

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

05, 08, 26, 34, 36

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 6, 8, 8
Evening picks: 3, 3, 5

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 07, Eureka
2nd Place: 08, Gorgeous George
3rd Place: 02, Lucky Star
Race Time: 1:49.86



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Giving up on their own terms: Stephen Ray Carson, 29, in a standoff with police, said he wasn't giving up until he finished the crack cocaine he had just bought with the proceeds of a robbery. (Police got him anyway.) (Panama City, Fla., January) Motorist Christina L. Willis, 36, who was finally caught by police following a 30-minute chase after she hit an officer with her car, still refused to get out until she had finished her beer (Fairfield, Ohio, January). Motorist Troy C. Stephani, 32, trying to elude a police chase so that, he later said, he could finish his crack cocaine, took a wrong turn and accidentally drove into the police station parking lot (Medford, N.Y., April).



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards."

— Mark Twain



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Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Peter Wallerstein, of the Whale Rescue Team, loads up a sea lion that was having seizures on the shore of Bay Street Beach on Tuesday. The animal will be treated with fluids.

Sea lions washing up on shore dazed, confused

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

A poisonous algae responsible for killing and harming hundreds of sea mammals last spring has cropped up again.

The algae, which is known as bridal plankton, begins to bloom in May and extends into June. The algae has caused a large number of dazed and confused animals to wash ashore in Santa Monica and other Southern California beach communities in recent weeks.

Peter Wallerstein, who runs the Whale Rescue Team, a non-profit group that patrols Los Angeles County beaches, transferred a sea lion to San Pedro Marine Animal Care Center on Tuesday.

The sea lion had washed up on shore at Bay Street Beach and was having seizures.

Wallerstein noted last year's situation was the worst he'd ever experienced. He received up to 50 calls a day for rescues last year.

See SEA LIONS, page 4

City takes on banks, loses in high court

Supreme Court refuses to hear ATM bank fee case

BY JOHN WOOD
Daily Press Staff Writer

After nearly four years of litigation, Santa Monica has lost its battle with the banking industry.

The Supreme Court refused to hear on Tuesday an appeal by the cities of Santa Monica and San Francisco, which in 1999 passed identical ordinances that banned fees on ATM withdrawals.

Santa Monica was the first city in California to take on the banking industry by banning what officials — and many consumers — regard as a "double charge."

The high court's ruling allows banks in Santa Monica to continue charging whatever amount they want in ATM fees to non customers.

Leland Chan, a lawyer for the California Bankers Association, called the cities' laws bogus.

"The cities attempted to do what they believed to be a consumer protection ordinance," he said. "Our position is simply the cities had no authority to regulate the pricing of national bank services."

Withdrawal fees, made common in the mid-1990s, range from \$1 to \$3.50 per transaction for non-customers and are often accompanied by a separate fee charged by the customer's bank.

City officials and consumer advocates explain it this way: Customers who use an ATM machine at a bank other than their own pay not only a \$1.50 fee, but \$2 more tacked on by their own bank. Then there's a third fee that rarely is discussed publicly that's called an "interchange fee." That's a fee customers don't see because the banks

privately charge each other for their customer's withdrawals.

Councilman Kevin McKeown brought the issue to the forefront in October 1999 after he realized he was charged twice when he used ATM machines in San Francisco's Chinatown.

"I'm glad it's over with and I wish and hope we can get back to normal now. I hate to say 'I told you so,' but I didn't think (the ordinance) was legal when we imposed it."

— BOB HOLBROOK
Santa Monica City Councilman

He said Tuesday consumers are getting "nickled and dimed to death" by bank fees. And he said it's unlikely that federal officials will do anything about it.

"That's why we had to act locally," McKeown said. "We're not politicians that are supported by big banks or huge corporate donations, so we were willing to go for it."

"This is and always was a local consumer protection issue," he added. "Santa Monicans are paying more than they should at ATMs, and we simply want (the banks) to do something about that."

With a 4-3 vote, the Santa Monica City Council passed the ordinance that made it illegal for banks to charge the fee. But within

See FEES, page 4

Gasoline cleanups lag despite \$2 billion fund surplus

Santa Monica wells effected

By staff and wire reports

Toxic plumes from 143,000 leaking underground storage tanks are awaiting cleanup across the nation, including Santa Monica.

Yet nearly \$2 billion motorists have already paid to clean up the soil and water

contamination isn't being spent.

Motorists have paid a tenth of a cent tax on every gallon of gasoline into a special cleanup fund each time they've pulled up to the pump for the last 17 years.

Santa Monica shut down seven wells supplying half its water in 1996 after discovering MTBE had migrated into a water supply that could have provided for 13,000 families.

The \$230 million settlement Santa Monica reached with oil companies last year is the equivalent of a 2 cents a gallon "tax" on every gallon of gasoline sold in California for a year, estimates the Renewable Energy Action Project.

The Leaking Underground Storage Tank trust fund brings in an average \$180 million

See CLEANUP, page 5

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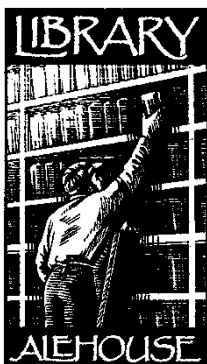
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Happy B-Day, Ross Furukawa



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

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

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ You cannot be clear enough right now, as others distort your words or don't hear you. Though great ideas could pop up, others might not get the gist of what you're saying or vice versa. Tonight: Continue discussions in a relaxed atmosphere.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You might be surprised by what is going on with others. Though everyone means well, confusion reigns in the workplace. Don't lose patience as you go over details again and again. Attempt to clear the air. Tonight: Do absolutely what you want.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Return calls; listen to what is being shared. You need to sort through the overflow of information that surrounds you. If you use your instincts and discuss what is on your mind, you will gain. Tonight: Take some time off.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You might want to explore your options more carefully. Partners toss in a lot of information about finances. Options make a difference; simply give up impulsiveness and flow with them. Friends or a group of associates helps steer the course. Let them. Tonight: Whatever makes you happy.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Take charge while others tumble backward. You know what you want. But you might not be able to convince others. While someone says "yes," he or she might not be getting the full gist of what you are saying. Work with a boss. Together you get it. Tonight: Willingly make it a late night.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Associates and work only add to your confusion. Rethink your ideas with some flex. You do best on your own, reflecting on the possibilities and what might or might not work. By extending your boundaries and finding out others' opinions, you gain. Tonight: Read between the lines with a friend or loved one.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Work as a team. You find that your ability to integrate helps you work with those who might be less sure of themselves. A partner or associate gets it, but only because you walk him or her through the steps. Fortunately, you specialize in teamwork. Tonight: Togetherness works.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You do not hold all the cards. Remember that, and you will succeed beyond your wildest imagination. Others seek you out as a resource for information and feedback. Because of your helpfulness, a loved one or partner lets you know the difference you make. Tonight: The only answer is "yes."

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Pace yourself; you'll accomplish much quickly. Your focus needs to be on getting the job done, because you can be sure that others will distract you. Curb or screen your calls. You will find that everyone needs you yesterday. Tonight: Do for yourself.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ What you believe is a sure bet might not be. You get information that might make you uncomfortable. Step back if you can and take another hard look at what might be happening. Brainstorm. Tonight: Play the night away.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You might not be sure which way is the best way to go. Think thoroughly and take a risk if need be. Others might encourage you to go for it, but it isn't their neck that is on the line. If you need more time to decide, just say so. Tonight: Head home.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Keep asking questions, especially if you're not as sure of what you think and feel as you would like to be. Discussions take you in a new direction if you want. Use your instincts if you feel something is off. You will know what is best for you. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

CORRECTION — In the May 27 edition, it was inaccurately reported where city officials will be holding budget session meetings this week. The meetings will be held today and Thursday at in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, located at 1685 Main St.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

New city finance director named

By Daily Press staff

It has been announced that Stephen C. Stark will replace Mike Dennis as City Hall's finance director.

Stark, who is currently working with the city of Santa Clarita, will take over the post in Santa Monica, effective June 30. Dennis is retiring from the city after 20 years.

