

FREE

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 2004

Volume 3, Issue 181

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

7 5 17 18 8

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 6 8 3

Evening picks: 9 7 1

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 05 California Classic

2nd Place: 01 Gold Rush

3rd Place: 11 Money Bags

Race Time: 1:49.03



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

In Orlando, Fla., on March 10, a motorist was unable to come to a stop quickly enough after making a fast left turn in traffic and smashed into a Just Brakes repair shop. And a company in Buckinghamshire, England, announced in February it would start selling a Russian-invented MP3 audio player made to the specifications of an ammunition magazine to fit into an AK-47 assault rifle.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I have bursts of being a lady, but it doesn't last long."

— SHELLY WINTERS



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Carrying the torch



John Wood/Daily Press

Members of the Santa Monica Police Department's S.W.A.T. team on Thursday run with the Special Olympics Torch in front of the new Rand Corp. building, across the street from City Hall. SMPD officers picked up the torch from LAPD officers at the city's eastern edge at Centinela Avenue and Pico Boulevard. They then handed the torch to the FBI in Santa Monica. The run was part of a nationwide fundraising effort called the 'Law Enforcement Torch Run,' which raises money for the Special Olympics.

Police chief to attend Ronald Reagan burial

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

Santa Monica Police Chief James T. Butts Jr. is one of 800 people invited to attend the private burial of Ronald Reagan today at the grounds of his presidential library in Simi Valley.

Butts will join world leaders, President George W. Bush, and a host of international and national dignitaries at the last ceremony of a week-long farewell for the 40th president of the United States.

Reagan, who died Saturday at his home in Bel Air, will be buried during a sunset ceremony begin-

ning at 6:15 p.m. today.

Butts said he received a fax this week inviting him to the final ceremony.

"Given the limited number of people that can attend, I was very surprised," Butts said. "This will be a highlight."

Butts rode in the procession

when Reagan's body was brought to Gates Kingsley & Gates Moeller-Murphy in Santa Monica last Saturday. The SMPD worked side by side with the Secret Service and the CIA to guard the funeral home and the Reagan family while they were there. The

See REAGAN, page 7

Labor board rejects hotel workers' petition

Workers don't want to pay union dues

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

A petition filed by a group of Santa Monica hotel workers who claim they were coerced into unionizing has been denied, labor authorities announced Thursday.

Workers at the Four Points Sheraton had asked for a secret election to determine if a majority of employees wanted union representation. Their petition was dismissed because it didn't include workers at a nearby hotel who are

part of the same union.

Both the Four Points on Pico Boulevard and the Viceroy on Ocean Avenue are owned by the Kor Realty Group. Workers at the two hotels are considered one "bargaining unit," and therefore the Viceroy had to be named for the petition to move forward, according to the National Labor Relations Board ruling.

It's unusual for workers to petition against their union. Since the NLRB was formed in 1965 to police labor law, employees have filed only 1,504 petitions to have a union decertified, said Tony

See UNIONS, page 6

Pier jumping made legal — for some

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — With summertime nearing full tilt, elected leaders this week passed two new laws aimed at making visits to Santa Monica beaches more safe and sane.

Already it's illegal to smoke, drink or light bonfires on the beach. Bringing glass to the beach also is a crime, as is wheeling out a barbecue or taking along the family pet. Some 52 million people flock to area beaches each year, most of them during summer.

One of the new laws makes it

legal to jump off the Santa Monica Pier — but only in conjunction with an authorized event, like Red Bull's "Flugtag" event last September, when more than a dozen teams designed elaborate contraptions and rode off the end of the pier.

Dozens of people jump off the pier illegally every year, said Santa Monica Police Department Harbor Patrol Officer Wayne Salkoski. It's especially dangerous because often people don't realize how far of a swim it is from the

See PIER, page 6

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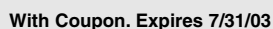
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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Park brought to life by students

By Daily Press staff

The expansion of Virginia Avenue Park will be seen through the eyes of students from Edison, Grant, McKinley and Rogers elementary schools, as well as older teenagers from the Police Activities League and the Pico Youth and Family center.

With the help of artist Ruby Mandanero, the students have produced seven mural panels that depict new aspects of the expanded Virginia Avenue Park. A reception for the youth painters and the volunteer artists will be held at the Edison Elementary School cafeteria on June 17, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Edison Elementary is located at 2425 Kansas Ave.

Ruby Mandanero, a local Santa Monica artist, donated her time to work on the murals. All the students will attend the reception and see each other's mural panels for the first time.

The seven 5-by-6-foot murals will be installed the following week along the Virginia Avenue Park construction fence. Mural scenes depict the farmers' market, new park equipment, a music studio scene in the new youth center and other park life.

For more information, contact Betty Macias or Concepcion Rechtjaid at (310) 458-8688.

Local center gets nod from county

By Daily Press staff

St. Joseph Center was recently commended by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for assisting homeless and low-income seniors in Santa Monica.

The center received the award at the board's 40th anniversary celebration of the War on Poverty.

"With sincere congratulations and best wishes, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors does highly recommend St. Joseph Center for its commitment to improve our community," read the plaque given to the center.

"We also received a grant from the county for \$17,000," said Luanne Tessier, the center's senior services coordinator, "which enables us to provide case management, grocery delivery, advocacy, home visits and health referrals to 17 homeless and low-income Santa Monica seniors in crisis."

The award recognizes agencies that stand out as a source of inspiration and have demonstrated commitment to improving the lives of low-income persons.

St. Joseph Center assists more than 8,000 working poor and homeless adults and children, veterans and seniors each year to achieve self-sufficiency through food distributions, child care, mentoring and job training. For more information call (310) 396-6468, ext. 328 or visit www.stjosephctr.org.



SURF REPORT

Look for a mix of S/SW swell and NW wind swell today. For Northern LA County, look for many spots to see surf in the waist-to chest-high range off the mix of swells, while standout S/combo breaks see shoulder-high and occasionally bigger sets. South Bay spots pick up mostly the wind swell for waist-high waves at many breaks. Best combo breaks in the north half of the bay see some occasional shoulder-high sets at best breaks. Look for light wind in the morning to build out of the W in the 8-15 knot range for the afternoon.

Today the water is:

68°

Write us at wood@smdp.com and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.



LOW TIDES

HIGH TIDES

	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	- 6:11	-1.6	5:12	2.5	1:02	3.7	11:30	6.4
SUNDAY	7:07	-1.3	6:20	2.7	N/A	N/A	2:09	3.8
MONDAY	8:05	-0.9	7:46	2.8	12:28	5.8	3:15	4.0
TUESDAY	9:04	-0.4	9:26	2.6	1:35	5.1	4:15	4.3
WEDNESDAY	10:00	0.0	10:59	2.1	2:53	4.5	5:05	4.6
THURSDAY	10:52	0.5	N/A	N/A	4:19	4.0	5:48	4.9
FRIDAY	12:13	1.5	11:39	0.9	5:42	3.6	6:24	5.3

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The Q Line

Recognizing that Santa Monica College and the Santa Monica and Malibu communities face a shortage of parks, physical education, recreational and other facilities, college officials are considering a \$175 million bond measure for the fall ballot to fund a wide range of local projects. Two years ago, voters passed a \$160 million bond measure at SMC that funds nearly two dozen projects, and the local school district recently completed building and renovating nearly \$100 million worth of new facilities using money that

was generated by a school bond passed by voters in 1998.

So this week, Q-line wants to know, "Would you support another bond measure to build more facilities at SMC and local schools? Why or why not?"

Call (310) 285-8106 with your responses before Friday at 5 p.m. We'll print them in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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OPINION



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The garden police are coming

Editor:

Now, coming soon to your street, the "parkway strip monitors." For years the city has encouraged planting in this often forlorn and monotonous strip between the sidewalk and the street. I thought I'd done my part to make things a little better by adding a little greenery over the years. Wrong. When I was out watering some today ... yes, very "greenly" and sparingly watering, with a watering can ... along comes monitor Walt in a city truck to inform me that a couple of my plants are "not a good idea" because they might some day exceed 30 inches in height.

