

FREE

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2002

Volume 1, Issue 159

Santa Monica Daily Press

Picked fresh daily. 100% organic news.

Upset at what Simon says



Protesters wave signs outside Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Simon's campaign office at 320 Wilshire Boulevard on Tuesday. The group, which consisted of politically active Democrats and union members, are upset over Simon's energy policies.

Andrew H. Fixmer/Daily Press

Affordable housing goes before voters

City Council wants TORCA to be tweaked

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

It's up to voters to decide how Santa Monica will fund new affordable housing developments.

The City Council on Tuesday voted to put a question on the November ballot that would ask voters to allow all taxes collected on apartments converted to condominiums be used to fund affordable housing projects.

The city has about \$8 million earmarked for low-interest loans as an incentive for home ownership. However, demand for the loans has been very low and few have been administered, city officials said.

The city wants to redistribute the money to build new affordable, rental housing. But residents must vote to change the city's charter to access the funds, which were collected under Tenant Ownership Rights Charter Amendment — also known as TORCA — which expired in 1996.

Of the roughly \$20 million collected under the tax — which called for a one-time fee equal to 12 times the maximum rent allowable under law — half went towards buying a

mobile home park, building low-income housing and administrative costs. The administrative costs alone reportedly exceed \$1 million.

"I think the most pressing housing need in the city is in the area of affordable housing, and that's where this money should be used"

—KEN GENSER
Santa Monica Councilman

About \$2 million has been used for home loans, but the remaining \$8 million that would have gone into the home ownership program would be made available for building more affordable housing.

The city could still use some of the funds for low-interest loans, but they would no longer be required to do so, city officials said.

Critics said the city's loan program is so complex that it prohibits people from applying for the loans. They said the loan program is one

See TORCA, page 5

Bus fares increase 50 percent

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

For the first time in nearly two decades, bus fares in Santa Monica will increase.

The Santa Monica City Council on Tuesday voted 4-1 to raise the Big Blue Bus's fare from 50 cents to 75 cents.

The council also voted to raise the \$1.25 base fare on the Line 10 express to downtown Los Angeles to \$1.75. Bus tokens and single fares on the Big Blue Card will increase to 70 cents.

The new fares will take effect on July 1.

Fearing the increase would be hurtful to persons living on a fixed income, the council did not raise any discounted fares for seniors, students and the disabled.

"The focus should be on helping those that cannot afford a car at all," said Councilman Richard Bloom. "Middle-class people who choose to ride the

bus now at 50 cents won't mind paying an extra quarter, but to some people the extra \$10 to \$20 a month in bus fare will make a big difference."

Seniors and the disabled will continue to pay 25 cents for a local fare; college students will pay 40 cents and the Blue Card for students K-12 will cost 25 cents. Seniors and the disabled will continue to have a reduced fare of 60 cents on the Line 10 Express bus.

The Big Blue Bus has not increased fares since 1983. However, the average cost to the bus company per rider has increased from 66 cents to \$1.49 since then. The 50 cent fare, adjusted for inflation would have been 86 cents, city officials say.

Compounding bus fare pressures, the bus company has had to increase the number of buses traveling on each route to accommodate more riders. The Big Blue Bus also has invested heavily in replacing its diesel

powered vehicles with environmentally friendly buses, which are more expensive.

Besides fares, the Big Blue Bus helps pay its operating

See BUS, page 5

Parents of teenager accused of Deanna Maran murder sue LAPD

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

The parents of a 17-year-old girl accused of killing Santa Monica High School sophomore Deanna Maran have filed a wrongful death claim against the Los Angeles Police Department, alleging that detectives could have prevented their child's death while she was in custody.

The claim, often a prelude to a lawsuit, was filed in the City Clerk's office on behalf of the girl's parents, Angeliue Sarkissian Bernstein and Sarkis Sarkissian.

Their daughter, Katrina Ava Sarkissian, was being questioned by police on Nov. 18 when she passed out at the West Los Angeles Police Station.

Police took Sarkissian and her 15-year-old half-sister into custody. They were detained for their role in the fatal stabbing of Maran, 15, the night before at a party in Westwood.

The Los Angeles County Coroner's Office ruled in February that Sarkissian had taken an overdose of antidepressant capsules before she left her Brentwood home with detectives. The autopsy revealed that Sarkissian had 43 capsules of Nortriptyline, a prescription antidepressant — twice the average fatal dose.

The claim alleges that Sarkissian would have survived had the two detectives, Jim Hays and Kirby Carranza, immediately summoned paramedics

See CLAIM, page 5

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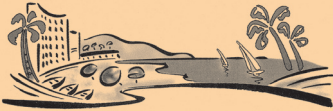
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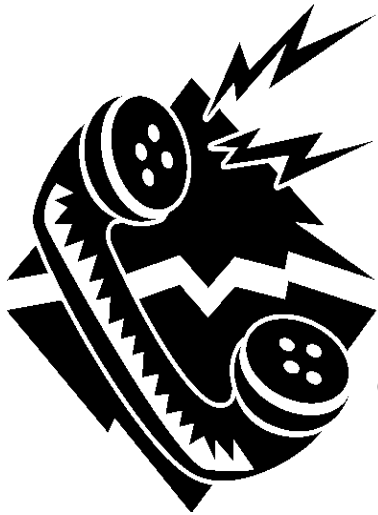
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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Optimism surrounds your home life. Accept a gift or someone's offer to make your life easier. This person's offer touches you in multiples. Reach out for others, giving them the benefit of the doubt. Tonight: Lie low.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Phone calls keep you busy. Others want to discuss their ideas and would like your suggestions. Listen more carefully to feedback from others. Brainstorming could be beneficial for everyone involved. Swap ideas. Schedule meetings. Tonight: Hang out with your friends.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ What seems to be enough financially might not stretch far enough for your extravagance. You might not realize what is going on immediately, but you'll get slapped by financial reality soon enough. Walk a conservative course. Tonight: Keep on smiling.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Your smile makes you a sure winner. You might not be sure of what is going on with a loved one or friend. Loosen up and make decisions just for you. Others seem to draw on your energy and enthusiasm. Trust what is happening. Tonight: It's your call.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ You might want to pull back, especially after a somewhat frenetic pace. Take your time and, if you can, call in and take a personal day. You profit in your free time and really enjoy yourself. Do for you. Use your sixth sense, and you'll succeed. Tonight: Where your friends are.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You gain through others. Meetings prove to be effective and important. Opportunity comes from where you least expect it. Remain upbeat and go for what you want. Success naturally follows you if you just go with the flow. Aim for more of what you want. Tonight: Reach high.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You're in the limelight. Touch base with others who might be vital to your well-being. A boss restores your image of him or her. You now feel as if communication's finally flowing. Others look to you for leadership. Know that you can do it. Tonight: A must show.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Reach out for someone at a distance. Your imaginative side emerges when dealing with those at a distance and when absorbing the facts that are dropped on your plate. How another presents the facts might have nothing to do with what is going on. Tonight: Do your own fact-finding.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Someone cannot do enough for you. Smile away and understand that you're being doted on. Have you been putting off a discussion about a sensitive topic? Now is the time to proceed. You're more than likely to get a "yes." Tonight: Let another ask for what he or she wants.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Allow another to listen more carefully. What he or she shares with you makes it more than possible to open up. Realize how much this person might be rooting for you. Smiling and good humor mark your many interactions. Tonight: Try something different.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Take it easy and relax with others. Good will surrounds whatever you put your mind to. Launch a project and make the most out of a special opportunity. Listen to another who might be pointing his or her finger in the direction of success. Tonight: Off to the gym.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Let romance build and don't cut off your options just yet. Stay centered, knowing full well what it is you want. Lighten up about a problem. Express your loving attitude and funlike nature. You feel like you can do nothing wrong, and you nearly can't. Tonight: Spice up your life!

