WEEKEND EDITION

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Santa Monica Daily Press

June 10-11, 2006 | A newspaper with issues | Volume 5, Issue 180

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS 8 17 18 26 47
Meganumber: 37
Jackpot: $17M

SUPER LOTTO 1 11 14 30 31
Meganumber: 12
Jackpot: $60M

Fantasy 5 3 4 10 22 35

DAILY 3 MIDDAY: 4 8 6
EVENING: 4 4 9

DAILY DERBY
1st: 05 California Classic
2nd: 04 Big Ben
3rd: 11 Money Bags
RACE TIME: 1:49.34

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site: **http://www.calottery.com**

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

Arrested recently and awaiting trial for murder: Bruce Wayne Potts, 34 (DeSoto, Texas, February); Oral Wayne Nobles, 71 (arrested in Kingman, Ariz., on a Massachusetts warrant, April); Ronald Wayne Spencer Jr., 19 (Richardson, Texas, April). Arrested and suspected of murder: Darrell Wayne Lewis, 32 (Tempe, Ariz., March). Sentenced for murder: David Wayne Hickman (Dallas, May); Anthony Wayne Welch, 27 (Viera, Fla., March). Committed suicide while serving life in prison for murder: John Wayne Glover, 72 (Sydney, Australia, September 2005).

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 161st day of 2006.
There are 204 days left in the year.

In 1801, the north African state of Tripoli declared war on the United States in a dispute over safe passage of merchant vessels through the Mediterranean.

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Kevin Herrera/Daily Press

STREET SMARTS Caseworker Suzie de la Rosa (left) and her client, Donna Mendez, reminisce about their first encounter nearly two years ago. Mendez, 50, was living on the streets for 25 years before de la Rosa helped Mendez find an apartment under the city's Chronic Homeless Program.

A place in the sun

The city's Chronic Homeless Program is impacting lives

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Daily Press Staff Writer

COLORADO AVENUE — After spending more than half her life sleeping on concrete and carrying all of her possessions every step she took, Donna Mendez realized that, at her age, it was too difficult to continue living on the streets of Santa Monica.

In her late 40s, and sober for the first time in decades, Mendez no longer wanted to deal with the daily routine of packing up her three buggies filled with belongings and move them from one corner of the city to the next in efforts to avoid police or predators hunting for their next victim — preferably an older, vulnerable woman like Mendez.

For 25 years, alcohol clouded her judgment and dulled the pain, enabling her to survive on the streets. Without it, the harsh realities of homelessness and aging hit hard.

See **CHRONIC HOMELESS**, page 10

LOCAL

Photo courtesy

Margaret Rose Roberts, 62, has been missing since leaving her Sunset Park home on May 21. She was wearing the clothes in which she is pictured.

Husband's search for wife continues

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

SUNSET PARK — It was a night just like any other night. Rejelio Muñoz went to bed with his wife and expected to wake up with her. But when he awoke on the morning of May 21, she was gone and hasn't been seen since.

When Margaret Rose Roberts, 62, who suffers from paranoid schizophrenia, didn't return home after three hours, Muñoz called the police and filed a missing person's report.

See **MISSING WOMAN**, page 13

The thin red line

Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Abby Sher paints the sidewalk along Main Street on Friday as a symbolic gesture for peace. Sher plans to spend one hour six days a week in silence while painting a red line down the middle of sidewalks throughout Santa Monica. According to Sher, the paint symbolizes blood dripping from an IV, which she believes depicts the fallen soldiers of the war in Iraq.

Al-Qaida needs 'terror celeb'

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With the demise of charismatic terror leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaida will be looking for a new sales approach in its fundraising campaigns.

Al-Zarqawi had become a key part of al-Qaida's marketing: He was a terror operator who stole headlines with jarring, gruesome attacks carried out by a network of foreign and Iraqi fighters. Counterterrorism officials have said al-Zarqawi served as a worldwide jihadist rallying point and a fundraising icon.

"The terrorist celeb, if you will," said Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich. "They are selling the success of Zarqawi in eluding capture."

Tenants file suit to stave off evictions

BY MICHAEL J. TITTINGER
Daily Press Staff Writer

VENICE — In case there was any doubt as to whether the 50 or so remaining tenants being evicted from Lincoln Place Apartments planned to go quietly into the night, a group of united residents filed suit this week against both the property owners and city of Los Angeles in efforts to stay put.

On Thursday, the Lincoln Place Tenants Association (LPTA) took their case to Superior Court in downtown Los Angeles, charging the buildings' owners with attempting to circumvent earlier agreements made with the city and tenants regarding the scale of the complex redevelopment project, and City Hall with failing to enforce those agreed upon terms.

According to LPTA president Sheila Bernard, 80 units have already been evicted, 58 of which were locked out by the Sheriff's Department on Dec. 6, 2005. The remaining tenants of Lincoln Place — a garden court complex on Elkgrove Avenue constructed between 1949 and 1951 — are considered either elderly or disabled, given a year to

See **LINCOLN PLACE**, page 12

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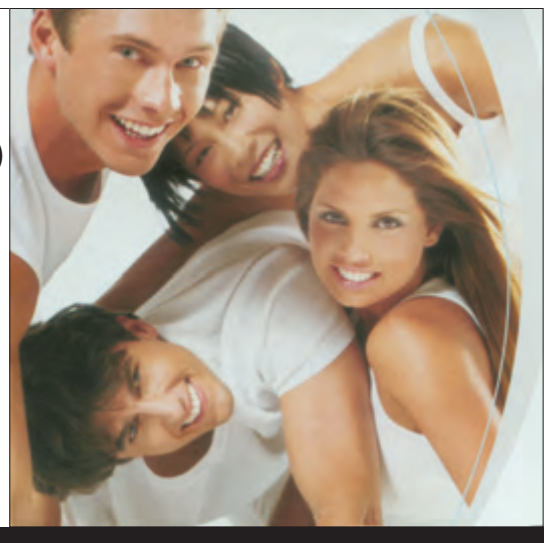

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Santa Monica Daily Press

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS The stars show the kind of day you'll Have:

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

HHHHH The time has come to tackle a project you have kept on the back burner. You might suddenly see a shortcut or better way to get where you want to be, which makes you more enthusiastic. Touch base with an in-law or someone at a distance. Tonight: Break into new turf.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Spend time with someone you really care about and get to the basis of what is important to both of you. You might want to promote a discussion that is overdue. Unexpected developments take you in a new direction. Tonight: What you want.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ You might want to refine your choices, as you could be seeing the results of a lack of discrimination. If you are on overload, who created this situation? Take responsibility and revolutionize your life. You need to make it more suitable. Tonight: Among the throngs of admirers.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Talk up a storm, knowing what needs to happen. Your chattiness helps many relax, and they will reveal more. You could be surprised at the startling insights you get. Understanding and empathy walk hand in hand. Tonight: Relax with favorite people.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Fun, flirtation and children mix in a manner that puts a smile on your face. You are all laughs. Your imagination punctuates your plans, interactions and style. You have what it takes to make headway. Think positively. Tonight: Happy as can be.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ You might have mixed feelings about a family member. Tension builds to a new level. The unexpected occurs in your dealings with others. Be ready to join in. Tonight: Entertain from home.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Speak your mind, and you'll make a difference. Listen to feedback that comes your way. Conversations prove to be lively and sometimes cause the unexpected in your plans. Go with the moment. Tonight: Swap stories.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ You don't have to spend as if there is no tomorrow. In fact, reining in your costs could make you a lot happier ultimately. Fun can happen without a trauma to your checkbook or credit card. Use your imagination. Tonight: Indulge and have a good time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ You might want to discuss what is on your mind. In some sense, you could shock someone close. You might be better off easing your way to a better understanding. You have a way of inviting others in. Use that ability. Tonight: Happy wherever you are, and so are those around you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Knowing when to honor the exit sign could determine how you feel. Sometimes you need seclusion, be it with one person or by yourself. Surprises head your way. Communication could be strange but informative. Tonight: Take some time off.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Where your friends are is where you want to be. Make what you want happen. Allow yourself the pleasure of enjoying those around you. What you want can happen. Tonight: You make the party.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Take your time making a presentation or being somewhere where others could be eyeing you. Think positively about what is happening. Don't play devil's advocate; accept people as they are. Tonight: You could be abrupt.

CIRCULATION AUDIT BY CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Students at a Crossroads with AIDS

By Daily Press staff

The AIDS epidemic may have been lost in the minds of the general public but not at Crossroads School in Santa Monica.

After immersing themselves in a three-day retreat focusing on AIDS, the local teenagers are ready to share with the community what they know about the ongoing problem and how to help.

On Sunday, June 11, the eighth through 12th grade Crossroads School's AIDS Ambassadors will join the UCLA AIDS Institute to present lessons, dramatic sketches, songs and poems that focus on the global AIDS pandemic and HIV prevention. An informal buffet will be served.

The students have brought the presentation to other Los Angeles-area schools after completing the UCLA AIDS Institute's Teen AIDS Ambassadors program, a three-day retreat where they learned the history of U.S. AIDS and HIV activism and how to conduct peer-to-peer education.

The Santa Monica forum will occur at 6 p.m. in the community room at Crossroads Norton Campus & Sports Center, 1715 Olympic Blvd.

Established in 1992, the UCLA AIDS Institute is a multidisciplinary think tank drawing on the skills of top-flight researchers in the worldwide fight against HIV and AIDS, the first cases of which were reported in 1982 by UCLA physicians. Institute members include researchers in virology and immunology, genetics, cancer, neurology, ophthalmology, epidemiology, social science, public health, nursing, and disease prevention. Their findings have led to advances in treating HIV as well as other diseases such as hepatitis B and C, influenza and cancer.

Crossroads School for Arts and Sciences is considered one of the leading college preparatory schools in the nation. In addition to its acclaimed academic studies, the school offers a notable arts program, school officials said. In its 34-year history, it has developed a reputation for progressive education and academic excellence with virtually 100 percent of its students graduating to distinguished colleges.

For more information, call (310) 829-7391, ext. 513.

Boys and Girls Club president a youthful spirit

By Daily Press staff

Longtime Santa Monica community member Allan Young has captured the spirit of youth.

The Spirit of Youth Foundation announced earlier this month at a garden party hosted by the British Consul General Bob Peirce and Ms. Sharon Harroun, the first Annual Spirit Awards were presented to Allan Young and John W. Mack. The award is given to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the development of youth.

Young, president and CEO of the Santa Monica Boys and Girls Club has grown up in the club since 1956, and became president in 1979 and is credited with its and the Southern California's Boys and Girls Club success and expansion. His dedication to youth has been recognized with many awards.

Mack, who recently retired as president of the Los Angeles Urban League after heading the league for almost 36 years, has worked tirelessly for the advancement of young people. Mack began his career with the Urban League in Flint, Mich. in 1964 and was appointed executive director in 1965. Mack continues his community work as president of Los Angeles Police Commission and board member of numerous community nonprofit organizations.

Spirit of Youth Foundation was formed in 1993 by its chairman Dennis Storer, then executive director of the British Business Council, in the aftermath of the Los Angeles Riots, in the recognition that the future's leaders need to know and understand diversity. Its primary role is to help youth with disadvantaged backgrounds, and who have leadership capabilities, to travel to foreign countries to experience culture, history and democracies, and establish enduring friendships.

CORRECTION In the June 6 edition, there was an error in a story regarding the day's election. Voters who are registered non-partisan receive sample ballots that do not include information on primaries involving candidates from political parties, such as the Democratic and Republican primary election for the 41st Assembly District, which includes the city of Santa Monica. Those who are registered non-partisan are eligible to vote in a party's primary if they announce their intention to poll workers before requesting a ballot.

SNOW AND SURF REPORTS

Snow Conditions

DATA PROVIDED BY ONTHESNOW.COM

BEAR MOUNTAIN — CLOSED

JUNE MOUNTAIN — CLOSED

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	84"-108	7:00 AM - 2:00 PM	35	4/28

CONDITIONS: Machine Groomed, Spring, Corn

MOUNTAIN HIGH — CLOSED

MT. BALDY — CLOSED

SNOW SUMMIT — CLOSED

SNOW VALLEY — CLOSED

Surf Conditions

Water Temp: 66°

Swell Forecast (3-5 FT)

This weekend we're expecting some occasional sets from the south to roll in from forerunner energy of our swell due on Sunday the 11th. Sets right now are looking infrequent, and around waist high + at south facing beaches.

Long Range Synopsis

Tracking SW'ers for 17th and 19th...

Tide Forecast for Santa Monica

SATURDAY				
LOW TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
HIGH TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SUNDAY				
LOW TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
HIGH TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MONDAY				
LOW TIDE	12:21 AM	2.03 FEET	11:28 AM	1.34 FEET
HIGH TIDE	5:30 AM	3.26 FEET	6:24 PM	4.68 FEET
TUESDAY				
LOW TIDE	1:09 AM	1.42 FEET	12:03 PM	1.61 FEET
HIGH TIDE	6:43 AM	3.19 FEET	6:48 PM	5.02 FEET
WEDNESDAY				
LOW TIDE	1:49 AM	0.81 FEET	12:37 PM	1.85 FEET
HIGH TIDE	7:45 AM	3.22 FEET	7:13 PM	5.37 FEET
THURSDAY				
LOW TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
HIGH TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
FRIDAY				
LOW TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
HIGH TIDE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The Q Line
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CHECK OUT THIS WEEK'S Q-LINE
RESPONSES ON PAGE 6.

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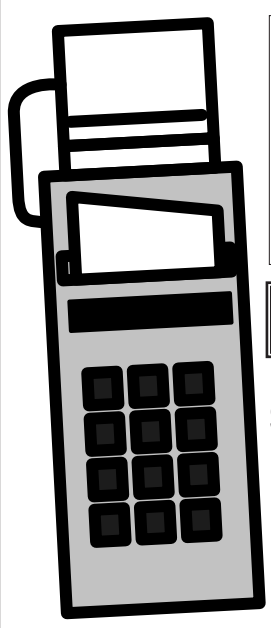
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P050382 1/05

Gay old time

Centers begin catering to gay senior crowd

BY LISA LEFF
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Like other gay men in their golden years, Jack Norris and Seymour Sirota had heard the horror stories.