They've been there for almost 10 years and only now has the city asserted its authority. Good timing. The city can't stop graffiti, litter, shootings or bums, but they can go on an onerously, opulently expensive building spree and stop errant foliage in its tracks. Perhaps some of you feel left out or ignored because you have not yet been monitored. Fear not, the city has not forgotten you, and they will be coming soon.

Steven Keats
Santa Monica

Give Christians a break

Editor:

Regarding Ed Silverstein's, "Black Sabbath for Jews flocking to Bush," (SMDP June 9, page 4).

It's hard to read your venom filled article. I'm sorry you hate Christians and are suspicious of their motives. The feelings are not mutual. As Christians, we are taught that the Jews are God's chosen people. You have an ally with all Christians and especially in George W. Bush. With our Judeo-Christian values we share much. You are afraid that if Jews help Bush win a second term that, "These Jews for Bush might find they are suddenly out of place in their own country. There would be an explosion of predominately Christian religious symbols adorning many public buildings and spaces."

News flash, Earth to Ed:

Bush has been president for four years, and the religious symbols are dropping like fall leaves. Probably more Christian symbols have been removed during his presidency than in all the others combined. Everyone (but you apparently) knows that Redlands and the County of Los Angeles just had tiny crosses removed from seals. In the case of the Los Angeles seal, the Pagan Goddess Pomona (easily 10 times larger in the seal than the cross) was allowed to remain. The ACLU, not Bush, wields the power you are so afraid of. And, who elected them? Oh yeah, nobody. Therein lies the true danger in our current political system. The ACLU can make elected officials, the board of supervisors of the powerful county of Los Angeles, fold up and scamper away with their tails between their legs ... afraid to even fight.

But wait ... there's more.

You go on to write "More appalling is that, if the courts allow vouchers for religious schools, Jews might find themselves paying taxes to fund the Christian equivalent of extremist Anti-Semitic Muslim madrasas."

That is so inflammatory, bigoted and foul I don't know what to say except that you owe those schools you just slamed an immediate apology.

Religious schools have been around since the inception of this country. Name the last Christian extremist Anti-Semitic Muslim madrasas graduating class. There aren't any, Ed.

Someday you may find that Christians are the best friends and neighbors that Jews could ever have. I already feel that about the Jews I call friends.

Eric Cooper
Santa Monica

College bond proposal expensive icing on an already decadent cake



Our good friends at Santa Monica College are at it again.

Their latest attempt to pick your pocket is a \$175 million bond issue which, in part, corrects some "deficiencies" in Measure U, the \$160 million SMC bond issue approved by voters less than two years ago.

It's not only the college that's behind this "stinker." The cities of Santa Monica and Malibu are in on it. And, there's even some crumbs for the Santa Monica/Malibu Unified School District. But don't worry about our schools being shortchanged. Rumors abound that school supporters are contemplating their own \$100 million school improvement bond on the 2006 ballot.

The SMC proposal is a "cooperative venture," or partnerships that would pay for recreational, cultural and health related projects that could be shared by the college, school district and communities. It also increases SMC's educational offerings such as a new marine studies program. If approved by the college board of trustee's next month, it will be on the November ballot.

Among the projects identified are improvements to physical education and arts facilities on the main campus, as well as a fitness, natural history and marine biology complex at 415 Pacific Coast Highway. The proposal even suggests funding SMC's response to reducing obesity and improving physical fitness in our school children.

A 3.6-acre botanical gardens in the downtown Civic Center — no doubt sandwiched in between low-income apartment projects — is included. Also on the list are improvements to the pier aquarium, a new career opportunity center, a children's fitness outdoor park on the main campus, a literacy center at 14th Street and Pico Boulevard, and an early childhood development lab and childcare facility. In other words, a lot of expensive icing on the cake.

The bond would now pay for the college's much touted Madison Theater proposal — a \$15 million community theater that was supposed to be completely funded by private donations from actors like Dustin Hoffman. Now, the college says

Madison should be funded by bond money. That way it could be shared as a community resource.

Wasn't Madison promoted as a community wide resource for dance, music, theater, drama and lectures all along? The only thing that's apparently changed is now we might pay for it.

The college is calling this an "educational and health benefit" bond which, according to state law, only requires a 55 percent voter approval as opposed to the two-thirds approval required for other tax and bond measures. According to SMC's staff report, available online at www.smc.edu/comm_ed_facil_2004/, the college is marketing itself as the ideal conduit for getting recreation, education and health related bonds approved because it requires less votes.

The cities of Santa Monica and Malibu have a short cut to getting ballot proposals approved, which is why there's so many municipal park, recreation and health/welfare projects benefiting the municipalities on the proposed list. But aren't many of these, including replacing the college's tennis courts, for example, something the city, college and/or school district should have been paying for in the first place?

In Santa Monica, both Santa Monica For Renters Rights (the powerful political organization that controls the City Council) and the Santa Monica city manager say the No. 1 priority is "affordable housing." While City Hall squanders millions of dollars on affordable housing and its social service agenda, we're forced to ante up for what most communities — that don't fund millions of dollars in social programs — provide as basic services to residents.

Because the vast bulk of bond money is earmarked for Santa Monica, this proposal won't sit well with Malibu residents who'll get little more for their tax bite than a couple of rehabilitated playing fields and maybe another satellite campus with a waste water treatment center.

Between these two bonds, the total amount requested by the state-supported SMC is over one third of a billion dollars — an amount that brings a gleam to the eye of the pencil-pushing, big spenders in the college's financial planning office. And a huge pain in the pocketbook for the rest of us just trying to make ends meet.

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

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? SOUND OFF IN THE DAILY PRESS!

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OPINION



Dads find their place in this world on their own day

PISTACHIO PERSPECTIVE

BY SUSAN ANN CONNOR



Decisions. Decisions. Decisions. I had been contemplating what I might write about this week, when there he was standing before me. My dad. I didn't move, and he didn't move. His eyes, steady, told me what I must do. An even-tempered amusing kind of guy, he had that silent strength that commanded respect. His visage, now aimed directly at me, softly stated, "You know, Susie, it's only fair."

I shook my head up and down, agreeing with him. "You're right," I said out loud to the framed photo staring back at me. My dad was smiling straight into the camera, and I was resting my head securely on his shoulder. It's such a lucky shot, taken several years ago, three weeks before he died.

Having conversations with my dad since he passed away is not unusual. Sometimes he listens. Sometimes he simply ignores me. Maybe he's just busy hanging the moon or chatting it up with Einstein, but I like to think he hears me. To some it may seem a little bit nutty, but my guess is most people have dialogues (or mere monologues) with their lost loved ones. It makes us feel closer to them.

My dad was right ... since I wrote about motherhood near Mother's Day, it's only equitable (right/left, yin/yang, hither/yon) that I pen about fatherhood now that Father's Day approaches.

Let's start with a little history. The genesis of Father's Day seems to have happened during the early 1900s. As with many beginnings, there is discrepancy as to its origin. Some say it was a church group in West Virginia in 1908. Mr. Harry Meek claimed it was his Lion's Club in Chicago that started it all in 1915 on his birthday. Yet another was Mrs. Dodd of Spokane, Wash., who wanted her minister to celebrate all fathers on her dad's birthday in 1909. These people needed to talk.

Not to worry. In 1924, after nearly a decade of groups lobbying Congress, along came President Calvin Coolidge who proclaimed every third Sunday in June "Father's Day." Hallmark was elated. Coolidge wanted to "establish more

intimate relations between fathers and their children, and to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligations."

Hmmmm, now this is a rather interesting piece of information about fatherhood. And I feel I would be remiss if I didn't include it. In the pre-Christian era, through various sorts of ceremonies, men would mimic the female act of birth-giving in order to claim physical fatherhood. Dressed in female fashions, while mom was in labor, dad would literally take to his bed moaning and groaning, screaming and squiggling, pretending to give birth himself.

Imagine for a moment, if you will, your dear 'ole dad improvising the birth process while your mom is in stirrups delivering you. OK, stop imagining. But realize all that fathers used to have to go through to prove you were their child. Now, thanks to DNA analysis, our dads can remain in their own clothes.

When a man becomes a father, they (at least most) want to be the best they can be. So the question is ... what does it take to be a good father?

