

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5
07, 21, 27, 28, 35

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 5, 5, 9
Evening picks: 1, 4, 2

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 02, Lucky Star
2nd Place: 05, California Classic
3rd Place: 06, Whirl Win
Race Time: 1:43.80



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

In the midst of the national debate over fire codes in the wake of the February Warwick, R.I., nightclub disaster, fire safety consultant Philip R. Sherman told a Providence Journal reporter that toughening the codes was not an automatic cure because the codes will still be ignored due to variations in people's intelligence: "Clearly we have to account for dumb things (when we write the codes). Is wrapping the room in foam plastic the level of dumbness we want to account for? Or will somebody do something (even) dumber?"

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"There is something about a closet that makes a skeleton restless"

— Unknown

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Deficit deal: Dirty parks, slower bureaucracy

(Editor's note: This is the second article in an ongoing series detailing the Santa Monica City Council's special budget sessions, which were held this week at City Hall.)

BY JOHN WOOD
Daily Press Staff Writer

Santa Monicans will have to spend more time waiting in line at the planning department, put up with more litter in neighborhood parks and maybe even do without the local symphony if next year's proposed budget is adopted.

The last six of 15 City Hall departments made presentations to the Santa Monica City Council on Wednesday, outlining roughly \$1.5 million in proposed cuts to

help lift the city out of next year's \$16.1 million budget deficit.

"We knew coming into this we were going to have a severe, serious challenge to meet come June 17th," Mayor Richard Bloom said Wednesday. "And going through this process for two days and hearing department by department just where the cuts will be and how bad things really are is depressing."

Each department, except fire and police, was asked to come up with a five percent cut in their budget. The first 9 departments proposed nearly \$4 million in cuts on Tuesday.

All told, the city wants to slash \$5.4 million from its operating budget and \$1.6 million from capital improvements (see related story), raise an additional \$5.2

million in revenues and save \$3.9 million through various policy changes, said Mike Dennis, the city's finance director.

The City Council will adopt a formal budget on June 17.

Among the proposed cuts Tuesday was \$584,000 from the

planning department, which is expected to slow the time it takes to push a permit through City Hall by seven percent, among other things.

Suzanne Frick, planning department director, said the cuts are coming at a time when services and

See DEFICIT, page 8

Departments detail proposed cuts

BY JOHN WOOD
Daily Press Staff Writer

Managers at City Hall finished their proposals Wednesday night on how to help plug the city's \$16.1 million deficit.

All departments except fire and police had to reduce operational costs by 5 percent.

The proposals, which were made to the City Council earlier this week, mean the elimination of 31 jobs and the scaling back of several programs.

Here are the department heads' suggestions:

■ The planning department said it could trim \$584,000 from its \$14.2 million budget by cutting one full-time position and a

vacant part-time maintenance position, as well as leaving three other positions vacant.

■ Community and cultural services proposed shaving \$1 million from its \$29 million budget. Two part-time workers will be laid off and nine vacant positions will be eliminated, most of them part-time. Park maintenance will be diminished and some community programs will be scaled back.

■ The library, which commands a \$6.5 million budget, proposed cutting \$517,000, largely because of the Main Library's closure. About eight library workers will be laid off

See CITY HALL, page 9

Stumping



Alex Cantarero/Daily Press

Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman campaigns for the Democratic nomination for president at Pacific Palisades Park on Thursday.

Main Street merchant faces federal charges

Furniture stripper allegedly dumped toxic chemicals into sewer

BY JOHN WOOD
Daily Press Staff Writer

Criminal charges were filed against the owner of a Santa Monica furniture-stripping shop Wednesday for allegedly dumping toxic chemicals into the sewer.

The action followed an FBI investigation launched when a sewer worker fell into cardiac arrest and suffered third-degree burns after crawling through methylene chloride, a chemical commonly used to remove paint.

Michael Miller, 40, owner of Stripper Herk Inc., 2015 1/2 Main Street, faces two counts of dumping toxic chemicals and one count of illegally storing hazardous

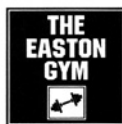
waste barrels. If convicted on all three counts, Miller faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in federal prison.

Miller, who lives in Playa Del Rey, admitted responsibility for the leak but said it was a mistake. He said the makeshift plug that sealed the drain on the floor of his workshop deteriorated and he didn't know about it until investigators tested the seal after the sewer worker was injured.

Once the problem surfaced, Miller cemented shut the drain at Stripper Herk and lined the work areas with galvanized steel to better retain the chemical runoff. He also had 20 unmarked barrels of the chemical hauled off his property, something he delayed doing because it costs about \$500 per barrel, he said.

"I've complied and over-com-

See MERCHANT, page 8



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HOROSCOPE

Be a wild thing tonight, Gemini



JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

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

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, May 30, 2003:

You have a way of making the best out of difficult situations. Loosen up and make firm decisions. You might not always be comfortable with what comes up. Take in an overview. Learn to look for answers and solutions. Don't hesitate to hop on the computer or take a class to increase your expertise. Detach and learn from different situations. If single, you'll find that you have many admirers. Many of you will network your way into a new circle of friends and a new relationship. If attached, you will grow in new ways together. Sometimes your sweetie might find you too me-oriented. Work on your listening skills. GEMINI understands you.

♊ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ You're a live wire, as are your friends. Get in weekend mode. You might not be sure about a friendship, but pressuring this person won't help. Return calls with an eye to clearing your desk. You might be surprised by what you accomplish. Tonight: Favorite spot, favorite people.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★ Just when you thought you were in the clear, a boss stages a major switch. Instead of wondering what gives, stay open and centered. You need to make money, and this might look like catering to this person. Don't lose sight of the big picture. Tonight: Your treat.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You beam; others respond. Think through a change more carefully that involves someone at a distance. You might not be sure what to do to make someone more comfortable, especially as this person might be bent on creating an uproar. Tonight: Be yourself. Be a wild thing.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ Take your time, especially if you don't feel up to snuff. You might want to think through a decision more carefully that involves a partnership. This person could be unusually erratic. Know what you want. Know what you need. Tonight: Take a timeout.

♊ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ You accomplish more than you thought possible and feel as if anything is possible. If someone acts up, so be it. You cannot change this person, and you are smart enough not to try. Tonight: Where your friends are.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ If you lean back, you'll suddenly realize just how much you need to accomplish, whether you want to do it or not. Dig right in if you have any hope for a fun, rewarding weekend. Others appear to be in control. Look to more efficient ways of handling your work. Tonight: Be creative.

♏ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You might not have the control you need or want right now. A child or loved one acts up in an unanticipated manner. You can only contain someone up to a certain point. Be realistic. Be instinctive in your response, and you could be delighted by what someone else does. Tonight: Split as fast as you can!

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ A partner has an odd way of testing your limits. You know what you want, but can you convince someone else without turning yourself inside out? Be careful, because on some level you will have to pay the piper. Unexpected developments surround your home life. Tonight: Go along with another's request.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Defer to others and see what might be put on your plate. You might not be sure at first, but others will reveal much more than you think. Go with the flow, carefully seeking answers. Unexpected actions might cause you to sit back and think. Tonight: Accept a wild invitation.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Though others charge through their work, you get more done than you originally anticipated. You complete what others don't. No wonder you have the reputation as the workhorse of the zodiac! Still, you might take a wild risk or expenditure. Tonight: Put your feet up.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Your unpredictability has a way of triggering others around you. Think in terms of gaining and moving forward. A loved one might feel a bit intimidated by your behavior. Help this person understand you better. Tonight: Put on your dancing shoes.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ You could be confused by a family member. Perhaps you might not want to see something and would prefer to look in another direction. Be open with this person. Discuss an agreement or financial matter that revolves around your home life. Tonight: Buy a new CD on the way home.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Concerts on tap for district students

By Daily Press staff

Student musicians from the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District will present two concerts to celebrate the end of the school year.

