

FREE

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 181

# Santa Monica Daily Press

*A newspaper with issues*

## LOTTO

### SUPER LOTTO PLUS

09-04-07-19-31

Megamember: 06

Jackpot: \$19 million

### FANTASY 5

06, 09, 12, 03, 21

### DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 1, 9, 7

Evening picks: 9, 5, 9

### DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 03, Hot Shots

2nd Place: 02, Lucky Star

3rd Place: 08, Gorgeous George

Race Time: 1:47.08



## NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Convicted killer Roderick Ferrell, 23, asked for a new trial in March, telling a judge in Tavares, Fla., that he had an inadequate defense at his 1996 murder trial. Ferrell had admitted then that he was the leader of a teenaged, goth-outfitted "vampire clan" that often cut their arms open to suck each other's blood and which murdered the parents of one of its members. Ferrell told the judge this time that he had been seeing a psychiatrist in 1996, whereupon the judge asked who had originally told him he needed help; Ferrell replied, "The school, the sheriff's office, my mom. Basically the whole city."



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I love Mickey Mouse more than any woman I've ever known."

— Walt Disney



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Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

**Crews work on a new 'traffic island' near 11th Street and Wilshire Boulevard on Wednesday while traffic piles up around them. The construction has created gridlock along one of the city's most used streets. City officials say the improvements will make it safer for pedestrians walking across Wilshire.**

## Wilshire traffic: Calming or pedestrian friendly?

*City Hall attempts to make street safer for pedestrians*

By Daily Press staff

Although it might not seem like it right now, construction on Wilshire Boulevard will eventually make it easier to walk along one of the city's main arteries.

More than 25 "traffic islands" from Lincoln Boulevard to Franklin Avenue are being built to serve as safe havens for pedestrians and to slow cars down.

During construction, which will last about a month, the "pedestrian improvements" seem to be working to slow cars down. Traffic is routinely backed up for

See CONSTRUCTION, page 5

## Teacher's union files grievance over school plans

*Samohi staffers allege they weren't included in school restructuring*

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

A plan to permanently divide Santa Monica High School into six smaller schools is in jeopardy.

More than one-third of Samohi teachers and staff members signed a formal grievance last month, alleging administrators didn't include them in their plans to split up the campus.

Samohi is scheduled to divide its 3,400 students into six separate schools on June 24. Proponents say the new arrangement will improve learning and give students more personal attention.

The grievance, which is expected to go to arbitration soon, alleges Samohi broke its contract with the union that represents teachers, school advisors, nurses and librarians by failing to properly include them in the plans for the redesign.

According to the union contract, the school must consult with its workers before major restructuring takes place. The grievance asks that school staff be included in the plans and be asked for approval.

"If the process was followed, we could make things better for teachers and kids," said Harry Keiley, president of the Santa Monica-Malibu California Teachers Association. "It has not been followed."

Samohi administrators disagree. They maintain they have acted within the parameters of the contract and attribute the grievance to a group of teachers who don't want to leave classrooms that, in some cases, they've taught in for decades.

"It's a change and change produces anxiety," said Samohi principal Ilene Straus. "People do not want to

See UNION, page 5

## Convicted felon pleads not guilty to SM woman's murder

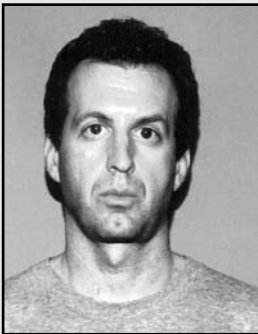
BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

A convicted felon accused of killing a Santa Monica woman pleaded not guilty to capital murder charges on Wednesday.

Victor Paleologus, 40, stood behind a glass wall in Superior Court in downtown Los Angeles with his private attorney, Andrew Flier. If convicted, Paleo-logus could face the death penalty.

The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office alleges Paleologus on Feb. 15 killed and sexually assaulted Kristi Johnson, a 21-year-old Santa Monica College student, two days before he was arrested in Beverly Hills for grand theft auto and five other related felony charges.



Victor Paleologus



Kristi Johnson

His preliminary hearing is scheduled for June 23.

Paleologus, who has a long criminal history, was only out of state prison for about a month

before he was arrested on Feb. 17 for allegedly stealing a car from a Beverly Hills BMW dealership under a false identity. He has been in jail ever since.

Earlier this month Paleologus replaced a public defender assigned to the case and retained Flier, a high-profile criminal defense attorney. It is unknown who is paying for Flier's services, but it's someone who is acting on Paleologus' behalf, Flier said.

