FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

The city's only daily newspaper

Boathouse lawsuit asks for $50 million

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

The owner of a Santa Monica Pier restaurant that was forcibly closed by the city has filed a $50 million lawsuit, claiming she was unfairly kicked out.

Boathouse owner Naia Sheffield filed the lawsuit Monday against the City of Santa Monica and the Pier Restoration Corp.

The suit alleges that the city and the PRC, which handles leases on the pier, reneged on a 25-year lease Sheffield negotiated in 1993.

Sheffield is demanding a jury trial, claiming breach of contract.

Deputy city attorney Tony Serritella said the city feels the Boathouse doesn't have a case. That's based on a ruling handed down by Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Diana Wheatley, who evicted the Boathouse.

"The city showed they never made such representations to the Boathouse," Serritella said.

The Boathouse, which was a fixture on the pier for 50 years, closed its doors permanently April 15, after Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies changed the locks as part of the court-ordered eviction.

The city, which owns the pier, ended its month-to-month lease with the Boathouse last July to make way for movie-themed chain restaurant, Bubba Gump Shrimp.

Sheffield claims she was forced to enter into the month-to-month lease in 1998 to keep possession of the restaurant. But John Gilchrist, the PRC's executive director in 1993, had offered Sheffield a 20-year lease with an option to renew for another 10 years, the suit claims.

For five years, Sheffield was assured that the delays were bureaucratic red tape by the PRC. However, the terms of the lease previously negotiated still stood, the suit claims.

"She honestly and faithfully believed what John Gilchrist and others told her," said Kelly Bixby, the Boathouse's attorney.

See BOATHOUSE, page 5

Little boy blue



Seth Kotok/Special to the Daily Press

John Gould of Whittier plays his coronet Tuesday at a vacant lifeguard tower south of the Santa Monica Pier.

Board member's denial may prove costly to city

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

Instead of denying a Main Street developer's plans, a city commission may have inadvertently given him more leverage in his quest to gain approval for the plan.

The Architectural Review Board voted 4-0 on Monday to deny Howard Jacobs' 133-unit housing and retail development on the north end of Main Street in the former Pioneer Boulangerie Bakery site.

But before the vote was taken, board member Roldopho Alvarez said he had to recuse himself because his view of the project had been tainted. He said a letter sent to him by Jacobs' attorney, Chris Harding, was meant to intimidate him into approving the project.

However, because not all the seven board members were present, Alvarez decided to vote anyway so the board would have a quorum.

"It's certainly one ground for appeal that the ARB exceeded its role," Harding said. "(Alvarez's) judgment was so clouded that he couldn't vote, but then he did. We think it's outrageous."

Harding sent the letter to all of the board members, which states that he and Jacobs agree with city staff that the ARB is limited to only reviewing the project's architectural design, appearance and landscaping.

The packet also gives background information on the project, which has been in the public approval process for almost three years.

"We were just being very careful given the fact of the history of the project," Harding said. "We didn't have very positive expectations about (Monday) night.

"We had an obligation to build a record in case things go awry."

Jacobs' intuition that he would not get an approval from the ARB was correct — it just wasn't for the reason he thought.

Alvarez and board member Joan

See ARB, page 5

Bulky vehicles have cities banning 'compact' spaces

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Yukon, Tundra, Sequoia, Navigator and Avalanche, those lane-filling vehicles that take up so much room, need bigger parking spaces — and cities are accommodating them by banning "compact" spaces at new projects.

One-size-fits-all spaces are the result of the sport utility vehicle craze: a wide-hip, 19-foot-long Ford Excursion, for example, barely fits into a standard space and it straddles the lines of a compact space. Minivans and those oversized pickup trucks also need room.

A compact space is about 18 inches narrower and five feet shorter than a standard spot.

In Southern California, more than a dozen cities have responded by eliminating compact parking space requirements adopted when small, gas-efficient cars were the rage. In Santa Clarita, Riverside and Westminster, small spaces are no longer allowed.

Also prohibiting compact spaces in new developments are Anaheim, Newport Beach, Orange, Calabasas, Rancho Cucamonga, Dana Point, Riverside, Downey, San Bernardino, Fontana, Fountain Valley, Santa Ana, Glendale, Simi Valley, Long Beach, Westlake Village, Monrovia, Westminster and Montebello.

Cities like Bell Gardens, Cerritos, Lawndale, Rialto and San Marcos have gone a step further: in addition to banning compact spaces in new developments, they allow only standard spaces that are nine-feet wide and 20 feet long.

"Even if they drive SUVs, people are parking in these compact spaces. It's a problem."

— HAL BERNSON
L.A. County Board of Supervisors

A proposal to make compact spaces roomier in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County is also being considered by the Board of Supervisors, and Councilman Hal Bernson may propose changing city parking requirements to accommodate bigger vehicles.

"Even if they drive SUVs, people are parking in these compact spaces. It's a

See SUV, page 3

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★★-So-so ★-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Others determine your plans, but you could look at them as a disruptive influence. Unexpected developments force you to handle a domestic or personal matter. Communication keeps you busy and concerned. Tonight: Go along with another's ideas.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Do your best to express what you expect from bosses and associates. How you handle financial matters finally pays off. Another expresses his or her relief that you're at the helm of the ship. Share good news. Pick up the phone. Tonight: Schedule something just for you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You might be playful, but another might not feel the same. In fact, this person could exhibit a case of the blues. Make calls and check out facts. Do your research. Let your creativity flow, and you'll find answers in a brainstorming session. Tonight: Be your playful self.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ See someone in a new light. Your vision of what might be possible changes as a result of a discussion. A partner suggests an alternative. You might want to check out his or her idea. Your instincts might be off, but your energy seems to keep coming back. Tonight: Head on home.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Make calls and touch base with that special person in your life. Though sometimes this person distracts you, he or she is very important to you. Take a walk and think through a decision. Your mind could be overloaded. Tonight: Flirt and play.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Financial matters could change for the better. You need to be willing to let others help. A group investment might be the right avenue. Discuss a serious matter with a boss or an associate you trust. You want only solid advice. Work as late as need be. Luck comes through friends. Tonight: Join a family member for dinner.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Others pick up on your mood, and, as a result, you're able to drive a hard bargain. Concern about information could be circumvented by doing your own research. A child or loved one needs some of your attention. Be flattered that so many people want you. Tonight: A midweek break.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Slow down. Though you might not have a difficult time, you're not as energetic as usual. Take this fact into account when making work or personal plans. A partner or associate could be unusually critical. Listen to feedback. Tonight: Curl up with a good book.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Pretend that you're not in the "thick of things" as you attempt to make a decision. A partner or associate attempts to explain his or her position but, somehow, feels ill at ease. Help this person relax and work through an issue. Tonight: Find your pals.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Others turn to you for answers, leadership and suggestions. Be careful just how much you offer in a moment of empathy. Later, you could be upset by your offer. Recognize when you're getting tired, and call it a day or, at least, do something refreshing! Tonight: A must show.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You might be inspired by someone at a distance to do something very different. You act like a whirlwind as you clear out tasks left and right. Help a loved one or a child loosen up. A new friend could be a bit uptight. Make that extra effort. Tonight: Put on your dancing shoes.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Let your affectionate nature speak. Others choose to become closer to you because of your caring and attentive manner. Your imagination takes you to a new level. Instincts lead you. Follow through on what's important. Tonight: Follow another's beat.