I took this query to my good friend, Benny. He's a wise guy, even though he's only 6. He spends most of his time at a local kindergarten, producing talent shows, playing sports and teasing his older sister. I thought he was the perfect candidate to sum up the requirements of a prize father.

These are his words. "Well, I like it when he takes me to karate and he's supporting you. Supporting you in a lot of things. Annnnnnnnd he knows ... no that's not good."

"No, that's OK."

"Well, he knows a lot about you. Like after my karate. He understands me. He's very protecting."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, to love your kids soooooooo much."

"How do you know your dad loves you, Benny?"

"I can see it in his face."

"So he doesn't need to say I love you."

"Nope. I can see it in his face."

I hung up the phone, looked over my shoulder at that lucky photo, and saw it in his face. And I know he saw it in mine. Lalalala...

(Susan Ann Connor can be reached at pistachiocolumn@aol.com).

OPINIONS EXPRESSED are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to sack@smdp.com. All letters must include the author's name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

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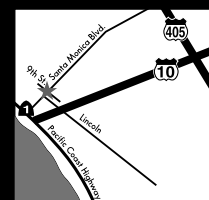
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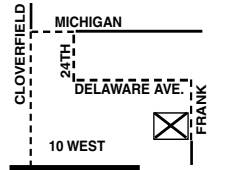
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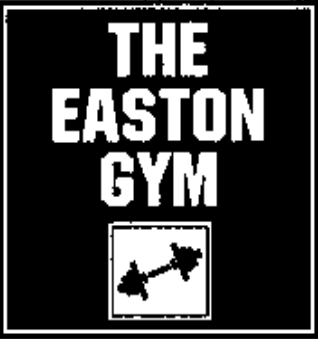
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LOCAL

Workers plan to appeal labor board's ruling

UNIONS, from page 1

Bisceglia, an NLRB spokesman. Organizers, on the other hand, have filed 8,400 petitions for a union election. The Four Points petition was different because it sought a secret election to gauge union support. There have been just 284 secret election petitions since 1965.

"We want official votes. We don't want to cheat anyone. If (workers) want the union here, we will respect that," hotel worker Raul Morales said last year. Morales, a bell captain at Four Points for nearly a decade, is the worker who formally filed the petition — but he wasn't alone.

More than 30 percent of Four Points workers signed onto the petition against the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11, which hopes to unionize all Santa Monica hotels.

Workers claimed labor leaders waged a harassment campaign to force them into the union. They filed formal charges with the labor board in December of last year, but the charges were dropped in February after investigators couldn't substantiate the claims, Bisceglia said.

Union representatives denied any wrongdoing and said workers now enjoy far superior benefits. The labor agreement calls for average wage increases of 20 percent, free health benefits for full- and part-time employees, a pension plan, reduced workloads and paid lunch breaks, among other benefits and protections for Four Points workers, labor organizers have said.

More than half of the upper-end hotel rooms in Santa Monica are in unionized hotels, including those at the Four Points,

Viceroy and the Fairmont Miramar Hotel. HERE organizing director Kurt Petersen has said the group is currently campaigning at the Doubletree Guest Suites on Fourth Street. Those still without any union presence are the Doubletree, the Radisson Huntley Hotel, Shutters on the Beach, Le Merigot Beach Hotel, the Holiday Inn Santa Monica Pier and Casa Del Mar.

Four Points workers have said they were turned off by aggressive organizing tactics, adding the promises of better wages and reduced workloads don't hold. Plus, they said they didn't want to pay the \$37 monthly dues. Some told stories of relatives who had bad experiences with unions.

The workers are being represented by the National Right to Work Foundation, a non-profit organization that fights unions across the country. At issue in the dispute is an organizing method called a card-check process, when managers agree to let the union in and give them an extended period of time to gather signatures from the majority of employees. Opponents say the process lends itself to abuse by overzealous organizers. Proponents maintain it's democratic.

Workers plan to appeal the recent NLRB ruling on the grounds that workers at the two hotels should fall into different bargaining units because they aren't employed at both properties. If that theory doesn't hold, the workers can still have their petition heard — if they can get signatures from 30 percent of the total number of workers at both hotels. That criteria is based solely on quantity, not location.

"If all those signatures come from one hotel or the other, that doesn't make a difference to us," Bisceglia said.

New law forces youth camps to obtain beach permits

PIER, from page 1

end of the pier to shore, and some of the jumpers will grab at the sharp pier pilings on their way back and injure themselves.

That's why the standard response by harbor patrol is to jump in after people and either bring them up a ladder or swim them back to shore. Police also are called to cite the jumper and to be around in case the jumper is drunk or uncooperative.

"Our eyes are open," said Salkoski, whose harbor patrol office is at the end of the pier. "We're there, and we can see the water, and just about the whole pier ...

"It happens more in the summer, because the water's warmer and people are going in the water more, especially teenagers and young adults — they dare each other to jump off the pier," added Salkoski. "If they do jump off the pier, they will get cited."

Flugtag went off without a hitch last year, but officials said the new law was needed anyway. The law, which was passed unanimously, also allows city maintenance workers and emergency workers to jump off the pier, in the course of their work.

"What this proposed ordinance would basically do is conform our law to practice, which, I think, is always a good idea," City Attorney Marsha Moutrie said.

"Right now it's not legal for anybody to dive off the pier or swim near it, if you take literally what the code says."

Officials passed a second law this week requiring youth groups on the beach to apply for permits from City Hall. The groups can obtain the permits free of charge this summer, though a fee may be instituted next year, officials said.

Neighboring cities require the permit, and local lifeguards asked City Hall to do the same after groups started converging on Santa Monica when space elsewhere was scant.

The new law requires the groups to fill out an application for a "beach/water activity" permit, indicating which tower they would like to be situated next to, along with the dates requested and a page of rules and regulations the groups must follow.

Despite the new laws — and numerous existing ones — the majority of beach goers abide by the rules and enjoy Santa Monica beaches without trouble.

"Probably, if you have anything, it's guys over there having a beer, they bring the cooler of beer," Salkoski said. "The worst thing, though, is glass. You get the glass bottles on the beach, and the tractors come by and they're sifting the sand ... and it'll break the glass, and the glass gets hidden down below the sand, and people cut their feet."

SMPD represented in presidential motorcade

REAGAN, from page 1

SMPD also was in charge of controlling the scene at the funeral home, located at 20th Street and Arizona Avenue. The news event attracted thousands of people over the two days Reagan's body was there.

"I feel the family and the family's spokesperson were appreciative of what we did here," Butts said. "They were extremely grateful."

Butts said he is honored to be part of the final farewell of a man he respected. Butts met Reagan in 1992 when the president gave Butts a plaque recognizing his protective detail work. Over the years, Butts has worked with Reagan's secret service agents.

"I've had very long relationship with the people who provide protection to the president," he said.

Butts also accompanied the Reagan family to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on Monday, making the SMPD the only marked police vehicle in the procession. Butts added the service held in

Simi Valley that day made him cry.

"When they removed the casket and played 'Hail to the Chief,' it brought a tear to my eye," he said.

Thousands of people have viewed Reagan's casket since he left Santa Monica on Monday. He was brought to Simi Valley, where a private ceremony was held at the library. His body sat in repose in the library's main lobby for the public to pay respects. On Wednesday, Reagan's body was flown to Washington D.C., where a formal funeral ceremony was held. He then lied in repose in the Rotunda in the U.S. Capitol through Thursday. He will make his final return to California today.

President Bush returned from the Group of Eight meeting of industrial nations in Georgia on Thursday and, with his wife, Laura, called on Mrs. Reagan and visited the casket. Bush and his father, who was Reagan's vice president and succeeded him in the White House, will be among the eulogists during today's service.

CALIFORNIA BRIEFS

Six charged for prostitution ring

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Prosecutors charged six people with operating a prostitution ring under the guise of an acupressure massage clinic.

The case grew out of an investigation of a massage therapy school operated by Sun Ok Joo, 48, one of the defendants.

Investigators found massage technicians with allegedly fraudulently obtained certificates, and seized \$2.4 million in cash and evidence from the school and at Oriental Acupressure in Inglewood.

