

FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Santa Monica beefs up reservoir security

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

(Editor's note: This is the first story in a weekly series that examines how the city is equipped for terrorist-related emergencies. Look for the second installment next Monday.)

The Los Angeles region has historically been connected by a single natural resource — water.

But in post Sept. 11, security officials believe the tie that binds the dozens of cities and communities across the region into one metropolis also may be its Achilles heel.

If terrorists inject a poison into the Metropolitan Water District's reservoirs — the main source of water for cities in Southern California — millions could be affected.

In Santa Monica, water utility warnings resonate loudly.

The city has owned its own water wells since its inception. But that self-dependency ended five years ago when officials found the wells had been contaminated

with high levels of a poisonous gasoline additive called MTBE.

And while the city is going after the polluters in court and working to build facilities to cleanse the water, it is currently dependent upon outside sources for its drinking water.

"It's a little ironic," said Craig Perkins, director of the city's environmental and public works department. "Here we are talking about how to protect ourselves against terrorism when MTBE was what actually closed down 80 percent of our water supply."

Because of its own water supply, Santa Monica was insulated from many of the hardships faced by surrounding communities when natural disasters struck.

After the 1994 Northridge earthquake ravaged the region, L.A. rationed water for weeks while Santa Monica was mostly spared because it was self-sufficient.

But in 1994 the city's wells weren't contaminated.

Now under similar conditions, Santa Monica would be forced into the same

See SECURITY, page 6

Look out Samohi: A 'new' principal headed your way

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

Good or bad, changes are coming to Santa Monica High School.

That's because Samohi's new principal plans to whip students and staff into shape.

It could be disconcerting news for students and some teachers who have been operating loosely at the city's main high school. But administrators and parents are hopeful that Ilene Straus' reputation as a strong leader will follow her to Samohi.

When Straus begins as Samohi's new principal on July 1, she'll roll up her sleeves, find the school's weaknesses and assemble a team to strengthen them.

Straus, who has been Lincoln Middle School's principal for the past 16 years, is known as a tough and demanding educator who means business.

And that's got some students worried, she joked. Straus has been spitting her time between Lincoln and Samohi for the past two months while assessing the state of the high school. When she's on campus, many of Straus' former students have



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press
Ilene Straus speaks at a send-off ceremony Friday at Lincoln Middle School, where she was principal for 16 years.

approached her asking if the dreaded "guided study" program would end up at the high school, or if Lincoln's dress code would be followed at Samohi.

Lincoln, which has been recognized nationally and by the state, has a rigorous

See SAMOHI, page 3



Franklin Smith/Special to the Daily Press

About 700 bicyclists finished the ninth annual California Aids Ride at Santa Monica College's Corsair stadium on Saturday. The seven-day ride started at Fort Mason in San Francisco and ended in Santa Monica. (Inset): A couple celebrates the end of a long ride with a public display of affection.

Aids riders cruise into Santa Monica College

By The Associated Press

Bicyclists in the 575-mile California AIDS Ride rolled past the finish line at Santa Monica Community College on Saturday, marking the end of a year of troubles for the charity event.

Riders added silk leis, Mardi Gras beads, feathered hats and angel wings to their red shirts and bicycle shorts for Saturday's ceremonies.

The seven-day ride from San Francisco raised more than \$2.7 million for AIDS groups, but only 715 people participated, down from more than 2,000 last year.

A competing ride was organized in May by other AIDS charities and raised \$4.4 million.

The Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation organized the LifeCycle Ride after claiming that not enough funds from the other event were going toward their programs.

Pallotta TeamWorks, which produced the ride, unsuccessfully sued to stop the AIDS/Life Cycle Ride. Last week, the two sides issued a joint statement that they had resolved their differences, and both rides are expected to be held next year.

Lawsuit challenges federal judge selection process

By staff and wire reports

LOS ANGELES — The man who recommended Santa Monica resident Debra Yang to be either Los Angeles' U.S. Attorney or a federal judge is being sued for allegedly interfering with the president's judicial powers.

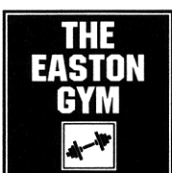
The suit names President Bush's top California political adviser, Gerald Parsky, and Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

A conservative group filed the suit on Friday in an effort to stop California's Democratic U.S. senators from helping the Bush administration choose candidates for judgeships.

It claims a committee to review candidates for federal district court openings interferes with the president's constitutional powers and violates open-meeting laws.

Federal judicial candidates normally

See SUIT, page 6



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

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

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Good intentions carry you far but cannot settle the waters totally when you hit rough seas. A solar eclipse announces a red flag for the next week. Tread carefully, especially with the emotional people that surround your life. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Use kid gloves with finances today, in one week and one month from now. You might not have the control you desire or think you do when handling certain key matters. A little self-discipline goes a long way. Make an important resolution while it counts. Tonight: Treat yourself well.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ If you are a woman, a solar eclipse in your sign could indicate changes in relationships. If you're a man, you might question whether you're in the correct field. In any case, use this stellar event to take stock of what's happening. Tonight: You smile, and others will react.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Step back some and make strong decisions. Your ability to come to terms with changes stars as a win-maker. Stay on top of what you want and need from others. You might be a little tired. Slow down and take care of yourself, too. Tonight: Vanish. Cocoon.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Just because you think you want something right now is no guarantee that you will want it later. Be realistic if you find yourself turned off to a goal or to a person. Understand that everyone changes, including you. Make way for transformation. Tonight: Give yourself a new beginning.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★ If you're uncomfortable with a professional situation, you might want to consider making a change. Otherwise, the choice might be made for you! Use caution with negativity. Remain upbeat and positive when dealing with others. Tonight: Be attentive to an authority figure.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ What suits you might not suit another. Flow with an opportunity, thinking through an important decision. Your perspective might change dramatically as a result. Avoid making decisions, as you will have more information coming your way. Tonight: Survey different opinions.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Your ability to listen to a partner must come through. Someone shares some important information with him or her. Remain sensitive to different opportunities. Know that impulsiveness, though natural, might not be appropriate right now. Tonight: Talk turkey with a loved one.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Others might become unusually challenging in the next few days, if not months. You might want to do something about a personal matter. Think carefully about what might be acceptable under the circumstances. Take all the time you need. Tonight: Make a positive resolution.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ You might need to recycle your energy or do something to help yourself rebuild. For some, this plan might be visiting your friendly doc and taking some vitamins. For others, less work and more exercise might fit the bill. Tonight: Slow down. Take care of yourself.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ If you think your love life might be dicey, hold on tight. Though you won't see a change right now, events in the next few months could head you in a new direction. Remain open. Stay positive. Creativity will be heightened. Tonight: So what if it is Monday?

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Changes revolving around your home life could take you in many new directions. Be more direct with those around you. You will get a stronger sense of direction in the next few weeks. Be careful with a leak in your home in the next few weeks. Make sure you get it fixed. Tonight: Put your feet up.

