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THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2004

Volume 3, Issue 169

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

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DAILY 3

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Art Comes to Life: In a 1999 episode of TV's "The Simpsons," Homer became a temporary multimillionaire by accidentally inventing a "tomacco" plant that sprouted tobacco-bred tomatoes that were hopelessly addictive from even a single bite. Inspired (and hoping to draw attention to the show's anti-smoking message), Rob Baur of Lake Oswego, Ore., tried to grow such a plant and has somewhat succeeded, although a forensic researcher believes that only the plant itself, and not the fruit, contains nicotine. In February, he announced that he would auction off the golf-ball-sized fruit.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We are here and it is now. Further than that all human knowledge is moonshine!"

— H. L. Menkin

INDEX

Horoscopes

Don't over-spend, Cap 2

Local

Summertime rules 3

Opinion

Looking for friends 4

Business

The financial realities of death 7

State

GOP invading Left Coast 8

National

Owl vomit comes up 11

People in the News

Make his day, punk 16



File photos

(Above) The Marion Davies Estate on the Pacific Coast Highway as it looked in the 1900s. (Below) Abandoned since the Northridge Earthquake in 1994, portions of the estate were recently demolished. But the historic site could get a serious face lift in the coming years.

Annenberg Foundation eyes the Davies Estate

Philanthropists may help save historic beachfront property

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

PCH — A major philanthropic organization may help renovate the Marion Davies Estate, a once-glamorous beachfront mansion that has been boarded up for the past 10 years, it was announced Wednesday.

Officials from The Annenberg Foundation said they are reviewing the 70-year-old property at

415 Pacific Coast Highway and will decide this summer whether to help City Hall preserve the historic site. It will cost an estimated \$17 million to make the grounds ready for public use.

Wallis Annenberg, daughter of Walter Annenberg and vice president of the foundation he began, was alerted to plans for the property by an article in a local Santa Monica newspaper, which prompted discussions between the foundation and city staffers, Annenberg officials said. City Hall last year had agreed to look into partnering with private

See ESTATE, page 5

Local beaches fail to clean up their act

High levels of bacteria still a cause for concern

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

PACIFIC OCEAN — Santa Monica's beaches received mixed marks for the last year.

While bacteria levels generally improved, certain local trouble spots took a turn for the worse, according to an annual beach "report card" released Wednesday.

Perhaps the most troubling slide was at the end of Pico Boulevard, where water quality received an "F" during wet months and a "C" in dry months, after a miscommunication between City Hall and county officials caused untreated runoff to flow directly into the ocean.

That was among the findings in the 14th annual Beach Report Card, released by Heal the Bay, a Santa Monica-based environmental group. Overall, the report found that dry weather beach quality was up slightly over average levels.

Wet weather bacteria levels stayed high, and officials still recommend staying out of the ocean for three days after every rainfall.

Swimming in dirty water even once can cause stomach flu, ear infections, upper respiratory infections and major skin rashes all over the body, they added.

From April 2002 to March 2004, there were more than 275 reported sewage spills, discharging more than 395,550 gallons of partially treated or raw sewage. But beaches in Los Angeles County were closed only twice due to the sewage spills, the report found.

Of the reported sewage spills, at least six spills were major, meaning more than 10,000 gallons went into the ocean. Officials were especially concerned about the four that didn't lead to beach closures — three of which were in the Pacific Palisades and impacted Will Rogers State Beach. Heal the Bay officials said the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services decided to "wait and see"

See BEACHES, page 6

No butts here: Smoking ban lights up today

By Daily Press staff

SM BEACH — It may affect their tan lines, but smokers headed here might want to start wearing the patch to curb withdrawal symptoms. Starting today, it's officially illegal to light up a cigarette along the sandy coast.

The controversial smoking ban was passed by the City Council last month. Enforcement starts just in time for an influx of out-of-town visitors and record crowds headed to the beach for the holiday weekend.

If caught, the crime is punishable by \$750 in fines. However, for the next 90 days, officers will warn offenders before citing them. After that, smokers who light up at local beaches or on the pier can be given a \$250 ticket. The ban also outlaws smoking at public waiting areas, like bus stops. Once fines, penalties and other court costs are totaled, viola-

tors can expect to be out of pocket \$750 or more, prosecutors said.

To appease concerned merchants, council members agreed to set aside designated smoking areas on the pier. The quantity, size and location of those areas has yet to be decided, but officials said they were willing to consider including portions of outdoor eating areas and private parties on the pier.

It's unclear how difficult it will be to enforce the new law, especially because many of the visitors to the beaches and pier are tourists who will need to be constantly educated about the city's law.

The Los Angeles City Council last month also banned smoking on the four beaches in the city of LA — Cabrillo, Dockweiler, Will Rogers and Venice — which comprises 13 miles of beach. The

See SMOKING, 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)