An elderly lesbian couple is housed on separate floors of a nursing home and kept from seeing each other. A gay retired college professor feels compelled to keep his sexual orientation a secret after his roommate at an assisted living facility asks to be transferred.

"I thought, 'We are not going to be in that situation,"' the 67-year-old Norris says crisply. "This is not going to happen to us in our final days."

That's how the two New Yorkers, partners for 14 years, landed at Rainbow Vision, a just-completed senior community in Santa Fe, N.M. From the private dining room named after Truman Capote to the cabaret where '60s teen icon Lesley "It's My Party" Gore was scheduled to appear this weekend, everything about the 146-unit retirement village was designed with the comfort of graying gays and lesbians in mind.

As the generation of gay men and lesbians who came out in the 1960s and '70s reaches retirement age, about a dozen specialized senior developments across the country are either up and running or in the works.

In such senior-heavy locales as California, Arizona and Florida, as well as less traditionally gay-friendly places like North Carolina and Texas, builders have found a market in a segment of the gay population that worries getting old will mean going back in the closet.

"In a retirement community, you want to be with people of like minds and like interests, whether it's a golf community or a religious community," said Bonnie McGowan, who is spearheading Birds of a Feather, a second gay senior complex in New Mexico. "Until I feel safe walking down the street holding a woman's hand ... and not feel like I'm going to offend even one person, there is a need for this."

Besides personal safety, specialists in gay aging issues offer other reasons why the so-called Stonewall Generation, named for the 1969 New York riots that marked the beginning of the modern gay movement, needs and craves places of its own to retire.

Among them are the years of stigma and

See **GAY SENIORS**, page 5

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Senior homes

GAY SENIORS, from page 4

isolation many gays who are over 50 experienced, that may have left them estranged from their families, financially insecure and childless.

"There is a real sense of disenfranchisement and also a sense of independence, of 'I don't want to be dependent on family, I want to be dependent on community,'" said Judy Dlugacz, founder of the San Francisco-based lesbian travel company Olivia Cruises and Resorts.

Olivia is currently scouting land in the Palm Springs area for what Dlugacz hopes will be the first of several high-end resort communities geared toward mature lesbians who are looking either for a vacation home or a place to retire.

Joy Silver, developer of Rainbow Vision, also plans to expand to Palm Springs, a desert community already popular with gay tourists.

"Back in the day, we could identify each other because the only place to be gay was a gay bar," said Silver, who views her Santa Fe property as somewhere for baby boomer gays to live their later years as residents of a majority.

"Now, we have more options and we may be more out, but it's still going to be hard to find friends or partners," she said. "It doesn't help to live in a gay-friendly community without any other gay people."

Along with second chances — Silver is planning to throw a prom party "for those of us who didn't go to senior prom with the person we wanted to" — Rainbow Vision was designed to foster a sense of immediate belonging.

The fitness center was named after lesbian tennis pioneer Billie Jean King, for example, while services for those requiring ongoing medical care reflect lessons learned from the AIDS crisis. The 26 rented assisted living units comprise a section of the complex called The Castro, after the San Francisco neighborhood that has long been a center of gay culture.

"Just as we have set the trends in music and fashion, (gays and lesbians) will be setting trends for the redefinition of family and community," Silver said.

Steven David, a postdoctoral psychology fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles who counsels and researches older gay men, said the concept of gay senior housing gets mixed reviews from his clients. He has spoken to some who think living in a gay environment sounds fun and others who think it sounds awful, "just like some straight people like retirement communities and some don't."

Meanwhile, some in his field oppose the idea of separate communities for gay seniors, which also have taken off in Canada and parts of Europe, as voluntary self-segregation. "There has been an argument of, 'Should we be creating these places in the first place or forcing society to accept us?'" he said.

For his part, Jack Norris says that battle can wait for the next generation.

He spent years in a job where he had to silently endure anti-gay jokes. Sirota, who is 80, did not tell his family he was gay until the two men got together.

Norris said even talking publicly about their new life at Rainbow Vision felt like a revolutionary act.

"Seymour was worried maybe we would be getting too much exposure," he said. "But then I said, 'We need to be like Rosa Parks. We can't sit in the back of the bus.'"

ON THE NET

Rainbow Vision
www.rainbowvisionprop.com

Lesbian and Gay Aging Issues Network
www.asaging.org/networks/LGAIN

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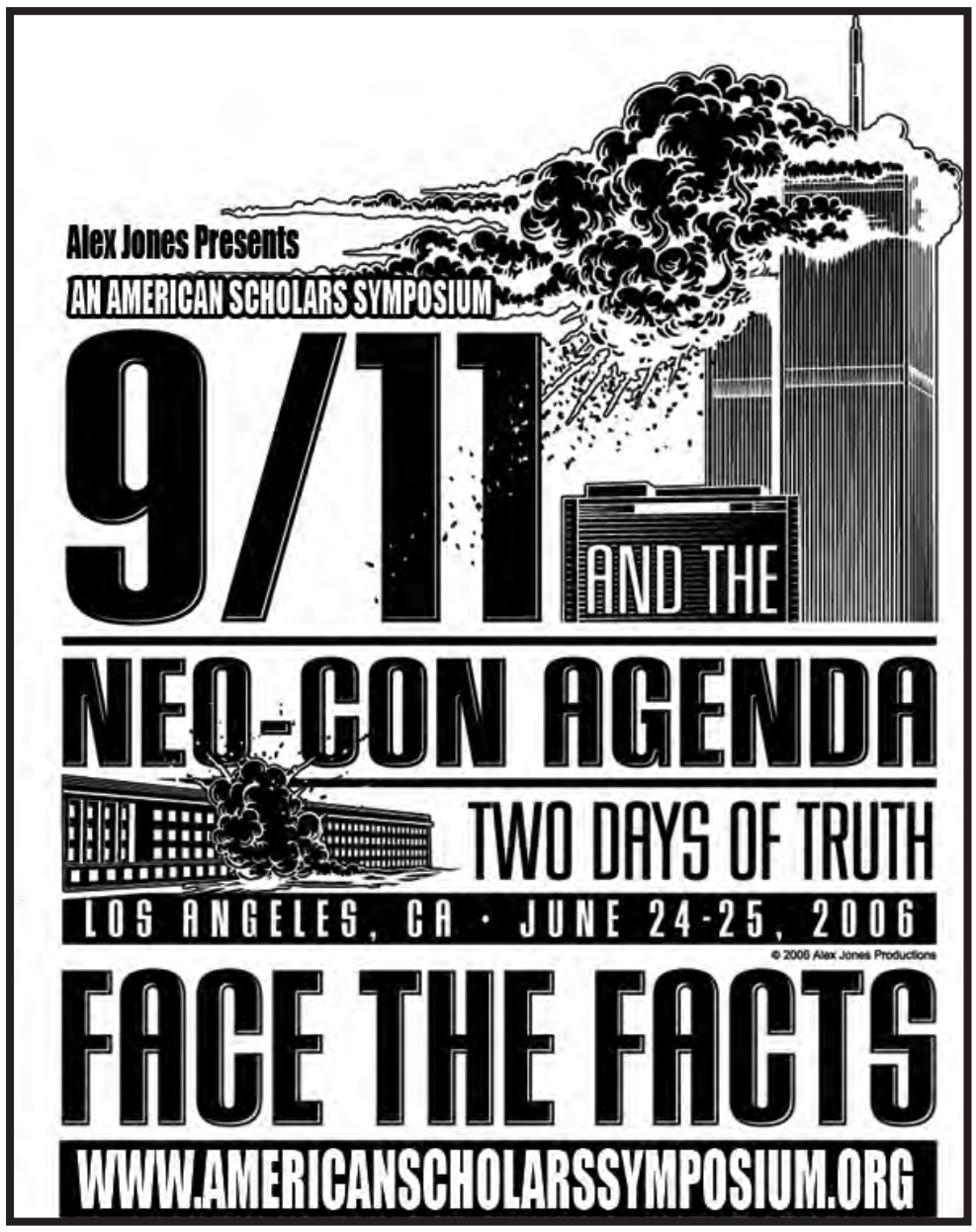

The Q Line

Plenty In Store For Shopping Mall

This past week, Q-Line asked:
"What would you propose for the shopping complex in the heart of downtown?"
Here are your responses:

✆ "Sixty years ago during World War II and before the Marina del Ray inlet was dredged along Pacific Ocean water to flow freely into the Marina Harbor, I would ride a Palamino stallion Apache style with just a hackamaw bridle with no bit along the Pacific Ocean's water edge from Manhattan Beach to Venice Beach. I had to stop at Venice Beach due to traffic congestion that existed in Venice Beach and Santa Monica Beach even back then. I trust that the new Santa Monica Place developers will take into consideration the horrors of traffic congestion that now exist in Santa Monica and build a parking structure that will allow cars to enter and exit quickly and efficiently."

✆ "They should build something like The Grove in Hollywood or something like that, but not have any type of chain stores; just have stores that are individually owned because we have enough chain stores in this town already. But it doesn't really matter what they build because the bums will probably be allowed to take it over like they do everything else and stink that place up, too."

✆ "For the proposed new shopping complex downtown I would propose a couple of things. Get rid of the tacky street performers and bring back peace and quiet. Secondly, strict enforcement and removal of all the cruddy bums, and maybe third definitely would be more restrooms for the visitors and shoppers and definitely have them with guards and people to keep cleanliness and law and order and all the rest within."

✆ "To all the Dr. Evils, it should have a tribute to Musselini, that we had to spend all that money for rope to hang him by his heels, the champion of the evil — the Bush's, the very rich, stingy capitalists, I'd like to dedicate a statue to them — the people with evils, where the evil people are."

✆ "I would suggest that they put in eateries that are wheelchair-friendly for disabled people. Different kinds, like maybe a hamburger joint, maybe an Italian joint, maybe a Greek-joint, maybe even a pie joint. Pedestrian-friendly, wheelchair-friendly, with beautiful shrubbery like night-blooming jasmine and such, and maybe some pools with water lilies and swans, evocative of Monet."

✆ "Can you spell taxpayer dummies? The Macerich Company made a bad real estate investment, so to make money they need to build condos. Twenty-one stories was their first choice. The fallback position will be eight stories because that's the height the City Council will allow to be built downtown. I can see an architectural disaster like the $70 million library. What is badly needed is an architect — not Frank Gehry, but a Howard Roark, to fuse what's left of a beach-town atmosphere with visionary planning and architecture. I have an idea for three big stores meshed with several smaller ones, open space, a supermarket, 40 condos, nothing over three stories, and a way to integrate this into the existing mall and the low-income housing rent area, plus Main Street. But it's a fools dream — the City Hall's unknown-to-residents downtown plan is already a done deal."

✆ "I would love to see Santa Monica Place have a discount department store like Target or K-Mart or anything like that, or a Penny's or a Mervin's. I quit shopping in Santa Monica because all you have is a bunch of little boutique places, and most of the people I know don't shop in Santa Monica; we just don't. And we eat, we go to the restauraunts but we don't shop here because you don't have any discount department stores. I think it's a big mistake. I know there's a lot of pressure; I know the lobbyists of the Bayside District, you know all the little stores, they drove out the idea of a Target but I still think it would be a wonderful idea, and I know that it would be very well-supported. There's a huge number of working-class people, senior citizens who are retired, single people, and families who would like a true discount department store in Santa Monica. We have enough beautiful things in Santa Monica. Why don't you get something that's realistic for the population?"

✆ "The parking structures downtown are depressing to walk past. They look like gloomy jails for cars — places to avoid, dangerous places. I would propose putting businesses at street level, maybe a big used bookstore like The Strand in New York. But of course, I would never get past the bookstore and shop in all the other places."

✆ "What I'd like to see in downtown is a Mecca for homeless people so they could ask for more change and accost people, maybe fewer bathrooms and, wait a minute — we already have that in our downtown."

✆ "What I propose for the shopping mall replacement is no replacement at all. What is the problem? Why do we have to rip off the roof and 'modernize' the shopping mall? It's not broke — please don't fix it."

✆ "In terms of what is needed in the new Santa Monica Place Mall, we obviously require a Target store that the city denied; there would be sufficient parking for that. We require a new, state-of-the-art multiplex theater complex that the city of Santa Monica, for whatever reasons known best to people working within the city, can't seem to get built. We certainly need the much in-demand Trader Joe's market. The Santa Monica Place Mall now has to be more egalitarian — it cannot just simply be a series of clothing stores appealing to teenagers and people in their mid to late 20s."

✆ "About your question of the shops downtown, I'd like to see something user-friendly for some of us older people, not just the stores for the youth and for tourists, but something useful like a JC Penny that we used to have downtown, maybe a drugstore, just some very useful kind of shops."

✆ "I would like to see a Target or a Wal-Mart or a K-Mart come into Santa Monica Place. Last month I spent $300 at Target in Los Angeles, Culver City. I spend all of my tax dollars someplace else. I'd love to be able to do it here."

Letting nature take its course just won't do

MODERN TIMES
BY LLOYD GARVER

EDITOR'S NOTE *Lloyd Garver is on vacation. This column originally appeared in June of 2005.*

In case you haven't noticed, breast implants are bigger than ever. Surgically-enhanced breasts are on the rise, and the trend shows no sign of pointing downward. Approximately a quarter of a million American women have their breasts enlarged each year. It used to be that women were secretive about these enhancements and desperately wanted them to look natural. Now, the artificial look is apparently perfectly acceptable to some women. They don't care if it's obvious that they've had surgery, they just like the way they look. In fact, a bra company, brastraps.com, recently introduced a bra whose purpose is to give the wearer the appearance of having breast implants. It is "designed to create a natural cosmetically enhanced look." I guess "natural cosmetically enhanced" is no longer an oxymoron.

So, some people must feel that phony-looking, gravity-defying breasts look better than what nature had in mind. This move away from imitating nature to creating a new, acceptable look has had precedents. Years ago, a woman would never want people to know that she dyed her hair. The big advertising slogan was, "Only her hairdresser knows for sure." Now, women who have orange hair or brand new blond highlights don't care that "everyone knows for sure."

Men also are in on the cosmetic surgery boom. Hair transplants, liposuction and laser hair removal are all on the increase for them. The chest or "pec" implant is another popular procedure for men. Our culture is apparently obsessed with chests regardless of gender.

In the middle of winter, both men and women can get phony spray-on tans that nobody thinks are real. Unless they discover something dangerous about the sprays — which they probably will, since they discover something dangerous about everything — the use of this product not only gives a desired look, but can actually save lives.