Numerous arrests for prostitution have been made at the clinic since 1990, prosecutors said.

All six pleaded not guilty and were released on bail or on their own recognizance.

Officials seek reimbursement for scheme

By The Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO — San Bernardino County officials hoping to recoup millions of dollars in an alleged corruption scheme took their case to court.

An attorney for the county argued in a civil lawsuit Wednesday that the county made payments on unlawful contracts while former officials got rich on bribes and kickbacks.

"It will be a miscarriage of justice, your honor, if you don't hold them liable for what they've done," attorney Leonard Gumport told Superior Court Judge Vincent O'Neill.

The scandal centered on former Chief Administrative Officer James Hlawek, who allegedly took bribes from several business owners in exchange for being awarded contracts.

Hlawek pleaded guilty in 1999 to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery.

The county originally targeted 22 people believed to be involved in the scheme, but has since then received \$16 million in settlements and won \$7 million in judgments from 12 defendants.

Park clears final hurdle

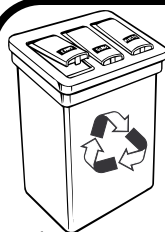
By The Associated Press

IRVINE — Pro-airport groups settled their lawsuits opposing plans to turn the closed El Toro Marine air base into a park.

The settlements remove the final hurdles for the 4,700-acre Orange County Great Park, envisioned as an alternative to an international airport once proposed for the site.

Pro-airport groups had challenged the environmental impact report for the park, alleging the city of Irvine — which annexed the base last year — had not taken into account the impact on traffic, air pollution and the need for cleanup of hazardous materials left over from the base's military past.

The plan for the park includes 3,625 homes, 3 million square feet of commercial and industrial space and 2,800 acres of parks and public facilities.



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Associated Press Writer

Increasingly, though, states are taking a look at motorists like Wulfers, concerned that vision, reaction time and other driving skills have diminished. At least 22 states have laws singling out older drivers for special attention, and experts predict

Illinois and Rhode Island require road tests for drivers over 75 who want to renew their licenses, while 15 other states have an accelerated renewal schedule. At least five states have stopped mail-in renewals

West Virginia has a medical advisory board where relatives, doctors or police can refer drivers after an accident. The board decides whether to retest the driver and

And by agreeing to focus on risks that related to a person's medical condition rather than age, "We found out that we weren't poles apart," Sauls says. "There came to be a trust — that we were not out to get seniors, that we were looking out for their overall well-being."

Associated Press Writer

McKee said she is waiting for legal counsel before she responds.

The initiative has caused controversy since it was first proposed in July 2003. Backers say it would curb lawbreaking by illegal immigrants while opponents say it

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Subsequent to the public hearing on **June 24, 2004** at the regularly scheduled meeting, it is the intention of the Board of Education to adopt a resolution to levy the tax at the rate of \$106.52 per parcel, which includes a 2.3% CPI adjustment. The CPI-U for Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, base year 1982-84=100, from April, 2003 through April, 2004, was used to calculate the adjustment.

NATIONAL



1929 shipwreck SS Aleutian at center of Alaska legal feud

BY SHEILA TOOMEY

Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE, Alaska

Laws of the sea rooted in a thousand years of history are at the heart of a fight in federal court over the remains of a 1929 shipwreck found by divers two years ago off Kodiak.

The divers say underwater salvage laws give their company, Shoreline Adventures, the right to take objects off the wreck of the SS Aleutian, a steamship that delivered goods and people to canneries and sank on May 26, 1929, after hitting a rock in Uyak Bay.

The state says the shipwreck is an underwater site of historic interest and items should only be removed as part of a professional archaeological expedition.

In papers filed with U.S. Magistrate Harry Branson, state historic preservation officer Judith Bittner dismissed the divers as "treasure hunters," a nasty phrase when used by archaeologists. But Steve Lloyd, a partner in Shoreline Adventures and the first diver on the wreck in August 2002, said there is no treasure to hunt. There was no gold or anything else of great value on the Aleutian when it sank, he said.

The ship causing all the ruckus was 375 feet long and 50 feet wide, built in Philadelphia in 1898. A two-masted steamer, it was chugging westward from Seward on a Sunday morning, searching in misty light for a floating cannery, when it struck a submerged rock about a mile south of Amook Island, tearing such a large hole in its hull that it sank in seven minutes, according to newspaper accounts at the time.

Only one of the 116 people aboard died, apparently because he went

back to his quarters to retrieve a keepsake. The captain and his chief officer later returned to the area and searched for the wreck but could find only an oil slick.

In testimony and written affidavits, Lloyd said there is nothing historically unique about the Aleutian. It was one of several similar Alaska Steamship Co. ships making routine deliveries at a time when water was the only way to travel between Alaska's remote coastal communities.

Lloyd, co-owner of Title Wave bookstore in Anchorage and author of "SS Farallon," about a 1910 shipwreck, said the draw for divers is the challenge and the mystery, not gold. He and his Shoreline partners say they have spent \$110,000 so far locating and diving on the Aleutian, which is down about 200 feet, deeper than most scuba divers are trained to go.

Shoreline wants to recover part of its costs by turning the wreck into a tourist business, a "world-class diving destination," Lloyd said. "A unique wreck adventure for advanced technical divers," according to company ads.

The idea is that experienced, trained divers looking for a challenge — a deep, dark, silty, Alaska dive — will pay to visit the Aleutian and be allowed to take a souvenir in return for helping to photograph, collect and document all items removed from the wreck.

Assistant Attorney General John Baker said during a court hearing last month that the state might not object to Shoreline taking divers down to the Aleutian. But removal of artifacts without a state permit and an approved professional archaeologi-

cal plan cannot be allowed, he said.

The state is concerned that if Shoreline is allowed to proceed, "within 10 years the Aleutian will be stripped," Baker said in a written motion.

Lloyd testified that the ship has been under water for 75 years, its sides collapsing, its wood rotting away. During that time, the state has never expressed any interest in finding it and has no plans or money to mount an underwater archaeological salvage operation, he said.

"The ship is gradually falling in on itself," Lloyd said.

Soon the smaller objects on the wreck will sink under a mountain of silt and debris and effectively be lost forever, he said.

There are thousands of pieces of steamship crockery still with the ship, Lloyd said, with little value other than as souvenirs.

Shoreline notified the state of its discovery last August when it filed in federal court, as required, for salvage rights to the Aleutian, said Peter Hess, the company's attorney. The state expressed no interest in the matter. So Shoreline began developing its business. The company is booking dives for this summer. It has a Web site and participated in a February trade show in New Jersey, Lloyd said.

In March, with no objections, Branson signed a default judgment in favor of Shoreline. A week later, the state filed a motion to intervene in the case to stop Shoreline.

Baker agreed that the state dropped the ball by not getting into the case earlier. But the state legally owns abandoned ships sunken off its coast and must take action to prevent destruction of the Aleutian, he said.

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DID YOU KNOW?: Steve Young, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback, is the great-great-grandson of Mormon leader Brigham Young.

WHAT’S NEW THIS WEEK

REVIEW
THEATER
Q&A

GARFIELD THE MOVIE
STONES IN HIS POCKET
MATTHEW BRODERICK

WHAT’S PLAYING

SHREK 2
There are oodles of gut-busting gags for all ages in a sequel that not only does its predecessor proud, but ranks among the funniest animated features ever.

TROY
A spirited throwback to the sprawling war epics of yesteryear. Brad Pitt’s muscular performance as Achilles is nearly unassailable.

BREAKIN’ ALL THE RULES
A mediocre WB sitcom disguised as a big screen sex farce; wastes decent talent on pablum that relies far too heavily on unlikely coincidence and lots of mistaken identity.

COFFEE AND CIGARETTES
A thoughtful collection of eleven deadpan comedic vignettes from indie icon Jim Jarmusch. A black and white gallimaufry of talent and abstraction.

VAN HELSING
The most extortionate B-movie ever produced; a ghoulish goulash of CGI overkill peppered with stilted dialogue and a host of historical inconsistencies.

NEW YORK MINUTE
Girls, boys and — no doubt — dirty old men are invited to Mary-Kate and Ashley’s big screen sexual awakening and, ugh!, is it ever unseemly.

