

FREE

TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2004

Volume 3, Issue 161

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTO
FANTASY 5

19 22 30 35 36

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 2 8 5

Evening picks: 5 5 4

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 04 Big Ben

2nd Place: 06 Whirl Win

3rd Place: 02 Lucky Star

Race Time: 1:48.26


NEWS OF THE WEIRD
by Chuck Shepard

THE DISTRICT OF CALAMITY

Recent news from the Washington, D.C., public school system, which by some measures is the poorest-performing in the country while simultaneously being the most expensive: D.C. schools were found to spend \$234 per year per pupil on security (twice as much as Philadelphia, for instance, and five times as much as Baltimore, according to an April Washington Times report). Also, in one high school last year, 56 percent of students had streaks of at least 15 absences that were unexcused. And in an accounting-firm review of 944 student records in 16 high schools, in "hundreds" of cases the grade ultimately posted did not match the grade turned in, according to the report described in a December Washington Post story.


QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In order to preserve your self-respect, it is sometimes necessary to lie and cheat."

— Robert Byrne


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Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II/Daily Press

The \$8 million Barnum Hall, on the Santa Monica High School campus, is one of 19 projects that were recently completed, funded by a school bond and state money.

Budget woes? New buildings go up, staffing continues to dwindle

By Daily Press staff

DISTRICT HDQTRS.

While it struggles to pay for adequate staff and programs, the local school district has recently renovated nearly \$100 million in new facilities.

Whether or not district officials will be able to properly fill those buildings with staff and students remains to be seen. Because of major budget shortfalls — largely due to state cutbacks — programs and staff have been eliminated.

About \$94 million has been spent in the past six years on 19 projects — everything from a performing arts theater at Santa Monica High School to a new pool at Lincoln Middle School.

The money was generated by Proposition X — a school bond passed by voters in 1998. About \$45 million of the construction costs were funded by Prop. X and the rest came from state funding dedicated for school facility projects. The bond is expected to expire within 20 years.

By 2000, the entire program was headed for serious difficulties because the general contractor in charge of the projects, Jacobs International, was costing the district millions of dollars in cost overruns and delays.

"There was a lot of controversy over quality of service, cost overruns, and things were significantly behind schedule," said

See PROP. X, page 7

Government liability trial to begin this week in SM

By Daily Press staff

SM COURTHOUSE — Jury selection will begin Wednesday in a trial that accuses the city of West Hollywood of being negligent in its upkeep of a crosswalk where a Los Angeles man suffered permanent brain damage in a traffic accident.

The case is centered around a

lawsuit which alleges the city of West Hollywood is responsible for injuries Jason Eli Sayers incurred after he was hit by a car while crossing the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Alta Loma Road.

Sayers sued the city on Dec. 6, 2001 for negligence and dangerous condition of public property. He alleges the city's failure to

maintain a flashing light system at the intersection caused him severe and permanent injuries, including brain damage.

On April 24, 2001, Sayers, then 25 years old, was walking across the intersection when he was struck by a car driven by Danielle Mason. Mason didn't see Sayers, because the flashing safety lights

in the crosswalk were not working, attorneys say.

Sayers' attorneys — Browne Greene and Robert D. Jarchi of the Santa Monica-based Greene, Broillet, Panish & Wheeler, LLP. — will argue that workers in West Hollywood's City Hall knew the

See TRIAL, page 6

City Hall sues law firms for asking too much

\$66 million hangs in the balance

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — They wanted to get paid. Instead, they got sued.

A group of lawyers hired by City Hall to help litigate the largest lawsuit in Santa Monica history has been sued by local officials for allegedly asking for an exorbitant amount of legal fees — \$66 million worth.

The lawsuit was filed by City Hall just days after it settled its last claim against more than a dozen oil companies that in 1996 contaminated local water wells with MtBE, a fuel additive. More than \$120 million has been promised to City Hall by the oil companies, who also will pay for a new water treatment plant, which is expected to cost several hundred million dollars.

Three outside law firms and dozens of attorneys worked on a contingency basis in the MtBE case. City Hall's lawsuit seeks to have their contract made void and asks that the lawyers instead be paid on a "quantum meruit" basis, meaning they would be paid as a judge sees fit.

According to the lawsuit, the outside lawyers may have nullified their contract by interpreting it in such a way that benefits them most. They also may have nullified it because they allegedly had

"There was an army of lawyers and their supporting staff involved in this litigation on behalf of the city ... the documents involved in the case are literally in the millions."

— DUANE MILLER
Attorney

an internal agreement for splitting the settlement that wasn't approved by City Hall.

According to its contract with the lawyers, City Hall was to pay the outside firms between 10 percent and 27 percent of any settlement, depending on how long litigation lasted. Though the MtBE suit was filed in 2000, there were long periods of inactivity, City Hall's suit claims.

But lawyers say they're owed 25 percent of the settlement money and a portion of what the treatment facility will be worth once it's built.

It's unclear how much City Hall officials think the outside

See MTBE, page 6

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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★★-Positive ★★★-Average
★★-So-so ★-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ You can easily make money through an unusual ingenuity and talent. Exercise those abilities today. Brainstorm and discuss ideas. What seems far-fetched could be realistic with some feedback. Be a sieve for others' ideas. Tonight: Play with your budget.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Greet today as your personal New Year as you enter a New Moon. Make resolutions with the expectation of fulfilling them. Be honest with yourself. Meanwhile, know that you have unusual charisma right now. Use it to the max. Tonight: Be all smiles.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Slow down and think. Your abilities and intellect will take you where you want to go. Just don't act at your normal fast pace. Weigh the pros and cons for several days. Talk to a trusted adviser. Tighten up your ideas. Mull your thoughts over as if you were ripening a good wine. Tonight: Snuggle in.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ What you have wanted could happen. Start talking about making this desire a reality. You find that others will start to pitch in to make it so. Make a long-overdue resolution — be it to lose weight or to network more. Spread your wings. Tonight: With friends.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ Work demands your attention. In fact, don't be surprised if in the near future you take a larger role in your work life. Others need your direction and request your help. Fortunately, you aren't shy either. Make what you want happen. Tonight: It could be a late night, whether you like it or not.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Understand the overview instead of getting into minute details. Sometimes you fuss so much about details that you miss the big picture. Seek out experts. Pull yourself out of the immediate here and now. Tonight: Juggle ideas.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Deal with a key partner directly and don't force your hand. Allow others to express more of themselves. Work as a team and see what happens. The beginning could be rocky, but the end results will be excellent. Two heads works better than one. Tonight: Be a duo.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You have the right idea, though it might be politically correct to have someone else think it is his or her idea. You might find this behavior hard to do, but most effective. Ultimately you will gain and gather more of what you want. Tonight: Say "yes."

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Focus on work and stay out of the present uproar. Concentrate on your work and what you want to accomplish. Avoid any uproar in your immediate circle. You will be happier and much more anchored. Tonight: Do something relaxing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You flow with ideas and solutions while others stumble. Still, don't commit funds just yet. Schedule some time with a favorite person or child, even if it is just a long lunch. Your steadiness makes a difference. Tonight: Let the kid in you out for a romp.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Don't get into an argument with others, especially family. You might find yourself in a tizzy. Let go of differences and be more accepting. In the long run, everyone will be a lot happier. You can only control yourself. Tonight: Order in.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Keep conversations flowing, even if you would rather walk away. Touch base with those you care about. Decide that a new approach in communication might benefit both you and others. Tonight: Chat over dinner.

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LOCAL



Pico man arrested for gun possession, parole violation

By Daily Press staff

PICO NEIGHBORHOOD — A Santa Monica man targeted by police last year for allegedly being connected with a rash of gang-related shootings was arrested here early Sunday morning for possession of a loaded handgun.

Richard C. DeLaCruz, 31, was arrested at about 3 a.m. after Santa Monica Police officers patrolling the area saw a group of men drinking in public in the 1900 block of 17th Street. When officers noticed DeLaCruz allegedly in possession of a handgun, they attempted to detain him, police said. That's when he ran into a nearby home, police said.

Officers arrested DeLaCruz and a juvenile. DeLaCruz is currently being held at the Santa Monica Jail for possession of a firearm and violation of probation. He has no bail, police said. The juvenile was transported to a juvenile detention facility.

DeLaCruz was arrested by the SMPD last May after a SWAT team raided his apartment, as well as three others. Police at the time described DeLaCruz as a "subject of interest" in the rash of shootings that had occurred in the neighborhood in

the month leading up to his arrest.

The raids netted several arrests and officers recovered weapons they believed were related to the gang-related shootings. DeLaCruz was arrested and charged with probation violation after police found evidence in his apartment that allegedly linked him to the shootings. It's unknown if he was convicted of any charges.

Known as the Pico neighborhood and considered part of the city's east side, it has been plagued with gang violence and drug dealing for years. Most of the tension is territorial — between the Graveyard Crips and the Santa Monica 17th Street gang — as well as racial. One gang is black, the other Latino.

For the past decade, most of the gang activity has been in a relatively small section of the neighborhood — 17th Street and Michigan Avenue. And many of the gang members are youth and young adults who are on parole or probation, police said.

Anyone having additional information to Sunday's incident is encouraged to contact the SMPD at (310) 458-8491. Callers who wish to remain anonymous can also call the We-Tip national hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME (27463).

Graffiti attracts attention

By Daily Press staff

Graffiti of the non-gang related kind showed up on the city's east side last week.