First is Jazz Fest 2003 on June 6. The concert will feature the Malibu High School Jazz Ensemble, the John Adams Middle School Jazz Ensemble, the Lincoln Middle School Jazz Ensemble, the SAMOHI Serenaders and Bluenotes (jazz band and jazz choir).

The show begins at 7 p.m. in Barnum Hall at Santa Monica High School, 601 Pico Blvd.

On Saturday, June 7, the 2003 Pops Concert will feature Samohi concert bands and seniors in their final concert. The show begins at 1 p.m. at Barnum Hall.

Tickets for both concerts are \$5 in advance (\$3 for students) and \$7 at the door.

For more information, call 310-395-3204 ext. 401 or hammer@smmusd.org

'Festival of Music' set for Sunday

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica College Concert Chorale and the First United Methodist Church Chancel Choir will present "A Festival of Music" at 7:30 p.m., on Sunday, June 1.

The program will feature "Songs of Praise," by composer Llew Mathews. It is a unique piece that uses a jazz trio along with large choir and orchestra. The piece was first commissioned by the church and SMC in 1985.

Also on the program is "Missa Brevis" by Zoltan Kodaly and "Serenade to Music" by Vaughan Williams. Featured soloists will be soprano Barbara Smith, alto Allison Waterworth, tenor Drew Hol and bass William Trabold.

The combined choirs will be under the direction of SMC music professor James E. Smith.

Tickets are \$15 general admission and \$10 for students and senior citizens. For tickets and information, call (310) 393-8258 or (310) 434-4323. The concert will take place at the First United Methodist Church, 1008 11th St.

'Concert in the Park' to feature eclectic program

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica College Emeritus College Band will present "A Concert in the Park" on Friday, June 13 at the SMC Concert Hall, 1900 Pico Blvd.

The 60-member concert band, part of SMC's acclaimed Emeritus College for older adults, is under the baton of Wallace Umber and will feature an eclectic program of classical, jazz and more.

On the program will be a wide range of pieces, including Webb's MacArthur Park, Sousa's Hail to the spirit of liberty and Bennett's Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Admission and parking are free and the concert starts at 7:30 p.m.

For further information, call (310) 434-4306 or (310) 474-5271.



Look for a mixture of slowly fading and slowly building SW swells to go along with a touch more NW wind swell. Northern L.A. spots see the SW swell for waist-to-chest-high surf at many spots and some inconsistent shoulder-high sets at standout SW. South Bay spots see mainly NW wind swell with 2-foot-to-3-foot surf at many breaks and some sets to chest-high-plus at best combo spot

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

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	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
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Check out the responses to the question
of the week on page 4.

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OPINION

The Q Line

Readers sound off on Pico violence problem

Last week, Q-line asked:

“What can be done, if anything, to end the cycle of violence and bring peace to the Pico neighborhood?”

Here are your responses:

■ “Get rid of the low-income housing projects and all of the crime will dissipate.”

■ “I think what is necessary to end the cycle of violence and bring peace to the Pico neighborhood is to keep the SWAT team, which was presented in your newspaper last week, permanently in place. Perhaps foot patrols, machine guns? The entire situation with a SWAT team in place permanently is probably going to be the only thing that is going to help this neighborhood.”

■ “Unfortunately crime is a boon to big business. If one thinks not just consider the amount of people who would be out of work if it were not for crime and counter-crime prevention activities and devices. This would include the entire judicial bureaucracy. Still murder is terrible. The gangmembers who are aware of the consequences of their actions continue their deadly game, even when innocent people are often caught between their deadly crossfire. It has a great deal to do with retaliation and macho. Also, jail has become a way of life with most gangs and crime gives gangmembers the opportunity to reunite with gangmembers behind bars where they continue their gang life. A jailer mentioned that fact to me. Perhaps reinstating the military draft would ease the tension. If you are 18 and not in college, you should be in the military for two years. Two years in the military will take the wind out of his sails. Trust me I have been there.”

■ “That’s a stupid question! Of course we know the answer to that. Get rid of all illegal aliens. They bring the crime to this country.”

■ “On the east coast when a family member is involved in violent crime or any kind of illegal activity, that person is evicted from the public housing. That’s how they should do it out here.”

■ “Why don’t they go back to having foot patrols like New York? Their crime rate is a lot less than ours. I think that would work in the Pico neighborhood.”

■ “Send the military in.”

■ “Let me get this straight. The police have a problem in the Pico neighborhood and they can’t solve it. They handle this problem the same way they handle the homeless. Don’t tell me they don’t have the manpower. The police can round up a lot of personnel when the janitors marched on Third Street. I’m sure they can increase the police presence in the Pico area. Maybe they need a curfew. I don’t think the police have done enough to protect the residents of that area.”

■ “This would not happen on the other side of Wilshire. Again, this would not happen on the other side of Wilshire.

Put this is black and white.”

■ “To stop violence you can hire the sheriff’s department, since the Santa Monica Police fails to do drug work. Maybe the city could promote police presence.”

■ “First of all, we need representation from the Pico neighborhood on the City Council. Time after time, issue after issue, the City Council is unresponsive to the concerns of the residents of Santa Monica.”

■ “The city needs to recognize that the problem exists first of all. Secondly, they need to devote the police social service resources to residents of the area. Currently one-third of police time is spent on drunk, homeless and millions are spent on services to transients. Little goes to Pico and this must change. Thirdly, they need to fix the broken windows. Civic improvement dollars should focus on Pico. For example, Cloverfield both north and south of the Pico neighborhood were beautified, yet between Pico and the freeway not one street tree exists. The city policy must change. Those convicted of violent crime, especially those with firearms should be evicted. The city attorney should help with this. Currently, this does not happen. CCSM should be prevented from an over-concentration of low income-only housing and execute criminal checks.”

■ “I’m a retired Army sergeant and I live on 18th and Michigan. I believe that the parents know a lot more about what’s going on than anyone else in that neighborhood. They need to step forward and turn in these trouble makers. That college should not cancel some trade-type schooling. It will give them something to do. Not a lot of them are college-bound people. I still believe it’s the parents that could help. That’s how it was when I was a kid. I personally know a mother in the area that had her own son’s probation violated because he was hanging around this gang. He went back to jail. My point is that this mother loves her son so much that she wants him away with that behavior.”

■ “Children learn by examples set and behavior that is condoned in our society. Everything from the leadership of this country that chooses war over diplomacy to all the movies, TV, Play Stations and video games that promote violence as cool and sexy and the answer to problems. I guess we all have to change.”

■ “What they need in the Pico neighborhood is more expensive police presence. Like what was used to control drug and other criminal activity in Palisades Park. Also better rewards and protection for law-abiding citizens who report disturbances and criminal activity.”