CORRECTION: A May 11 article misstated the electoral time frame a November ballot initiative proposes. The Voter Election Reform Initiative for a True Accountability System, also known as VERITAS, proposes moving the city's general election to the California primary in March.
If no candidate receives more than 50 percent of the vote, the two top vote getters would have a run-off election in November. Winners in the election are typically sworn into office during the first council meeting in December, but the exact date is set by the city manager's office after the election.

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LOCAL

The Q Line

The powers that be in City Hall are kicking around the idea of re-naming the Santa Monica Public Library. One idea is to name the building after the celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, one of the most distinguished American leaders of the civil rights movement.

As the city council continues to move forward with its plans to rebuild the building for $50 million, our elected officials want to gauge the public's thoughts on this idea.

So, this week's Q-Line question wants to know:

"If you had your way, what should the library be called and why?"

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

Surf Report

Swell activity shifted recently from predominantly south, southwest last week to a new mix of northwest, southwest and southeast swell today. Spots like Venice Breakwater and El Porto got large yesterday and will remain waist-to-shoulder high while swell persists. Overhead sets are possible, though rare, and conditions will be choppy today and tomorrow. Blame competing southeast swell and northwest winds for the bumpy waves.

Rain Sunday night washed a lot of pollution into the Santa Monica Bay, but flagged spots are posted with water warnings, mostly around mouths of storm drains and creeks.

(Information compiled by Jesse Haley.)

Location	Wednesday	Thursday	Water Quality
County Line	2-4'/Fair	2-4'/Fair	A
Zuma	2-4'/Poor	2-4'/Fair	A
Surfrider	1-2'/Poor	2-3'/Poor-Fair	A
Topanga	1-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	B
Breakwater	3-5'/Poor	3-4'/Fair	A
El Porto	3-5'/Poor-fair	3-4'/Fair	A

Companies don't want to build small parking spaces

SUV, from page 1

problem," Bernson said.

The trend isn't limited to Southern California. Thirty-five cities in California now prohibit compact spaces in new developments, according to a study of 160 California cities by International Parking Design Inc., a suburban Sherman Oaks architectural firm.

Most cities mandating larger parking spaces have not cut back on the overall number of stalls required for housing and commercial projects. The new rules simply mean developers must build bigger parking lots and garages.

"Most companies don't want to build compact spaces anymore," said William Hurrell, vice president of the engineering firm Wilbur Smith Associates. "You hardly ever see anyone (adding) compact spaces anymore."

Still, there are holdouts.

Davis has some of the smallest spaces and there are no indications anything will be changed. The Northern California city's parking standards allow developers to build nothing but compact spaces measuring 7 1/2 feet wide and 16 feet long.

The trend of massive SUVs has yet to hit the college town, so the need for bigger parking spaces has never been raised, said Mike Webb, a spokesman for the Davis Building and Safety Department.

A stroll in the park



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

A family takes an early evening walk in Palisades Park.

Downtown Big Blue Bus routes back to normal

By Daily Press staff

As of last Sunday, all downtown Big Blue Buses returned to their regular routes.

The construction of the transit mall, which required lane closures and traffic detours, is now complete, and with the regular lanes of traffic open again, the buses returned to regular service.

Construction crews will be putting the finishing touches on the transit mall over the next few weeks — adding stainless steel and bronze bus signs, installing kiosks featuring large maps and touch screen information centers, and performing some light utility work. None of the construction will impact bus service.

All customers now can meet buses at their normal bus stops and all stops will be back to regular locations and times.

For maps, schedules, timetables or other information visit the company's Web site at www.BigBlueBus.com, or call the customer service department at 310-451-5444.

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OPINION

LETTERS

How about the John Dillinger Public Library?

Editor:

Since Councilman Richard Bloom has "counseled" us Santa Monicans that the renaming of the main library is "an important juncture," and that "the public should take this opportunity to tell the council how they feel about using this naming opportunity," please read this, Mr. Bloom.

I think this whole matter of naming the main library after Martin Luther King, Jr. is a disgusting display of public officials and self-serving (or self-righteous) activists falling over themselves to stumble into a syrupy morass of political correctness. The only known connection between King and a library was his association with the one at Boston University. It was in the archives of that distinguished institution of higher learning that King plundered its resources, stole the work of a legitimate scholar, and, upon signing his name to it as the author, proceeded to submit a plagiarized doctoral thesis, leading to a degree that he had utterly no right to hold and certainly didn't earn.

King might have been an outstanding civil rights leader. But as an academic he was a scoundrel and a bum, and set a disgraceful example. Naming a library after Martin Luther King, Jr. is like naming a bank after John Dillinger.

Julian Maltese
Santa Monica

Parking signs, lack thereof lead to frustration

Editor:

I read with great interest the article entitled "Booting illegally parked cars catching on in cities" by Don Babwin, Associated Press writer.

While I personally was not booted, I was towed from the a parking lot for a mini-mall located in Santa Monica on May 2, 2002, to the tune of $106. I frequent that location on the average of two to three times a week, and have been parking there without incident since December, 1998. You can imagine then, when, after spending time at Starbucks there on May 2, 2002, the fright I felt when I returned to my car, and it was not where I had parked it, and, when suddenly glancing up the ramp, I saw my car in the process of being towed.

I was dumbstruck, ran up the ramp, yelled to the tow truck driver and he stopped and got out of the truck. I asked why he was towing my car. He said I was parked there too long. I said I had been in Starbucks. Then, he said I was in someone's parking space. I was amazed, because I had parked near that location before, and was unaware of it being anybody's assigned space.

So, he proceeded down the ramp pointing to his own "unauthorized vehicles will towed...." sign, and I then noticed the reserved parking sign above the space where I had been parked located very close to the ceiling. I had not seen either of the signs, and, needless to say was extremely distraught and upset.

When I asked if I could have my car, the tow truck driver stated that I could have my car if I paid him $89.00, at which point I got even more upset, and he drove off with my car, leaving me stranded there running after him in the hopes that he would stop and I could pay him and get my car back. He kept right on going in spite of my repeatedly yelling "Stop"!

With much ado, I managed to get someone at that location to drive me over to the towing lot, and, I begrudgingly paid the fee which had now risen to $106 in order to get my car back, as I had absolutely no choice.