Following a national recruitment by executive search firm Bob Murray and Associates, Stark was one of two finalists interviewed by City Manager Susan McCarthy and Assistant City Manager Gordon Anderson. With a strong background in financial and management services and information technologies, Stark has been director of administrative services and city treasurer in Santa Clarita for 11 years, overseeing a \$118 million budget and staff of 56.

"Santa Monica will benefit in the coming years from Steve's experience as a financial manager and his excellent business sense," McCarthy said. "He has been well regarded by his colleagues and staff in Santa Clarita. I look forward to working with him on the fiscal challenges ahead for Santa Monica, which he is fully capable of meeting."

Stark has overseen major technological advances, such as the replacement of Santa Clarita's core financial system, development of its Web site, including e-commerce, and the development of a community-wide technology plan. He designed the city's first long-range financial plan, developed a fiscal impact model to analyze the financial impact of development and annexations on the city's operating budget, and has negotiated development agreements, as well as financial incentives for the attraction and retention of businesses.

"I'm looking forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in Santa Monica," Stark said. "I'm honored to join an organization that includes an outstanding finance department staff and strong executive management team."

From 1989 to 1992, Stark was director of management services and internal auditor for the city of Fontana, where he's credited with being part of the team that helped the community through some very difficult fiscal and organizational times. He spent 11 years prior to that in Arlington, Tex., where he was internal audit manager and assistant internal auditor.

Local woman to travel back to Iraq

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Public Library and the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica will host a free public program featuring Kelly Hayes-Raitt, who sits on the Santa Monica Commission on the Status of Women, at the Montana Avenue Branch Library, located 1704 Montana Avenue, on Saturday, June 14, 2003 at 2 p.m.

Hayes-Raitt visited Iraq for 10 days in February, just five weeks before the onset of the U.S. bombings. She spoke with hundreds of women and children to see firsthand the effects of the 1991 bombings and U.N. sanctions. Hayes-Raitt is returning to Iraq for two weeks in June and July 2003 to talk again to the women and children to see the impact of the latest Iraqi war.

Hayes-Raitt will share photos and stories of the women and children of Iraq, revealing their messages of peace.

The Montana Avenue Branch Library is wheelchair accessible. For special disability service, call the Branch Library at (310) 829-7081 at least three business days in advance.

For more information, contact the Santa Monica Public Library at (310) 458-8600.



The chest-high waves are rolling in, and local breaks are packed with wave-starved surfers.

Tuesday's mix of SW swell was accompanied by a small, consistent WNW wind swell.

BAD NEWS: The SW will start to fade this evening.

GOOD NEWS: The mixture will hold for fun waves this morning.

OUTLOOK: NW wind swell remains fairly consistent through the week.

Today the water is:

57°

**Sunrise: 6:00 a.m.
Sunset: 7:58 p.m.**

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	12:11	2.1	12:03	0.4	5:31	3.9	6:51	4.7
SUNDAY	1:04	1.5	12:41	0.7	6:37	3.8	7:17	5.0
MONDAY	1:46	1.0	1:13	1.0	7:31	3.8	7:40	5.2
TUESDAY	2:22	0.5	1:40	1.3	8:19	3.7	8:03	5.4
WEDNESDAY	2:55	0.1	2:06	1.6	9:02	3.7	8:25	5.6
THURSDAY	3:27	-0.2	2:31	1.8	9:43	3.6	8:49	5.7
FRIDAY	3:59	-0.4	2:56	2.1	10:23	3.5	9:15	5.8

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The Q-Line

Last week, one Santa Monica neighborhood experienced three separate, gang-related shootings. No one was injured. The violence was nothing new to residents of the Pico neighborhood, who have struggled for decades with gang, gun and drug-activity.

Santa Monica Police arrested four people late last week in connection with the shootings. More suspects are being sought.

This week, Q-Line wants to know, **"What can be done, if anything, to end the cycle of violence and bring peace to the Pico neighborhood."**

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.



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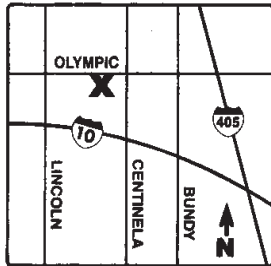
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CITY OF SANTA MONICA NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO THE DISABILITIES COMMISSION

The Santa Monica City Council is now accepting applications for appointment of two (2) members to the Disabilities Commission. Commissioners must be residents of Santa Monica and have significant experience in the disability community.

The State Political Reform Act requires certain officeholders to disclose their interest and income that may be materially affected by their official action. The applicants appointed to serve in this position will be required to file a Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) with the City Clerk's Office upon assuming office, and annually thereafter.

Applications and information on Commission duties and disclosure requirements are available from the City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 1685 Main St., Rm. 102 (submit applications at this location), by phone at (310) 458-8211 or on-line at http://pen.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/communication/cityforms/Board_Comm/index.htm. All current applications (those received in the past 12 months) will be considered; re-applying is not necessary.

Applications due by Noon, Tuesday, June 17, 2003.

Appointments to be made by City Council June 24, 2003.

Disability-related assistance and alternate formats of this document and all application materials are available upon request by calling (310) 458-8211 or emailing city-clerk@santa-monica.org.

*The Disabilities Commission meets the first Monday of every month
(except holidays) at the Ken Edwards Center, 6:30-9:00 P.M.*



LOCAL

Residents will continue to be charged at ATMs

FEES, from page 1

two weeks of the law being enacted, a coalition of banks secured a federal injunction which banned the city's controversial law.

In July of 2000, a U.S. District Judge in San Francisco struck down the bans after Bank of America, Wells Fargo and other California banks filed a lawsuit seeking their repeal.

Walker upheld the banks' argument that federal law, which governs nationally chartered and federal savings banks, trumps any local restrictions. The banks say they are protected by the National Banking Act and the Home Owners Loan Act, which govern them.

In essence, Walker said those congressional acts prevent cities and towns from restricting the fees either by council vote or referendum.

The cities then appealed to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. But the panel of three judges also overturned the laws. The court of appeals also ruled that only the federal government, not city councils or local voters, may create such regulations.

The San Francisco-based appeals court ruled that federal banking regulations adopted by Congress allow banks to charge fees for ATM usage and Santa Monica and San Francisco voters had no authority over the issue.

City officials then appealed the decision to the Supreme Court, where justices refused to hear the case and offered no comment.

Owen Martikan, of the San Francisco

city attorney's office, said he wasn't surprised by the high court's decision to not hear the case.

"We thought it was an issue that was at least important enough that they might consider it, but it's always an uphill battle," he said. "We felt Congress back in the mid-90s had made clear they intended state and local governments to regulate in consumers' interest. ... The courts concluded differently."

Martikan said the cities' only recourse is to lobby for federal legislation, which is unlikely. Instead, he recommended consumers educate themselves about how not to fall prey to excessive fees.

Officials in the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office could not be reached for comment.

Adam Radinsky, the deputy city attorney handling the case, has said in the past that federal banking regulations do allow local governments or city voters to adopt such rules. He said Arkansas, Mississippi and Wyoming have rules limiting the amount of ATM fees banks may levee.

Some city officials said Tuesday they were relieved to see the lawsuit come to an end, adding the city wasted thousands of dollars in attorney hours.

"I'm glad it's over with and I wish and hope we can get back to normal now," said Councilman Bob Holbrook. "I hate to say 'I told you so,' but I didn't think (the ordinance) was legal when we imposed it."

(The Associated Press contributed to this report.)

Whale rescue team has secured spot for operations

SEA LIONS, from page 1

When the algae blooms it releases a toxic substance called domoic acid, which is ingested by small fish like sardines. Larger animals then eat those fish and become sick.

The substance doesn't appear to affect people because they do not swim far enough from the mainland to come into contact with it. But scientists warn that humans can become ill after eating fish poisoned by the algae.

The toxin affects the animals' nervous systems and can cause disorientation, violent seizures, comas and death.

What Wallerstein is noticing this year is that there are a lot more sea lion pups that are either washing up on shore sick or dead.

"Their moms are so stressed out and trying to survive that they are dumping their pups," he said.

Animals found in Los Angeles County are transported to the San Pedro Marine Animal Care Center where they are treated. They are given intravenous fluids and treated with heavy doses of antibiotics before being released.

