for Arnold's aspirations.

In any event, I heard his boast with conflicting emotions: On the one hand, I realized that most cynical journalists would have thought, "Talk about clueless! He doesn't even know who the top movie stars are," but on the other hand, my intuition was telling me, "There's something about this guy that rings true. In fact, if I had to bet, I would bet that he reaches his goal."

Talk about a colossal understatement.

In the mid-1980s, my wife, Carole, and I were in London, and I remember seeing dozens of movie marquees dominated by the name "ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER," featuring the movie "The Terminator." On the flight back to Los Angeles, I was reading a magazine article describing how Arnold had become box-office gold, while Robert Redford, with the movie "Havana," had become box-office lead.

I tore out the page and sent it to Arnold with a note reminding him of our breakfast conversation.

We corresponded like this during the intervening years, especially after Carole and I moved to Los Angeles so I could work at the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. I actually helped write a fitness book for businessmen with Arnold's best friend, Dr. Franco Columbu. It is interesting that all three of us now live in the same neighborhood.

I've seen Franco recently, and I see Arnold on the news every night, though I miss seeing him at the old World Gym in Santa Monica, where he always managed to turn hard work into fun. He figures out a way to find joy in everything he does,

and I find that to be an incredibly appealing quality. He is forever optimistic — always seeing a better future — and his enthusiasm is contagious.

We saw each other at World Gym three or four times a week over a period of 15 years. I consider myself very fortunate to have had those opportunities. There was no better way to start the day in an upbeat, positive mood than to spend an hour working out in the same gym as Arnold. It was during those times, and at a handful of meals together, that Arnold gave me advice about my career, real estate and business in general.

When Arnold announced he was running for governor, people from all over the world wanted to know, what is going on? When the polls showed Arnold way behind, my friends from out of state asked me if I still thought he had a chance, and I always said yes.

In fact, I made that prediction to some of Creators Syndicate's columnists, including high-profile television commentators Bill O'Reilly and Robert Novak. This was not because I have any special skill at predicting the outcome of elections (I don't), but because of Arnold's personal magnetism, which I had seen up close, going back many years.

Before Arnold announced his candidacy, he was a larger-than-life international celebrity. When I visited China in 2000, there was a giant poster, not of Mao, but of Arnold on the bridge leading to the Great Wall. The guide explained that Arnold was promoting the Special Olympics, "and everybody wants to see him." Once he became governor, Arnold traded in the glamour of Hollywood and international fame for the daily grind of state government.

Now that he is settling into his new role, Arnold is facing enormous challenges. He is calling 2005 the "Year of Reform," and he is going all out for his proposals. Not surprisingly, he is being criticized more than ever, and many of his opponents are speculating that he will soon surrender. They say that the problems confronting California are simply overwhelming and that he will be forced to return to Hollywood. Those are people who don't know Arnold. Of course, he will continue to face obstacles and setbacks, just as he is now.

But in the big picture scheme of things, my prediction is that he will prevail. Based on the impression he made on me 27 years ago, and after watching him achieve one goal after another in the interim, I would never underestimate Arnold Schwarzenegger and his unrelentingly positive attitude. I have no doubt that in his mind's eye, he sees a better and brighter California. And if the past is prologue, that should be good news for the people who elected him.

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City services noted by other homeless groups

GRANT, from page 1

who have been homeless for at least a year and have not participated in any other housing program would qualify for a voucher to pay for an apartment.

The HUD grant would provide the city \$1 million over two years to contact homeless individuals on the streets and enroll them in the pilot program.

Brian Sullivan, a spokesperson with HUD, said the program will likely be evaluated in coming years for effectiveness. He said the program comes as a response from recent research indicating that of the 150,000 homeless individuals living in the United States at any given time, 15,000 to 30,000 of them are considered to be chronically homeless, many of whom suffer from drug and alcohol addiction.

Sullivan said that although research indicates those individuals make up a smaller percentage of the homeless population, they use a majority of the services available. As a result, other segments of the homeless population — such as women who have suffered from domestic violence, or people recently out of work — might not be able to take full advantage of the services, Sullivan said. By trying to address the chronic homeless issue,

Sullivan said more services may be freed up for other homeless individuals.

Sullivan said HUD is part of a 20-agency group called the Interagency on Homelessness — federal entities coordinating homeless efforts nationwide — that seeks to end chronic homelessness.

"It's a lofty goal," Sullivan said. "Some say it's not realistic, but we'll never get there if we don't say we're going to get there."

Sullivan declined to comment on the type of cities HUD will be looking to award the grant, or when the recipients will be announced. He did say, however, that sites that prove they have a strong track record of addressing chronic homelessness will be considered.

Julie Rusk, City Hall's human services manager who helps oversee citywide homeless projects, said Santa Monica is applying for the grant because the city has much of the programming to make the grant successful.

"I believe we are well suited for the grant because of the services we already have in place for the homeless," Rusk said. "But what we need is the housing."

Santa Monica applies annually for about \$380,000 in assistance from HUD through the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, a local government

"It's a lofty goal. Some say it's not realistic, but we'll never get there if we don't say we're going to get there."

BRIAN SULLIVAN
HUD spokesperson

entity that works within the county to address homelessness, city staff said. Also, City Hall applies for millions of dollars through HUD for housing money not directly related to homelessness.

City Councilman Richard Bloom said Santa Monica would make an excellent recipient for the grant.

"We have been piloting programs that reach out to the chronically homeless," Bloom said. "I think our own staff has been surprised how successful it has been."

Bloom said the city's successes in addressing homelessness has caught the eye of Bring LA Home — a countywide program involving more than 80 municipalities intended to address chronic homelessness in the region and end homelessness in LA within 10 years. Bloom said the group might soon announce plans to

help 5,000 homeless individuals get off the street within 18 months.

"It would be an extraordinary opportunity if successful and a first major change we've seen in the homeless population in a long time," Bloom said.

Councilman Bobby Shriver — who recently won the approval of his colleagues for City Hall to hire a regional liaison to tackle the homeless issue in Santa Monica and surrounding communities — said he is glad city staff is applying for the HUD grant.

"I hope we get the grant, but I continue to think a regional leader is needed to make a plan to get grants like this and other cities working together," Shriver said. "The key is leadership, leadership, leadership. We need leadership that can be committed to tackling this issue."

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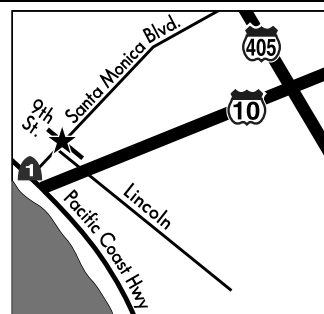
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STATE



Jury awards blinded teenager \$700,000

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Jurors decided Southern California Edison should pay \$700,000 to an Orange County teenager blinded in one eye by a paintball round fired by an Edison employee at the utility's Big Creek forest hamlet.

After a five-day trial, the Superior Court jury said the boy should get \$700,000 for general damages, including pain and suffering, and \$4,663 for medical treatment, attorney Brian Chase said Thursday.

"A teenager was blinded," Chase said. "For the rest of

his life, he has to confront the serious challenges that come with permanent loss of vision in his right eye."

In March 2003, the 14-year-old Newport Beach boy was playing with paintball guns in the tiny Sierra National Forest community of 300 when the Edison employee was enlisted by junior high school players to ambush older high school competitors, testimony showed.

The Edison employee claimed the gun accidentally went off, striking the teenager. The woman said in an initial statement to Edison that the shooting was an acci-

dent, but the company destroyed the first statement and replaced it with one saying she intended to shoot the gun but did not mean to hurt the boy, Chase said.

