

FREE

SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 171

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

00000

FANTASY 5
9, 17, 24, 36, 37

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 4, 8, 5
Evening picks: 2, 3, 4

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 02, Lucky Star
2nd Place: 08, Gorgeous George
3rd Place: 01, Gold Rush
Race Time: 1:49.62



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
by Chuck Shepard

In February in Chichester, N.H., Thomas A. Barrett was fined \$240 and given a six-month suspended sentence for his no-contest plea to creating a false fire alarm. Barrett told the judge that he was celebrating his 21st birthday at Jillian's Bar & Grill, and as he staggered down a hallway to the men's room, he mistakenly urinated on the floor and pulled the fire alarm, which he thought was a toilet's flushing mechanism.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Divorce is a game played by lawyers."

— Cary Grant



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Accused killer hires private defense attorney

Convicted felon allegedly murdered Santa Monica woman

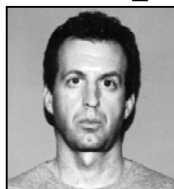
BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

A convicted felon accused of killing a Santa Monica woman has retained a high profile criminal defense attorney.

Victor Paleologus is charged with killing Kristine Johnson, 21, which could bring the death penalty.

Paleologus hired Andrew Flier, an Encino-based attorney. Flier took over the case from public defender Jennifer Friedman last Thursday,



Victor Paleologus



Kristine Johnson

when Paleologus was scheduled to be arraigned. The hearing was continued until June 11.

"Somebody on his behalf has retained us," Flier said, declining to name the person. "(Paleologus) feels that based on his past, he

has become the focus point in this investigation. He is adamant he didn't do it."

Paleologus, 40, has an extensive criminal rap sheet including luring and victimizing young, attractive women by allegedly claiming to be a photographer in the entertainment industry. His criminal history dates back more than a decade and is described by Santa Monica Police Chief James T. Butts, Jr. as a smooth-talking predator.

He has two prior convictions of assault with intent to commit rape, Flier said.

Paleologus received three years probation after a jury deadlocked on charges against him

See KILLER, page 4

Parcel tax campaign heats up as election nears

Special election to fund schools is Tuesday

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

With four days before voters decide whether to pass a parcel tax to benefit local schools, what began as a quiet campaign is gaining momentum.

More than 200 people are expected to meet at Santa Monica High School this morning before canvassing Santa Monica neighborhoods to help turn out voters in support of the measure.

And phone bank volunteers, who have already placed more than 30,000 calls to residents, will work up to the last minute, said Ralph Mechur, co-chair of the committee

pushing for the measure.

The proposed parcel tax, called Measure S on the June 3 ballot, would levy a flat \$225 fee on the more than 32,000 properties in Santa Monica and Malibu. If it garners two-thirds of the vote, the tax is expected to raise about \$6.5 million annually for the cash-strapped school district.

Supporters of the measure kept

their campaign relatively quiet at first and focused their efforts on specific groups that were likely to back the tax, Mechur said.

To find supporters, campaign managers purchased voting registries from L.A. County that outlined party affiliation and voting history of area residents.

Because the parcel tax will be

See TAX, page 4

Bush, Europeans to patch up 'bad blood'

BY CALVIN WOODWARD

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — They've been through months of spit-in-your-eye rhetoric, snubs and warnings of "consequences." President Bush and European leaders have a lot of patching up to do after straining relations almost to the breaking point over the Iraq war.

As Bush flew to Europe on Friday for the Group of Eight summit and weekend meetings in advance of it, the talk was of partnership, cooperation and a new tomorrow.

But even in that rosy chatter it was clear that slights have not been forgotten.

"Where we are is, let's talk about the future," Secretary of State Colin Powell said on his way over. "That's not to say that we don't have bad blood with some of our closest partners, but you move on. What pulls us together is much stronger than whatever stretches

the rubber band."

At times, the rubber seemed ready to snap, with France and Germany, with Russia on occasion, and others, too.

In Evian, France, Bush's partners will include French President Jacques Chirac, host of the summit and source of seething anger in the Bush administration because he thwarted U.S. attempts to win U.N. Security Council backing of the Iraq invasion.

Also at the table: German Chancellor Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who ran a re-election campaign that played up his opposition to U.S. policy on Iraq, who warned an attack would set the Middle East aflame and mean certain death for thousands of innocents, who declared flatly about the invasion, "The wrong decision has been taken."

After greeting leaders in St. Petersburg as host for that city's

See SUMMIT, page 9

King-sized



Alex Cantarero/Daily Press

"Midget Elvis" performs on the Promenade on Friday.

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★★-So-so ★-Difficult

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Saturday, May 31, 2003:

Much changes this year, with a lunar eclipse marking your birthday. You might experience an identity crisis — if you're a man or if you're a woman — about the man in your life. If you live your dreams and stay open during communications, you will have much to smile about. You will also question your profession. Make this OK. You need to know what you want. Recognize how close you are to making a dream possible. Some might say you are self-absorbed, but you have a lot on your plate this year. If single, that status is likely to change. If you are not in a major relationship, you will want to be. You meet people with ease. If attached, your relationship will transform, and most likely for the better. GEMINI is a soul mate.

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ Today's eclipse depletes your energy when you least expect it. You will make an effort, and no one will question you. Put your best foot forward. Call a spade a spade. Make that call and/or talk to that person to change your plans. Tonight: Whatever works.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ The eclipse might signal financial changes. You might want to talk with a loved one or family member about what your expectations are. Together you build a sounder budget. Check in with an older relative. Tonight: Your treat.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ You make waves. Your ability to reach out for others and make them feel more comfortable is one of your greatest assets. Use your creativity with a touchy partner. The eclipse could deplete your energy. Take a nap if you need to. Tonight: It's your call.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ Assume a low profile. The lunar eclipse could drain your energy. You could be unusually emotional. You might go on a spending spree, or possibly a partner could decide to indulge you or pitch in with a project. Tonight: Get as much sleep as you need.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Aim high. Today's lunar eclipse could focus you again on what you want and believe you need. Your upbeat spirit plays a factor. Take a stern look at what you want from a love relationship or child. Tonight: You are the action.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Visualize more of what you would like professionally or with a parent. You might not be as content as you would like. Others want to help you make a dream a reality. A parent or older relative dominates the scenario. Make a must appearance. Tonight: A must show.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Seriously consider a trip, though you might not want to take off immediately. Enjoy yourself and make the most of what might be going on with friends and a loved one. Children could be your primary focus. Swing with the moment. Tonight: Whatever floats your boat.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ You might not be sure of what is occurring within your immediate circle. Questions surround a relationship, at least in your mind. Avoid making decisions right now, still keeping your eye on the big picture. Use a family member as a resource. Tonight: Make time for a special person.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ A partner and/or your immediate circle could change in the near future. You will like what happens if you stay open in the next few months. Within a week, one month or six months, a relationship could change. Be open to the process. Tonight: What a partner wants.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ A project needs completion, but you might be best off not pushing right now. Take a hard look at your finances. You might not be comfortable with another's tendency to go to extremes. Try to be more realistic about what you can do. Tonight: Don't push.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Your imagination could create something out of nothing. Be careful, because ultimately your expectations could disappoint you. On the other hand, you could go off and create a dream. A partner seems ready, willing and able to do his or her part. Tonight: Add playfulness to the mix.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ You might want to change your living circumstances and do some things differently. Take your time with change. Have long-overdue discussions with a roommate or someone you ultimately trust. Meanwhile, decide to have a party. Invite others over. Tonight: Your place is where the action is.