QUOTE of the DAY

**“The opposite of talking isn't listening.
The opposite of talking is waiting.”**
— Fran Lebowitz

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LOCAL

Santa Monica to launch new AM radio station

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

It seems the warmer the weather gets in Santa Monica the worse the traffic becomes.

But city officials hope a new municipally-owned radio station that broadcasts continuous traffic updates can cool off some of the city's notorious summer congestion.

"We want to try to help people get around our city as easily as possible," said Lucy Dyke, the city's transportation manager. "One aspect of that is real time information about where there is congestion and where there is available parking."

The antenna for a low frequency AM radio station — 1640 on your radio dial — has been installed at the city yards on Michigan Avenue and 24th Street.

The signal from the radio station will only be audible within the city's limits, and the broadcasts will be limited to traffic and parking information.

Though officials believe they will be able to broadcast advocacy spots, advertising off-beach parking locations that have a free shuttle service to the beach.

"We want to get the message out that you can get out of your car and park once in Santa Monica," said Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McKeown. "We provide a lot of services that people who come visit us don't know about."

Officials have not decided when the new AM radio station will begin broadcasting, but they believe it may be up and running within the next two months.

All the equipment has been purchased and all the necessary permits have been received from the Federal Communications

Commission, which regulates television and radio.

"It's a special FCC license given to communities specifically for traffic use," McKeown said. "If a voice off the dash board can help get cars off the street, I'm all for it."

"If a voice off the dash board can help get cars off the street, I'm all for it."

— KEVIN MCKEOWN
Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tem

Now all the city needs to do is decide where the broadcast booth will be located and how information from the police and fire departments, and other city departments will be collected.

"It's a brand new system for us," said Dyke, who has been leading the city's efforts to create the new radio station. "Most of our traffic problems are regular occurrences and we can predict when they are likely to occur."

"But we will need someone to actively update it," she added.

The city also plans to broadcast which downtown parking structures and beach lots have available spaces. Those spaces can be monitored through a new electronic system the city has installed to monitor the city-owned parking decks.

Struttin' their stuff



Franklin Smith/Special to the Daily Press
'Mr. Eagle' walks with students of John Muir Elementary from the school to the beach Saturday as part of the day's fund-raising activities.

New leadership needed at Samohi, superintendent says

SAMOH, from page 1

curriculum, tough student behavior policies and a dress code.

"In middle school, I don't let girls' bra straps show," Straus said. "I run a school with high expectations with staff and students."

Lincoln's successful "guided study" program, which was instituted about 13 years ago, mandates that students who failed to do their homework before they show up to class must do it before they can leave.

Lincoln math teacher Steve Marcy and other staffers didn't think it could be done. But more than a decade later, about 85 percent of Lincoln's 1,300 students have their homework done before they walk through the door.

"It's one of the best things we ever did," he said. "I said it would never work — get 1,000 kids to do their homework, but my God, they really did it. It's amazing."

"It started to be part of the culture," he added.

That "culture" is what is known by Lincoln administrators as the "Straus

effect." Infusing a high accountability system, a strong leadership style and teamwork at Lincoln is what has made Straus desirable and successful as an educator.

She has been asked four times to come to Samohi in the past nine years, but because she felt there was still work to be done at the middle school, Straus has remained the driving force behind Lincoln's success.

It wasn't until school superintendent John Deasy approached Straus this past spring to be his assistant superintendent that the 52-year-old began re-evaluating her options. Deasy didn't offer Straus the assistant superintendent job, but he did ask her to come to Samohi.

He said her skills would be better utilized there. Straus agreed.

"I think it was time to make a difference on a higher level," she said.

She said the maturity level of students will be a welcome change at Samohi but there also are challenges that come with her new job, especially because she will oversee 1,100 more students and 100

See SAMOH, page 6

The Q-Line

After a win Sunday, the Los Angeles Lakers are on their way to being NBA champs once again. While they are doing a fine job keeping the New Jersey Nets at bay, fans know not to jinx their record by claiming victory too early.

However, Southern Californians are optimistic that their basketball team will prevail. Flags are being flown and parties are being thrown.

This week, Q-Line wants to know,

"What would be the best thing about the Lakers winning the NBA championship and how should we celebrate when the Nets are dunked?"

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OPINION

LETTERS

School district should bail itself out

Editor:

There can be no question as to the unacceptability of any attempt to bail the school district out of its current fiscal woes by increasing the parcel tax.

Having received my entire pre-collegiate, K-12 education in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, I was witness to unprecedented waste and misplaced priorities at every level — waste which I find it hard to believe has suddenly vanished over the course of the intervening years.

I am naturally, therefore, skeptical of claims on the part of the Board of Education that a parcel tax is the only means of resolving the monetary shortfall.

It is my belief that you do not want to make the tough decisions, that you believe the property owners of the district to be a cash cow, that you regard the school system as a sacred cow. Neither is true — there are no cows in this situation, only good and bad, fair and unfair, sound and unsound fiscal policy.

Parcel and property taxes, especially as pertain to funding education, are antiquated and lazy governance unbecoming of any forward thinking body.

They are unfair because they lay the burden of debt on those who did not incur it and who are not most likely to benefit from its removal. They are unsound because there is no correlation between the need of the district and the property owner's ability to pay.

With property values in the Santa Monica and Malibu areas reaching new heights, there is a perception that a few more dollars on the property tax bills won't be noticed. This perception could not be more wrong.

While they live on multi-million dollar lots, many such property owners are 20-30-, 40- and even 50-year residents — often retirees on fixed incomes. Your problems are not their fault, and the resolution of such problems should not be their burden. Their homes are aging — they have roofs to repair, plumbing to re-pipe, insurance to pay and other priorities which, frankly, are no one's business but their own.

Pep rallies, school activities, special programs and the education of other people's children are not their concern.

You should also understand that the parcel tax is not the only bond appearing on the property tax bill. Citizens are up to their necks in bonded indebtedness — \$50 here, \$100 there.

For those on fixed incomes, even those who live on highly-assessed properties, such an accumulation can quickly amount to hardship. And yet there are municipalities and communities all over this country, even in California, which do not rely on parcel taxes and property taxes to fund their services and their schools.

I urge you to look to them for innovative and creative ideas. At the very least you owe it to this community to involve property owners in the process — let the community have oversight of your budget and make suggestions as to where they think cuts can be made. It is, after all, their money you are asking to spend.

The cuts might not be popular — cuts never are — but they would be fair and responsible. If you were working in the private sector, you would have no choice but to make cuts or seek more creative means of funding.

Many of us grow weary of the argument that "we all benefit from the education of our children." If this is the case, then please find a way to make everyone pay equally for the education of our children and not just homeowners.

But don't trot out the "plight of our children" as justification — emotional extortion may appeal to people's hearts but it doesn't obfuscate hard facts and common sense.