REAL ESTATE



Landlord responsibilities in Santa Monica detailed



DAYS ON THE MARKET

By Jodi Summers

Rent control in Santa Monica applies to the 28,000-plus properties currently occupied by tenants who signed leases between April 10, 1979 and Jan. 1, 1999.

Do you know the legalities of how landlords should treat tenants and maximize their income property potential? Tracey Condon, public information manager for the Santa Monica Rent Control Board answered questions recently about landlord/tenant relationships.

Q: How does the city decide how much to raise rents?

A: "Every year the Rent Control Board authorizes a city-wide increase, called the general adjustment. The general adjustment is based on a study which calculates the different components of where every rent dollar goes. The board looks at the cost changes of these components and comes up with a general adjustment. In large part, rent increases reflect the consumer price index. Landlords can reset the rent at market rate when a tenant leaves. That rent can be increased on an annual basis once it is registered with the board."

Q: When does a landlord raise rents on rent-controlled units?

A: "Every September. The board holds public hearings in May and in June announces that year's rent increase. The general adjustment is automatically added to all of the registered units in our database, and that becomes the maximum allowable rent a landlord may charge for that controlled rental unit. In some cases, certain surcharges may be added."

Q: Can a new owner evict a tenant to live at the property?

A: "If there is no like unit vacant, an owner can evict tenants from one unit for the purpose of owner occupancy. They need to pay relocation benefits determined by the city's relocation ordinance. (FYI — a three-bedroom unit relocation fee can range from \$5,700 to \$6,950, depending.) If there are multiple units of the same size, the owner must evict the tenant who moved in most recently."

Q: Are there ways to legally evict a tenant other than the owner moving into the unit?

A: "There are nine very specific reasons called the 'Just Causes For Eviction' — they're listed in Section 1806 of the Rent Control Law. 'Just Causes' can include owner occupancy, violating the

"If there is no like unit vacant, an owner can evict tenants from one unit for the purpose of owner occupancy.

They need to pay relocation benefits determined by the city's relocation ordinance."

rental agreement, failing to pay rent, causing a nuisance, using the rental unit for illegal purposes... Because of the Unlawful Detainer Act, the tenant is entitled to some notice before eviction proceedings begin. If tenant does not correct the problem, the owner can go to court and have a judge determine whether there is just cause for eviction."

Q: How long does the eviction process take?

A: "If the tenant is fighting the eviction, it depends upon how long it takes for the court to put the eviction proceedings on their calendar. An eviction attorney can give you a better idea on that time frame."

Q: Where do you get paperwork for an eviction proceeding?

A: "Owners can get eviction forms from a stationery store or one of the apartment owners' associations in Santa Monica."

Q: Can you relocate tenants to get access to a unit?

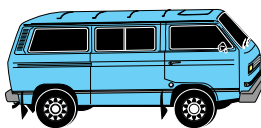
A: "In L.A., a landlord could evict a tenant if they were going to put more than \$10,000 into improvements into a unit. That's never been the case in Santa Monica. If an owner wants to rehab a building, they are required to provide relocation benefits while the work is being done. Then, upon completion, the tenant can come back to their unit at the original controlled amount. If the improvements are considered to be a 'necessary and reasonable' the landlord can petition for a rent increase."

For more information contact the Santa Monica Rent Control Board at Room 202, City Hall, 1685 Main Street, (310) 458-8751 or at www.santa-monica.org/rentcontrol.

(Jodi Summers is a real estate agent at Boardwalk Realty. If you have local real estate questions or opinions you'd like to share, e-mail them to her at jodis@boardwalkrealty.com or call (310) 309.4219.)

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OPINION

LETTERS

\$19 a month is small price to pay**Editor:**

You may think you can't afford Measure S — a parcel tax of approximately \$19 dollars a month that will prevent laying off teachers, librarians and school nurses.

If you're a tenant, like me, in a multi-unit property, your share would be even less (if pass-through is allowed by the Rent Control Board). You can even tell yourself that your \$19 to help subsidize the shortfall will not make a difference in the level of education or jobs available.

When you're done rationalizing saving the \$20 bill in your pocket, ask yourself what Santa Monica and Malibu will gain by passing Measure S on June 3. That \$19 each month will provide a clean and positive learning environment for our city's children and teenagers.

Maintaining the high level of education that SMMUSD is known for helps ensure a strong real estate market and well-kept rental units, attracts responsible families concerned about education and responsible families maintain the fabric of a community that secures a capable workforce.

This circle can be completed in many ways. My family moved here when I was a teenager. My father chose to settle in Santa Monica because of the reputation of SMMUSD. My mother was an elementary school teacher who taught in public schools. I grew up in a family that knew the value of a good public school education. I am a product of the SMMUSD school system. Lincoln Jr. High and Santa Monica High taught me many things, most of all how important good schools are.

I have lived in other cities but I came back to settle in Santa Monica. I have lived here for over 20 years and have worked for the city for 14 years. Many of my fellow employees have children in school here. Children are our future. Access to quality public education acts as a cornerstone of a strong community and a necessity for any society.

Vote yes on Measure S. Help ensure the quality education SMMUSD is known for.

Lauralee Asch

*Crime prevention coordinator and president
Coalition of Santa Monica city employees*

Residents can't afford to veto Measure S**Editor:**

We in the business community are the ultimate beneficiaries of a quality education for our local students. Without a high caliber scholastic infrastructure to educate and nourish our children, we would not have the future business leaders we need.

Because of a lack of leadership in Sacramento, we have fallen from the proverbial frying pan into the fire. Who among us is unaware of the current almost \$40 billion

state deficit? By abdicating his responsibility to his most important constituency, namely our children, Gov. Davis has left us with two alternatives:

1. The ostrich option of allowing the \$13 million funding shortfall to decimate our local schools and cause the loss of 91 teaching positions and a dramatic increase in class size or;

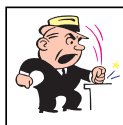
2. The reality option of passing a reasonable and modest school funding measure that would be equitably shared by both businesses and residents alike.

We do not have the luxury of playing the "blame game." The political chips will fall where they may and the voters will eventually hold those accountable to task. We, the citizens, are the guardians of our children and must fill the leadership vacuum that has been left us by passing this school funding measure.

Even if passed, Measure S will only make up for half the annual \$13 million in state cuts. There will still be significant pain.

Measure S is right for the right reasons. Even if we put aside any altruistic considerations, there are ample pragmatic reasons why we should support Measure S.

See LETTERS, page 7

**Politicians refuse to choose between agendas and schools**

**MY
WRITE**
By Bill Bauer

I just received a letter dated May 2003 from Santa Monica renters for Renters' Rights signed by SMRR co chairs Denny Zane and co-chair emeritus Nancy Greenstein.

"Measure S is the only hope of saving our schools," it said.

Being that the powerful renters' rights organization controls virtually every aspect of political life here in Santa Monica — including five of seven city council seats and most school board seats — this was a stunning admission.

They were unequivocally saying that the SMRR-controlled Santa Monica City Council will NOT provide more financial support for our schools.

The problem is that just isn't true.

The fact that the letter did not mention rent increases, especially for tenants in smaller buildings, also shows how SMRR's loyalty to its renter base has been compromised by political ambition.

As with almost everything in Santa

Monica, SMRR also controls the "yes" campaign that has been claiming that those against "S" are against our schools, oppose education and are "sacrificing children."