Flier said Wednesday Paleologus believes that he was targeted in the murder case based on his criminal past. Paleologus claims he didn't kill Johnson, Flier added.

"I think the evidence is weak and predicated on his past," Flier said. "We are telling the

See PLEA, page 6

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★★★★★ Reach out for others, whether to make plans or schedule a get-together. Associates could be testy. Coming up with strong answers takes talent and inquisitiveness. What might seem to be an obstacle isn't. Give everyone time and space. Tonight: Work as late as you can so you can take off early tomorrow.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Photo courtesy of Santa Monica Fire Department

Santa Monica firefighters serve breakfast at the Santa Monica Airport to volunteers who collected money for burn victims.

Fire department canvasses in caravan

By Daily Press staff

Local firefighters drove their trucks in a caravan recently throughout Los Angeles to raise thousands of dollars for a burn victim program.

The Santa Monica Fire Department hosted the kicked-off of the annual Burn Relay to benefit the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation at Barker Hanger at the Santa Monica Airport.

Santa Monica firefighters cooked and served breakfast to those involved in the relay and donated \$4,500 to the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation.

Fire departments from all over Southern California joined in the relay caravan, which stopped and collected donations from fire departments and associations from cities across the greater L.A. area.

Founded in 1971, the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation works with firefighters, educators and burn care professionals to develop innovative programs and services.

BMXers and music this weekend in Venice

By Daily Press staff

Although music and madness are part of every day life in Venice, even more is planned for this weekend.

The Nokia Core Tour kicks off on Friday, June 13 and lasts through Sunday.

The Nokia Core Tour is a qualifier for the Gravity Games in Bike Dirt, so expect to see top BMXers including 2002 Gravity Games Gold Medalist Steven Murray, 2002 King of Dirt Champion Cory Nastazio and former X Games, Gravity Games and King of Dirt champion T.J. Lavin, along with the best local amateurs.

The event will take place on the beach in Venice near Windward and Pacific where music and action sports will meld under the hot sun for a sizzling three-day experience at the Nokia 5100 Core Tour that is free to spectators and appropriate for all ages. One of the bands, “h is orange,” appearing at 2 p.m., Saturday, has managed quite a bit of sizzle on its own.

Already named one of the “Hot 100 Unsigned Bands” by Music Connection Magazine, “h is orange” has a loyal local following. The five-man hard rock group, based in L.A., is working toward a full-length CD release at the end of the summer and is currently signing with a producer to guide the sound of the album.

After “h is orange” performs, the BMXers will start hangin’ it out by flying over three-story-high dirt jumps, alongside mountainboarders skyrocketing off 50-foot launch ramps.

This is the Core Tour’s fifth year, with stops including Venice Beach, Jones Beach, Long Island, NY (July 25-27) and Huntington Beach, (Sept. 5-7).

For additional details, daily schedule of events or photos, visit [www.coretour.com](http://www.coretour.com)



Damn the June gloom — yesterday was fun and it was sunny. Summertime is back, at least for a little bit.

BAD NEWS: Our plentiful combo of SW swells starts to back off today. And the NW wind swell we were expecting is looking a little weaker than anticipated. Still ...

GOOD NEWS: There will still be solid rideable waves through today and tomorrow.

OUTLOOK: Next week’s S swell is lining up 3-5’ surf. Stay tuned. It’s between New Zealand and South America now.

Today the water is: **65°**  
Sunrise: 5:48 a.m.  
Sunset: 8:11 p.m.

|           | LOW TIDE |        |         |        | HIGH TIDE |        |         |        |
|-----------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|
|           | Morning  | Height | Evening | Height | Morning   | Height | Evening | Height |
| SATURDAY  | 9:59     | 0.3    | 10:52   | 2.4    | 2:33      | 4.2    | 5:12    | 4.3    |
| SUNDAY    | 10:49    | 0.5    | N/A     | N/A    | 4:06      | 3.9    | 5:45    | 4.8    |
| MONDAY    | 12:02    | 1.6    | (11:36) | 0.7    | 5:33      | 3.8    | 6:19    | 5.4    |
| TUESDAY   | 12:59    | 0.7    | 12:22   | 1.0    | 6:49      | 3.8    | 6:55    | 5.9    |
| WEDNESDAY | 1:50     | -0.2   | 1:06    | 1.3    | 7:56      | 3.9    | 7:33    | 6.4    |
| THURSDAY  | 2:38     | -0.9   | 1:50    | 1.6    | 8:56      | 3.9    | 8:13    | 6.8    |
| FRIDAY    | 3:27     | -1.4   | 2:34    | 1.8    | 9:53      | 3.9    | 8:55    | 7.0    |

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The Q-Line

Now that the school parcel tax passed last week, the local school district’s \$13 million budget deficit will get some financial help.