On May 13 at 7:40 a.m., Santa Monica Police responded to an eastside neighborhood regarding a malicious mischief call. When officers arrived, they saw that unknown suspects had written some anti-Islamic slurs on a wall. The graffiti was

removed immediately. The vandalism caused no permanent damage to the area and the police are conducting an investigation.

Anyone with any information regarding this incident is encouraged to contact the SMPD at (310) 458-8426 or (310) 458-8491. Callers who wish to remain anonymous, yet still become eligible for a reward, also may call the WeTip national hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME.

Riordan takes top title this year

By Daily Press staff

Richard Riordan is the man.

That's according to Santa Monica-based WISE Senior Services, which named the former Los Angeles mayor Man of the Year at its annual benefit dinner at the Beverly Hills Hotel Friday. Riordan was honored for championing the Stop Senior Abuse Awareness Campaign.

Also honored was the First Federal Bank of California for its charitable commitment to Los Angeles communities, and its strong financial support for seniors and their families. CEO Babette E. Heimbuch accepted the award on behalf of First Federal.

WISE is a multi-service, private non-profit organization that was founded in 1968. It offers a wide range of services to older adults in the LA area.



How about that warm water...

Look for a mix of NW wind swell and slowly building SW swell today. Most spots will see surf in the 1-3' range, with best SW breaks seeing a little more consistent waist-high waves, and occasionally bigger sets in the afternoon. Look for the SW swell to fill in further as we move into the second half of the week. Winds are variable out of the S up to 8 knots in the morning, building 8-12 knots+ out of the SW to W for the afternoon.

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	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
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SUNDAY	2:45	0.1	2:10	1.1	8:47	3.9	8:29	5.7
MONDAY	3:20	-0.3	2:36	1.5	9:30	3.8	8:52	5.8
TUESDAY	3:54	-0.5	3:00	1.8	10:11	3.6	9:16	5.8
WEDNESDAY	4:27	-0.5	3:23	2.1	10:53	3.5	9:41	5.7
THURSDAY	5:02	-0.5	3:47	2.3	11:37	3.3	10:09	5.6
FRIDAY	5:41	-0.4	4:11	2.5	12:28	3.2	10:39	5.4

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The **Q**Line

Louisiana Rep. Derrick Shepherd has filed a bill that, if passed, would outlaw low-riding pants. He said he did it because he was tired of catching glimpses of boxer shorts and G-strings over the lowered belt lines of young adults.

The law would punish anyone caught wearing the pants with a fine of as much as \$500 or as many as six months in jail, or both.

The bill would be tacked onto the state's obscenity law, which restricts sexual activity in public places and the sale of sexually explicit items.

Los Angeles could arguably be considered the mecca of people who wear low-riding pants, commonly seen on just about every young person in Santa Monica.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Is the government going too far in regulating us?"

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

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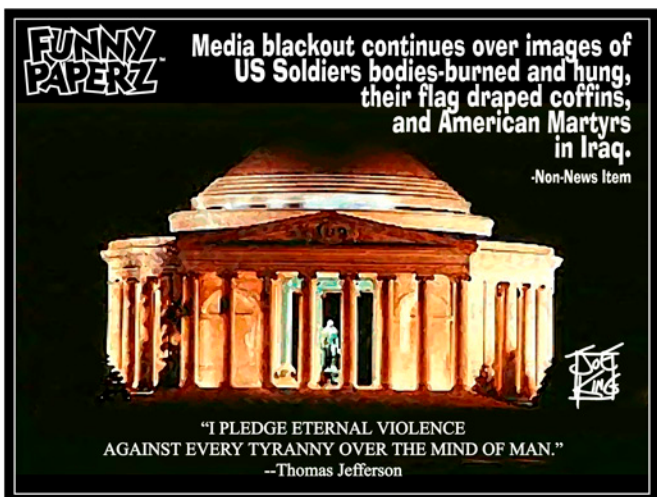
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LETTERS



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Politician showing signs of hypocrisy?

Editor:

Sheila Kuehl, our California senator (D. Santa Monica), has been providing guest commentary most recently about the workmen's compensation plan signed by the governor and legislature. Yet, I remember that she was the author of the medical leave plan for pregnancy that has been criticized for placing tremendous burdens on California businesses. In addition, she has authored many laws placing severe restrictions on property owners, resulting in the removal of apartment rentals from the open market. In sum, Sen. Kuehl has chosen the path of serving the wishes of the few without striving to balance competing interests for solutions that are best for the majority of Californians. I hope that our senator will change from being a regulator to promoter of solutions that increase competition among businesses and expand opportunities available to Californians.

George Balanis
Santa Monica

Laws are outdated, antiquated

Editor:

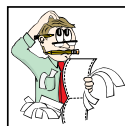
My husband and I moved to our Sunset Park home on 20th Street in January 2004. We live on a block that serves as a thoroughfare to Santa Monica College. The noise from the cars (radios, honking), the car exhaust, our toddler's safety and the general eyesore of stop and go traffic in front of our house led us to prioritize the erection of a 6' redwood fence around the front of the property. After scouring the many city ordinances dictating what Santa Monica property owners could or could not do with their own land, I discovered that not only would we be limited to a 3 1/2' fence, but that shrubbery also had to be limited to the same height.

I contacted City Hall's Planning and Community Development Department to find out if this was still an enforced ordinance, and if so, how I might appeal it due to special circumstances. The city employee I spoke with noted that the ordinance, while still enforced, was indeed antiquated. However, she gave me some historical reference so that I could understand why it had been put on the books and continued to exist: In short, it's a good neighbor policy. As she explained it, back in the (circa) 1940s, the city wanted neighbors to have a clear view of one another's homes so that they could all keep an eye out for one another in an effort to curb crime. Apparently, if I'm away and a burglar is prowling around my yard, my neighbors (who for the most part exist in fortified apartment structures with no direct view of my house) will either call the police (regular police, not hedge police, please) or make a citizen's arrest of the wrongdoer. As far as appealing for relief from the ordinance, the same woman told me I could file such a request for a cost of \$1,000 by way of a variance, but that I shouldn't bother because these were always turned down with little consideration. The \$1,000 sounds like an awful lot of money to process and review a simple request. But hey, the city gets to keep the \$1,000 regardless of the decision.

I understand the need to keep certain fences/shrubs restricted due to street traffic concerns. If I'm backing out of my driveway, I want to see who is flying over the speed humps in my direction. But for those of us who have finally made home ownership a reality in a city we love (and in the case of my husband and I, were born in), it seems we should at least be entitled to the enjoyment of our front yards. And if any resident's conditions are like those faced by my family, privatizing the front yard by way of a fence and or greenery is the only way for this to happen.

Kathy Speer
Santa Monica

Public pays the price in the game of politics



DOSE OF REALITY

By Matthew Glasser

When it was revealed that the highest paid Santa Monica city employees make between \$155,000 and \$220,000 a year (SMDP May 7, page 1), I couldn't help but wonder, how can I get one of those jobs? I now realize that my high school guidance counselor was right. She warned me about becoming a writer. She said very few writers ever strike it rich. What she failed to mention is that if I really wanted to be wealthy, I should have gone into government work.

I always thought that when you went to work for City Hall, you devoted your life to being a public servant. Perhaps it's unfair to pick on city staffers. After all, running a city — especially Santa Monica — is difficult and time consuming work.

Here's an idea. Since these folks are public employees, let's ask the public if they think the salaries are warranted. E-mail me if you think you are getting your money's worth from your highly paid City Hall staff. I will announce the outcome of this poll in one of my future columns.

Unfortunately for all of us worker bees, the issue of high salaries for public employees and politicians goes far beyond our local government.

Travel up north and you'll find that the politicians in Sacramento make about \$150,000 a year. This is on top of a car allowance, daily per diem allowance — travel allowance, food allowance, funds for staff, and a host of other perks and benefits.

Then again, the California Legislature is debating more than 3,000 new bills and that means that legislators are only making \$50 in salary per bill. The real question is: Does California really need 3,000 new laws? It would appear to me that we have a fair amount of laws already. What's left? Perhaps we need a law that would require hamsters to wear helmets when running in their wheels.

Members of Congress do even better than state legislators. They make about the same amount of money but they clean up on the perks. They receive almost their full salary as a yearly pension when they retire, get free medical care, have an expense account for meals and travel (for the meals that lobbyists aren't already picking up the tab on), receive an annual housing allowance, can use their taxpayer-paid frequent flier miles for personal use, get free mail privileges, and even get free parking at National and Dulles Airport. Who said there was no such thing as free parking? Just get elected to Congress.

What ever happened to the idea of elected representatives actually being representatives for those who elected them? With the notable exception of their exclusion of women, I think the founders of our country did pretty well as legislators considering that they were farmers, merchants and settlers. They weren't professional politicians but they still managed to include some really big words in the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution.

When did public service become a full-

time profession? And what is it going to take to return our city councils, legislatures, and the two houses of Congress to the people who actually understand today's public policy issues because they are not insulated by exorbitant salaries, excessive perks, and inflated senses of self-worth?

One of my biggest gripes about professional politicians is that most of them think of themselves as celebrities. They act more like actors and less like public officials. And as far as I know, there are only a handful of public officials who can rightfully claim the title of actor-politician. Forgetting about the governor for a moment — why do so many of our elected officials act like they are more important than the people they represent?