QUOTE of the DAY

“I like work; it fascinates me.
I can sit and look at it for hours.”
— Jerome K. Jerome (1859-1927)

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LOCAL



NEWS BRIEFS

Superintendent pays loan back to school district

By Daily Press staff

School superintendent John Deasy has paid back an \$85,785 loan he borrowed from the district to purchase a home in Santa Monica.

When the school district was hiring a new superintendent, the school board added a requirement that the new chief administrator live in either Santa Monica or Malibu — the two communities that make up the school district.

The salary advancement was supposed to be paid back in the form of lower salary increases and bonuses over a few years. But Deasy decided to liquidate some of his assets and finance his home in order to pay back the loan in full.

The school board had been paying Deasy a monthly \$1,500 housing stipend since he was hired last July. However, about three months ago the board attempted to loan Deasy \$100,000, but the plan was shot down by the Los Angeles County Board of Education. County officials said using the public's credit rating for personal matters violated the state's constitution.

Union to rally before school board meeting

By Daily Press staff

More than 100 demonstrators are expected at tonight's school board meeting, when board members will vote on a resolution asking that a labor dispute at the Doubletree Guest Suites end.

The Doubletree, located on Fourth Street near Santa Monica High School, pays rent to the school district.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District board members will vote on a resolution that will call upon the Doubletree management and its workers to resolve their disputes.

Students, parents, teachers, clergy and other community members have lobbied hotel management to respect workers' rights. The workers want the hotel to pay for their health insurance, among other gripes.

Demonstrators plan to hold a demonstration outside City Hall before the 7 p.m. school district meeting.

The dispute between the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union workers who are organizing at the Doubletree and the hotel's management has been intensifying since the workers spoke at a March 20 school board meeting.

HERE 814 filed unfair labor practice charges on Monday against the Doubletree to the National Labor Relations Board, claiming harassment, discrimination and interrogation of workers who are trying to organize a union.

Main library gets redesign

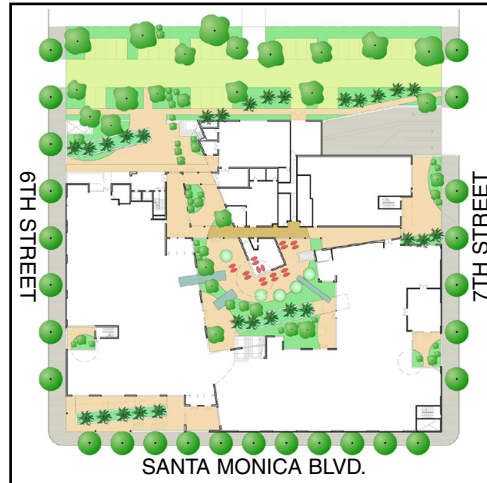
By Daily Press staff

Proposed plans for the new Main Library facility were publicly displayed at Tuesday night's city council meeting.

While three levels of subterranean parking would be created, the current parking lot would be replaced with a park-like setting.

A central courtyard would be built, allowing library goers to relax with a book and grab a cup of coffee from a proposed cafe.

Pictured below are drawings of the building from the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Sixth Street. The illustrations below that are of an overhead of the facility and a view from the main reading room.



Surf relies heavily on the leftover swell from two past southwestern storms today. Waves will be inconsistent in the knee-to-chest range, occasional sets get shoulder high. The best waves will be at spots where both southwest swell and northwest wind swell can sneak in. Low, southerly, morning winds will subside by afternoon for clean, glassy conditions.

An offshore, southwest swell approaches California Friday. Weather reports predict it will reach the coast by late evening. Friday day looks like more inconsistent, knee-to-shoulder-highs at best with better waves on hold until the weekend.

(Information compiled by Jesse Haley.)

Location	Wednesday	Thursday	Water Quality
County Line	2-4'/Good	2-3'/Good	A+
Zuma	3-4'/Good	2-3'/Good	A+
Surfrider	2-4'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	C-F
Topanga	2-4'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	B
Breakwater	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A+
El Porto	2-4'/Good	2-3'/Fair	A+

The Q Line

Campaign season has begun in Santa Monica. Last week residents learned about a November ballot measure that would rewrite how people are elected to the city council. If approved, the measure would allow residents to vote for one city council member from their neighborhood, instead of all seven who run at-large currently. It also would require that the mayor be elected by the people, instead of being appointed by council

members. Supporters of the measure think certain neighborhoods, like the city's east side, are not represented.

This week Q-Line wants to know, "Do you feel adequately represented by your city council? Why or why not?"

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

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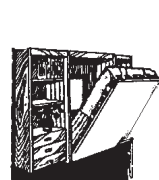
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OPINION

LETTERS

Surf etiquette corrected

Editor:

Regarding your publication of "Surf etiquette, at a glance," while generally the tips are appropriate and help surfers sort themselves out in the water, I must take exception to the recommendation that "Locals have the right-of-way."

This recommendation is at least mildly provocative and contributes to the ugly history of unwarranted localism in surfing.

Although locals may indeed catch and ride more waves at their local break, it should be due to their skill, experience and familiarity with the local conditions.

Locals otherwise have no presumed claim to the "right-of-way."