Then there's the teeth-whitening fad. Natural human teeth are not blinding white in color. But now, thanks to advertising and societal pressures, people are bleaching their teeth. And those with bleached teeth don't care if they look unnatural. They figure if you need sunglasses to look at them, that's your problem.

So, it seems that much of the "I don't care if it looks natural or not" craze has to do with self-esteem. Instead of being ashamed of using human-made things to change their looks, people are proud of their purchased appearances. The attitude is simply, "I feel better about myself looking this way, and I don't care who knows about it."

If all of these "super-natural" looks stay in fashion, will our DNA evolve to include them? For quite a while, I've believed that babies will soon be born with the innate ability to be experts at computer games and genetically predisposed to be able to watch one TV show while taping another. Similarly, if people of the opposite sex find all these artificial looks attractive, will natural selection and the survival of the fittest lead to our genes being altered? Will people in future generations be born with a propensity to have ludicrously large chests, no fat, a perfect tan, no hair except on their heads, and white teeth bright enough to light up the neighborhood? It's quite possible. And if you think I'm exaggerating, consider the name of that bra that tries to give women the unnatural look. It's called, the "Evolution."

*(**Lloyd Garver** has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier." He also has 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.)*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What's in a name?

Editor:

As a Santa Monica resident, you received a letter requesting suggestions to name the short road just south of Colorado Avenue leading to PCH. I was astonished to read the new street name "Moomat Ahiko." My first thought was that the name sounded like a WWII Japanese combatant — perhaps it was meant to appease our Japanese tourists. As soon as I got home I searched the Internet, no such luck. Certainly our council members could have picked a name more reflective of our beach community that everyone would understand, i.e. Seascape Drive, Ocean View Road, Sea Breeze Road, etc.

According to Councilmember Richard Bloom the name means: "breath of the ocean" in the language of Gabrielino Tongva Native Americans who were indigenous to this area. Now you are one of the select few who know the meaning of the name. To be fair, all council members did not approve this bewildering street name.

Comments to councilmember Richard Bloom at richard@bloomlaw.net

Fred Alexander
Santa Monica

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GUEST COMMENTARY BY GREG SMILEY

A cop's perspective on pot priorities

I would like to respond to the many comments and opinions from your readers regarding the proposed ordinance requiring the Santa Monica Police Department to make adult marijuana offenses its lowest priority.

The proponents of this initiative would like you to believe that this ordinance would, as they put it, "free up police resources to focus on serious and violent crimes." But the truth is that although the use of marijuana by adults in a private residence is already treated as a low priority by the police department, this ordinance could actually further tie up police resources because it requires additional reporting by our officers and the department.

By making such incidents the "lowest priority," this initiative would prevent the police from responding to investigate a community member's call for service concerning the adult, personal use of marijuana unless there were no other law enforcement calls pending. This means any pending calls, including parking violations, would send a citizen's legitimate complaint about the odor or visible use of marijuana within a residence to the bottom of the dispatch queue. I would like to provide you with a recent example of why this would be a bad idea.

While working patrol just a few months ago, I responded to a call from a Santa Monica resident concerned about the odor of marijuana coming from an apartment. When the first officer on the scene arrived, he approached on foot and observed a bag of what appeared to be marijuana in the back seat of a mini van parked in front of the area in question. I arrived shortly thereafter and observed an adult male exit the apartment where the van was parked. The officer and I detained the adult male and quickly discovered that he was in possession of a loaded .38 caliber handgun concealed in his waistband. Further investigation led us to the discovery of 245 pounds of marijuana inside the subject's apartment. It was later learned that the adult male had sold over 700 pounds of marijuana earlier that day for an estimated street value of over a quarter of a million dollars.

But that was not the worst part of this incident. Let me tell you about the conversation I had with the adult male's 4-year-old niece. After she led us to the 245-pound cache of marijuana stored in the apartment, she told us that her uncle had picked her up from school earlier that day with a gun in his hand and several bags of marijuana in the vehicle. She explained how he drove around with the gun in his hand and made several stops throughout Santa Monica. Adult, personal use of marijuana is not entirely harmless; it still requires someone to deliver it.

Based upon the way this call was received, it would have been assigned the "lowest priority" had this initiative been in effect at the time of this call. Officers would have been directed to other calls first and may have been delayed several hours as a result. You may think the previous account was an isolated incident, but officers often discover more serious crimes when investigating the odor of marijuana.

Our goal is to provide this community with the highest quality of law enforcement services. It is our responsibility to provide a safe environment for our residents, business owners and visitors.

This initiative makes no sense from a public safety standpoint and it is bad public policy. We believe that it interferes with officers' lawful performance of their duty to remain responsive to our community's safety needs.

*(**Greg Smiley** is the chairman of the Santa Monica Police Officers Association.)*

GUEST COMMENTARY BY JOHN W. WHITEHEAD

It's up to Christians to fight for freedoms of all religions

Amidst a sea of memorial plaques at the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery, one space remains blank.

That space is waiting to be filled by a plaque honoring the life and sacrifice of 34-year-old Sgt. Patrick Stewart, who was killed in action on Sept. 25, 2005, when his helicopter was struck with a rocket-propelled grenade as it flew over Afghanistan. But it may be some time before Sgt. Stewart is remembered with a memorial plaque. That's because his war widow and the Department of Veterans Affairs are at odds over the Stewart family's request to have the Wiccan pentacle, a five-pointed star surrounded by a circle, placed on the plaque. As of May 31, government officials have refused to allow the Wiccan symbol to be placed on Stewart's plaque.

Sgt. Stewart identified himself as belonging to the Wiccan faith. Although Wiccans are not considered part of America's mainstream religious establishment, they are a growing minority. According to 2005 Defense Department statistics, approximately 1,800 active-duty service members identify themselves as belonging to the alternative religion that subscribes to magical activities and Earth worship.

According to federal guidelines, only approved religious symbols — of which there are 30 — can be placed on government headstones or memorial plaques. Included among the 30 approved symbols are those that represent such mainstream religions as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. The list also includes more obscure religions like Konko-Kyo Faith and Seicho-No-Ie. And while the list does not include a symbol for the Wiccan faith, incredibly enough, it does include symbols for atheism and humanism.

Whatever one's opinion might be about the Wiccan faith, there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the First Amendment to our U.S. Constitution provides for religious freedom for all individuals of all faiths — whether they are Christians, Jews, Muslims, atheists, Wiccans and others.

The United States Supreme Court has routinely held that viewpoint discrimination by the government against particular expressions of religion is unconstitutional. In the Supreme Court's 1963 ruling in Sherbert v. Vernor, Justice William J. Brennan observed, "The door of the Free Exercise Clause stands tightly closed against any governmental regulation of religious beliefs." In that same opinion, Justice Brennan wrote that "Government may neither compel affirmation of a repugnant belief, nor penalize or discriminate against individuals or groups because they hold religious views abhorrent to the authorities."

Yet by refusing to place the Wiccan symbol on Sgt. Stewart's memorial plaque, while permitting symbols of other religions and non-religions, the government is clearly engaging in viewpoint discrimination — which is a shoddy way to treat someone who has died in service to his country.

Having posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart to Sgt. Stewart, the U.S. government intends that he should be remembered for his bravery and sacrifice. Yet what his widow, Roberta Stewart, will remember is the fact that her husband died defending the country that is denying him the right to express his religious freedom.

Hours before official Memorial Day ceremonies were set to begin at the Northern Nevada Veterans Cemetery, Patrick Stewart's widow gathered at a park a few miles away to hold an alternative service in honor of her husband, his faith and his service to his country. Speaking to a gathering of approximately 200 friends and family, Roberta Stewart declared, "This is discrimination against our religion. I ask you to help us remember that all freedoms are worth fighting for."

How do we remember?

We do so by renewing our resolve to preserve and protect our freedoms. As President Ronald Reagan remarked as he looked out upon a sea of headstones at Arlington National Cemetery on a Memorial Day many years ago:

The sight before us is that of a strong and good nation that stands in silence and remembers those who were loved and who, in return, loved their countrymen enough to die for them. Yet, we must try to honor them — not for their sakes alone, but for our own. And if words cannot repay the debt we owe these men, surely with our actions we must strive to keep faith with them and with the vision that led them to battle and to final sacrifice.

If we are to keep faith with Sgt. Stewart and the other brave men and women who have died in service to the United States, then we must remember that all rights hang together. That is both the genius and the strength of the American system.

Although our country was founded on a Judeo-Christian base, the Framers of the U.S. Constitution understood that religious freedom was for everyone, not just Christians. In other words, the only way that freedom can prevail for Christians is for Christians to stand up and fight for the minority beliefs and religions of others.

Without it, freedom will most likely be lost. And we will be left wondering whose freedoms we are really fighting for.

*(Constitutional attorney and author **John W. Whitehead** is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. He can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.)*

Green investments just might pay off

BY TIM FOUGHT
Associated Press Writer

PORTLAND, Ore. — You wouldn't think of buying a couple of tons of carbon dioxide emissions or a breeding pair of red-cockaded woodpeckers for your retirement accounts.

But for some investors, those might look like good investments — which some environmentalists, financiers and government officials say is a good thing for the planet.

The idea is to create markets for environmental benefits, for example by imposing limits on emissions of carbon dioxide or wetlands development and then allowing players in the market to trade development rights. A group of activists and others, including a Goldman Sachs executive and a Bush administration official, gathered in Portland Wednesday to consider ways to create more such markets in the Pacific Northwest.

Advocates say such schemes could benefit Oregon's Willamette River, expected to be subject to new regulations intended to cool water temperatures to improve fish habitat. A market mechanism could allow cities and industries to pay farmers to plant trees to shade upstream reaches and tributaries of the river.

The markets in such benefits are small. Bettina von Hagen, a leader of the Portland-based Ecotrust organization, said volumes are measured in a few millions of dollars, but ought to be in the billions, trillions and "bazillions."

The markets, however, have attracted big players. Last year, two global financial institutions, the European group ABN Amro and U.S.-based Citigroup, said they were backing an online site — Ecosystem Marketplace — that tracks prices and developments in environmental markets.

The site was developed by a nonprofit conservation group, Forest Trends, whose leader, Michael Jenkins, has nurtured the idea of trading in environmental benefits since a 1999 conference in Katoomba, Australia.

Even though the site tracks some markets that haven't recorded any transactions for months, Jenkins said it has begun to supply one of the prerequisites of public trading: transparency, or a common pool of information for investors.

"We're trying to build this brick by brick," he said at the beginning of the meeting.

For environmentalists, he said, there's urgency in trying new tacks. Measures of environmental benchmarks from climate change to habitat loss show "we're not winning," he said.

"It's been kind of a difficult pill for many in the environmental community to accept," he said. "Historically, the market has not been good for the environment, just as it has not been good for poor people."

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Obituary

MATTHEW (MATT) LATTIMORE, SR.

He was born March 24th, 1961 in Long Beach, California and lived most of his life in Orange County. Beloved husband, father, brother, son, grandpa, and uncle who overcame obstacles in his lifetime that would have daunted a lesser determined man through the continued support of his family, his brothers in AA, and his faith in God. He tended to unfinished business, mended broken bridges, and became an inspiration to others through dedication and prayer.

Matt graduated from Kennedy High School in Cypress and spent twenty years working in construction before discovering his interest in, and talent for, entertainment. Over the last eight years he had built a solid career as a commercial actor on televisions across America. His kind, gentle persona and contagious smile were ever apparent and impossible to resist.

Married in 1999 to his wife, Dee, he was a devoted husband intent on providing her the love and security she so deserved. An intermittent father during his daughter, Melissa, and son's, Matthew, childhood he had become their confidante, mentor, role model, and cherished friend as they grew toward young adulthood. To his older sister, Marla, and brother, Mark, he was a loving and beloved brother who would lift a heavy heart or lend a helping hand. Although he became a grandfather earlier than most, he relished the role and took great pleasure in his granddaughters. To his mother he was tender and supportive in time of need; a joyful presence during their 6:30 phone calls or by her side; he was an irreplaceable friend.

He lived – He loved – He overcame

He met the challenge

He conquered the mountain!!

He will be eternally missed by all who loved him

http://www.mattlattimore.com

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Consumers seem to go with flow

BY JEANNINE AVERSA
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Consumer confidence in the economy rebounded over the month, suggesting that people are taking still-elevated gasoline prices and the specter of even higher borrowing costs in stride.

The RBC CASH Index, based on results from the international polling firm Ipsos, showed confidence snapped out of the doldrums and clocked in at 84.1 in early June. That was a big improvement from May's reading of 67.1, a seven-month low.

June's number marked a return to a more normal reading for the confidence barometer. A year ago, consumer confidence stood at 84.

"In spite of high energy costs and all the uncertainties around them, consumers are holding in there. It's still a decent economy," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economic Advisors. "Consumers seem to be weathering a lot of storms out there."

Economists were especially encouraged that consumers' attitudes brightened because they viewed it as a sign that people are holding up fairly well not only to high energy prices but also to some other recent turbulence.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke issued a stern inflation warning on Monday that was seen as a strong signal that interest rates will go up again later this month. Bernanke's message has sent stocks swooning for three days in a row. Stocks recovered from an earlier plunge to close mixed Thursday.

Information for the index was collected Monday through Wednesday.

The rebound in confidence also comes after a government report, issued last week, showed job creation slowed dramatically in May to 75,000, the fewest new positions in seven months.

Even though the jobless rate dipped to 4.6 percent, a five-year low, economists viewed the employment report as more evidence that overall economic growth, which barreled ahead in the opening quarter of this year, is now slowing.

The economy grew in the first quarter at a 5.3 percent pace, the fastest spurt in 2 1/2 years; It is expected to moderate to half that pace — around 2.5 percent — in the April-to-June quarter, analysts said.

Even though consumers' confidence improved in early June, many Americans have concerns about President Bush's economic stewardship. Sixty percent disapprove of Bush's handling of the economy, according to an AP-Ipsos poll.

Analysts track consumer confidence for clues about consumers' willingness to spend, an important force shaping overall economic activity.

So far, most shoppers haven't been daunted by high gasoline prices, which have topped $3 a gallon in some areas. Major retailers last week reported strong sales for May. The big exception: Wal-Mart Stores Inc., whose lower-income customers are feeling the biggest pinch from prices at the pump.