Measure S — a \$225 flat tax on parcels in Santa Monica and Malibu — will be in effect for six years and raise an estimated \$6.5 million a year for the school district. However, there still are dozens of academic programs that face elimination if the district can’t close its budget deficit.

And despite that City Hall doesn’t have a financial obligation to the school district, it has for years voluntarily contributed.

Some believe the Santa Monica City Council should buck up this year and give more than its usual \$3 million annual con-

tribution. Last year, the City Council gave an additional \$1.5 million in one-time funds because of a similar budget crisis.

On June 17, the Council will be asked to give more to the school district when it adopts its budget.

So, this week Q-Line wants to know: “Should the City of Santa Monica give more to the local school district? Why or why not?”

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response before Thursday at 5 p.m. We’ll print them in Friday’s paper. Please 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

LETTERS

Watch out for income tax bill

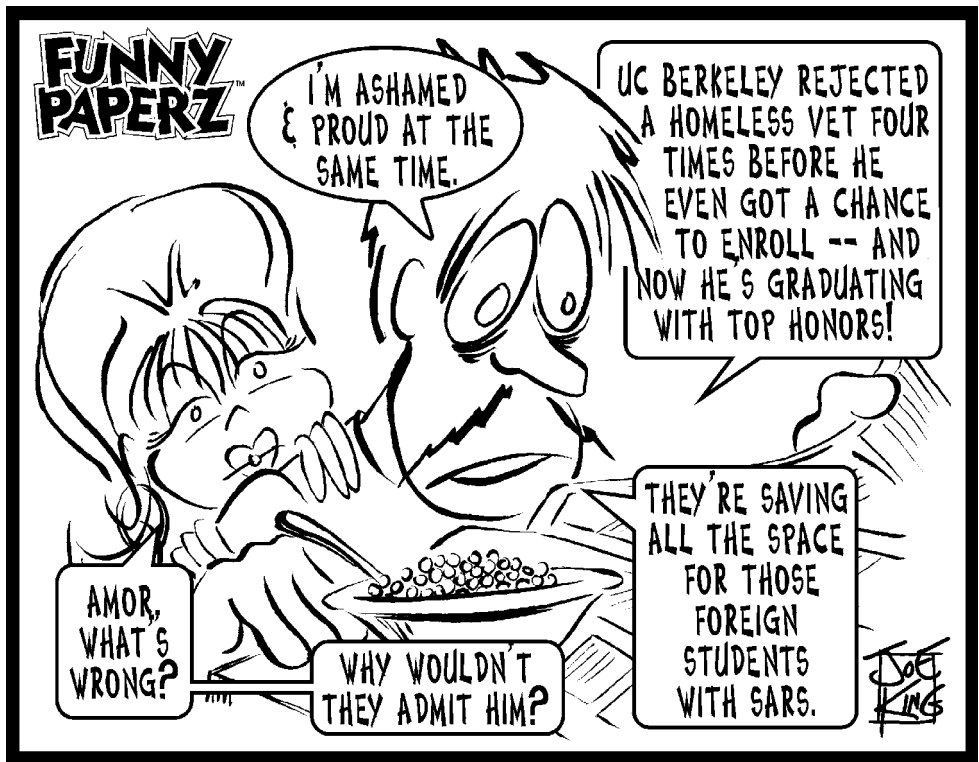
**Editor:**  
Thank you for listing bills (SMDP, June 10) that passed the state assembly but have not yet been passed by the state senate. One of those bills stood out: AB1690. The reason is that AB1690 would allow local governments — the L.A. County Board of Supervisors — to levy their own income taxes. That means even the revenue-hungry Santa Monica City Council or the school district — could establish their own income taxes.  
Naturally that also means that come April 15, you could be writing four checks rather than the one or two that you normally sign.  
That the senate will pass this bill or that the recall-threatened Governor will sign it is doubtful.  
But with most local governments howling with financial pain such a bill has a better chance of passing than it would have had two years ago when the economic slump was new.