The difference, Chase said, is that if she intended to shoot the boy, that would have lessened the liability for the company.

"While there's no question what happened to this boy, this young man, was tragic, we believe the facts presented support a different conclusion than the one reached by the jury," Edison spokesman Tom Boyd said, adding, "We're disappointed in the jury's decision."

Two men convicted on anniversary of the brutal murder

By The Associated Press

RIVERSIDE — Separate juries convicted two men of murdering a man who was handcuffed, beaten, shocked with a stun gun and dragged to his death behind his own pickup truck.

John Edmund Malagon, 33, and Michelle Elizabeth Jones, 30, were each convicted of first-degree murder in the death of Johnny Rudas, 25, and special circumstances of kidnapping and torture. Malagon was acquitted of a charge of making criminal threats.

The couple, who thought Rudas had stolen something from them, will be sentenced June 13 to life without possibility of parole.

The verdicts were announced Thursday, the four-year anniversary of the gruesome killing in a rural area near Perris. Deputy District Attorney Deborah Lucky called it the most heinous crime she has ever prosecuted.

"It's my opinion that (Malagon and Jones) don't deserve anything less than what Johnny went through," said Steve Rudas Jr., 34, the victim's older brother.

The Jones jury deliberated two days and announced its verdict Thursday morning. The Malagon jury deliberated three days and announced its decision Thursday afternoon.

A third defendant, Jeff Bastion, 25, pleaded guilty in November 2002 to four charges, including accessory to murder. He testified for the prosecution.

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STATE

Clinton aide pleads ignorance on gala cost

BY RYAN PEARSON
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's former national finance director never knew the total cost of a lavish 2000 Hollywood fundraising gala, his attorney said Thursday in opening statements at his federal trial over whether campaign contributions were illegally concealed.

Defense lawyer Paul Sandler said the event's mounting expenses — eventually totaling about \$1.2 million — were hidden from David F. Rosen by its organizers.

But the first major witness for prosecutors, Jim Levin, testified that Rosen was deeply aware of the ballooning budget, saying Rosen told him "that the cost of this event will never be the cost of this event" — meaning they would not report the excessive expenses to federal regulators.

Levin, who helped organize the celebrity-studded gala with Aaron Tonken and Peter Paul, said he became involved in fundraising generally and the gala in particular at the request of his "dear friend," former President Clinton.

Rosen told Levin that costs "were spiraling out of control" and was worried he would be fired if the event failed, Levin testified.

Sandler suggested Levin's testimony was not credible because it came three days after he signed an agreement to cooperate with federal prosecutors and plead guilty to bribery and fraud charges in an unrelated case in Chicago.

In his opening statement, Sandler depicted Rosen as a victim of the "sinister" organizers Tonken and Paul. He said Rosen relied on them to report costs accurately but "they had their own agenda."

"David Rosen's responsibility was not to be Sherlock Holmes" by investigating expense reports, Sandler said.

Rosen has pleaded not guilty to three counts of making false statements to the Federal Election Commission, which oversees campaign contributions. Each charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Both defense attorneys and prosecutors

say Sen. Clinton didn't know about the alleged wrongdoing.

The event, held at a 112-acre Brentwood estate, attracted stars including Cher, Diana Ross, John Travolta, Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston.

It was underwritten by Paul, who pleaded guilty in March to unrelated charges of securities fraud. Paul has told the FBI he gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to Clinton's campaign that were not reported.

Rosen's case is unusual not only because of the celebrity wattage of the event and political power of its beneficiary, but also for the fact that it went to trial at all: most FEC allegations are settled out of court.

Federal prosecutor Peter Zeidenberg told jurors that it was Rosen's job to both raise money for Clinton's campaign and track of how much was spent. He told jurors Rosen deliberately lied to regulators by claiming "in-kind" contributions of \$400,000 when he knew their value exceeded \$1.1 million.

"How are you going to react when you see that you have OK'd \$5,000 for Patti LaBelle's hairdresser, or \$10,000 worth of Paul Anka CDs given away on a single night?" Zeidenberg said. "David Rosen knew that people would be extremely alarmed and upset at those kinds of expenses."

Under federal election rules, Clinton's campaign would have benefited by underreporting the event's cost. The more a gala costs, even if part of the cost is covered by in-kind contributions, the less money a campaign can spend on the election itself.

Witness Andrew Grossman, treasurer for the political committee that benefited from the gala, testified Thursday he had never before heard of a fundraising event costing more than \$1 million. Under cross examination, Grossman said he still doesn't know the event's cost and he hasn't filed any amended reports to the FEC.

The boyish-looking Rosen, wearing a dark gray suit, took notes during testimony Thursday and conferred repeatedly with his lawyers. Levin was expected back on the stand when testimony resumes Tuesday.

Birthday clown arrested for alleged molestation

By The Associated Press

FONTANA, Calif. — A birthday party clown was arrested for allegedly molesting two San Bernardino County girls, and authorities suspect Trim-Trim the Clown may have abused other youngsters.

David Albert Lemus, 48, was charged with two counts of continuing sexual abuse of a child under 14 and he's in jail with bail set at \$500,000, the district attorney's office said.

"This guy's been doing the clown thing for about 12 years," police Sgt. William Megenney said Thursday, adding police suspect there are other victims.

Lemus was wearing a clown costume of white pancake makeup, red wig and nose, and floppy shoes when the incidents allegedly occurred Saturday night outside a swap meet at the National Orange Show Events Center in San Bernardino.

The 12- and 14-year-old girls were allegedly assaulted in the man's van.

Deputy District Attorney Karen Martinez said Lemus has allegedly molested the two girls since 1999.

Lemus, a part-time construction worker who was arrested May 7, worked birthday parties as a clown and visited swap meets throughout Southern California to find business.

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STATE



Easing tradition splits Hollywood church

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — When the Rev. Alan Meenan took over as senior pastor at the nationally prominent Hollywood First Presbyterian Church, it had been losing members for 20 years.

Now, hundreds of new worshippers are flocking to an alternative service staged by the church at a nearby nightclub that offers live rock music and a casual atmosphere that doesn't frown on flip-flops and nose piercings.

The service, called Contemporary Urban Experience, has bolstered membership at one of the most storied Presbyterian congregations in the country. But it has also created a deep rift between old and new members that threatens to tear the conservative church apart.

Responding to numerous complaints about Meenan, regional church officials, in a rare step, took control of operations at Hollywood First last week and put Meenan and his executive pastor on paid administrative leave to restore the peace.

The turmoil within the 2,700-member congregation reflects what experts call the "worship war," an identity crisis that has beset many mainline Protestant denominations as they struggle to survive in a culture that puts less importance on the traditions of organized religion.

Membership among Presbyterian churches has declined by as many as 40,000 people a year since the mid-1960s, said Jerry Van Marter, news director at Presbyterian Church USA.

Similar declines have been seen in nearly all mainline Protestant denominations, as clashes have developed not only over worship style but issues such as the ordination of women and the role of gays and lesbians in the church.

The decline has been especially painful at Hollywood First, where the congregation helped launch evangelists Billy Graham and Lloyd Ogilvie, who's now U.S. Senate chaplain. It was home to Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and Henrietta Mears, author of the popular Sunday school curriculum Gospel Light.

"Hollywood Presbyterian is the elite," said congregant Teena Smith, who until recently attended a nondenominational megachurch in Atlanta. "People against Meenan say ... 'That's great, move to alternative. But not in our backyard.'"

The rift over worship is something that William McKinney, president of the Pacific School of Religion at University of California, Berkeley, has seen before.