In the days following the incident, I returned to the location to investigate and question merchants regarding the parking situation because I was literally in terror of being towed again. I was told that there was a 2-hour parking limit. After repeated inspections, I found not one sign indicating that time limit.

I had been towed from the subterranean parking where there is a "customer parking only" sign posted overhead with arrows pointing both right and left. I parked to the left of the sign, not knowing that high above my car was a reserved for sign. There are many signs indicating and inviting parking and there are many signs indicating "unauthorized vehicles will be towed at their own expense". I do not have a clue as to what constitutes "unauthorized vehicles" and to date, have been unsuccessful in having it explained clearly and succinctly to me.

I have photographically documented the signs which are misleading and confusing, and have attempted to find a Santa Monica city department to which to address the issue of these confusing, misleading and unclear signs. So far, I have been unsuccessful in locating any department which oversees the posting of parking signs in the parking lots of retail centers in order to make know my concerns.

I feel that the matter needs to be addressed with a proper Santa Monica governmental office.

Julia Reeves
West Los Angeles

Councilwoman clarifies remarks

Editor:

Your issue of May 17 misstated what I said at the May 14th city council meeting. I said that elements of the new Santa Monica Library, such as a garden or meeting room, provide naming opportunities and that along with Dr. Martin Luther King, other people from history who have made significant contributions could also be recognized.

Pam O'Connor
Santa Monica City Councilmember

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

LOCAL

Boathouse owner has no case, according to city

BOATHOUSE, from page 1

It wasn't until June of 1998 that Sheffield was informed by the PRC that it was looking for other businesses to lease the space, though the Boathouse would be included in the selection process.

The PRC solicited bids from other restaurants — a process Sheffield claims she was left out of intentionally.

In an attempt to be part of the selection process, Sheffield provided a proposal that included a $2 million renovation of the restaurant, which would have used the famous Route 66 transnational highway as a theme. Route 66 used to end at the pier.

But the PRC frowned upon aspects of Sheffield's theme — specifically the historical perspective of the American Indian motorcycle, similar to what currently is on display at the Guggenhiem Museum in Las Vegas.

The lease was awarded to Bubba Gump. Its 25-year lease with the city was supposed to begin on Oct. 1, 2001, which has financially harmed the city because Bubba Gump's plans to open in the spring of 2003 have been delayed, city officials claim.

Bubba Gump is expected to pay $10,417 in base rent a month, plus $1,889 annually for common maintenance and 2.5 percent of the restaurant's food, beverage and retail gross sales.

The Boathouse paid $5,429 in monthly rent; $168 for annual promotional fees and 8 percent of its gross revenues in excess of $688,088 in annual sales.

The PRC has been criticized by many, including Santa Monica Mayor Mike Feinstein, for engaging in behind-the-scenes political maneuvering.

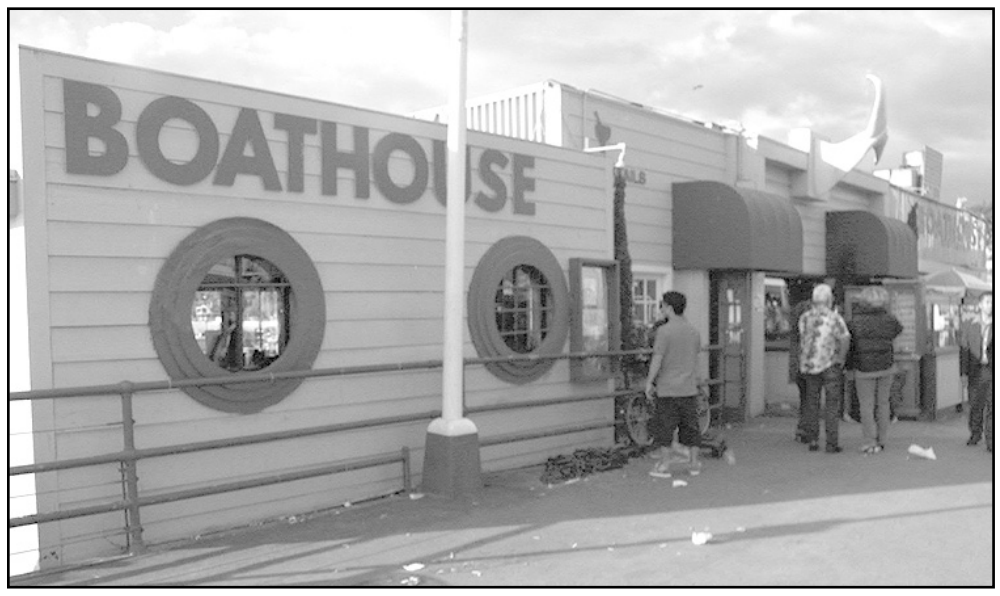
The selection of Bubba Gump Shrimp seems to go against the PRC's own leasing guidelines, which were approved last year. The guidelines specifically state that preference should be given to tenants on the pier that are locally-owned businesses. The guidelines say chain restaurants are not wanted.

Bixby said the claim for $50 million is calculated based on assumptions that the business could make $1 million annually during the 25-year lease. Also included in the figure is the current market value of the restaurant at that location and a return on any investment in the building.

"$50 million is not a stretch of the imagination," he said. "The most important is the inherent value of the building in and of itself."

The suit filed Monday is similar to the one Sheffield filed in U.S. District Court. The case was dismissed in March because the statute of limitations had run out for some of the claims. But according to Bixby, the federal judge said the Boathouse may still have a case for the breach of contract claim.

Meanwhile, the city has filed a motion to recoup $24,479 in attorney fees relating to the eviction case, which was first filed by the city last July when Sheffield refused to leave.





File photos/Daily Press

The Boathouse restaurant was located on the Santa Monica Pier for 50 years until last month. At right, Naia Sheffield.

Board member wants 'more unique characteristics'

ARB, from page 1

Charles voted to deny the project based on Harding's letter, despite the fact that two city councilmen present urged them to ignore the letter and vote on project's design.

Board members Sergio Zeballos and Rick Abelson voted on the merits of the project's architecture.

But Abelson's reasons for denying the project also were problematic for Jacobs.

Because the building will take up an entire city block, the council and the planning commission, during the review process, asked Jacobs to make the building appear as if it was several with different storefronts.

"It should look like a lot of buildings built at different times and with different styles," Jacobs said.

But apparently that's not what the ARB wanted.

Abelson questioned Jacobs on what his vision of Main Street should look like, then said Jacobs' architectural design was "naively" done.

"Slapping on facades and calling it arbitrary doesn't work," he said. "I really don't think the architect and the developer got the DNA of the street."

"I really don't think the architect and the developer got the DNA of the street."

— RICK ABELSON
Architecture Review Board

Abelson added that Main Street should have more unique characteristics — like the sculpture of a clown wearing a skirt hoisted above a building at the corner Rose Avenue and Main Street in Venice.