Brian Johnson
Santa Monica

Bring back the displaced families

Editor:

The church that I Pastor is one of the oldest predominantly African-American congregations in Santa Monica.

It was severely negatively affected by the freeway. Everyone who was here at the time tells me that the freeway cut straight through our community and our members were forced to relocate.

Most have them have not been able to afford to relocate in the Santa Monica area. A few of them have continued to commute over the years but many have dispersed into the fabric of the new community where they settled.

The most recent project being proposed by the (Community Corporation of Santa Monica) has the potential of helping to bring those families back home and helping to re-strengthen some of the historic community organizations that were nearly destroyed.

Our church continues to struggle with issues that can be directly attributed to its membership being displaced. We support CCSM in its efforts to provide affordable housing in Santa Monica and in its efforts to refurbish and maintain some of the historic value in the Kessler property.

I intend to take a major leadership role in helping to make this project happen because it is good for the future of historic organizations of the city and good for Santa Monica in general. People need housing that they can afford and the church must be apart of making that happen.

Rev. Ronald L. Williams
First A. M. E. Church by the sea
Santa Monica

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to sack@smdp.com. All letters must include the author's name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 530 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

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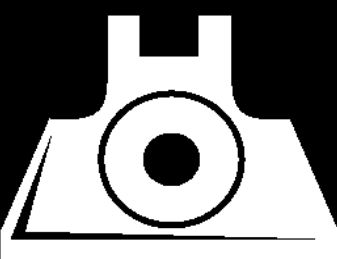
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LOCAL



Maran family not surprised by suit against LAPD

CLAIM, from page 1

when they were questioning her.

Sarkissian allegedly told detectives that she felt sleepy during the interview. Within 15 minutes, the teen collapsed unconscious in front of her half-sister, the claim said.

The claim alleges that Hays and Carranza thought Sarkissian was having a seizure and wondered how long it would last. However, Sarkissian's half-sister told detectives her sister "doesn't have seizures" and their mother, Angelique Bernstein, had told them that Sarkissian had been prescribed Nortriptyline, the claim said.

Sarkissian was transported to UCLA Medical Center about an hour after she was taken into custody. She was pronounced dead at 5:32 p.m.

"Hays and Carranza failed to determine directly or through summoning others, including drug recognition experts employed by LAPD, that Katrina was suffering the effects of a drug overdose," the claim said. "Hays and Carranza made a medical decision which they were not competent or trained to make that Katrina had suffered a seizure."

The parents decided to file the claim to meet a state-imposed, six-month deadline for filing the legal paperwork. The claim does not specify a damage amount.

Sarkissian's half sister, whose name is being withheld because she is a minor, was arraigned last month on a battery charge in Inglewood Juvenile Court. Police believe it was her scuffle with Maran that triggered the stabbing at the party.

After the scuffle, the girl allegedly kicked Deanna while Sarkissian allegedly stabbed Maran in front of the home where a 15-year-old boy hosted the party. Apparently, his parents were out of town.

According to eyewitnesses, dozens of people watched while the girls fought and older, college students prevented anyone from rescuing Deanna in attempt to watch the fight.

Meanwhile, Maran's parents plan on filing a lawsuit against those responsible for their daughter's death.

"We anticipate filing a civil lawsuit not later than next week against all of those whom we believe to be responsible for the death of Deanna Maran," said Tony Glassman, an attorney for Ilja and Harriet Maran, Deanna's parents.

Glassman said the Maran family is considering suing Sarkissian's parents and the owners of the home where the unchaperoned party was held.

The Marans, who raised their four daughters and one son in their Santa Monica Ocean Park home, haven't heard from the Sarkissians, the Bernsteins or the parents whose home was the scene of the party.

Harriet Maran said she is disappointed and disheartened that the girls' parents refuse to accept responsibility for her daughter's death and the circumstances of their children's problems. The suit against the LAPD is just another example, she said.

"I wasn't surprised," she said. "I think it will just aggravate what their daughter is going through. I think it is poor judgment on the mother's part to subject her daughter to more of an ordeal."

The Bernsteins and the Sarkissians have declined to comment on the case, but their attorney, Gary Casselman, has said in the past that his clients have been cast in a negative light.

Los Angeles city attorney's office spokesman Frank Mateljan said attorneys were reviewing the claim and had no comment Wednesday.

Affordable housing measure added to November ballot

TORCA, from page 1

of the few remaining ways that Santa Monica promotes home ownership.

"That money was supposed to be used for home ownership incentives," said Peter Tigler, president of the Pico Neighborhood Association, who has advocated for more home ownership incentives. "Their own system is so convoluted and burdensome to get through — that's why the money is still there."

"They should be amending the rules to make it easier to use that money as it was meant to be used," he added. "They should have a program to advertise its

existence and promote its use."

Paul DeSantis, a local real estate attorney who chairs the board of Community Corp. of Santa Monica — the largest provider of affordable housing in the city — advocated the city continue with its incentives for home ownership.

"Over the years I have worked on many different funding mechanisms for affordable housing," he said. "This isn't something we should be doing."

DeSantis said the city's loan program was designed to fail to make way for new affordable housing.

"Although few loans are being made,

plenty of funds are available," he said, encouraging the city council to make the loan process easier. "There are so many better ways of dealing with the unexpended funds, that I am opposed to breaking down this program."

But supporters said the greatest need

should be addressed first, and home ownership is lower on the list.

"I think the most pressing housing need in the city is in the area of affordable housing, and that's where this money should be used," said Councilman Ken Genser.

New fares take effect in July

BUS, from page 1

expenses through revenue from advertisements that appear on its buses.

The Big Blue is renegotiating its advertising contract. If approved, the new 6-year contract with Viacom Outdoor would bring in almost \$500,000 more than the existing \$6 million contract with Gateway Outdoor Advertising.

That money would help stave off future fare increases.

Councilman Ken Genser, who voted against the fare increase, argued the Big Blue Bus should explore more options that would allow the company to continue offering the same low fare.

Mayor Mike Feinstein and Councilman Bob Holbrook were absent from the meeting.

At first Genser argued for a proposal that would have kept the basic fare at 50 cents but eliminate the historically free transfers on local buses.

"I'm not sure this is the right trade-off," he said. "It would do more good for

more people to keep the fare at 50 cents, and by making bus transportation cheaper may encourage more ridership."

However, other council members argued the plan would not bring long-term stability to the bus company and the bus system was designed so riders would transfer buses to reach their final destination.

"It's a hub and spoke system," said Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McKeown. "Bus riders have to transfer to get across the city."

Councilwoman Pam O'Connor said you get what you pay for.