Unfortunately, this is another white lie. We all want to save our schools. Measure S is strictly about who is going to pay.

Will the schools be saved on the shoulders of taxpayers already being squeezed from all sides? Or, will they be saved through the grace of the cities of Santa Monica and Malibu with their combined \$400 million-plus budgets?

I wouldn't mind being taxed if this were the last resort. But here it's always the first resort preceding prudent spending, fiscal accountability and finding other funding sources.

SMRR knows that if S passes, its agenda and the City of Santa Monica are off the hook.

But, if S loses, does anyone think the Santa Monica and Malibu city councils won't dig deep for \$8 million or \$10 million to bail out the district? After all, we're talking less than 3 percent of their budgets.

You betcha' they will because everyone knows that refusing to support our schools

is political suicide for any elected official here or in Malibu.

SMRR politicians don't want to choose between diverting some of the tens of millions of dollars for affordable housing and services for homeless transients to the schools.

They don't want to cut millions allocated for maintaining the mostly unused Civic Auditorium and their generous subsidies for the Santa Monica Pier and downtown Bayside organizations and reprioritize for education.

They'd rather fritter away millions on plans, studies and community relations for the Civic Center redevelopment, a \$72 million library and parking garage, traffic calming schemes, more parking garages, pier ramps, failed ATM ordinances and other wretched excesses than support our kids.

Their campaign propaganda says, "You must vote 'yes,'" because they're protecting their turf.

Lies and distortion is SMRR's stock and trade. So add, "more taxes are the only way to save our schools" to your "Top 10" list of outrageous SMRR myths.

But the scare tactics play well and hysterical parents and PTA types are swallowing the bait hook, line and sinker. It's

too bad school supporters didn't press harder earlier this year after 1,000 parents and children paraded in front of a disinterested and non-committal City Council.

You can bet the SMRRs controlling the Save our Schools movement slammed on the brakes and fast-talked parents and school supporters into gambling on a "let's tax everyone, instead" strategy rather than demanding the city meet its responsibility.

Mayor Richard Bloom, also a SMRR, sent out hundreds of letters last week asking for donations for a pre-Fourth of July fireworks display at Santa Monica College. Too bad Richard and SMRR aren't expending the same energy on securing donations for education.

We're all feeling the squeeze. Politicians must stop looking at us as the golden goose for personal agendas or face being voted out of power.

The cities have the resources and they must do what we elected them to do.

So, listen carefully: Stop making threats, stop lying, stop passing the buck. Get a grip or get out of town.

(Bill Bauer is a longtime Santa Monica resident and a freelance writer.)

OPINION



LETTERS

LETTERS, from page 6

Regardless of whether or not we personally have children in the Santa Monica Malibu School District, we are all stake-holders.

Good schools are a magnet that draw well-educated families to the area. There is a direct correlation between the quality of schools and real estate values. Local parents are not forced to send their children to private schools as they are in other areas.

There is also an incentive for businesses to locate and stay here and they have an edge in attracting good employees when local schools are better than average. Lastly as Santa Monica Police Chief Jim Butts has emphasized, there is a definite connection between good schools and safe neighborhoods.

Measure S is an investment in our children's future we cannot afford to pass up. Please join me in doing the right thing and voting yes next Tuesday.

Dr. Michael E. Gruning
Chairman-elect
Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce

Teachers, Davis responsible for situation

Editor:

Thank you Dr. Escare for putting out all the facts and data surrounding the Measure S debate. Finally someone has given Santa Monicans an "objective and dispassionate assessment of the data."

Clearly it is not the fault of our local school district based on the data presented. As Dr. Escare points out in his commentary, "Tragically, California's budgetary fiasco and the resulting devastating impact on public schools funding threatens our district's successes and accomplishments."

Does anyone else find it interesting that Dr. Escare seems to completely ignore the connection between those who campaigned and voted to re-elect the "honorable" Gov. Davis and our current problems?

Dr. Escare gives no data as to how much money the California Teacher's Association spent to re-elect the very man who is responsible for most of California's current financial shortfalls based on his promises (and their assumptions) about schools being his top priority.

He doesn't mention how much taxpayer money is wasted on countless teacher-lobbyists that fly up to Sacramento 11 months out of the year to meet and "strategize." He doesn't mention how, just recently, the union arm-twisted the Gov., in order to force him to back-peddle on his proposed cuts to California's teachers.

I think data of this nature is also important for the debate, Dr. Escare, especially when the property owners of Santa Monica are asked to add yet another tax to their yearly bill.

Do the teachers have any culpability in the state of our schools? Or, are teacher (and the unions that lobby for them) simply innocent bystanders of this "fiscal drive-by?"

How about taking responsibility for re-electing Gray? How about the teachers pitch in and work through their annual two-month summer vacations and donate that money to our schools (I would, but like most working people I only get two weeks vacation per year)? How about taking a pay cut until we get back on our feet?

Okay, before all you teachers get your paper and pencils out and start to tell me that I don't know what I'm taking about and that you work hard all year long and that you are underpaid and that you just want what's best for "the children" — take a deep breath...hold...exhale.

I know it's not PC to question the motives of our teachers. But I do know what I'm taking about because one of my parents has been an educator for more than 40 years. I've seen it all and heard it all.

You re-elected Gray and now he's screwing over you and all the rest of us. You made your bed and now California's schools and taxpayers have to lay in it! Nice.

Tony Street
Santa Monica

Bus drivers shouldn't sell passes

Editor:

As a person who attended the emotion-laden May 22 MTA meeting, I believe your article neglected a major feature of the new fare plan. It is the one-day, \$3 pass meant to replace the 25-cent transfer.

What makes the \$3 pass so notable, besides its cost, is that MTA officials said that they will be sold by bus drivers. If drivers are focused on selling passes, the "rapid" in "rapid transit" will vanish faster than the old, trusty transfer.

Joanne Gamlin
Santa Monica

Recommendations for Community Corp.

Editor:

In response to Joan Ling, executive director of Community Corp., of Santa Monica letter, where she said apartments don't produce gang violence.

That is a lie because I have witnessed and publicly complained to CCSM that it is CCSM that has instigated gang members to commit violence at CCSM buildings. I have witnessed CCSM rat on CCSM tenants to gang members. CCSM would tell the violent gang members which tenants were cooperating with CCSM to end their drug

dealing.

At times, CCSM has told tenants that were crime victims by gang member tenants to move out of my building. It was only after the victim's family insisted to CCSM that CCSM not force them as victims to move and instead evict the twice arrested CCSM tenants. CCSM told the victims that they were being very unreasonable, like another trouble-making tenant named Pro Se

Massive and repeated written complaints by numerous tenants sent to CCSM Ling, have been ignored. Ling's head-in-the-sand attitude toward the criminal activity that occurs in and around many of the city's low income projects does nothing to make them safer and further endangers tenant and neighbor alike.

Requests by me to CCSM to report all crimes to the police and fire department have always been ignored by CCSM.

Numerous written requests by many CCSM tenants Ling to fix broken security gates and for CCSM to cease all CCSM employee activities that encourage criminal activities have been ignored Ling.

For example, without providing the required written 24-hour notice, a CCSM-hired person entered a CCSM tenant's apartment to replace a toilet and instead attempted to rape and strangle to death Maria.

Since the May 1, 1998 grand opening of my new building, I have been a tenant in a very low-income CCSM building. I've seen for myself the criminal and anti-social behavior perpetrated by some of my fellow tenants and their visitors.