"Yeah, a transvestite clown, that's exactly what Santa Monica does not need," Harding said. "Their direction was so fundamental, they wanted him to start all over again and we can't do that."

After nearly three years, a pending lawsuit against the city and countless hours of review, Jacobs was told in February by the Santa Monica City Council that he could build his development.

But the project still has to pass through the ARB, which determines the development's overall conformity with the neighborhood — the controversial reason given by the planning commission when it denied the project Dec. 5.

The project still has to be reviewed and approved by the state coastal commission.

The development includes three- and four-story buildings on the west and east sides of Main Street just south of Pico Boulevard. The larger building will occupy the former Pioneer Boulangerie Bakery site.

The project will now go back to the planning commission for another review.



Seth Kotok/Special to the Daily Press

The clown sculpture on the corner of Main Street and Rose Avenue.

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STATE

Two anti-government militia members convicted

BY DON THOMPSON
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — Two anti-government militia members were convicted Tuesday on federal charges of conspiring to blow up two massive propane storage tanks in a Sacramento suburb.

Kevin Patterson, 44, of Camino, and Charles Kiles, 52, of Placerville, now face up to life in prison after they were convicted of conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction, and up to 20 years in prison for conspiracy to use a destructive device. The attack never took place.

It was the second trial for the former members of the San Joaquin County Militia on charges they intended to blow up the 12-million-gallon tanks in suburban Elk Grove. The first 12-member jury deadlocked six months ago with 11 jurors voting for conviction.

During the second two-week-long trial, prosecutors again alleged the men intended to rupture and then ignite the giant tanks. That would engulf four nearby 60,000 gallon high-pressure tanks and cause a massive explosion at one of the nation's largest propane storage facilities.

The tanks are a few hundred yards from heavily traveled Highway 99 and a half-mile from a subdivision.

Their goal was to force a government crackdown that in turn would spark uprisings across the nation, prosecutors alleged.

But Kiles' attorney, Bruce Locke, produced bank records showing that a key government witness was wrong about the time and place when he twice testified that Kiles made incriminating statements at a Nevada gun show about plans to blow up the facility in conjunction with the new millennium.

Locke alleged former Stockton arms dealer Ronald Rudloff was seeking leniency on his own federal firearms conviction when he swore the two men considered buying a rocket-propelled grenade launcher they later determined they couldn't afford. Prosecutors said the two frequently traveled to militia meetings, gun shows and survivalist expositions in California, Nevada and Montana.

In either event, defense attorneys said their clients were talkers, not doers.

They and the militia "got together, drank coffee, ate doughnuts," complained about the government and "played soldier," Locke said.

While investigators found bomb-making literature along with materials that could be used to make a bomb at Patterson's home, his attorney, Dwight Samuel, argued they were common household items.

Former San Joaquin Militia leader Donald Rudolph earlier pleaded guilty to withholding information on the alleged plot, and testified against the two men in exchange for a more lenient sentence.

Rudolph, a former California Department of Transportation worker, also pleaded guilty to conspiring with several other unidentified people to kill U.S. District Judge Edward Lodge of Boise, Idaho, in 1998. He already was serving a 2 1/2 year sentence for possessing a machine gun.

Los Angeles mayor argues against valley breakaway

BY ROBERT JABLON
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — A day before a commission votes on whether San Fernando Valley secession should be on the fall ballot, Mayor James Hahn argued that a breakup with Los Angeles could hurt public safety.

A breakaway city might be unable to float bonds to pay hundreds of millions of dollars for voter-approved fire and police station construction, Hahn said Tuesday.

Last week, a leading bond firm warned that Los Angeles could have more trouble paying its debts if the valley or other areas secede. Fitch Ratings Co. downgraded its forecast for the city's future credit standing from stable to negative.

"Believe me, if secession passes, taxes are gonna go up in the new valley city, they're gonna go up in the remaining city of Los Angeles, or else public services will have to be cut on both sides of the line — and in all likelihood, both things will happen," Hahn said at a news conference.

"Their finances, I think, are so shaky, their reserves are so thin, their outlook is so uncertain ... they won't be able to issue bonds that anybody would want to purchase."

"Simply put, secession hurts public safety and hurts emergency preparedness," the mayor said.

"Show me the money. Show me where the money's gonna be," added Los Angeles Fire Chief William Bamattre. "Give me the assurances and I'll allay my fears. But I haven't been able to get those answers."

Secession supporters disputed the dire predictions.

"New cities with no debt and large revenues are not gonna have a problem getting financing," said Joe Vitti, an executive board member of the group Valley Voters Organized Toward Empowerment. "We certainly believe that this new city would get financing."

Secession movements have flared repeatedly since Los Angeles annexed the 270-square-mile valley in 1915.

Activists complain the valley makes a significant tax contribution to Los Angeles but is ignored by downtown-based politicians and gets short shrift when it comes to services. The region is home to entertainment studios and a multibillion dollar pornography industry but also to poverty-ridden barrios and crime-plagued enclaves.

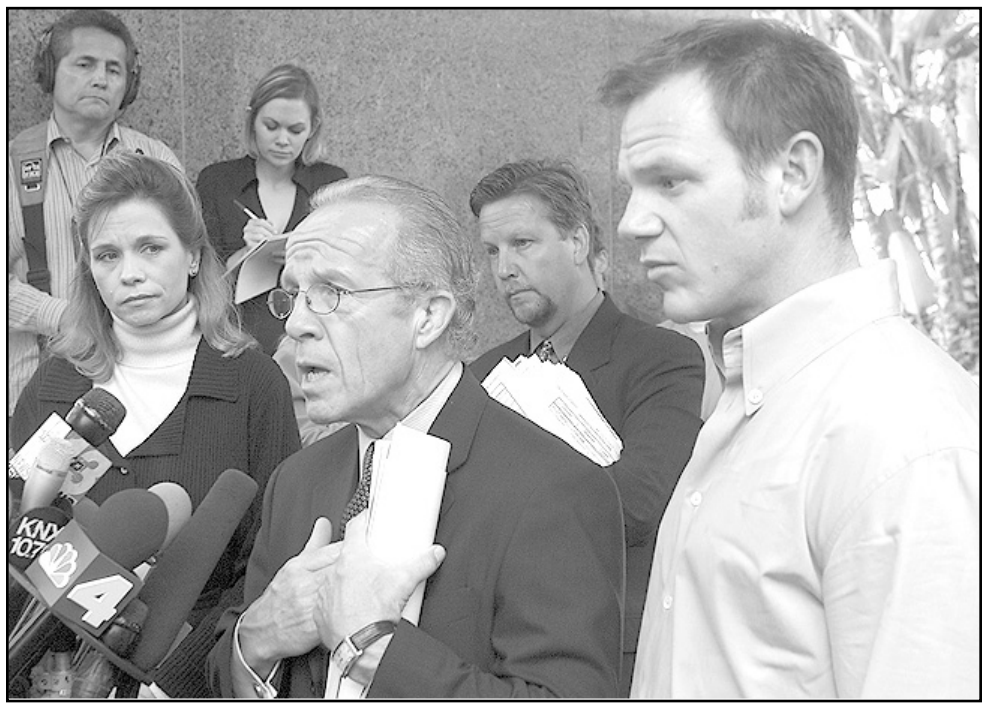
The Local Agency Formation Commission is expected to vote Wednesday on whether to allow a secession vote on the Nov. 5 ballot. Under state law, a majority of voters in breakaway areas and a majority of voters citywide have to approve secession.