There is no more tragic irony in this situation than the fact that many who must live on a budget find it hard to do so because they must pick up the tab for officials who cannot live on theirs.

Wade Major
 Malibu

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

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LOCAL



The FunHog

By Dan Dunn

Jealousy rears its ugly head

"What's wrong with being single, man?" Bottomfeeder asked me, as I drowned some blues in whiskey at the Some Young Moon. "I mean, you're good at it. REALLY good at it. I think it's the one thing that separates you from ordinary people."

He had a point ... and that certainly didn't make me feel any better about the situation. It's one thing to be lonely in the world, it's quite another to realize that were you NOT alone, you'd be altogether less interesting.

"It's been five years!" I blurted. "Five years since that evil woman ... no, nevermind ... I swore I'd never talk about it again."

"Good," said Bottomfeeder, tossing back a shot of Jameson. "Wanna play darts?"

"OK, fine ... if you really want to know what happened, I'll tell you!" I cried. Boy, that Bottomfeeder can be SOOOO pushy sometimes!

My ex-girlfriend's name is Tina. I haven't seen her since 1997, and I swear, I hope I never do again. What she did made me a hard man — and NOT in the good way. She yanked out my heart, threw it on the floor, and did a "Lord of the Dance" number all over it. By the time she was through, my spirit was beaten like a junkyard dog. A shell of the man I used to be, which — come to think of it — really wasn't all that much of a man to begin with.

Tina and I shared what is popularly known as an "open relationship." Ostensibly, an open relationship is one based on mutual respect for individuality and a belief in personal freedom. But all it REALLY means was that both of us were free to date whomever we pleased.

Had I been the one who decided we should have an open relationship, everything would have been dandy. I wasn't, though, because I'm the old-fashioned type who figures if you really respect somebody in a relationship then you ought to have the decency to sneak around and keep the cheating to yourself.

"I think I'd like to keep things wide open," Tina told me at the beginning of our doomed dalliance. And at first, I was all for it. I figured I'd be able to indulge my primal male hunter-gatherer urges guilt-free, AND still have a steady, attractive date lined up for Saturday nights. Men invented the concept of the open relationship for this very reason: To have our cake ... and eat lots of other people's cakes too!

Problem was, I quickly grew to love the cake I had with Tina. A few weeks into the arrangement, I started wondering — obsessing, actually — over who, besides me, was sampling her icing. All at once, Jealousy, Insecurity and Lame Metaphors reared their ugly heads.

And so it was that I made my way into a crowded bar one night to calm my nerves with Strong Drink, and noticed a cute couple snuggling in a booth across the way. That's when I discovered the excruciatingly painful downside of the open relationship ...

"Tina, what in the name of Jiminy Cricket are you doing with my best friend?" I shrieked.

That was Tommy Barnard, a pilot I met when I was stationed in Guam with the Merchant Marines (long story — don't ask). Tommy and I had a lot of common interests, such as going out drinking, staying in drink-

ing, and ... well, assorted ... other ... things ... drinking.

I'd tell you more about Tommy Barnard, but then I'd be breaking yet another vow — the one about never speaking his cursed name again — and I WILL stick to my vow never to break more than two vows in a single day. And, whew, did that last sentence tire me out!

So after Tina left with that back-stabbing jerk who shall remain nameless, I launched into an aberrant mode of behavior: For the rest of the evening, when I wasn't pounding beers at the bar, I attempted to utilize those fabricated stories, pitiable pick-up lines and sultry facial expressions I foolishly convinced myself was personality, in the desperate hope that I'd meet someone else too.

It didn't happen.

What did happen, however, was that in a relatively short period of time, I managed to make a raging ass of myself, insuring that for the rest of the evening women avoided me like a second-string junior varsity defensive back with bad skin.

Then sometime around 2 a.m. I burst into my apartment, picked up the phone and called that person I thought was my girlfriend — determined to tell her how I really felt. She wasn't home. Probably still fore-playing with Tom, er ... that GUY!

Uh-oh. In a night littered with poor decisions on my part, I made yet another dubious move: I left a message:

"Where are you, Tina? Could you actually be spending the night with him? That loser with the off-the-rack wardrobe and the red Miata? Don't you realize what a hideous mistake you're making? Don't you know how much cooler I am than him? HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?!!!"

To add indignity to disaster, all of her girlfriends got to listen to my psycho-babble since it was permanently saved on her answering machine. She played it over and over again — inviting friends over, and calling social workers in Ohio long distance who made poor second-generation tapes to play on the way to work at the volunteer center.

In one vicious night, I'd lost my girl, my best bud and my dignity. Had it not been for my ole' pal beer, well, I don't know what I would have remembered.

Then I moved to California to start over. "Here's what I think, Hog," Bottomfeeder offered. "A relationship is like the inside of a jar of paste. Even with the lid securely fastened, it's sticky and hard to handle. Leave it open, and it'll quickly harden and become useless."

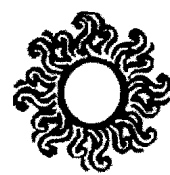
Bottomfeeder was right, of course. (Twice in one day — no doubt a record that may never be broken.) I wanted to tell him more about Tina and me. I wanted to tell him that despite her cheatin' ways, she was the most intriguing woman I've ever met. I wanted to tell him about the way she walked. And the way she wore her hair.

"Hey, man," I said, tossing an arm around his shoulder. "Let's play darts."

Some things are better left unsaid.

NEXT WEEK: The FunHog gets a visit from an ex-girlfriend ... care to venture a guess who it might be? Hmmm?

(Dan Dunn, a Santa Monica resident, writes for Warner Bros. Online. For more FunHog fun, check out www.thefunhog.com.)



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Straus known as a strong, respected educator

SAMOHI, from page 3

more teachers.

Known for being an overachiever and a woman who gets things done, Straus said she already has plans for the high school, with many more changes to follow.

"If the high school is not as effective as it should be, we'll find ways that it will be," she said, adding morale among the staff needs to be lifted. "We've got a lot of work to do."

While her immediate plans don't even scratched the surface, Straus said her priorities will be putting an effective administrative team together, changing the school's policies on student behavior, making courses more standardized to the state's curriculum and redesigning the organization of the school.

While the problems at Samohi are kept quiet by administrators, many parents have said they think the school operates too loosely.

Samohi has been operating with two co-principals, but after an exhaustive search, Deasy realized Straus was the best candidate for the job.

"There was no other candidate that met my satisfaction," he said. "The leadership is critical to Samohi."

Clearly Deasy and Straus have admirable respect for one another and view themselves as colleagues rather than in the traditional boss-employee relationship.

Last week, Deasy spoke before administrators, staff, parents and students at a reception welcoming Straus to Samohi, as well as at good-bye ceremony at Lincoln, where her subordinates sent her off with a traditional "roasting."