Ling knows that since 1998, the Santa Monica Police Department has compiled several hundred pages of crime incidents. Most of the crimes (hate crimes, attempted murder, an attempt to blow up the building, 22 arsons, gun being put to the children heads) have gone unreported by the owner and by the tenants. The SWAT team has been at my building a couple of times. Mr. Moncrief, CCSM and the City Council refuses to admit that the official HUD Crossfire Report, which says massive criminal activity comes with residents of publicly funded low income housing.

Ling needs to get out of the spin zone when she speaks or writes. Ling doesn't live in a high crime CCSM building. Ling is a homeowner who makes \$94,000 a year or more in income.

I recommend that CCSM criminal background checks on all people that CCSM contracts to do work in CCSM tenant's apartments.

I recommend that CCSM charge the 150 prospective tenants it places a \$5 fee for a criminal background checks as part of the tenant evaluation process. A suggestion that has been dismissed by Ling as "unnecessary and cumbersome."

I recommend that CCSM sell their units to their tenants without delay and with a deed restriction that the tenant would lose their home if they or their guests commit crimes.

Pro Se
Santa Monica

Nothing funny about Alzheimer's

Editor:

While I have always enjoyed reading News of the Weird and feel putting the blurbs on the front page was a truly ingenious move, I feel (Thursday's) blurb about the Alzheimer's patients was in poor taste.

It is neither weird nor funny to hear of patients who have uncontrollably lost their memory, etc., hitting each other and not remembering. Alzheimer's is a truly serious and debilitating disease. Please pass these comments on to your News of the Weird coordinator and Chuck Shepard.

Libby Kozaczek
Santa Monica

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LOCAL

City budget cuts threaten parks and the symphony

DEFICIT, from page 1

enforcement of building code violations are already suffering. "In many respects, the service we give is unacceptable," Frick said. "We're not satisfied with the progress we're making at all."

Local architect David Hibbert echoed that complaint.

The problem, he said, is a conflict of wills between anti-growth legislation passed by the City Council and the simultaneous desire by councilmembers to promote independent businesses.

"There's no other city that I've ever worked in that compares to it," he said. "I get calls all the time from people saying, 'I've been in building and safety plan check for seven months and I don't know what to do.' These are mom and pop (businesses)."

Also on the chopping block Wednesday was more than \$1 million from the community and cultural services department, which commands a \$29 million budget.

Park maintenance will suffer as a result of the cuts, said Barbara Stinchfield, director of community and cultural services. Barbecue grills and picnic tables will not be replaced as quickly, resurfacing of tennis and basketball courts will be delayed and weeding and litter removal will be reduced, she said.

In addition, several recreation programs offered by the

city will be scaled back and two youth programs will be eliminated entirely.

And things will only get worse in 2004-2005, Stinchfield added.

"I want to call out for an anesthetic," Councilman Kevin McKeown said after Stinchfield's presentation. "These are the most painful cuts I've heard."

Stinchfield's department also oversees grants to social services and non-profits throughout the city. The Santa Monica Symphony Association, which has put on free concerts at the Civic Auditorium for 58 years, is among those groups.

Instead of receiving \$29,000, as it has in years past, the proposed budget calls for a symphony grant of \$12,500.

Because staging the symphony for each four-show season costs roughly \$115,000, the reduced funding puts the symphony's future in danger, said David Bendett, president of the symphony association's board.

Bendett said the event would be able to survive if the association receives only the five percent cut in funding it was anticipating. Instead, officials proposed a 56 percent reduction — though other groups were cut by a smaller percentage and a few were given additional funds.

Stinchfield defended the proposed cuts, saying the symphony has received more money than other groups in

its funding bracket because it is a valuable resource to the community. It received less than the year before because of the council's direction to open the grant applications to new agencies, Stinchfield added.

Two new agencies qualified for \$5,500 grants in 2003-2004. The overall value of grants Stinchfield's department hands out was reduced by five percent to \$174,000, which was split between 10 agencies for next year.

"When you only have a limited amount to hand out, you look at it a number of different ways to receive the most equity that you can," Stinchfield said. "The symphony is in the smallest group in terms of the size of the budget. And the overall rationale, which was an objective rationale, was to give the larger agencies larger dollar amounts and the smaller agencies got smaller dollar amounts."

"They're not easy decisions. It was excruciating."

Bendett called the cuts to the symphony unfair and said supporters will turn out to voice their concerns at the June 17 budget meeting at City Hall.

Some councilmembers are already on their side.

"It's incredible because there doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to (the grants)," Councilman Bob Holbrook said. "This is a murky thing."

"If it is left the way it is, (the symphony) will probably pack it in."

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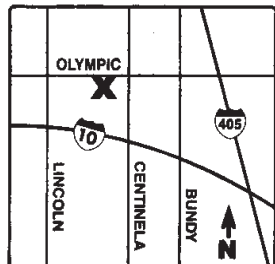
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Man faces 15 years in jail for dumping toxic chemical

MERCHANT, from page 1

plied," he said. "I won't dispute the drain did leak. It did and that's a violation. But to put me in jail for a leaky drain seems kind of stupid."

Miller also questioned the reaction of sewer worker Vincente Valenzuela, who was treated for third-degree burns covering 60 percent of his body after crawling through methylene chloride in the 36-inch sewer. Miller said the methylene chloride he uses in his shop is diluted with water and relatively safe.

Stripper Herk's five full-time employees, some of whom have worked with Miller for more than 20 years, said Wednesday that even though they work directly with the chemical, they have never had any safety issues with it.

But Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's office, characterized the charges as uncommon and said the violation was severe. He said the leak almost killed Valenzuela, who was revived by paramedics and transferred to UCLA Medical Center and later to the Grossman Burn Center.

Miller will be arraigned in United

States District Court in L.A. next month. Mrozek said no determination has been set on whether to push for the full 15-year sentence.

Gary Welling, industrial waste services coordinator for the city, has been monitoring Stripper Herk regularly for more than a decade. He said Miller was issued a notice in 1992 not to discharge methylene chloride into the sewers and had been in compliance until the March incident. Since March, Miller has again been in compliance with the city's codes, Welling said.

Though the city has not filed any civil charges against Miller, Carol Kurtz, deputy city attorney, said the city will consider pursuing Miller for some of its investigative costs.

In the meantime, Miller is eager to pay for his mistake but said he's hoping the price won't be too high. He said he doesn't understand why federal officials have made such an issue of the incident since he has taken full responsibility for the leak and corrected the problem.

"Go after the big companies that dump and know it and don't care because they have attorneys to cover it up," he said. "Don't go after the little guy."



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LOCAL



City departments asked to cut 5 percent of budgets

CITY HALL, from page 1

and one vacant position will be eliminated. Purchasing of new books will be cut by 20 percent for next year.

■ The Big Blue Bus, which oversees a budget of \$36.5 million, does not face cuts because its money comes from state and county transit funds and not from city coffers.

■ Environmental and public works management proposed cutting \$550,000 from its \$55.8 million budget by laying off one analyst and eliminating six vacant positions. Additional savings will be made by bringing projects in-house that were previously farmed out to contractors.

■ Resource management said it could cut \$204,000 from its \$11.8 million budget by eliminating one vacant analyst position, cutting certain maintenance funds for the Third Street Promenade by \$29,000 and reducing the amount of money that goes to the Pier Restoration Corporation by \$55,000.