Late Tuesday, the commission was expected to release a report giving good financial marks to the proposed city of 1.3 million.

A new San Fernando Valley would be able to stand on its own financial legs, commission Executive Officer Larry Calemine said.

The commission has not dealt with the bond issue dilemma, Hahn said.

STATE



Jill Connelly/Associated Press

Lawyer Jeffrey Anderson speaks at a press conference announcing the filing of a lawsuit against Cardinal Roger Mahony, the archdiocese of Los Angeles and Rev. Michael Baker under the racketeering statute outside the Los Angeles County Courthouse on Monday. Listening are Mary Grant of SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests), at left, and Matt Severson, right, who says he was abused by Rev. Baker as a child.

Ex- pastor arrested for alleged 1970s molestations

By The Associated Press

LONG BEACH — A former church youth pastor was arrested Tuesday in Santa Clara County for allegedly molesting two Southern California boys in the 1970s.

Gary Allen Carsonhull, 57, of Los Altos was arrested on a warrant for investigation of child molestation, Long Beach police said in a statement.

He was held at Santa Clara County jail on $900,000 bail.

Carsonhull was a youth pastor at Los Altos United Methodist Church in Long Beach, south of Los Angeles, when he allegedly molested the youths between 1974 and 1979, police said.

The boys, who were between 11 and 14, were fondled and sodomized during church trips, Detective Craig Newland said.

At the time, Carsonhull was a deacon, the first step toward ordination as a minister, said the Rev. Jerry Larsen, chief pastor of the 1,000-member church. He was fired and his orders as a deacon rescinded in 1979 after the abuse allegations came to light.

Newland said the allegations were made to the then-senior pastor by the father of one victim.

Church officials "considered it and made a decision not to go to the police," he added. "Part of that was (due to) the wishes of one of the victims."

"Back then, there wasn't a requirement for clergy for report" suspected sexual abuse, Newland said.

Church staff and clergy now are required to report any suspicions of child abuse, Larsen said.

Carsonhull told police during the current investigation that he had received counseling after the allegations, Newland said. He did not know whether the man held any other youth or religious posts after leaving the Long Beach church.

A 39-year-old man reported the alleged molestation in April and an investigation led to a 38-year-old man who also claimed he was molested as a youth by Carsonhull.

Parishioners were to be notified of the arrest in a newsletter and during a planned Tuesday night meeting, Larsen said.

"I'm very sad, for one thing, that it ever happened and that it's coming up again for families that may have been affected by it," Larsen said. "But I would encourage anyone ... who wants to report something that happened them, I encourage them to speak out. We will support them in that."

Woman held for choking softball coach at picnic

By The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A 52-year-old woman allegedly choked her granddaughter's softball coach at a team picnic, according to police.

Coach Julie Lynn Worthen told police she was attacked Sunday at an end-of-the-season picnic for the 8- and 9-year-old girls on her team and their families.

Cheryl Hilliker allegedly got upset when her granddaughter did not win in voting for most valuable player or other awards, police said.

Worthen suffered several scratches and bruises on her neck, but declined medical treatment.

Witnesses gave police conflicting accounts of what happened.

Worthen placed Hilliker under citizen's arrest, according to police, who issued Hilliker a citation.

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FBI warns of possible threats to New York landmarks

BY DONNA DE LA CRUZ
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — The FBI warned city officials Tuesday that it had received uncorroborated information that terrorists had made threats against the city, police said.

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly characterized the information as "general threats." A law enforcement official speaking on condition of anonymity said city landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty were potential targets.

The warning came a day before the start of Fleet Week, an annual maritime celebration expected to draw 6,000 naval personnel.

Kelly said the department had "received information from the FBI about general threats to New York City. We are taking all necessary precautions and are communicating with the appropriate law enforcement agencies on both the state and federal levels."

The information was based on interviews with detainees and was not independently confirmed, the law enforcement official said. It was passed on to the FBI's joint terrorism task force in New York.

Security was increased around monuments and landmarks after the warning was relayed to New York, the official said. Kelly would not confirm any details, but heightened security was visibly in place at City Hall and the Brooklyn Bridge on Tuesday.

Earlier Tuesday, Kelly said the NYPD was dealing very closely with federal authorities and said the department was prepared for "any eventuality."

The city is preparing for Fleet Week 2002, an annual gathering that this year boasts the largest number of U.S. Naval vessels ever sent to New York City by an Atlantic Fleet commander. Sailors, marines and Coast Guard personnel will be aboard 22 ships, including six warships. The public is invited aboard ships participating in the festival.

Gov. George Pataki urged people to visit New York City and its landmarks despite the threats.

"We cannot allow threats to take away our freedom or our confidence," Pataki said. "There are going to be threats for the foreseeable future."

Pataki said the state has received all types of threats over the past eight months, but state and city officials have taken security steps. He said the threats were aimed at "dividing us and frightening us and taking away our freedom by fear."

Kelly said he felt the department was "doing the best that we reasonably can do to prevent another incident and to respond if, God forbid, there is one."

Security zones are in place, forbidding vessels from operating within 150 yards of the United Nations, Ellis Island or Liberty Island. Also, no vessels can operate within 25 yards of bridge piers, abutments, tunnel ventilators or waterfront facilities.

At the Brooklyn Bridge on Tuesday afternoon, police officers checked vehicles at both the Brooklyn and Manhattan entrances of the bridge, though the bridge remained open to cars and pedestrians. Around City Hall, there was also a heightened police presence.

Additional Fleet Week restrictions were announced Monday. There are minimum-speed, no-wake "protection zones" that extend 500 yards from all U.S. naval vessels at all times.

Non-military vessels are not allowed to enter within 100 yards of any U.S. naval vessel unless authorized by an official patrol.

On Tuesday, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said he didn't see any reason why people shouldn't enjoy Fleet Week and other activities over the weekend.

"The more people that are out the safer this city will be, and we are used to hosting big events. Fleet Week is just another one," he said. "There area always threats unfortunately, but fortunately, most are hoaxes."

Nearly every major tourist attraction, including all the big museums, the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty, were closed following the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

National Basketball Association playoff schedule

By The Associated Press

CONFERENCE FINALS — EDT (Best-of-7)

Saturday, May 18
L.A. Lakers 106, Sacramento 99, Lakers lead series 1-0

Sunday, May 19
New Jersey 104, Boston 97, New Jersey leads series 1-0

Monday, May 20
Sacramento 96, L.A. Lakers 90, Series tied 1-1

Tuesday, May 21
Boston 93, New Jersey 86, Series tied 1-1

Friday, May 24
Sacramento at L.A. Lakers, 9 p.m.