"You try to identify the kernel of the gospel — and that, you don't mess with. But your presentation needs to be sensitive to cultural change," he said. "This is a question that mainline folk wrestle with: Has the sacredness of the organ been elevated to a point where Jesus gets lost?"

At Hollywood First, the trouble began when Meenan launched the Contemporary Urban Experience, or CUE, services more than two years ago. The weekly Sunday service has attracted some 350 twenty- and thirty-somethings, some with tattoos and piercings. Many work in the entertainment industry.

"I could go into any coffee shop in Los Angeles and go up to any artsy, crazy guy and feel totally comfortable inviting him to this service," said J.C. Cornwell, 34, a church member who volunteers to produce CUE each week. "It's just a really cool service — but it's still the truth."

Some traditionalists have embraced the new service as a way to save their beloved church. For others, however, it represents a threat to the faith and a fall from grace.

"I would be very sad if it became demographically oriented or age-oriented, where there would come a day when the sanctuary was abandoned and all worship moved down to the warehouse," said Sparky Jamison, a 20-year member of Hollywood First and a church elder. "I come from a tradition of loving to sing and perform classical music."

The building tension over worship style exploded this spring when members discovered an \$856,000 budget shortfall that Meenan had not disclosed. The pastor hasn't been accused of fraud — simply poor management.

The Presbytery of the Pacific, a regional governing body for the denomination's churches in Southern California and Hawaii, received more than 100 letters and calls from disgruntled members. They complained about Meenan's dictatorial management style, his disregard for Presbyterian tradition and his decision to put money into overseas missionary trips and youth outreach while criticizing the cost of the traditional services.

On May 3, some 500 parishioners attended a five-hour meeting during which dozens of parishioners both for and against Meenan addressed the presbytery.

Meenan acknowledged he hadn't been a perfect pastor but blamed dissension on traditional members who were unwilling to embrace his new direction. He said the church gained 728 new members under his eight-year leadership, including 350 at the alternative service and between 300 and 500 who attend the weekly Bible study.

"There are those who sense a loss of involvement in their church and target me as a result," said Meenan, who has been a pastor for 32 years. "Change is essential to our future and change is working for good in Hollywood."

The presbytery voted to seize control of Hollywood First and appointed an administrative commission, which immediately placed Meenan and his executive pastor, David Manock, on an indefinite paid leave.

Many members worry that the congregation won't be able to bridge the generational gap even with outside intervention.

"I would like to see our church learn how to embrace these separate styles of worship. How can we do that and merge together and remain merged together as a congregation?" said Jamison, the church elder.

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Tommy Chong gets 'courage under fire' award at SM gala

GALA, from page 1

a similar gala held May 4 in Washington D.C. garnered the attention of the San Francisco Chronicle. "Why is this on page 1? We did this in D.C. ... When you do something normal, it's news. It's like they expected us to misbehave."

The non-smoking event in Santa Monica attracted celebrities such as television talk show host Montel Williams, who, as the event's honorary chair, delivered a sobering message about how marijuana has saved his life since he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1999.

In true talk-show host fashion, Williams walked around the penthouse of the Sheraton Delfina Hotel, speaking to the crowd as they noshed on baked chicken and lasagna. Williams, who broke down crying during his speech, received a standing ovation from the crowd.

Williams, who is a user of medical marijuana to treat the symptoms of MS, first tried to alleviate his pain with regular usage of the strongest painkillers on the market — Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet and morphine. Not only were the drugs expensive and didn't bring Williams any relief, they made him incoherent, addicted and depressed, he said. Acting upon his doctor's recommendation, Williams began smoking pot to alleviate his symp-

toms. Since then, he has advocated for protection of patients on his television show, and during personal visits to Capitol Hill and New York's state Capitol, to name a few.

"All I want is a chance to keep working, and without this marijuana, I can't work," said Williams, who wrote in his book about living with MS, "Climbing Higher," that his mental and physical pain were so severe that he twice attempted suicide.

The Marijuana Policy Project, the nation's largest policy reform lobbying organization, works to minimize the harm associated with marijuana — both the consumption of it and the laws that are intended to prohibit it. The nonprofit advocacy group based in Washington, D.C., believes that the greatest harm associated with marijuana is imprisonment. It has focused most of its energies on removing criminal penalties for medical marijuana use.

The Santa Monica event was held to celebrate MPP's victories over the past 10 years and commemorate the progress of the entire marijuana policy reform movement.

But as Williams pointed out, the battle to reform medical marijuana laws is far

See GALA, page 14



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Talk show host Montel Williams and actor Tommy Chong are advocates for reforming marijuana laws. (Below) Williams and Marijuana Policy Project Executive Director Rob Kampa are interviewed by the media last week before the organization's 10th anniversary gala at the Sheraton Delfina Hotel.

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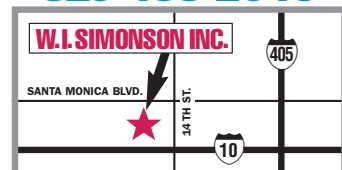
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LOCAL

Advocates charge lawmakers as 'weak'

GALA, from page 12

from over. He said that when he got involved in the movement, he was convinced that President Bush would expand medicinal marijuana laws.

"I thought this was a battle that we could win ... maybe I was high when I was thinking that," Williams joked. "Then I came to realize how absolutely ignorant that thought was."

Williams, who carries a card issued by California that allows him to obtain his marijuana supply, partially blamed heavy hitters in Hollywood who use pot recreationally but remain on the sidelines in the debate.

"There are a lot of powerful voices out there, but they all cover and run away," he said.

Williams also said he feels betrayed by his government not only because he served in the military for 22 years, but that he bought into the country's war on drugs and for years spoke out against drug use at high schools.

"I defended a country that doesn't support me ... I've been paying my taxes, and I haven't missed a beat my adult life ... I think I did my share for democracy," he said. "I fought this dumb-ass war against drugs, and I got sold a line of shit."

Also honored at the gala in Santa Monica was Supreme Court medical marijuana plaintiff Angel Raich, who has been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor, a seizure disorder, nausea and several chronic pain disorders. She was partly paralyzed until she started using marijuana. As a result of Raich and co-filer Diane Monson's lawsuit against the federal government, both are now legally allowed to use, possess and grow their own marijuana under California state law

and federal law.

Actor Tommy Chong received the Courage Under Fire Award for his recent imprisonment for paraphernalia trafficking. His experience is highlighted in a recently released documentary, "Chong's Not Here!" a portrait of Chong set against the backdrop of America's culture war. Filmmaker Josh Gilbert follows the journey of legendary counter-culture comedian Chong, who was besieged by a fully armed SWAT team and indicted for distributing art glass water pipes over the Internet in a \$12 million drug paraphernalia sting operation, "Operation Pipe Dreams." He wound up serving nine months in federal prison.

International comedian Tom Rhodes, who hosted the event, said the legalization of medicinal marijuana is about money — the country's lawmakers would rather stay in the deep pockets of the pharmaceutical companies than use the most inexpensive way to combat pain associated with disease. Their arguments that marijuana legalization will lead to harder drug usage among Americans is nothing more than a smokescreen for their own agendas, Rhodes said.

"The lobbyists are too strong, and the lawmakers are too weak," he said. "Marijuana is not going to make you run out and do heroin."