LAWS OF ATTRACTION
Offers little in the way of convincing conflict. The script gives character development such short-shrift that even a prodigious talent like Moore struggles to locate her arc.

MEAN GIRLS
Some funny stuff up front, but as things move along, the laughs are harder and harder to come by.

13 GOING ON 30
Has its moments, but is hampered by several conspicuous shortcomings, not the least of which is that it replaces one dubious lifestyle fantasy with another that is just as chancy.

MAN ON FIRE
A by-the-numbers revenge thriller that benefits from strong performances by Denzel Washington, Christopher Walken and Dakota Fanning.

I’M NOT SCARED
Director Gabriele Salvatores enchants and unhinges us in this gorgeous, disturbing reflection on the loss of innocence.

THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
Emile Hirsch and Elisha Cuthbert bring a genuine vulnerability to their roles and, despite a paucity of previous comedy experience, prove to be quite adept at delivering the laughs.

DOGVILLE
Undeniably engaging, even as the cinematic techniques the director employs leave us feeling oddly detached as the story unfolds.

THE UNITED STATES OF LELAND
An incoherent, fetishistic film, which invites viewers to question the why of juvenile violence when all they really should be asking is “why bother?”



Entertainment

Old’: Not the cat’s meow

...tingly left unanswered, slinger throughout this film: What abhorrent sin merit to deserve Breckin large Hollywood executive the most perspicacious surely even they should ized by now that the uld be a far better place iside Schwartz” and to the Kellys” never Yet Meyer inexplicably ling our homes and mul... here he’s joined by Love Hewitt, Stephen /sky and, sadly, Bill ; who lends his pipes to mputer-generated titular . It isn’t that “Garfield” horrendous film so much a terribly unnecessary , especially with far erior fare such as “Shrek 2” and “Harry Potter” in theaters to keep the kids occupied. Plus, the

source material — Jim Davis’ popular but outmoded comic strip — ceased to be funny about midway through the Reagan administration. Legions of faithful comic readers know that Garfield is one acerbic and pampered fat cat. As rendered on the big screen, he’s downright nasty to his wet rag of an owner, Jon (Meyer), who nonetheless dutifully dotes on the beast. Jon’s such a truckler and Garfield an irritant, you may find yourself rooting for some sort of massive flea infestation. Instead, they get a dog. Odie’s a dim-witted but talented dachshund-terrier mix, and it’s not an exaggeration to say that the dancing pooch is the best thing going in “Garfield.” The other dogs, though — Meyer, ubiquitous character actor Tobolowsky (“Groundhog Day”) and Love-Hewitt (still flustered from “The Tuxedo,” perhaps?) — apparently weren’t trained properly because they crapped all over this movie. Not that the blame is entirely theirs. The script, by “Cheaper by the Dozen” scribes Joel Cohen and Alec Sokolow, isn’t fit to line the bottom of a litter box. And the Oscar will probably not be going to director Pete Hewitt either. Murray gets a pass because he’s Murray (“Caddyshack,” “Lost in Translation,” “Stripes”), but here’s hoping in the future he sticks with the likes of talented filmmakers like Sophia Coppola and Wes Anderson and leaves this trash to the strays.

(Rated PG for brief mild language.)

Matthew Broderick talks about his real wife

Q&A

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

The boyishly charming Matthew Broderick has come a long way since his film debut in “Max Dugan Returns.” He’s had hits (“Ferris Bueller’s Day Off,” “Glory”) misses (“Godzilla”), and considerable scrutiny of his personal life — from relationships with actresses Jennifer Grey and Helen Hunt, to his marriage of “Sex and the City” star Sarah Jessica Parker. Broderick’s latest film, the dark comedy “The Stepford Wives,” pairs him with another stunner, Nicole Kidman. The 42-year-old actor spoke recently with a group of reporters in New York City about the film and his famous significant other.

QUESTION: There are several

New York specific jokes in “The Stepford Wives.” Will people who aren’t overly familiar with the city get them?

MATTHEW BRODERICK: I think there’s a version of New York, whether it’s real or fictionalized, that everyone has in their head. Audiences know how hard it is to find an apartment here — that people read obituaries to find out where to get a good deal. People know about New York. If the jokes were about a small town in Ohio, well ...

Q: Your character, Walter, gets indoctrinated into a very sinister boys club in Stepford. Do you think groups like that actually exist?

MB: It’s scary what happens when a bunch of nerdy white guys with a bunch of money get together. The results are terrifying. It’s all comic, but you’re reminded of groups of guys who got together with cognac and cigars and came up with fascism. Those scenes

were easy and fun, because it’s great to have the permission to tap into your desire to watch big color TVs and smash robots and play cards ... and, you know, do all the awful things that men like to do.

Q: The satire in this film seems particularly relevant in this age of extreme makeovers.

MB: Yeah, I’ve been watching “The Swan” on TV, which I love watching but am very ashamed of. It’s hard not to see the parallels between what’s really happening — these women getting cut up to all look the same way — and what happens in this movie. But I have no profound thoughts about that.

Q: Are there any similarities between you and Nicole Kidman as a couple in “The Stepford Wives,” and the way you and your real-life spouse, Sarah Jessica Parker, have been portrayed in the press?

MB: Maybe there is with the way we’ve been portrayed in the

media, but in reality I don’t think Joanna and my wife are alike at all. She’s extremely successful and mega-powerful. She could destroy this whole hotel just by looking at it ... my wife, I meant. But so far, I feel perfectly safe around her.

Q: Does Sarah have any Stepford-like qualities?

MB: She’s old-fashioned in some ways. She likes cooking and homemaking when she has time for it.

Q: Ever since you two had a baby, you’re all over the tabloids. Is that bothersome?

MB: They do. They follow us, and that’s sort of a new thing. I’m hoping that will become dull.

Q: Is Kidman going to play Ulla in the film version of “The Producers?”

MB: Uh, yeah. I don’t want to speak for her. It’s a year away. But that’s what I keep reading.

Nerdy ‘Napoleon’ lacks clarity, focus

Review

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

Tyro writer-director Jared Hess’ oddball character study about a high school nerd in small-town Idaho is derivative of the work done by Todd Solondz (“Welcome to the Dollhouse”) and Wes Anderson (“Rushmore,” “The Royal Tenenbaums”). It certainly boasts enough humdingers to qual-

ify as a winner in what has thus far been a humdrum year for comedies. But “Napoleon Dynamite,” like its eponymous protagonist is idiosyncratic, sometimes leads you to the point of distraction. A lack of clear-cut narrative progressions induces stasis from time to time, and because the laughs come almost entirely at the expense of several inveterate dweebs, it all feels strangely masochistic.

Played with inspired uncool by

newcomer Jon Heder, Napoleon Dynamite — a one-time pseudonym of Elvis Costello’s — is the geekiest cat at school in dead-end Preston, Idaho. When he’s not getting bullied by jocks and harassed by his van-dwelling Uncle Rico (Jon Gries), Napoleon occupies himself playing tetherball and practicing ’80s hip-hop dance moves. Making his acting debut, Aaron Ruell is a hoot as Napoleon’s brother, Kip, a wispy

32-year-old who spends his days searching for a soulmate in Internet chat rooms — constituting the film’s only discernible storyline. Kip eventually finds love online with LaFawnduh (Shondrella Avery), and when she turns up in Preston, hilarity arrives with her. Tina Majorino also shines as the diffident neighbor who captures Napoleon’s heart.

(Not yet rated. Running time: 86 minutes)

ENTERTAINMENT



‘Stones in His Pockets’ turns out surprisingly funny

Theater

BY CHRIS ALLEN

Special to the Daily Press

Audiences at the Mark Taper Forum laughed whole-heartedly and gave “Stones in His Pockets” by Marie Jones a standing ovation for what has been labeled a “surprising comedy.”

Critics and theatre lovers from the Atlantic to the Pacific hail “Stones in His Pockets” as a spectacular production, which is directed by Neel Keller.