But there was a few serious moments when Straus' employees spoke about the

effect she had on them and the school. Deasy echoed many of the same sentiments and told Straus the legacy she is leaving behind was created by her strong leadership.

"We are all held accountable, and in turn, the students are as well. Her style has been inspiring."

— JEANNE DAVENPORT
Lincoln Middle School staffer

"I probably get why people are so nervous about you leaving and why people are so excited to see you go to Samohi," Deasy told Straus in front of about 100 people at Friday's roast.

He joked at the podium in the school's auditorium that he was probably the least favorite person in the room for taking their fearless leader away from them.

He joked that it wasn't the car service, the daily meals delivered or the weekly spa appointments that he used to lure Straus away from Lincoln.

"It was a conversation of need," Deasy said. "(Samohi) needs tending to and Ilene's skills set will provide that leadership."

Lincoln teachers had fun taking shots at Straus during her roast, but clearly they were endeared to their boss over the years.

They made fun of her by using "Strausisms" during a skit that included commonly used phrases she's used over the years — "clear expectations," "let's have a meeting about that," "put up a flow

chart," "identify the stakeholders."

All joking aside, the Lincoln staff felt they were allowed to succeed by collaborating together, instead of teaching in isolation.

Teachers could expect Straus to pop in on their classrooms at any given moment and when a potential educator interviewed for a job, the candidate had to "audition" in

front of other Lincoln staffers.

While they may have cursed her in private, Straus' staff at Lincoln will miss what she has done for them as a team, regardless of how painful it was at times.

"We are all held accountable, and in turn, the students are as well," said Lincoln staffer Jeanne Davenport. "Her style has been inspiring."

Water system maps no longer available to public

SECURITY, from page 1

strict rationing. And even then the city would have only enough water reserves to last residents about five days.

"We get 80 percent of our water from those outside sources," Perkins said. "Whatever we do is not nearly as important as what they are doing upstream with where we get our water from."

As part of its 10-year capital improvement plan, the city intends to increase the capacity of its reservoirs — possibly even adding another one under the civic center as that area is redeveloped — to better protect itself should the water become contaminated upstream.

"That's like a 10-year best case scenario plan," Perkins said. "In the interim we are going to have to hope for the best but plan for the worst."

If the pipes that bring in the city's water were ruptured and service could not be returned within five days, Perkins said the city would face some tough choices.

"We would have to bring in outside water by trucks and turn on the contaminated wells — not for drinking, but only for fire fighting purposes," he said.

The city currently has four reservoirs capable of holding a combined water supply of 40 million gallons.

The largest reservoir can hold 25 million gallons of water and is located below the Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades. The club's tennis courts are directly on top of the tank.

The other three reservoirs can hold 5 million gallons each. There's one on Franklin Street, just north of Wilshire Boulevard on the eastern boundary of the city. Another is located at the Arcadia water treatment plant at the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Bundy Drive in

West Los Angeles. And the third is directly below the median of San Vicente Boulevard, stretching from about 20th Street to 26th Street.

All the reservoirs are underground, a decision meant to save on the high cost of land but which today makes guarding the city's water reserves much easier.

"With regard to safe guarding our water supply it comes down to more vigilance and a continual overall review of our water facilities," said Gil Balboa, the city's utilities manager.

Even with the strenuous budget conditions the city currently finds itself in, officials will likely approve security upgrades for next year.

A fence that runs around the Arcadia water treatment facility may be replaced for \$57,000. It would include an electronic roll gate security entrance and two secure walk-through entrances. Another \$2,500 would go toward adding security cameras.

Since Sept. 11, officials say they have made mostly "common sense" changes.

The city has locked all of the gates surrounding its facilities, made sure only the right people have keys to the locks and it has asked for more police patrols at the reservoirs.

The city also has removed access to the water system's detailed maps that used to be on the city's Web site.

"We had maps of the distribution systems, the locations of pipes, where the reservoirs are and their sizes — all that type of stuff," Balboa said. "Those plans are still available for someone with a legitimate purpose, but we want to know who is asking for the information and for what purpose."

Dead deer dumped on campus

By The Associated Press

PLEASANTON — Senior prank day at Amador Valley High School took a morbid turn Friday when parts from four deer carcasses were found in the school swimming pool and elsewhere on campus.

School officials and police still haven't determined who was responsible for leaving the cut up deer parts scattered around campus.

The carcasses appear to have been part of a senior prank, school officials said.

Police Lt. Greg Wixom said all four animals looked to have been dead for at least a few days.

"It wasn't like someone went out, killed Bambi, tied their legs together and threw them onto the campus," Wixom said. "The animals looked like road kill."

The help of a skin diver had to be enlisted to retrieve a deer leg from the bottom of the school's pool, according to school district spokeswoman Kathleen Rueggesser.

Senators say judge selection process is bipartisan, fair

SUIT, from page 1

are screened by the home-state senator of the president's party. But neither California senator is a Republican.

So Parsky worked out an agreement with Boxer and Feinstein last year to create the bipartisan Judicial Advisory Committee. Members of its four subcommittees — one for each judicial district in California — vote on whether to refer a candidate to the White House for consideration as a possible nominee.

The United States Justice Foundation, a conservative legal group based in Escondido, contends that the procedure gives Democrats veto power over the selections.

However, when Yang was selected for a judgeship and the U.S. Attorney slot, the

bipartisan process seems to have worked.

Yang, who chose the U.S. Attorney position for the Central District of California, also was given the option to be a federal judge, after being interviewed by the committees.

Yang, who is a staunch Republican, was selected unanimously by the committees and both senators, despite that they are Democrats.

Parsky and aides to Feinstein and Boxer praised the selection process.

"It's producing good, well-qualified candidates who enjoy strong bipartisan support and can be swiftly approved by the Senate," said Howard Gantman, a Feinstein aide. "This is a procedure that fully recognizes the role of the president in the nomination of judges and the Senate's role."

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STATE



SAG president Gilbert prepares for tough role

BY GARY GENTILE
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — New Screen Actors Guild President Melissa Gilbert is matter of fact about the challenges of leading a fractious union as it grapples with the changing economics of the global entertainment industry.

"Nothing, nothing in this building comes easily," Gilbert said recently as she sat in her office surrounded by photos of her family and a framed ballot from the first of two contentious elections she won against actress Valerie Harper.

Gilbert took office in March after the first election was rerun because of ballot irregularities.

But her epic battles against Harper were only a warm-up to the challenges she now faces as head of the union. Chief among them is runaway production, which is costing the union thousands of jobs and compromising its clout in Hollywood.

In the months ahead, Gilbert will try to shore up a pension and health fund that has been deprived of an estimated \$23 million since 1997 as actors take work in countries where union bylaws aren't necessarily followed.

In the process, she must enforce a rule that requires members to work only under SAG contracts — even when those jobs are outside the United States.