The federal government classifies marijuana in the same category as LSD, PCP and heroin, considered unsafe to use even under a doctor's prescription. In most states, physicians are allowed to prescribe cocaine, morphine and methamphetamine, but not marijuana. California is an exception — voters have approved allowing doctors to prescribe medical marijuana to patients and caregivers.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

Join Adventure 16 for the Southern California premiere of "Return2Sender," the latest rock-climbing film from Peter Mortimer, director of film "Front Range Freaks." Reprising his role as the Urban Ape, Timmy O'Neill continues to climb the buildings of Los Angeles and transitions to crack climbing in Southern Utah. Return2Sender also features the return of Biscuit, the rock star climbing dog; BASE jumping in Mexico; Cicada Jenerik, the 10-year-old climber; and big wall climbing in Greenland. Director Peter Mortimer will be on hand to answer questions, and star Timmy O'Neill will perform a piece of his high-flying comedy act.

On Tuesday, May 17, at 7 p.m. the movie can be viewed at John Adams Middle School Auditorium in Santa Monica.

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NATIONAL



Vegas looks back on its humble beginnings

BY KEN RITTER
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — Sin City pauses in its round-the-clock frenzy of glitter and glitz this weekend to celebrate its 100th birthday with a look back at a surprisingly rich pioneer history.

"Las Vegas was a speck in the desert in 1905," Nevada state archivist Guy Rocha said of a town in a bowl-shaped valley rimmed by jagged gray mountains and nourished by a natural spring. The name is Spanish for "the meadows."

"Now there's not a place in the modern world that doesn't recognize Las Vegas," Rocha said. "That's not hype. It is what it is."

American Indians and travelers on the Old Spanish Trail watered at the springs, but the town got its start because the railroad from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles needed a place to house workers.

Today, it's a go-go 24-hour metropolis of casinos, nightclubs and restaurants that lures 37 million tourists a year. Marquee casinos with dancing fountains and canals sprouted where the springs dried up long ago.

Down the Las Vegas Strip are scale models of the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty and an Egyptian pyramid. Up the Strip, the curvy Wynn Las Vegas resort opened last month at a cost of \$2.7 billion.

Not surprising for this city of excess, there's nothing humble about Sin City's celebration of the May 15, 1905, land auction that drew hardy buyers to dusty home sites in what is now downtown Las Vegas.

A birthday cake larger than a basketball court, fireworks, concerts, simultaneous "I Do's" for 100 couples, and a resurrected "Hellorado Days" parade are scheduled in and around the town that didn't have a paved road until 1924.

It now has 1.7 million residents and choked freeways that funnel commuters to work from sprawling suburbs.

"Las Vegas is the only place that knows how to put on a world-class birthday party," boasts Mayor Oscar Goodman, a former mob lawyer now in his second term as the self-described world's happiest mayor. "We want the whole world to celebrate with us."

Drawing attention and people was a lesson learned a century ago from townsfolk artful with hyperbole and unblinking pragmatism.

Skeptical of the 1900 U.S. Census, which put the area population at 30 people, Michael Green, a Community College of Southern Nevada professor, checked residents' signatures.

"They look uncharacteristically alike," said Green, co-author of "Las Vegas: A Centennial History." Many probably worked a ranch owned by Helen Stewart, who sold almost 3 square miles for home sites.

More settlers soon came — drawn from Los Angeles

and Salt Lake City by cheap land and the promise of train ticket refund if they plunked down as little as \$100 on a lot.

"A \$25 down payment and a \$22 round-trip ticket to L.A.," recalled Ed Von Tobel Jr., 92, whose father bought two parcels and opened a lumber yard to supply the town's first building boom.

The auction was conducted near today's Plaza hotel-casino. When it was done, organizers even sold the roughhewn auctioneer's stand for floors for the city's first canvas-sided homes.

"I think they got \$7 for the wood," Green said.

Years later, motorists would be lured off the highways by billboards touting cheap shrimp cocktail (still 99 cents at the Golden Gate) and free rooms for gamblers.

Las Vegas got its first highway, golf course and daily passenger air service in the 1920s, but was hurt by a railroad strike. It recovered in 1931 when state lawmakers relaxed divorce laws and legalized casino gambling, and the federal government began building what would become Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, 30 miles east of town.

Rocha called dam construction "a threshold event."

"Before 1931, more people knew where Las Vegas, New Mexico, was than where Las Vegas, Nevada, was," he said. "It was one of the largest public works project in the history of the nation, and with water and hydroelectric power available, people could start thinking about bigger things."

World War II brought soldiers to a gunnery range that became Nellis Air Force Base, workers to Basic Magnesium Inc. to produce lightweight metal in Henderson for the war effort, and gamblers to downtown Fremont Street.

"The Apache, the Boulder, the Frontier Club, the Pioneer. A lot had Western names and a very Western orientation," Green said of the neon-lit casinos in downtown's "Glitter Gulch." Hellorado Days started in 1935 as a Western-themed pageant and ran until 1998.

The Western theme continued with the opening of the El Rancho on the Strip — a stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard south of town in Clark County that Golden Nugget owner Guy McAfee is credited with naming after the famous Sunset Strip in Hollywood.

Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel broke ground in 1945 with \$1.5 million from New York and California underworld associates on a hotel farther down the Strip. A year later and \$4.5 million over budget, it opened as the Flamingo. Within months the legendary mobster was shot to death — but his hotel would thrive.

"The Flamingo touched off the Strip building boom," Green said. "In the next decade and a half, you get the classic old Strip hotels — the Thunderbird, Desert Inn, Sahara, Sands, Riviera, Hacienda, New Frontier,

Tropicana."

Mobster Morris "Mo" Dalitz arrived from Cleveland in 1949 to open the Desert Inn and Las Vegas Country Club, and diversified into housing, a hospital and a residential mall east of the Strip.

Northwest of downtown, the Moulin Rouge opened as the city's first integrated casino in 1955, drawing black and white entertainers after their Strip performances. It closed within six months, but it led to the landmark 1960 agreement to desegregate Strip hotels.

On the Strip, Frank Sinatra played the Sands' Copa Room nightly and caroused after hours with "Rat Pack" buddies Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford.

The gambling industry gained credibility with the creation of the Nevada Gaming Commission and "respectability," Green said, when reclusive tycoon Howard Hughes decided to settle in the Desert Inn, one of several casinos he bought.

"After he arrived, the city was seen as a clean investment for people who didn't have to have a rap sheet," Green said.

Hughes moved in in 1966, by coincidence the same year that Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas' first themed casino, opened. Elvis Presley gave Las Vegas a "viva" identity during his 837 performances at the Hilton from 1969 to 1977.

Twelve years later, Steve Wynn opened The Mirage with an exotic tropical theme and a fire-belching volcano. The first new hotel on the Strip in 16 years sparked a competitive casino boom — and a wave of spectacular implosions.

Gone are the Dunes, the Landmark, the Sands, the Hacienda, the El Rancho and the Desert Inn. In their places are multibillion-dollar hotel-casinos and a tourism machine that teases: "What happens here, stays here."

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NATIONAL

Democrats to play time game to block Bolton

BY BARRY SCHWEID

AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON — President Bush's nomination of John R. Bolton to be U.N. ambassador has been shaken again by a Republican senator's surprise opposition to the embattled nominee, and Democrats hope to seize the opportunity and defeat him in the Senate.

At a minimum, they will play for delay, make the White House squirm and renew accusations that Bolton was overly aggressive as the State Department's top arms-control official, pushing his views and trying to damage the careers of officials who disagreed with him.

The leader of the fight against Bolton, Sen. Joseph R. Biden of Delaware, suggested Bush "would be better served by bringing the nomination down."

"It does not appear that Mr. Bolton has the confidence of a majority of the members of the Senate," Biden said.

The White House showed no sign of backing down after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday voted 10-8 along party lines to forward the nomination to the Senate but without a recommendation, an unusual move.