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LOCAL



Friends of Sunset Park to hold annual meeting

By Daily Press staff

One of Santa Monica's largest neighborhood organizations, Friends of Sunset Park, will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, June 7. All members and the general public are invited.

The meeting will be held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, 14th Street and Ocean Park Boulevard, in Santa Monica.

Formed in 1989, Friends of Sunset Park is a non-profit neighborhood organization dedicated to working for the interests of all Sunset Park residents.

Sunset Park is bordered by Lincoln Boulevard to the west, Pico Boulevard to the north, Centinela Avenue to the east and Dewey Street to the south.

Santa Monica Airport, Santa Monica College, Santa Monica Business Park, Clover Park, Marine Park, Fairview Library, John Adams Middle School, Grant Elementary School, and Will Rogers Elementary School are all located in the neighborhood.

The featured speaker at the annual meeting will be Jonathan Lait, a senior planner from the city's planning division. He will discuss the interim development ordinance that currently limits the size of new homes and additions to existing homes in Sunset Park.

There will also be a speaker from the Santa Monica Historical Society, reports from the organization's airport, college, historic preservation, and library committees, as well as the election of board members and a short performance by the Senior Girls' Chorus from John Adams Middle School.

For more information, please consult the Friends Web site at www.friendsofsunsetpark.org or phone 358-7117.

Obituary

SMC philanthropist dies

By Daily Press staff

Jim Cayton, a philanthropist who supported Santa Monica College, died May 24. He was 88.

The Cayton Associated Students Center was named in honor of Jim and his wife, Lucille, for their donation of \$100,000 that went toward building the second floor of the center. In addition, the James and Lucille Cayton Award for Leadership is one of the largest scholarship endowments managed by the SMC Foundation.

For years, the scholarship has provided monetary help to hundreds of SMC students. This year alone, for example, the SMC Foundation will award a total of \$25,000 in Cayton scholarships to 31 SMC students, ranging from \$500 to \$2,000.

Cayton and his wife had long been active in community and philanthropic activities. Retired in 1981, he founded Louverdrape (originally Vogue Venetian Blinds) in 1937 and built the firm into an international company with 700 employees and 100 distributors in 100 nations worldwide.

A Stanford University alumnus, he served as president of the Rotary Club of Santa Monica and Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce and served on the boards of the SMC Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Santa Monica, YMCA of Santa Monica, Center for Healthy Aging, and the Wellness Community. Aside from SMC, he sponsored scholarships at Stanford and also contributed to the Betty Ford Center.

Cayton was active to the end. He and Lucille had gone together on more than 150 ship cruises throughout the world and had returned from a worldwide cruise earlier this month.

Aside from his wife, to whom he was married for 59 years, Cayton is survived by four children, Bob, Kiki, John and Lori and six grandchildren.

No services will be held for but memorial donations may be made to the SMC Foundation or any of the above listed organizations



The mixture of SW swell with NW wind and ground swell lost a little force on Friday but kept waves at local breaks in the fun, waist-high-plus zone. There's a lot of that in coming days.

BAD NEWS: The bigger of the two SW swells is on its way out.

GOOD NEWS: A steep NW will fill in late on Saturday.

OUTLOOK: Another SW should hit us Tuesday.

Today the water is:

64°

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

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	4:33	-0.5	3:22	2.3	11:05	3.4	9:42	5.8
SUNDAY	5:10	-0.5	3:49	2.5	11:51	3.3	10:13	5.7
MONDAY	5:49	-0.5	4:19	2.7	(12:43)	3.2	10:46	5.6
TUESDAY	6:33	-0.4	4:55	2.9	(1:44)	3.2	11:25	5.3
WEDNESDAY	7:20	-0.2	5:50	3.1	N/A	N/A	2:51	3.3
THURSDAY	8:12	-0.1	7:22	3.2	12:11	5.0	3:52	3.5
FRIDAY	9:06	0.1	9:16	3.0	1:12	4.6	4:36	3.9

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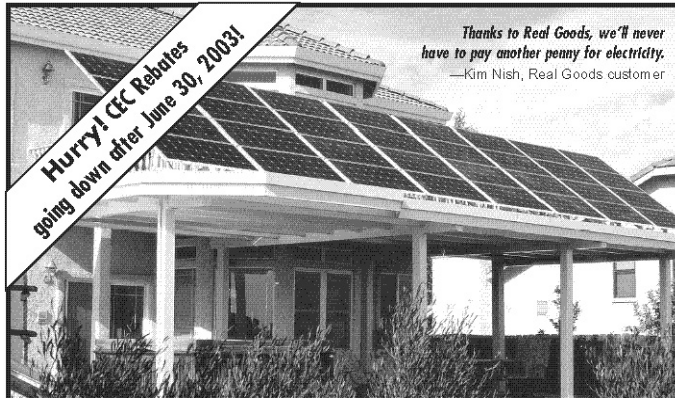
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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF PROPOSED FY 2003-04 ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN ALLOCATING FEDERAL CDBG AND HOME FUNDS

Notice is hereby given that the City of Santa Monica has developed the Proposed FY 2003-04 One-Year Action Plan. The One-Year Action Plan is submitted annually to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It delineates the City's specific projects and activities for one-year use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds in order to meet the City's overall housing and community development needs as specified in the Consolidated Plan (FY 2000-05) adopted by City Council and submitted to HUD in June 2000. The City is seeking community comments on the Proposed One-Year Action Plan.

Copies of the Proposed FY 2003-04 One-Year Action Plan and the Proposed Draft Community Development Plan FY 2003-06 are now available to the public for a 30-day community review period ending June 17, 2003. Any comments received before June 6, 2003 will be transmitted to the City Council. To obtain a copy of the Proposed FY 2002-03 One-Year Action Plan or the Proposed Draft Community Development Plan FY 2003-06, please contact the Human Services Division, 1685 Main Street, Room 212, Santa Monica, CA 90401, telephone (310) 458-8701. Please send your written comments to the above address by June 17, 2003.

F:\HSD\SHARE\CDBG HUD\Ads\Ad NOA FY 2003-04 Action Plan.doc



LOCAL

Third conviction for suspect could bring death penalty

KILLER, from page 1

in 1991 for attempted rape, assault and false imprisonment. He allegedly lured a woman into a hotel room after telling her she would meet famous people, including Madonna, at a party for record executives. Paleologus then allegedly tied the woman to a hotel bed and attempted to rape her but she was able to escape.

Paleologus has been convicted of six felonies since 1998 ranging from grand theft to burglary to assault. He was released from state prison on Jan. 20, just three weeks before Johnson disappeared.

Paleologus has been in custody since Feb. 17 when he was arrested for allegedly stealing a BMW from a Beverly Hills dealership — just two days after he allegedly lured Johnson at a shopping mall by claiming to be a publicity photographer.