The so-called Rule One was extended globally on May 1 in an attempt to curb the exodus of film and television work to Canada, Australia and other countries. Penalties for actors who violate the rule range from reprimand to ouster from the union in extreme cases.

Enforcement could lead to high-profile disciplining of major stars while putting SAG at odds with major studios that have insisted the union's authority doesn't extend beyond U.S. borders.

On top of it all, actors could find themselves in a conflict in which the agents who are supposed to protect their interests are also their employers.

The situation was created when union members overwhelmingly rejected a contract regulating the relationship between actors and talent agents — a contract Gilbert strongly supported.

Now, agents are free to invest in production companies or advertising agencies that employ actors.

At the heart of Gilbert's challenge is a contentious, fractious membership of about 90,000 actors. A handful earn millions of dollars for a single movie, but most are unemployed much of the year.

"This kind of discrepancy is unique. I don't know of any other union in the country that is like it," said William Daniels, who served as SAG president from 1999 to 2001. "When you're making \$20 million per picture, sometimes you don't even know where your union headquarters is."

Unlike members of more traditional unions, SAG members can actually hold a variety of jobs, supporting themselves as waiters or accountants between acting gigs.

"We're not dealing with the traditional work force where people have a lot of contact with each other or are in a work environment where they have a lot of internal cohesion," said Kent Wong, director of the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Labor Research and Education.

In recent years, the union has had to

deal with its share of labor disputes.

A six-month strike by U.S. commercial actors in 2000 brought filming of television commercials to a halt. Much of that production went overseas and has not returned.

In 2001, the threat of strikes by actors and writers forced major studios to accelerate production of feature films. The strikes did not happen, but the subsequent lull put a lot of entertainment industry employees temporarily out of work.

On the runaway production front, SAG is now negotiating with studios film by film and recently reached agreements with Warner Bros., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Paramount to honor SAG con-

"I think a lot of people underestimate the level of my stubbornness ... they perceive that I'm still 12 and am easily swayed and they are going to convince me to do whatever they want me to do. That just isn't the case."

— MELISSA GILBERT
Screen Actors Guild president

tracts on films being shot in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, in its dealings with agents, SAG is working to bring individual state laws in line with the previous agreement to avoid commission hikes and unfair labor practices.

SAG also has extended an olive branch to agents in hopes that the old agreement can be reinstated.

Through it all, the 38-year-old Gilbert is determined to provide strong leadership.

Her first challenge is to dispel her image as the child actress who rose to fame on the television show "Little House on the Prairie."

"I think a lot of people underestimate the level of my stubbornness," she said. "Not only do people still perceive that I'm going to be an absolute doormat, they perceive that I'm still 12 and am easily swayed and they are going to convince me to do whatever they want me to do. That just isn't the case."

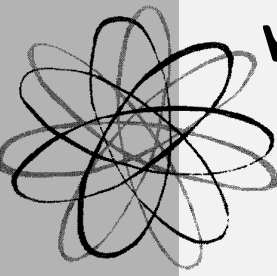
Even critics give her credit for determination.

"I will say this about Melissa. She shows up at the guild every day," said Gordon Drake, a SAG board member who opposed Gilbert's election. "She works hard and I do believe she has the better interests of the membership in mind."

Gilbert said she hopes to change the perception of SAG as a disorganized, paralyzed union. But she is not expecting miracles.

"We're just a big, dysfunctional family of very dramatic and colorful people," she said. "I felt it was my time to step in and see if I couldn't direct that energy and colorfulness, those eccentricities, in a more productive direction."

"Unity? It's a nice word. It's just not necessarily an achievable goal. If I set out with that in mind, with that high an expectation, I'll be ridiculously disappointed when this is over."



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SPORTS

L.A. Lakers one win away from a three-peat

BY JOHN NADEL

AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Start planning the parade.

The Los Angeles Lakers, with old reliable Robert

Horry hitting the go-ahead basket and seldom-used Devean George playing a major role, are within one win of a three-peat.

Considering no team has ever come back from a 3-0 deficit in the NBA playoffs, much less the NBA Finals, it's all but assured.

While Kobe Bryant scored 36 points and Shaquille O'Neal added 35, the Lakers had to tighten their defense and get other contributions down the stretch to beat the New Jersey Nets on Sunday night.

They got just enough in their 106-103 victory.

The Lakers can complete a sweep Wednesday night at Continental Airlines Arena, where it appeared the Nets were going to get back into the best-of-seven series by virtue of a red-hot shooting display.

But making 10 straight shots late in the third quarter and early in the fourth wouldn't be enough for the Eastern Conference champions.

The two-time defending champion Lakers, who have been in tight situations on so many occasions, had what it takes down the stretch, outscoring the Nets 13-2 to go ahead for good and 19-9 to finish the game.

George, who scored all six of his points in the fourth and got five of his eight rebounds, hit a twisting jumper

from the right corner as the shot clock was running out to cut New Jersey's lead to 90-85 with 8:22 left.

George, averaging 4.6 points in the playoffs, made two free throws and a follow shot around a basket by Bryant to move the Lakers within one at 94-93.

Horry had only three points before making a 3-point-er with 3:04 left to put the Lakers ahead 98-96, and they were on top the rest of the way.

The Lakers seemed in complete control late in the third quarter with a 73-63 lead when the Nets suddenly got their running game in gear.

When their hot spell was over, they led 84-78, the crowd was going crazy and the Lakers seemed a tired and beaten group.

Even in victory, the Lakers gave up 52 points in the paint while scoring 38 — a shocking development considering the presence of O'Neal.

In the end, though, it didn't matter.

The Lakers set an NBA Finals record with their seventh straight victory — four over Philadelphia last year and three over the Nets. And they've won 14 of their last 16 road playoff games.

One more and they've added another championship.



National Basketball Association

By The Associated Press

All Times EDT

NBA FINALS (Best-of-7)

Wednesday, June 5

L.A. Lakers 99, New Jersey 94, Lakers lead series 1-0

Friday, June 7

L.A. Lakers 106, New Jersey 83, Lakers lead series 2-0

Sunday, June 9

L.A. Lakers 106, New Jersey 103, Lakers lead series 3-0

Wednesday, June 12

L.A. Lakers at New Jersey, 9 p.m.

Friday, June 14

L.A. Lakers at New Jersey, 9 p.m., if necessary

Monday, June 17

New Jersey at L.A. Lakers, 9 p.m., if necessary

Wednesday, June 19

New Jersey at L.A. Lakers, 9 p.m., if necessary

Local girls' basketball champs ranked fourth in state; will compete in Orlando

By Daily Press staff

Ranked fourth in its age group for the state, the Santa Monica Surf 10 & under girls' basketball team will compete this summer in the Amateur Athletic Union's national tournament in Orlando.

The local girls' team also

will play several Southern California tournaments this month before making its first-ever trip to the nationals, beginning July 3.