Joanne Gamlin  
Santa Monica

It’s Davis’ fault, not SMC’s

**Editor:**  
It is understandable that employees of Santa Monica College are upset, but blaming SMC administrators and the board of trustees is outright foolish. Remember that these financial problems stem from Gov. Gray Davis, who seems more concerned with rewarding his supporters than fulfilling his commitment to the people of California.  
Placing blame on ones who have to deal with the governor’s short sightedness accomplishes nothing. Rather, SMC and its factions need to unite and work together in solving the problems that Gray Davis has bestowed upon us.

Joe Weichman  
Santa Monica



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Helping the individual helps everybody in the end



TITTINGER’S TAKE

By Michael J. Tittinger

“Well, I, for one, am glad I cleaned my fingernails before this segment,” the narrator said as a discount-store globe spun ‘round and ‘round to open the show.  
“Here at the Bering Strait, once filled with land, is where the first inhabitants of America literally walked over onto the continent ... they were following a herd of animals, of course.”  
Of course.  
Boy, if this constitutes a job within “the industry,” it’s hard to imagine being any further removed, I thought to myself. Sitting in my quiet, lonely, temperature-controlled Toluca Lake office, I am toiling away on the reformat of an instructional video for a closed captioning company.  
And here is Clark County School District (Nevada) teacher Mike Englert sitting motionless at a desk, producing a video with such poor quality it makes free access cable look like a Jerry Bruckheimer epic.  
C’mon, man, just move around or something.  
“These people did not have any intentions of starting a new land, a new country, the greatest country in the history of the world,” Englert explained. “They were just following some animals.”  
Time for a walk. I needed to step away from my computer and the spoon-fed eight-hour history lesson for some fresh San

Fernando Valley air, but I knew upon my return it was gonna be more of the same.  
Did he actually open the broadcast by talking about his dirty fingernails?  
This was not the kind of writing and editing I had in mind — closed captioning a slovenly middle-aged schoolteacher talking directly into a camera for hours on end. Change your shirt. Shave half your mustache. Put on a clown’s nose. Please do something, Mr. Englert, to break the monotony of it all.  
Closed captioning, for those who don’t know, are the words of dialogue and description that scroll up and down the television screen to aid the hearing impaired. Of course, you see it more and more often today — at bars where music is playing, at the gym, even at home when you hit the mute button the TV. Still, it’s primarily intended as a service for the hearing impaired.  
Admittedly, it can be tedious typing until your fingers hurt, trying to capture all the dialogue and action descriptions in a given broadcast.  
“The dreams only last a couple of weeks or so,” the girl assigned to train me had warned when I began work there.  
Actually, it was about three weeks to be precise. Sleepy time was stress time as I tried in vain each night to type all the words being said in my subconscious, but I could never keep up as I tossed and turned from one side of the bed to the other. I felt like I was perpetually with Lucy and Ethel in the candy factory when the conveyor belt speeds up and they can’t keep up with wrapping them so they start eating them.  
Sometimes words were just flying at

me, jabbing me in the eyes and ribs with their descenders.  
Then the alarm clock goes off ... and it’s time to go captioning.  
In the past, I would try to derive some satisfaction from the belief that my handiwork was enabling those with hearing problems to enjoy the world’s most powerful medium — TV — in the same manner the rest of us do, bringing them the news and sports telecasts, and prime-time dramas and classic films that they could have never fully appreciated before.  
But this? This was, shall we say, less than I had bargained for. With most production on hiatus, the instructional videos are what we are stuck with for the time being. So today, I have another date with Englert and his nonexistent classroom as we trek through U.S. history, semester I.  
OK, OK, it’s still providing a service. Hell, it’s even educational. My earnest work on this project is aiding in the education of some disabled students. I can deal with that. So I sit back down at my terminal with a renewed vigor and pound away until the day is done and it’s time to make a break for Santa Monica.  
“Goodnight,” I called in to the girl who had trained me in the halcyon days of “Jeopardy!” and “That ‘70’s Show” and “Hack” and theatrical movies.  
“Well, another lesson in the bag,” I said with a fatigued smile. “I hope these kids get the most out of this.”  
“You know,” she replied, “the whole series is for just one student, one girl with a hearing problem.”  
One?  
I was incredulous, deflated. We are all sitting in here each day working away on