Johnson's body was found in Laurel Canyon, a remote neighborhood in the Hollywood Hills by hikers on March 3. Her body was partially clothed, her wrists bound and she was covered in a sleeping bag at the bottom of a steep hillside off of Skyline Drive.

Johnson, a student at Santa Monica College, disappeared on Feb. 15 after telling her roommates she was going to Beverly Hills to meet a man who claimed to be a publicity photographer. She reportedly met Paleologus while shopping at the Century City Mall earlier.

Along with the capital murder charge, the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office

earlier this month charged Paleologus with six counts relating to the Beverly Hills case including identity theft, filing a false financial statement, burglary, grand theft auto, forgery and receiving stolen property.

Paleologus allegedly tried to buy a car at Beverly Hills BMW using the name, social security number and credit history of Robert Wasvary, who owns a home on Wonderland Park Avenue in the Hollywood Hills — just blocks away from where Johnson's body was found.

Police say Paleologus allegedly poses as a publicity photographer for a specific film title that he's used as his ruse multiple times. In fact, in one instance that led to a conviction, Paleologus allegedly used the exact same film title to lure his victim as he did with Johnson.

Because Paleologus has two strikes against him already for prior felonies, a conviction for Johnson's death could bring the death penalty or life imprisonment.

"He believes he is being rail-roaded based on his prior convictions," Flier said. Flier, who characterized himself and his father and law firm partner, Ted Flier, as popular and successful criminal defense attorneys, said Paleologus approached him about a week ago.

Flier recently won a murder case in the San Fernando Valley and worked on the Marvin Gaye, Jr. murder case 10 years ago. Flier speculated that Paleologus heard about his reputation while in custody and contacted him.

Parcel tax supporters have raised more than opponents

TAX, from page 1

decided in a single-issue election, Mechur said the campaign focused first on residents who regularly turn out to vote, second on Democrats who, in general, are more likely to support tax increases and third on parents.

Parent lists were compiled by parents and not from school records, which is illegal because the school district is not allowed to throw its weight behind the measure, Mechur said.

Once the groups were identified, mailers were sent out and phone calls and precinct walking began.

The opposition to Measure S has been less active, sending out just one mailer against the proposed tax and producing some lawn signs. The opposition has been outspent by nearly \$200,000 by Measure S supporters, according to campaign finance reports.

"They're buying this election," said Matt Millen, who heads Citizens Against Unfair Taxes, the group opposing Measure S. "The same people who complained that the hotels bought the last election are out there buying this one."

Millen said his group is fighting the proposed tax because it unfairly puts a burden on homeowners and it lets big business off the hook for the same flat rate it charges everyone else. He said the city should direct more funds to schools instead of into affordable housing and other projects.

While Millen's group has pulled in \$5,500, Measure S supporters have raised roughly \$200,000 and more money is

coming in every day, Mechur said.

Of the money raised by Measure S supporters, about \$40,000 has gone to Pam Brady, the campaign manager, and Sue Burnside and Barbara Grover, two election consultants working on the campaign.

Nearly \$80,000 has been spent on a

"They're buying this election. The same people who complained that the hotels bought the last election are out there buying this one."

— MATT MILLEN
Citizens Against Unfair Taxes

handful of mailers sent out to more than 20,000 residents and another \$50,000 has been spent on compiling lists for canvassers, Mechur said. The other expenses came from an April poll conducted by the group, office expenses and newspaper advertisements.

Before last November's election supporters of Measure EE — a more costly parcel tax proposal — raised about \$175,000. Measure EE, which did not receive the mandated two-thirds majority of the vote, was not formally opposed by any organization.

STATE



Media shake-up looms under new FCC rules

BY MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — An expected loosening of the rules on how many newspapers and broadcast stations a company can own is being eagerly awaited by some media chains, while critics fear the result will be fewer public voices.

The changes, expected to pass 3-2 in a Federal Communications Commission vote Monday, will end a 28-year-old ban on ownership of newspapers and broadcast stations — television or radio — in the same market. The prohibition was intended to preserve a variety of viewpoints.

Cross-ownership has been barred in all but a few cities, such as Chicago, Atlanta and Milwaukee, where it existed before the ban.

The FCC also is expected to let companies build their portfolio of TV stations up to a new limit of 45 percent of the total U.S. market. The limit now is 35 percent.

The prospect of fewer owners controlling more communication channels deeply troubles some people. They predict even more cutbacks in already-shrinking newsrooms, resulting in more superficial, homogeneous coverage that ignores crucial community issues.

"If the FCC does this, we will have started down the path to the end of democracy," said Seattle Times publisher Frank Blethen.

Supporters of the changes envision more nimble and profitable businesses that will pool the resources of newspapers and broadcasters to deliver better coverage.

"It gives you a much bigger megaphone to talk through," said William Dean Singleton, president of Denver-based MediaNews Group, a newspaper publisher considering expansion into TV.

With the rise of cable and the Internet, top media companies persuaded the FCC's three Republicans that the restrictions are no longer needed. The commission's two Democrats are not convinced.

Most people still turn to television or newspapers for local news. Not all, however, depend on both sources. Some media companies want to reach more people by distributing the same stories through multiple channels.

"I wish everybody read a newspaper, but they don't," said Singleton, whose company owns 47 papers in 10 states, including The Denver Post, Los Angeles Daily News and The Salt Lake Tribune.

The FCC has indicated the new rules will allow cross-ownership mostly in large and medium-size markets. Restrictions would still apply in many small markets where there is only one paper and a few broadcast stations.

Under the FCC's preliminary proposal,

joint ownership of newspapers and TV stations could occur in 140 of the nation's 150 largest markets, according to the Consumer Federation of America, a staunch opponent.

Markets eligible for cross-ownership span the nation, from San Francisco to Portland, Maine.

"If the FCC does this, we will have started down the path to the end of democracy."

— FRANK BLETHEN
Seattle Times publisher

The maneuvering has already begun.

The stock of TV network owner Paxson Communications, for instance, has nearly doubled since mid-May, reflecting investor expectations that its 61 stations will make an attractive takeover target.

The Journal Co., parent of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and 42 radio and TV stations, has announced plans for an initial public offering of stock to raise as much as \$250 million so it can expand under the new rules.

Other media companies, including Gannett Co., Tribune Co., Hearst Corp., Media General, Belo Corp. and E.W. Scripps Co., are expected to join in.

A notable exception is newspaper publisher Knight Ridder. Its management says it sees few financial advantages to cross-ownership.

Still, San Jose-based Knight Ridder supports ending the ban, and analysts say the company could emerge as a takeover target for a broadcaster interested in its 31 daily papers.

Mark Cooper, the Consumer Federation's research director, said news coverage could suffer even if owners do not trim the payroll. That is because journalists would spend more time doing the same story for different media channels — going on-air when they could be doing more reporting, for example.

Perhaps the most ambitious test of cross-ownership to date is in Tampa, where Media General moved the staffs of The Tampa Tribune, WFLA-TV and Web site TBO.com under the same roof three years ago.