The rebound in consumer confidence buttressed economists' forecasts that economic growth will slow modestly, not dramatically, in coming months.

"It is a hopeful sign that we won't ebb too far and will get back to a pace of growth that is positive but not so strong as to exacerbate inflation," said Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at LaSalle Bank.

The confidence index is benchmarked to a reading of 100 on January 2002, when Ipsos started the gauge.

Showing the biggest over-the-month improvement was consumers' expectations about the next six months.

That expectations measure rose to 40.4 in June, from a very low reading of 6.3 in May. This gauge turned negative for the first time ever in September highlighting consumers' anxiety in the wake of the devastating Gulf Coast hurricanes. It had been slowly showing some signs of improvement until the plunge in May. A year ago, this measure stood at 37.2

Despite last week's mostly disappointing employment report for May, consumers' feelings about the jobs climate were much more upbeat. This jobs barometer jumped to 124.1 in June. That was up from 110.3 in May and 119.6 in June 2005.

Consumers' attitudes about current economic conditions also improved, with a reading of 99.4 in June compared with 90.3 in May. A year ago, this measure was at 100.8.

Another gauge tracking consumers' sentiments about making a purchase, saving and other investment decisions climbed to 88.4 in June, up from 79.9 in May. In June 2005, this measure stood at 93.

The RBC consumer confidence index was based on responses of 1,003 adults surveyed Monday through Wednesday about their attitudes on personal finance and the economy. Results of the survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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Making life 'a little better each day'

CHRONIC HOMELESS, from page 1

"I got old," said Mendez, her arms gently folded in her lap as she sat in an office at the OPCC Access Center, a place on Seventh Street and Colorado Avenue where the down-and-out can shower, eat a meal and receive counseling or access other social services. "I had gotten sober on the streets, and without the alcohol … I began to realize that my body was getting run down. In those few moments when I was sober and had some clarity, that's when I realized how bad my body ached."

Mendez, now 50, dressed in a tan Mickey Mouse sweatshirt and jeans, her long black hair combed closely to her face, rubbed her knee and wrists where bones were broken during drunken stumbles or confrontations with the abusive men she married.

"The laws are getting tougher now. The city is getting a lot stricter and you have signs going up everywhere telling you, 'you can't sleep here' and 'you can't sleep there,'" she added. "It was just getting a lot harder to live on the street. It wasn't like it was 25 years ago, and neither was my health."

Today, Mendez said she has a new lease on life. Not only is she celebrating two years of sobriety, attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings religiously, Mendez also is living indoors, which is something she never would have thought possible as one of the city's "chronically homeless," a term used by government agencies for someone who, despite intervention, has spent several years living on the streets or in shelters.

With her one-bedroom apartment on Sixth Street and Santa Monica Boulevard, Mendez said she can finally put the past behind her and start fresh. Her rent is $1,204 a month, of which Mendez pays $320. The remainder is covered by the federal and local governments.

"I'm looking to extend my life and make it a little better each day," she said. "The program has been wonderful. I don't know where I would be without it, maybe dead, but definitely still on the streets."

Following several rejections by the federal government, Mendez was declared disabled last year due to her arthritis. She receives slightly more than $1,000 a month in government aid. "There's just no way I could have saved enough money for an apartment by myself. No way."

Mendez owes her newfound good fortune to a woman she calls her guardian angel, Suzie de la Rosa, a caseworker at OPCC. It was de la Rosa who first approached Mendez at Reed Park in late 2004 and offered her a chance to live indoors through City Hall's Chronic Homeless Program, a relatively new venture which brings the city's five homeless services providers together to focus on the most severe cases of homelessness.

SEALING CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM

Under pressure from residents and business owners to dramatically reduce the number of homeless in Santa Monica, the City Council in 2004 created the Chronic Homeless Program, which is essentially designed to be a more efficient and effective way to organize the distribution of homeless services.

Before the program, providers such as OPCC, Step Up On Second, the St. Joseph Center and the CLARE Foundation were working almost entirely independent of one another, as were the police and fire departments. Those agencies would often deal with the same chronically homeless individuals daily, but rarely communicated with each other to better coordinate care. That meant homeless people were slipping through the cracks, receiving meals at one location, but not the drug counseling or medical care necessary to get back on track.

Many community members criticized the system, saying it enabled the homeless to remain on the streets and did nothing to ensure they were moving towards more stability and an eventual return to society.

"There was a call from the community to do something different and the council has been very supportive in trying new things. That is what this initiative has been all about," said Mona Miyasato, City Hall's interim human services manager, who has overseen implementation of the program. "Councilmembers also wanted to ensure we were improving on the existing system and showing some results. We're confident we can do both."

Since its creation, 85 people have been enrolled in the program, with 21 being placed in permanent housing and 27 in temporary or transitional housing. Its success has been praised by The Los Angeles Times and is considered by New York City homeless officials as being an effective model to enhance the continuum of care. New York City has a similar program called Community Collaboratives, in which police and fire departments work directly with service providers, the religious community and residents to identify chronically homeless individuals and assist in their recovery.

A PROGRAM WITH SUBSTANCE

The City Council in March approved an expansion of the Chronic Homeless Program, pumping an additional $178,560 into rental subsidies. Another $256,554 was allocated for services such as social workers and rental deposits. City Hall also applied for and received a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the amount of $948,000 to provide the bulk of the rental subsidies.

That money is in addition to what City Hall spends annually on homeless services, which is 2 percent of the general fund. Last year, that amounted to $3.7 million. Homeless service providers do not receive extra funding under the program, instead their caseworkers have put in extra hours to work inside the program's parameters, said officials at OPCC and St. Joseph.

Before the program's expansion, the City Council had dedicated $20,000 a year for two years to hire a social worker to help coordinate the effort, Miyasato said.

As a comparison, one chronically homeless individual cost City Hall more than $8,500 a year over a three-year period, much of which was the result of 62 arrests and 48 paramedic calls. That doesn't include visits to the emergency room, Miyasato said. City officials tracked one homeless individual in Santa Monica and measured the calls for service, his arrest record, the number of times he was jailed and was treated by paramedics.

"I believe that with (the Chronic Homeless Program), if it becomes widespread, can really show terrific results," said City Councilman Richard Bloom, a member of Bring LA Home, a coalition dedicated to ending homelessness in 10 years. "What this program does is it brings everybody involved together so that we can all be on the same page and present an unified message that resonates every time there is an opportunity to interact with someone who is homeless, and that message is 'we are here to help.'"

As part of the program's expansion, service providers will work with a three-person team of professionals who will focus on 30 homeless individuals at a time, helping them receive counseling, medical care and apply for federal aid such as Social Security. Once medical and legal issues are addressed and the client shows he or she is committed to succeeding in the program, he or she is paired with a caseworker who helps them look for an apartment, sign the lease and take care of the rent, which is subsidized by HUD and Santa Monica City Hall.

For clients like Mendez, the program has enabled her to likely receive government assistance for the rest of her life, as well as keep a roof over her head. Once she feels as though she can handle those responsibilities, the involvement of de la Rosa will taper off and she will focus on the next chronically homeless client.

The program is not without criticism. Of the 85 enrolled, 14 are still homeless, four are refusing service, six are in jail or hospitalized and the whereabouts of 12 remain unknown. One person has died, Miyasato said.

Those who are enrolled in the program, many of whom have had drug or alcohol addictions, are not tested to see if they are still using. And there is little incentive for them to pursue a higher level of income, because if a client earns more money than he or she is currently receiving in Social Security, general relief or disability payments, there's a chance they will not qualify for as much rental assistance or could lose their housing voucher, putting some back on the streets.

As for the drug testing, Julie DeRose, director of homeless services for the St. Joseph Center, said clients who are abusing drugs or alcohol would not commit to the program because of the dedication it requires, and caseworkers would most likely not approach them because there is a higher risk of failure for someone under the influence.

"These are people who have been through quite a lot, and the last thing we would want to do is pressure them into a sit-

See **CHRONIC HOMELESS**, page 11

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CHRONIC HOMELESS, from page 10

uation in which they may suffer from another failure, which can be a dramatic setback in getting them housed," DeRose said. "It takes a lot of effort for our caseworkers to build the trust and to build a relationship with our clients, and the last thing we would want to do is to damage that relationship."

DeRose said much of the substance abuse is a symptom of other problems, either medical or emotional, and once those core issues are addressed, the abuse goes away.

"We definitely support a period of stabilization before someone is placed in permanent housing," DeRose said. "We encourage people to go into rehab and address the issues which are troubling them. It happens at different times for different people."

Mendez, who was introduced to alcohol at an early age by her mother, said caseworkers need not worry about drug abusers or alcoholics enrolling in the program because those who are under the influence will not want to commit to the responsibilities that come with it, including having to meet with caseworkers several times a week.

"If a person wants to get off the street, they have to be willing to do something to help themselves," Mendez said. "You can't just come into a facility like (OPCC) and automatically be put in housing somewhere. You have to do some kind of work … and have some kind of income, because housing is very difficult to find around here. General relief isn't going to cut it."

THE YEARS FALLING AWAY

Those enrolled in the Chronic Homeless Program are, by definition, the most difficult to reach. They've been homeless the longest and are the most resistant to change, according to service providers.

"It's really about baby steps in the beginning," said de la Rosa, Mendez's caseworker. "There are serious trust issues because many (homeless) have been abused, robbed, taken advantage of. It's really scary for them and sort of inconceivable for them to think that they will be in their own home. You just have to keep trying, and after a while you begin to see a little ray of hope and then it just takes on a life of its own."

Mendez said she became homeless in her early 20s after a failed marriage. However, she admits as a teen she ran away from home constantly, rebelling against authority and the alcoholic mother who force-fed her prescriptions drugs and booze as a child to keep her quiet. The alcohol became a way for Mendez to forget about her problems, but in the end, it contributed to her prolonged battle with homelessness.

"There are quite a few women who have been married and eventually grow into drugs or alcohol," Mendez said. "It's either involved in the beginning (of the marriage), creating that shift to fail, or it gets picked up along the way."

Following her divorce, Mendez said she lived in a car and got a job at fast food restaurants or waitressing at bars. A few months turned into a few years, until she eventually lost her car and began sleeping on the streets. She grew up in San Bernardino, but bounced around the Los Angeles area while she was homeless.

She moved to Santa Monica because the word on the streets from her fellow homeless friends was that Santa Monica was more compassionate than other cities. Mendez heard the city was kind to people like her, offering programs and free food. Years then turned into decades, until living on the streets became routine.

"When you are on the streets so long, you know how the police work and you know how to get by every day — what you're supposed to do and what you can't do, where not to be caught sleeping, where to eat, shower, get clean clothes, medical help," Mendez said. "You've got it down to a science and then someone approaches you with an offer you can't refuse."

But Mendez did at first. It took de la Rosa a few visits to get Mendez to trust her enough to listen to what the program had to offer.

"I was scared. They wanted to take me out of my element … and learn how to deal with landlords, bills and house cleaning," Mendez said. "It's a little overwhelming. Basically, I didn't know how to do any of that."

SWEPT UNDER THE RUG

Since moving into her apartment just over a year ago, Mendez has had to learn a lot of skills, from how to use her dishwasher to making sure her bills are paid each month. Everything seems new to her, she said, including vacuuming.

de la Rosa remembers receiving a call from Mendez shortly after she moved into her apartment. Mendez was frantic, afraid that she would be evicted for putting thin lines in her carpet from the vacuum cleaner.

It turned out, the lines were simply caused by the vacuum's wheels, and would disappear within a few hours, "but Donna didn't know that," de la Rosa said. "She thought she had ruined the whole carpet. It was quite refreshing actually, to explain it to her and walk her through the process. Donna has really come a long way."

Mendez said she still doesn't use her dishwasher and just recently turned on her electric oven for the first time. She didn't cook anything. She just wanted to see if she knew how it worked.

"You're just so used to not having to worry about anything except yourself," Mendez said. "Then you're brought indoors, into this environment that you are so unfamiliar with. It's hard for people to understand, but having lived on the streets for 25 years, things like a phone or just learning how to interact with your neighbors, those are all new to me. I have to learn what that's like all over again."

FINDING A PLACE TO HANG YOUR HAT

While adjusting to a new home can be difficult, locating an apartment that is affordable in Santa Monica can prove to be even more of a challenge.

Johnny Haro and Billy Upchurch are clients of the St. Joseph Center. Both said in interviews in May that they have been waiting for at least four months to find an apartment in or around Santa Monica that would accept housing vouchers. They found there are very few available, because many landlords no longer accept vouchers as they can get more money on the open market.

"It's been rough finding a place, just because you're talking about Santa Monica — a pretty competitive place to look for an apartment," said Upchurch, 35, who became homeless about three years ago after a company he was working for in Bakersfield laid him off and he had no means to get back home to Texas. He managed to hitch a ride to Santa Monica, a place he heard had services for the homeless. Upchurch is currently living on the streets here while he waits for an apartment.

"My caseworker and I have been all around the city, it seems, and we've had some luck in finding places," Upchurch added. "But it hasn't been easy."

DeRose said one of the biggest obstacles in the program is mastering the housing component. As rents continue to rise and more affordable housing is converted into condos, the more difficult it becomes to find landlords who will accept vouchers.

Gwen Wonder, executive director of the Action Apartment Association, which represents landlords in Santa Monica, said the rules regarding subsidized housing have become so restrictive that they have pushed more landlords to opt out of the program. Wonder said the amount of money offered for each voucher pales in comparison to what landlords can get by renting to those who are not considered "low income."

"(Landlords) are less eager to accept vouchers now," she said. "However, there are those who have accepted tenants on Section 8 and other housing assistance because they feel these folks deserve to have a nice, comfortable and secure place to live."

DeRose said Upchurch and Haro are close to securing housing and should sign leases soon. But there is still concern for others, including families, who are often the most difficult to house together because of the lack of apartments big enough to accommodate more than two people.

"We've had a lot of success, but the costs are increasing and it is becoming more challenging," DeRose said.