If you've ever gone to a gala or fundraiser for an influential organization, you will surely see how the MCs and speakers "oooh and ahhh" over the elected officials in the audience. They announce their names with glee and thank them for coming to the event. Why not thank the waiter who makes minimum wage but still serves us with a smile, or the stage crew who worked all day and night to make the production look good. But when a politician just bothers to show up (most don't stay through the entire event), they receive kudos and rounds of applause.

Have you ever tried reaching your local representatives by phone or mail? Good luck getting past the gatekeepers. You get an answering machine, an intern, or a form letter in response. Of course, you can have dinner with your elected officials if you are willing to donate a few dollars to their reelection campaigns. But for us mere mortals, there is very little chance of ever exchanging ideas with those who represent you.

For the rest of us, our best chance to share ideas with our elected officials is at public hearings. And while I have been impressed with the Santa Monica City Council's willingness to listen to public comments and debate the issues, the same can't be said for their big brother in Los Angeles.

A friend once spent weeks preparing her remarks about why the city should protect the historical housing of the Miracle Mile district. When she finally was called to the podium at the LA City Council meeting to present her comments, she received an eye-opening lesson in modern politics. Instead of listening to her testimony, City Council members spoke on their phones, ate their lunches, got up and walked around, or just sat with their backs to her. It's far from what I would call representative democracy in action. And that sort of behavior happens all the time.

Here's what I think we need. Let's force our professional politicians to get real jobs and hire the folks who have been working hard all of their lives to represent us. We need more "real" people in power who understand the needs of the 95 percent of the population who don't make more than \$150,000 a year. And we need to go back to part-time, citizen-run legislatures and elected bodies. Let's spend less time legislating and passing unnecessary laws, and more time getting things done. It worked for Madison, Jefferson and Hamilton. It might just work for us.

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

OPINION



It's time to start regulating our own government



LEGAL VIEWS AND NEWS

By David Pissarra

As a community member who has received the beneficence of the great and far ranging wisdom of the current City Council, I would like to present the following as a gift for the continued orderly running of our fair city.

Since the City Council has decided that it is appropriate for it to determine the health and safety for the rest of the community, I would like to see it begin by setting the standard. The latest attack on personal freedoms has led me to propose the following: We should require each councilmember to maintain no more than 25 percent body fat, and to adopt a heart healthy diet and exercise regimen. The AMA has declared that increased body fat can contribute to heart disease, lung disease, sleep apnea, increased health costs and early termination of life. I feel that it is only for the common good that we have a fit and healthy City Council.

We should require that our City Council exercise three times a week. The councilmembers should be made to pay for the inspection of their bodies and their personal trainers. Alternatively, they can

We should require that our City Council exercise three times a week. The councilmembers should be made to pay for the inspection of their bodies and their personal trainers.

pay a "processing fee" to avoid this hassle that is equal to \$100 for each 10 pounds over their ideal body mass index, on a semi-annual basis. Failure to appear for their physical examination will result in a suspension of their salaries, and their right to speak on behalf of the city.

Additionally their diet should be regulated. They may have a choice of a Zone Perfect system or the Atkins Diet. For the vegetarians among them, they can control their own diet, if they can prove to the satisfaction of a committee comprised of a PETA member and a macrobiotic doctor, that they are maintaining a healthy weight and dietary requirements. And they should be made to pay for the professional fees and all food involved.

Of course, no councilmember should be allowed to drink alcohol and their intake of caffeine should be limited to no more than two cups in the morning and one before 5 p.m. Smoking is of course a verboten behavior, unless it is marijuana for medical purposes.

Each member should be allowed to have dessert twice a week, but only at lunch. And the tiramisu must be non-alcoholic.

Eating out should be limited to non-quick serve restaurants. No McDonalds, Jack In The Box, TacoBell, or Arby's for them, unless they want to pay a "convenience fee" of say \$2,500 for the damage they are doing to their arteries and the increased risk to the community that we might have to replace one of them.

The cost to the community of losing a councilmember is the institutional memory they carry with them. For example, Councilmember Ken Genser has been on the City Council since 1988. That will be 16 years this coming November. Sixteen years of council meetings where he listened to the complaints of the homeowners. Sixteen years where he sat and heard the business community bewail the over-regulation. Sixteen years of hearing the schools complain they don't have enough money. Can you imagine what we would lose if something happened to him? He

has a wealth of institutional memory. The man is a veritable encyclopedia of local politics. The thousands of hours of hearing from the community would be lost forever. The loss would be tremendous.

We have a right to protect the city from unexpected losses. We have an office of emergency services. We have a succession plan for the council. But wouldn't it be better if we didn't need it? We should demand a healthy council. After all, they are demanding smoke-free parks, pier and beaches. They are demanding that the signs are all licensed and that the businesses all conform to the community standards. The City Council should be made to live up to the standards it sets for others in the community.

I think we would get a very different quality of councilmember should the above proposed legislation be enacted. We might get a council that understands that its action, or its inaction, has effects. We might get a City Council that understands the realities of homeowners and business owners. We might get good legislation, rather than the pie-in-the-sky, save-the-world policies that pass for effective governing.

(David Pissarra is a business development lawyer in the Santa Monica firm of Pissarra & Grist. He welcomes your questions and comments. He can be reached at dpissarra@pissarra.com or (310) 664-9969).

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LOCAL

Mediations bear no fruit in City Hall case

MTBE, from page 1

attorneys ought to be paid. The lawsuit doesn't specify an exact amount and instead seeks to have the contract pronounced void, and the outside attorneys reimbursed on the quantum meruit basis, as determined by the courts. The suit also describes as "premature and not ripe for consideration" how much, if any, City Hall should pay the lawyers for helping to secure the water treatment facility.

"There's no set number because it depends on a lot of different calculations," said Assistant City Attorney Joe Lawrence, who oversaw litigation in the MtBE case. "However, we are extremely far apart, and unfortunately we've been unable to reach any kind of compromise or agreement. We need to get the matter resolved, and so the city filed a lawsuit ...

"The city is disappointed that it has come to this point in time," he added. "We had every hope that we would have been able to reach an agreement without a lawsuit, but since that has not been possible we think it's in the public interest to get the issue resolved as quickly as we can."

Dallas-based attorney Fred Baron, one of the outside lawyers retained in the MtBE case, said Monday he was bewildered and disappointed by the lawsuit.

"I've been practicing law 33 years, and I've done it exclusively on contingency fee contracts and I've never had a client ever try to renege on the contract itself — this is the first time," said Baron, adding outside attorneys performed the majority of work on the case. "We never received an inkling from the city that they intended to renege on the contract. Indeed, they told us that we had done a magnificent job for the city."

Sacramento-based attorney Duane Miller agreed.

"We've worked for four years and

we've achieved a result that the city has described as exceeding their expectations," said Miller, whose firm placed a lien against any payments in the case. "There was an army of lawyers and their supporting staff involved in this litigation on behalf of the city ... The documents involved in the case are literally in the millions."

City Hall closed all five wells at the Charnock Well field in West Los Angeles after it was discovered MtBE had seeped into the groundwater from nearby underground fuel storage tanks. Charnock supplied about half of the water to 300,000 customers in Santa Monica, including more than 85,000 residents. After first trying to resolve the matter out of court, City Hall hired additional legal help and filed suit against the oil companies in 2000.

City Attorney Marsha Moutrie said the MtBE lawsuit was the exception to City Hall's rule of only hiring outside lawyers on an hourly basis. She said City Hall did so to save money because it realized from the outset the case would involve long and complicated litigation.

Baron and Miller said they never submitted a bill to City Hall, but added they asked that an appraiser be hired to value the water treatment facility.

"We know how much cash was recovered, that was easy. But the better question is, 'What's the value of the water treatment facility?'" Baron said. "The city has refused to even acknowledge that we have a contract at this point that is valid ... At this point in time, the city apparently is seeking to rescind the contract completely ... I'm very discouraged by that."

The two groups unsuccessfully mediated the matter with retired Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Keith Wisot last month. There are no further mediation sessions scheduled.

Trial expected to last more than two weeks

TRIAL, from page 1

crosswalk was dangerous for pedestrians.

As early as 1990, hundreds of people who worked in nearby offices petitioned the city's transportation department to make the intersection safer, including those employed by Playboy Video Enterprises, Inc. and Western International Media, according to Sayers' attorneys.

One of those working in West Hollywood's transportation department at the time was Lucy Dyke, who is now the transportation planning manager in Santa Monica.

Lawyers will argue that West Hollywood's City Hall knew the best solution to the problem was to install a traffic tri-light signal and was trying to compel local area businesses to pay for the traffic light. Instead, it opted to install a system with a motion sensor and flashing lights surrounding the crosswalk to alert motorists to crossing pedestrians at night, lawyers say.

In 1990, petitions were submitted to Dyke in West Hollywood's transportation department that had been signed by 37 Western International Media employees and 43 Playboy Video Enterprises, Inc.

employees, asking that a crosswalk be installed in the intersection.

Four years later, Anne Mercer submitted petitions to Dyke on behalf of hundreds of employees working in the area of Alta Loma and Sunset, writing, "Our questions (sic) is, how many pedestrians must be injured (seriously or fatally) before West Hollywood takes full responsibility for the traffic in this area? We would like nothing more than to see a 'full' traffic light installed at this corner or at a very minimum we would like a 'pedestrian' signal, that stops traffic for pedestrians."