"We are incredibly proud of what our 10 & under girls' team has accomplished this year, becoming the first Santa

Monica-based team to qualify for AAU Nationals," said George Quintero, founder and director of coaching for the Westside Basketball Club, the non-profit organization that sponsors the Santa Monica Surf team.

The team, which prac-

tices at John Adams Middle School and Lincoln Middle School, includes local girls Ashley Bautista from Will Rogers Elementary; Suzanne Couste from Roosevelt Elementary; Michel Pilon-Briggs from Franklin Elementary; Jennie Harding and Kristina Johnson from Will Rogers Elementary; Josephine Messer and Cheyenne Weekley from Edison Elementary; Charlotte Bax from Brentwood School; Savannah Erskine from La Ballona Elementary; Sophie Payson from Turning Point; Maya Feldman from Clover Elementary and Jennifer Borderud from St. Paul's.

Quintero, a Santa Monica High School graduate and coach at Westside High School, heads the coaching staff. Samohi alumni Allan Erskine, Chris Harding and Rashied Weeks also will attend the event, as well as long-time coaches Dante Sarmiento and Joseph Peacock and UCLA women's basketball player Michelle Greco.

"Our philosophy is to focus on the long-term development of our girls, both individually and as a team," Quintero said. "Thus, to qualify for the AAU Nationals in only our second year is very special."

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New plan may mark start of government reorganization

BY SHARON THEIMER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Leading lawmakers on intelligence issues said Sunday that President Bush's proposed domestic security agency does not address flaws in the FBI and CIA and is just the start of the changes needed in response to Sept. 11-related failures.

"If the administration takes the stonewall position that every word in their plan is biblical and if you change it you're unpatriotic, I think that will be a very serious error," said Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Sen. Richard Shelby, the committee's top Republican, said Congress must review carefully what Bush's plan does and does not do. For example, he said, it fails to address problems with the FBI and CIA that Congress' intelligence committees are reviewing.

"As this investigation unfolds, you are going to see more and more problems in the intelligence community," said Shelby, who appeared with Graham, D-Fla., on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"We're going to need the help of this administration to change a lot of things structurally and otherwise with these huge bureaucracies that I believe are not agile and do not, on all occasions, serve us well today," said Shelby, R-Ala.

The Department of Homeland Security proposed last week by Bush would inherit 169,000 employees and \$37.4 billion from the agencies it would absorb, including the Secret Service, Coast Guard, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the immigration and customs services. It would exclude the largest intelligence operations, including the FBI, CIA and the National Security Agency.

White House chief of staff Andrew Card said Bush left the FBI out of the new Cabinet-level department in part because he did not want it to resemble an "old Soviet-era" agency and because law enforcement would not be a homeland security responsibility.

"The FBI does more than worry about terrorist attacks," Card said on ABC's "This Week." "This is a homeland security department that will secure the homeland."

Card said the department would not gather intelligence about potential terrorist attacks but would serve as a clearinghouse, analyzing information from the FBI, CIA and other sources and assessing threats.

He said the government would have had a better chance of putting terrorism intelligence together before Sept. 11 had the new agency been in place.

While the White House has said the proposal would not increase the cost of government, homeland security adviser Tom Ridge said it may cost more initially, but not over the long term.

Card said Bush would not veto legislation setting up the department if it expands the size of government.

"No, he's looking to secure the homeland, and that's the priority," Card said on ABC.

Ridge said on CNN that under Bush's proposal, in addition to the new Cabinet secretary, his current post as a White House adviser would remain.

Democrats and Republicans have pledged to act quickly on the plan. House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt and others hope the department could be established by this Sept. 11.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., predicted turf battles, particularly over whether the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Coast Guard should join the new agency.

FBI questioning dive shop owners in scuba inquiry

BY SETH HETTENA

Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO — The FBI is checking to see whether Werner Kurn's dive shop and hundreds like it across the country hold the key to unraveling the next possible terrorist attack against the United States.

Agents spent several days last week at Ocean Enterprises, one of the biggest dive shops in the country, checking customer files and sales of special equipment.

"They want to know if we have seen anything out of the ordinary," Kurn said. "If you ask me where's the best place to dive, that's normal. If you ask me in a limited visibility dive how do you maintain your bearings or how can I dive in the harbor, that's not."

The inquiry stems from debriefings of detainees that found potential members of Osama bin Laden's terrorist network might have taken scuba training, said John A. Sylvester, who heads the counterterrorism office in the FBI's San Diego bureau.

Last week, the Professional Association

of Diving Instructors, the world's leading diving organization, gave the FBI a list of 2 million people the Rancho Santa Margarita-based association has certified to dive over the past three years, Vice President Jeff Nadler said.

Agents also have contacted 1,200 dive shops nationwide to check the names of those who took scuba courses over the past three years, including those who dropped out without getting certified.

In addition to California, dive shops in the Pacific Northwest, Florida and Ohio say they have been contacted. Dive shops in landlocked states, like Scuba One in Mandan, N.D., also are getting calls.

"They must have FBI agents around the country calling up little scuba guys like me," said owner Randy Kraft, who offers trips to the Caribbean for the 50 to 100 customers he certifies each year.

Also on the checklist are U.S. commercial dive schools that train students in underwater welding and repair work.

"What we're looking for is people who just took scuba for scuba's sake — people

Stand-off continues



Zia Mazhar/Associated Press

Protesters from Pakistan's Christian minority chant slogans against the Indian government on Sunday in Karachi, Pakistan. The military stand-off at the India-Pakistan border persists, with one million soldiers facing off along the tense border that separates the two countries. The front banner reads "we fight shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistani army against India."

who bounce from school to school to school and don't finish the course," Sylvester said.

He said agents also are checking for large sales of highly specialized scuba equipment.

At Ocean Enterprises, agents are checking the infrequent sales of \$5,000 rebreathers, devices that allow Navy SEALs to swim without notice because they don't produce a trail of bubbles.

A recent customer, Kurn said, was a wealthy man from Utah who wanted to watch whales without disturbing them. The FBI also has been checking with companies that manufacture the devices.

Also of interest are sales of underwater propulsion vehicles that can tug a diver long distances and sell for as much as \$8,000 each, Kurn said.

The FBI said San Diego is a crucial part of the investigation. It's both a dive center and a major tourist destination. The area is home to a host of potential targets, from seaside nuclear power plants to cruise ships and nuclear-powered Navy submarines and aircraft carriers.

The scuba warning, issued before Memorial Day, was part of a list of alerts about possible suicide bombers, subway and railroad attacks, suicide attacks using small planes, the use of weapons of mass destruction and assaults on nuclear plants and landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty.

While an underwater terrorist attack might sound more like a James Bond plot than reality, Sylvester said the FBI is tak-

ing the threat seriously.

"Before Sept. 11, flying planes into buildings was far-fetched also," he said.

Still, scuba experts are doubtful that a determined diver could do little more than make mischief underwater.