> "I was scared. They wanted to take me out of my element … and learn how to deal with landlords, bills and house cleaning. It's a little overwhelming. Basically, I didn't know how to do any of that."
>
> DONNA MENDEZ
> A CLIENT OF THE CITY'S CHRONIC HOMELESS PROGRAM

WHAT LIES ON THE ROAD AHEAD

As soon as Haro, 45, finds an apartment, he said he wants to work towards receiving his General Education Diploma, and then hopefully land a permanent job. He currently works as a cashier at LAX, but the job is seasonal. He currently resides in a transitional housing shelter.

"I think a happy ending is coming up for me," said Haro, who became homeless five years ago when he lost a construction job and was forced by his mother to move out. He said he lived in his car, taking odd jobs when he could, but after a while he couldn't keep his head above water and drowned in debt, forcing him to lose his last valuable possession, his car.

"At that point, I felt like all hope was lost," Haro said. "But after working with folks at St. Joseph, and becoming enrolled in the program, I'm now on my way to getting my own place. My only goal is to get my G.E.D. and maybe in a year or two, purchase another car and keep continuing in the direction I'm going."

Upchurch, who has been diagnosed with a mental disability and cannot work around large groups of people, said he hopes to find an apartment and possibly "a woman."

"It's going to be a journey," he said. "I still don't know what I'll do, but one thing's for sure, I don't want to go back to the streets."

Firmly entrenched in her apartment, Mendez is looking to continue attending her daily AA meetings while trying to maintain her new life indoors. She doesn't have any big plans.

"I just want to make sure I keep what I have," she said. "Sometimes I think about going back out (on the streets) for a night and sleep with some of my friends. But just my luck, I'd get a ticket for sleeping and it's not worth it just to relive the moment."

Santa Monica Daily Press
A newspaper with issues

Evicted tenants are pushing back

LINCOLN PLACE, from page 1

vacate their homes under current eviction laws.

Still, they fear they may soon meet a similar fate with Apartment Investment and Management Company (AIMCO) — the nation's largest private landlord — as the filing of unlawful detainers can begin as soon as September 1.

"This is not over. We are not letting this be over," said a defiant Bernard on Friday. "We want justice to be done."

AIMCO plans to redevelop the 35-acre property, placing condominiums and luxury apartments on site with 140 low-income units. AIMCO has typically declined to comment on negotiations with tenants because of a gag order imposed by the mediator.

In previous interviews, Patti Schwayder, vice president of government relations and communications for AIMCO, said the company offered a "generous" relocation package to tenants, which has played a large part in the site's declining occupancy. AIMCO has also offered 140 units of affordable housing to former tenants.

The suit filed this week was brought under the California Environmental Quality Act, on behalf of longtime tenant Ingrid Mueller. Among its charges are that Los Angeles is illegally refusing to enforce redevelopment conditions, including comprehensive tenant protections it had previously worked out with the owners. The protections, the suit alleges, had been offered in 2002 by the developer as an inducement in order to gain approval from the city to redevelop the apartment complex as apartments and condominiums.

AIMCO, however, was just a 50-percent owner of the 52-building complex at the time the redevelopment tract map was approved, and is sole owner today.

The steadfast tenants contend City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo is backing down to AIMCO in the company's efforts to increase the density of the project and render the tract map null and void because it was never recorded.

"I wouldn't say all the members of the city have turned their backs," explained Bernard. "Councilman (Bill) Rosendahl has been in our corner from the start. The mayor's office has been supportive. The Council has been supportive. The City Attorney's office has been rebuked for its legal opinion, but they're not changing their wrong story."

According to the LPTA, the Court of Appeals in August of 2005 ruled that mitigating measures on the property adopted by the City Council are not "mere expressions of hope" but must be enforced, regardless of whether the map was recorded or not.

The court ruled that the city and AIMCO had violated the conditions of the project approval when AIMCO demolished five Lincoln Place buildings in 2003, and that the Denver-based apartment giant had the legal obligation to comply with the conditions of redevelopment that they had originally signed for in 2002, unless the project is revised through public hearings.

City officials, the tenants charge, have continually reneged on their promises made in 2002, and refuse to challenge the "esoteric" interpretation of subdivision laws. As a result, the remaining elderly and disabled tenants have been living under the threat of eviction for more than a year while AIMCO negotiates a better deal and increased profits.

Jonathan Diamond, a spokesman for Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, said on Friday that his office had yet to see the suit, but hasn't given up on finding an amiable solution to what has become "an ongoing issue."

"We have been working with the mayor's office and City Council to find a mediated solution," said Diamond. "We feel we have been receptive to their (tenants') concerns, participating in all the mediation efforts. We don't think we've turned our backs on them at all.

"We're hopeful this can all still be worked out."

Meanwhile, the restless tenants still occupying less than one-tenth of the remaining 696 units — there were 795 units prior to demolition — aren't so hopeful.

The tenants charge in Thursday's lawsuit that Delgadillo's office, despite losing the appeals case, has persisted in advising the City Council in hush-hush "closed sessions" that the tenant conditions are somehow different than the demolition conditions, therefore, they are not enforceable. They further contend that Delgadillo has caved to the threats of a lawsuit from AIMCO's attorneys — Latham & Watkins — rather than getting their backs.

On May 30, the City Council voted down a motion by Councilman Bill Rosendahl (8-5) to record the tract map conditions, despite strong support from Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and fellow Council members Janice Hahn, José Huizar, Tom LaBonge and Tony Cardenas.

Rosendahl's chief of staff, Mike Bonim, said on Friday that his office had yet to receive a copy of the lawsuit.

"The fight has now shifted from the Council Chamber to the courtroom," said Bernard, a tenant of Lincoln Place since 1988. "AIMCO's threats of expensive lawsuits have been effective against the city. We don't think AIMCO's threats will be so effective with a judge.

"It's a shame we have to do what the city attorney should be doing to protect the city's people from real estate speculators."

The lawsuit asks the court to order Los Angeles officials to enforce the mitigation measures it adopted in 2002. It seeks an injunction against all eviction proceedings until the tenant relocation measures have been complied with or modified in a public hearing, in line with the Court of Appeals opinion.

It also seeks an order restraining AIMCO's evictions under the Unfair Business Practices Act.

"At issue is whether the public can trust that conditions imposed on a project's approval will actually be enforced," said Mueller, a 62-year-old disabled tenant. "Both AIMCO and the city promised me I could stay at Lincoln Place when they blessed this grandiose redevelopment scheme. Then they turned around and evicted most of the tenants and tore down some of the buildings to make way for their condos before the court stopped them.

"I look to the court to make them stand by their promises to keep me and the other remaining elderly and disabled tenants in our homes and our community," said Mueller. "At this stage in our lives, being evicted is terrifying."

The case of Lincoln Place has served as a rallying cry for renter groups in the wake of the state's Ellis Act, which allows owners to evict tenants in order to get out of the landlord business.

Lincoln Place Apartments, completed in 1951 by Modernist architects Ralph Vaughn and Heth Wharton, was originally backed by the Federal Housing Authority to support World War II veterans and their families. However, it has been privately owned since. There are 45 buildings remaining following demolition.

Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Fabian Lewkowicz/File Photo

GONE, BUT NOT FORGETTING **(Top) Tenants are escorted out of their apartments by Sheriff's Department personnel after being evicted from Lincoln Place in December. (Right) Los Angeles City Councilman Bill Rosendahl attempts to calm down tenants at Lincoln Place Apartments in Venice after they were forced out last year to make way for a condominium redevelopment project. The Lincoln Place Tenants Association this week filed suit to have the evictions rescinded.**

> "This is not over. We are not letting this be over. We want justice to be done."
>
> SHEILA BERNARD
> **PRESIDENT, LINCOLN PLACE TENANTS ASSN.**

The site has been largely abandoned in the face of the ongoing legal battle between residents and the owner that began shortly after 1992, when AIMCO proposed a redevelopment plan that called for 850 total units, most of which would be market-rate condos.

According to the LPTA, the project developer specifically offered and agreed not to evict tenants, but City Attorney Delgadillo failed to stop the demolitions and was handed a rebuke by the Court of Appeals last summer. The court subsequently ordered the city and AIMCO to pay the plaintiffs' attorney fees for forcing them to act as a "private attorney general" to enforce state law.

Now, according to the LPTA, Delgadillo is refusing to enforce the tenant protections adopted by the City Council in 2002, and has provoked another lawsuit against the city by the tenants to enforce the same state laws.

"We just want for the city to uphold the laws and protect its people," said Bernard. "We want the tenants to remain in their homes, and for the evicted tenants to be able to come back. We want the evictions to stop."

Trickle down ergonomics

Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Surfers take a ride on the small waves produced at Bay Street one recent morning.

Husband presses on

MISSING WOMAN, from page 1

Since that time, he has been scouring the city in search of his wife with whom he has spent the last 35 years.

"You would have thought that covering 900 miles, I would have found her," Muñoz said Friday, while driving in West LA looking for Roberts. "I've been under the bridges, in the bushes ... I've got to cover everywhere. I can't take any chances.

"It's like the planet just swallowed her. It's weird."

Muñoz said Roberts left their Sunset Park house without her psychiatric medication, which allows her to function normally. He's worried that she is not in her right mind and is vulnerable to the predators who lurk on the streets.

"I can't sleep because I keep thinking about the horrible things that could be happening to her, especially in her state," said Muñoz, 62, a retired West Los Angeles Veterans Administration Hospital worker. "But I've got to leave the negative stuff and hope for the best."

Muñoz has distributed more than 100 missing person flyers describing Roberts throughout Los Angeles, including Santa Monica and Venice. He has posted them at her favorite places, like Norm's Restaurant and Carrow's Restaurant, as well as homeless shelters in downtown LA, motels, hotels, parks and liquor stores.

Roberts also suffers from a chronic lung illness, which she was being treated for at the Venice Family Clinic. But the treatment for her lungs had interrupted the effects of her psychiatric medication, Muñoz said. He added that he noticed Roberts began acting strangely about a week prior to her disappearance and planned to address it when Roberts had her next scheduled appointment with her psychiatric doctor, whose office is located on Sepulveda and Olympic boulevards.

During his search, Muñoz learned that Roberts went to her doctor's office two days after she disappeared, asking for financial assistance. But the staff there was not aware she was considered missing at the time, so they instructed her to come back when she had an appointment.

"They said she looked clean and had her purse," Muñoz said, adding Roberts was wearing the same clothes that is in the picture he put on the flyers.

He is now in contact with Roberts' doctor and the medical community, particularly mental institutions where she might end up.

Santa Monica Police Lt. Frank Fabrega said Roberts' information has been shared with law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

"If she is stopped by an officer, they will see that this information was posted," he said.

Since Roberts' disappearance, Muñoz has been getting up at 5 a.m. each day to continue looking for Roberts. He has combed Hollywood, a place she recently talked about wanting to visit, and just about every area surrounding it.

On Friday, he had returned to his Spanish-style home on 31st Street to take a shower and get something to eat before he resumed his search. He said Thursday night was the first night he's been able to get any sleep, but that was because his neighbor gave him four sleeping pills.

"My head feels like it has lead in it," Muñoz said of the lack of sleep and the anxiety of his missing wife whom he has lived with in Santa Monica for 30 years.

Roberts, who met Muñoz 36 years ago while working at the VA, was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia four years ago and has been on medication ever since.

"As long as she stays on the medication, she's normal and she functions in everyday life," Muñoz said, adding that Roberts begins to lose a sense of reality and paranoia sets in if she is off the medication. "Without that medication for her head, forget about it."

Margaret Rose Roberts is 62 years old, has light brown hair and blue eyes. She is five feet, one inch tall and weighs 102 pounds. She has a red birthmark on the back of her neck and a small mole on her nose. Anyone with any information is asked to call Muñoz at (310) 922-2633.

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Bribery scandal rocks House

BY DAVID ESPO
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — House Democratic leaders are determined to sanction Rep. William Jefferson, scandal-scarred but unindicted, despite a blunt reminder from the Congressional Black Caucus that he is entitled to a "presumption of innocence."

"It's about to blow up in their face," predicted Rep. Melvin Watt, chairman of the CBC.

The North Carolina Democrat added Thursday night that black voters might wonder why a "black member of Congress" would be stripped of his committee post with neither rule nor precedent to justify it.

The reaction heightened a controversy that has flared at the outset of an election campaign in which Democrats accuse Republicans of fostering a "culture of corruption."

The controversy stems from a bribery investigation that already has resulted in two convictions. The FBI claims he accepted $100,000 in cash and that its agents later found $90,000 of it wrapped and stashed in a freezer in his home.

The FBI carried out a weekend search of Jefferson's congressional office last month, triggering an outpouring of criticism from congressional leaders claiming agents had encroached on Congress' constitutional powers.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi renewed her call Thursday for Jefferson to give up his seat on the House Ways and Means Committee until his legal situation is clarified.

Her office said she would have no response to the CBC's statement. But an aide, Jennifer Crider, said any suggestion that race was a factor was "absolutely untrue."

"This is about upholding the highest ethical standard for every member of the Democratic caucus," she said.

With Jefferson refusing to step aside, the party leadership took the first formal steps to enforce its will.

Party leaders responsible for committee assignments voted for his suspension "until such time as a further recommendation to restore him to the committee is made."

Arrangements had already been made to convene the full rank-and-file to ratify the action. But Watt swiftly invoked a rule providing for a five-day delay, and the decision was postponed until next week.

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Lessons found with caveman

BY FRANK X. MULLEN
Associated Press Writer

FERNLEY, Nev. — Two Nevada elementary school teachers never meant to get in the middle of a political battle over who controls the history of North America.

"It's been quite a ride for 10 years, but the kids love it," said Vivian Olds, a fifth-grade teacher at Fernley Elementary School. "Here's one of the most important archaeological discoveries in North America, just 30 miles from Fernley, and yet we had no access to that information."

The secrecy, she said, just "drove us to find out more."

Olds and her colleague, Deb Sutherland, wanted to teach students about a 10,600-year-old partially mummified body called Spirit Cave Man. The man's remains were found 66 years ago in a cave near Fallon, but his antiquity wasn't known until 12 years ago.

Northern Nevada Indian tribes want to rebury the remains in a secret location, so that the man's soul may continue its journey into the next world. Tribal leaders filed suit against the government to get the remains.

But some scientists want to study him further because they say he may hold keys to understanding how — and when — human beings came to the New World tens of thousands of years ago. Most anthropologists say Spirit Cave Man probably isn't related to modern Indians, and represents a group that predated the ancestors of tribes now in the Great Basin. A few other researchers disagree.