"We have to adjust the fares to pay for the transportation system we have today," she said. "For us to continue to operate a bus company, we have to help provide some stability for its services and give some assurances that it will continue."

"We can't expect them to continue to roll out new services and expand on their current services if we don't give them an adequate budget to work with," she said.

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STATE



Denis Poroy/Associated Press

Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy John P. Walters looks out of the gunner's window of a U.S. Customs Department UH-60A Blackhawk helicopter during a nighttime aerial border tour of the U.S.-Mexico border near San Diego this week. The tour was part of a two-day visit to the California border area.

New drug czar visits U.S.-Mexico border

BY BEN FOX
Associated Press Writer

TIJUANA, Mexico — The fifth man to serve as the U.S. drug czar visited a city ravaged by addiction, corruption and violence to renew the vow of his predecessors to fight narcotics traffickers and stem America's appetite for their wares.

"We intend to drive down demand and we intend to go after those who are suppliers with renewed vigor," John P. Walters said Wednesday as he toured a residential drug treatment center.

Walters, director of national drug control policy, visited the center as part of a two-day swing through Southern California and Tijuana, his first since he was appointed by President Bush and announced a goal of reducing U.S. drug use by 10 percent in two years.

The visit was intended to highlight drug treatment, enforcement and prevention efforts in the \$19 billion federal anti-drug budget that Walters oversees.

He spoke to a substance abuse conference in San Diego; flew along the border at night in a sleek Customs Service Blackhawk helicopter; discussed Tijuana's growing addiction problem with Mexican officials; and viewed the latest tools for inspecting trucks at a U.S. checkpoint.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy is evaluating anti-drug efforts and trying to determine whether authorities on the Southwest border have been stretched beyond their limits by the extra demands for more security following the Sept. 11 attacks, Walters said.

Some of the anti-drug efforts are "obviously having some effect," he said just before taking off in the Blackhawk Tuesday night. "The question is whether we can do this more systematically."

The U.S.-Mexico border region in Southern California continues to be one of the nation's major transit points for illegal drugs. In the past six months, authorities at five border points confiscated 166,000 pounds of marijuana, about 23 percent of the total Customs seized nationally.

Tijuana has suffered as a result of its location, said Dr. Jose Hector Acosta, director of the 26-bed treatment center that has a waiting list of 35 people.

The border city has a rate of drug use three times higher than Mexico's national average because it is the final stop in the route to the United States and drugs are plentiful in Tijuana as they are in few places in the interior of the country, he said.

"... We intend to go after those who are suppliers with renewed vigor."

— JOHN P. WALTERS
Director of national drug control policy

Walters agreed with this assessment.

"Where drugs pass, where drugs are produced consumption begins and addiction sets in," he told reporters at the clinic, which was also visited by another drug czar, retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey, in 1999.

Tijuana is also the base of operations for the Arellano Felix drug cartel, which U.S. authorities have long said controls the regional drug trade and is responsible for police and government corruption and scores of drug-related murders.

In recent months, Mexican authorities arrested the reputed head of the cartel, Benjamin Arellano Felix, following the death of his brother, Ramon, in a shootout with police in the beach resort of Mazatlan. Two other top cartel officials have also been arrested over the past year.

Walters said it is too early to say whether the blows against the cartel have weakened its position in the border region, but he praised Mexico's efforts.

"It is not true, as some people say, these things don't make a difference," he said. "We cannot get to the lower levels of the people who are involved in the market here and in the United States unless the most dangerous individuals ... are brought to justice."

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NATIONAL



Bush was warned by U.S. intelligence before 9-11 of plot to hijack airplanes

BY RON FOURNIER
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — In the weeks before the Sept. 11 attacks, President Bush was told by U.S. intelligence that Osama bin Laden's terrorist network might hijack American airplanes, prompting the administration to issue a private warning to law-enforcement agencies, the White House acknowledged Wednesday night.

But officials said the president and U.S. intelligence did not know that suicide hijackers were plotting to use planes as missiles, as they did against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"There has been long-standing speculation, shared with the president, about the potential of hijackings in the traditional sense," White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said. "We had general threats involving Osama bin Laden around the world and including in the United States."

He said the administration, acting on the information received in early August, notified the "appropriate agencies" that hijackings "in the traditional sense" were possible. The warning was never made public, he said.

The development, first reported by CBS News, comes as congressional investigators intensify their study of whether the government failed to adequately respond to warnings of a suicide hijacking before Sept. 11. It is the first direct link between Bush and intelligence gathered before Sept. 11 about the attacks.

Fleischer would not discuss when or how the information was given to Bush, but a senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the president was made aware of the potential for hijackings of U.S. planes during one or more routine intelligence briefings last summer.

The CIA would not confirm what it told Bush, but the agency said the issue of bin Laden's attempting an airline hijacking was among a number of terrorist methods raised to U.S. government officials at the time.

But there was no information that suggested hijackers would crash planes into American landmarks and there was no mention of a date, a CIA official said.

The information was based on intelligence obtained by the U.S. government, the official said, without specifying.

"I will tell you there was, of course, a general awareness of Osama bin Laden and threats around the world, including the United States; and if you recall, last summer we publicly alerted and gave a warning about potential threats on the Arabian peninsula," Fleischer said.

But he said Bush had never been told about the potential for suicide hijackers steering the planes toward U.S. targets.

Still, acting on the information the government did have, the administration "notified the appropriate agencies. I think

that's one of the reasons that we saw the people who committed the 9-11 attacks used box cutters and plastic knives to get around America's system of protecting against hijackers," he said.

Fleischer said he did not know what agencies were notified or what they were told.

"It represents a failure to connect the dots. This was dismissed rather lightly at FBI headquarters."

— PAUL ANDERSON
Sen. Bob Graham spokesman

The Associated Press reported earlier this month that FBI headquarters did not act on a memo last July from its Arizona office warning there were a large number of Arabs seeking pilot, security and airport operations training at at least one U.S. flight school and which urged a check of all flight schools to identify more possible Middle Eastern students.

A section of that classified memo also makes a passing reference to Osama bin Laden, speculating that al-Qaida and other such groups could organize such flight training, officials said. The officials said, however, that the memo offered no evidence bin Laden was behind the students that raised the concern.

Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., the Senate Intelligence Committee chairman, said through a spokesman Wednesday that the revelations in the memos marked an important discovery in Congress' investigation into why the FBI, CIA and other U.S. agencies failed to learn of and prevent the Sept. 11 plot.

"It represents a failure to connect the dots," said Graham spokesman Paul Anderson. "This was dismissed rather lightly at FBI headquarters."