"Is it feasible? It sure it is," Nadler said. "Is it likely? It'd be kind of tough."

Blowing things up underwater requires far more skill than it does above ground. Navy SEALs, who have the most training of any U.S. special warfare group, must prepare for years before they are certified as combat swimmers skilled in the complexities of underwater demolition.

"It's well beyond the skill level of a scuba diver," said Master Chief William Guild of the Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, near San Diego.

Scuba schools train people to dive in clear conditions with good visibility. But the water around bridges and ports — the location of many potential targets — is turbulent and cloudy.

Underwater explosives are developed for military use. The Navy trains its SEALs to use limpet mines, which attach to a ship's hull with powerful magnets and can blast a hole through a 3/4-inch thick steel plate, according to Jane's Underwater Warfare Systems.

To use such explosives, a terrorist would likely have to transport several a considerable distance underwater to avoid detection and without sinking.

Still, San Diego's scuba shops are happy to help the FBI.



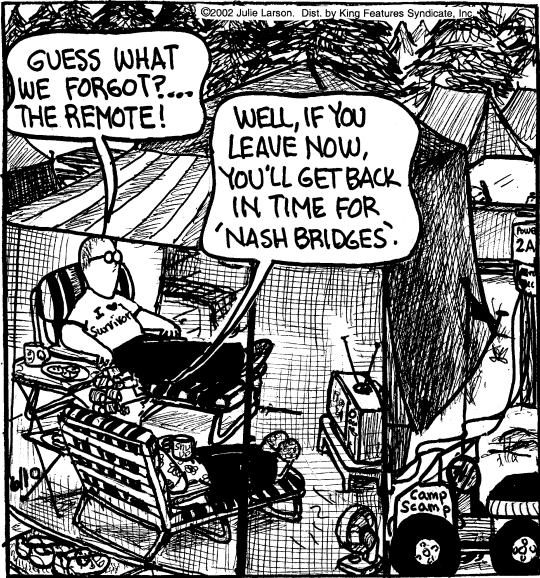
Lenny Ignelzi/Associated Press

A U.S. Navy boat patrols San Diego Harbor adjacent the USS Stennis aircraft carrier as a commercial vessel, left, and a pleasure craft sail past this week. The FBI, concerned that future terrorist attacks might come by sea, is compiling a database of all the country's certified scuba divers.

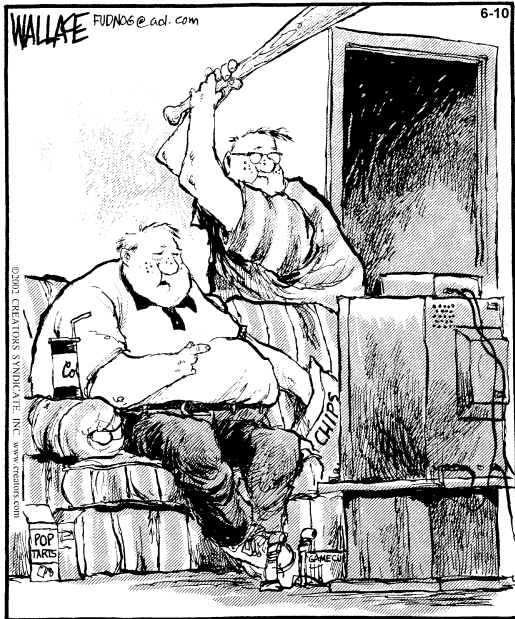


COMICS

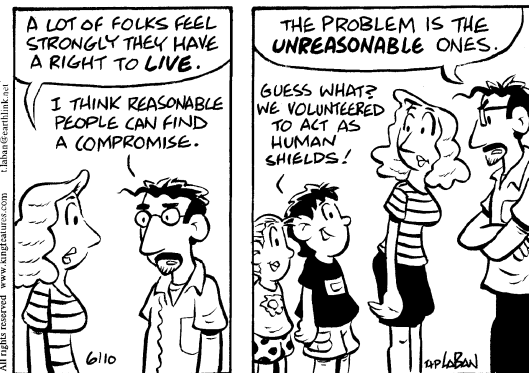
The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



Natural Selection® By Russ Wallace



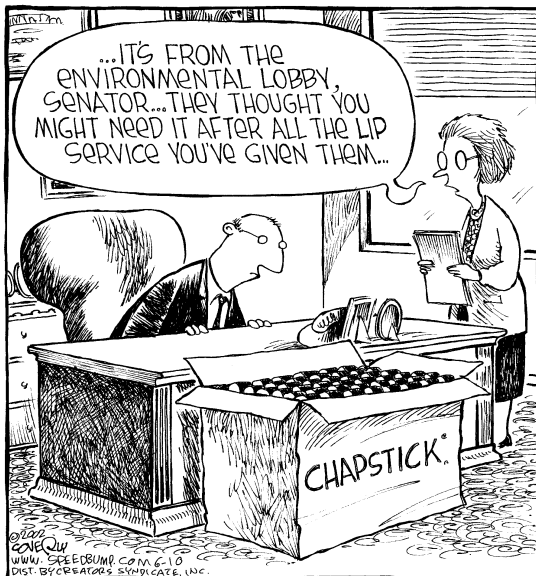
by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



Reality Check® By Dave Whammond



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ACROSS
1 Dupe
6 Parts of plays
10 Subsequently
11 Reef material
13 Occupied
14 Thrill
15 Neither follower
16 Road goo
18 Spying org.
19 Material for edible houses
22 Count starter
23 Noted name in art deco
24 Enraged
27 Poultry buy
28 The first place
29 Debt letters
30 Some cookies
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36 Crosses out
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40 Silly
42 More dreadful

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44 Is unable to
45 Cuss

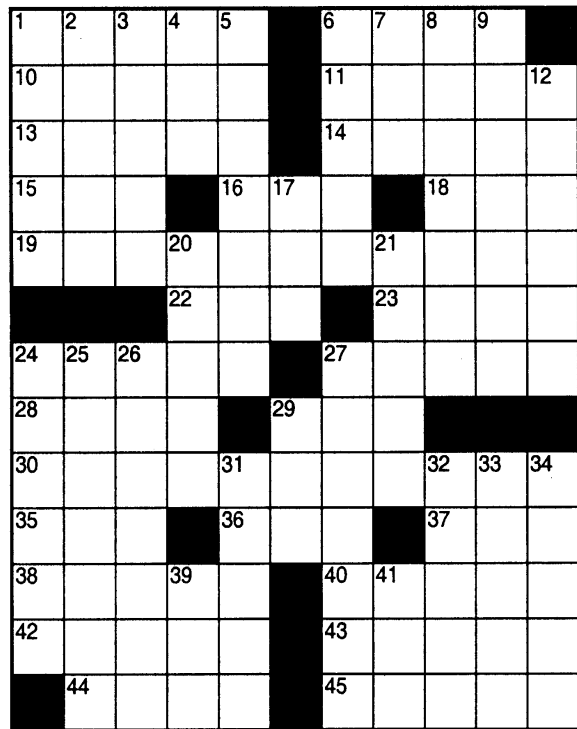
DOWN

1 Adhere
2 Asian city
3 Driver's reversal
4 — amis
5 Feign
6 Sarcastic
7 Maj.'s superior
8 Architec- tural orna- mentation
9 Fill
12 Guide
17 Exist



Saturday's answer

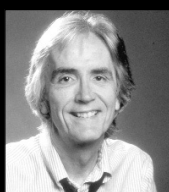
20 On the way
21 Summer TV
24 Ran
25 Foolish
26 Governor Jesse
27 Paleon- tology finds
29 Anger
31 Wield
32 Not oblivious
33 W. Va. neighbor
34 Take the wheel
39 Lair
41 Immedi- ately



6-10

STUMPED?