Joe Cordoro, a wildlife biologist for the National Marine and Fisheries Services, said so far this year, 12 live sea lions have been found on LA County beaches and 22 have died through May 20. He added that because June is the prime month for sea lions to give birth, rescuers expect to see increased numbers.

"We are only in the first month," he said. "June will tell us a lot."

Last year in LA County, 132 sea lions came in alive for treatment and 233 of them died, Cordoro said. Eight live dolphins were treated for domoic acid poisoning last year and 17 died, Cordoro said.

So far this year, one dolphin has been treated and eight have died.

Just like last year, because there are so many animals to be treated, the marine and fisheries service has issued a 48-hour watch on the ones found beached. If a sick mammal is found on the beach, they will be monitored for 48 hours before being transported.

"It's like establishing a triage system," Cordoro said, adding if a person finds a sick animal on the beach, report it immediately to the Santa Monica animal control office or the nearest authorities.

"If an animal is placed on watch, a sign is posted," Cordoro said. "Don't feed them, don't throw water on them, just leave them alone."

Wallerstein would prefer that all the animals receive treatment immediately.

"It just prolongs their suffering," when placed on a 48-hour watch, he said.

This year, Wallerstein at least has better response time when an animal is reported as sick. He used to work out of his home in Topanga Canyon, but the LA County Board of Supervisors recently authorized funding for the Whale Rescue Team to have a secured spot at Dockweiler State Beach, between Manhattan Beach and Marina Del Rey.

"We've got a RV spot and a 35-foot trailer," Wallerstein said. "We are right in the center of the south and the north."

LOCAL



Money for MTBE cleanup continues to be stockpiled

CLEANUP, from page 1

every year. But critics say presidents ever since have kept much of the money tucked away to help paper over the federal budget deficit. As a result, the fund now has ballooned to \$1.9 billion, a surplus projected to reach \$2.1 billion by the end of the next fiscal year.

"They can use the surplus in this fund to hide the deficits in other funds," said Tom Osborne, spokesman for the Society of Independent Gasoline Marketers of America. "So a problem that could have been close to being taken care of has not been taken care of."

Leaking gasoline tanks are a problem in every state. But the best known contaminant is MTBE, or methyl tertiary butyl ether, used for more than two decades in about a third of states mostly in the Midwest and Northeast to make gasoline burn cleaner and thereby cut air pollution.

States including California have banned the use of the product, and Congress is considering a four-year phase-out of MTBE use. But the House last month approved a provision as part of an energy bill that limit MTBE producers' liability for groundwater contamination.

While the product's health problems have not been conclusively determined, the federal government has labeled it a potential cancer-causing agent.

California has cleaned up about 35,000 of its estimated 40,000 leaking tanks, but faces continued expensive problems with 55 municipal wells contaminated with MTBE. Another 50 private well owners have had to replace their water supply because of MTBE contamination.

But even if the entire surplus is spent it will only touch part of the problem. Michigan alone estimates the 4,200 problem tanks there could cost the public as much as \$1.7 billion.

Cities would be better off lobbying for the fund money than suing oil companies, urged Frank Maisano, spokesman for the Oxygenated Fuels Association.

"It is a boatload of money, and it's going to continue to pile up," Maisano said. "A tenth of a cent builds up fast when you consider all the gasoline we use in this country."

About half the current surplus, or \$1 billion, has been spent from the fund since it was created by Congress in 1986, including about \$64 million in grants to California, \$48 million to Texas and \$45 million to New York.

Trent Duffy, a spokesman for the administration's Office of Management and Budget, said there are "just additional funds because the needs are being met" and that the nearly \$2 billion balance is being maintained "in case of an emergency."

Congress, Duffy said, must decide what's spent each year from the trust fund.

But when the Senate passed a bill that would spend \$1.675 billion from the LUST fund over the next four years, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman objected, saying in a letter the program has been so successful that spending more money is unnecessary.

Yet the EPA says the number of completed cleanups dropped 28 percent last year, leaving the national backlog of 143,000 underground spills.

Despite Whitman's comments, the EPA and Congress' nonpartisan General

Accounting Office say the need is there, and senior EPA officials say the agency could spend more money than Bush's budget provides if it can be spent on prevention as well as cleanup efforts. Whitman announced last week that she is leaving the administration.

In California, Santa Clara County residents pay nearly \$1 million a year to protect drinking water wells from spreading toxins. And millions more are being spent on problems like those in Anaheim, Los Angeles, Riverside, South Lake Tahoe and San Diego, which has a plume beneath Qualcomm Stadium where the Super Bowl was played in January.

"It is a boatload of money, and it's going to continue to pile up. A tenth of a cent builds up fast when you consider all the gasoline we use in this country."

— FRANK MAISANO

Oxygenated Fuels Association spokesman

The cost of cleanups ultimately land on motorists at the pump, either through higher taxes or higher prices, consumer and environmental groups say.

Spending more of the money motorists already paid has been a sticking point particularly in the Senate until this year. But even if the measure is approved in the House and signed into law, the trust fund money still would have to be appropriated in the federal budget each year.

A year ago, a bipartisan coalition of 55 congressmen asked that the entire amount collected in 2002 be spent, never mind the accumulated surplus. Bush proposed only an incremental increase instead — less than 5 percent of the available surplus — after reducing the amount spent from the fund the previous year.

The current grants are small enough that most states don't use them for cleanups at all. Instead, the money goes for administrative costs, the General Accounting Office reported last year, with the cleanup money mostly coming from state taxes, fees and settlements with the tanks' owners.

All told, state and federal governments spend about \$1 billion a year on leaking tank cleanups, according to the EPA.

Despite a 1998 deadline, about 76,000 tanks, or 11 percent of the total nationwide, have never been upgraded to federal standards, and more than 200,000 (29 percent of the national total) are not operated and maintained properly, according to the GAO study.

Half of the 13 states with the biggest problems said they rely on the federal grants for their cleanup programs, and several blamed their backlog on a lack of federal money to hire enough employees to pursue the tanks' cleanup, the GAO found.

The federal funding is "critical" to California's cleanup program, where it goes to pay for local oversight programs, said the State Water Resources Control Board.

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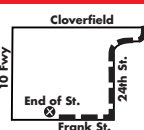
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OPINION

LETTERS

Apartments don't produce gang violence

Editor:

Every family has its triumphs and tragedies. Community Corp. of Santa Monica (CCSM) is no exception. It is a bittersweet irony that in the same month we feature in our newsletter a successful young teacher at Edison Elementary School who grew up in our housing, a young man living in our housing is arrested for robbery. Same neighborhood, same property owner, different outcome.

Those who think that CCSM causes gang shootings are wrong. Gang violence in the Pico neighborhood precedes CCSM's existence and we do everything within our power to reduce such violence. That includes working closely with the police, the courts and our neighbors. In fact, over the years, we counseled and then evicted several families living in housing we purchased in that neighborhood. But for most of our families, our housing gives them the financial stability that allows them to focus on raising their children.

Our tenants suffer the same violence, fears and uncertainties as everyone else. The recent round of shootings and arrests tells us that more work needs to be done to rid our community of a few bad apples. CCSM is committed to do just that, with the help of our neighbors and police.

P.S. Press reports that suspect Terence Brown or his father lives in our 17th Street building are incorrect.

Joan Ling

Executive director, Community Corp. of Santa Monica

Homeless columnist should buck up

Editor:

So which is it Chuck?

Are you "homeless and living in Santa Monica" (Charles Springer's From the Street column SMDP 5/26/03) or are you "a formerly homeless man living in Santa Monica" (SMDP 5/19/03)? It seems lately that you are a little schizophrenic. But, I digress.

Recently in one of your many uninformed opinion submissions, you claim a connection between the shootings in the Pico neighborhood and the alleged under-funding of our education system. Now for the sake of this discussion I will put aside your blatant, although typical, omission of parental responsibilities in raising these kids or any indictment on people who have kids when they are, in fact, too poor to provide adequately for their offspring.

Having said that, a few things to consider:

Firstly, the budget "crisis" hasn't happened yet so how can you tie these recent incidents in Pico to the future shortfalls? (Or, are you saying that our Santa Monica schools are currently horrible and that we just need some money to maintain the sta-

tus quo, which would continue to make our schools ... horrible?)