Sticking to a weeks-old script, Bush spokesman Scott McClellan said, "John Bolton is the right person at the right time for this important position."

While not a defeat for Bush, the vote by the Republican-led committee represented an embarrassing setback early in his second term.

Bush does have an ace in the hole, however, in that Republicans control the Senate 55 to 44, with one independent.

If Bolton survives the bruising Senate fight, he will take with him to New York the scorching criticism of Democratic senators, the doubts of Republican George Voinovich of Ohio, who placed a legislative stumbling block in his path, and criticism even from Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., who is managing the nomination.

"His blunt style alienated some colleagues," Lugar acknowledged.

Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., called Bolton "a loose cannon."

Voinovich's doubts helped delay the vote for more than three weeks. In an impassioned and conflicted statement that electrified the committee's 5 1/2-hour meeting, he questioned the impact on the United Nations of naming an ambassador "who himself has been accused of being arrogant, of not listening to his friends, of acting unilaterally and of bullying those who do not have ability to properly defend themselves."

"These are the very characteristics that we are trying to dispel," Voinovich said.

Lugar, taking a contrary tack, said if Bolton goes to the United Nations and

helps achieve reform, the U.N. will gain in credibility, especially among the American people. "Secretary Bolton has become closely associated with the United States' efforts to reform the U.N.," the chairman said.

Bush, aware of Voinovich's reservations, telephoned him Wednesday, a day before the vote. McClellan said Friday he was the only senator the president called.

Hoping time is on their side, the Democrats plan to demand more documents, particularly information on whether Bolton sought the names of U.S. officials whose communications were intercepted by U.S. intelligence.

Sen. Barbara Boxer of California, while not threatening a filibuster, told a reporter that the Democrats would not cooperate with any proposed deadlines. Biden reminded the Senate committee that other U.N. nominations have moved slowly through the Senate.

Biden said the committee spent six months on former President Clinton's nomination of Richard Holbrooke to be U.N. ambassador and four months on Bush's nomination of John Negroponte for the post.

Voinovich, in laying out a case against Bolton, called the nominee "the poster-child of what someone in the diplomatic corps should not be."

Voinovich said Bolton should be com-

mended for his achievements. The senator cited Bolton's work in countering anti-Semitism, on a treaty to reduce stockpiles of U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons, and on a U.S. program designed to curb the spread of weapons technology.

"Despite these successes, there is no doubt that Bolton has serious deficiencies in the areas that are critical to a good ambassador," Voinovich said.

After weeks of deliberation by the committee, interviews with 29 past and present U.S. officials and examining thousands of pages of documents, "I have come to the conclusion that the United States can do better than John Bolton," he said in a low voice.

Democrats leaned forward. It seemed the Republican majority would disintegrate and be replaced by a 9-9 tie.

Then Voinovich hesitated, put his prepared statement aside, and changed course.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "I am not so arrogant to think that I should impose my judgment and perspective of the U.S. position in the world community on the rest of my colleagues. We owe it to the president to give Mr. Bolton an up-or-down vote on the floor of the U.S. Senate."

The committee, he said, should move it along. "Let the Senate work its will," he said.

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NATIONAL



Rumsfeld's base-closing plan far-reaching

BY ROBERT BURNS

AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is proposing the most sweeping changes to its network of military bases in modern history, a plan that would close 33 major facilities in 22 states and reconfigure hundreds of others to achieve savings and promote cooperation among the armed services.

More than two years in the making, Friday's recommendations by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld represented his attempt to balance a whirl of competing forces. They include the changing threats facing the nation, massive federal deficits, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the economies of local communities and political pressures.

While state officials, community leaders, lobbyists and members of Congress combed through a thicket of data the Pentagon presented, the overarching theme of Rumsfeld's plan was surprisingly simple: To be more combat ready and affordable, the individual services must become leaner and more unified.

An example: The Army would move the 7th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, N.C., to the Air Force's Eglin, Fla., base, so both services' elite troops could train together more easily. An airfield next to Eglin is the headquarters of Air Force Special Operations Command.

Out would go the crown jewel of the Army hospital system: the venerable Walter Reed hospital in Washington. The hospital would move staff and services to

the National Naval Medical Center in nearby Bethesda, Md., to create a new, expanded facility carrying the Walter Reed name.

The military calls this "jointness" — the services combining their strengths rather than working separately.

"Because jointness is key to creating military value — that was our goal," said Michael Wynne, the Pentagon's technology and weapons-buying chief who oversaw the base review project.

Rumsfeld had said before releasing his report that closures would be fewer than once anticipated, in part because surplus space will be used to accommodate tens of thousands of troops scheduled to be brought home from Cold War-era bases in Europe and Asia.

And while the number of bases he has asked to be shuttered is only slightly higher than in previous base-closing rounds dating to 1988, he put forth an extraordinary number of other changes and consolidations — 775 "minor closures and realignments" compared with 235 in the four previous rounds combined.

The proposal submitted to Congress and an independent base closing commission evoked immediate howls of protest from members of Congress whose states stand to lose jobs — civilian and military — and the Pentagon pledged to lend a helping hand to the hardest hit communities.

"It is wrong. It is shortsighted," Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., said when he learned the closures would include the submarine base at Groton. He called it "cruel and unusual punishment" of his

state, which would suffer a net loss of 7,133 military and 1,041 civilian jobs.

Disappointment was also felt far from the corridors of power.

In Texarkana, Texas, doughnut shop owner Danny Witt estimated he would lose \$1,000 a month in sales if the Red River Army Depot and Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant are closed as proposed.

"I hate it," he said. "It's devastating. I really thought we would miss the list."

Many of the states that fared well are in the South and Southwest. Georgia would register a net gain of 8,677 military positions, although it would lose 1,971 civilian jobs, while Texas would gain nearly 9,000 military positions, with El Paso and San Antonio acquiring the most.

Rumsfeld said he knows some communities will struggle to cope with job losses, but he made clear that the nation's security can be assured only if the military gets stronger.

It's a theme Rumsfeld has sounded throughout his tenure at the Pentagon, and he alluded to it in a cover letter to the report to Anthony J. Principi, chairman of the base closing commission.

"Increasing combat effectiveness and transforming U.S. forces are critical if our country is to be able to meet tomorrow's national defense challenges," he wrote. He recommended that a similar base-use review be done every five to 10 years. His was the first since 1995.

The chiefs of all the services endorsed Rumsfeld's plan, but it will face intense scrutiny from Principi's panel, which will take public testimony from Rumsfeld on

Monday. The commission has until Sept. 8 to present its recommendations to President Bush, who can accept or reject it whole, but not part. Congress likewise can accept or reject it in whole.

Among other highlights of Rumsfeld's plan:

■ In addition to the 33 major bases that would be closed, another 29 would shrink in size and lose 400 or more jobs. Four of the latter are Navy facilities in California, including Naval Base Coronado. Fort Knox, Ky., would not close but would lose 4,867 military jobs while gaining 1,739 civilian slots.

■ The Air Force would consolidate its B-1 Lancer bomber fleet at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, resulting in the closure of Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D. The aerospace medicine program at Brooks City-Base, in San Antonio, Texas, would move to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. Wright-Patterson also would obtain the Navy's aero-medical research laboratory now located at Pensacola, Fla.

■ The Army would close Fort Monroe, Va., built in the early 1800s on the site of various fortifications that dated back to 1609, when the British erected defenses to protect the approaches to the Jamestown colony. Its main tenant, the Training and Doctrine Command, would be moved to Fort Eustis, Va.