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

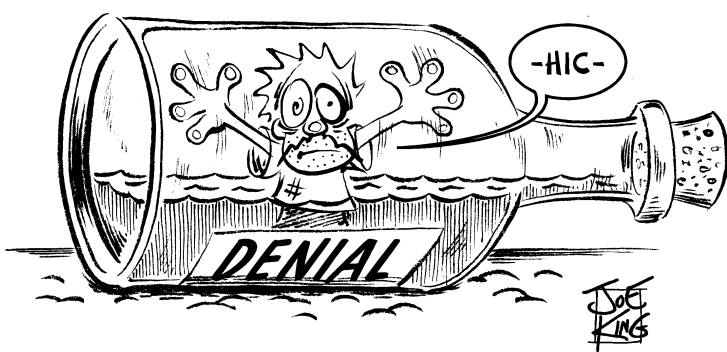
by Chuck Shepard

Man arrested for toe sucking fetish

In May, Trenton Veches, 31, resigned from his job with the Newport Beach, Calif., after-school recreation program when he was arrested on multiple counts of sucking the toes of boys age 6 to 10. Police said as many as 45 kids may have been involved, with several appearing on videotapes recovered from Veches' home. There was no evidence of anything beyond toe-sucking, but any touching of a child for sexual gratification is a crime in California.



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Carolyn Sackariason
530 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 200
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Employment

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The Santa Monica Daily Press is looking for experienced journalists to contribute on a freelance basis to its daily coverage of Santa Monica. Applicants must have a knack for investigative stories and a hard news background. Newspaper experience is required and daily experience is preferred. If you want to have some fun in a growing newsroom at Santa Monica's only daily newspaper, send your resume, clips and story ideas to:

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BACK PAGE

Napa Valley Wine Auction draws a \$320,000 bid

BY MICHELLE LOCKE
Associated Press Writer

ST. HELENA, Calif. — Sparkling wine flowed and “Hey, Big Spender,” belted out over the loudspeakers as 26 magnums of Napa Valley’s finest went to the high bidder of \$320,000 in the celebrity-studded annual wine auction Saturday.

“I really wanted the lot,” winner David Doyle said, a glass in his hand and a smile on his face as the software entrepreneur shook hands with people, including valley patriarch Robert Mondavi, who crowded around his table with congratulations.

Really wanted it — “\$250,000 was my limit,” he confessed ruefully.

Saturday was the 22nd Napa Valley Wine Auction, billed as the world’s largest charity event. And although individual bids were a bit below the high-flying days of the Internet boom, the money was rolling in. By the time the auction closed early Saturday evening, the auction had brought in an estimated \$6 million to \$7 million.

Doyle’s lot had been one of the most closely watched because it contained a number of highly prized wines including bottles of the almost impossible-to-get Harlan Estate and Screaming Eagle.

Last year, eight 3-liter bottles of Screaming Eagle went for \$650,000.

The auction was spread over four days, starting Thursday, but the big event came Saturday afternoon when people bid on bottles donated by members of the Napa Valley Vintner’s Association, the event’s sponsor.

Proceeds go mainly for health care for

“One of the reasons the wine auction gets such incredible bids — it’s not just because of the wine, it’s because of the personal relationships that people have developed.”

— TOM FULLER
Vintner’s Association

people in Napa County. Over the years the auction has raised about \$37 million.

Celebrities in the audience included actor Rob Schneider and former San Francisco 49er Joe Montana.

But the real star was the money.

“Forty-five-fifty-five-sixty-five-seventy,” auctioneer Fritz Hatton whipped out, barely drawing breath as the bidding on Doyle’s lot jumped \$30,000 in about 30 seconds. Seated at tables crowded under a big white tent, the smell of bruised grass mixing with wine, bidders held up yellow paddles to signify their intentions. Whistles blew to make sure they had Hatton’s attention.

When the bid got up to \$310,000, Doyle, from Newport Beach, “thought about it for 10 seconds. I looked at her (his girlfriend) and said, ‘What do you think?’”

She nodded, which means they’re the owners of 26, 1.5 liter bottles of wine from various wineries in Napa Valley’s prime Oakville region along with tours, tastings, lunches, brunches and a plane ride.

“One of the reasons the wine auction gets such incredible bids — it’s not just because of the wine, it’s because of the personal relationships that people have

developed,” said Tom Fuller, of the vintner’s association which has been putting on the charity auction for 22 years. “You’re bidding on your friendship more than just wine in a bottle.”

Also on offer at this year’s auction was

a Pillar Rock Vineyard donation of two 3-liter bottles of the 1999 and the 2000 vintage, which went for \$100,000. The lot and the 2000 vintage are dedicated to Barbara Olson, who was aboard the plane hijackers crashed into the Pentagon on Sept. 11.

Olson, 45, a lawyer, author and talk show commentator, was a friend of winery owners Teri and Ron Kuhn and “had so much fun with this wine auction,” Teri Kuhn said. Dedicating the vintage to Olson was “a way that I could heal.”

Olson’s husband, Ted, who is solicitor general of the United States, was at the auction.

Nine magnums from perennial cult favorite Harlan Estate went for \$300,000.

Gov. Ventura to travel 1,800 miles in swimsuit

By The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Gov. Jesse Ventura is heading down the Mississippi River in his swimsuit to promote his state.

Ventura and two friends will ride the river 1,800 miles from St. Paul to New Orleans in swim suits and life preservers and on personal watercraft made by Medina-based

Polaris Industries.

It will be part business, part adventure, the governor said.

“We’re going to bring light to the Mississippi River,” he said Friday shortly before leaving for a trade mission to China.

“It can’t be more dangerous than jumping out of a plane,” the former Navy Seal said.

The July trip will take

at least six days and will highlight the recreational value of the Mississippi River and promote awareness of river pollution, Ventura said.

Ventura said he and his friends, whom he wouldn’t identify, will likely sleep near federal dams between St. Paul and St. Louis. The trio expects to travel up to 300 miles a day.

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