The combination initially created some morale problems and strategic mistakes, but Eric Land, WFLA's president and general manager, said: "This undertaking has created a more powerful form of journalism and made us a better community watchdog."

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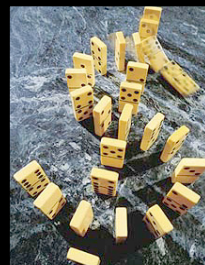
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LETTERS

Legal threats made over housing project

Editor:

On Monday, May 19, the Architectural Review Board met for a second time to review Community Corporation of Santa Monica's proposed four-story, 44-unit low-income housing project at the corner of Pacific and Main in Ocean Park.

The ARB recommended additional design changes and refinement to the exterior of the proposed building to make the building more attractive. Nevertheless, the ARB has not required CCSM to eliminate the fourth floor, reduce the number of units or increase the number of parking spaces provided for residents, guests and visitors to Main Street to make the building more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The current design consists of 113 bedrooms with a single elevator, housing more than 200 residents, with nearly 1,500 square feet of ground level retail space, yet only 82 parking spaces. However, the ARB did request that CCSM make the entire length of the Main Street frontage retail-oriented by relocating the community room, which had been located along Main Street. The matter was continued for a third time, and the ARB will meet again in June to review the revised plan.

What stood out in my mind from this last ARB meeting was CCSM's reluctance to make any voluntary design changes or improvements unless forced to do so by the ARB. For example, when asked why the project included only minimal ground-floor retail space, Joan Ling, head of CCSM, replied "Because the zoning code allows us not to."

The same goes for why the proposed project is four stories, has 113 bedrooms and only one elevator and contains only 82 parking spaces. The local zoning code, with its numerous incentives, density bonuses and reduction in parking requirements for low-income housing projects, does not require it.

Well then, the neighborhood be damned. It makes no difference that CCSM was given \$3,173,000 in public funding to purchase the land at Pacific and Main and \$915,000 for pre-development, planning, and design fees. Evidently, CCSM has no sense of responsibility toward its neighbors or the larger community of taxpayers who have allowed CCSM to become Santa Monica's biggest landlord. Incidentally, CCSM pays no property taxes.

The second item that stood out were the comments from James Conn, ex-mayor of Santa Monica. It was during Mr. Conn's tenure and that of ex-Mayor Judy Abdo, both strong CCSM supporters, that the zoning code was changed, back in the late 1980s, to include all those incentives, density bonuses and reduction in parking requirements for low-income housing.

Jim Conn restated what has become a sort of mantra for CCSM supporters that "rich people" are to blame for the high cost of housing in Santa Monica and he used the "\$1.2 million dollar home" at the corner of Pacific and Main as an example of the greed and unjust influence of "rich people."

Knowing the owner of the house and her personal trials and tribulations, I can honestly say she has earned the privilege to live in such a splendid home. We can debate the reasons for the current housing affordability crisis, but when did it become justified and fashionable for an ex-mayor and clergyman of a local church to denigrate an entire class of people?

If I or anyone else for that matter, had blamed "poor people" for not earning enough

money or certain minorities for not having access to quality education, we would rightly be labeled "insensitive" at best. But in the name of CCSM and some of their supporters, its OK to stigmatize those who own their own homes in Santa Monica.

Since becoming "a leading opponent of the project," some have questioned my motives. As a long-time resident raising a family in Santa Monica, I am concerned with the quality of the neighborhood, just as I am concerned with the quality of our school system. I know that others in my neighborhood are as concerned as I about the rapid pace of change, increased density and traffic, deterioration of the school system and lack of accountability at City Hall.

Should the planning commission (on appeal from the ARB) fail to reduce the height and density of the Pacific and Main project to make the building more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, I will have no other alternative than to test in a court of law the "administrative approval" and exemption from the CUP process for this project as well as the project's compliance with the planning and zoning code.

Jeffrey Weinstein
Santa Monica

See LETTERS, page 7



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Some ideas to increase auto racing's audience



MODERN TIMES

By Lloyd Garver

Auto racing fans, start your angry e-mails: I just don't understand the popularity of your favorite sport.

I know it takes great talent and courage to drive so fast and skillfully and it must be an amazing thrill for the driver. But where's the fun in watching them drive around and around — and around and around. And around?

Last Sunday was the day of both the Indianapolis 500 and the Coca Cola 600 in North Carolina. I had no interest in either race. However, when I heard that driver Robby Gordon planned to drive in both races on the same day, that got my attention.

After doing his best at Indy, Gordon sped away on a golf cart to a waiting rental car, which took him to the

Indianapolis airport where a plane flew him to Charlotte. Onboard the plane, he took intravenous fluids and got to the second speedway about an hour before race time. Now, that was impressive.

However, the fact that his racing in order to race was more interesting to me than actually watching him drive around in circles made me think that maybe they aren't televising the right races.

I can think of a few other heroic car journeys that more of us could appreciate, and you probably can, too. For example, if the following road contests were televised, auto racing would have an even greater audience:

THE SPOUSAL 5 MILE — As you attempt to get to the local movie theater on time, your spouse continues to call out things like, "You'd get there faster if you took my shortcut," "Why are you driving so fast?," "Why are you driving so slow?," "It's too hot," "Now, it's blowing on me too much," "Did you buy the tickets in advance?" and "Why are you parking here? I saw a better space."

The winning driver is the one who arrives at the theater safely, does not yell at his or her spouse and still remembers the name of the movie he or she is going to see.

NOTE: The person in the car must actually be a legal spouse since, for some reason, people don't act like this in a car until after they are married.

THE ROUND THE BLOCK TEENAGER DRIVING LESSON — The winner is the parent who does not use the imaginary brake, does not grab the steering wheel from the teen and does not yell, "I'm not letting you drive until you're 30!"

THE RUSH HOUR RUSH — All entrants must drive home from work in the worst traffic of the day. This race must be run regardless of the kind of day you had at work and regardless of the weather and road conditions. You end up behind somebody whose turn signal has been on for the last three miles. You have to stop to pick up dinner, the only parking places have meters and you don't have any change. The setting sun blinds you through your broken sunglasses, your kids have

changed all your radio buttons and you're repeatedly cut-off by drivers who make left turns while talking on their cellphones.

After completing the harrowing course and arriving at home (and spilling a little take-out food on the car's carpet), you're greeted with, "What took you so long?" The winner does not get \$1 million dollars or an endorsement contract from Pennzoil or Viagra. No, the prize for winning is that you get to do it again tomorrow.

These audience-pleasing events will make it obvious that we ordinary people do the real heroic driving. And our daily races are not done on a closed track, we don't have the aid of a pit crew and we don't get intravenous fluids. Where's our TV contract?

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and can be reached at smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.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

'Misguided' council efforts force 'no' vote**Editor:**

Let me get this straight: Our City Council, led by the misguided efforts of Kevin McKeown and Michael Feinstein, spend more than \$1 million in city funds to pursue litigation against the banking industry and now I'm supposed to augment the city coffers by voting "yes" on Measure S?

Not this year. Not ever.