Secondly, you equate a child getting a quality education with that child's future "opportunity to achieve to their highest potential." Chuck, according to you, you received a "private school" education. What happened? Now do you really think you should be a spokesman espousing the benefits of a quality education?

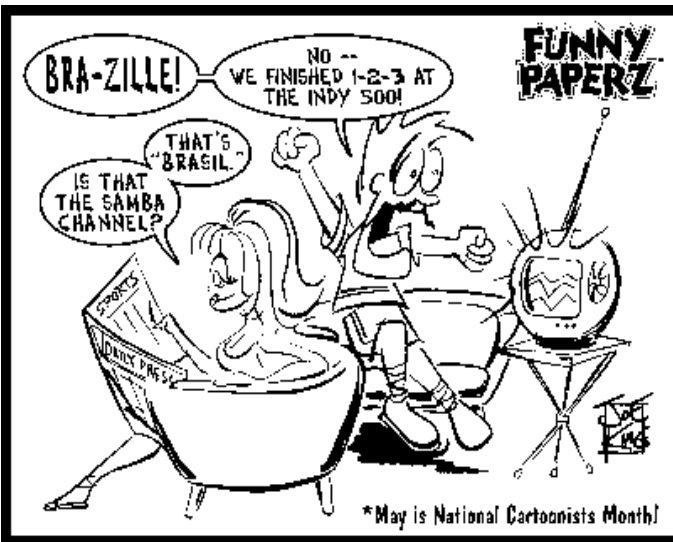
Thirdly, isn't it interesting that you don't own a business or a home or any property in Santa Monica, yet you are very willing to tell those of us that do that we should get out our checkbooks, once again, to "rescue" the schools because of a poorly managed government?

Finally, how much money will you personally be donating to the SMMUSD to "save" our schools? Yeah, I thought so.

CHECK PLEASE!

Tony Street
Santa Monica

See LETTERS, page 7



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Driven to distraction: A crash course for stupid drivers



INCITES

By Ed Silverstein

"Drivers Wanted." I briefly register the three-foot letters plastered on one of the ubiquitous billboards that in Los Angeles substitute for both landscaping and skyline. It is at that exact moment that the blue Honda, two cars ahead, decides to make a left turn. The problem is that the driver is in the right lane and in order to execute this maneuver she must slash across four lanes of traffic while being distracted by her two young children. She apparently considers the odds acceptable and in fact completes the turn successfully — that is if you don't take into account her nearly taking out a half a dozen vehicles and collectively eliminating about 12,000 miles worth of normal brake wear. Two thoughts instantly go through my head: The billboard should read "Drivers Wanting," and Southern California, reputedly the car capital of the world, has an abundance of drivers that should be in the Guinness

Book of World Records for stupidity.

Let's talk about those license holders who think that driving is a contact sport. You know the type. They're next to you at the light. It turns green. This sends a signal to their brain that it is time to determine if their car really can go 0 to 60 in 5.9 seconds while executing seven lane changes with no more than four inches of clearance. Finally they screech to a stop at the red light on the next block, having arrived there 2-10ths of a second and one car length ahead of you. And here's the dirty little secret: We know who they are. Almost all of them are exclusively men who invariably fall into four categories: Agents, lawyers, frat boys (which really isn't a different category because they'll probably become agents and lawyers) and any person who plays their car stereo loud enough to turn my vehicle into a magic fingers massager. My own personal theory is that these drivers are compensating for small penises.

Then there's the flip side, those octogenarians in the first Cadillac they ever bought, basically a boat with fins, crawling 25 miles below the limit (which is 30) taking up two or more lanes. To them I have only two words: Fort Lauderdale. Right behind them are Volvo owners. If

it's true that someone stepping on the brakes at 9 a.m. causes the traffic jam at 4 p.m., then 87 percent of all traffic is caused by Volvos. News flash, you're driving the safest car in the world, live a little.

And you Humvees, you're a bunch of bullies. Allow me to let you in on something, four-wheel-drive is not meant for climbing over Volkswagens. And let's be real, a car that big that seats only four is the only good reason for joining the Green Party.

Then there's the phone people, the second most annoying group on the road. Phone people fall into several subsets: Those who lose the ability to depress the gas pedal, those who lose the ability to use the brake pedal (usually while hurdling toward the back of my car), the mentally disturbed who transfer the emotions of their conversation (usually with their ex) to their driving, drifters who suddenly can't remember what those white lines are for, and 12 steppers who need 12 moves to make a one handed turn (also usually while hurling toward my car). Here's a general rule. If you can't walk and chew bubble gum at the same time, which depending what study you want to believe is 60 to 80 percent of all people residing in California, you have no business having a

phone in the car, even if it's turned off.

Finally, there is the worst, most heinous, original sin of driving. Take this simple test. Sit in the car, hands on the steering wheel. Extend your fingers until they touch that stalk that emerges out of the steering column. Do you know what this is? Have you ever used it? You're driving along enjoying a beautiful sunny day, when suddenly you are rushing at the back of the car in front of you who has abruptly slowed without warning and for no explicable reason until they make that turn that they didn't bother to signal. Or you see that SUV stopped in the left lane obviously waiting for a pedestrian to cross? You stop, they make a left and you think how nice it would be to get them a dinner invitation with Hannibal Lecter. People who don't use turn signals are the only legitimate argument against Darwinism because if natural selection really worked, drivers who don't use turn signals would have been killed off long ago by the drivers with the small penises.

(Ed Silverstein is a freelance writer living in Santa Monica. Steer all comments to edsincites@aol.com.)

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 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

OPINION



LETTERS

LETTERS, from page 6

Parcel tax not a level playing field

Editor:

I find it refreshing to see so many NOMO people pleading with everyone to support Proposition S. After all, for them, the \$225 tax is almost equal to what they would spend for a pleasant night at Michael's — not a big deal.

And they don't seem to think there is anything wrong with their paying the same amount as a low-income family in the east Santa Monica area. After all, the poorer folks should be happy to help improve Roosevelt and Franklin schools. Somehow, it helps them too.

Since these socialist millionaires are so intent on everyone chipping in to improve the community, let's propose doing it by what we can afford to pay. Why not pro-rate the contribution to the education coffers by the value of the property? Therefore, the NOMO folks, who seem to know what's best, would be made to "contribute" to give much more than the poorer folks. I'm sorry. My ears are ringing from the howls of protest coming from the direction of San Vicente Boulevard.

And perhaps landlords do have the anti-Prop S signs up to show concern for their rent-control paying tenants. After all, aren't the owners allowed to pass on the increase?

Kevin Skoglund
Santa Monica

Parcel tax a good investment

Editor:

We are 17 year residents of Santa Monica (our first seven years in Ocean Park and the last 10 north of Montana). We have a second grader at Franklin Elementary and a kindergartner starting this fall. I love this city and our schools, but we have some seri-

ous problems that will not go away by themselves. The state-wide funding cuts to the public schools is our most immediate crisis. Santa Monica and Malibu voters have to act now to save our community!

I am talking about Proposition S — a local, district wide property tax of \$225 per parcel per year for the next six years. Seniors would be exempted, so those of you on fixed incomes do not have to fear being priced out of your homes. This measure is desperately needed. Without it our schools will be devastated. We'll be forced to make \$13 million in budget cuts, which means we'll lose 91 teachers, class size will increase and many valuable programs will be eliminated. This will be a devastating blow to the quality of our education.

Santa Monica-Malibu schools are among the best in this state and the property owners in this district enjoy high property values, which are directly linked to the value of our public schools. A yes vote on S is not just a vote for public schools, it is a vote for our community. It is in every resident's interest to support our public schools. This is the case even if your child goes to private school, or if you have no school-age children. If you own property in Santa Monica you benefit by keeping the quality of the schools high. We're not suggesting you vote yes on S for altruistic motives, do it for selfish reasons. Do it because you want to keep your property values high. \$225 per year is a small price to pay to protect your biggest investment.

To those of you who oppose the flat property tax because it's regressive, we agree it is regressive, but vote for it anyway. Initially, we thought we'd prefer a tax based on assessed property value but it turns out a tax like that would cause renters to bear an even higher proportion of this tax. On average, S will cost renters an additional \$2 per month, whereas another type of tax could be 10 times that much. Our renters, particularly low income families with kids in the public schools, get much more out of the tax than they'll be asked to give. If S doesn't pass our community will deteriorate and that hurts everyone who lives here.