★★★★ Optimism starts your workday but will be quickly challenged. You might take another's comment personally, or you might receive an uncomfortable insight. Be direct with a friend or associate concerning finances. A suggestion won't work for you. Tonight: Relax your body and mind.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Your ingenuity comes out in your work or daily life. A friend might shake your foundation or disappoint you. Don't lend money right now. Discussions at work might have a vague tone. Use your creativity. Tonight: Start playing as if it is the weekend.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You feel good about yourself and a personal matter. Don't let an authority figure or an exterior event shake you up. You know what you are doing. Schedule a brainstorming session for later in the day. Answers come forward. Tonight: Make it easy. Remember, your home is your castle.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Verbalize what you want in the morning. Make calls, return messages and clear your desk. Unexpected news or gossip might take some time to regroup from. You can do it. Depend on yourself right now and not others. Tonight: Swap war stories with a pal.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Finances dominate your thoughts. Still, don't allow anyone to interfere right now. You know what you need and want. An associate could become disruptive or difficult. Others are downright flaky. As they say, the ball is in your court. Tonight: Balance your checkbook first.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You are in a position of power today, though you might doubt it, as others are so difficult, reactive or flaky. Remember, you're in charge of your life. Laughter surrounds those who have a good perspective on life. Swing with the moment. Tonight: As you like it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Know when to cut out and change gears. You might not be able to make the difference you would like to make. Listen to a child or loved one, but remember that the message you are getting could be distorted. Tonight: Hide away.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ As you like to discuss various options, you'll come up with many ideas related and unrelated to the topic at hand. Meetings and groups bring success. A child or loved one could be a bit put off. Let your creativity flow. Tonight: You are the party.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Good news starts your workday, be it that the boss is in a good mood or you closed a business deal. You feel as if you are on the verge of a pay raise or promotion. Unexpected actions from a family member might startle you. Tonight: Out late, again.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Once more, you are called upon to take an overview. You also don't hesitate to find experts. When you do your research, you're right-on. Knee-jerk responses to others might be counterproductive right now. Tonight: Don't over-spend.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You could upset others as well as yourself. Don't take a money risk right now, even if you believe you can afford it. Others who are more affluent than you might not understand your hesitancy. Take one step at a time. Tonight: Be with your best friend.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Read the Aquarius message for information. Don't take any risks right now. Play it cool. In fact, let others seek you out, and you'll get the results you want. Others seem more than willing to do their share. Accept an invitation. Tonight: Where the crowds are.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

What's a little fun without rules?

By Daily Press staff

As springtime ends and the warm days of summer approach, the city's parks will be maxed out with picnics, parties and play. But it won't be much fun without City Hall reminding park visitors of a few rules.

■ No smoking. To protect children and others from the harms of second-hand smoke and to prevent litter, smokers need to move to the sidewalk at the perimeter of the parks. Fines are \$250.

■ No vending. It's allowed at parks only at city events or by contracted instructors participating in city-organized classes. This includes the offering of merchandise, food, beverages, services, etc., for profit.

■ No food lines without a permit. A county health permit is required for those giving food to the public. Only private events like birthday parties and family picnics where food is served to invited guests do not require a health permit. Groups giving food to the public must obtain and carry an LA County health permit. Call (310) 665-8450 for information.

■ No events more than 150 people without a city permit. If you're expecting a huge crowd at say, your high school reunion picnic at Clover Park, call the community events office at (310) 458-8573 for permit information. You also can visit www.santa-monica.org/ccs/events for details.

■ Barbecuing or cooking at parks is allowed only on city-installed grills. BBQ grills can be found at Clover, Marine and, when it reopens, Virginia Park. Leave the mini-Weber at home.

■ Group picnic and BBQ areas at Clover and Marine Parks are available on a first-come, first-served basis. These areas may be reserved in advance if your group is more than 150 people and you have obtained a city event permit.

■ No fireworks. They are not allowed in the city except at special events with prior City Council approval.

■ Go fly a kite! But not at Clover Park or Marine Park, due to their proximity to the Santa Monica Airport.

The complete list of park rules is posted on the city's Web site at <http://santa-monica.org/ccs/openspacemgmt/parkrules.htm>. Call City Hall's open space management division at (310) 458-8974 for all other park-use questions.

SMC students rollin' in dough

By Daily Press staff

Local college students will have hundreds of thousands of dollars handed to them next weekend.

Santa Monica College students will receive about \$400,000 in scholarships at a ceremony to honor the recipients at 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 6 in the SMC student cafeteria, 1900 Pico Blvd. The event is hosted by Wells Fargo Bank.

About 500 students, including incoming freshmen, have been selected for scholarships. Awards generally range from \$250 to \$2,000 each and are donated by area service clubs, businesses, government agencies and individuals.

The largest individual scholarships — each for \$2,000 — are two Paul and Leslie Ridley-Tree Awards for Latinos; three Sydney Goldfarb Awards for Outstanding African American Students; and two Hilding A. Tegner Awards for Academic Achievement. Another top award is the James and Lucille Cayton Award for Leadership.

The SMC Foundation, founded in 1956, is the fundraising organization for the college.

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surf report

There'll be a slow start today, as leftover swell in the morning holds most breaks in the 1-2' range (maybe some 3' sets at the standouts). A new SW swell will slowly creep up throughout the day and by the afternoon better exposed breaks will have some waist-high sets and the standouts may see a few shoulder-high waves before sundown. Look for light winds in the morning with building W-NW winds 10-15 knots on tap by the afternoon.

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	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
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SUNDAY	7:12	0.0	5:02	3.0	2:57	3.1	11:51	4.9
MONDAY	8:06	0.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TUESDAY	9:03	0.3	8:26	3.3	12:4	14.5	5:13	3.5
WEDNESDAY	9:57	0.4	10:28	3.0	1:53	4.1	5:36	3.8
THURSDAY	10:45	0.5	11:42	2.3	3:24	3.9	5:56	4.2
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The QLine

City Hall has been putting a new emphasis on code enforcement in recent months. New pushes for compliance include the regulation of signs in front of businesses and hedge heights around homes. Although both these issues have safety concerns associated with them, they also deal with the beautification of Santa Monica, which is an important issue in a city with a large focus on tourism. But many people are arguing that City Hall is going too far with its code enforcement

and needs to refocus its efforts.

So this week's Q-line question is: **Do you agree with the emphasis City Hall is putting on code enforcement? Why or why not?**

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 first think about the wording of your response.



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OPINION



MAY IS NATIONAL CARTOONISTS MONTH!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Squirrels are merely rats

Editor:

I must respectfully disagree with Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McKeown's assertions regarding ground squirrels in Santa Monica. At issue is that the distinction must be made between domesticated and "clean" mammals and those that destroy property and plant life, endanger the public safety and create a health hazard to both humans and other animals.