Saturday, May 25
New Jersey at Boston, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 26
Sacramento at L.A. Lakers, 5:30 p.m.

Monday, May 27
New Jersey at Boston, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 28
L.A. Lakers at Sacramento, 9 p.m., if necessary

Wednesday, May 29
Boston at New Jersey, 9 p.m., if necessary

Friday, May 31
New Jersey at Boston, TBA, if necessary
Sacramento at L.A. Lakers, TBA, if necessary

Sunday, June 2
Boston at New Jersey, TBA, if necessary
L.A. Lakers at Sacramento, TBA, if necessary

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INTERNATIONAL

Rocker and Republican open their African tour

BY CLAR NI CHONGHAILE
Associated Press Writer

ACCRA, Ghana — It's the Rocker and the Republican, on Africa Cliche-Breaking Tour 2002.

Singer Bono and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill embarked Tuesday on a four-nation odyssey: the activist pop star, Bono, bent on convincing the skeptical politico, O'Neill, that Africa puts Western development aid to good use.

"I come here to learn," promised O'Neill, who was talked into the trip by the Irish singer.

"Normally, when we hear a secretary of state is visiting, it's usually an all suit-and-tie affair," President John Kufuor joked, smiling at meeting the shaggy-haired singer in trademark blue wraparound shades.

Bono and O'Neill, in an equally to-type gray suit, set the tone for the 10-day trip from the first stop Tuesday — no mud-hut village, but a gleaming high-tech center in Ghana's capital, Accra.

O'Neill watched approvingly as young Ghanaian women input data for the U.S.-based firm ACS-BPS.

Bono and O'Neill listened attentively as company president Tom Blodgett answered questions about the workers' pay and benefits.

"It is really an experience to see these well-trained people," O'Neill told an international retinue of rock 'n' roll, financial and political reporters.

"It's equal to anything you can find in the world," the treasury secretary said.

Bono sat on a low wall, swinging his feet while O'Neill talked. The sleek high-tech operation showed it was possible to recast Africa's image, the singer told reporters.

"I really loathe the cliched, international view of Africa. I don't think it is helpful," Bono said.

Similar stereotype-shattering is planned during stops in South Africa, Uganda and Ethiopia.

O'Neill has been a vocal critic of past anti-poverty programs in Africa, saying they failed to generate real development and so wasted billions of dollars.

The idea of a joint trip was hatched a year ago, when the two men met in O'Neill's office. Bono, who has campaigned for years to focus the attention of rich nations on the plight of Africa, asked for the session.

Initially reluctant, O'Neill finally agreed to meet Bono, and later said he was impressed by the U2 singer's knowledge of Africa's problems.

Bono has campaigned to get the Group of Eight top industrial countries to provide greater debt relief for the world's poorest countries.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, the issue of fighting poverty to eliminate a breeding ground for terrorists has gained momentum. It will be a top agenda item of the G-8 countries at their June summit in Canada.

In an effort to learn what kind of aid really works, O'Neill and Bono, whose real name is Paul Hewson, will visit AIDS clinics, schools and projects sponsored by the World Bank and other development agencies.

At stake, indirectly: $10 billion promised by the Bush administration in a new foreign aid program called Millennium Challenge Accounts.

The money is to be distributed between 2004 and 2006 — but primarily to those countries that show progress eliminating corruption and reforming their financial systems.

O'Neill said African countries needed to govern justly, encourage economic freedom by removing trade barriers and to invest in their people.

Separatist leader killed amid rising tensions in Kashmir

BY NEELESH MISRA
Associated Press Writer

SRINAGAR, India — A prominent separatist who sought dialogue with India and opposed violence was shot to death Tuesday in front of 5,000 people at a ceremony to commemorate another assassinated independence leader.

The slaying of Abdul Ghani Lone came at a time of increasing tensions between India and Pakistan, nuclear powers that have fought two wars over the divided Himalayan region. Shelling persisted on the India-Pakistan frontier, where the Indian prime minister planned to visit troops.

The two masked men who killed Lone escaped and there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Lone's murder comes ahead of elections scheduled for September in Jammu-Kashmir. It's stands to cause a further division among militants who already disagree on whether to pursue independence or attachment to Pakistan. It's also likely to cause more violence from revenge attacks, and could quiet moderates who have sought talks with the Indian government.

Lone had been attacked last month by a Hindu nationalist and has said India's government tried to kill him. He also has been at odds with other separatists who do not favor dialogue.

Lone's body and that of a security guard lay on the lawn of his Srinagar home, surrounded by wailing women. His son blamed neighboring Pakistan and its Inter Services Intelligence spy agency, which India says has sponsored Islamic militant groups that have crossed into Kashmir and supplanted local separatist groups.

"Pakistan and ISI killed him," Sajjad Lone told The Associated Press Television Network. He gave no explanation. There was no immediate response from Pakistan late Tuesday.

He and his father, a leading peace activist, have urged the Pakistan-based Islamic militants that have fought Indian forces in Kashmir for 12 years to give war-shattered residents a chance to find a nonviolent way of expressing their desires for self-government.



Rafiq Maqbool/Associated Press

An Indian BSF (Border Security Force) soldier keeps a tight vigil outside a bunker in Srinagar, India on Tuesday. Security has been tightened for a visit by the Indian prime minister as tensions along the India-Pakistan border have increased.

"He was working for peace and for this he had to give up his life," Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee told reporters as he arrived in Jammu, winter capital of Jammu-Kashmir, the only state Muslim-majority state in Hindu-dominated India. "Lone's death means we shall have to work harder for peace to return to Kashmir."

Vajpayee came to visit victims of a militant attack on an army base last week that killed 34 people, mostly wives and children of soldiers, raising the war temperature among 1 million troops posted on both sides of the border since December.

India blamed Pakistan and Islamic militants based there for the army camp attack, expelled the Pakistani ambassador, and reorganized maritime and ground forces under the military. An extra 3,000 soldiers were sent to the frontier on Tuesday.

There was aggressive slogan-shouting Tuesday between rival groups — one supporting Kashmir independence, the other merger with Pakistan — at the memorial Lone and 5,000 other people attended at a cemetery in Srinagar, summer capital of the state.

The gathering was to commemorate the assassination 12 years ago of Kashmir's highest religious leader, Mohammed Farooq.

Lone was a top leader of Kashmir's main separatist alliance, the All Party Hurriyat Conference, whose religious and political parties are sometimes split along the same lines as the cemetery crowd.

As the two-hour event ended, Lone stepped off the stage, holding the hand of his friend, Peer Hafizullah Makhdoomi, who then walked a few steps ahead.