Greene, Broillet, Panish & Wheeler, LLP, whose offices are at 100 Wilshire Blvd., are representing victims of the Farmers' Market accident — when an elderly man drove his Buick LeSabre into the crowded market last July, killing 10 and injuring dozens of others.

The city of West Hollywood is being represented by Scott Haith, who works for the Calabasas-based law firm of Robertson & Vick. Haith couldn't be reached for comment.

The trial is expected to last 20 days and will be heard by Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Valerie Baker.

LOCAL



Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II/Daily Press
Music students on Monday practice in a new facility at Santa Monica High School.

New fields, pools and recreational complexes

PROP. X, from page 1

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Superintendent John Deasy, adding the problem had grown to severe levels by the time he took the job in 2001. "It was the single biggest problem that stood in front of me."

A team of school officials and the CEO of Jacobs International worked together to overcome the issues, which largely were because of how the subcontractors had been scheduled, managed and paid.

"We met with the CEO and he and I worked out how we could quadruple the amount of people on each project," Deasy said. "It's remarkable how much time he gave to this. He responded very well to the problems and as a result, every project came in under budget."

Barnum Hall, Samohi's new performing arts theater, was the last project to be completed. It opened last October.

The completion of the facilities were celebrated by the school board earlier this month. The following projects have been completed:

160 new classrooms
A new competition gymnasium
A new "cafetorium"
Two new softball fields

A new baseball field
A new competition pool
A new track and field complex
A new Greek Theater

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Santa Monica High School:
Barnum Hall Restoration
Addition of eight classrooms to the language building
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Malibu High School:
New classroom building
New gymnasium
Conversion of cafetorium into an auditorium with orchestra pit
New track and field complex

John Adams Middle School:
Cafeteria renovation
Auditorium renovation

Lincoln Middle School:
Pool renovation
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STATE BRIEFS

Text messaging could turn into a criminal act

By The Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Criminal charges could be filed against a teenage motorist who was allegedly reading a text message on his cellular telephone when he struck four other teens, critically hurting two of them.

The four teenagers were standing on Bellflower Boulevard, putting gas in the tank of a Ford Expedition sport utility vehicle that ran out of fuel, when they were struck early Sunday by Philip Parker, 18, of Lakewood.

"There's a whole multitude of charges that could be considered because the accident resulted in serious injuries to the victims," Sgt. Paul LeBaron said.

The distracted driver told investigators he had just received a text message on his cell phone and was reading it while driving his 1990 Ford Probe, the sergeant said.

The injured teenagers were taken to local hospitals. A 14-year-old girl and a 15-year-old boy were admitted to Long Beach Memorial Medical Center in critical condition and two other boys, 17 and 15, were described only as stable at St. Mary Medical Center and Community Hospital of Long Beach, fire spokesman Wayne Chaney said.

Murder in LA jails

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — At least five County Jail inmates have been killed or beaten during the past 18 months in retaliation for testimony against other prisoners, it was reported.

The bloody toll is higher than previously acknowledged by the Sheriff's Department. Two jailhouse revenge attacks, one of them fatal, have been the focus of county officials and news accounts in recent days.

"It's unacceptable that the sheriff has been unable to protect the safety of inmates in the county jails," Supervisor Michael Antonovich said. "This kind of failed management has created an intolerable situation."

A Daily News review of claims filed with the county uncovered the additional attacks.

The first widely publicized case involves Santiago Pineda, 23, of Long Beach, charged with murder in the death of inmate Raul Tinajero, 20, of Wilmington, who testified against him in a murder case.

Authorities said Pineda slipped out of his cell at the Men's Central Jail on April 20 and roamed the jail for five hours before strangling Tinajero in his cell.

Other cases included:

Inmate Ki Chul Hong, 33, whose stabbed and strangled body was found in a laundry basket in the jailhouse basement on Oct. 21. Hong's brother had testified against a rival gang member and authorities said they suspect Hong was killed in retaliation.

Martin Davis filed a claim Nov. 7, 2002, alleging jail deputies, knowing he just testified against a man who had shot him, placed them together in the same cell and left him there unprotected.

Tony Shane Wilson, who testified in a murder case on March 25, was knifed by an inmate on March 26. Prosecutors suspect the attack on Wilson was in retaliation for his testimony.

Brian Williams, 38, filed a claim against the county April 29 alleging he was knifed after testifying against a murder defendant.

"The Sheriff's Department allowed (an inmate) to come into my cell and try to stab me with five other inmates helping him to jump me, causing physical and emotional injuries," Williams wrote.

As a result of the Tinajero case, the Board of Supervisors asked Sheriff Lee Baca to oversee multiple investigations to determine what systemic problems have led to such assaults. The inquiries are being carried out by the Sheriff's Department internal affairs and homicide bureaus, the Office of Independent Review, Special Counsel Merrick Bobb, the District Attorney's Office and the county grand jury.

Recall election mounting

By The Associated Press

CHINO, Calif. — A community group said it has enough signatures, more than 5,000, for a recall election to oust Chino Valley Unified School District president John Pruitt and district clerk Bill Klein.

The group, Taxpayers Against Bait and Switch, claim Pruitt, Klein and board vice president Lonnie Truett have participated in intimidating and bullying behavior and repeatedly violated state open meeting laws. Truett wasn't included in the recall because his term ends in November.

Group spokesman Jeff Wren said there are fears of retaliation by board members against district staff who signed the petition if the recall fails.

"They are afraid Pruitt and Klein will go after them or their principals. They are more afraid for their principals, and they are only collecting signatures," Wren said.

Pruitt and Klein called the petition drive groundless.

"I don't retaliate against people. I think that's so ridiculous," Pruitt said. "I think they have bad information, I think they have been misled, and I think their actions have been fueled by emotions rather than logic."

Klein said some people who signed the petition have already asked to remove their names.

Wren said termination of Superintendent George Bloch's contract earlier this month makes the recall drive crucial.

"I don't think anything has changed. I think the firing of Dr. Bloch and the McKee lawsuit has made it even more relevant," he said.

The school board fired Bloch on May 6 after two internal investigations alleged improper building construction payments and lax oversight in special education.

To qualify the recall for the ballot, organizers must collect at least 8,968 valid signatures in 160 days, though they are aiming for 10,000, they said.

With a start date of March 26, the recall group wants to complete the petition drive by early June for the November ballot, Wren said.

STATE



Bullet train project on slow track for funding

BY STEVE LAWRENCE
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — California's high-speed rail project seems to be stuck on a siding, held up by a shortage of money to complete an environmental review and by disagreement over when to ask voters to approve nearly \$10 billion in bonds to begin construction.

There's also considerable debate over where the speedy trains should run.

"It's on some level of life support," says Richard Silver, executive director of the Rail Passenger Association of California, a rail advocacy group. "There's no one thing that's killing or injuring it. It's an accumulation of different things that are all conspiring against it."

The California project's problems come as Florida Gov. Jeb Bush tries to sidetrack a voter-mandated high-speed rail project in his state and rail advocates search for a reliable source of federal funding for high-speed and "intermediate-speed" trains in several areas of the country.

The 700-mile, \$30 billion-plus California project seemed to be off and running in September 2002 when then-Gov. Gray Davis signed legislation putting a \$9.95 billion bond measure on the November 2004 ballot.

Sale of the bonds would provide about half of the funds needed to build the first leg of the project, from San Francisco to Los Angeles through the San Joaquin Valley. Supporters envision the rest of the money coming from the federal government or private investors.

Later segments would stretch the line to San Diego and Sacramento.

But since that September 2002 bill-signing ceremony the project and the state have been beset by money problems.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority, the agency overseeing planning for the bullet trains, is \$720,000 short of the amount needed to complete an environmental impact report, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's Department of Finance is refusing to authorize boosting the budget to pay for it.

The state itself is battling multi-billion-dollar budget deficits, and in March voters approved a \$15 billion bond measure to ease the state's cash-flow problems.

That's raised concerns that voters won't be in the mood to plunge the state deeper into debt by approving the rail bonds in November.

"At this point it seems like all the parties most of the parties agree that it should be put off," says Sen. Kevin Murray, the Culver City Democrat who chairs the Senate Transportation Committee.

But there's disagreement over whether the proposal should be moved to the ballot in 2006 or 2008.

The Schwarzenegger administration is backing legislation that would delay the vote until November 2008, saying other transportation projects have a higher priority.

"We didn't say not ever; we just said not now," says H.D. Palmer, a spokesman for the Department of Finance.

But putting the vote off that far into the future would raise the cost of the project and force planners to redo or upgrade environmental studies, critics say. Also, some potential routes and station sites might no longer be available by then.

"2008 is just so far in the future you

almost have to start all over again," says Silver.

Murray has a bill that would postpone the vote until 2006, but he says he's not wedded to that date. He says lawmakers have to figure out when the proposal is most likely to pass and when the state can afford to pay the interest on the bonds.

"I think there is bipartisan support for the project in general, but it is about timing," he says. "We just have to figure out when is the best time."

Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, a project supporter, says that if lawmakers agree to postpone the vote until 2008 Schwarzenegger should promise to support the funding needed to update the environmental reviews and agree to campaign for the bond measure.

They only have about a month to make a decision. The cutoff date to put measures on, or take them off, the November ballot is June 24, state election officials say. But Murray says the Legislature has been able to stretch that deadline a little in the past.