The situation on the bluffs is much the same situation confronted by cities up and down the California coast. From La Jolla to Big Sur, the California ground squirrel has created tremendous problems for cities, municipalities and its citizens. According to the University of California's Agriculture and Natural Resource department, the California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) is one of the biggest pests facing humans in California. Not only do they burrow into cliffs, causing erosion and other damage, but they subsist on all forms of plant life and according to the UCIPM, "will enter gardens and devour vegetables in the seedling stage. They may damage young shrubs, vines, and trees by gnawing bark, girdling trunks, eating twigs and leaves, and burrowing around roots. Ground squirrels will gnaw on plastic sprinkler heads and irrigation lines. They also eat the eggs of ground-nesting birds and may limit attempts to attract quail to the yard."

Moreover, and perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the ground squirrel, is that its cute and playful demeanor brings it into close contact with humans. This may seem innocuous and even appropriate to the casual observer, but most persons are unaware of the fact that the ground squirrel may be carrying a whole host of diseases, including bubonic plague, which is carried by fleas that can also be transferred to dogs and cats. This is why ground squirrels are classified as non-game mammals by the California Fish and Game (essentially classifying them alongside rats and other pests).

We can all be reasonable and compassionate with animals but let us not endanger the lives of humans or the health and safety of our plant life, animal habitat and our domesticated pets at the expense of this emotional issue but potentially dangerous pest.

Lance Arthur Schmidt
Santa Monica

A 'cancer on society'

Editor:

How many trees had to die for this wasted so called community profile? (SMDP, May 24, page 1). Try doing one on someone who actually contributes something to society, instead of some lazy useless kid. That is all he is, a lazy useless kid. He doesn't want a boring repetitive job.

Boo hoo, welcome to the real world pal. Jobs are boring, not fun. That is why it's called work. If you can't figure out the meaning of that word, look it up. We can't all be firemen, astronauts, and jet pilots. You want to be a rock star? Try auditioning for American Idol. If you actually have talent, you can make it. Society doesn't owe people like you a living, you have to actually work. Unless you can find enough bleeding hearts in Santa Monica to support you. I don't waste my money giving it to the homeless. People who wish to do so, do it with your own money, not taxpayers' money.

They are indeed, a cancer on Santa Monica

Mike Kirwan
Venice

With no friends on Thursday, recycled ones will have to do



INSIDE OUT

BY AMY PERRITT

It's been three weeks since the finale of "Friends" and I miss it. I have been finding things to do. Last Thursday I had my hair done and went for sushi. The week before, I worked late and then met some friends from out of town for dinner.

But you see, probably much like the millions of viewers who tuned in to the last episode, I watched "Friends" loyally for over six years. My friends knew not to organize gatherings on Thursdays if they wanted me to attend. If out at the time, my husband knew not to call me at home from 8 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on those nights if he wanted to talk to me.

"Friends" made me laugh. It couldn't be any less complicated.

When I can't relax until my husband removes his sweaty socks from the couch, I think of Monica. When my friend slips another "big" word into her vocabulary and uses it often and out of context, I smile and think of Joey.

At one time or another, most of us have had to explain to a guy friend why he was dumped by his girlfriend for another girl. We also have the friend who goes to work every day yet his profession remains a mystery. And after years of friendship, now how do we go about asking him what he does? (Just don't go betting your home on it.)

And admit it ladies. If we haven't had one, we have fantasized about having a relationship with an older man ... or a younger cute guy in the office. Am I right?

I have read some of the cynics' coverage of the show. Now that it's over they seem to have a lot to say.

One journalist claimed the show was "... a great soap opera masquerading as a great sitcom." Funny, really. I don't recall Rachel plotting a murder or Chandler disappearing and then reappearing months later with amnesia. Phoebe probably could have pulled it off, but I am positive she didn't die on one episode only to come back to life on the next. No. The writers decided to have her bear triplets for her brother instead. Is that so hard to believe?

It's a pity. Ten years later and some people still lack the self awareness to be able to share their name and say, "Hello. I am a drunk-dialer." Rachel was one. I was one once. Ah ... the feeling of angst upon awak-

ing in the morning and with the hangover.

A couple of years ago, I took my mom to the gym during one of her visits.

After showing her around, she decided on the treadmill. She put on her earphones, got on the machine and started her 30-minute walk. I got on a stairmaster just behind her. With eight TVs lined up and hanging on the wall ahead of us, I set my channel to CNN and started my work out.

About 15 minutes later, I noticed people watching my mom. Most stared at her, then smiled and continued their exercise. What embarrassing thing has she done this time, I wondered.

I walked over.

Before even reaching her machine, I heard the laugh out loud — and immediately understood everyone's amusement. As I got closer, I realized she was laughing so hard she was crying.

"Are you OK mom?" I asked, relieved but puzzled.

"What dear?" she shouted turning towards me. She tripped slightly while trying to remove the earphones from her head and continue the steady incline. I pushed the emergency stop button.

"What are you laughing about?"

As the treadmill slowed, she wiped the tears from her flushed cheeks. "I'm wonderful! I'm watching one of my favorite episodes of 'I Love Lucy.'"

I returned to my machine and resumed my climb. I was surprised and disappointed. How on earth could she find that show funny? My mom had a degree in education and had been a teacher. She sang in a choir that once performed in Carnegie Hall. She was the proud mother of three grown children and was now a recognized artist.

I turned my attention from the news to the TV screen with "I Love Lucy." Lucille Ball (from what I remember) was scrambling around in the kitchen handling an oversized bag of flour like it was an uncontrollable tiger fighting to be freed. She was wearing high heels, a floral skirt tight at the waist and a kerchief on her red hair. Clearly, she was a dizzy dame. Every time she moved, clouds of flour spewed from the bag all over her and the kitchen.

At the time, I just didn't get it. What was so humorous about "I Love Lucy?"

Now I get it. The answer is everything. And thank goodness for that ... and for the "Friends" reruns I am going to enjoy for the rest of my life.

(Amy Perritt can be reached at aperritt@hotmail.com).



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LOCAL



Estate red-tagged since Northridge Earthquake

ESTATE, from page 1

developers in order to push the expensive project forward.