Ann Payson and Rob Ulin
Santa Monica

Don't believe the naysayers of school parcel tax

Misrepresentations, distortions, and lies.

Those are the three legs holding up the shameful and cynical campaign against the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's school funding measure, called Measure S, that is being waged by a handful of residents who are willing to sacrifice our children and our schools in order to further their own political agenda.

One of the biggest lies promulgated by the opponents of Measure S is that our school district is mismanaged and wasteful. In fact all the evidence points, compelling and convincingly, to the opposite conclusion.

It's essential to understand that California public schools have been severely underfunded for years. According to the journal, Education Week, the most recent report card on the 50 states, in 2002 California schools spent \$7,236 per student, nearly \$300 below the national average of \$7,524 and ranking 31st in the nation. However, this figure does not account for regional differences in the cost of living — a dollar goes much farther in Idaho, Nebraska, or Mississippi than in our home state. Adjusting for regional cost differences reduces California's spending to \$6,161 per student, nearly \$1,400 below the national average and our ranking plummets to 46th among the states.

Chronic underfunding has forced public schools in California to reduce or eliminate numerous valuable programs and services over the past two decades. For most districts, any fat in their operations disappeared years ago. Recent cuts have whittled away plenty of meat and have begun to dig into bone. According to EdSource, a nonprofit, independent organization that conducts research on public education, in 2001 California public schools had:

■ 20.6 students per teacher, 28 percent higher than the national average of 16.1 percent and ranking 48th among the states.

■ 994 students per guidance counselor, two times higher than the national average of 490 and ranking last among the states.

■ 4,379 students per librarian, five times higher than the national average of 873 and ranking last among the states.

■ 482 students per school principal or assistant principal, 37 percent higher than the national average of 352 and ranking 48th among the states.

■ 2,468 students per district administrator, three times higher than the national average of 828 and ranking 48th among the states.

California public school officials have done everything they could to spare teachers from cuts relative to other types of per-

sonnel. Nonetheless, the consequences of our state's dismal funding for the public schools include very large classes, inadequate numbers of counselors and librarians, and skeleton administrative staffs in both schools and district offices, not to mention serious shortages of nurses, classroom aides, clerical staff, maintenance and repair staff, custodians, gardeners, and transportation and food workers.

Our own district has been more fortunate than many in California. Thanks to the wisdom, foresight, and generosity of the citizens of our communities, we have been able to spend more than \$400 more per student than the California average, though it is important to realize that this is still far below the national average when regional differences in cost of living are taken into account.

The additional funds have been carefully targeted to improve the education our children receive. For example, to improve instruction in the classroom, we have hired more and better teachers. To improve the advice and guidance our high school students receive, we have hired

more counselors. To improve literacy and students' access to books and other information sources, we have hired more librarians. To raise the achievement of low-achieving students, we have developed innovative intervention programs. To provide our students with a well-rounded education that includes the arts, we have maintained an award-winning music program. As a result of these targeted efforts, our district has just under 20 students per teacher, 635 students per counselor, and 2,540 students per librarian, all better than the California figures, though still far worse than the national averages.

Recently, opponents of Measure S have alleged mismanagement and waste based

on the fact that our district's per student spending on teachers is 19 percent higher than the average in Los Angeles County. This is perhaps the most astonishing, ignorant and odious distortion of all. Yes, we do spend more on teachers than most other districts in the county, but this is not due to higher salary levels. It's because of our district's emphasis on hiring and retaining the most qualified teachers available.

According to DataQuest, a repository of public school data maintained by the California Department of Education, our teachers average 14 years of experience compared with a county average of 12 years. Only 11 percent of our teachers hold emergency credentials compared with 18 percent in the county. Most remarkably, 53 percent of our teachers have masters degrees or doctorates compared with 31 percent in the county.

The talent, qualifications, and dedication of our teachers, combined with our district's focus on high academic standards and its intervention programs, help to explain the high levels of academic achievement among our students.

Most gratifying, our most challenged schools, which had the lowest API scores in the district in 1999, have made the most rapid gains. Three schools in our district have been California Distinguished Schools, and one recently won a National Blue Ribbon Award.

Clearly, the picture painted by the evidence is not that of a mismanaged, wasteful public school district. Quite the contrary, the picture that emerges from an objective and dispassionate assessment of the data is that of a district that has focused its limited funds where they will do the most good. It's a district that has striven to provide our students with a rigorous, well-rounded education. It's a district that has attained high levels of academic achievement despite enormous challenges and contributes to the quality of life in our communities.

Tragically, California's budgetary fiasco and the resulting devastating impact on public school funding threatens our district's successes and accomplishments. Our district simply cannot absorb a shortfall of \$13 million — more than \$1,000 per student — without severely damaging the quality of the education our students receive.

Our district's school funding measure, Measure S, is a crucial component of our communities' effort to keep our schools as nearly whole as possible. If Measure S does not pass, the negative consequences will be immediate, severe, widespread, and enduring.

Please don't believe the distortions and lies told by the opponents of Measure S. Please support a high-quality education for our students and a high quality of life for our communities.

Measure S needs two-thirds of the vote to win. Please vote YES on Measure S.

(José J. Escarce, M.D., Ph.D. is vice president of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education)

Guest
Commentary

By José J. Escarce

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STATE

Gov. Gray Davis' allies announce anti-recall effort

BY ERICA WERNER
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — In the first public sign that Gov. Gray Davis' allies view the Republican effort to recall the Democratic governor as a serious threat, a group of labor and religious leaders said Tuesday they were launching a campaign to oppose it.

A longtime senior Davis adviser, Steve Smith, will be taking a leave of absence from his administration job to assist with the campaign, said Carroll Wills, communications director for the California Professional Firefighters, which is a leader of the new effort.

The involvement of Smith, a top adviser during Davis' gubernatorial campaigns and former political director of the California Democratic Party, suggests that Davis is taking the recall seriously after months of playing it down.

But Davis adviser Roger Salazar said the governor's focus "is on doing the work that he's being paid to do."

"I don't think he sees it as any more of a threat than he did when it first popped up," Salazar said.

Most political consultants, however, view the recall much more seriously since the involvement earlier this month of Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista, who donated \$445,000 to the effort and formed a committee to raise money to replace Davis as governor.

Prior to that, the recall was largely seen as an underfunded, longshot bid by conservative activists angered over the unpopular governor's handling of the state's energy crisis and record budget deficit.

Smith, who is secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, was on vacation Tuesday and did not immediately respond to a request for comment left with Wills.

Wills declined to elaborate on Smith's role or give details of the new effort, "Taxpayers Against the Recall," pending a formal launch Wednesday outside a Sacramento fire station.

In addition to Dan Terry, president of the California Professional Firefighters, other co-chairs of the new group are: Rev. Cecil B. Murray of the First AME Church in Los Angeles; Mary Bergen, president of the California Federation of Teachers; Fred Keeley, executive director of the Planning and Conservation League; and Miguel Contreras, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

Proponents said in a press release that they will "voice their concern that the recall

effort seeks to divert critical taxpayer dollars to the re-running of last year's election at a time when state and local budgets are stretched to the breaking point."

Tuesday was also a deadline for counties to report to the California secretary of state the number of signatures turned in by recall supporters as of May 19. Recall backers began collecting signatures two months ago and must collect 897,158 by Sept. 2 to get the recall on the ballot.

"I don't think he sees it as any more of a threat than he did when it first popped up."

— ROGER SALAZAR
Davis adviser

Backers of the original recall efforts, begun this winter before Issa got involved, held a press conference May 5 at which they claimed they were turning in 100,000 signatures to county clerks.

As of midafternoon Tuesday, however, the secretary of state reported receiving only 18,590 signatures — 8,425 from Sacramento County and 10,165 from San Diego County.

Forty-one other counties, including Los Angeles County, reported receiving no signatures. Fifteen counties had not yet reported.