Ron Yukelson
Santa Monica

'Us kids are the future'**Editor:**

We've all heard information about Measure S, on how us Santa Monica citizens have to vote yes on it. Parents are concerned that their children won't get a great education, teachers are worried that they won't have jobs next year, but no one has ever asked how us students feel about the disasters facing us.

Some kids just don't care — they don't find school interesting. But the students that are in music, student council, that participate in after-school programs or take a special or extra class know that they might not be able to do that next year.

I am one of those unfortunate students. I take an a.m. class, which means I go to school an hour earlier than normal. If Measure S does not pass, I won't be able to take that extra class, which for me is band.

If they make student council a class, I won't be able to participate in that either. And some of the programs I participate in, like peer mediation and yearbook, might not get the funding needed to create a really great and functional program.

Ever since the 1994 earthquake the Lincoln pool has been in need of repair and this year it was finished. If Measure S doesn't pass, students might now be able to use the pool during physical education. If P.E. doesn't get the funding that it needs, then us kids won't have new equipment needed for an interesting physical education class.

I was fortunate to be able to take music in elementary school and I am still playing my saxophone in the highest band at Lincoln. It has been an amazing experience to perform at Stairway to the Stars and go to festivals and conventions around Southern California. If Measure S doesn't pass, my brother, who is in second grade, would not be able to learn an instrument in elementary school and would not get to have the experiences I had.

I know everyone has heard the saying, "Our kids are the future." And saying that is true — without a proper education for us kids the country will be in disarray. So it's just a couple hundred bucks a year to help pay for thousands of students to succeed in life. Please vote YES on Measure S on June 3. Us kids are the future and we need your help.

Daniel Nemzer
7th grade student
Lincoln Middle School
Santa Monica

Hotels support Measure S**Editor:**

We as a community must work to pass Measure S, a school funding measure, which will be on the June 3 ballot. Without Measure S many critical programs in our schools will be eliminated. Currently over 200 teachers and critical district personnel have received notices that they will not be able to return next year.

As an active member of the business community, I feel that it is important for Casa del Mar and Shutters on the Beach, as well as our parent company, The Edward Thomas Companies, to support our schools. I have always believed that giving back to the community is very important and over the years our hotels have adopted schools and helped support the education of local students.

With the state budget crisis and the continuing financial downturn in the economy, it is important that the whole community help schools to secure much needed funding.

I urge a YES vote on Measure S.

Klaus Mennekes
Vice-president and general manager
Edward Thomas Companies

Don't feel guilty about voting 'no' on S**Editor:**

Well, I think I have received just about all the slick ad campaigns produced and paid for by big business in support of Measure S. They are convinced, and I am sure

the school district and city council were relieved to be told, that the most effective ad campaigns will concentrate solely on the emotional aspect of the problem, our children's future and it's for the kids for God's sake (tight head shots of pouting kids help).

I know that sounds cold but the fact is, everyone knows schools are important for children, even the estimated 20-30 percent of Santa Monica students who don't even live here. I don't know if the charges that there is fiscal mismanagement at our schools is valid, but the fact that the school district is unwilling, or worse, unable to address the non-resident issue makes me wonder.

So, you see, framing it in an emotional context lets the city and school leaders off the hook. The central issue for me is simply the manner of raising the funds they say they need. The city government DOES waste our tax dollars on all sorts of things that have nothing to do with running the city. The school district has already said that they will seek other ways of raising money and the city government will be forced to shift existing funds from their pet projects.

When Measure S is defeated they will do just that and the business community will pay their fair share based on a reasonable tax formula and the renters will have to pony up too, definitely, since they comprise the majority of the student body and the ineptitude, incompetence and sophomoric political grandstanding of our city government will be held under harsh lights and exposed for what they are and come election time, we can replace them all with leaders that put common sense and the priorities of Santa Monica residents first. Vote NO on Measure S and definitely do not feel guilty about it. Don't let a slick ad campaign sway you.

John Gorman Place
Santa Monica

Defeat Measure S, send 'strong message'**Editor:**

I am sorry that the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District is facing serious cash problems, but it's time to hold the state and city accountable for their budget shortfalls and let them know they can't keep coming to us for more money to fix their mistakes. If we don't send a strong message now by voting against Measure S, we are being co-dependents in their inability to properly run a government.

How about keeping a perfectly good Main Library and giving the \$77 million earmarked to pay for the new one to the school district? It's time to think outside the box for once rather than continue to think about new ways to empty our pockets.

Krista Grossman
Santa Monica

Today's first-graders, tomorrow's leaders**Editor:**

The article on the cover of the Santa Monica Bay Week newspaper, dated Thursday, May 29 was appalling. Mr. Casillas as quoted in such article should consider that "S," as in Measure S, does not stand for (as he puts it) the "shaft tax," but rather "someday."

Someday Mr. Casillas, as well as the rest of the citizens in Santa Monica, will become old, incapacitated and possibly senile. We will depend on these first-graders of 2003 in the future to make important decisions concerning our well-being. They will, as we do now, make decisions regarding budgets, healthcare and public schools. They will become the doctors who treat us at Saint John's Hospital, they will sit as judge in the Santa Monica Courthouse and incarcerate criminals who may harm our children and/or grandchildren and keep Santa Monica's streets safe.

Parents do not raise "a child," we raise a generation and if we do not take their education seriously we could have negative repercussions in the future. The education of these children benefit Santa Monica as a whole. It is a much bigger picture than parents having the selfish glory of a refrigerator full of cute little pictures drawn by our own kids.

Although I am not a homeowner, because I am a single mother who spends half of my salary in exorbitant rents in order to enroll my child in Roosevelt Elementary School, I would be happy to write an additional check per month for approximately \$18.75 for the betterment of my child's education, as well as the future of Santa Monica.

In crucial times with alerts regarding terrorist activity, do we really wish to endanger children by having no nurse on campus? Do we really want the student/teacher ratio to be so high that the essentials such as reading and math skills are barely monitored (keep in mind that these kids may be handling your bank account "someday")?

To me, as well as many concerned citizens of Santa Monica, there is no question about it — vote yes on Measure S!

Kimberly Clark
Santa Monica

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

Send your letters to Santa Monica Daily Press Attn. Editor:

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NATIONAL

Fireworks shows threatened by confusion over new rules

BY JIM ABRAMS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Small towns across America could be without fireworks this Fourth of July if federal agencies can't settle on new homeland security restrictions on shipments by train.

"It's getting stupid. Do they really think a terrorist will use a firecracker to blow up a building?" said Don Lantis, of North Sioux City, S.D., whose family-owned pyrotechnics company puts on 300 to 400 shows around the country every Independence Day.

Since early this year railways have refused to handle fireworks, cutting off the main method of transport for shipments arriving at West Coast ports from China and other Asian countries. On May 5, the government issued regulations on fireworks transport by air, water and truck but has yet to decide on new guidelines for trains.

On Thursday, House Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner,

"The lack of action on rail transport threatens to prevent the delivery of fireworks for the Fourth of July in many areas of the country."

— JAMES SENSENBRENNER
House Judiciary Committee Chairman

R-Wis., wrote the secretaries of Justice, Transportation and Homeland Security, urging them to quickly come up with interim rules to comply with last year's passage of the Safe Explosives Act.