"Wallis remembers, in her earlier days, attending events and functions at the Sand and Sea," said Leonard Aube, managing director of the foundation's Los Angeles office. "One of the reasons that we have a presence in Los Angeles is that members of the Annenberg family make their homes in and around the Los Angeles area. As such, the members of the family, in their roles as trustees, have a particular interest in contributing to the quality of life and the fabric of the community here in the Los Angeles area."

The Annenberg Foundation, whose headquarters are in Pennsylvania, granted nearly \$200 million to 40 different groups throughout the country last year. Walter Annenberg was a distinguished publisher, broadcaster, diplomat and philanthropist who served as ambassador to the Court of St. James from 1968 to 1974. He also founded journalism schools at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Southern California.

Before officials from the foundation decide whether to give money to City Hall for the project, Aube said an analysis of the site and its historical significance must be completed. That process will take four to eight weeks, Aube said, adding it was too soon to say whether the foundation will be willing to pay the entire estimated \$17 million to renovate the property.

"We have no idea," he said. "We really haven't formed any opinions about that."

The estate, once occupied by William Randolph Hearst's mistress Marion Davies, was bought by the state of California in 1960 and leased for decades to the privately-run Sand and Sea Club.

At the time, the property was at the center of a battle between local restaurateur Michael McCarty, who won approval from the City Council to build a hotel

there, and residents determined to prevent new beach hotels from developing in Santa Monica. When an initiative passed that squashed McCarty's project, the City Council voted to terminate the Sand and Sea lease and take control of the property.

From 1990 until the 1994 Northridge earthquake, the estate was open to the public for recreational use and was often rented for various film shoots, including the popular television series "Beverly Hills 90210."

It has been abandoned since 1994, due to a lack of funding.

There are no specific designs for how the property will be restored. City Hall's rehabilitation plan calls for preserving the history of the site, encouraging a "light touch" on the site, creating a community oriented destination, providing public recreational facilities, increasing public beach access, creating a range of uses, encouraging a wide array of visitors and providing year-round use, Aube said. The Annenberg Foundation was encouraged by those goals, and officials said they also would focus on public access.

Barbara Stinchfield, director of City Hall's community and cultural services department, said if the grant money does come through, a team of architects, landscapers and engineers will be hired immediately. Community input would then be taken for as long as six months before work on the site would begin. The actual construction phase of the project could last about two years, Stinchfield estimated.

"We would like to move ahead as quickly as we can, get council review and a final decision from The Annenberg Foundation," she added. "We're kind of poised and ready to go, and once the foundation decides whether it's a go for them, and once the City Council has an opportunity to discuss this with the foundation, then we'd like to very quickly proceed with the community input process."



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LOCAL

Hundreds of sewage spills caused beach closures

BEACHES, from page 1

how bad the spill was rather than take a proactive approach and close the beach.

"There are two issues that must be addressed by the county," the report reads. "First, as a public health protection measure, a more precautionary approach must be adopted when a spill has reached a water body and has the potential to impact the beach ... and secondly, a meeting between public agencies involved with wastewater operations and stakeholders must take place immediately to revisit sewage spill action plans and public notification protocols ..."

Not all the news was bad for Santa Monica. Thanks to a new runoff diversion project at Santa Monica Canyon, water quality during the dry months improved from a "D" in 2002-2003 to a "B" in 2003-2004, according to the Heal the Bay report card. Countywide, dry weather water quality was good. Of 77 locations monitored, 55 received very-good-to-excellent water quality marks.

Still, dry weather problems persisted at Malibu Surfrider Beach and Malibu Point, which received an "F." Redondo

Municipal Pier and Cabrillo Beach harborside, at the lifeguard tower, also failed to make the grade. Long Beach beaches at Molino Avenue and at 54th Place also received poor marks.

"Surfrider Beach's water quality was very poor again this past year," the Heal the Bay report card reads. "This year, Surfrider Beach was able to wrestle away the title of Los Angeles County's most polluted beach from Cabrillo Beach, harbor side. Please be aware that if the Malibu Lagoon sand bar is breached, water contact at Surfrider Beach is likely to cause illness ..."

Environmental groups are working actively to improve water quality and have secured millions of dollars to build new runoff diversion plants and get the ocean cleaner. Mark Gold, president of Heal the Bay, said he expects this summer to be the cleanest year on record.

Many surrounding communities look to Santa Monica as the example of how to keep their beaches clean. Located next to the Santa Monica Pier, the Santa Monica Urban Runoff Recycling Facility — or SMURRF — is seen as the leading model for filtering and disinfecting runoff.

Beach smoking ban could extend throughout state

SMOKING, from page 1

Malibu City Council also passed a smoking ban on its beaches and the law will take effect this summer.

In an attempt to not confuse anyone about where they can light up, Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) announced this week that he will introduce a bill to ban smoking on all public beaches on all of California's 1,200-mile coastline.

Smoking also is prohibited in Santa Monica parks and within 20 feet of a public building.

California is at the forefront of anti-smoking legislation. Perhaps the fiercest bans exist in Davis, Berkeley, Palo Alto

and San Ramon, where smoking is illegal within 20 feet of any smoke-free area. For Santa Monica that would mean stores, restaurants and offices.

Outdoor dining areas are smoke free — by law — in Davis, Berkeley, Santa Barbara, San Ramon, Laguna Hills, Los Gatos and Dublin. Smoking is also prohibited in non-public waiting areas — like ATM and movie theater lines — in Davis, Palo Alto, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Goleta, Carpinteria, Buellton and Dublin. Davis and Berkeley have upped to 75 percent the number of rooms that must be set aside as smoke free in every hotel. State law requires 35 percent, officials said.

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BUSINESS



How to financially deal with impending death



IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

BY JOHN KIM

If you are a woman, with new medical advances prolonging life expectancies, the chances of becoming a long-term caregiver to a disabled or seriously ill spouse are greater now than ever before. Extended caregiving can be an emotional roller coaster. And, without proper planning, it can be financially devastating. When faced with the prospect of a spouse's serious illness, only one thing is certain: For now, all the responsibilities are on your shoulders.