The FBI also has faced tough questioning about whether it failed to act aggressively enough after arresting Zacarias Moussaoui, a Frenchman of Moroccan descent, in August after he raised concerns by seeking flight training at a Minnesota flight school.

Moussaoui has emerged as the lone defendant charged in the aftermath of the attacks, which killed more than 3,000 people in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. He is charged with conspiring with bin Laden and the 19 suicide hijackers to attack Americans.

FBI Director Robert Mueller repeatedly has said he wished the FBI had acted more aggressively in addressing the Arizona and Minnesota leads but said nothing the FBI possessed before Sept. 11 pointed to the multiple-airliner hijacking plot.

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SPORTS

Two-time champion Lakers say they're underdogs

BY JOHN NADEL

AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — As preposterous as it sounds, the two-time defending NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers consider themselves underdogs to the Sacramento Kings in the Western Conference finals.

At least that's what several of them are saying.

Don't believe it, because they don't. It's just talk.

And considering the Lakers have won a playoff-record 11 straight road games, 23 of their last 25 postseason games and 19 of the last 20 they've played at Staples Center over the past three months, they're probably quietly offended anyone would consider them underdogs.

"I think in some people's eyes we are," Derek Fisher said with a laugh Wednesday at the Lakers' practice facility in El Segundo. "I'd probably says it's 50-50 right now.

"As the games go along, people will probably sway and jump on whatever bandwagon looks best."

Following his third straight clutch fourth-quarter performance against San Antonio on Tuesday night that helped eliminate the Spurs from the best-of-seven series in five games, Kobe Bryant placed the Lakers in an underdog role against the Kings.

But asked if he really felt that way, Bryant paused and replied: "I never feel like an underdog. It's irrelevant. All that matters is how we feel as a unit, how we feel as a team and our togetherness."

Lakers coach Phil Jackson called the Lakers underdogs because the Kings have the homecourt advantage in the series that begins Saturday at Arco Arena in Sacramento.

And Robert Horry said much the same thing.

Both failed to point out the Lakers are 16-5 against Sacramento since Jackson became their coach; eliminated the Kings from the playoffs in each of the last two years including a four-game sweep last year, and have won five of their last six games at Arco.

Rick Fox wouldn't comment when asked if the Lakers should be underdogs, but pulled no punches when asked his opinion on the series.

"I truly believe we're the better team," he said. "We're lacking homecourt advantage, and I think that's going to be a challenge for us."

In the aftermath of Tuesday night's 93-87 victory over San Antonio, Fox forecast a Lakers' victory in the conference finals.

"I have babble of the mouth, I speak what I feel," he

said Wednesday. "I'm only one person, it takes 12 of us to do this along with the coaching staff. I believe it. It's up to the Kings to prove us wrong, to prove me wrong."

Samaki Walker said the Kings deserve the attention they're receiving because of their NBA-best 61-21 regular-season record, but added: "They're cherishing everything, which is good. Saturday they have to play the two-time defending champions."

After Tuesday night's game, a sheet of paper was taped to Shaquille O'Neal's locker with a photograph of Vlade Divac and a midseason quote from the Kings' center: "If (the Lakers) don't have homecourt advantage this year, they're not going to win it."

O'Neal's reaction: "I hear and see everything. I'm the police."

Minneapolis-LA Lakers playoff history

By The Associated Press

1947 — Didn't make playoffs.

1948 — Didn't make playoffs.

1949 — Beat Chicago 2-0; Beat Rochester 2-0; best Washington 4-2, NBA Champions.

1950 — Beat Rochester for division championship; Beat Chicago 2-0; Beat Fort Wayne 2-0; Beat Anderson 2-0; Beat Syracuse 4-2, NBA Champions.

1951 — Beat Indianapolis 2-1; Lost to Rochester 3-1.

1952 — Beat Indianapolis 2-0; Beat Rochester 3-1; Beat New York 3-1, NBA Champions.

1953 — Beat Indianapolis 2-0; Beat Fort Wayne 3-2; Beat New York 4-1, NBA Champions.

1954 — Beat Fort Wayne 2-0 and Rochester 1-0 in round robin; Beat Rochester 2-1; Beat Syracuse 4-3, NBA Champions.

1955 — Beat Rochester 2-1; Lost to Fort Wayne 3-1.

1956 — Beat St. Louis for conference second place; Lost to St. Louis 3-1.

1957 — Lost to St. Louis for division championship; Beat Fort Wayne 2-0; Lost to St. Louis 3-0.

1958 — Didn't make playoffs.

1959 — Beat Detroit 2-1; Beat St. Louis 4-2; Lost to Boston 4-0.

1960 — Beat Detroit 2-0; Lost to St. Louis 4-3.

1961 — Beat Detroit 3-2; Lost to St. Louis 4-3.

1962 — Beat Detroit 4-2; Lost to Boston 4-3.

1963 — Beat St. Louis 4-3; Lost to Boston 4-2.

1964 — Lost to St. Louis 3-2.

1965 — Beat Baltimore 4-2; Lost to Boston 4-1.

1966 — Beat St. Louis 4-3; Lost to Boston 4-3.

1967 — Lost to San Francisco 4-3.

1968 — Beat Chicago 4-1; Beat San Francisco 4-0; Lost to Boston 4-2.

1969 — Beat San Francisco 4-2; Beat Atlanta 4-1; Lost to Boston 4-3.

1970 — Beat Phoenix 4-3; Beat Atlanta 4-0; Lost to New York 4-3.

1971 — Beat Chicago 4-3; Lost to Milwaukee 4-1.

1972 — Beat Chicago 4-0; Beat Milwaukee 4-2; Beat New York 4-1, NBA Champions.

1973 — Beat Chicago 4-3; Beat Golden State 4-1; Lost to New York 4-1.

1974 — Lost to Milwaukee 4-1.

1975 — Didn't make playoffs.

1976 — Didn't make playoffs.

1977 — Beat Golden State 4-3; Lost to Portland 4-0.

1978 — Lost to Seattle 2-1.

1979 — Beat Denver 2-1; Lost to Seattle 4-1.

1980 — Beat Phoenix 4-1; Beat Seattle 4-1; Beat Philadelphia 4-2, NBA Champions.

1981 — Lost to Houston 2-1.

1982 — Beat Phoenix 4-0; Beat San Antonio 4-0; Beat Philadelphia 4-2, NBA Champions.

1983 — Beat Portland 4-1; Beat San Antonio 4-2; Lost to Philadelphia 4-0.