Then two bursts of automatic weapon gunfire rang out, and the crowd dispersed, screaming and terrified.

Makhdoomi said he heard gunfire and turned around to see Lone lying dead on the ground.

Lone's driver said the leader and a bodyguard were killed by two masked gunmen wearing police uniforms. Another guard was critically injured. Lone was shot in the heart, abdomen and thigh, said M. Yousuf, a senior police officer.

One of the attackers rolled a grenade into the crowd, but it did not explode, the independent Aaj Tak television said.

Lone's funeral was expected to draw thousands on Wednesday evening.

Vajpayee planned on Wednesday to visit the border, where shelling, and mortar and small arms fire were traded for a fifth straight day by the armies of the two nuclear-armed nations. The Indian army said three Indian villagers were killed and seven were wounded.

Pakistan's government said two people were killed and seven were wounded by Indian gunfire. Neither report could be independently confirmed.

Suspected Islamic guerrillas killed two activists of the state's ruling National Conference party, said Tirath Acharya, spokesman for the paramilitary Border Security Force. Four soldiers were reported wounded and three guerrillas killed in other fighting.

Angry Iceland threatens to resume whale hunts

BY MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press Writer

SHIMONOSEKI, Japan — The rift between pro- and anti-whaling nations deepened Tuesday after Iceland stormed out of the International Whaling Commission meeting and hinted it may resume whale hunts following the rejection of its bid for full membership.

The pro-whaling nation's application to join the commission was turned down for the second year in a row on Monday. Iceland has had nonvoting observer status since its delegates quit an IWC meeting 10 years ago to protest the commission's anti-whaling stance.

"It has gone too far," Iceland Whaling Commissioner Stefan Asmundsson said. "We cannot accept it."

The acrimonious start to the five-day meeting, which began in this former whaling hub on Monday, underscores deep divisions within the 48-nation IWC over whether the global ban it imposed in 1986 on commercial whaling should be lifted.

Japan, which claims whale populations are large enough to sustain limited catches, is pushing hard for a lifting of the ban. But it faces strong opposition from the United States, Australia and others. Both sides have roughly equal strength.

If Iceland had succeeded in rejoining the IWC, that could have given the pro-whaling forces the simple majority necessary to discuss lifting the ban. Ending the moratorium, however, requires a three-fourths majority.

Without a simple majority, it was unclear whether the pro-whaling bloc could even bring their proposal for a lifting of the ban up for a vote before the conference ends Friday.

Iceland opposes but has abided by the worldwide ban. Asmundsson hinted Tuesday that it might consider resuming commercial whaling without the IWC's approval.

But he said the country will first review the situation and explore its options, including a membership of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, a Norway-based international body for conservation and management of whales and mammals in their waters.

"From the political point of view, it is much better to do it within the framework of the international organization," he said. "We were hoping to do this within the IWC ... We are going to have to sit down and evaluate the whole situation."

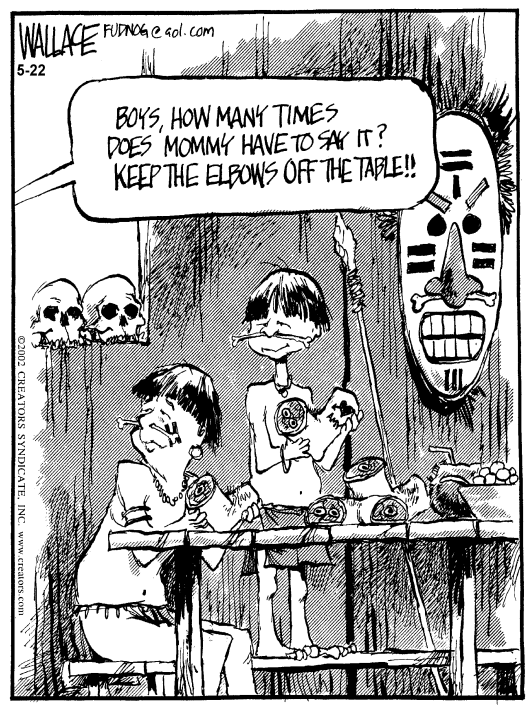
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The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



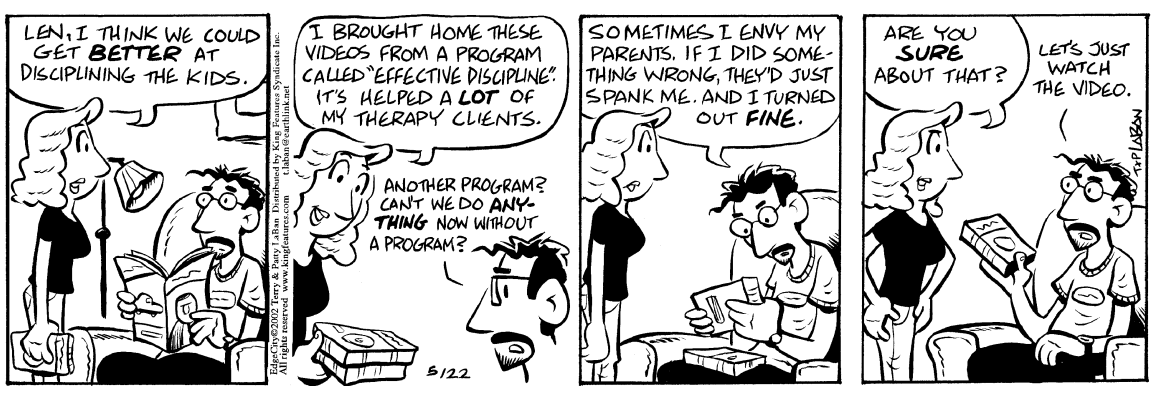
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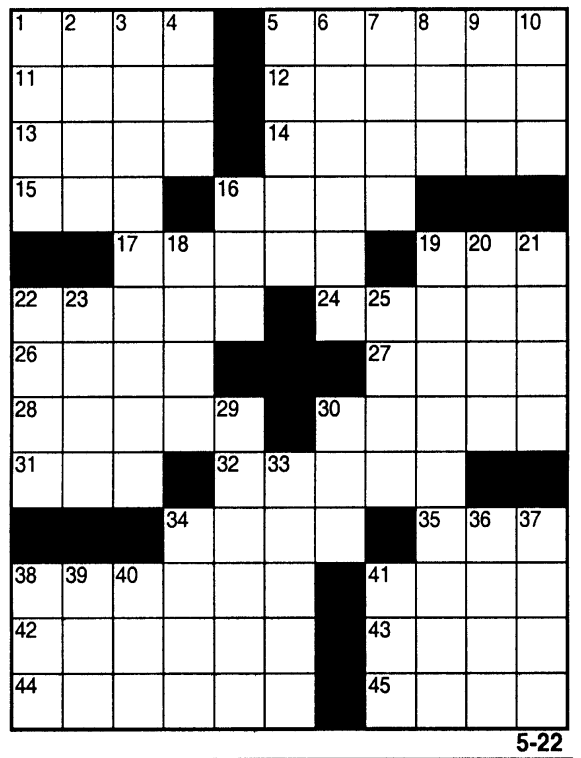
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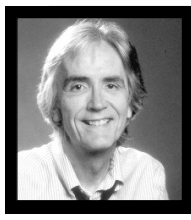
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D	O	S	E	S	■	■	R	A	N	T