It is likely that in addition to the physical caregiving responsibilities that have passed to you, all legal, financial and health-care-related decisions will become yours as well. Taking charge, as the proxy decision maker won't be easy, particularly if your spouse resists giving up his role, however necessary that may be.

Plan to "gently" take on the role of sole decision maker in your household. Start by identifying and surrounding yourself with professionals who can provide you with current information, resources and common-sense advice on personal financial matters and legal issues. The more advocates you have to support you during

this uncertain time, the easier your transition should be.

Consider your caregiving options. Make a detailed plan now. By planning ahead and anticipating certain needs before your situation becomes overwhelming, you can avoid having to make important decisions during a time of crisis.

List the things you may need help with, now or in the future. List all your informal support contacts (e.g., family, friends, neighbors) and decide how each person might help meet your needs. Repeat the list for formal support services (e.g., community services, home care workers, adult day care programs). It is important to set a realistic time frame for any action planned. Of course, make an appointment with an attorney knowledgeable in estate planning, probate, and, if possible, public benefits planning.

What types of care should you consider and how will you fund them? A professional familiar with your spouse's specific health issues, your current caregiving situation and community resources can often facilitate your decision. Explore every option with the help of an attorney, or professional who specializes in elder care, as well as a financial advocate before taking any decisive steps.

While you still have time together, track down all financial accounts; keys to safe deposit boxes; important identification papers such as birth and marriage certificates, deeds to property, vehicle regis-

trations, military records, Social Security cards, naturalization cards and insurance policies; and existing estate planning documents, such as your will or irrevocable trust or agreement.

Update your will. As an essential part of your family's estate plan, a will establishes who receives your assets and how they will be distributed. Dying without the benefit of a will leaves the laws of your state to decide the division and distribution of your property. It can also create unwanted estate tax consequences.

What's more, you will could explicitly address who will manage your spouse's assets in the event of your death, and how much of your assets you wish to set aside for this purpose.

Evaluate your own long-term care needs. Although it may be difficult to focus on yourself now, it is important that you think about your own health and your future. Should you suffer health problems and require long-term care down the road,

do you have a plan in place to cover yourself financially? Long-term care insurance can offer a good alternative to dipping into your retirement savings or relying on your children to shoulder this potential burden.

Keep in mind that you don't have to carry the burden alone. Use all resources available to you: Your family, friends and community organizations. Finally, recommendations from your attorney, accountant and financial consultant can help you manage the financial challenges and sort through the many choices you will have to make.

(John S. Kim is a financial consultant with Smith Barney, located in Beverly Hills. Call (310) 205-4939 or visit www.fc.smithbarney.com/jkim. Smith Barney does not provide tax or legal advice. Please consult your tax and/or legal advisor for such guidance. Smith Barney is a division and service mark of Citigroup Global Markets Inc. Member SIPC).

BUSINESS BRIEFS

FIRM ANNOUNCES THREE NEW VPs

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

Montgomery & Co., LLC, has announced that it has added three vice presidents, further expanding the company's presence in San Francisco and Santa Monica. With nearly 20 years of investment banking expertise among them, Robert Louv, Jon Rein and Dan Williams will be tasked with advising Montgomery's clients in the technology and media sectors on merger and acquisition opportunities and financings.

"These most recent hires directly reflect the robust growth we are seeing in the market today," said James Montgomery, founder and CEO of Montgomery & Co. "Over the last eight months, the company has seen a surge in merger and acquisition, public offering and private equity deals across the tech and media sectors in particular."

Louv, who comes to Montgomery & Co. with more than seven years of investment banking experience, will be based in the firm's San Francisco office and will serve as vice president in the company's information technology group. Previously, Louv was vice president of global mergers and acquisitions at J.P. Morgan Securities, Inc., where he supported clients in the IT services, Internet, storage, EMS and healthcare industries. During his time there, Louv announced more than 40 transactions representing aggregate consideration in excess of \$100 billion.

Williams, vice president in the information technology group, brings exten-

sive operational and transaction experience to Montgomery & Co. in the enterprise software, communications and media markets. Prior to Montgomery & Co., Williams was the founder and president of Imperial Partners, an investment advisory boutique to technology companies. Previously, Williams was a vice president with the technology investment bank Broadview International in Boston. Williams has held roles in corporate development, finance and operations with Nortel Networks and Siemens AG. He has been involved in more than 50 public, private and cross-border transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, as well as debt and equity financings.

Rein has joined the Santa Monica office as vice president in the media group, where he will be advising client companies in online services and entertainment content, wireless and publishing. Prior to joining Montgomery & Co., Rein was a director with Gleacher & Co. LTD in London, where he co-founded the office. His responsibilities included cross-border and domestic merger and acquisition execution, restructuring advisory and principal investing — both venture capital and private equity.

Based in Santa Monica, the firm also has offices in San Diego, San Francisco and Kirkland, WA. Montgomery & Co. is a member of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. (NASD), and its professional associates are registered with the NASD-SIPC.

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STATE

Positive signs for GOP in 'Left-Coast' California

BY BETH FOUHY
Associated Press Writer

CARLSBAD — Democratic strength in recent presidential elections has left California Republicans nostalgic for the last actor-turned-governor — Ronald Reagan — and looking toward their new one to improve GOP prospects.

Republicans say privately President Bush has little if any chance of capturing the state's prize of 55 electoral votes. Contemporary history and math also indicate John Kerry should keep California in the Democratic column — Bill Clinton won the state in 1992 and 1996, Al Gore beat Bush by double digits there in 2000 and the president's approval ratings remain in the low 40s.