"The lack of action on rail transport threatens to prevent the delivery of fireworks for the Fourth of July in many areas of the country," he said.

"We are working diligently to get a rail explosives notice," said Blain Rethmeier, a spokesman for the Justice Department. He said the effort was still in the draft stage awaiting agreement by the involved agencies.

Julie Heckman, executive director of the American Pyrotechnics Association, said the biggest worry is that companies putting on fireworks shows, while able to satisfy their larger customers, will lack the supplies to carry out performances in smaller communities.

"It's been crippling for the fireworks industry," she said. "The concern is that we are way behind in getting products" because of backlogs at the ports.

She said her association, which represents some 260 pyrotechnics companies, has found only two truck lines willing to carry their products because of the increased security and insurance costs. Trains actually are the safest and most

secure way of moving fireworks, she said.

The industry is close-knit, she said, and better situated companies will help their competitors with supply shortages.

But "it's now or never," she said of the need for new rail transport rules before Independence Day. "We are most renowned for lighting up the skies to show the country's greatness. We aren't associated with terrorism."

Lantis, whose Lantis Fireworks company has been in business since 1945, said it will cost his firm an extra \$4,000, more than double current rates, to move a shipment of fireworks from the West Coast by truck rather than train.

He said his company of about 40 employees will have to pay \$5 million this year in insurance, and that under new rules everybody in the industry will have to undergo background checks. In the past, he said, the company's Salt Lake City branch hired "shooters" from Australia because of their skills, but prohibitions on foreigners will make that impossible this year.

"It's foolish," he said. "Fireworks don't do anything, they make colors."



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INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA PERSONNEL BOARD

The Santa Monica City Council is now accepting applications for two (2) appointments to the City of Santa Monica Personnel Board. Applicants must be a current resident of the City of Santa Monica.

The State Political Reform Act requires certain officeholders to disclose their interest and income that may be materially affected by their official action. The applicant 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 Board duties & disclosure requirements are available from the City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 1685 Main St., Rm. 102 (submit applications at this same location), by phone at (310) 458-8211, or on-line at <http://santa-monica.org>.

All current applications on file will be considered.

Applications due by noon, Tuesday, June 17, 2003.
Appointment to be made by City Council, June 24, 2003.

Disability related assistance and alternate formats of this document are available upon request by calling (310) 458-8246.



City of
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Three get probation and fined for having sex on train

By The Associated Press

MINEOLA, N.Y. — Three people were sentenced Friday to a year of probation and fined \$200 each for having sex aboard a Long Island Rail Road train.

Dennis Greene was arrested along with his brother Lyle and his sister-in-law Francine in September. A conductor alerted by a passenger found the three having sex in a passenger car occupied by at least 15 other people.

Lyle and Francine Greene pleaded guilty to public lewdness, and Dennis Greene was convicted at a trial.

They could have gotten up to 90 days in jail.

DID YOU KNOW?: Beethoven was

the first composer who never had an official court position, thus the first known free-lance musician. Born in 1770, he grew up poor, but published his first work at age 12.

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NATIONAL



Concorde flies into history

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Flying into blue skies and history, the last Air France Concorde to go on a commercial flight from Paris to New York landed Friday, an emotional end to a pioneering chapter in aviation.

The white, needle-nosed supersonic plane took off with a roar from Charles de Gaulle airport, north of Paris, at 10:38 a.m. (4:38 a.m. EDT). In New York, the JFK Airport operations desk said the Concorde landed at 8:10 a.m., 10 minutes ahead of schedule.

On Saturday, in its last ever commercial flight for Air France, Concorde will speed back to Paris from New York and then go into retirement.

"It's very emotional. Concorde is a story of joy, of emotion, of technical prowess," said Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, an Air France staffer, before the flight departed with 58 passengers, three pilots and eight cabin crew. Chief pilot Jean-Francois Michel was at the controls.

Air France and British Airways, the only carriers to operate the aircraft, are both retiring their Concorde fleets. The last British Airways flights are scheduled for October.

The Concorde's demise follows the July 25, 2000, accident over Gonesse, France, that killed 113 people, including four on the ground. The aircraft was taken out of service until November 2001, and refurbished based on findings by investigators.

An investigation determined that a stray piece of metal on the runway punctured a tire during takeoff. Rubber chunks then punctured the fuel tank, triggering a fire. The Concorde was fixed with sturdier tires and a fuel-tank liner, but things were never the same.

Flying fears after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks took a toll on airlines around the world, making it harder to keep the

fancy flying machine, with its costly maintenance, in service.

Concorde's demise ends an era of Champagne at twice the speed of sound.

The menu for Friday's flight included caviar, foie gras in puff pastry, lobster and beef fillet.

"We work in exceptional conditions, with an exceptional clientele, in an exceptional plane," said Jean-Charles Principeaud, a Concorde flight attendant. "To be able to serve a glass of Champagne while flying at Mach 2 was something that seemed impossible a few years ago. Now we are aboard the most beautiful plane in the world. It will remain an unforgettable dream."

The rich pampered themselves with supersonic trans-Atlantic travel. Concorde also served on-the-go diplomats like French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin and executives making deals on both sides of the Atlantic. Another category of supersonic clients certain to feel wistful are neither rich nor high-powered, just faithful lovers of the Concorde, including the aircraft's specially trained crews.

The luxury aircraft began regular service in 1976. With a cruising speed of 1,350 mph, it crosses the Atlantic in about three hours; because of the time change, west-bound passengers arrived before they left.

The idea of a supersonic passenger plane gained momentum in the 1950s, after Chuck Yeager's 1947 blast through the sound barrier. Manufacturers in Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States all worked on designs.

In 1968, the Concorde's first prototype rolled out at Toulouse, France. It lifted off 13 months later, three months after the Soviet version made its first flight.

Air France says the aircraft is now too expensive to maintain and announced with British Airways in April that Concorde was being retired.

European slights not forgotten

SUMMIT, from page 1

tricentennial celebration, Russian President Vladimir Putin will also be in Evian. He and Bush will be working on a friendship that got off to a strong start before veering off course because of Iraq.

Putin's foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, became one of the sharpest critics of the U.S.-led war, at one point declaring icily, "Iraq does not need a democracy which is carried on the wings of a cruise missile."

At their testiest, relations dipped into name-calling.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien's communications director, Francoise Ducros, resigned late last year after being overheard calling Bush "a moron," and Germany's justice minister, Herta and Paul Paulsen, was forced to quit after comparing Bush's political tactics to Hitler's.

For their part, Bush's companions will sit with a president whose administration has earned a reputation in much of Europe and beyond as arrogant in its foreign policy and vindictive in holding out the prospect of retribution against those who disagree with it.

They remember that Bush's top advisers met specifically to discuss ways to punish France for standing against the United States in the war. They remember the president making a point of saying he wouldn't be inviting Chirac to the Texas ranch soon.

Before the war, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld snubbed his German counterpart at a NATO meeting and set

tongues wagging with his dismissive description of France and Germany as part of "old Europe."