Anti-tax activist Ted Costa and former Assemblyman Howard Kaloogian were the recall leaders involved with the May 5 press conference. Kaloogian did not immediately respond to phone messages Tuesday, while Costa insisted that more than 160,000 signatures had been collected and "are getting turned in in an orderly fashion."

As for the claim made at the press conference that 100,000 signatures were about to be turned in, Costa said, "I didn't say that. Mr. Kaloogian probably did say that and I believe his press release said that."

Meanwhile, Dave Gilliard, the leader of the Issa-backed effort, Rescue California, said paid signature gatherers had collected 200,000 signatures but had not yet turned them in.

Rescue California has raised more than \$500,000 toward a \$2.5 million goal, including the \$445,000 from Issa. All the signatures being collected by the different recall backers will eventually be merged into a single list.

Rare shark spotted off coast

By The Associated Press

DANA POINT — A rare shark was reportedly sighted off the coast Monday.

The encounter would be only the 18th time a megamouth has been seen anywhere in the world since the species was discovered and named in 1976.

A veteran swordfisherman said he saw a megamouth shark as he and three other people were out on a boat searching for thresher sharks two miles off the breakwater.

"From a distance, it looked like a great white. But when we got closer, it was, whoa, that looks like the pictures of megamouths I've seen," said Scott Caldwell, 51, of San Clemente.

Megamouths are docile filter-feeders with wide, blubbery mouths.

Caldwell estimated that the one he saw was 20 feet to 25 feet long and weighed about 5 tons.

Strangely enough, Monday's sighting occurred five miles east of where a 16-foot, 5-inch male megamouth was inadvertently captured by gill-net fishermen in October 1990.

Caldwell said he regrets that he didn't take a picture of his shark sighting.

STATE



Court ruling in favor of police in interrogation case

BY GINA HOLLAND
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A fractured Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that an Oxnard, Calif., police officer did not violate the rights of a gravely wounded farm worker by interrogating him at the hospital without reading him his Miranda rights.

But Oliverio Martinez may still be allowed to collect damages on grounds that his constitutional due process rights were violated by the 1997 hospital room questioning, the court said in sending the case back to California for more consideration.

The ruling means that police officers cannot be sued for failing to read someone their rights, known as Miranda rights, if the person is never prosecuted, the attorney for the sergeant in the case said.

"Police officers are less likely to be second-guessed when they're discharging a very hard job under complicated and high pressure circumstances," Washington lawyer Lawrence Robbins said.

Martinez was shot five times by police and then subjected to a lengthy interrogation as he awaited medical treatment. He was never told

"I am choking. I am dying, please."

— OLIVERIO MARTINEZ
Interrogation transcript

of his rights, and he says a police sergeant kept questioning him even after he said he did not want to answer.

Martinez, who was never charged with a crime, was left blind and paralyzed.

Justice John Paul Stevens compared the interrogation to "an attempt to obtain an involuntary confession from a prisoner by torturous methods."

The man filed a civil rights lawsuit against the city of Oxnard and the police sergeant.

Justice Clarence Thomas, writing for the majority in part of the ruling, said that Sgt. Ben Chavez did not violate Martinez's Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. He was joined by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Antonin Scalia. Justice David Souter agreed in a separate opinion, joined by Stephen Breyer.

An appeals court had ruled that police coerced a confession from Martinez, in violation of his rights, and that his statement could not be used as evidence in his excessive-force

civil trial. Justices disagreed.

Lawyers for the man, who was blinded and paralyzed after being shot in the eye and spine during a scuffle with an officer, claim he was in excruciating pain and begged the officer to leave him alone.

An interview transcript shows that Martinez told the lawman: "I am choking. I am dying, please." The officer replied: "If you are going to die, tell me what happened."

The Supreme Court is expected to take a broad look at Miranda warnings, which begin with, "You have the right to remain silent," in the term that begins this fall. Justices have chosen three cases to review.

Associated Press

This a July 2001 file photo of Oliverio Martinez, who was shot five times by an Oxnard, Calif., police officer after a struggle in Oxnard in 1997. A fractured Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that a police officer did not violate the rights of the gravely wounded Martinez by interrogating him at the hospital without reading him his Miranda rights.



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INTERNATIONAL

Surge of attacks on forces reflect U.S. vulnerability

BY BASSEM MROUE

Associated Press Writer

FALLUJAH, Iraq — Two Iraqis stepped from their car and opened fire early Tuesday, killing two Americans and wounding nine in a city whose people have made clear that U.S. troops are not welcome.

The violence in Fallujah, a hotbed of support for Saddam Hussein, was the latest in three deadly days for the U.S. military in postwar Iraq — further evidence the country remains a perilous place for its American occupiers.

Eight American soldiers have died in Iraq since Sunday — in direct attacks, accidents and explosions. Nearly two dozen have been injured. Hours after the attack in Fallujah, two American military police officers were wounded in rocket-propelled grenade assaults on a Baghdad police station.

"You've always got to be worried," said Sgt. Ariel Saez, 28, a soldier with the 1st Armored Division manning a Baghdad checkpoint. "You hear the gunshots constantly at night. It makes you wonder if it's one of us being put down. We always worry about it."

Whether recent incidents are connected is unclear. The American general commanding troops in Baghdad said the attacks, which he blamed on extremists loyal to Saddam, appeared to be uncoordinated.

"It's very small groups — one or two people — in isolated attacks against our soldiers," said Maj. Gen. Buford Blount III, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, which fought its way to Baghdad and is now trying to keep the peace.

On Tuesday afternoon, six Iraqis were being interrogated about the shooting in Fallujah, a city where Saddam had many strong supporters — and a place where bitterness at the Americans has been particularly aggressive. Two Iraqi attackers were killed in the firefight.

"Who knows what they were thinking when they engaged U.S. soldiers?" said Maj. Randy Martin, a spokesman for the Army's V Corps. "I know we suffered casualties, and the enemy paid a price for those casualties."

Details of the incident, which happened around midnight at a Fallujah traffic checkpoint, some 30 miles west of Baghdad, were hazy.

Initial reports said the Americans were fired upon from many directions, including from a mosque, U.S. military officials said. But townspeople said only two men opened fire, and both were quickly cut down by American forces.

Martin said two vehicles had pulled up to the checkpoint together, and when a search of the first turned up weapons, men in the second vehicle opened fire and threw a grenade. The intensity of the assault "would suggest the possibility" that it had been coordinated by occupants of the two vehicles, said Capt. Tom Bryant, another V Corps spokesman.

U.S. troops captured six of the attackers, U.S. Central Command said in a statement.

Fallujah's 200,000 residents benefited greatly from Saddam's regime, with its young men awarded positions in the Republican Guard or jobs in government-



Ali Haider/Associated Press

A U.S. Army soldier sits on his Bradley Fighting Vehicle in front of the municipal council building in Fallujah, 30 miles west of Baghdad, Iraq on Tuesday, hours after a firefight left two U.S. soldiers and two unidentified attackers dead and nine other American troops injured.

built factories.

Today, while much of Iraq appears to be outwardly accepting the U.S. presence, people in Fallujah is openly angry.

"Every Iraqi is ready to sacrifice his life for resistance," said Safa al-Jubair, a 27-year-old street vendor in Fallujah. "We are 26 million Iraqis and we are all resisting and, God willing, occupation will end."

Protests against the U.S. Army's presence in Fallujah turned violent twice in April when soldiers fired at crowds,

killing 18 Iraqis and wounding at least 78. The United States said people in the crowds fired first, but Iraqis insisted no one shot at the Americans.

On Sunday alone, there were three ambushes against Americans in Baghdad, all along a highway between the city center and the airport, said Lt. Clint Munding, a U.S. Army intelligence officer.

In one, an explosive was placed onto the highway in the path of a Humvee carrying four U.S. soldiers and detonated as

the vehicle drove past. All four soldiers were injured, though two managed to fire on the suspect as he fled and left a trail of blood. The other two soldiers were trapped in the burning Humvee as ammunition it was carrying began to explode. Both were badly injured, and one later died.

Hours later, someone dropped a grenade from an overpass apparently trying to hit a moving Humvee. No one was injured. Also that night, a Humvee driven by three military police officers hit a trip wire, triggering an explosion. There were no injuries.

In the other incidents this week:

■ On Monday, one American soldier was killed and another was wounded when their convoy was ambushed in northern Iraq.