Nevertheless, Republicans see a wealth of opportunities on the horizon, due in large part to shifting population growth and the broad popularity of their new governor — Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"I have always maintained that California is far more competitive than pundits believe," said former Gov. Gray Davis, the Democrat who was recalled by voters and replaced by Schwarzenegger last year. "Democrats can't win this state on the cheap. Kerry has to spend money here, and I believe he knows that."

Political strategists largely credit excitement about Schwarzenegger with helping to increase Republican voter registration in the state, cutting the advantage

for the Democrats from more than 10 percent in 2000 to about 8 percent.

Organizers of the Republican National Convention and Schwarzenegger aides are trying to reach an agreement on how to showcase him in New York in late August. The Schwarzenegger camp is pressing for a prominent role — perhaps a prime-time convention speech — that organizers have not yet offered.

But unlike conservative icon Reagan, who served as California governor from 1967-75, Schwarzenegger is a moderate on social issues such as abortion and the environment, putting him at odds with Bush. Schwarzenegger largely has kept his distance from Bush, even while serving as honorary co-chairman of his reelection campaign.

Schwarzenegger declined to appear publicly with Bush on the president's last trip to California, attending a private fundraiser with him instead. Schwarzenegger's Democratic wife, Maria Shriver, joined Kerry in Sacramento during his visit to the state in March.

Bush's most optimistic political advisers believe California will be in play this November only if Schwarzenegger remains popular, the state party meets White House fund-raising and registration goals and the governor agrees to put his political capital on the line for Bush in September and October.

Others say the odds may be even longer, and Kerry's lead in polls would

have to narrow before Bush would consider investing in the state.

Kerry's advisers insist they won't have to compete in the state. Even assuming the worst-case scenario — that Bush pulls even in state polls — Kerry's advisers say they wouldn't advertise in California until the last week of the campaign.

Republicans point to the state's changing population patterns. While Democratic strongholds such as the San Francisco Bay area have been bleeding population, growth has exploded in traditionally Republican areas such as northern San Diego County and the so-called Inland Empire east of Los Angeles, where cheaper housing and new roads have lured thousands of families.

Said Republican National Committee chairman Ed Gillespie: "There is no downside to us competing in California, and having it be real."

Outside a Starbucks in a sprawling new community north of San Diego, Jeanne Chronis, a 37-year-old mother of three, straps a fussy toddler into her maroon minivan and provides one reason why her family feels so comfortable living in this sprawling "exurban" community.

"I'm a Republican, so I'll vote for President Bush. I've just been a supporter of what he's done, with the whole direction he has taken," she says.

But Mark DiCamillo, director of the nonpartisan Field Poll, said California's most significant demographic trend — the

rapid growth of the Hispanic population, who still vote overwhelmingly Democratic — presents Republicans with their greatest challenge.

"Republicans have a long-term problem there, and they have to stop the bleeding," DiCamillo said. "Maybe with Schwarzenegger in office, it might."

But Garry South, a longtime strategist for Davis and other Democrats, argues that Republicans have largely blown the chance to build on their gains by choosing candidates for other offices who are either too weak or too conservative to win statewide.

Two-term Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer is favored to defeat former Secretary of State Bill Jones, a Republican who holds conservative views on issues such as abortion.

"Schwarzenegger is an aberration — Republicans still have major problems in this state," South said, noting that Democrats swept all statewide offices in 2002, an otherwise heavily Republican year. "They have shown no depth, no capability with the kind of run-of-the-mill candidates they run, and that includes George W. Bush."

Still, South concedes, "I've been warning Democrats for years that they should not delude themselves into thinking that California is irretrievably in the Democratic column."


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STATE



No droughts about it, global warming begins to bug scientists across state

BY DON THOMPSON
Associated Press Writer

KINGS BEACH — Western forests may be on the brink of epochal change, driven to permanent retreat in lower elevations by years of drought and decades of fire-suppression that has made them vulnerable to a scourge of insects, scientists warned Wednesday.

The die-off in turn is resulting in uncontrollable wildfires of the sort that swept Southern California last fall, and Arizona and Colorado the previous summer.

A hundred of the West's top scientists are gathered by invitation only for a three-day Lake Tahoe conference to share the latest studies on global warming and its impact, and to plot what research is needed over the next five years.

"There's stuff dying all across the montane forests of the western U.S.," said Craig D. Allen of the U.S. Geological Survey. "It's a big deal — socially, environmentally and economically."

Other researchers compared the current drought and rising temperatures to a similar episode 13,000 years ago. Mountain forests died off or were wiped out by fire, to be replaced by woodlands, grasslands and desert scrub that had been prevalent at lower elevations or farther south.

"Yet another spate of disturbance-driven plant migrations may be looming in the West," the researchers reported.

"Critical fuel thresholds have been exceeded, a warming North Atlantic and cooling tropical Pacific have shifted the climate from wet to dry, the last freeze now happens earlier in the spring, and longer hotter growing seasons now characterize both dry and wet spells. The outcome is a flashy landscape capable of broad scale, multispecies die-offs followed by unnatural surges in tree recruitment."

Allen, in the ominously titled "Massive Forest Dieback," reached similar conclusions by studying more contemporary severe droughts in the 1580s, from the 1890s into the early 1900s, 1950s, and the current drought that began in 1996.

"The unprecedentedly rapid climate changes expected in coming decades could produce rapid and extensive contractions" in forests, concludes Allen of the USGS Jemez Mountains Field Station at Los Alamos, N.M. Western forests are vulnerable to "widespread and rapid forest die-back" because of warmer and drier temperatures.

Fifty years ago, for example, a drought over years changed the forest on the eastern slope of the Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico, he reported.

Within five years, the ponderosa pine forest retreated more than a 1 1/2 miles to higher elevations and was replaced by pinon-juniper woodland. The ponderosa

forest has never recovered.

That drought is likely to be eclipsed by the coming climate changes, Allen said.

Allen documents the Four Corners area, where 90 percent of the pinon trees have died during the current drought, to be replaced by junipers. The pattern has been repeated across the West.