Even the Canada-U.S. relationship, traditionally close, has seen some chill. After U.S. Ambassador Paul Cellucci sharply criticized Canada for staying out of the coalition that was fighting in Iraq, Chretien canceled a trip to Washington and Bush postponed one to Canada.

"They have a great opportunity to renew the relationship," Lee Feinstein, of the Council on Foreign Relations, said of the summitters. "The question is whether they want to."

If personal rapport is lacking, policy differences may be of more consequence.

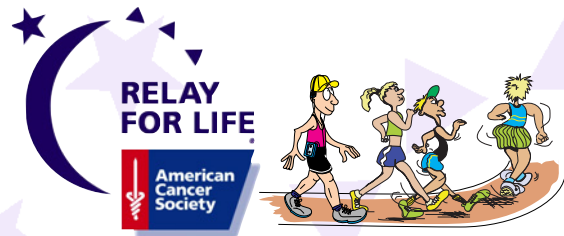
"There's no doubt in my mind that the Iraq episode has shifted the strategic calculation across the globe and certainly in Europe," said Shibley Telhami, international relations professor at the University of Maryland.

Other countries are nervous about the Bush doctrine of acting preemptively to deal with a perceived threat such as Iraq, he said, and they want some counterweight to what they see as American unilateralism.

Other leaders at the G-8 economic summit are settling in for three days of talks in the French Alpine town but Bush is barely staying 24 hours before flying to Egypt and Jordan for a meeting with Arab leaders and then Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Efforts to let bygones be bygones will go on without him — he'll be gone.

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INTERNATIONAL

Halliburton's contracts in Iraq, Afghanistan at \$600M

BY DAVID PACE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Vice President Dick Cheney's former company already has garnered more than \$600 million in military work related to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and potentially could earn billions more without having to compete with other companies.

As the Army's sole provider of troop support services, Halliburton's Kellogg Brown & Root subsidiary has received work orders totaling \$529.4 million related to the two wars under a 10-year contract that has no spending ceiling.

Rather than put the Iraq work up for bidding, the government has used the 2001 Halliburton contract to place the various work orders in Iraq, prompting criticism from some Democrats that Cheney's former company is receiving favored treatment.

"The amount Halliburton could receive in the future is virtually limitless," said Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., who disclosed the troop support work orders Thursday. "It is simply remarkable that a

single company could earn so much money from the war in Iraq."

Halliburton, a Houston-based oilfield-services and construction company, disputes those characterizations, noting it had to compete to win the original contract and that each of its work orders is covered by strict guidelines and costs controls.

"U.S. government contracts are awarded, not by politicians, but by government civil servants, under strict guidelines," company spokeswoman Wendy Hall said. "Government civil servants are well aware of and consistently abide by the requirements of the process. Privatizing this work allows the military to concentrate on its mission."

"Any allegation that this contract is set up to encourage unwarranted spending is unfounded and untrue," she said. "The vice president has nothing to do with the awarding of contracts, the bidding process or task orders."

Cheney headed Halliburton from 1995 until George W. Bush picked him as his running mate in July 2000.

The Army Corps of Engineers, using a

separate no-bid contract, has awarded Kellogg Brown & Root \$71.3 million in work orders to repair and operate oil wells in Iraq. That contract has a two-year duration of a spending ceiling of \$7 billion.

Kellogg Brown & Root competed with two other companies in 2001 to win the logistics contract that makes it the Army's only private supplier of troop support services such as housing, amenities and food over the next decade.

The initial logistics contract award carried no value. The Army negotiates each task order with the company and then verifies the costs as they are billed.

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 Kellogg 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 \$425.5 mil-

lion under the contract for work related to Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to Army records provided Waxman. Eleven more work orders totaling \$103.9 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 Kellogg Brown & Root through April for work under the contract related to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Carlson said the more than \$500 million in work orders under the logistics contract represents the Army's best estimate of the final costs of the projects. He said the company 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."

Much of a \$60 million obligation to Brown & Root to provide logistical supply line services and locations in Turkey was never spent because the Turkish government refused to allow U.S. troops to launch an invasion of Iraq from Turkey, Carlson said.

Israel, Palestinians near agreement on disarming militants

BY RAVI NESSMAN
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Israelis and Palestinians neared agreement Friday over disarming Palestinian militants ahead of a summit with President Bush, but security remained a key issue — as underscored by a U.S. Embassy warning that it has received "credible reports" of plans to kidnap U.S. citizens in Gaza.

The Israelis have demanded Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas crack down on militant groups in the West Bank and Gaza who are responsible for attacks against Israelis. Abbas says he prefers using persuasion to stop the attacks and has been working to negotiate cease-fires with the groups.

The sides said Friday they would be willing to accept a combination of the two plans.

Abbas told Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in a meeting Thursday night that the planned cease-fire would only be the first phase of a crackdown, a senior Palestinian official said Friday. If Israel refrains from military operations in Palestinian areas, the Palestinians would collect illegal weapons and force militant groups to integrate into the Palestinian political system, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Sharon understood that efforts to shut down the extremist groups would have to start with a cease-fire, Sharon adviser Zalman Shoval said.

"There was an understanding, but I want to be clear that they have to start cracking down on terror immediately," Shoval said. "If they want to do this by starting with a cease-fire, then we welcome this."

The Israelis believe Abbas is heading in the right direction, he said. "We got the impression that the Palestinians were serious about fighting the terror," Shoval said.

The U.S. Embassy announced it had received "credible reports" of plans to kidnap U.S. citizens in the Gaza Strip, underscoring the danger in the region.

"At this time, Americans are advised to be particularly cautious," the Embassy



Nasser Nasser/Associated Press

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, right, heads the PLO Executive meeting while his Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas talks to other members at his office in the West Bank town of Ramallah on Friday. The meeting convened to review the results of the three-hour meeting on Thursday night between Ariel Sharon and Abbas.

said on its Web site, adding that citizens should also follow earlier recommendations to defer travel to Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.

The embassy declined to give details about the kidnapping threats. The U.S. government has been more active in sending out warnings since the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

The Islamic militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad are mainly based in Gaza. Both groups have claimed responsibility for scores of attacks in Israel that have killed more than 350 people in more than 2 1/2 years of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Though Americans have been killed over the years in the Mideast conflict, they have usually died in attacks that targeted Israelis. Hamas said it did not target Americans.

"We are battling with the Zionist enemy and not with the United States," Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi told The

Associated Press on Friday, referring to Israel. Hamas "will not target any American or any other nationalities."

Some Palestinian and Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip hold American citizenship, and there also are a number of U.S. citizens in the area as international aid workers and peace activists. The U.S. Embassy said there are fewer than 500 Americans in Gaza.

Security has been a main sticking point ahead of Abbas' and Sharon's meeting with Bush, which is planned for the Jordanian resort of Aqaba on Wednesday. The Palestinians want Israel to clearly endorse their right to statehood at that meeting.

Declarations by each side recognizing the rights of the other to statehood and security are supposed to be the first step of the U.S.-backed "road map" toward peace. The plan first calls for a halt to violence, and ends with a full-fledged

Palestinian nation in 2005.

A committee of Israeli and Palestinian officials discussed those declarations Friday, said Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath.

"I think that the draft will be ready before the Aqaba meeting," he said.