The legal, cultural, scientific and political battle has spilled into the classroom.

"The Indians think Spirit Cave Man is one of them, and maybe he is," said Courtney Stapleton, 13, of Fernley. "We want to learn about him, but the tribes and the government are trying to keep everything on the down-low. They don't want people to know about him. ... We learned a lot anyway, though."

Stapleton began learning about Spirit Cave Man in the third grade and continued to study the prehistory of Nevada in the fifth grade. She and other Fernley students have made presentations about the ancient human at conferences, weaved duck decoys from reeds, studied Indian stories, wrote poems about Nevada 10,000 years ago and used clay to put faces on plastic skulls.

The students and teachers said government officials ignored them when they've asked for information about the remains. They said they've been shunned by some Nevada anthropologists, who have told reporters they don't want to offend the tribes by discussing Spirit Cave Man.

At the Great Basin Anthropology Conference in Elko in 2002, teachers said an Indian woman in the audience wept when the students talked about Spirit Cave Man during a lecture. The teachers said the woman was upset that her ancestor and his burial were being discussed in public.

But the kids kept talking — and they kept learning.

"It's fun learning about history and about this man who lived so long ago," said Julia Thompson, 11. "I loved making the tule duck decoys and writing poems about who he was and how he lived when Nevada was a place of lakes and swamps.

"He's so important to history, to everyone's history."

Olds and Sutherland became interested in Spirit Cave Man after the Nevada State Museum announced in 1994 that a mummy in its collection was carbon-dated at about 10,600 calendar years old. The museum spent $7,500 for a CAT scan of the remains and to employ a forensic artist put a clay face on a replica of the skull. The man's cranium, scientists said, has little in common with the skulls of any group of humans, living or dead, including American Indians.

The mummy and ancient remains found elsewhere could rewrite the history of the human occupation of the continent, experts said. The remains may tell a story of people who were here before the ancestors of the Indians came.

In 1998, the state museum said it would display the busts of Spirit Cave Man and Wizards Beach Man, another set of ancient human remains found at Pyramid Lake. Nevada tribes objected, saying that public viewing of anything connected with the burial of persons they consider their ancestors would be a desecration.

So the state government locked up the busts and the artifacts and promised never to allow the public to see them. The museum also withdrew requests for more testing of the Spirit Cave Man remains.

The controversy over the remains spawned a Nevada State Museum exhibition called "Under One Sky," which centers on the tribal perspective of prehistoric Nevada. In the museum, Spirit Cave Man is a footnote on one panel and is mentioned on another display.

Gene Hatori, museum curator, said the "Under One Sky" exhibit was an attempt to mend fences with the tribes who had been excluded from early researchers' work and reports concerning Spirit Cave Man.

He said Indians initially didn't want any mention of the case and what resulted was a compromise that tried to present both sides.

"We tried to balance the presentation, and it's up to the viewer to decide," he said. "I think we succeeded. I thought it was balanced."

But Olds said the 2001 exhibit sheds no light on new theories, and for years it's been difficult to find out anything about Spirit Cave Man.

"It became a total blackout, a code of silence, here in Nevada," Olds said. "We could not find anything out. We took kids to the (Nevada State) Museum on field trips only to find out there was nothing about Spirit Cave Man there. They couldn't tell us anything. We asked why. We got no answers."

So the teachers and the students did research. They interviewed people. Some Indian leaders didn't accept the students' invitations to the classroom, Olds said, but others did.

DOING AN ABOUT-FACE

Douglas Owsley, director of anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution, shared information. Sharon Long, the artist who did the busts of the ancient Nevadans and who has reconstructed the faces of more than 150 other historic Americans, came for a visit.

Olds said she doesn't dwell on what people wouldn't tell her students or what the state government won't show them. She's said she is more interested in what the students learned — and keep learning.

Last month, the two teachers and a few of their students located the ancient cave where Spirit Cave Man was found. The site had remained secret for 66 years, and neither government agencies nor Indian leaders would reveal its location.

After years of searching in archives and on the ground, the party of adults and children from Fernley Elementary finally saw the place where the remains of Spirit Cave Man were laid to rest. The cave matches the 1940 site report exactly.

"It was here, more than 10,000 years ago that his people wrapped him in a tule blanket and buried him," Stapleton said. "In this dry cave he became mummified."

Olds and Sutherland said they present both sides of the battle for the bones. They ask students to role-play as Indians who want their ancient grandfather reburied and as the scientists who want to study him. The students study Indian creation stories and scientific theories.

"Balance is important," Olds said. "We don't want the students to see it as an either-or, one-sided thing. We don't have any self-interest in this. But we do have a human interest, and we want the students to come to their own positions."

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Young Julia Thompson stood at the grave site of a man who died 500 generations ago and gazed out across the sagebrush ocean. She said she tried to imagine the waves, waterbirds and people of long ago.

She said scientists should learn what they can from the ancient witness, but the old man needs to go home.

"He's been in a box in Carson City for 66 years, and he shouldn't be trapped in a box," she said. "He should be brought here and put back where he was found. Here's where he was meant to be."

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Invention fallout explosive

BlastGard wins raves for ability to muffle detonations, but family squabbles ruin the party

BY SANDRA CHEREB
AP Business Writer

RENO, Nev. — The video is dramatic. Five pounds of explosives detonate beneath a blue station wagon, engulfing the car in a cloud of smoke and debris. The vehicle is all but destroyed, but its two occupants — test dummies dubbed Thelma and Louise — are unscathed.

The material that muffled the explosion and promises to add a measure of safety to a world challenged by terrorists is focusing attention on an upstart company called BlastGard International Inc. Though it has yet to turn a profit, the Clearwater, Fla., company is winning awards and contracts with municipal agencies and the military.

But a federal lawsuit filed in Reno raises questions whether BlastGard is entitled to reap any of the rewards.

Sam Gettle, owner of Verde Family Partnership, says what began as a promising venture has turned into a costly and bitter dispute as former business associates market what he and his brother, Guy, claim is technology based on years of their research and family owned patents.

In the suit filed last fall in U.S. District Court, Verde Partners, which owns the rights to Guy Gettle's patents, accuses BlastGard, a subsidiary and company officers of racketeering, conspiracy, theft of intellectual property, breach of fiduciary duty and misappropriation of a trade secret.

It alleges the principals of BlastGard Inc. — a different, now-defunct company of which Verde was one-third owner — defaulted on a licensing agreement, orchestrated a board takeover, formed new companies of a similar name, and stole the technology it is now using to lure investors and market bomb-resistant trash cans and other blast resistant items.

BlastGard International officials maintain their company is not an offshoot of BlastGard Inc. They list CEO James Gordon and President John "Jack" Waddell as co-inventors of the product they call BlastWrap.

The legal standoff pits Sam Gettle — who shuns computers, answering machines, cell phones and often shuttles paperwork in a duffel bag while riding his bicycle — against some sophisticated rivals.

BlastGard's board includes Howard Safir, former New York City police commissioner, now chairman and chief excutive officer of SafirRosetti, an investigative and security firm; and Joel Gold, director of investment banking for Andrew Garrett Inc., a New York investment firm.

In its filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, BGI maintains that BlastGard Inc., formed in 2000, "attempted to commercialize a 12-year-old technology" that "was never successful." The company says that despite a similar name, corporate cast and ultimately acknowledging that Gettle material was used in their own promotions, the Gettles have no claim on its main product, BlastWrap.

BlastGard attorneys are seeking to have the suit dismissed on grounds the court in Nevada lacks jurisdiction. The suit seeks unspecified damages, and a ruling by U.S. District Judge Brian Sandoval is pending.

"The Gettle family has been developing this product for many years," said Verde lawyer Chris Wicker. "It's my belief they believed the Gettles wouldn't have the resources to do anything about it."

BlastGard International reported a net loss of $411,300 for the first quarter ending March 31, but its revenues are growing, thanks in part to mega-strength trash cans it manufactures.

Described by one transportation official as "trash cans on steroids," they're designed to suck the force and fire out of an explosion, limiting destruction and loss of life. They've been purchased by Amtrak, the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the military.

BlastWrap is made up of sheets of plastic-like pouches that look like muffin-sized bubble wrap filled with grains of perlite, a volcanic mineral much like pumice. When heated, water trapped in the grains makes them expand, "popping" them like popcorn. Combined with fire suppression materials, the pouches dissipate the energy from an explosion and minimize flames.

Potential applications are vast, from military and homeland security to transportation, industry and manufacturing.

The company's patent applications remain under review, according to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The Gettles say that although earlier versions of BlastWrap used different filler and containment materials — honeycomb as opposed to plastic pouches — it's essentially the same and covered under Verde's patents issued to Guy Gettle in 1993 and 1995.

Gordon disagreed.

"Apples and oranges are both food, taste good, eliminate hunger, are satisfying," he said. "Thus, there are similarities, but they are totally different."

In legal documents, officers of BGI, which was profiled by The Associated Press in December, called the lawsuit "nonsense," and disputed allegations of using Gettle technology.

The company's Web site, however, invited doubt.

VIDEO DOESN'T TELL THE TALE

Guy Gettle appeared in one video of a car-bomb test that the Gettles say was conducted eight years before even the original company was formed.

"In one way it makes me mad, they think we're so stupid," Sam Gettle said.

The video was removed from the site a day after the AP questioned Gordon and BGI attorney Jeff Sheldon about it.

In an e-mail, Gordon said the video is owned by BGI, but was "being removed from the Web site since it does not show BGI's product."

The Gettles also disputed a comment Waddell made during a November interview with MSNBC and posted on the company's Web site, in which Waddell said Lockheed Martin Missiles and Space had the company's product installed at their Palo Alto, Calif., facility.

Documents show the Lockheed contract was with Suppression System Engineering Corp., Guy Gettle's business that predates the initial BlastGard company.

"Jack Waddell was in charge of the manufacturing of said product and during a live interview, did misspeak when he said 'our' product. It happens," Gordon said.

That video also was removed from the Web site after an AP inquiry.

Suppression Systems had turned to JoyVer Inc., a Houston-based company, to do the fabrication for the Lockheed project, the Gettles said.

Waddell is a former president of JoyVer. Through him, the Gettles said they met James Gordon and Michael Gordon, who is now chief financial officer for BlastGard International.

After JoyVer decided not to pursue anti-blast products, the Gettles said they formed the original privately held BlastGard Inc. with Waddell and the Gordons.

Under a licensing agreement with Verde, BlastGard was to obtain at least $2 million in funding and held an option to purchase the patents and Verde's stock holdings for $10 million, according to court documents.

But the business relationship soured, according to Sam Gettle. The lawsuit alleges Waddell and the Gordons orchestrated a coup of BlastGard Inc.'s board of directors, making Verde a minority shareholder, and dissolved the company in 2004, taking the Gettle technology with them.

Around the same time, according to SEC documents, Waddell and the Gordons formed a new company "for the purpose of pursuing a new technology. ... for use in the blast mitigation solutions industry," and chose to use the BlastGard name solely because of "their personal affinity" for it.

That company, BlastGard Technologies Inc., was acquired in January 2004 by Opus Resource Group Inc. — a company headed by another Gordon brother, Robert. Opus then changed its name to BlastGard International.

Verde's lawsuit describes the deal as a "convoluted stock swap" designed to wrest control of valuable technology.

BGI currently trades around 70 cents a share over the counter, but investors are taking note. Last month the company announced that a group led by an officer of Monarch Capital Group LLC, a New York investment firm, acquired about 2.1 million shares from current shareholders originally affiliated with Opus.

Gettle's lawyer said Verde hopes to reclaim BlastGard's technology — or come to an acceptable licensing agreement.

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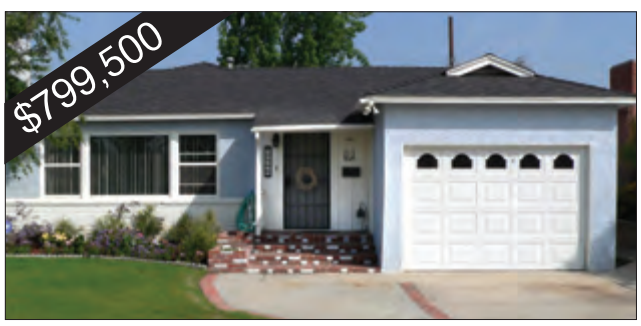

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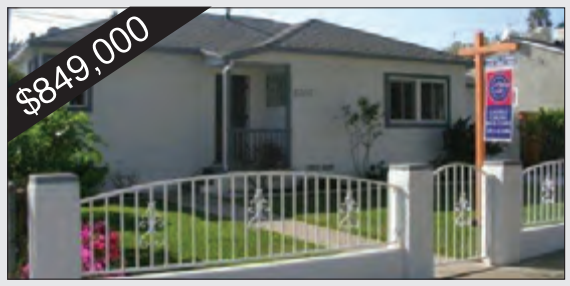

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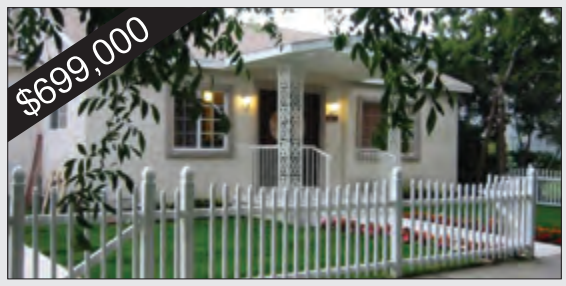

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A clog in the pipeline

BY MATT VOLZ
Associated Press Writer

JUNEAU, Alaska — State lawmakers have failed to agree on terms of an oil-tax bill, a key component to bringing a proposed 3,600-mile natural gas pipeline closer to reality.

The source of contention between the House and Senate was a single percentage point in the base rate of the tax on profits and how fast that rate would escalate as oil prices rise.

The different versions of the bill went to a conference committee, and negotiators emerged about 90 minutes before a special session was to end Thursday with a compromise tax rate on the Alaska profits of oil companies. But the House rejected the compromise and adjourned. The bill died, as it did at the end of the regular session in May.

Gov. Frank Murkowski, who has been pushing the pipeline contract, would have to call another special session for legislators to start the process again. Murkowski has said he plans to do so but has not said when.

The pipeline — at an estimated cost of $19 billion to Canada or $27 billion to Chicago — would be North America's largest construction project ever.