Scientists still don't know how much climate stress forests can withstand before massive die-back kicks in. Without that knowledge, researchers can't begin to realistically predict how much of the West's forests will die, nor gauge the resulting effects on the environment or society.

The effects of drought are compounded by the ravages of tree-eating beetles that are killing entire forests from Alaska to Arizona. Not only may a lack of water weaken trees, but warmer temperatures may help the bugs survive and multiply into what Jesse A. Logan of the U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station called widespread and intense outbreaks.

While forests have survived insect onslaughts for millennia, the bugs can adapt quickly — as little as a year — to changing conditions, while it can take forests decades to adjust, Logan said.

Rapid climate change can thus trigger "catastrophic disruption" of what usually is a natural battle between forests and insects. Rising temperatures may let pests survive in areas where they once could not, leaving trees in those areas suddenly vulnerable.

But the overall cycle is part of nature. Beetles eventually die after consuming the vulnerable trees and new, sometimes radically different, growth replaces lost forests.

"It's really a natural response in some ways — a self-thinning of forests," Allen said.

A century of fire suppression has resulted in forests crowded with smaller trees, which may compete for water and nutrients while helping spread disease and pests.

But it is uncertain how the die-off may effect catastrophic wildfires of the sort that consumed beetle-devastated trees in the San Bernardino Mountains east of Los Angeles last fall.

Thomas W. Swetnam of the University of Arizona's Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, reported a massive and largely unexplained increase in the number of fires that leap between treetops instead of moving along the ground.

But dead trees eventually drop their needles as well, which may actually slow such crown fires, noted Allen. That, too, is a critical area scientists have only begun to study.

This week's Mountain Climate Sciences Symposium is designed to determine what scientists do and don't know, and to plot a five-year plan to guide research and funding.

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NATIONAL

Al-Qaida said to be almost ready for attacks on U.S.

BY CURT ANDERSON
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The United States has “credible intelligence from multiple sources” that al-Qaida is determined to launch an attack in the United States in the next few months that could be linked to events such as an upcoming international economic summit and the summer political conventions, Attorney General John Ashcroft said Wednesday.

Speaking at a Justice Department news conference, Ashcroft said the intelligence, together with recent public statements attributed to al-Qaida, “suggest that it is almost ready to attack the United States.”

“This disturbing intelligence indicates al-Qaida’s specific intention to hit the United States hard,” Ashcroft said.

In particular, Ashcroft said, seven people being sought by the United States “all present a clear and present danger to America. All should be considered armed and dangerous.”

The warning was not accompanied by an increase in the U.S. terror alert status, however.

FBI Director Robert Mueller, who appeared with Ashcroft, cited a “heightened threat to United States’ interests around the world. ... We do not know what form the threat might take.”

The withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq due to the political repercussions of the March 11 train bombings in Spain, Ashcroft added, could lead al-Qaida to attempt to influence U.S. politics.

The sudden warning returns the nation’s attention to terrorism, the issue that President Bush has highlighted as a central theme of his re-election campaign, after intense focus on other subjects like Iraq and prisoner abuses in Iraq. Bush has lost ground in the polls, falling in approval ratings to the lowest point of his presidency.

The intelligence does not contain specifics such as timing, method or place of an attack. Officials say it is highly credible and backed with greater corroboration than usual, including information that operatives may already be in the United States.

Mueller and Ashcroft drew new attention to enlarged photos of seven suspected al-Qaida operatives that the FBI has been pursuing for months. They include Adnan G. El Shukrijumah, a Saudi native who once lived in Florida, and Aafia Siddiqui, a woman from Pakistan who studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“We are not aware of details of a plan,” Ashcroft said when pressed for specifics.

The attorney general said recent intelligence indicates that al-Qaida operatives now may be traveling with their families to attract less suspicion and that the terror network has been seeking recruits “who can portray themselves as European.”

He portrayed the “ideal al-Qaida operative” as an individual in the late 20s or early 30s.

To focus on the threat, the FBI has established a 2004 Threat Task Force and FBI analysts are reviewing previously collected intelligence to see if it contains any clues to the latest threat. There will also be a series of interviews conducted by the FBI with individuals who could have information about potential plots.

Earlier, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said there are no current plans to lift the national alert status from yellow, where it has stood since January. That’s the midlevel alert level on a five-step warning program.

“First of all, every day we take a look at the overall threat reporting that we receive,” Ridge said on NBC’s “Today Show.”

“There’s not a consensus within the administration that we need to raise the threat level. ... We do not need to raise the threat level to increase security. Right now, there’s no need to put the entire country on a (elevated) national alert,” he said.

Asked whether Ridge’s comment suggested a difference of opinion between his office and Ridge’s, Ashcroft told reporters: “I believe we’re all on the same page.”

Mueller said that “extraordinary precautions” already were being taken to protect the sites of the two political conventions — the Democratic convention in Boston in late July and the Republican convention in New York in late August — as well as next month’s Group of Eight economic summit on Sea Island in Georgia.

Some law enforcement and firefighter union representatives, supporters of Democrat John Kerry for president, suggested that the timing of the threat report was suspicious because of polls showing a sagging approval rating for President Bush. International Association of Firefighters President Harold Schaitberger told reporters in a conference call that the intelligence has been in the government’s hands for weeks.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan, however, denied that there is a political aspect to the threat report.

“The president believes it’s very important to share information appropriately,” McClellan said. “We do that in a number of ways when it comes to looking at the threats we face here in the homeland.”

Bitch!

Whine!

Complain!