■ About 12 million square feet of leased space would be vacated for more secure facilities owned by the government.

Lousy timing: Small Oregon coastal town votes on gas tax hike

BY JULIA SILVERMAN

Associated Press Writer

FLORENCE, Ore. — Gas prices in this small coastal town have hovered at around the \$2.50 per gallon mark for weeks now, with no drop in sight.

So even supporters of a plan to raise the city's gas tax by 3 cents per gallon have to admit that this isn't, perhaps, the best time to ask voters to pony up more at the pump.

"The timing is lousy," conceded Mayor Phil Brubaker, a self-described "pro-business, fiscal conservative" who has nevertheless been stumping for the gas tax at club meetings and homeowners' associations in anticipation of Tuesday's vote.

About a dozen Oregon cities, and others around the West, have similar taxes to pay for maintenance of city streets. But with gas prices in the region — particularly in Oregon, Washington, California and Nevada — among the highest in the nation, backlash like the one in Florence could become commonplace.

In Washington, Democratic Gov. Christine Gregoire just signed into law a

new statewide gas tax that will mean a hike of 9.5 cents over four years. The money is intended to pay for massive transportation projects across the state, but Republicans already have begun a drive to collect enough signatures to put the issue to a statewide vote.

In Nevada, where the state gas tax is already 17.65 cents per gallon, lawmakers last month stopped a proposal to raise gas taxes by 2 cents a gallon each year for the next five years before it even really started.

"I will not move forward with any bill that raises gasoline taxes," said John Ocegüera, the Democratic chairman of the Assembly Transportation and Homeland Security Committee.

In Arizona, legislators have gone a full 180 degrees from gas taxes, offering a proposal to let motorists who rack up the miles claim a 10-cent per gallon rebate, up to \$200, for gasoline taxes paid between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

John Tapogna, an economist with Portland-based ECONorthwest, said that in the past, local gas taxes have been able to find favor with voters because the

results were, quite literally, concrete.

"Voters could see in short order the benefits of the tax, in terms of improved roads or improved maintenance," he said.

But now, such taxes are likely to be a far harder sell, Tapogna said.

"Local willingness to increase taxes on gas is going to have to be viewed in the context of the current situation," he said. "With prices having risen by 40 to 50 cents a gallon in the last few months, voters will take a second look."

In tourist-oriented Florence, population 7,500, where retirees have settled in droves, the fracas over the gas tax started back in December, where City Council members unanimously approved the tax to help pay for maintenance of the city's 36 miles of road.

There was no other choice, Brubaker said — dollars from the logging trucks that used to rumble through town once paid for the wear-and-tear on streets, but that funding has dried up as the logging economy slowed.

Florence resident Suzanne Roberts said she was infuriated that the plan was passed without giving voters a say. She

teamed up with former Florence Mayor Wilbur Ternyik to collect enough signatures to put the plan to a citywide vote.

It wasn't hard to collect the 450 signatures they needed, about 10 percent of those who voted in the last election. Gas prices in Oregon rank fifth in the nation, at an average of \$2.48 as of May 3, according to the state's Triple A affiliate. That's topped only by California, at \$2.61, Nevada and Hawaii at \$2.51 and Washington at \$2.49.

"I don't think there is any question — I think we will win," Roberts said of the vote-by-mail election that concludes Tuesday. "There's already a heavy voter turnout here, and there's nothing else on our ballot of any interest."

Brubaker, though, said he thinks the gas tax still has a shot. Voters understand, he said, that preventive maintenance now will stop the city's current roads from going to pot(holes) later.

"The city is built on sand," he said. "Our environment is saltier, and since salt is a drying agent, the road surface is literally shrinking."

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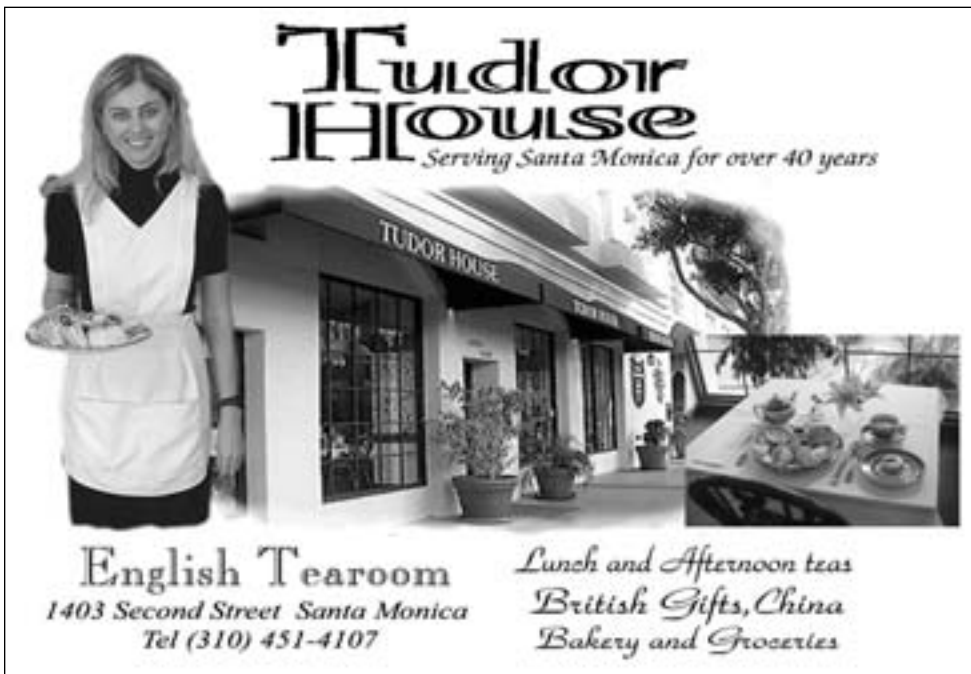
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NATIONAL

Rec vehicle bans are increasingly common

BY MARTHA IRVINE

AP National Writer

Mary Herr thought she was one lucky kid when she got an electric scooter for her recent 10th birthday. But when she rode it for the first time on a bike path from her home to her nearby Idaho school, she ran into an roadblock: School administrators confiscated the scooter and told her she wasn't allowed to ride it.

It's an increasingly common scenario as motorized recreational vehicles — from scooters to mini-sized motorbikes known as "pocket bikes" — grow in popularity, and as more cities and states make moves to ban or regulate their use on public property.

In Idaho, where Mary lives, state law prohibits anyone without a driver's license from operating a motorized vehicle of any kind — something her parents didn't know when they bought the scooter.

"It's sort of fair," says Mary, who lives in Meridian, just outside Boise. "But it's sort of not fair because it's super fun to ride it."

Trouble is, say law enforcement officials and others who monitor transportation, these new vehicles present a whole different set of safety issues — and often don't mix well with foot traffic on sidewalks or with bigger, faster cars and trucks on roadways.

One transportation expert says she's especially worried about pocket bikes, which can exceed speeds of 40 mph and ride low to the ground, making them difficult to see.

"In our view, it's just an accident waiting to happen," says Barbara Harsha, executive director of the Governors Highway Safety Association, which will convene a workshop on the topic of "unconventional vehicles" at its annual meeting this summer in Norfolk, Va.

At the very least, Harsha is urging states that haven't addressed the issue to begin registering all motorized vehicles and requiring riders to wear helmets.

Utah is one state that recently enacted a law banning pocket bikes from public roadways and paths unless the bike and the driver are licensed. And some cities are banning many types of motorized recreational vehicles altogether.