The project is also being hit with criticism about where the tracks are likely to run, raising the possibility the bonds could have trouble passing in areas that are unhappy about the trains' routing.

Silver said he spoke recently with a group of people who said they wouldn't vote for the bonds unless the first line went to Redding, a city of about 87,300 residents roughly 140 miles north of Sacramento that isn't targeted for high-speed service.

"I was just blown away by the intensity of the arguments up there," he said. "You have that in cities up and down the state, but there's just not enough population to make it worthwhile in some of these places."

The route debate seems to be particularly intense over how to get the trains over, or through, the coastal mountains to the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas.

The Train Riders Association of California, another rail advocacy group, is sharply critical of how the project is shaping up, in part because the planners favor a southerly Bay Area route out of San Jose for the trains instead of following Interstate 580 through the Altamont Pass.

"We certainly do not want to see the bonds go ahead in 2004," says Alan Miller, the group's executive director. "The environmental impact report is in such disarray. It excluded major parts of the state. It excluded routes that are viable. It's just got so many holes in it and is being attacked from so many directions."

"To give them money at this point would just be to throw money at a bad project."

Silver says his group also "screamed bloody murder" when consideration of the Altamont route was dropped, until he decided that route would be more expensive and difficult to operate.

Mehdi Morshed, the authority's executive director, says Miller's group has criticized a number of other rail projects.

"We have our work reviewed by people in Germany, France and Japan who actually have experience in operating these systems, and they agree in what we are doing," he says. "That's all we can say."

He says a high-speed rail system will have to be built eventually to serve a population that's projected to grow by nearly 24 million people over the next 36 years.

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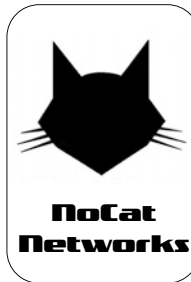
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How to detect overindulgence: The test of four

Guest Commentary

By Jean Illsley Clarke Ph.D.

Parents want to give it, their children want it, they both feel good about it, but what if they're overindulging? How can they tell? The research that supports the book "How Much is Enough? Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likable, Responsible, and Respectful Children" gives us four clues. A "yes" answer to any of the four questions indicates we better think carefully about overindulgence. A "yes" to all four screams "watch out, this is a risky situation!"

THE FIRST CLUE

Will doing or giving this interfere with, or slow down my child's learning what she needs to learn at this age? Finding out about child development can be a steep learning curve for someone whose last close contact with children was during his own childhood. But learn it we must, or we risk pushing the child to grow up too fast or teaching him to be incompetent by holding him back.

Does Hank know that surrounding his son with toys that do everything with the push of a button keeps his toddler from developing important hand and brain patterns that come from manipulating blocks, banging kitchen pans, stacking tubs, taking things apart and putting them back together hundreds of times?

Does Denise know that teaching money management skills to her school-age daughter implies that her daughter has an allowance that is not enough to buy everything she wants, and that Denise needs to insist that her daughter save some money every week, as well as put some aside for her religious institution or charity giving?

There are lots of ways Hank and Denise can learn about children's developmental tasks. They can use books, magazines, classes, or ask older parents. "How Much Is Enough?" also has simple descriptions that can be copied and put on your refrigerator for easy reference.

THE SECOND CLUE

Will giving this thing, activity or experience use a disproportionate amount of family resources on one or more of your children? Resources mean money, as in buying another expensive video game

when the credit cards weren't paid in full last month. It might mean space — will this set of drums take space the family needs for other uses? It could be time, as when driving this far and this often for a child's lessons means mother gives up her exercise program. Maybe supporting a particular activity takes more energy than dad has to give. Does this skew the family's attention so much toward one child that the other family members lack attention? What about psychic output? Will this activity be so demanding that the parents feel drained or worried? It is important for children to learn to take their places within the family system so that they receive support, but also understand that they are valued and contributing family members.

THE THIRD CLUE

Is this activity done more to please the parents than for the benefit of your child? Marcia insisted that her daughters be fashionably dressed in order to impress the mother's friends. Nathan sent his son to baseball summer camp because he, Nathan, had always wanted to play baseball. His son preferred the saxophone to the catcher's glove. Participants in the research studies in the overindulgence project reported that their childhood overindulgence was

done to meet some need of their parents, not the child's need.

THE FOURTH CLUE

Does this situation potentially harm others, society, or the planet in some way? If yes, that is a signal it is overindulgence. Does Jason leave the water from the hose running the entire time he washes, dries and polishes the car? Does Mindy throw out a full bottle of shampoo because she just saw an add on TV that promised a new brand will make her hair look sexier?

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Practice using the test of four on situations that look like overindulgence to you.
- Attempt to let children learn new skills at their own pace. Teach them to do things that benefit the whole family.
- Be proud of your children for who they are and get your own needs met in the adult world.
- Teach children to be considerate of others and the environment.

(Jean Illsley Clarke Ph.D., Connie Dawson Ph.D., and David J. Bredehoft Ph.D. are co-authors of "How Much is Enough? Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likable, Responsible, and Respectful Children." Jean can be reached at jiconsults@aol.com. To read more about overindulgence go to www.overindulgence.info.)

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SuperSMASH SILENT AUCTION AND CARNIVAL
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PARENTING for PEACE WORKSHOP
 "Resolving Conflict so Everyone Wins" - presented by the Center for Nonviolent Communication. 10:00 a.m. - noon. Pacifica Charter School, 3754 Dunn Drive, LA (near Culver City). Call 310-845-9405 for more info or visit www.pacificaschool.org.

The YMCA is currently accepting reservations for the following programs:
Memorial Day Family Camp at Big Bear Lake - May 29-31
Summer Keyboarding Camp - ages 7-11. A one-week program, 4 sessions offered. These YMCA programs are

available to members and non-members. Contact Audrey Meyer, program director, at 393-2721, ext. 107 for more info.
MAY 20th - Registration begins for the summer youth programs, including Parent/Me Gym and Swim, Toddler Time and more.
 The YMCA is currently accepting registration for a variety of summer programs for women and children including Mommy and Me, Pilates, dance, crafts, tumbling and more. Pick up a brochure for more info. 2019 14th St., 452-3881.

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

SESAME STREET LIVE - OUT of this WORLD

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms sponsored by:
 "Connie and Carla" showing May 18.
 11:00 a.m., Loews Broadway, 1441 3rd St. Promenade - for Moms and babies newborn - 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable.
www.reelmoons.urbanbaby.com
 "Connie and Carla" stars Nia Vardalos (My Big Fat Greek Wedding), Toni Collette and David Duchovny. Comedy, rated R-13.

Storytelling

Main Library
 Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 & 10:30 a.m. Stories for two year olds with adult.
Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.
Cuentos Para Pequenos - 10:00 a.m., April 27 - June 1. Six-week series in Spanish for 24 - 36 month olds with adult.
Lap Time - 11:00 a.m., April 27 - June 1. Six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMUSD Infant and Family Support Programs.
Twilight Story Time - 7pm - an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.
Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave

- 310-829-7081.
Family Story Time - 7:00 p.m., all ages.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804.
Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30. Music, rhymes and stories for 24-36 month olds with adult. Register now for the next session beginning June 8th.
Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis
 Themes change weekly; for ages infant to 3. 11:00 a.m. 116 North Robertson, Plaza A, LA. 310-358-2500, www.storyopolis.com
Barnes and Noble at the Grove
 Storytime for ages 2 - 6. 10:00 a.m. 189 Grove Drive, LA, 323-525-0270

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA
 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Thursdays 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.
Itsy-Bitsy Yoga at Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Ave.
 Tots (crawling to 24 months) - 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.; Babies (6 wks. to pre-crawling) 11:30 - 12:30 a.m. On-going 6-week series; \$120.

THURSDAY

Storytelling

Babystyle, 1324 Montana Avenue, 434-9590
 10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4.
Main Library - Reed Park
 Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 a.m.; for 2 year olds.
Preschool Story Time at Reed Park; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.
Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.
Toddler Story Time - 10:30 a.m.; April 29 - June 3; for ages 2-3.
La Hora Del Cuento - 7:00 p.m. Spanish stories, songs and rhymes for all ages.
Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081.
Toddler Story Time - 10:15 a.m., April 15 - May 20; for 2 year olds.
Preschool Story Time - 11:15 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804.
Lap Time - 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., May 6 - June 10. 6-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMUSD Infant and Family Support Program.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA
 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.
Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; Pre-natal yoga - 7 - 8:15 p.m.
Yoga Works - 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal 12:15 - 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me - 1:45 - 3:00 p.m.
Mommy Care - 11870



FRIDAY

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

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works - 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m., \$15.
Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; (infants only) - 1 - 2 p.m.; Pre-natal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717
Prenatal Breath and Movement - a Continuum Movement and Yoga-based program designed to support women through various sound and movement explorations that celebrate pregnancy and labor as powerful rites of passage. 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. With Deborah Raulot at the Continuum Studio,

SUNDAY

Concerts on the Pier - every Sunday thru May 30 - 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., FREE!
 Live music, on the parking deck, weather permitting.
Snowwhite, a brand new musical for kids of all ages, at the Santa Monica Playhouse
 Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m. April 3 - May 30, \$12 adults, \$10 kids, ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 1 for reservations, www.santamoniacaplayhouse.com
Main Street Farmer's Market - 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., corner of Main St. and Ocean Park Blvd. Pony rides, live music, lots of vendors and great family socializing.
Puppetolio - 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested
Magiopolis - 2 p.m., 1418 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/Babies 0-4 months, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.