The House approved a base tax rate of 23.5 percent; the Senate's version had a 22.5 percent tax rate.

The compromise bill included a base tax rate of 22.8 percent, which would have brought an additional $2.5 billion a year to the state in tax revenue when oil is $70 per barrel.

The tax would have replaced the state's current production tax system, which legislators say is outdated and has resulted in large oil fields escaping or paying minimal taxes.

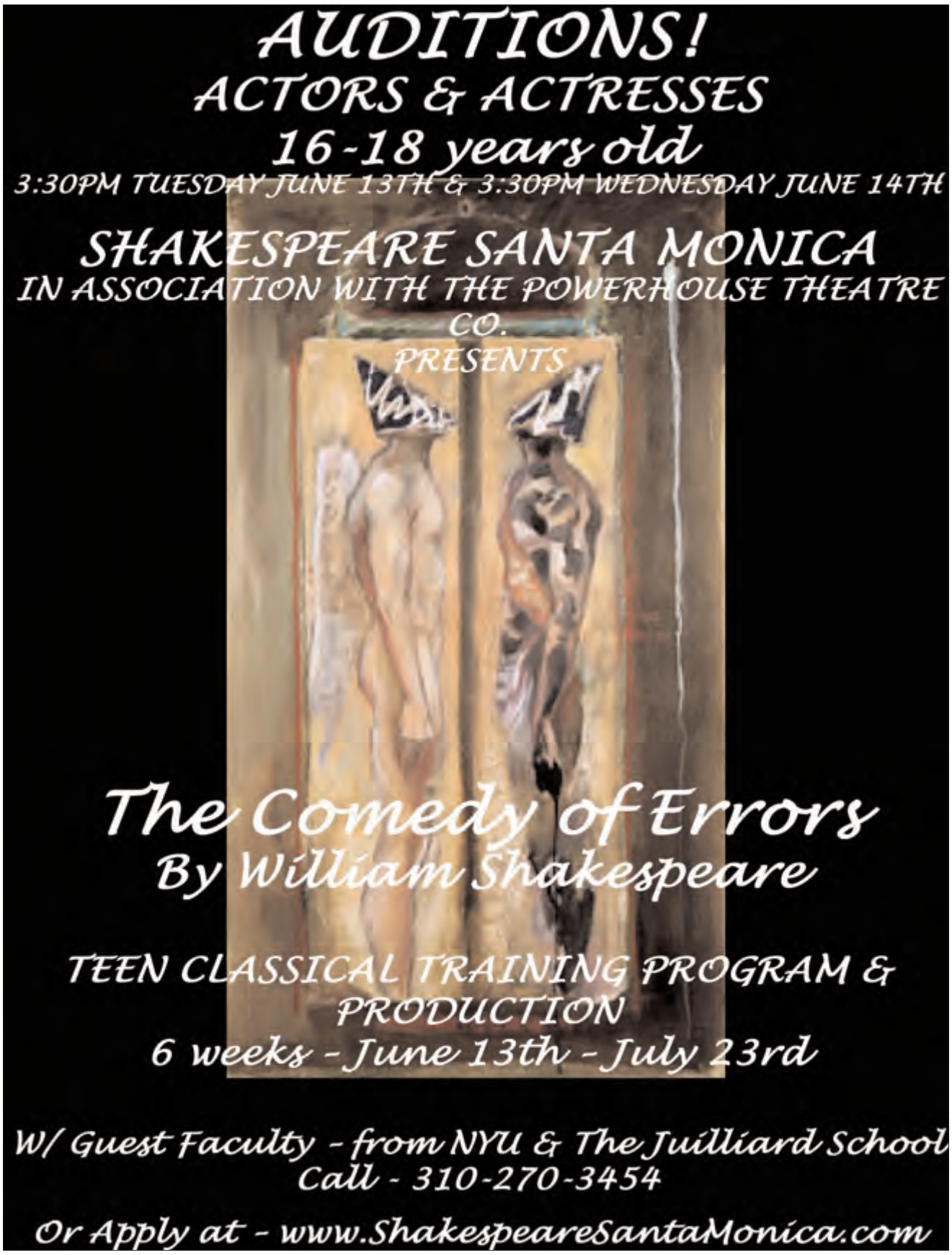
Murkowski negotiated a tax and royalty contract with oil giants BP, Exxon Mobil and ConocoPhillips to recover the North Slope gas; part of it was a 20 percent tax on profits, with no rate increase on high prices, that would be locked in for the companies' oil production for the next 30 years.

Any higher tax rate could hurt future investment in oil and gas development, the governor said.

There was no requirement in the proposed legislation or the contract itself that the pipeline actually be built, even if lawmakers eventually agree on a tax rate. That decision would be made about four years after the contract is signed, once permitting and design of the pipeline is completed.

The proposed gas pipeline would extend by decades the life of Alaska's declining oil and gas production.

There are 35 trillion cubic feet of proven natural-gas reserves in Alaska's North Slope, which the state for decades has been trying to develop and sell. Only in recent years, since natural-gas prices have skyrocketed, has the expensive gas pipeline been a realistic project for the three energy companies.



Troops saw terrorist alive

Al-Zarqawi died from wounds

BY KIM GAMEL
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A mortally wounded Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was still alive and mumbling after U.S. airstrikes on his hideout and tried to get off a stretcher when he saw American troops nearby, a top military official said Friday.

Also, U.S. troops conducted 39 raids late Thursday and early Friday based on information gleaned from searches in the hours after the al-Qaida leader's death. Fearing that insurgents will seek revenge, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki imposed driving bans in Baghdad and restive Diyala province, where the terrorist was killed.

Al-Zarqawi could barely speak when Iraqi police arrived at the scene of Wednesday's attack.

"He mumbled something, but it was indistinguishable and it was very short," U.S. military spokesman Maj. Gen. William Caldwell said at a news conference.

U.S. and Polish forces arrived intending to provide unspecified medical treatment, and al-Zarqawi was put on a stretcher, Caldwell said. The terrorist "attempted to sort of turn away off the stretcher, everybody reached to insert him back. ... He died a short time later from the wounds suffered during the air strike.

"We did in fact see him alive," Caldwell said. "There was some sort of movement he had on the stretcher, and he did die a short time later."

Caldwell said the U.S. military was still compiling details of the airstrike, including the exact amount of time Zarqawi was alive afterward. He said an initial analysis of Zarqawi's body had been done but he was not certain whether it constituted a full autopsy.

In an interview earlier Friday with Fox News Channel, Caldwell was more descriptive of Zarqawi's actions before he died.

"He was conscious initially, according to the U.S. forces that physically saw him," Caldwell told Fox. "He obviously had some kind of visual recognition of who they were because he attempted to roll off the stretcher, as I am told, and get away, realizing it was U.S. military."

At the news conference, the spokesman also provided a revised death toll from the attack.

U.S. Gen. George Casey, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, said at the time that the American airstrike targeted "an identified, isolated safe house." Four other people, including a woman and a child, were killed with al-Zarqawi and Abu Abdul-Rahman al-Iraqi, the terrorist's spiritual consultant.

Caldwell said it now appears there was no child among those killed. He cautioned that some facts were still being sorted out but said that three women and three men, including al-Zarqawi, were killed.

Hours after the bombing, U.S. troops carried out 17 simultaneous raids Wednesday near Baqouba, the capital of Diyala province. The region is in the heartland of the Sunni Arab-led insurgency and has seen a recent rise in sectarian violence. Baqouba is 35 miles northeast of Baghdad.

Those raids provided the information leading to the searches overnight Thursday.

In the 39 raids, troops "picked up things like memory sticks, some hard drives" that would allow American forces to begin dismantling al-Zarqawi's al-Qaida in Iraq, Caldwell told the British Broadcasting Corp.

He said the latest information was helping U.S. forces unravel the source of al-Qaida's weapons and financing.

Earlier, Caldwell had said U.S. forces waited to kill al-Zarqawi before carrying out the other raids, in an apparent effort not to spook the Jordanian-born terrorist.

"We had identified other targets that we obviously did not go after to allow us to focus on al-Zarqawi. Now that we got him, we will go after them," Caldwell told the BBC.

As Iraqi and U.S. leaders cautioned that al-Zarqawi's death was not likely to end the bloodshed in Iraq, Caldwell said another foreign-born militant was already poised to take over the terror network's operations.

He said Egyptian-born Abu al-Masri would likely take the reins of al-Qaida in Iraq. He said al-Masri trained in Afghanistan and arrived in Iraq in 2002 to establish an al-Qaida cell.

A foothold for 'Deadwood'

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — David Milch, the creator of HBO's "Deadwood," has received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

"If I were in charge I would give you a star on every block along this street," said Ian McShane, who stars on "Deadwood," the saga of a rough-and-tumble 19th-century mining town. The series begins its third season Sunday.

"Long may you ride into the sunset," McShane said.

Also on hand to witness the star's unveiling Thursday were Paramount Pictures executive A.C. Lyles and producer Steven Bochco, who worked with Milch on "Hill Street Blues," "NYPD Blue" and other shows.

"In a life that is very eventful, I would not have predicted this," said Milch. His TV credits also include "Brooklyn South," "True Blue," "Big Apple" and "Capital News."

Milch is developing another series for HBO, a surfer drama set in California tentatively called, "John From Cincinnati."

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood's elite gathered to pay tribute to Sean Connery, who received The American Film Institute's annual lifetime achievement award.

Directors Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, and actors Harrison Ford, Andy Garcia and Mike Myers were among the stars who cheered on the legendary actor Thursday at the ceremony at the Kodak Theatre.

Myers wore a tuxedo jacket and a kilt to honor the Scottish actor.

"Men want to be him, women want him, and in my case I both want to be him and want him," Myers joked.

"He's extremely professional, very talented and has an amazingly strong presence on the screen," Lucas said from the red carpet.

Connery thanked the audience for "one hell of an evening."

"I got my big break when I was five years old, and it's taken more than 70 years to realize it," he said. "At five I learned to read, and I would not be standing here without the books, plays and scripts."

Connery was launched to stardom in the 1960s and 1970s, playing agent 007, or "Bond, James Bond," as he introduced himself to foes.

He also starred in "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," "The Hunt for Red October" and "The Untouchables," which earned him an Oscar for best supporting actor.

He is the 34th recipient of the award, the Institute's highest honor for a career in film.

Past recipients include Orson Welles, Bette Davis, Alfred Hitchcock, Sidney Poitier, Elizabeth Taylor, Jack Nicholson, Steven Spielberg, Clint Eastwood, Martin Scorsese, Robert DeNiro, Meryl Streep and George Lucas.

LOS ANGELES — The former manager of "Desperate Housewives" co-star Nicollette Sheridan is suing the actress, accusing her of breaking an agreement to pay a percentage of her income.

Rob Lee claimed Sheridan hired him when her career "consisted primarily of occasional appearances on television." The lawsuit filed Thursday also said Lee persuaded Sheridan to audition for Desperate Housewives, and stopped her from abandoning a second audition. Thanks to the show's success, "Sheridan's entertainment career was reborn," according to the suit filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Sheridan initially paid Lee 10 percent of her gross income, but stopped paying after she fired him in November 2004, according to the complaint.

The suit seeks more than $500,000 in damages.

Neither Lee's attorney nor Sheridan could be reached for comment after business hours Thursday.

LOS ANGELES —"Apprentice" winner Sean Yazbeck and show contestant Tammy Trenta are an item, but have no plans to exchange rings.

"We're not getting married," Yazbeck said in a phone interview Thursday. "At this stage, it's way too soon to be talking about that."

Yazbeck said he and Trenta started dating after the filming of the show's fifth season.

During Monday's "Apprentice" finale in Los Angeles, host and real estate mogul Donald Trump commented on Yazbeck's affections for Trenta, and asked whether he was going to marry her.

Yazbeck answered yes, "but I thought I was answering whether I loved her," he said Thursday. After that, rumors of the couple's engagement started circulating.

In an interview with Inside Edition, Trenta also said they aren't engaged.

NEW YORK — Beyonce Knowles needs an all-female band for her upcoming tour — and fast.

Knowles is searching for musicians to play on a tour in support of her second solo album, "B'Day," Columbia Records announced this week.

The album will be released internationally on Sept. 4, her 25th birthday, and in the United States on Sept. 5.

Auditions will be held Monday in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Burbank, Calif., and Weehawken, N.J. The band will include drummers, keyboard players, bassists, guitarists, horn players and percussionists.

Finalists from local auditions must be available to travel to New York to audition for Knowles later in the week and to begin working on the road by June 20, the record label said.

Aspiring band members must be 18 or older and must be prepared to play Knowles' "Work It Out," as performed on the "Beyonce: Live at Wembley" DVD.

Knowles, who fronted R&B girl group Destiny's Child, won five Grammy Awards for her top-selling solo debut, 2003's "Dangerously in Love."