■ Representatives from capital improvements projects, which commands a \$71 million budget, proposed taking away from funds meant for a seismic retrofit of City Hall, extending the time frame for replacing city computers and vehicles, delaying the alley revitalization project and borrowing money for City TV, the city's cable television channel. The total proposed cuts amounted to \$1.6 million.

■ In an effort to save \$20,000, officials proposed cutting the City Council's back-up staff by eliminating the part-time position of a retiring worker.

■ The city manager's office, which commands a \$6.8 million budget, proposed cutting \$230,000 by eliminating a vacant full-time computer support position and a part-time vacant administrative post.

Staff in the city manager's office also plan to share resources with the City Council's office, reduce the number of new City TV programs, eliminate the Public Electronic Network, cut expert services on communications projects and reduce the amount of technology the police department uses.

■ Records and elections services proposed to cut \$59,000 from its \$1.8 million budget, mostly by limiting equipment and supply expenses, including finding less expensive paper contracts. The city currently is locked into an agreement for paper with 50 percent recycled content. Arrangements with a different vendor or a lower content of recycled paper could be less expensive, said City Clerk Maria Stewart. The department also proposed removing the public copier from City Hall.

■ The city attorney's office, which oversees a \$6 million budget that is 94 percent salaries and wages, proposed saving \$257,000 by cutting a vacant relief receptionist position and shifting the salary for another worker to a different fund.

■ The finance department proposed scaling back its \$4.3 million budget by \$200,000 by cutting a vacant auditor position, cutting overtime and reducing the amount of money spent on supplies and expenses.

■ Human resources recommended shaving \$93,000 off of its \$2.1 million budget, mostly by cutting two technician positions and limiting supply expenses.

■ The police department, which controls a \$46 million budget, proposed reductions of \$438,000 by cutting the equivalent of 1.8 positions. Police Chief James T. Butts Jr. said the cuts will affect back-up staff in the vice and narcotics division, as well as the mounted police unit.

■ The Santa Monica Fire Department, whose \$16.2 million budget is 93 percent salary and wages, proposed cutting \$85,000 from next year's budget, including the elimination of a fire safety coordinator position. Fire Chief Ettore Berardinelli said the cuts will mean discontinuing several outreach and education programs sponsored by the fire department.

■ The budget for non-departmental expenses, which oversees employee benefits for the entire city, will grow from \$8.5 million in 2002-2003 to \$15.8 million in 2003-2004, largely because of increased retirement and health care costs. Still, the department will cut roughly \$800,000 from its budget, mostly by freeing up funds that were being held if the living wage ordinance had passed last year.

City Hall would have been required to pay all of its employees \$10.50 an hour with benefits or \$12.50 without benefits if the ordinance had passed last year. Additionally, roughly \$300,000 will be saved by shifting expenses to a different fund.

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Rise of part-time smokers worries health officials

BY KRISTEN WYATT

Associated Press Writer

ATLANTA — Karen Monroe is just the type of smoker that government health officials want to know more about.

The recent college graduate, sipping a beer at a baseball game, took a cigarette break with her friend. But she doesn't smoke every day and doesn't really consider herself a smoker.

"It's just when I drink," the 24-year-old said. "It's not, like, all the time."

Part-time smokers like Monroe are a fast-growing segment of the 23 percent of American adults who smoke, a troubling trend to anti-tobacco activists.

A generation ago, people generally were either daily smokers or nonsmokers. Researchers lately are finding a new group of smokers — occasional smokers who don't light up every day.

They say the likely reasons for the emergence of this smoking subgroup are more expensive cigarettes, tough smoking bans and a growing social stigma against smoking.

But scientists still don't know very much about who the part-time smokers are and how to get them to quit for good.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta released an annual

tobacco survey last month that showed little change in the overall percentage of adult smokers. But it revealed a big change in the percentage of those smokers who call themselves part-time smokers.

Between 1996 and 2001, 38 states showed significant increases in "someday smokers," or people who said they smoked, but not every day. In Georgia, a 1996 survey showed that 14.8 percent of smokers said they smoked only some days. By 2001, that group grew to 25.8 percent of total smokers.

Other states showed huge increases, too. Arizona's percentage of part-time smokers jumped from 16.2 percent to 28 percent, Illinois went from 17.6 percent to 26.7 percent, and New York from 17.3 percent to 28.3 percent.

"We've seen a substantial increase," said Terry Pechacek, associate director for the CDC's Office of Smoking and Health. "And yet we don't have any confirmed conclusions about why this is happening."

The trend is disturbing to public health officials who have poured billions into anti-tobacco efforts, but are far from their goal of having only 12 percent of American adults smoking by 2010. The number of adult smokers is staying about the same, but they're smoking fewer ciga-

rettes, Pechacek said.

Researchers aren't sure why consumption is going down, but they suspect the high price of cigarettes and indoor smoking bans are making it inconvenient to smoke as often.

"Years ago, occasional smoking was overlooked," said Joel London, a spokesman for the CDC smoking office. "Now we're seeing a big trend of people decreasing the amount they smoke rather than quitting completely."

Cigarette makers also have noticed the trend. R.J. Reynolds, maker of Camel, Winston, Salem and Doral cigarettes, has introduced a new line of high-end flavored cigarettes. The Camel Exotic Blends come in flavors such as vanilla, citrus and chocolate mint — cigarettes not intended for pack-a-day consumption, but to be smoked with an after-dinner drink or dessert.

"Smoking is becoming almost a time-out activity," said Camel spokeswoman Ellen Matthews. "We wanted to give them opportunities to try different options on that. Occasional smokers are looking for something premium."

The changing smoking habit gives researchers a new problem. Are these part-time smokers former daily smokers,

meaning their new smoking habits are a good development? Or are these part-time smokers young people who have heard so many anti-tobacco messages that they don't like considering themselves "real" smokers?

"We don't know if we're looking at heavy smokers cutting back, or if this is a new kind of smoker," said Danny McGoldrick, research director for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "All our evidence is pretty anecdotal. We don't know."

CDC officials are worried about part-time smokers, citing studies that show dubious health benefits from smoking less but not quitting.

A 16-year study of thousands of European smokers found that daily smokers who cut their cigarette consumption by at least half were just as likely as their heavy-smoking counterparts to develop tobacco-related disease. Doctors also warn that smokers who cut back unconsciously inhale more deeply, meaning their exposure to carcinogens doesn't go down.

"We need to be careful about saying you're better off by smoking fewer cigarettes. We just don't have the science to show that," McGoldrick said. "We've got to send the message that there's no safe alternative to quitting."

U.S. hopes for peace as officials downplay military option

BY GEORGE GEDDA

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — In some ways, Iran may seem more of a menace in both terrorism and weapons than Iraq did. Still, administration officials are talking as though a military strike is the last thing on their minds.

Iran is closer to having a nuclear weapons capability than Iraq was under Saddam Hussein. And the administration believes al-Qaida operatives working out of Iran were behind the devastating terror-

ist bombing in Saudi Arabia on May 12. Eight Americans were among the 34 people who died.

The ties officials were able to establish between Saddam and al-Qaida seemed less compelling.