MONDAY

Storytelling

Main Library - Lap Time at Jody's Park, 9:30 a.m., Jan. 5 - June 4 (no class May 31). Ages 0-24 months with adult in conjunction with the Infant and Family Support program of SMUSD.
"Family Connections" - 10:00 a.m., immediately following Lap Time - a series of discussions related to early childhood development and growth. Children welcome, free.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main Street, 310-392-3804.
"Spanish for Little Ones", 11:15 a.m., April 19 - May 24 (no class April 5 & 12). Rhymes, songs and very simple stories in Spanish for ages 2-5 with adult.
Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade - Toddler Story Time - 10am - 310-260-9110

Breastfeeding Group

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

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45pm, \$15
Yoga Garden - Restorative yoga for pre/postnatal - 6:30 p.m., 310-450-0133. www.yogagardenstudio.com

SATURDAY

Storytelling

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade - Kids Story Time - 10am - 310-260-9110
Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion - 10:30am - ages 2-5 - 310-475-4144.
Children's Book World - 10580 1/2 Pico Blvd, LA - 10:30 a.m., 310-559-800K. (no storytime May 22nd)

Yoga & Exercise

Santa Monica Yoga - Pre- & Post-Natal Yoga, Saturdays - 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
 1640 Ocean Park Blvd, 396-4040
www.santamoniacayoga.com
Yoga Baby (Venice) -

310-306-9381; Prenatal yoga - 9:15 - 10:45 a.m., \$13
Mommy Care - 11870 Santa Monica Blvd. at the Dance Factory, West LA, 394-6711;
Pregnancy Exercise - 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise - 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)
Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Other

Snowwhite, a brand new musical for kids of all ages, at the Santa Monica Playhouse
 Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30

& 3:00 p.m. April 3 - May 30, \$12 adults, \$10 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 1 for reservations, www.santamoniacaplayhouse.com
Puppetolio - 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested
Magiopolis - 2 and 8 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$20 for evening, \$15 for matinee. Call 310-451-2241 for info.
Precious Prints - Ceramic Hairlooms for a Lifetime
Second Saturday every month at The Pump Station, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Contact Kristan Ritchie at 310-802-8013 or visit www.preciousprintsstudios.com for more info.
Rainbow Factory in The Goldilocks Case - presented by the Santa Monica Theatre Guild, May 8 - 24. A play by Jake Eberle, directed by William

WEDNESDAY

Storytelling

The Walking Stick Coffee Lounge - 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., 450-6052
 10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4 at this neighborhood coffee shop.
Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.
Preschool Story Time - 10:30 a.m., April 28 - June 2; six-week series for 3-5 year olds with adult.

Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081.
Lap Time - 10:00 & 10:30 a.m., April 14 - May 19; for children ages 0-2.
Toddler Story Time - 11:15 a.m., April 14 - May 19; for 2 year olds.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 392-3804.
Preschool Twilight Story Time - 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Parents/children ages 3-5.
Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion - 2 pm - ages 2-5 - 310-475-4144

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

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; (infants only) - 1 - 2 p.m.; Pre-natal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45pm, \$15
Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal

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Air tanker grounding unfair, dangerous, firm says

BY DON THOMPSON

Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — A California company that supplied more than a third of the heavy firefighting air tankers grounded by the government said Monday it is unfairly being lumped in with a Wyoming firm responsible for most of the catastrophic accidents.

The U.S. Forest Service and Interior Department this month canceled all contracts for use of 33 air tankers that usually drop retardant on fires during the summer, citing safety concerns after two planes broke up in midair in 2002.

"We have been unjustifiably put in the same category as the company that is responsible for five of the six structural

accidents that have occurred in the last 30 years," said Terry Unsworth, president and chief executive of Aero Union Corp. of Chico.

Both of the deadly 2002 accidents over California and Colorado involved aircraft operated by Hawkins & Powers Aviation Inc. of Greybull, Wyo. Both planes lost their wings in mid-flight while dropping fire retardant.

An Associated Press investigation found Hawkins & Powers had a long history of crashes and safety problems. By contrast, air tanker pilots, industry experts and a government inspector called Aero Union an example of a company that was able to maintain high standards while competing for government low bids.

Aero Union says it has been able to

avoid problems by upgrading its planes and training its pilots. Court records show the company spent \$3 million to modify each old military plane it obtained from the government.

Unsworth complained that his company wasn't consulted nor its operations inspected before the National Transportation Safety Board, Interior Department and Forest Service decided they can't guarantee that the old air tankers can be safely operated.

The company plans to fight the decision by seeking support of congressmen who are concerned about similar companies in other states, and who say grounding the heavy air tankers imperils firefighting efforts.

The government says it can function

using helicopters, smaller planes and military aircraft, though the Interior and Agriculture departments now say they may reinstate some of the large tankers if the Federal Aviation Administration agrees to certify they are safe.

In the meantime, the grounding is having a "devastating effect" on Aero Union, which will lay off many of its employees, Unsworth said.

Hawkins & Powers referred calls for comment to a spokeswoman who was said to be unavailable, and who did not return a voice mail message.

Meanwhile, Monday marked the official start of fire season began for all of California south of Sacramento. Fire season in the rest of the state is expected to begin June 1.

Same-sex couples begin marrying in Massachusetts

BY THEO EMERY

Associated Press Writer

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Gay couples began exchanging vows here Monday, marking the first time a state has granted gays and lesbians the right to marry and making the United States one of four countries where homosexuals can legally wed.

Tanya McCloskey, 52 and Marcia Kadish, 56, of Malden, went at a breakneck pace to fill out paperwork, get a waiver from the usual three-day waiting period, then return to city hall.

At 9:15 a.m., Cambridge City Clerk Margaret Drury told the couple: "I now pronounce you married under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

It was among the first same-sex weddings anticipated to take place throughout the state on Monday, the day that under a court order same-sex couples could wed.

"It was really important to us to just be married. We want to be married as soon as we possibly can. Part of it is, we don't know what the Legislature is going to do," McCloskey said.

In neighboring Boston, the lead plaintiffs in the lawsuit that led to the landmark ruling — Hillary and Julie Goodridge — began the process of getting a marriage license so they could be married later in the day.

It was three years ago that they were turned away from Boston City Hall when they sought a marriage license. This time, Mayor Thomas Menino greeted them personally.

"Once again, we've broken down a barrier in the city of Boston and the state of Massachusetts," Menino said. "That's what it's all about."

The moves came against the backdrop of scattered protests but a largely festive party atmosphere.

"I'm proud of this state," said John Meuneir, 43, of Boston, who arrived at City Hall in Boston with his partner, Jim Flanagan, 42, more than two hours before the scheduled 8 a.m. opening.

In Cambridge, more than 260 couples filled out application forms for marriage licenses in the wee hours. A throng that police estimated was more than 5,000 people converged on city hall, including some heterosexuals there to witness history in the making.

Massachusetts was thrust into the center of a nationwide debate on gay marriage when the state's Supreme Judicial Court issued its narrow 4-3 ruling in November that gays and lesbians had a right under the state constitution to wed.

In the days leading up to Monday's deadline for same-sex weddings to begin, opponents looked to the federal courts for help in overturning the Supreme Judicial Court's ruling. On Friday, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to intervene.

The SJC's ruling touched off a frenzy of gay-marriages across the country earlier this year, emboldening officials in San Francisco, upstate New York, and Portland, Ore., to issue marriage licenses as acts of civil disobedience. Even though courts ordered a halt to the wedding march, opponents pushed for a federal constitutional ban on gay marriage, which President Bush has endorsed.

The SJC's ruling also galvanized opponents of gay marriage in Massachusetts, prompting lawmakers in this heavily Democratic, Roman Catholic state to adopt a state constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage but legalize Vermont-style civil unions. The earliest it could wind up on the ballot is 2006.

Massachusetts joins the Netherlands, Belgium and Canada's three most populous provinces as the only places in the world where gays can marry. The rest of Canada is expected to follow soon.

The city of Cambridge, a liberal bastion that is home to Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, opened its doors to couples at midnight, and

remained open until about 4:30 a.m. to accommodate the people who flocked there to make history.

The first couple to receive marriage paperwork was Marcia Hams, 56, and her partner, Susan Shepherd, 52, of Cambridge. After 27 years together, they sat at a table across from a city official shortly after midnight, filling out forms as their adult son looked on.

"I feel really overwhelmed," Hams said as they left the clerk's office and walked through a throng of reporters. "I could collapse at this point."

About 15 protesters, most from Topeka, Kan.-based Westboro Baptist Church, stood near City Hall carrying signs with anti-gay slogans. The group, led by the Rev. Fred Phelps Sr., travels around the country protesting homosexuality.

Ray McNulty, a spokesman for the Massachusetts Family Institute, one of the leading organizers of opposition to same-sex marriage, criticized some of the protesters, saying there was no need for hateful speech.

"What's going on down there is legal, and as far as I'm concerned, give those people their happiness for the day," McNulty said.

Out-of-state gay couples are likely to challenge Massachusetts' 1913 marriage statute, which bars out-of-state couples from marrying in Massachusetts if the union would be illegal in their home state. Gov. Mitt Romney, a gay-marriage opponent, has said the law will be enforced and clerks who give licenses to nonresidents may face legal implications.