"We saw kids zooming into intersections — 5- and 6-year-olds riding down the middle of the street," says Sgt. Dan Carlson, a spokesman for the police department in Burnsville, Minn., which imposed a ban in February, after several residents complained.

Because every state and city has its own set of regulations, it can get confusing for riders who are often unaware of restrictions when they buy motorized recreational vehicles at toy stores and specialized dealers.

Erik Slaven, a 31-year-old in Los Angeles, says he recently got a \$300 ticket in Beverly Hills for riding on the sidewalk on his gas-powered scooter, designed so he stands while riding it.

"I love my scooter and am finding it harder and harder to find acceptable places to ride," says Slaven, who's taken to riding it in smaller towns outside Los Angeles, with fewer problems.

One type of motorized transportation that has received a relatively warmer reception in some cities is the Segway, a wheeled contraption that travels a maximum of 12.5 mph and can be ridden at much slower speeds. Already, they're becoming a more common sight in some cities, as riders — who stand — whisk along sidewalks, controlling the Segway with both their hands and feet.

Several Southern California cities have, for instance, been open to Segway use. In some cases, law enforcement officials there are using them on their patrols. And commuters also can take them onto trains in Los Angeles.

"I think people are starting to see the value," says Jason Stemmler, president of the Segway Los Angeles dealership who notes that his sales between May and December 2004 rose about 50 percent.

Peter Shankman, a 32-year-old New Yorker, bought his Segway two years ago and says he's also had little problem riding it on city sidewalks. "I've gotten stopped by cops four times. Each time, it was to try it out," he says.

The biggest annoyance, he says, comes from the people who yell "Lazy!" as he rides by, causing him to slow down and pull out the certificate he received for finishing the New York City marathon.

For Mary Herr in Idaho and other youngsters, though, being able to join the ranks of the motorized is going to take some patience.

Her mom, Lea Herr, persuaded the toy store where they bought the \$200 electric scooter to refund their money. They then went to another store and bought her a purple bicycle — "my favorite color," says Mary, who misses her electric scooter but is starting to see the advantages of having a plain old bike.

"The motor scooter, you had to wait to charge," she says. "The bike, you can ride any time you want."



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INTERNATIONAL



Protests spread over alleged desecration

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan — Protesters threw rocks and police shot back Friday as violent anti-U.S. protests spread to more Afghan cities, leaving at least eight people dead and threatening a security crisis for the government.

In neighboring Pakistan, street protests fizzled despite tough rhetoric from hard-line preachers over allegations that U.S. anti-terrorism interrogators desecrated Islam's holy book. The rest of the Muslim world was mostly quiet, with only small rallies at a Palestinian refugee camp and in Indonesia.

Afghan officials suggested opponents of the country's painstaking democratic rebirth were stirring up this week's trouble, while the U.S. government appealed for calm and stressed that the desecration charge was being investigated by the Pentagon.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that if the allegations "are proven true, we will take appropriate action. Respect for the religious freedom for all individuals is one of the founding principles of the United States."

Friday's deaths — reported in four Afghan towns and cities — brought to 15 the number of people killed in the biggest outpouring of anti-American sentiment since a U.S.-led military campaign drove the Taliban regime from power at the end of 2001.

Afghan officials said some of the protesters chanting anti-American slogans and stoning the offices of international relief groups are being encouraged by factions that have resisted U.N. disarmament drives or been sidelined by President Hamid Karzai's government.

"This is organized by particular groups who are the enemies of Afghanistan," Interior Ministry spokesman Latfullah Mashal told The Associated Press. "They are trying to show that the situation — that security — is not good."

Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, an Islamic cleric and close ally of Karzai, told worshippers in Kabul's main mosque Friday that the violence was against Islam.

"The ones who are here to help us and help our government, until they leave our country, we should respect them," Mujaddedi said.

He claimed "foreign hands" were stirring the violence — words often used to accuse Pakistan, where leaders of the Taliban and the Hizb-e-Islami group led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar are believed to find refuge.

Shooting broke out in the southeastern city of Ghazni as protesters swarmed toward a police station and the governor's residence after Friday prayers, chanting "Death to America" and pelting the buildings with rocks, witnesses said.

Shafiqullah Shafaq, a doctor at the city's hospital, told AP that two civilians and a police officer were fatally shot and 21 people were wounded, including the provin-

cial police chief.

In northeastern Badakhshan province, three men died when police opened fire trying to control hundreds of protesters in Baharak district, Gov. Abdul Majid said. Twenty-two people were reported hurt, including three police officers.

Majid said the crowd set fire to the offices of a British aid group and Focus, a reconstruction agency financed by the Aga Khan Foundation, a fund set up by the spiritual leader of the world's 20 million Ismaili Muslims.

Officials said a protester was killed when police fired during a riot after prayers in the northwestern town of Qala-e-Naw and another died from a gunshot wound in Gardez, near the Pakistani border.

The protests began after Newsweek magazine reported in its May 9 edition that interrogators at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, placed Qurans in washrooms to unsettle suspects, and "flushed a holy book down the toilet."

Many of the 520 inmates at Guantanamo are Muslims arrested during the U.S.-led war against the Taliban and its al-Qaida allies in Afghanistan.

Protests over the Newsweek report erupted Tuesday in the eastern city of Jalalabad, and the killing of four rioters by police further enflamed passions. Demonstrations

— many of them violent — have occurred in at least 12 Afghan towns and cities.

Saudi Arabia joined fellow U.S. ally Pakistan in registering dismay over the allegations, as did the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, a banned militant religious movement.

But aside from Afghans, few in Muslim lands have taken to the streets.

Some 1,500 activists from the Islamic militant group Hamas staged an anti-U.S. protest Friday in the Gaza Strip, chanting "Protect our holy book." About 50 people demonstrated in the eastern city of Makassar in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country.

An appeal by Pakistan's opposition Islamic coalition Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal for Muslims to protest after Friday prayers fell flat. Only a few hundred people turned out for peaceful demonstrations in Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar.

"By insulting the Quran, they have challenged our belief. We are hurt ... If we don't rise against Americans, if we don't give them a strong message today, they will do it again," cleric Hafiz Hussain Ahmad told worshippers at a mosque in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital.

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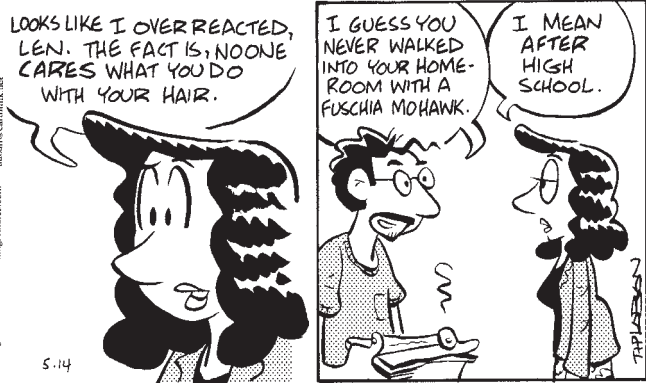