But the administration is not ready to do battle with the Iranians. A turning point in its preferred approach, diplomacy, could come next month when the International Atomic Energy Agency, an organization of the United Nations, visits Iran to inspect the country's nuclear facilities.

An IAEA finding that Iran is in violation of its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments could put the issue before the U.N. Security Council.

Whatever the council decides, the administration may opt for restraint. Iran is flanked on either side by Afghanistan and Iraq, both of which feature expensive — and somewhat messy — U.S.-led reconstruction efforts. Success in both is being measured in years, not months.

The political climate does not favor a pugnacious approach. Unlike Iraq, there is no U.N. Security Council resolution demanding that Iran dispose of weapons of mass destruction. The administration was able to use a dozen years of council weapons resolutions as a lever to justify force against Iraq.

Nonetheless, Iran is even more a U.S. irritant now than when President Bush designated it an "axis of evil" member 16 months ago. Its supposed ties to al-Qaida are causing anxiety, as are disclosures that Iran is producing highly enriched uranium and perhaps plutonium as well.

The opposition National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) has been tracking Iran's nuclear development activities through its sources inside Iran.

The administration confirmed an NCRI report last August of a uranium enrichment facility and is now examining a new NCRI claim of two additional enrichment facilities 40 miles west of Tehran. An NCRI spokeswoman said Tuesday Iran could have a nuclear weapon by 2005.

The CIA has no official estimate of a time frame. It says Iran is seeking both chemical and biological weapons and is in the late stages of perfecting a medium-

range missile.

Analysts wonder if the time will come when Bush will apply to Iran his policy statement on terrorism of last September, as he did to Iraq.

"Our greatest fear is that terrorists will find a shortcut to their mad ambitions when an outlaw regime supplies them with the technologies to kill on a massive scale," he said.

Regime change is not the official policy for Iran, but that certainly is the goal of a large number of Iranians, now weary of the conservative mullahs who have run the country, albeit with some democratic trappings, for 24 years.

Perhaps the most sensitive issue in U.S. relations with both China and Russia is the degree to which both have contributed to Iran's military buildup.

The State Department used exceptionally strong language last week in denouncing China's alleged acquiescence in sales by a Chinese company of materials designed to aid in Iran's missile development.

Russia, meanwhile, may be having second thoughts about its cooperation with an Iranian nuclear reactor under construction at Bushehr.

Russia's second-ranking diplomat expressed concern Tuesday about the existence of "serious, unresolved questions in connection with Iran's nuclear research."

Russia had been maintaining that the Bushehr project was unrelated to nuclear weapons development, which is consistent with Iran's own explanation. Bush is certain to sound out Russian President Vladimir Putin on the issue when they meet this weekend in Russia.

Everest anniversary



David Longstreath/Associated Press

Sir Edmund Hillary, left, greets Nepalese Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev during ceremonies Thursday in Katmandu, Nepal. Hillary and other Mount Everest mountaineers were on hand to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the conquering of Mount Everest. Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay were the first to scaled the 8,850-meter (29,035-foot) summit on May 29, 1953.

DID YOU KNOW?: King Henry I, who ruled in the England in the 12th century, standardized the yard as the distance from the thumb of his outstretched arm to his nose.

SPORTS



As Williams struggles, just two U.S. men remain

BY HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

PARIS — Venus Williams' play was so erratic, Mom sat up and took notice.

Williams hit forehands long, short and wide. Backhands, too. And her serving? Don't ask. It was not the sort of performance she usually delivers at majors — unless the opponent is her sibling, that is.

Instead, it was a player with a losing record and ranked 110th who briefly threatened the run of Sister Slams on Thursday in the French Open's second round. Williams got her act together in time to beat Evie Dominikovic 6-3, 4-6, 6-2.

"I can't stay at that level and still continue to do as well as I'd like to at this tournament," said Williams, seeded third. "I've got to find my balance and find it soon."

She didn't look like a player ready to retake the No. 1 ranking from younger sister Serena. Dominikovic, who won two games against Serena at Wimbledon last year, offered a comparison.

"I was happy I was playing Venus and not Serena," she said. "Serena's a lot better and doesn't miss as much. Venus is more erratic."

Three top women hoping to prevent a fifth consecutive all-Williams Grand Slam final won Thursday in straight sets: Kim Clijsters, Jennifer Capriati and Lindsay Davenport.

Nine U.S. women reached the third round, but just two of 13 American men did: Andre Agassi and Vince Spadea, who's never won a tournament. Two U.S. men exited, with No. 24 James Blake eliminated by Ivan Ljubicic in a match suspended the night before because of darkness. Todd Martin lost to No. 25 Tim Henman.

There's a trend, it seems. At last year's Wimbledon, there were no U.S. men in the fourth round for the first time in 80 years.

"We've got a young batch of players that are starting to run into a bit of a speed bump," said Martin, who's 32. "This period of time is going to be a big challenge for our younger players."

Blake pointed out that part of the problem at Roland Garros is the red clay, a surface that isn't common in the United States.

"We don't grow up on the stuff. The French, the Spanish, the South Americans play on it from very early

on," he said. "The guys from California — they don't even know what a clay court looks like."

Nearly a third of Thursday's winners were Spanish: defending champion Albert Costa, 2002 runner-up Juan Carlos Ferrero, Felix Mantilla, Tommy Robredo and Fernando Vicente. Three-time French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten, a Brazilian, eliminated Hich-am Arazi 6-1, 6-0, 6-1.

But top-seeded Lleyton Hewitt had another long day, needing more than 3 hours to get past Nikolay Davydenko, then conceding, "I'm not one of the big favorites." He plays Robredo next and would love to see 112 unforced errors, Davydenko's total.

Williams compiled 55 mistakes through two sets and finished with 68. She had seven double faults and was broken five times, including to end the second set.

To that point, her mother, Oracene Price, had been watching from the guest box with her chin on her hand. She suddenly straightened up to watch the third set, as if she was thinking, "Well, maybe I ought to be concerned."

Her daughter was. After closing one game with an errant backhand, Williams tapped her racket against her head several times — about the biggest display of emotion she allows.

She arrived in Paris rusty, having last played May 4, when she didn't finish a match because of a stomach muscle injury. Still, Williams plays big points at big tournaments brilliantly, which is why she owns four major titles. Set aside losses to Serena in the past four finals, and Williams is 44-1 at Slams since Wimbledon in 2001.

Williams won Thursday because she kept conjuring up groundstroke winners, 31 in all.

"She hit one volley, and I thought, 'Whoa, that's amazing!'" said Dominikovic, 4-6 this year and not even listed in the WTA Tour media guide.

One particularly strong backhand knocked the racket out of Dominikovic's hand and into a court-side advertising sign with a "Clunk!"

More commonly, players throw rackets in anger.

Wimbledon finalist David Nalbandian did so a few times during his loss to French qualifier Nicolas Coutelot — and afterward, it seemed fists would fly.



Michel Euler/Associated Press

Venus Williams backhands to Australia's Evie Dominikovic during their second round match of the French Open tennis tournament at Roland Garros stadium in Paris.

Los Angeles Dodgers lose third in a row to Rockies

BY JOHN MOSSMAN

AP Sports Writer

DENVER — Todd Helton homered three times and had a career-high six RBIs to lead Colorado over the Los Angeles Dodgers 12-5 Thursday and extend the Rockies' winning streak to five.