So, what’s the buzz about this play? First off, it has a cast of 15 characters and only two actors. The stage is kept at a bare minimum with only two wooden boxes and a multi-purpose trunk full of costume accessories. The main characters, played by JD Callum and Barry McEvoy, are Jake (Callum) and Charlie (McEvoy) from County Kerry, Ireland. Watching Jake and Charlie interact with the myriad of supporting characters, ranging from an old Irish drunkard to a multi-million dollar American actress makes for great hilarity.

Jake has just returned from America where his plans to make it big and live the lavish life is not as easy as it looks on TV. Charlie’s independent video store has just flopped because of a Blockbuster that opened around the corner. Both defeated

and dejected, what do they do now? Sign-up to be extras in the Hollywood movie being filmed in town.

The dialogue is well written and the fine-tuned physical comedy results in moments of gut-busting laughter. Yet there is something in the show that leaves you wanting. The dialogue is good, but the story is poor. The plot and conflict take way too long to develop. It seems we spend too much time getting to know the ensemble of characters and getting our laughs in at their individual quirkiness instead of getting on with the conflict so the story can move forward.

It also seems to be more of a social commentary on the perceptions of Hollywood and the dirt under the glam. Jake and Charlie become personifications not just of Irish locals, but also of anyone who is not in the film industry. These two try so desperately to get in and make it while the big-time actress endlessly voices her extreme dislike for the “biz.”

The show suffers from a split personality. Is it a story about a small Irish town taken over by Hollywood and milked of its resources, or is it about our social perceptions of the film industry from the inside and out? All in all, “Stones in His Pockets” is a good show. There were many moments when I was gasping for air amid bouts of laughter.

“Stones in His Pockets” runs through



Photo courtesy

(From left) JD Callum as Jake and Barry McEvoy as Charlie in “Stones in His Pockets” now playing at the Mark Taper Forum.

July 18. Performances are Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:30 p.m. There are no performances on

Mondays. Ticket prices range from \$33 to \$47. Public rush and senior rates are available the day of performances. Call (213) 680-4017 for more information.

Dance season ends with Paul Taylor Dance Co.

Dance

By Daily Press staff

The Paul Taylor Dance Co., celebrating its 50th year, will be the final attraction of the inaugural season of dance at the music center.

There are two performances, June 26 and 27, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center. The repertoire includes the Southern California premiere of Taylor’s 2002 critically-acclaimed “Promethean Fire,” as well the 1982 “Mercuric Tidings” and the 1975 “Runes.”

Taylor choreographed “Promethean Fire” in January and February 2002 with costumes



designed by Santo Loquasto and a spectacular lighting array by Jennifer Tipton.

The dance, which uses three compositions by J.S. Bach (Toccata & Fugue in D

minor, Prelude in E flat minor, and Chorale Prelude) as orchestrated by Leopold Stokowski, is an uplifting examination of the radiant colors of the emotional spectrum and features all 16 Taylor dancers.

The Paul Taylor Dance Company was nominated for a 2004 Laurence Olivier Award in the category of “Best New Dance Production” for Paul Taylor’s “Promethean Fire,” which the company performed in May 2003 at Sadler’s Wells Theatre in London during a month-long tour of the United Kingdom. The program also features two classic Taylor works — “Runes” (1975) to music of Gerald Busby

and designed by George Tacet and “Mercuric Tidings” (1982) to music of Schubert and designed by Gene Moore.

Tickets for Paul Taylor Dance Company at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center range from \$15 to \$50. Tickets are available at the box office at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Ave., and through Ticketmaster at (213) 365-3500 or (714) 740-7878, online at www.ticketmaster.com, and at all Ticketmaster outlets including Tower Records, Robinsons May, Wherehouse Music, Tu Musica and Ritmo Latino.

‘Riddick’ is a brutal assault on all of the senses

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

Writer-director David Twohy’s follow-up to his underappreciated 2000 sci-fi thriller, “Pitch Black,” marks a fine return to action-hero form by Vin Diesel, but suffers from excess and a storyline that is more convoluted than White House spin on the Abu Gharaib scandal. “Riddick” is intense and visually intoxicating, but where its modestly-budgeted predecessor was almost egghead-like brainy, this

much brawnier film instead tries to bully us with a barrage of computer-generated effects, ear-damagingly loud explosions and overblown chase sequences. “Riddick” assaults the senses, and many folks will no doubt exit theaters feeling as though the ass Diesel kicked — and he kicks serious ass — was theirs.

A dreary universe — not sure if it’s ours, but it looks an awful lot like Poland during rainy season — is being ravaged by an unholy army of aptly-named Necromongers. Led by the powerful Lord Marshal (Colm Feore), these Necromongers are a disagreeable lot with

gloomy matching wardrobes (why do villains hate pastels and bright floral patterns so much?) The good guys have failed at every turn to slow the ruthless goth killers, so they turn to Riddick, a one-man wrecking crew who’s been on the lam for five years. Riddick’s a loner, an anti-hero (it says so right in the production notes), but clearly game to take on the Necromongers, especially after they get their hands on the teenaged girl who was called Jack in “Pitch Black,” but has transformed into a comely prison inmate named Kyra (newcomer Alexa Davalos). His demise at the hands of Riddick having

been foretold by Judi Dench, Lord Marshal attempts to use Kyra to blackmail the bald stud into joining his crew instead ... and then things REALLY get confusing. Perhaps aware that our cranial mush is being enervated by all this nonsense, Twohy amps up the action midway through. The relentless sound and fury will certainly appeal to some — video game junkies come to mind — but others will find it oppressive.

(Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violent action and some language. Running time: 119 minutes)

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NATIONAL

All things hot — Las Vegas takes over the tube

BY CHRISTINA ALMEIDA

Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — When MTV came courting Sin City three years ago, some of the biggest hotel-casinos on the Strip said no to the idea of hosting the cable network's popular series, "The Real World."

A long production schedule, concerns over patron privacy and a target audience too young to visit Las Vegas all were reasons to keep the casino doors closed.

BIG mistake.

The sexy reality show catapulted the city and eventual host — the off-Strip Palms hotel-casino — into the pop culture stratosphere.

"If they had to try and buy that kind of advertising, they wouldn't be able to afford it," said Jeanne Corcoran with the Nevada Film Office. "No one could."

Fast forward to 2004. Sin City now is rolling out the red carpet to TV producers and their cameras.

An incredible six prime-time shows devoted to all things Vegas are flooding the small screen, taking over some of the biggest network and cable channels on television. The prime-time shows are in addition to a multitude of poker and travel shows about Las Vegas that seemingly run 24 hours a day on cable TV.

"Las Vegas has become the first wonder of the postmodern world," said historian and author Hal Rothman. "It's so hot it sizzles."

Beginning this month, two new reality shows will zoom in on this city of strippers and showgirls.

From Mark Burnett, creator of "Survivor" and "The Apprentice," "The Casino" is set inside the Golden Nugget

hotel-casino, a storied downtown property that recently got a new pair of thirty-something owners.

The show, set to debut June 14 on Fox, shadows owners "Tim and Tom" as they are affectionately known, along with a cast of characters comprised of hotel-casino employees and camera-hungry patrons.

The stakes are admittedly high, with state gambling regulators scrutinizing the series for anything that reflects poorly on the gambling industry.

"This is the biggest bet of our lives," said co-owner Tom Breitling. "We have a lot of fun with it. ... But there really is a lot of drama. Tim (Poster) and I have so much on the line."

"American Casino," which debuted earlier this month on Discovery Channel, is less about the owners and more about the everyday challenges of working in a casino. From handling drunken guests to managing a Super Bowl party for thousands, the show follows employees as they go to work at the suburban Green Valley Ranch hotel-casino.

"There's a mystique about (Las Vegas) that people find insatiable. And that's what we're capitalizing on," said Mark Finkelpearl, co-executive producer of "American Casino."

This fall, NBC will take an animated spin on Las Vegas with its show "Father of the Pride," about a family of white lions that perform in the famed "Siegfried & Roy" show on the Las Vegas Strip.

The satirical comedy on NBC's prime-time lineup joins "Las Vegas," which stars James Caan as a casino boss. Already a big hit for the network, "Las Vegas" earned the honor of highest-rated new

drama for the 2003-04 season.

"At a time when so much of the news in the world is bleak, it's a great escape for the audience," said Jeff Zucker, president of NBC Universal Television Group. "It's a fun, sexy ride in a fun, sexy place."