1984 — Beat Kansas City 3-0; Beat Dallas 4-1; Beat Phoenix 4-1; Lost to Boston 4-3.

1985 — Beat Phoenix 3-0; Beat Portland 4-1; Beat Denver 4-1; Beat Boston 4-2, NBA Champions.

1986 — Beat San Antonio 3-0; Beat Dallas 4-2; Lost to Houston 4-1.

1987 — Beat Denver 3-0; Beat Golden State 4-1; Beat Seattle 4-0; Beat Boston 4-2, NBA Champions.

1988 — Beat San Antonio 3-0; Beat Utah 4-3; Beat Dallas 4-3; Beat Detroit 4-3, NBA Champions.

1989 — Beat Portland 3-0; Beat Seattle 4-0; Beat Phoenix, 4-0; Lost to Detroit 4-0.

1990 — Beat Houston 3-1; Lost to Phoenix 4-1.

1991 — Beat Houston 3-0; Beat Golden State 4-1; Beat Portland 4-2; Lost to Chicago 4-1.

1992 — Lost to Portland 3-1.

1993 — Lost to Phoenix 3-2.

1994 — Didn't make playoffs.

1995 — Beat Seattle 3-1; Lost to San Antonio 4-2.

1996 — Lost to Houston 3-1.

1997 — Beat Portland 3-1; Lost to Utah 4-1.

1998 — Beat Portland 3-1; Beat Seattle 4-1; Lost to Utah 4-0.

1999 — Beat Houston 3-1; Lost to San Antonio 4-0.

2000 — Beat Sacramento 3-2; Beat Phoenix 4-1; Beat Portland 4-3; Beat Indiana 4-2, NBA Champions.

2001 — Beat Portland 3-0; Beat Sacramento 4-0; Beat San Antonio 4-0; Beat Philadelphia 4-1, NBA Champions.

2002 — Beat Portland 3-0; Beat San Antonio 4-1; vs. Sacramento.



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National Basketball Association playoff schedule

By The Associated Press

CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS — EDT (Best-of-7)

Saturday, May 4

Sacramento 108, Dallas 91, Sacramento leads series 1-0

Sunday, May 5

New Jersey 99, Charlotte 93, New Jersey leads series 1-0

Detroit 96, Boston 84, Detroit leads series 1-0

L.A. Lakers 86, San Antonio 80, L.A. Lakers lead series 1-0

Monday, May 6

Dallas 110, Sacramento 102, series tied 1-1

Tuesday, May 7

New Jersey 102, Charlotte 88, New Jersey leads series 2-0

San Antonio 88, L.A. Lakers 85, series tied 1-1

Wednesday, May 8

Boston 85, Detroit 77, series tied 1-1

Thursday, May 9

Charlotte 115, New Jersey 97, New Jersey leads series 2-1

Sacramento 125, Dallas 119, Sacramento leads series 2-1

Friday, May 10

Boston 66, Detroit 64

L.A. Lakers 99, San Antonio 89,

Saturday, May 11

Sacramento 115, Dallas 113, Sacramento leads series 3-1

Sunday, May 12

New Jersey 89, Charlotte 79, New Jersey leads series 3-1

Boston 90, Detroit 79, Boston leads series 3-1

L.A. Lakers 87, San Antonio 85, L.A. Lakers lead series 3-1

Monday, May 13

Sacramento 114, Dallas 101, Sacramento wins series 4-1

Tuesday, May 14

Boston 90, Detroit 81, Boston wins series 4-1

L.A. Lakers 93, San Antonio 87, L.A. Lakers win series 4-1

Wednesday, May 15

Charlotte at New Jersey, 8 p.m.

Friday, May 17

New Jersey at Charlotte, 8 p.m., if necessary

Sunday, May 19

Charlotte at New Jersey, TBA, if necessary

Boston at Detroit, TBA, if necessary



NATIONAL □ INTERNATIONAL



A peaceful reminder



Ron Edmonds/Associated Press

President Bush is embraced on Wednesday, by Arlene Howard, left, the mother of George Howard, a New York City Port Authority Policeman who was killed in the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Bush talked with slain officer's families after speaking at the 21st annual Peace Officers' Association Memorial service in Washington. Standing at right is Steve Young, President of the Fraternal Order of Police.

Allies say NATO must adapt, but maintain importance

BY PAUL AMES

Associated Press Writer

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Many rushed to write off the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after the U.S. military crushed the Taliban with a minimum of help from its allies. But in two days of talks the alliance has fought back.

During the session, which wrapped up Wednesday, NATO foreign ministers sealed a landmark deal with Russia to jointly fight terrorism and other threats, confirmed plans to take on new members from eastern Europe and pledged to build up the alliance's military might.

That was followed by talks to intensify cooperation with Ukraine and other former-Soviet states to spread stability in the volatile Caucasus and Central Asian regions.

"NATO has a bright military future ... The alliance is as relevant as it has been in the past," U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell declared.

For the man at the top of NATO, the meeting in blustery Iceland was a reaffirmation of the alliance's importance in the post Sept. 11 world.

"The decisions ... here will help to ensure that NATO continues to do what it has always done — bring together North America and Europe to preserve the security of our populations," Secretary-General Lord Robertson told a meeting joining the 19 alliance members, 10 candidate nations and 17 other countries from Ireland and Uzbekistan.

When U.S. forces successfully launched the war in Afghanistan nearly single-handedly, many in the United States asked if Washington still needed support from Europeans with outdated, underfunded armed forces and often dubious support for U.S. policy goals.

A decade after the Warsaw Pact was consigned to history, they questioned the usefulness of an alliance built to defend against the Soviet threat, and asked how 19 diverse nations could act quickly and decisively against today's sudden and

unpredictable threats.

On the other side of the Atlantic, governments complained the Bush administration was ignoring them in favor of "unilateral" action that paid scant attention to European sensitivities.

In Reykjavik, Europeans and North Americans sought to quell such doubts.

Powell stressed that once-sidelined allied militaries are now helping root out the remnants of al-Qaida and their Taliban allies in Afghanistan. British Royal Marines, Canadian commandos, French special forces and others are fighting alongside U.S. troops.

Ministers enthusiastically promoted NATO as the bedrock of security in Europe, and the springboard to extend a network of alliances eastward to Russia and other former Soviet republics in Central Asia given new strategic importance by their proximity to Afghanistan.

"North America, Europe and the countries of Central Asia are now part of a political community that is unprecedented in its breadth, in its inclusiveness and its capacity to work together," Robertson said Wednesday.