Local officials in Provincetown, Worcester and Somerville, have said they will not enforce Romney's order and will give licenses to any couples who ask, as long as they sign the customary affidavit attesting that they know of no impediment to their marriage.

Sure enough, Chris McCary, 43, and his partner of six years, John Sullivan, 37, of Anniston, Ala., were first in line outside town hall in Provincetown on Monday morning.

"This is the most important day of my life," said McCary.

Both sides in the debate say the issue may figure prominently in the November elections across the country.

Candidates for Congress could face pressure to explain their position on a proposed federal constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriage, and voters in several states will consider similar amendments to their state constitutions.

Married couples are entitled to hundreds of right and protections under Massachusetts law, including the ability to file joint state tax returns, automatic preference for making medical decisions for a disabled spouse and workers' compensation benefits. But other rights, such as the ability to jointly file a federal tax return, are not available because federal law defines marriage as between a man and a woman.

(Associated Press writers Jennifer Peter, Martin Finucane, Ken Maguire, Trudy Tynan and Matt Pitta contributed to this story.)

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DID YOU KNOW?: Klezmer music is derived from two Hebrew words, *clay* and *zimmer*, meaning "vessel of music."

NATIONAL



U.N. nuclear chief calls for overhaul to prevent spread of nuke weapons

BY EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — The U.N. nuclear chief called for a major overhaul of global measures to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, warning that “extremist terrorists” and several insecure countries still want to get their hands on nuclear material. Mohamed ElBaradei complained that the international community isn’t thinking “outside the box” about trying to create a globally secure system where people can live peacefully without relying on nuclear weapons.

In the post-Cold War world, especially after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, he said many countries feel that security can only come through nuclear weapons, and “we have realized there is a new group of people, the so-called extremist terrorists ... who would like to get their hands on some of this (nuclear) material.”

North Korea is the top global security problem, and the way the international community responds to that country’s nuclear program will be an important precedent for other would-be proliferators, ElBaradei said.

As far as countries that believe they will be more secure with nuclear weapons, ElBaradei argued that “if a group of terrorists developed their own weapons right now, no matter how much horrific weaponry you have in your arsenal, it will not protect you.”

“So we need a better system of security ... that does not rely on horrific weapons, which won’t protect you or anyone else,” he said.

During an hour-long question-and-answer session at the Council on Foreign Relations, ElBaradei repeatedly returned to this long-term challenge. But he said there were also short-term measures that should be taken to better protect nuclear material, prevent its export and give additional authority to the International Atomic Energy Agency, which he heads.

He criticized the U.N. Security Council for not even expressing concern when North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty — the cornerstone of global efforts to control the spread of nuclear weapons.

“If a country is walking out of the system, they are saying, ‘we are getting out to exercise our option to develop nuclear

weapons.’ If that is not a threat to international peace and security, what is?,” ElBaradei asked.

He said a truly successful global regime must include all countries, noting that three de facto nuclear weapons states — India, Pakistan and Israel — aren’t parties to the treaty. He also lamented that seven years after an additional protocol was adopted allowing intrusive inspections, more than 100 countries still haven’t signed it.

Still, ElBaradei said he wants to supplement the treaty to make it more effective, and one of his proposals will be a worldwide moratorium or ban on the development of plutonium and highly enriched uranium, the building blocks of nuclear weapons.

“In the next couple of months, I’m establishing a group of experts to look into how we can develop a better system of security with regard to enrichment and reprocessing,” he said.

With 100 facilities in 40 countries using highly enriched uranium, he said it was also time for “a clean-up” of this nuclear material.

U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham is planning to go to Vienna, where the IAEA is based, to launch a global clean-up of all the highly enriched uranium from civilian reactors, he said.

“Ideally, I’d like to see the non-proliferation regime treated the way we treat genocide — that whether you’re in or out of the treaty, you are banned from developing nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction,” ElBaradei said.

“We’re far away from that,” he lamented.

ElBaradei, who is scheduled to present an assessment of Iran’s nuclear activities to the IAEA board of governors in June, said his inspectors are getting the access they want but need additional information.

On Libya, ElBaradei said he believes Moammar Gadhafi’s decision to stop programs for developing weapons of mass destruction was a result of “the change of the whole international landscape” rather than the Iraq war.

“I think he has concluded that it’s in their interest to regularize relationships in the West” partly because years of sanction have hurt Libya’s economy, he said.

Stay Tuned

To Santa Monica City Council

BUDGET STUDY SESSIONS

May 25, 26 & 27

6:00 p.m., City Hall, 1685 Main Street

Presentations on the proposed 2004-05 city budget will air on:

- City TV Channel 16
Live Cablecast beginning at 6 p.m.
- www.santa-monica.org
Live Netcast beginning at 6 p.m.
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The proposed 2004-05 city budget, reflecting community priorities, revenue enhancements and budget cuts necessitated primarily by uncertainties generated at the state level, is available on-line at www.santa-monica.org and at all library branches and the City Clerk’s Office at City Hall.

Adoption of the 2004-05 budget preceded by a public hearing, is scheduled for June 15, 2004



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NATIONAL

Iraq could end up as central election issue

BY TOM RAUM

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The turmoil in Iraq is changing the political equation for President Bush and Democratic rival John Kerry.

While the war is eroding public support for Bush, it is also making it harder for Kerry to define himself for voters or promote his domestic priorities.

Strategists from both parties had suggested the election probably would come down to a few states, perhaps turning on different issues in different states.

Some analysts now are suggesting the race could broaden into a national referendum on Bush's Iraq policy.

As president, Bush has the ability to drive Iraq news coverage; for example, his decision to send his embattled defense secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld to Iraq for a surprise visit last week.

With fewer options as the challenger, Kerry has called for Rumsfeld's resignation and accused Bush of running an "extraordinarily mismanaged and ineptly prosecuted war."

Those in Kerry's camp have expressed delight at recent polls showing Bush's approval rating at the lowest of his presidency. But Bush's drop in the polls has not translated directly into a surge for Kerry.

Also, the Massachusetts senator has had to walk a cautious line as he decides how hard to go after Bush as commander

"To suggest that this is a political issue is to fundamentally misunderstand the gravity of the situation."

— MARK MELLMAN
Kerry pollster

in chief without risking a backlash.

Kerry already has drawn criticism from Republicans who accuse him of politicizing the prisoner-abuse issue.

"To suggest that this is a political issue is to fundamentally misunderstand the gravity of the situation," said Kerry pollster Mark Mellman. "Voters recognize that this is a very serious issue. They recognize that Republicans are raising questions, that independents are raising questions, that all Americans are raising questions about this."

Images of Iraqi prisoner abuse by U.S. soldiers, the gruesome deaths of American civilians at the hands of Iraqi militants, a rising death toll and other calamities have overtaken the political agendas of both parties.

Bush and Kerry spent last week stressing domestic issues. Bush campaigned on education, Kerry on health care.

It was hard for their message to get out when local and regional news increasingly is

influenced by pictures and stories from Iraq.

A story on Rumsfeld's visit to Baghdad was the top front-page story, for instance, in Friday's Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. An account of Kerry's visit to Little Rock on Thursday received lesser billing.

Working to Kerry's apparent advantage, and to Bush's disadvantage: Some conservative lawmakers and commentators have been expressing misgivings over the Iraq mission, citing intelligence lapses and Pentagon decision-making.

Bush sought to address their concerns in a speech to the American Conservative Union on Thursday in which he assured his audience he shared their conservative values.

That Bush has to court core supporters this late in the election cycle could indicate trouble.

Democrats immediately pounced. "Now he has to go back and spend time shoring up his base," said Democratic party chief Terry McAuliffe.

Political analysts suggest Bush needs to do more to court independents and other swing voters.

Polls show that more people are becoming disillusioned by the war. So far, however, that has not particularly benefited Kerry.

A poll released Wednesday by the Pew Research Center found that a majority of respondents — 51 percent — said for the first time that the war in Iraq was not going well.

Pew Director Andrew Kohut said in an interview that there are "a lot of independent and swing voters" who could decide the election, but that Kerry has been having difficulty making inroads because their attention is on the president.

Voters must first decide whether Bush deserves re-election before determining whether Kerry is a qualified alternative, Kohut said. That could give high importance to this fall's televised debates.

Iraq also may command more attention because the economy, which usually is the No. 1 election issue, seems to be recovering after years of weakness. Job growth, for example was strong in March and April.

Of course, Iraq cannot continue to work against both Bush and Kerry. As Bush's father, the former president, once observed, the thing about undecided voters is that "eventually they'll go one way or the other."

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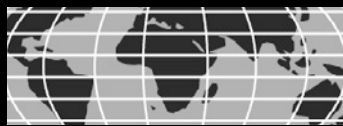
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WORLD BRIEFLY

Rice pushes for peace

By The Associated Press

BERLIN — National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice met Monday with Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia in talks that are part of a fresh push by Washington to bring about Palestinian statehood and restore movement to Mideast peace efforts.

Rice, who held the talks during a trip that also is focusing on Iraq, renewed U.S. backing for a Palestinian state ahead of the meeting. She said in a television interview Sunday that she would tell Qureia the Palestinians must build "accountable political and economic institutions" under a prime minister with full authority.

"We are ready to be full partners with the Palestinians in doing that," she told Germany's ARD television. "We need movement from the Palestinians on those elements of the road map."