MOVIEGUIDE

SHOWTIMES: JUNE 10-11, 2006

Broadway Loews Cineplex
1441 3rd Street
(310) 458-6232

Keeping Up With the Steins (PG-13)
1:30, 4:45
Prairie Home Companion, A (PG-13)
1:00, 4:15, 7:15, 10:30
X-Men: The Last Stand (PG-13)
12:30, 2:00, 3:00, 5:15, 6:15, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:15, 11:00

Mann's Criterion Theatre
1313 3rd Street
(310) 395-1599

Friends With Money (R)
3:00, 7:40
Mission: Impossible III (PG-13)
1:10, 4:00, 7:00, 10:10
The Omen (R)
11:20am, 12:50, 1:30, 2:10, 3:40, 4:20, 5:00, 6:30, 7:10, 7:50, 9:20, 10:00, 10:40, 12:00am
Poseidon (PG-13)
12:30, 5:10, 9:50
Thank You for Smoking (R)
1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20

AMC7 Santa Monica
1310 3rd Street
(310)289-4262

Break-Up, The (PG-13)
11:00am, 11:40am, 1:45, 2:15, 4:15, 5:10, 7:00, 8:00, 9:35, 10:40, 11:40
Cars (G)
10:40am, 11:30am, 1:40, 2:30, 4:40, 5:30, 7:40, 8:30, 10:30, 11:30
Da Vinci Code, The (PG-13)
11:45am, 12:35, 3:00, 4:00, 6:30, 7:30, 10:00, 11:00
Over the Hedge (PG)
12:10, 2:35, 4:50, 7:20, 9:30

Nuwilshire Theatre
1314 Wilshire Blvd
(310)281-8228

Art School Confidential (R)
11:30am, 2:00, 4:30, 7:10, 9:45
District B-13 (Banlieue 13) (R)
11:45am, 2:15, 4:45, 7:30, 10:00

Laemmle 4-Plex Theatre
1332 2nd Street
(310)394-9741

An Inconvenient Truth (PG)
12:15, 1:30, 2:45, 4:00, 5:15, 7:00, 7:45, 9:30, 10:15
Peaceful Warrior (PG-13)
12:45, 3:45, 7:00, 9:55
Water (PG-13)
1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 9:55

Information: **calendar@smdp.com**

MORE TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1865, the Richard Wagner opera "Tristan und Isolde" premiered in Munich, Germany.
In 1940, Italy declared war on France and Britain; Canada declared war on Italy.
In 1942, the Gestapo massacred 173 male residents of Lidice, Czechoslovakia, in retaliation for the killing of a Nazi official.
In 1946, Italy replaced its abolished monarchy with a republic.
In 1964, the Senate voted to limit further debate on a proposed civil rights bill, shutting off a filibuster by Southern states.
In 1967, the Middle East War ended as Israel and Syria agreed to observe a United Nations-mediated cease-fire.
In 1978, "Affirmed" won the Belmont Stakes and with it, horse racing's Triple Crown.
In 1981, in Frascati, Italy, 6-year-old Alfredo Rampi fell down an artesian well; the story ended tragically as efforts to rescue him proved futile.
In 1985, socialite Claus von Bulow was acquitted by a jury in Providence, R.I., at his retrial on charges he'd tried to murder his heiress wife, Martha "Sunny" von Bulow.

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson

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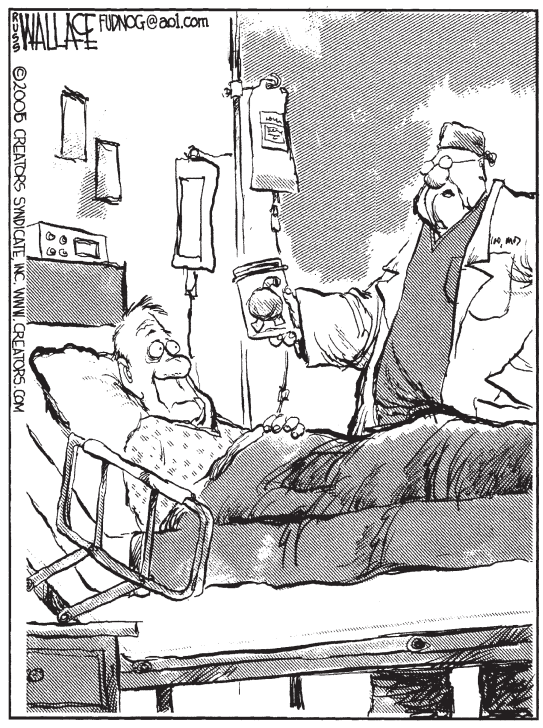
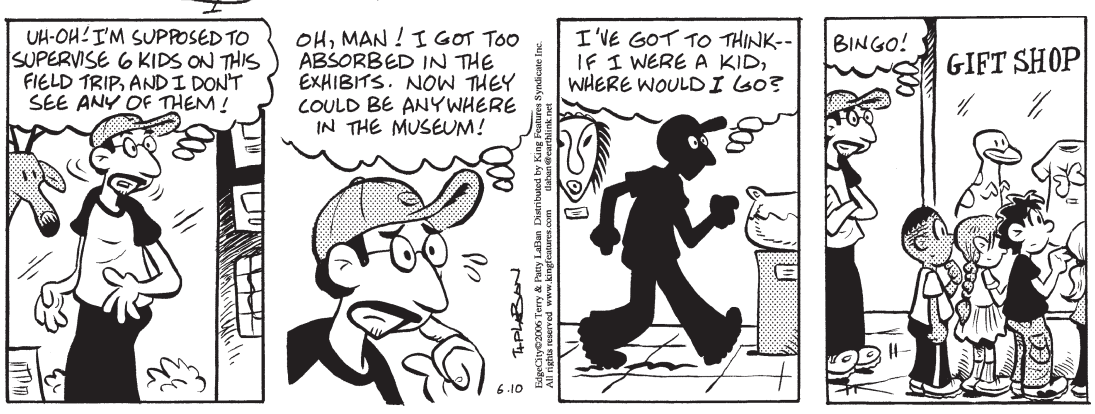
By Russ Wallace



"This was left over at the end of your operation."

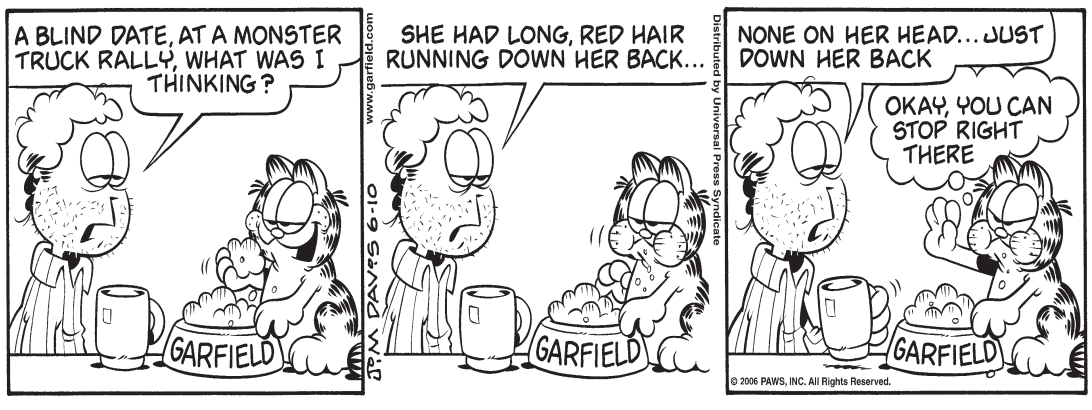
edge City

by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



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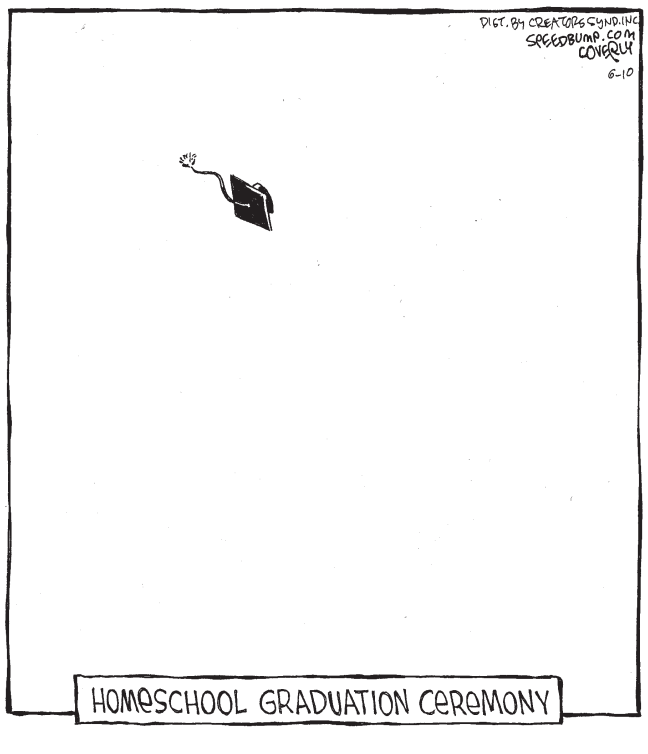

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Gazelle's kin
7 Fling
11 Ornamented, in a way
12 Track
13 Left
14 Used to be
15 Trivial
16 Border
17 Goes below the horizon
18 Soldier's lodging
19 Strong as —
21 One or more
22 Like some bonds
25 Bus. card no.
26 TV warrior
27 Uris book
29 Lounge about
33 Friend of D'Artagnan
34 1985 Glenn Close film
35 Prejudice
36 Layer
37 Shave cream additive
38 Radiated
39 Turns right
40 Expands

DOWN

1 Checkout-line count
2 Pluck
3 Pencil part
4 Art Pepper's instrument
5 Lewd look
6 Say further
7 Bath need
8 Have something in common
9 Painter John Singer —
10 Like winter weather
16 Shrewish one
18 Spars
20 Link
22 Cloth
23 Islands song
24 "The Natural" author
25 Brewing aid
28 Rx amounts
30 Rust, essentially
31 Sheet stuff
32 Top roles
34 Long skirt
36 Detective Archer

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■	■	E	N	R	I	Q	U	E	■	■
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Yesterday's answer

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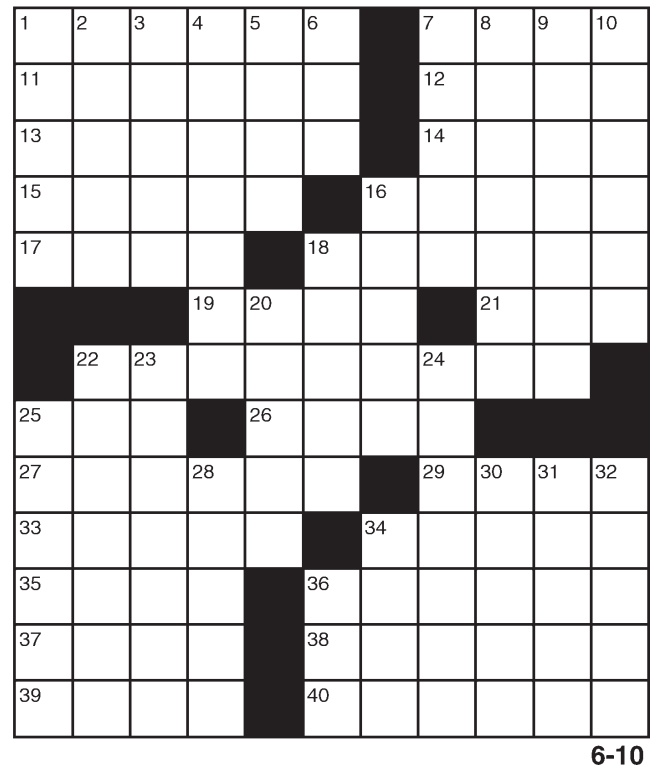

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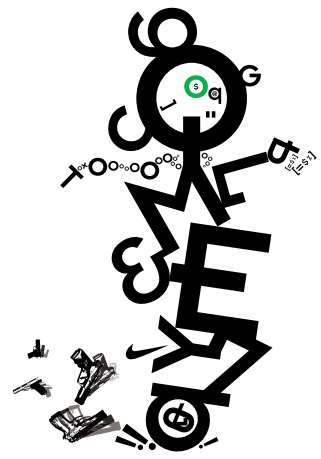

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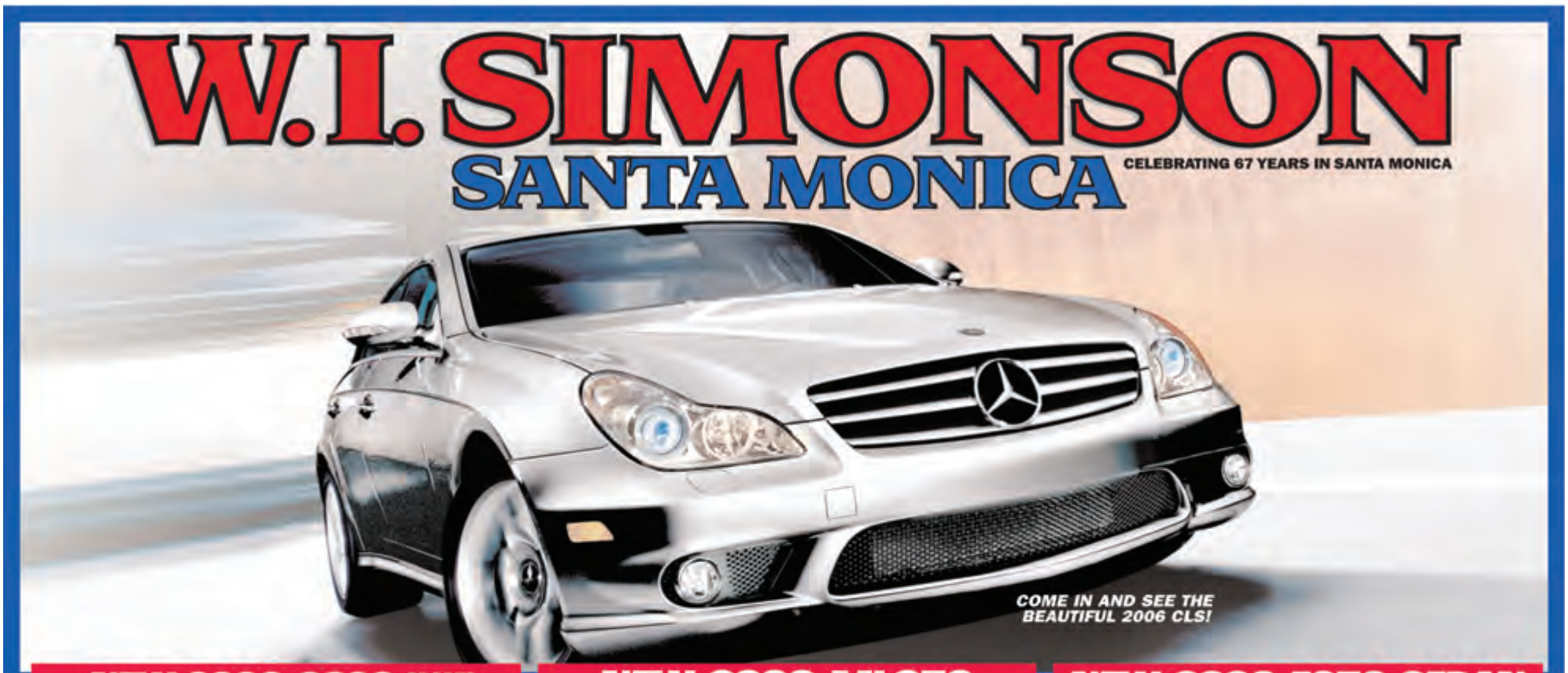

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