NATO officials acknowledge corrupt or authoritarian regimes, unscrupulous arms sales and political instability may dog attempts to reach out to former Soviet states. But they say contacts built with the likes of Kazakhstan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan have paid rich dividends in fighting al-Qaida and need to be developed further.

The showpiece in Reykjavik was a new cooperation agreement with Russia that create the mechanisms for NATO to work with Moscow in fighting terrorism, the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological arms and a range of other shared threats.

Powell and other NATO ministers embraced their Russian counterpart Igor Ivanov and declared the Cold War dead and buried as the former foes unite to fight the common terrorist enemy.

"Russia is no longer the enemy or a difficult neighbor, but an ally and a friend," said British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.

Lindh says he had First Amendment right to associate with al-Qaida

BY LARRY MARGASAK

Associated Press Writer

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — California-raised John Walker Lindh had a constitutional right to associate with al-Qaida and another U.S.-identified terrorist group, his lawyers argued Wednesday in seeking dismissal of most counts in his indictment.

Eight of 10 counts amount to guilt by association because there's no proof that Lindh intended to further illegal aims of the two organizations, the written motion said.

Lindh's defense team has filed a series of pleadings this week that, together, seek dismissal of the entire case against the former Taliban infantryman.

He is accused of conspiring to murder U.S. nationals, providing support to foreign terrorist organizations and using firearms during crimes of violence. Three of the counts carry maximum life sentences and the others have combined penalties totaling 90 years imprisonment.

"Central to First Amendment freedoms is the right to associate with unpopular and disfavored groups," said the written motion.

The motion asserted the Supreme Court, at least five times, has held that an individual cannot constitutionally be punished based solely on association with an organization.

In charging Lindh with aiding al-Qaida and Harikat ul-Mujahedin (HUM), a group that has operated in Kashmir, the indictment alleges that Lindh received training from the groups and served in combat against the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, the motion said. This association was not illegal, the defense asserted.

"The indictment does not allege that Mr. Lindh provided al-Qaida with anything," the motion said.

"The government seeks to penalize Mr. Lindh ... for allegedly providing himself to HUM and al-Qaida."

In a separate pleading, the defense challenged the constitutionality of the last count, charging Lindh with carrying firearms during crimes of violence. Since the allegations of aiding terrorist groups do not allege crimes of violence, the firearms count should be thrown out, the defense said.

Wal-Mart to launch up to 40 Supercenters in California

By The Associated Press

BENTONVILLE, Ark. — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. announced Wednesday that it would enter the grocery market in California by opening as many as 40 of its Supercenters over the next several years.

Supercenters combine general merchandise Wal-Mart stores with grocery stores. Bentonville-based Wal-Mart is the world's largest retailer.

Wal-Mart has more than 1,100 of its Supercenters nationwide. The company

did not offer specific sites or opening dates, but said the building program will take place over the next four to six years.

The company now has 125 of its general merchandise stores in California, and three distribution centers. It also has 29 Sam's Club warehouse stores in the state.

Wal-Mart opened its first Supercenter in 1988.

Wal-Mart shares were down 62 cents to close at \$56.77 a share Wednesday on the New York Stock Exchange.

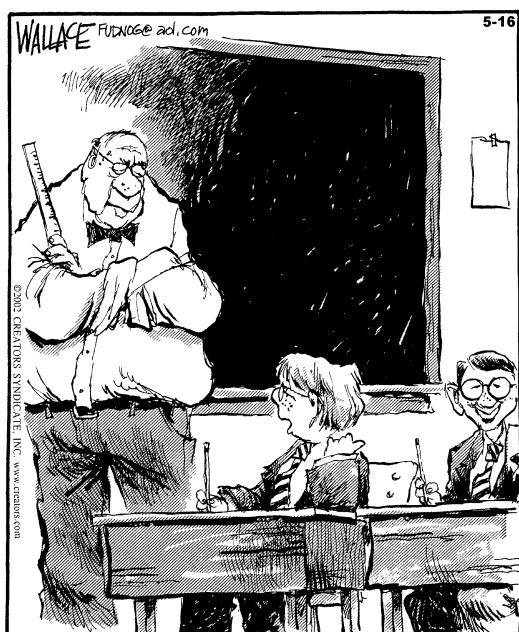
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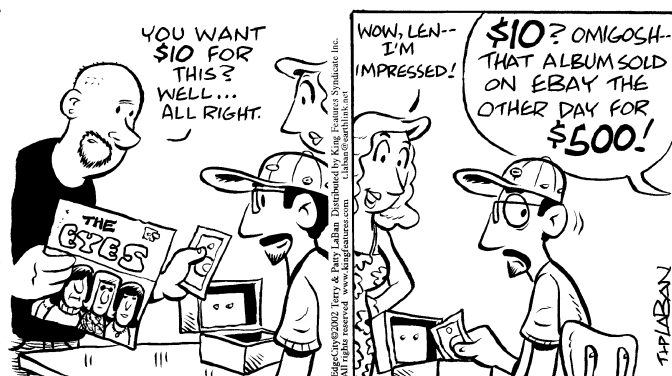
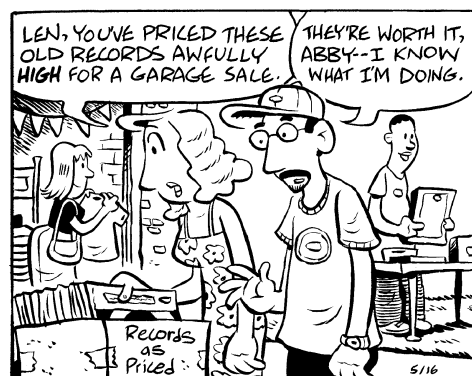
Victor R. Caivano/Associated Press

General Tommy Franks, right, greets Canadian troops at the U.S. base in Kandahar, Afghanistan on Wednesday. Franks was paying a one-day visit to Afghanistan to the several thousand American troops stationed in the country. As Franks shook hands with Canadian forces, he apologized by the friendly fire incident in which four Canadian soldiers were killed by a U.S. pilot last month.