Helton hit a two-run homer in the first inning off Odalis Perez (4-3), a solo shot in the fourth and another two-run homer in the eighth off Eric Gagne. Helton, who has 10 homers this season, also singled in a run in the third.

It was the second three-homer game for Helton, who also accomplished the feat at Coors Field on May 1, 2000. It was his 22nd multihomer game, his first this season.

Ronnie Belliard had a career-high five hits and Jay Payton had three RBIs for the Rockies, who swept the Dodgers in Denver for the first time. Colorado, which has swept three series in Dodger Stadium, is on its longest winning streak since taking five in a row last June 20-24. The Rockies out-hit Los Angeles 16-14.

Scott Elarton (1-1), making his second start after missing last season because of shoulder surgery, allowed three runs and eight hits in five innings. Elarton blanked the Dodgers over his

final three innings.

Perez (4-3) gave up a career-high nine runs and 11 hits in three-plus innings.

Los Angeles starters, who came to Coors Field having gone 10-0 with a 1.62 ERA in their previous 11 games, compiled a 14.72 ERA in the three-game series.

Gagne had not allowed a home run since Troy O'Leary hit a tiebreaking shot for Montreal last Aug. 13 on the reliever's first pitch after entering the game.

Los Angeles went up 2-0 in the first on Fred McGriff's RBI single and Jolbert Cabrera's sacrifice fly. The Rockies tied it in their half on Helton's first homer.

Alex Cora's run-scoring single gave Los Angeles a 3-2 lead in the second, but the Rockies scored five runs in the fourth on Helton's RBI single, Chris Stynes' two-run single and Bobby Estalella's RBI double off the left-field wall.

Payton's two-run homer and Helton's solo shot chased Perez in the fourth and put the Rockies ahead 9-3.

Belliard singled in the fifth inning for his fourth hit and scored on Payton's triple over Cabrera in the center.

The Dodgers' Bubba Crosby, in his first major league at-bat after being promoted from Triple-A Las Vegas, had an RBI single off Todd Jones in the seventh.

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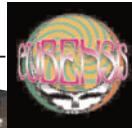
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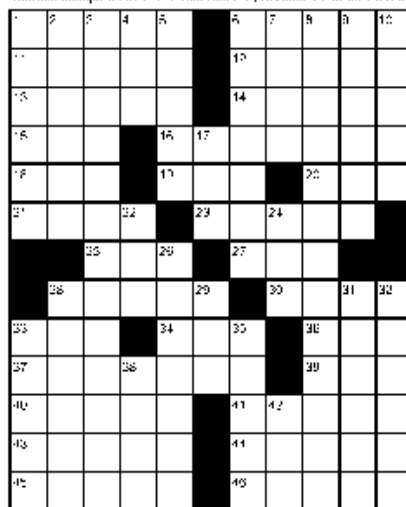
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ANYONE KNOW the whereabouts of Roberta "Bobby" Roberts. Have her call Jamie Mura. (949)632-1646

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.

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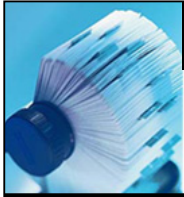
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BACK PAGE

Microsoft to pay AOL \$750M in antitrust lawsuit

BY HELEN JUNG
AP Business Writer

SEATTLE — Microsoft agreed to pay AOL Time Warner \$750 million to settle an antitrust suit Thursday over charges it used strong-arm tactics to make Internet Explorer the dominant Web browser, displacing AOL's Netscape.

Under the settlement, AOL-Time Warner also gets free license to Microsoft browsing software for seven years. Microsoft also will license its digital media technology to AOL, as well as work with AOL to promote digital movies, music and similar initiatives.

Microsoft will provide technical information to AOL to ensure that its products run effectively on the Windows operating system.

The agreement resolves a lawsuit AOL filed against Microsoft in January 2002 on behalf of its subsidiary, Netscape Communications. The complaint was one of several private antitrust lawsuits still pending against Microsoft over anticompetitive behavior.

AOL had alleged that Microsoft used anticompetitive business practices to ensure the dominance of its Internet Explorer browsing software over Netscape's software. AOL argued that Microsoft made deals with computer manufacturers and others to shut out Netscape and quash competition.

"While our companies will continue to compete, I'm pleased that we've been able to resolve our prior dispute," Microsoft chairman Bill Gates said.

Gates added that he was "excited about the opportunity to work together collaboratively to make the digital decade a reality."

Jonathan Miller, chairman of the America Online division, lauded the settlement as "good news for the AOL service, its members and the Internet as a whole."

"It provides America Online with certainty that, as Microsoft develops new operating systems and platforms, the AOL

service will work optimally with them."

The settlement reflects the push that both companies are making in the emerging world of digital media. Microsoft has agreed to a long-term license to AOL of software designed to prevent illegal copying and downloading of digital music, movies and other content.

In addition, the two companies plan to explore how to integrate their two instant-

messaging networks to allow users of one company's service to use the other's.

Microsoft shares closed Thursday down 1 cent to \$24.40 on the Nasdaq Stock Market. Shares fell 10 more cents in after-hours trading. AOL closed down 1 cent to \$14.85 on the New York Stock Exchange. Shares rose 48 cents, or 3.2 percent, in extended trading.

Halliburton work now almost half a billion

BY DAVID PACE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Army has given a Halliburton Co. subsidiary more than \$425 million in troop support work related to the Iraqi war in the past 14 months, using an exclusive contract that Vice President Dick Cheney's former company won in 2001.

The previously undisclosed work, awarded without competitive bids, is in addition to the \$71.3 million that Halliburton's subsidiary, Kellogg Brown & Root, has received from the Army Corps of Engineers in no-bid contracts to repair and operate oil wells in Iraq.

Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., who disclosed the troop support work orders Thursday, said the structure of exclusive contract means that "the amount that Halliburton could receive in the future is virtually limitless."

"It appears that many, if not all, the task orders under the contract were awarded without any competition,"

Waxman said in a letter to Acting Army Secretary Les Brownlee. "This type of arrangement poses inherent risks to taxpayers... It is unclear what safeguards, if any the Army is using to prevent excessive charges to the government."

Brown & Root competed with two other companies to win the logistics contract that makes it the Army's only private supplier of troop support services over the next decade. There is no ceiling on spending, because the contract is designed to provide rapid troop support wherever and whenever U.S. forces move into action overseas.

Under similar contracts, the Army paid Brown & Root \$1.2 billion from 1992 through 1999 to support U.S. troops, mainly in the Balkans. An extension of that contract from 1999 through 2004 is projected to cost \$1.8 billion.

Since March 2002, the Army has issued 24 task orders totaling \$425 million under the contract for work related to Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to Army records provided Waxman. Eleven more work

orders totaling \$103 million have been issued under the same contract for work related to the war in Afghanistan.

Dan Carlson, spokesman for the Army Field Support Command, said the Army has paid \$42 million to Brown & Root through April for work under the contract related to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Carlson said the more than \$500 million in work orders represents the Army's best estimate of the final costs of the projects. He said Brown & Root must justify its spending to Army contract officials before it can be paid.

"Costs are verified as they are billed," he said. "We may spend more or we may spend less."

In January, the Army obligated \$60 million to Brown & Root to provide logistical supply line services and locations in Turkey. But because the Turkish government refused to allow U.S. troops to launch an invasion of Iraq from Turkey, much of that obligation was not spent, Carlson said.

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