Abbas has been working for more than a week to try to halt new attacks by militants. In an Israeli television appearance Friday night, he said Hamas could agree within a few days to a cease-fire agreement.

"I believe we will reach a full agreement that we will be able to trust and to act on," he said.

The leader of Islamic Jihad also offered a conditional cease-fire. However, the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, linked to the mainstream Fatah movement, said it would continue attacks.

Palestinian officials also met with two smaller groups, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, to discuss the agreement, Palestinian Cabinet minister Ziad Abu Amr said.

The Israelis argue it will be impossible to dismantle the militant groups and disarm them without using force because they have known no other life. The militants have bomb factories, smuggling rings and a widespread network of underground activists and armed cells.

Abbas said Friday that force would not be necessary.

"We will deal with it in our way as we see fit without reaching a conflict with anybody," he said.

Palestinian security sources said Friday that Zuhier Manasrah, the head of the West Bank preventative security service, resigned. It was another indication that the Palestinian leadership was trying to consolidate power so it could take stronger action against the militants.

Mansarah resigned to protest plans to unite the Gaza and West Bank preventative security units under Rasheed Abu Shebak, who now heads the Gaza branch, the Palestinians said.

DID YOU KNOW?: Mel Blanc, who played the voice of Bugs Bunny, was allergic to carrots.

Serena Williams apologizes for 6-0, 6-0 victory

[illegible]

check out your forecast in today's horoscopes ... page 2

COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



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- ACROSS**
- Words from a tripper
 - Standup guy?
 - Low point
 - Avoid
 - Labyrinth setting
 - Played the usher
 - Do something
 - Guy's date
 - Poker prize
 - A block or two
 - Basinger and Hunter
 - Spots for toiling
 - Make amends
 - Hawaiian crop
 - Tiara adorners
 - Town leaders
 - Eminem's art
 - Cal. abbr.
 - Ball club?
 - Tea party guest
 - Futile
 - Rivera art
 - "Okla-homa!" aunt
 - Depleted
 - Fix socks
- DOWN**
- Like Machu Picchu
 - Aquino's predecessor
 - Noted folk singer
 - Young fox
 - Con holder
 - Bullfight call
 - Kid's creation
 - Figures of speech
 - Some change
 - Sailing event
 - Maker of weapons
 - Sight at the U.N.
 - Massage
 - List
 - Close tightly
 - Diamond expert

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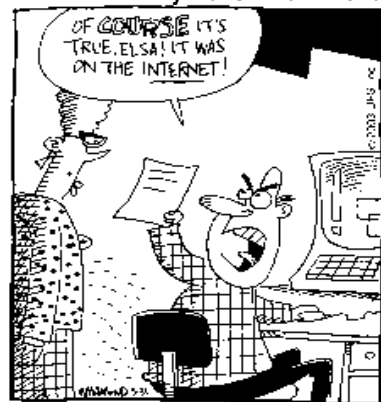
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Personals

ANYONE KNOW the whereabouts of Roberta "Bobby" Roberts. Have her call Jamie Muddra. (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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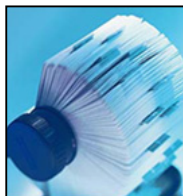
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BACK PAGE



State to residents: Stop super-sizing

By The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The nation's second-most overweight state may ask residents to go easy on the super-sized sodas.

The proposed campaign does not plan to ask people to quit soft drinks, but would promote smaller portions, said Nidia Henderson, wellness manager at the Public Employees Insurance Agency.

Henderson's agency said that the state Medicaid program and the agency together spent more than \$200 million treating obesity-related diseases in the 2000-2001 budget year.

Henderson noted that a 6-ounce bottle was the standard serving size when soft drinks first became popular in the United States. Now fast-food restaurants and convenience stores offer 64-ounce soft drinks containing about 800 calories.

West Virginia is ranked second among the 50 states and four territories for obesity and general poor health, according to the 2001 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The proposed advertising campaign will be similar to an earlier campaign: "Biggie Fries Biggie Thighs," which encouraged West Virginians to avoid super-sized fast food meals.

New 'Vette gives away theft

By The Associated Press

CINNAMINSON, N.J. — An armored car company guard admitted he stole some \$400,000 from his employer when suspicious officials questioned him after he drove to work in an expensive new sports car.

Perry Vedder, 32, of Philadelphia, was charged with theft in the May 10 robbery at Dunbar Armored's office in Cinnaminson, where he had worked for seven years. He was arrested shortly after and released after posting \$20,000 bail.

Authorities said Vedder was seen on video entering and leaving the vault around the time of the theft, but the robbery itself was not captured on tape because office security cameras were briefly disabled.

Dunbar officials confronted Vedder when he drove to work a few days after the theft in a 2000 Chevrolet Corvette valued at \$53,000.

Police confirmed that \$340,000 had been recovered from the home of Vedder's girlfriend. He had used \$25,000 for a down payment on the car and \$36,000 was still missing.

Neither the girlfriend nor two other guards on duty at the time of the theft have been implicated.

Warthog goes for a ride

By The Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — It was anything but "Hakuna Matata" — Swahili for "no worries" — when an anesthetized African warthog at the Potawatomi Zoo took off in a van.

Zoo visitors had to seek shelter inside zoo buildings briefly Wednesday when Mando the warthog woke up unexpectedly and knocked the otherwise unoccupied van into gear, sending it rolling down a small hill.

The ride came to an abrupt end when the van hit a fence. The warthog jumped through the driver's side window before falling back asleep.

No one was injured, although Mando needed stitches for cuts, zoo veterinarian Jeremy Goodman said.

The entire event occurred in a restricted area of the zoo, but visitors were moved inside buildings as a precaution because the warthog, with its sharp tusks, is potentially dangerous.

Mando was taken to the zoo hospital Wednesday afternoon when his keeper noticed he wasn't putting any weight on a back leg. X-rays showed there was no break, so he was placed back in the van, Goodman said.

The movement of being put in the van, though, woke Mando up. Workers quickly shut the van's door to trap the warthog inside.

When Mando moved into the front seat, the zoo workers cracked open the door and gave the warthog another shot of anesthesia. Before it took effect, however, Mando hit the gear shift, sending the van rolling.

Couple's office blown away

By The Associated Press

BOZEMAN, Mont. — A couple arrived for work at their new landscaping business only to find that their office wasn't there.

The modular trailer had been blown into a nearby pond the night before when a powerful wind roared through the area.

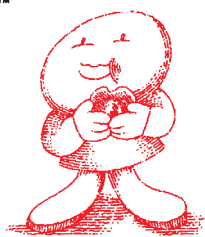
"I told my wife she should have paid the office bill because it's gone," said Bob Norton. His wife Julia Royston owns J&B Rock and Landscape Materials west of town.

Norton and Royston said plans to open their new decorative rock and landscape materials business on Monday probably will have to be put on hold.

"I'd give you a business card, but they're a little wet," Norton said.

He estimated the modular unit weighed 10,000 pounds. He and Royston hooked it up to a loader and towed it closer to shore and then used a float tube to reach it in hopes of retrieving anything salvageable. A business desk floated out and sank in the middle of the pond.

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