Over the years, Las Vegas has been a popular destination for sitcom characters like Ross and Rachel of "Friends," but rarely the setting for its own television show. Until recently, the biggest show set in Sin City was "Vega\$, a late '70s series starring Robert Urich as a private eye who lived behind the Desert Inn hotel-casino.

It wasn't until the 2000 debut on CBS of "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" that Hollywood began its current love affair with Vegas. But even the forensics drama initially was leery of placing too much emphasis on Sin City.

"At the outset, the idea was that Vegas was a backdrop," said Carol Mendelsohn, the show's executive producer. "As time went on, Vegas has become more and more a character on 'CSI.' Vegas has been the accent, the seasoning of so many episodes."

After the success of "CSI," CBS is taking a gamble this fall on "dr. vegas," a show about a playboy casino doctor played by Rob Lowe.

"It's a traditional medical show during the day, and during the night he sleeps with chorus girls and gambles," CBS Chairman Leslie Moonves said this month in announcing the network's fall lineup. "What could go wrong with that?"

Hotels like Mandalay Bay thought a lot could go wrong, especially with a reality TV series. The hotel-casino has turned down several offers, opting instead for short-term projects like NBC's "Fear

Factor," which are less intrusive to hotel guests and limited to certain areas of the property.

"No amount of television is worth offending a customer," said Gordon Absher, public relations director for Mandalay Bay hotel-casino. "We just can't justify giving permission for them to do anything and everything."

But "The Real World" proved to many that reality television could succeed in Las Vegas. Not only could cameras operate inside a casino without disrupting business, but Sin City's dramatic tension and rich story lines of quickie weddings, megajackpots and Elvis impersonators made an inviting sound stage.

"What happens on the inside of a casino can be the story of an entire human life," said Robert Thompson, director of The Center for the Study of Popular Television at Syracuse University. "Inside a casino, you can go from rags to riches, sometimes on the roll of a dice."

The TV trend has meant big business for the state. In 2003, total production revenues in Nevada exceeded \$104 million. Of that, nearly \$60 million came from TV shows and specials.

But all things Vegas can only last so long. When the neon dims and ratings drop, Hollywood will move on to the next big thing, and Las Vegas will be off on another marketing strategy.

"Vegas is the Madonna of cities," said Anthony Curtis, editor of Las Vegas Advisor, a consumer newsletter that tracks casino promotions and gambling trends. "It's going to find a way to reinvent."

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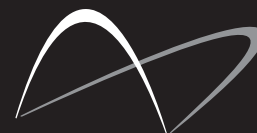
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NATIONAL



Timber giant hopes for negotiated settlement

BY MATTHEW DALY

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Most U.S. timber companies were disappointed this month when the Commerce Department recommended that steep tariffs on imports of Canadian softwood lumber be cut in half.

Lower tariffs would mean more imports and lower prices for U.S. products — an outcome U.S. companies have tried to avoid as they battle what they call a subsidized Canadian wood-products industry.

But at least one American company welcomed the decision.

Washington-state based Weyerhaeuser called the proposed tariff reduction “good news” and a sign that a resolution to the long-standing dispute over softwood lumber — easy-to-saw wood used in home-building — may finally be in sight.

The company’s atypical reaction stems from its unusual perspective on the cross-border dispute.

While Weyerhaeuser is one of the largest U.S. producers of softwood lumber from pine, spruce and other trees, it also is a major producer of Canadian lumber: About one-third of its annual production comes from north of the border.

Weyerhaeuser operates on nearly 35 million acres in five Canadian provinces, producing about 2.4 billion board feet of lumber a year. A board foot is one-foot square by one-inch thick. It takes about 10,000 board feet to build a modest single-family home.

The company pays more than \$100 million a year in countervailing duties and antidumping tariffs, a spokesman said — one of the highest rates of any lumber producer in North America.

The recent Commerce Department decision would cut the company’s combined levy from about 31.2 percent to 17.6 percent — a sizable reduction, but still much more than Weyerhaeuser wants to pay, said Frank Mendizabal, a company spokesman.

“The irony that (some of) the highest tariffs on lumber imports from Canada to the United States are being paid by a U.S. company is not lost on us,” he said.

Spurred by that reality, Weyerhaeuser, Oregon-based Pope & Talbot and other companies with cross-border operations are pushing for a negotiated settlement to end the complex dispute, which has been playing out for more than three years in cases before the World Trade Organization, NAFTA dispute panels and the International Trade Commission.

“We’ve been saying all along that the only way to create a solution that’s fair to both parties is to get both sides back to the table and negotiate a deal,” Mendizabal said.

In April, senior executives from Weyerhaeuser and Connecticut-based International Paper Co. traveled to Canada to try to jump-start negotiations, which have stalled since provincial governments rejected a U.S. offer made last December.

The proposal would have given Canadian lumber duty-free access to 31.5 percent of the U.S. softwood market — down from about 34 percent currently — with stiff tariffs on shipments above that level.

Canadian officials rejected the plan amid concerns about how the quota would be split among the provinces and how refunds from tariffs already collected would be distributed.

International Paper’s participation in the April trip caught some observers off-guard. Unlike Weyerhaeuser, the paper giant is part of the Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports, a collection of U.S. companies that pushed for tariffs to counter what they call unfair subsidies given to Canadian companies by provincial governments.

About one-third of IP’s North American production is in Canada, with the rest in the United States, said IP spokeswoman Jenny Boardman.

The company remains hopeful a negotiated solution is still possible Boardman said.

“That would be the best-case scenario,” she said. “But in the end there’s got to be a solution that is fair.”

A spokesman for the lumber coalition said negotiations are always welcome, but said tariffs should end only when Canada stops subsidizing its lumber.

“The best long-term fix is Canadian provinces selling their timber in open and competitive markets — and some form of interim border restraint until that occurs,” said John Ragosta, an attorney for the Washington-based coalition, which includes Seattle-based Plum Creek Timber Co.; the Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association; and California-based Sierra Pacific Industries, among others.

If Canada fails to put forth a reasonable alternative, litigation will continue, Ragosta said.

On the other side of the dispute, the National Association of Home Builders is pushing to eliminate tariffs entirely.

The group estimates that the current duties add about \$1,000 to the cost of a new home, making a purchase unaffordable for thousands of would-be buyers.

“It’s high time to ... end the hidden tax imposed on American home buyers and renters,” said association President Bobby Rayburn, a home builder in Jackson, Miss.



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Check Out the Question of the Week on Page 3 and let us hear what you have to say

The Q Line



NATIONAL

At Umpqua, you can bank on more than comfort

BY RUKMINI CALLIMACHI
Associated Press Writer

PORTLAND, Ore. —There are no velvet ropes or marble teller's counter. No dark wood or imposing glass panels.

Instead, the interior of Umpqua Bank has the feel of a sleek living room — hip leather chairs form the bank's core, flanking a plasma TV screen and a shelf of best sellers. On offer are mortgage consultants, as well as yoga class, movie night, freshly brewed coffee and a chunk of milk chocolate with every transaction.

"What if we felt like home?" asks Umpqua Bank's chief executive Ray Davis, standing next to a pot of steaming coffee in the plush Portland branch.

Started in 1953 in the southern town of Canyonville by loggers who were fed up with driving long distances to cash their checks, the tiny Oregon bank has grown into a cutting-edge institution.

Community banks like Umpqua are gaining prominence by adding a human touch, prompting commercial giants like Wells Fargo and Bank of America to change the way they handle basic financial transactions.

In 1994, Davis — who had just been hired to help Umpqua Bank grow beyond its rural roots — did something revolutionary. He invited customers to linger.

Internet banking had just been invented and the prevailing ethos was that customers could be weaned off human contact.

"If you wanted to check your balance, we sent you to the phone. If you wanted to withdraw money, we told you to use the ATM," said Nancy Kinnard, manager of Umpqua Bank's Eugene branch, who worked for First Interstate Bank before joining Umpqua.

"The big banks had created a vacuum," said 77-year-old Milton Herbert, the only surviving founder of Umpqua Bank.