■ Also Monday, one soldier died and three were wounded when their vehicle hit a land mine or a piece of unexploded ordnance in Baghdad.

■ On Sunday, a U.S. soldier was killed and another injured when a munitions dump they were guarding exploded in southern Iraq. The blast was not thought to be a result of hostile action, Central Command said.

■ A U.S. soldier died Tuesday and two were injured in a road collision near the town of Tallil.

■ Also Tuesday, a soldier drowned in an aqueduct in northern Iraq.

In yet another incident, five children swimming in a Baghdad canal were injured Tuesday when a grenade — apparently thrown at American soldiers — flew past them and into the canal, according to a witness. Two of the children were badly injured.

FBI-CIA 'matrix' is key to tracking threats

BY CURT ANDERSON

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The decision to put the country on high alert for a terrorist attack was based largely on a top-secret daily report produced by the FBI and CIA that details every sign of a threat, from intercepted e-mails to satellite photos to clandestine whispers of spies.

Running up to 30 pages, this threat "matrix" has become part of President Bush's morning routine in the fight against terror.

Each day Bush is at the White House, Attorney General John Ashcroft, FBI Director Robert Mueller and CIA Director George Tenet brief the president in the Oval Office about threats facing the United States at home and abroad.

The crux of their briefings is the document formally titled "Terrorist Threats to U.S. Interests Worldwide," or more informally, the "Daily Threat Matrix."

The high level of threat "chatter" collected worldwide and detailed in the Matrix was a key to the Bush administration's decision Tuesday to raise the terror threat level from elevated (yellow) to high (orange). The other main consideration was recent deadly bombings in Saudi Arabia and Morocco that officials say point to a resurgence of activity by the al-Qaida network.

Officials say they expect the alert level to remain high at least through the Memorial Day weekend.

In recent congressional testimony, Mueller said the Matrix is produced "to ensure we are working off a common knowledge base" as officials assess threats from al-Qaida and other groups as well as individual "lone wolf" extremists and violent home-grown radicals.

The document is "a list of every threat directed at the United States in the past 24 hours," Mueller said.

Government officials familiar with the Matrix, who spoke on

condition of anonymity, described it as a daily compendium of a few pages to 30 or more. Each threat is entered in tabular format, with those considered the most severe listed first.

No threat is ignored, and even known hoaxes are reported, officials say. "We put everything in there," one federal law enforcement official said.

Sometimes only pieces of the Matrix get out publicly, leading to a distorted view of reasons behind heightened vigilance for terror, officials say. Last week, some news reports focused on threats on Internet sites — never corroborated or specific — that attacks could be imminent in New York, Washington, Boston and the Eastern coastline.

Officials stressed the Matrix provides a cumulative snapshot that, taken together, gives officials a broad picture of the overall ebb and flow of threats.

Each entry includes the type of source, such as a human informant, intercepted signal or computer e-mail. Precise details are withheld to protect the intelligence source and method, and even these general entries are given in a classified code for an additional layer of security.

Also included are possible targets and which terrorist group might be plotting an attack, if that is known, and some notes about a threat's level of credibility or corroboration. The Matrix also describes possible methods of attack and, perhaps most important, lists what government action has been taken to avert it.

For the FBI, this action could mean obtaining an emergency warrant — Ashcroft sometimes is awakened in the middle of the night for his signature — to set up secret surveillance and tap telephones of suspected terrorists in the United States.

The Homeland Security Department might notify sensitive industrial sites about threats to their installations. The CIA could step up efforts to penetrate foreign groups that might be plotting.



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SPORTS



Chang, Seles, Roddick say 'au revoir' to Roland Garros

BY HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

PARIS — Michael Chang cried at the French Open for the second and last time.

Back in 1989, they were tears of joy after he won the tournament. On Tuesday, a lifetime later, they were tears of sadness after he hit his final shot here.

Chang's farewell to Roland Garros ended with a 7-5, 6-1, 6-1 loss to Fabrice Santoro in the same spot that the American claimed his lone major title.

"It's bittersweet," said Chang, who'll retire after the U.S. Open. "It's disappointing to lose in the first round. But it feels good to be able to play my last match on center court."

Also bidding adieu to the clay-court Grand Slam were No. 6-seeded Andy Roddick and three-time champion Monica Seles — who might not be back. It looked as if defending champion Albert Costa would lose, too, but he constructed the biggest comeback of his career after being a game from defeat.

Roddick was considered capable of contending. He reached his first major semifinal at the Australian Open, and he won a clay-court tournament in Austria last weekend.

Instead, he heads home after the first round, just like last year, beaten by Sargis Sargsian 6-7 (3), 6-1, 6-2, 6-4. "It's weird going from feeling like you're playing pretty well," Roddick said, "to not really knowing what you're doing out there."

He still has time to learn; this was only his 10th Grand Slam event.

Seles, by contrast, has played 40, winning nine. And she never exited in the first round until Tuesday's 6-4, 6-0 disappointment against Nadia Petrova.

Seles, 29, plans to take some time off to see if her injured feet heal. If they don't, she might retire.

"I know I'm in the later stages of my career. I don't have the luxury of taking five-to-six months off. At the same time, I don't want to have surgery," the tournament's 12th-seeded woman said.

Could this be her last French Open? "If I can't practice the level that I want to, yeah, definitely. And if I can, then for sure not," she said, "because this is not the way I would like to leave."

Other seeded losers: No. 13 Elena Dementieva, No. 17 Amanda Coetzer and, among men, No. 18 Agustin Calleri.

Venus Williams, Lindsay Davenport, Jennifer Capriati and Kim Clijsters eliminated overmatched opponents, dropping 13 games total.

Costa dropped that many in the first two sets alone against Sergio Roitman, a slender Argentine with one tour-level match victory — and that came three years ago. Roitman lost in qualifying here, making it into the main draw only when players withdrew.

But he played like a star for nearly two hours Tuesday. With a laserlike forehand, he won the first



Michel Euler/Associated Press

USA's Monica Seles backhands to Russia's Nadia Petrova during their first round match of the French Open tennis tournament at Roland Garros stadium in Paris on Tuesday.

two sets and led 4-1 in the third, then was a game from victory at 5-4. Costa, meanwhile, couldn't seem to control his shots or his temper. He yelled at himself and his coach ("What a disaster!") and drew jeers from the crowd when he smashed his racket in the third set.

But Roitman's right leg — and nerves — began to cramp in the fourth set, and Costa pulled out a 6-7 (3), 2-6, 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 victory, the first time he's won after losing the first two sets.

No. 3 Juan Carlos Ferrero, who lost to Costa in the 2002 final, advanced in straight sets, while No. 1 Lleyton Hewitt and three-time champion Gustavo Kuerten each dropped a set. Tim Henman, the four-time Wimbledon semifinalist, also won and plays Todd Martin next.

Hewitt wasted four match points before defeating Brian Vahaly of the United States 6-4, 6-1, 6-7 (6), 6-3.

Vahaly remembers watching Chang's run to the French Open title.

"He had incredible intensity," said Vahaly, 10 at the time. "Americans didn't play well here then, and it was inspiring to see him."

Chang, 31, no longer has the game that carried him to that championship and three other Grand Slam finals that he lost, including at the 1995 French Open.

"I love getting out there and competing," said Chang, honored in a postmatch ceremony. "I just don't feel that I'm able to sustain it in the way that I have."

He's won one ATP Tour match all year, is ranked 142nd, and he needed a wild-card invitation to get into his 16th straight French Open. He started well but quickly faded against Santoro, a 30-year-old Frenchman on the downside of his career.

"I have so many images in my head from his victory in 1989. It seems so odd to me that he's leaving," said Santoro, who ended a seven-match losing streak.

After his last point at Roland Garros, Chang turned to the ballboys and motioned: He wanted the match balls, which he put in his racket bag. The fans gave Chang a standing ovation for several minutes while he slowly walked to the middle of the court twice to wave goodbye.

How long has he been around? His French Open debut, as a wild-card entry in 1988, ended with a third-round loss to John McEnroe. The next year, Chang became the first U.S. man to win at Roland Garros since Tony Trabert in 1955 and the youngest Grand Slam winner ever.

One reporter wondered Tuesday how Chang has changed since those heady days.