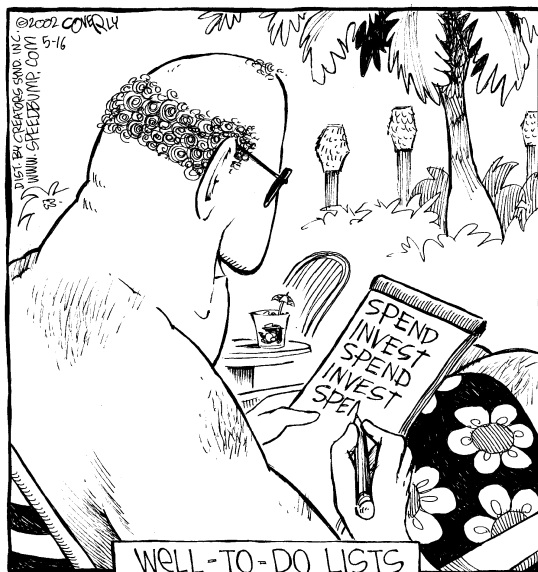
By Russ Wallace



by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



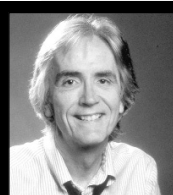
By Dave Coverly



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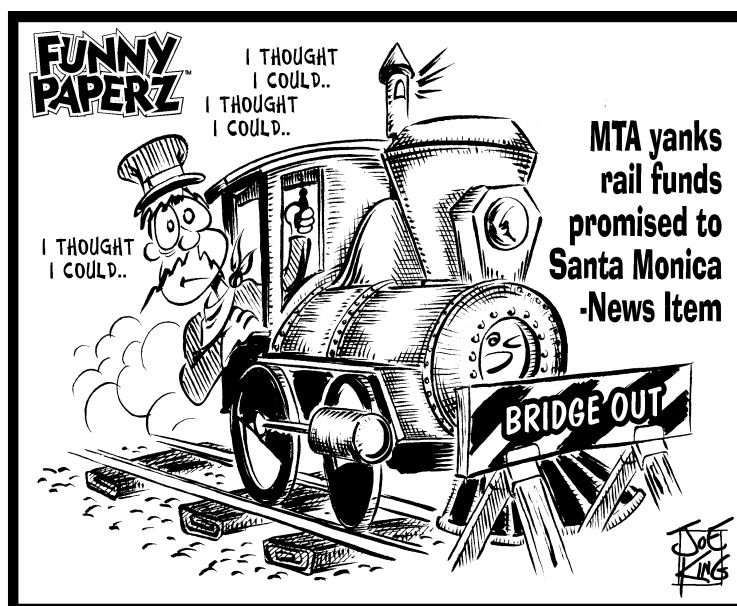
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by Chuck Shepard

Researchers from Duke's medical school and the University of Texas' Southwestern Medical Center announced in April that they have identified an enzyme that can be stimulated to mimic the effects of exercise on muscles (albeit in mice, not humans). Team leader R. Sanders Williams said it is quite possible that eventually humans could build muscles by taking the enzyme (calmodulin-dependent protein kinase) in a pill.



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Santa Monica Daily Press

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BACK PAGE

ODDS & ENDS

Ads spark bomb scare

By The Associated Press

LOGAN, Utah — A car dealership that wanted to drum up a little publicity managed to succeed.

Kevin Day Mitsubishi mailed 10,000 plastic bottles as a promotion, setting off a panic among residents suspicious of anthrax attacks and mailbox bombs.

The bottles were labeled, "Hurry open this right away to receive your message in a bottle." They contained an invitation for car buyers to try to win a \$5,000 discount by matching a marble inside the bottle with one at the dealership.

"What it's designed to do is get people's attention," said John Sandifer, general manager of the dealership. "I'm just beginning to wonder how good it worked."

Residents flooded police with calls when the bottles started turning up Tuesday in mailboxes.

"It's completely ridiculous that they would be doing something like this after this big scare with mail bombs all over the country," Cache County sheriff's Lt. Dave Bennett said.

Logan Postmaster Kim Taylor said mailing an innocent package is not illegal.

Freeze-dried trees save water

By The Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — From the drought-stricken Southwest city that brought you painted grass comes another agricultural oddity: freeze-dried trees.

Furniture store owner Chip Livingston said several people honked at him or rolled their eyes in disapproval as he put in 18 of the 2-foot, Christmas tree-shaped trees along Santa Fe's major business thoroughfare.

"We want everybody to know they're fake," Livingston said.

Well, not quite.

Lynn Olmen, a buyer for the business, said the trees are grown in California, cut after eight years of careful trimming, then freeze-dried in a "highly technical but nontoxic process" that ensures they will hold their shape for up to 10 years.

Santa Fe has been under water restrictions since April that ban the planting of grass and limit the watering of trees to once a week.

The store's manager, Mary Thomas, decided dried trees would be a better choice than flowers while Santa Fe struggles with water shortages.

"Somebody came by the other day and said, 'I can't believe you're planting those,'" she said Tuesday. "I said, 'They're fake.'"

Hawaii called socialist state

By The Associated Press

HONOLULU — The editors of Forbes magazine think Hawaii's business climate is far from paradise.

The national business magazine this week gave Honolulu the "booby prize for economic development." Gov. Ben Cayetano called the action "a cheap shot."

In an article titled "Why doing business in Honolulu has become nearly equivalent to suicide," Forbes said Honolulu's economy was already dried up before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"Take an island paradise, with year-round balmy weather and immense value to tourists, add a heavy dose of socialism and you get an economic basket case," the article said. "Fidel Castro would feel right at home here."

Hawaii's economy and politics have been a popular target over the past decade for the 850,000-circulation magazine published by former Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes.

"Every election year they do this to us," Cayetano said Tuesday. "It's one thing to disagree with some of the things that we have done. It's another thing to label this state as a people's republic and a socialistic state which Fidel Castro would enjoy living."

United mistakenly sells airfare for \$5

By The Associated Press

CHICAGO — For some travelers, it's going to cost more to get to the airport than to fly.

For about 45 minutes on Tuesday, United Airlines customers were able to buy roundtrip tickets to U.S. cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles for as little as \$5 because of an error by a computer that distributes fares for major airlines.

United will honor the tickets but did not yet know how many were bought or the destinations, spokeswoman Chris Nardella said Wednesday.

"We discovered the problem and we fixed it, but there was a 45-minute window when customers were able to book these tickets," she said.

The incorrect prices were posted when Airline Tariff Publishing Co., a clearinghouse for all airlines' fares, was loading new sale fares onto United's site, Nardella said.

The site stopped giving customers a promised \$5 discount for booking online, and when workers tried to fix it, it began selling flights for as low as \$5 instead, she said.

It wasn't the first time United sold tickets cheap via the Internet.

In January, 142 passengers bought tickets to international destinations for as little as \$25. United first said it would not honor those fares but later agreed to do so.

And in August, 120 customers booked trips to Bombay from Chicago for \$140 or \$180.

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