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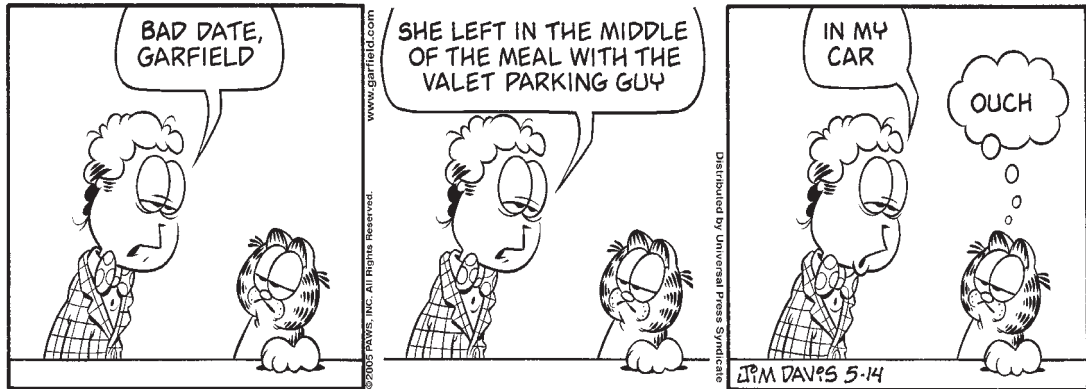
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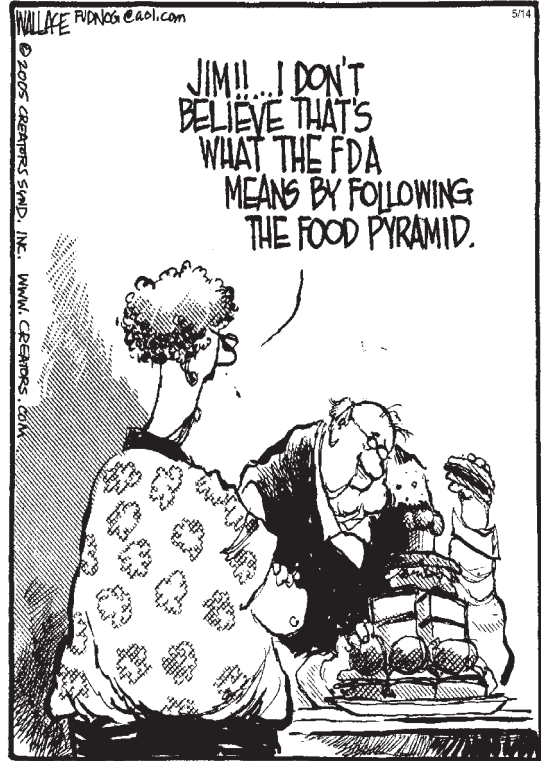


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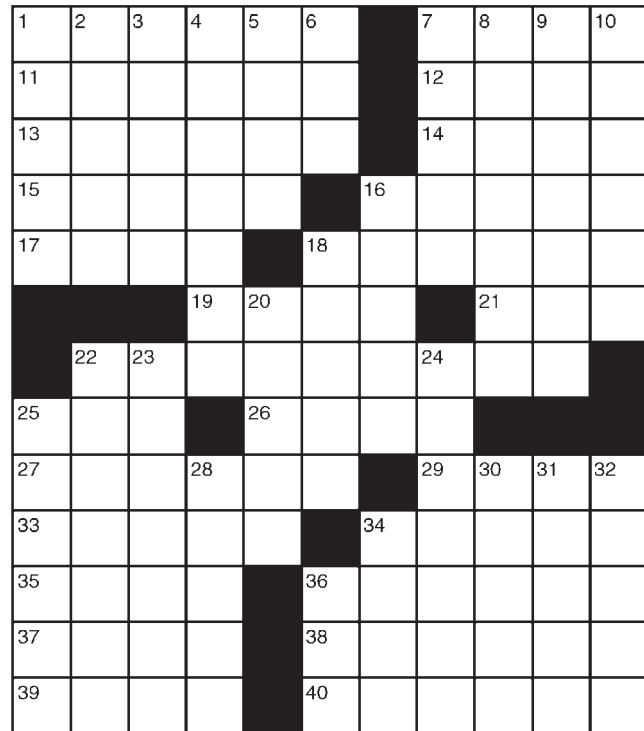
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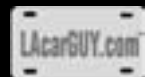
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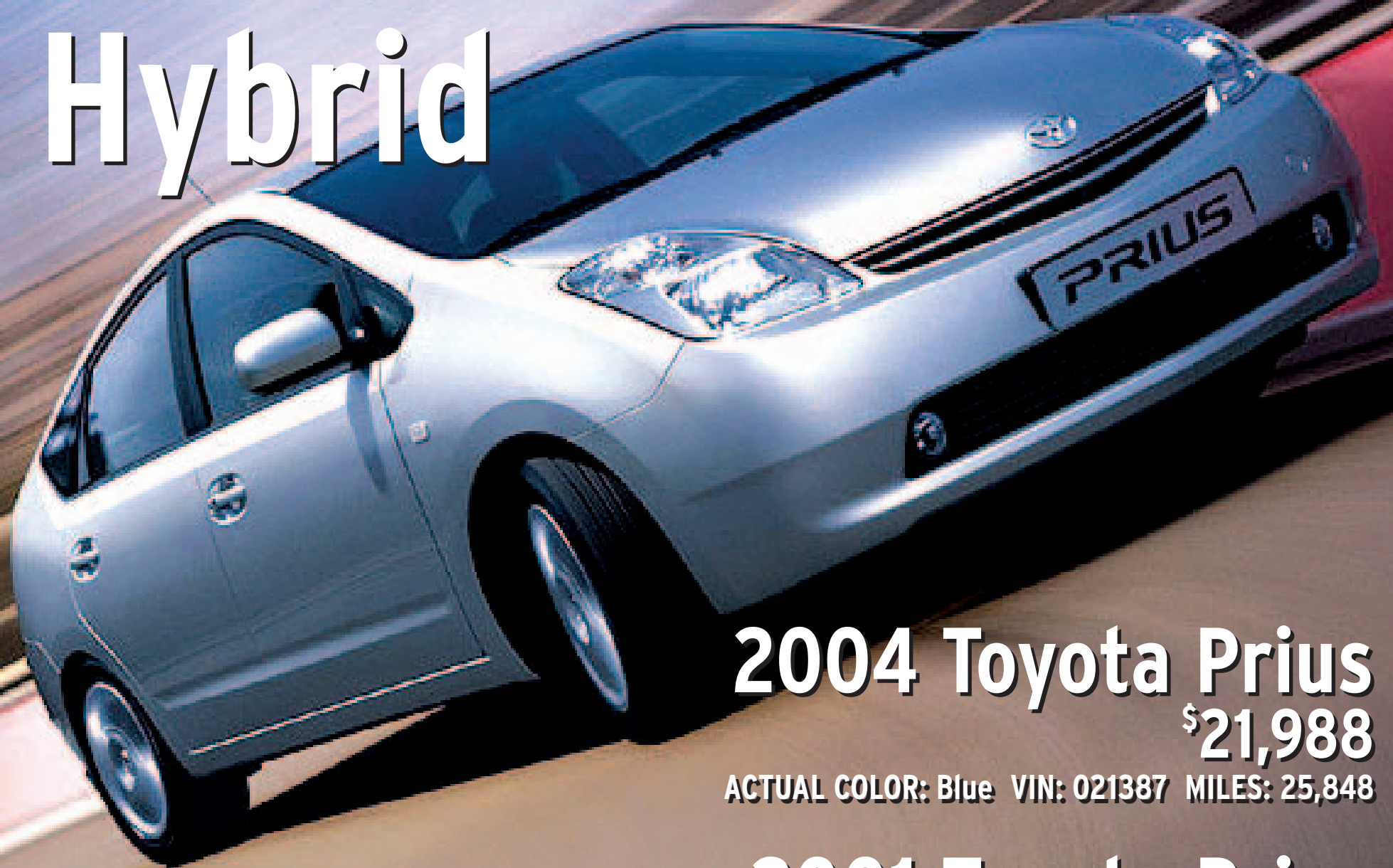
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