Yesterday's answer



5-22

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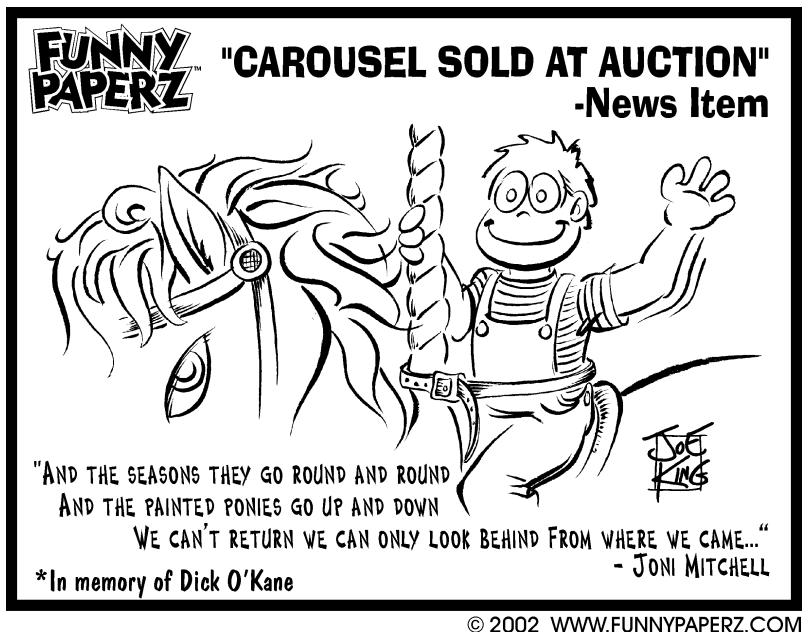


NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Man pulls car 47 feet with his eyelids

Among those whose public displays recently either garnered Guinness Book of Records recognition or are being considered: Wang Chuntai, 49, who pulled a sedan 47 feet with cables attached only to his eyelids (Yaan, Sichuan, China); Monte Pierce, who propelled a coin more than 10 feet by using his elastic-like earlobe as a rubber band; and B.D. Tyagi, who was certified to have the longest ear hair in the world (4 inches) (Bhopal, India).



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BACK PAGE

Americans are buckling up but still chugging down

BY LINDSEY TANNER
AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO — Americans are buckling up but chugging down, getting cancer screening tests yet still smoking too much, according to government research showing mixed results when it comes to healthy habits nationwide.

State-by-state surveys of adult health trends in the 1990s reveal disturbing increases in binge drinking — rising in more than a third of states and falling in only three. Most states showed increases in seat-belt use, mammography and even adult vaccinations, yet smoking increased in almost a third and declined in only one.

"It's a mix of good and bad news," said Dr. David Nelson, who helped conduct the research for the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Improvements in insurance coverage for some cancer screening tests may explain some results, but reasons for other changes are unclear, Nelson said, calling the study "a jumping-off point for people to answer the 'why' questions."

Results appear in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

In a JAMA editorial, Dr. J. Michael McGinnis of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation called the findings "a reality check," indicating a need for stronger public health measures.

"It is easier to deliver services than to change behavior," McGinnis said.

As might be expected, the study found obesity has increased in all 47 states surveyed on the topic and "just confirms that this has been a nationwide problem," Nelson said.

Among the most surprising findings was the rise in binge-drinking, defined as downing five or more alcoholic beverages at least once in the past month, said Nelson, now with the National Cancer Institute.

Increases were concentrated in the South and Midwest, where Wisconsin had the highest amount of binge drinking in 1999 — 19.6 percent, compared with 16.4 percent in 1991. Illinois had the greatest increase during the study, jumping from 7.3 percent to 13.9 percent.

Illinois' public health chief, Dr. John Lumpkin, called the increase a concern but was unsure of its cause. State programs have addressed binge drinking on college campuses, and more efforts are planned once the state's budget crunch eases, Lumpkin said.

Psychiatrist Dr. Daniel Angres, who heads an alcohol and drug dependency program at Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, said one reason may be that young adults, especially in the Midwest, tend to view alcohol as "the lesser of two evils" and more acceptable than harder drugs.

Also, Angres said, as women have become more equal in the workplace, many have turned to "the drinking culture," where doing business over drinks is part of the office dynamic.

Minnesota was one of just three states that saw binge drinking decline, perhaps due to extensive programs to reduce drinking and driving, fetal alcohol exposure and adolescent drinking, the researchers said.

The researchers compiled results from monthly state telephone surveys of adults ages 18 and over, collected randomly from 1991 to 2000.

Participants were asked about 11 health behaviors: smoking, drinking, physical inactivity, obesity, seat-belt use, mammograms, Pap tests, colorectal cancer and cholesterol screenings, and flu and pneumococcal vaccines.

The total yearly number of participants increased from 87,846 in 1991 to 182,444 and were weighted statistically to represent state populations, Nelson said.

Data were incomplete for some measures and some years, and were not available for Wyoming and Washington, D.C.

New York showed the overall best results, with improvements in eight measures. Three states tied for the most declines: Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota each worsened in four measures.

Stevie still a wonder at the Apollo

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — We all know Stevie Wonder can sing — but can he swing?

He proved he could do both Monday night, jamming with Wynton Marsalis and his septet at Jazz at Lincoln Center's spring gala at the Apollo Theater.

Wonder not only played piano as the band performed John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," he also sang a jazzed-up version of his own hit, "Living for the City" in front of an adoring crowd.

"It is truly an honor to be at the Apollo," said Wonder, noting his own performances at the historic theater when he was a child prodigy.

Other performers at "Comin' Home To Harlem," were Tony nominee Vanessa Williams, musician Roland Hanna and Savion Glover, who received a standing ovation after delivering a dazzling tap performance. Whoopi Goldberg served as the evening's host.

Wonder also provided some comedy. When the 52-year-old sat at the piano, he grabbed the sheet music in front of him, then put it aside and quipped: "Didn't really need to read right now."

He also hinted at a lively past at the Apollo. "I was telling Wynton a story backstage that I could never tell you all," he said. "Let's just say it was an eye-opening experience."

The gala was a benefit for Jazz at Lincoln Center, which bills itself as world's largest arts organization dedicated to jazz. Marsalis is its artistic director. Among the guests were actress Angela Bassett and news anchor Peter Jennings.

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