Neither Rice nor Qureia made any comment as they arrived for Monday's talks.

The pain still felt in Miss.

By The Associated Press

MONEY, Miss. — The murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till in 1955 shocked a nation and galvanized the civil rights movement, yet the memory of the racial killing wasn't always kept alive in the place where he died.

This Mississippi Delta community kept its infamous history quiet long after the trial of two white men, who later admitted to the killing, had been inserted into textbooks.

Last week, the U.S. Justice Department announced plans to reopen the Till investigation. A black Mississippi district attorney will take the lead in the case.

On Aug. 28, 1955, Till was pulled from his uncle's home after the teenager reportedly whistled at the wife of Roy Bryant outside the old store. Till was

taken to nearby Tallahatchie County and beaten.

His body was discovered three days later in the Tallahatchie River — eye detached, ear missing. Till's body was rendered unrecognizable, except for a ring on his hand.

The discovery of the body led to the arrests of Bryant and J.W. Milam, who admitted they had kidnapped Till but said they had released him unharmed.

An all-white, all-male jury in Sumner acquitted Bryant and Milam of the charge on Sept. 23, 1955. The two, now deceased, confessed to the killing months later in Look magazine.

Transportation bill may be too good to be true for some

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's legislation dear to the hearts of politicians: a highway spending bill spreading jobs and economic benefits throughout the country. But even such a popular measure can't get traction this year against a White House that insists the bill is just too much of a good thing.

Nearly eight months have passed since the last six-year, \$218 billion highway and transit plan expired. Congress has approved three temporary measures to keep federal grants to the states at the old spending level while it struggles, without success, to come up with a new plan.

There's wide agreement that current spending is inadequate to deal with the nation's unsafe, congested and deteriorating transportation system. The Transportation Department has suggested a figure of \$375 billion over the 2004-2009 period is needed.

The White House, however, set a \$256 billion ceiling on the bill while suggesting it might accept \$275 billion if Congress could do it without increasing the deficit.

Administration officials say President Bush would exercise his first veto if he is sent either the \$318 billion bill passed by

the Senate or a \$284 billion version passed by the House.

The Republic rejoicing

By The Associated Press

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic — Former Dominican leader Leonel Fernandez reclaimed the presidency in a vote that reflected frustration with the nation's worst economic crisis in decades, sending his supporters dancing in the streets of Santo Domingo on Monday.

Fernandez praised incumbent President Hipolito Mejia for his "good sense and generosity" in promptly conceding defeat in Sunday's vote, calling it a victory for democracy in a country where past votes have been tainted by fraud.

Fernandez, who was president from 1996-2000, greeted followers with hearty embraces while revelers rode through the streets in caravans, hanging out car windows and waving purple-and-yellow party flags.

Hundreds danced outside his party headquarters to a merengue beat, screaming the campaign slogan: "Out they go!"

The phrase resonated with Dominicans desperate for relief from a severe economic downturn. Under Mejia, prices of staples such as eggs and rice tripled or quadrupled as the peso's value plunged. Thousands of jobs have disappeared, and those with work often complain their pay can't keep up with rising costs.

Lewis and Clark making a comeback with public

By The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Like aging rock stars on a comeback tour, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark are enjoying a huge surge in popularity.

America this week celebrates the bicentennial of the expedition's departure from the St. Louis region, when the explorers and a roughly 40-member crew

set off to explore the Louisiana Territory and seek a Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean.

The explorers logged about 8,000 miles as they navigated the Missouri River, crossed the Rocky Mountains, reached the Pacific and returned with knowledge of the land and its natives.

"I think it's perhaps the most important story in our history," said Scott Mandrell, 38, who portrays Meriwether Lewis nationwide.

He and other re-enactors with The Discovery Expedition of St. Charles, from the city about 25 miles northwest of St. Louis, are expected at dozens of bicentennial events.

American Indians are participating in many of the events and educating visitors about their history and traditions. Other tribes are keeping their distance, noting that the arrival of the white explorers marked the beginning of the end of the Indian way of life.

Military shifts away from S. Korea

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a sign of the Iraq war's increasing strain on the U.S. Army, the Pentagon is considering an extraordinary shift of troops to Iraq from their garrisons in South Korea, where they have stood guard for decades against a feared invasion by forces of communist North Korea, officials say.

The move reflects not only the Army's difficulty in finding enough soldiers for the next rotation of forces into Iraq later this year but also Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's push for greater flexibility in deploying troops based anywhere in the world, including the Korean peninsula.

The U.S. commitment to defending South Korea is the most enduring of its kind, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact that threatened Europe until it dissolved in 1991. U.S. forces saved South Korea after the North invaded without warning in June 1950.

South Korean officials offered the first word Sunday that the United States wanted to move some of the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed there to Iraq, and Pentagon officials confirmed that talks were under way.

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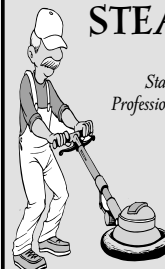
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Jon Stewart gets serious about the War on Terrorism

By The Associated Press

■ **WILLIAMSBURG, Va.** — Jon Stewart, host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," told graduates at his alma mater they have a chance to become the new greatest generation by winning the war on terrorism.

"Even if you don't, you won't have trouble surpassing my generation," he told the 2,033 graduates at the College of William and Mary. "If you end up getting your picture taken next to a naked pile of enemy prisoners and don't give the thumbs up, you outdid us."

Stewart told the graduates their help is needed in "the real world."

"I know we were supposed to bequeath to the next generation a world better than the one we were handed, so sorry," he said. "But here's the good news, you fix this thing, you're the new greatest generation, people."

Stewart, a 1984 W&M graduate, got lots of laughs and an honorary doctorate Sunday from the school where he confessed he was a mediocre student.

"What piece of wisdom can I impart to you about my journey that will somehow ease your transition from college back to your parents' basement?" he asked.

With Stewart as the host, "The Daily Show" has won several Emmys and a Peabody Award. Using the format of a newscast, the comedy show skewers not only politicians, but the reporters who cover them.

LOS ANGELES — It's a boy — and a boy — for Oscar-winning actress Geena Davis.

The 47-year-old star of "Thelma & Louise" gave birth to twin boys at a Los Angeles hospital, publicist Paul Bloch said Monday.

Kian William and Kaiis Steven, born May 6, are now at home in Los Angeles with their mother.

"Mother and babies are doing beautifully," Bloch said.

These are the second and third children for Davis and her surgeon husband, Reza Jarrahy, 33. The couple, who married in September 2001, already have a 2-year-old

daughter, Alizeh Keshvar.

"Alizeh was delighted to have two new baby brothers," Bloch said.

Davis won a supporting-actress Academy Award for playing the kooky dog trainer in 1988's "The Accidental Tourist" and received an Oscar nomination for best actress for 1991's "Thelma & Louise."

■ **TOPEKA, Kan.** — Americans must "return to the streets" to fight for better schools and against poverty to fulfill the promise of the historic Brown v. Board of Education ruling, the Rev. Jesse Jackson said.

"Brown was a first down, not a touchdown," Jackson said during a sermon Sunday at Topeka's Mount Carmel Missionary Baptist Church.

Monday marks the 50th anniversary of the Brown decision, in which the U.S. Supreme Court declared segregated schools unconstitutional.

Like other civil rights activists who gathered in Topeka over the weekend, Jackson said that while the decision represented a major legal change, the United States still falls well short of being a truly integrated — and truly just — society.

"The black-white gap is illegal," Jackson said during his Mount Carmel sermon. "But the gap between the haves and the have-nots is legal — and growing."

Jackson said the Constitution should be amended to declare that a good education is the right of every child. In an interview late Saturday night, he said adequate and fair funding for all public schools is "the next big legal and legislative challenge."

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Catwoman and Spider-Man will present awards at the upcoming MTV Movie Awards — or, at least, their real-life alter-egos, Halle Berry and Tobey Maguire, will.

Other presenters at the irreverent ceremony will include Snoop Dogg, Dave Chappelle, Kirsten Dunst,

Eve, Jimmy Fallon, Kate Hudson and Scarlett Johansson, the cable channel announced Monday.

Lindsay Lohan, the 17-year-old star of "Mean Girls," is set to host the show, which will be broadcast June 10.

"Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl" has the most MTV Movie Award nominations with six, including best movie and best on-screen team for co-stars Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom.

D12, the Beastie Boys and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs are among the bands scheduled to perform at the show, which will be taped June 5 at Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, Calif.

"Spider-Man 2," the sequel to the 2002 blockbuster, will be in theaters June 30. "Catwoman," in which Berry stars as the feline comic book character, comes out July 23.

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Queen Noor of Jordan urged graduating students to build coalitions to achieve global peace and security, creating "a safety net for all of us."

Queen Noor told about 3,500 people who attended the graduation commencement Sunday at Occidental College that education can help resolve some of the world's problems.

"Use your education, foster connections, and cooperate to establish a new kind of security, built on mutual benefit, not better bombs," Queen Noor said. "Not a fortress for the few, but a safety net for all of us."

The queen, 52, who was married to the late King Hussein, also received an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

She said that while "divisions are all around us, and the gulfs seem to be growing moment by moment," students must be willing to work together no matter how severe the differences between one another may be.

"The ability to see from other perspectives, to listen to other opinions, to consider others' needs as well as your own, is right now the most crucial skill you can possess," she said. "Global peace and security depend on it."

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