Check Out the Question of the Week on Page 3 and let us hear what you have to say

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COMICS



The Dinette Set by John McKinley

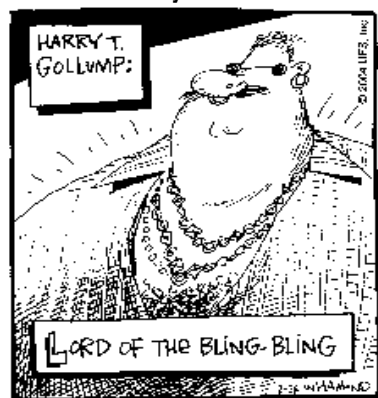


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5 Malfunction
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27 French article
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39 Jazz combo
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41 Peel
42 Has on
43 Sums up

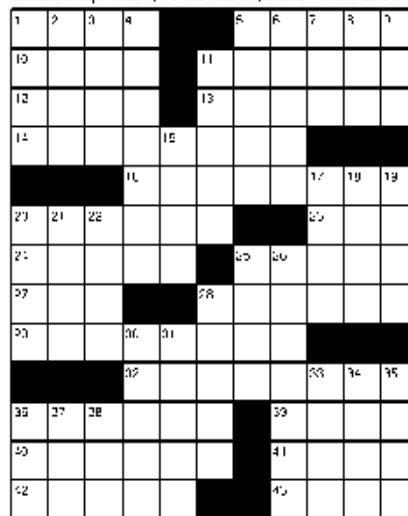
- 3 Music's Home
4 Circling
5 Came up
6 Star
7 Smidgen
8 Avail
9 Signing need
11 Pursue
15 Hay unit
17 First person
18 Finish last
19 Lewd look
20 Go out of business
25 Job for a gumshoe
26 Sophocles play
28 Computer command
30 Detest aunt



Yesterday's answer

- 21 Region
22 Play group
25 Job
26 Sophocles play
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31 Tries to save the boat
33 Dry
34 Intellect
35 Seed holders
36 Really impress
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38 Acapulco aunt

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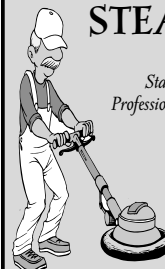


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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Clint Eastwood rallies for mountain maintenance

By The Associated Press

■ **BEVERLY HILLS** — Clint Eastwood wants you to volunteer, punk.

The "Dirty Harry" star reprised his role Tuesday as spokesman for Take Pride in America, an organization of volunteers who maintain public lands.

Eastwood previously promoted the group in the 1980s.

On Tuesday, he posed for photographers while helping students in a fifth-grade class clean up a hiking trail and paint picnic tables at Franklin Canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains, adjacent to Beverly Hills.

Take Pride in America is a federal organization that supports volunteers who tend to public parks, forests, grasslands, reservoirs, wildlife refugees, playgrounds and historic sites.

■ **LOS ANGELES** — The Rock, Vin Diesel, Paris Hilton and Ice Cube will share the stage as presenters at the upcoming MTV Movie Awards.

Other presenters announced Tuesday by the music channel include Ashton Kutcher, "Friends" star Matthew Perry, Queen Latifah and Marlon Wayans and Shawn Wayans.

They will join previously announced participants Snoop Dogg, Dave Chappelle, Kirsten Dunst, Eve, Jimmy Fallon, Kate Hudson and Scarlett Johansson.

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.

■ **LONDON** — Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, had a testy exchange with the host of a British TV talk show, when the topic turned to the royal family.

The former daughter-in-law of Queen Elizabeth II

was being interviewed on Channel 4's "Richard and Judy" show Tuesday when host Richard Madeley said: "A couple of quick questions about the Windsors ..."

"I suppose you have to, don't you?" Ferguson replied.

When asked if she is still on speaking terms with Prince Philip, her former father-in-law, she gave a curt "yes."

Madeley persisted and asked if there was any possibility she would get back together with her former husband, the Duke of York.

"I really thought I was going to come on to this show and you were really honestly going to take Sarah Ferguson as Sarah Ferguson — a single working mother with two girls," she replied.

"I'm very serious about what I do. OK? And don't make a mockery of it, all right?"

She told the presenter he had been warned "not to go there" on the topic of the royal family before the show started.

"We were told the opposite, actually," Madeley said. "I was told you were happy to talk about anything by your people."

■ **BEVERLY HILLS** — Talk-show host Tavis Smiley and Dennis Haysbert, who plays the president on the Fox TV series "24," were among those honored at an annual awards dinner held by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The Roy Wilkins Freedom Fund Dinner took place Tuesday in honor of the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in "Brown v. Board of Education," the historic ruling that heralded the official end of segregation not only in education but also in areas such as housing and work.

"As one who was a beneficiary of the struggle that Thurgood Marshall and those brilliant lawyers waged on my behalf ... it's humbling and it challenges me now to do some significant work to live up to the award," Smiley said.

Though much has been accomplished since the landmark decision, Smiley said the situation in American education leaves much to be desired.

"One can argue legitimately that our schools are as segregated now as they ever have been," he said. "I pause in using the word 'resegregated' because that would suggest at one point we had full integration. Clearly that was not the case."

Educator Theodore Alexander, who won the W.E.B. DuBois Education Award, oversees integration programs in Los Angeles schools. Haysbert serves as a role model both as an actor and for the positive character he plays in the TV thriller, said Stasia Washington, head of the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP.

"And you have Tavis Smiley," Washington said of the PBS talk-show host, who also hosts a radio program on public television and is a frequent guest on many other news programs. "Fifty years ago we couldn't do any of the things that Tavis is doing."

■ **LOS ANGELES** — A judge has ruled against an overseas film distributor who tried to block the release of the controversial Iranian film "The Lizard" in the United States.

The satirical movie featuring a thief disguised as a cleric was a smash hit in Iran until authorities pulled it from theaters May 19. It won top honors at Tehran's international film festival in February and took in about \$1 million.

Director Manuchehr Mohammadi agreed to a contract to distribute the film through Atlantis Enterprises in the United States and elsewhere. The film's Iranian distributor, Kamal Mosafaye Tabrizi, sought a temporary restraining order in Los Angeles Superior Court to block the U.S. debut.

Judge Dzintra Jamavs denied that restraining order Tuesday.

Tabrizi's lawyer, Patrick M. Saboorian, said he would be back in court next week if the parties can't work out a private agreement.

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