"I'm actually a bit taller and better looking," he said. "You got that, right? You're writing that down?"

YES on S

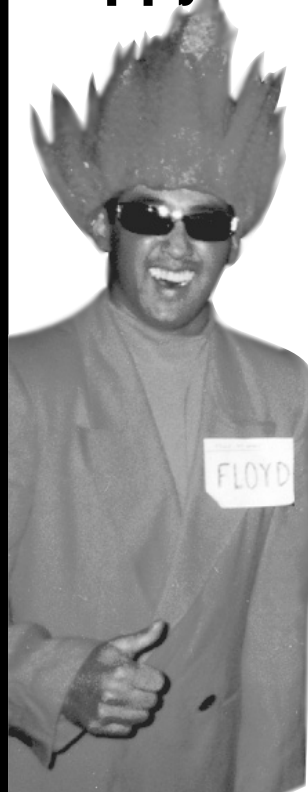
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 - 3 Reckless
 - 4 Thai lady
 - 5 Actor Grant
 - 6 Nervous
 - 7 Sea off
 - 8 Poor
 - 10 Kind of price
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 - 16 Occasionally
 - 18 Bound
 - 21 Distress call
 - 23 Roster
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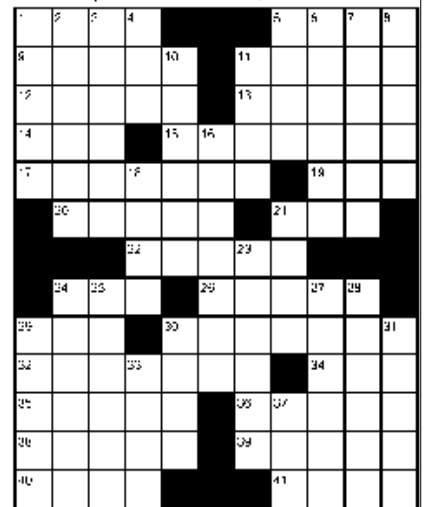
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Announcements

"I SOLD it one day! When I put my futor for sale in the Daily Press, it took me one day to sell it...thanks!" Nina Stewart, Santa Monica.

"THE FIRST day I put my laptop for sale in your paper, I got several offers and sold it that day! Thank you Daily Press!" Jamie Schuler, Santa Monica.

Announcements

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Yard Sales

GARAGE SALE: Hot tubs, retro metal & glass furniture. Hardwood moldings, clothes, etc. Saturday 05/31, 8pm-2pm, 3545 Ashwood Ave.

MOVING SALE!! Major appliances, 2 autos, jacuzzi large terrarium (4'x2'x40"), angle-iron (warehouse type), shelving, office equipment (cross-cut shredder, overhead projector), light fixtures, ceiling fans, furniture, clothes, household items. By appointment only; 5/24 thru 5/30/03. Call (310)674-3664 or (310)613-9852

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Personals

ANYONE KNOW the whereabouts of Roberta "Bobby" Roberts. Have her call Jamie Mura. (949)632-1646

Obituaries

DONNA E. WHITE, long time Santa Monica resident, passed away April 29, 2003. She was 79. Memorial Services will be held Saturday, May 31st, 3pm at The First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the church.

WE ARE THE

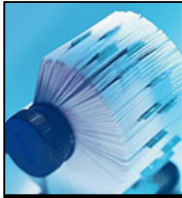
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BACK PAGE



God is in the phone number

By The Associated Press

PINELLAS PARK, Fla. — Dawn Jenkins isn't in the new Jim Carrey comedy "Bruce Almighty," but her phone number is — and that's become a problem.

In the film, Carrey stars as a mortal who receives the powers of God. The character of God tries to reach Carrey's character by repeatedly leaving a phone number on his pager.

But instead of the usual 555 prefix used by most television shows and films, God's number is a common exchange — one too common for Jenkins' liking. It's her cell phone number.

She's been getting about 20 calls per hour, with callers asking for God before hanging up.

"What am I to do?" Jenkins wrote on an Internet forum. Reached by telephone by the St. Petersburg Times, Jenkins declined further comment, saying only she wants to hire an attorney. Officials from Universal Studios did not return telephone calls from the newspaper Monday.

Jenkins isn't alone in her plight. The number on Carrey's character's pager matches the number of a South Carolina woman who declined to give her name, but said she's been "getting aggravated to death" by the incessant calling.

It also matches the number for a call center to a group of five Colorado talk-radio stations. Ron Nickel, senior vice president for the Radio Colorado Network, was worried about what would happen Tuesday, the first regular office workday since the movie's release.

"My receptionist is going to go crazy," Nickel said.

Town's history doesn't add up

By The Associated Press

BIGLERVILLE, Pa. — This small town in central Pennsylvania recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding — 36 years after celebrating its 150th.

Historians looking at courthouse records years ago had apparently confused records of Biglerville with those of the founding of Idaville, a village about six miles north.

As a result they believed Biglerville, sometimes called the Apple Capital of Pennsylvania, was 86 years older than it was.

"The records were talking about a town that was half way between Gettysburg and Carlisle," said longtime Biglerville resident Marion Harbaugh. "Biglerville isn't halfway."

Idaville is.

Harbaugh, who was one of the people in charge of the festivities back in 1967, said she found out about the error six months ago. "It was quite a shock," she said.

A man reunites with fighter jet

By The Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. — As a present, a former World War II pilot got to do something he hadn't done in almost six decades: fly in P-51 Mustang.

Leroy Steiger, wearing his old flight suit, took a 25-

minute flight Sunday in a plane identical to the one he flew over Germany during World War II. The flight was a birthday gift from his family.

"I never thought I would be able to do this again," he said before the flight. "This is the most fun I'm going to have in 58 years."

The P-51 entered the war in 1943 and served as an escort for B-17 and B-24 bombers.

Atlantic City offers \$1,000 slots

By The Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — The cost for the most expensive slot machine tokens in Atlantic City may soon double.

The Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, scheduled to open this summer, has been given temporary approval to offer machines that accept \$1,000 tokens. The most expensive token now in use in Atlantic City is \$500.

The \$1,000 coins are in limited use in Las Vegas but will make their debut in Atlantic City at the Borgata.

"There will be some players that will love to give this machine a shot," said Paul Tjoumakaris, the casino's vice president of slot operations.

Of the casino's 3,640 slot machines, two will accept the \$1,000 tokens, two will accept \$500 tokens, 10 will take \$100 denominations and 16 will accept \$25 coins.

The top payout for the \$1,000 machines is \$1 million.

The Casino Control Commission approved the new tokens in time for the Borgata's scheduled opening in late July. The commission will hear public comment on the slot machine proposal through July 18 before making a final decision.

Not all casino-goers are enthralled with the idea. "That's way out of my league," said Rose Heeghan, 72, of Margate. "I don't even play \$1 slots."

DID YOU KNOW?: Music was sent down a telephone line for the first time in 1876, the year the phone was invented.



Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Charlie Chaplin and Bugsy Siegel

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UCLA Extension

Saturday, May 31

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With Lisa Firestone, Ph.D. and Joyce Catlett, M.A.
The Glendon Association, Santa Barbara, CA

Are you pursuing your life as a fully vital human being, or are you unintentionally living someone else's prescription for your life? Are your actions based on what you really feel and believe or on negative programming from your past? This workshop can help you counter negative thinking and live free from imagined limitations. Through videotapes, interactive discussions, and exercises, Dr. Firestone and Ms. Catlett, coauthors of *Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice* will challenge your customary ways of thinking about yourself, your relationships, and your career, and will suggest actions you can take to expand your boundaries and achieve more fulfillment in life.

Join these presenters as they explore such important questions as:

- How do guilt and shame affect us in our everyday lives? How do negative thoughts about ourselves keep unnecessary feelings of shame and guilt alive in us? How can we successfully overcome these barriers to self-realization?
- How do destructive thoughts and attitudes undermine our efforts to achieve our full potential in our work lives?
- How does the inner voice interfere with intimacy and closeness in our relationships?
- How can people challenge the destructive thoughts or voices that influence addictive behavior and break free of these patterns?
- How can we deal effectively with negative thinking that leads to a destructive spiral of depression and hopelessness?

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