Into that vacuum, Davis placed a cup

of coffee. Not just a pot of generic brew, but the company's own blend. The transformation started in the southern town of Roseburg, site of the bank's headquarters until moving to Portland in 2001. In Roseburg, the bank's design team tore out the teller windows and created a living room, replete with magazines, a couch and a large-screen TV.

"Read, Sip, Surf, Bank," became the bank's motto. "What if we felt like home?" is not just a rhetorical question for Davis — but also the bank's latest advertising line, emblazoned on buses and billboards.

From \$140 million in assets a decade ago, the bank has grown to \$3 billion today. It has 64 branches and recently announced plans to expand into Washington and California.

By inviting people to linger, Davis stumbled upon a concept familiar to the retail industry.

"There is a direct relationship between the time spent in a store and the average amount that you buy," said Dan Stanek, executive VP of Retail Forward, a retail research and analysis firm in Columbus, Ohio.

"Retail is a four-letter word for most bankers," said Davis. "They see themselves as the guy with the coat and tie."

Starting in 1996, Umpqua Bank became the first to call its branches "stores."

Like at the Estee Lauder counter, they began offering a complimentary gift with every new account — a T-shirt, a Java mug, a bestseller.

"My customers walk away with a bag full of stuff," gushed Marie Green, manager of the Roseburg branch.

Like in a department store, the products are on display.

"If you were to go outside a Nordstroms, what do you see? Merchandise," said Davis. "If we believe that we're in the same service industry,

then we need to figure out how to visualize a mortgage loan."

Open an interest-bearing account, and you get the seed of a Douglas fir tree, wrapped like a pair of Tiffany's earrings in soft, white tissue. At the Roseburg branch, customers walk past an elaborate fish bowl and a sign asking: "Has low tide left your business dry?"

"Retailers understand the importance of touch and feel — even with intangible products like electronics," said Ellen Tolley, spokeswoman for the National Retail Federation in Washington, D.C.

Smart retailers, she said, display digital cameras on the countertop and encourage customers to point and shoot.

A decade after opening its first "store," Umpqua Bank is now far from alone in its approach.

In Seattle, Washington Mutual has pio-

neered its 'Occasio' branches — Latin for "favorable opportunity." In addition to a coffee bar, the branches include a play area, where children can have fun while their parents "shop."

In Virginia, the 168-year-old Riggs Bank — where Abraham Lincoln had an account — has shed the marble, in exchange for European furniture and flatscreen TVs.

A fireplace with leather-bound chairs greets customers at Old National in Indianapolis.

"It's part of a trend in business which tries to make transactions an experience — rather than just a transaction," said Charlotte Birch, spokeswoman for the American Bankers Association.

Overall, the retail strategy has not only worked — it's forced megabanks like Wells Fargo, Charter One and Bank of America to take notice.

Colorado pledges to help rebuild town after attack

BY STEVEN K. PAULSON
Associated Press Writer

DENVER — The governor announced \$600,000 in state aid Thursday to help the town of Granby recover from last week's bulldozer rampage that virtually destroyed half a dozen buildings and badly damaged at least six more.

State officials also said they will help people who lost their jobs — if not their workplaces — with a "fast-response team" developed to help employees laid off from major corporations.

Gov. Bill Owens said the state does not usually provide economic assistance to victims of crimes like vandalism, but the loss of two dozen jobs in a mountain town like Granby could devastate the local economy.

"We understand that the financial resources of a small town are limited and that state assistance is a critical part of their recovery effort," Owens said.

Officials in Granby said it will cost millions of dollars to rebuild the town of 1,600 people after a former muffler shop owner angry with city officials ran amok in an armored bulldozer last Friday before killing himself.

Mayor Edward "Ted" Wang said 13 buildings were damaged and at least six, including the town hall, were expected to be total losses.

Marvin Heemeyer, 52, launched the assault after losing a battle with town officials over zoning rules and town code violations at his muffler business. Investigators believe he spent months building a steel and concrete box around the driver's cage of the bulldozer and targeted buildings that had some association with the disputes.

Owens said the grants will come through the Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund to help rebuild public and civic facilities. The town will get \$500,000 to rebuild the town hall and \$100,000 to help rebuild the library.

The fund currently has about \$5.5 million and a list of proposed projects totaling \$18 million. Owens said giving some of the money to Granby was justified because of the potential impact to the entire community.

The rapid response team will be in town Friday to help those left without jobs. The state will provide up to \$400 a week, expediting an applications process that usually takes weeks.

New England UCC church votes for independence

By The Associated Press

WETHERSFIELD, Conn. — Citing differences over homosexuality and other issues, the largest United Church of Christ congregation in New England has voted to break away from its denomination.

Members of the First Church of Christ in Wethersfield voted 510-59 to leave the national church and return to the independent status the congregation had for most of its 369-year history.

The liberal, 1.3 million-member United Church of Christ began ordaining openly gay clergy in 1972. Leaders of the Wethersfield church said this stand and others affirming homosexuality do not conform to their views of the Bible. Conservatives believe Scripture bans gay sex.

A similar vote at First Church last year failed by a slim margin.

Pastor J. Jey Deifell Jr., who voted to remain in the UCC last year, voted to leave this time, saying he saw "no hope" that he and other conservative pastors could effect change.

"I was hoping that we could make some changes from within, but I was frustrated because, like other conservative pastors, I felt unwelcome, prejudicially barred from participating in the life of the church," Deifell said.

Twenty-four of the 257 churches that belong to the denomination's Connecticut Conference accept homosexuality and give recognition to committed same-sex couples.

First Church is the third in the state to leave the denomination in the past decade.



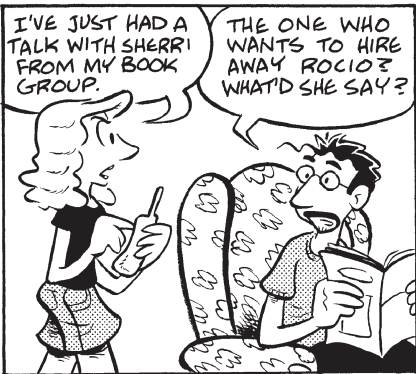
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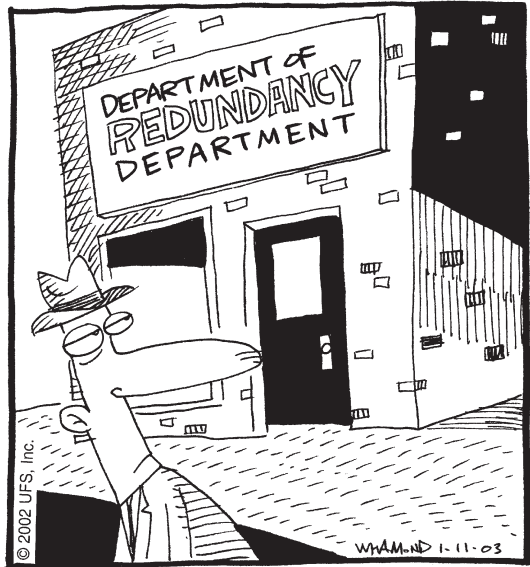
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21 Before today
22 Dressed in
24 Murdered
25 Phil of talk
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32 General assembly?
33 Cone source
34 Candle count
35 Little rascal
36 B & B
37 Sister
38 Taken wing

40 Parlor drinks

42 Conical abodes

43 Peace goddess

44 Herd member

45 Cheyenne Mountain org.

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2 Ring star

3 "An Essay on

Man" poet

4 Right away

5 German city

6 Gave a hoot

7 Tycoon Onassis

8 Holy water introducer

9 Come into view

10 Scopes trial figure

17 Was connected

23 Auction signal

24 Take to court

26 Intrudes

27 Swallows' cousins

28 Ophelia's love

30 Scaly pet

31 Stiffened

33 More exquisite

39 Small

41 Spanish gold

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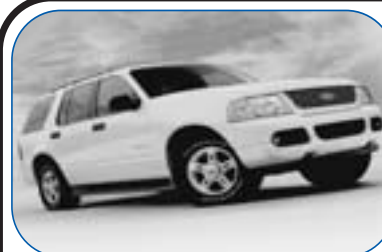
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