videos for just one person? It can’t be. It doesn’t make sense. Hell, they could have just written the lesson down for her in less time. Why is Englert sitting up there day after day, talking about responding to “viewers’ requests” and making references about “everybody doing well on the final exam”? Why the hell does he even bother wearing a tie, or cleaning his fingernails for that matter?  
What a waste of freakin’ time!  
I was incensed when I left the office and, of course, had ample time to reflect sitting in the 405 “parking lot” en route to my apartment. But something rather sweet dawned on me in “June Gloom” haze — the fact that this was all for just one person made it seem more worthwhile.  
Here is this instructor spending day after day, most likely after school, recording all his lectures for one single student, a girl with a hearing problem. And he’s not just going through the paces, as I’d assumed. He does find a globe and does clean his fingernails and does try to make jokes to keep it as lively as he realistically can. Maybe he’s out shopping for the globe and other props at night. Maybe he’s writing bad jokes in between classes or on his break.  
Maybe he’s going to great pains to make that girl feel just a little bit more a part of things, “less special,” by addressing a make-believe group of students.  
Suddenly, my appointment with Englert this morning doesn’t sound so bad.  
  
*(Mike Tittinger is a freelance writer living in Santa Monica. To reach him, e-mail to Tooroam@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.

LOCAL



Union: Not in this house

UNION, from page 1

move their rooms. Moving is stressful.”  
Straus left Lincoln Middle School as its principal of 16 years last summer to initiate change at Samohi. She described the massive overhaul as a difficult but worthy project.  
“We are doing this professionally and appropriately with the best intentions,” Straus said. “My argument is we haven’t done anything in 10 years to improve achievement at this school.”

Straus said she invited all Samohi workers to give their input to a committee of teachers, parents, students and administrators that planned the redesign over the past several months.

Union officials don’t dispute that but said the district still violated the part of the contract that deals with restructuring schools. Keiley added the union has a legal and ethical commitment to uphold the contract.

Before the district can restructure its programs, it must seek the advice of the union, according to the contract, which also mandates a presentation be made and 70 percent of school workers agree with the proposal.

Keiley said the union’s goal is to resolve the grievance as soon as possible. Once a grievance is filed, the school named in it makes a formal reply. If Samohi administrators do not agree with the complaint, union officials can then send the grievance on to the district. If the district still does not agree, the union can opt to send the grievance on to a third party arbitrator.  
The union is expected to make a decision in the next two weeks on whether to send the grievance to arbitration.  
“We feel the process was violated,” said Susan Dresher, a Samohi advisor and union board member. “The union feels very confident this will be arbitrated and decided in our favor.”

Both union officials and school representatives say the ultimate effect the grievance will have is unclear. Union officials said they want the contract upheld but would not speculate on how specifically that could occur. If the grievance does go to arbitration, the ruling is binding for both parties.

Both sides said they don’t want to see

students suffer.  
“We want students to be successful,” Dresher said. “That’s our purpose for being here, not to be combative about things. Being able to help and really have an impact on all the students, even those who are not successful, is an important part of what we do here every day.”  
Dresher added that there were many more Samohi teachers and staff members that expressed support for the grievance but didn’t sign on for fear of political ramifications.

“If the process was followed, we could make things better for teachers and kids.”

— HARRY KEILEY  
California Teachers Association, president

If the administration’s plan to split the school goes ahead as scheduled, the move will displace as many as 80 teachers and begin shortly after next Thursday’s graduation. The exact number of teachers who will be moved will not be known until next week, Straus said.

Staff have been instructed to have their rooms and offices completely packed by Monday, June 23. Movers will work Tuesday through Thursday and teachers will have Friday and the weekend to prepare for summer school, which begins the following Monday.

Teachers are not allowed on campus during the move so movers can work quickly, Straus said.  
The new arrangement is expected to raise test scores and allow instructors to give students more personal attention. Each of Samohi’s six houses would have an assistant principal, two advisors and a teacher leader who oversees the other house teachers.  
Sports, music, clubs and central services — including college mentors, nurses, psychiatrists and others — would be shared by the entire school, which would be overseen by Straus.

Wilshire traffic islands will be finished in one month

CONSTRUCTION, from page 1

blocks as a result of the work.  
The islands — fully landscaped — will be similar to the ones placed in other areas of town like Ocean Park Boulevard near the airport.  
Traffic islands inherently slow down traffic because it appears the street is narrower. However, it’s not. Wilshire Boulevard will remain two lanes in each direction, according to Beth Rolandson, a city senior transportation planner. Parking along the street also will remain in tact.  
At the beginning of next week, the curbs for the medians will be built. Landscaping work will take until the middle of July, when the project is expected to be completed.  
Sidewalk curb ramps at areas that do not have traffic signals already have been built and are designed to line up with the islands, which will break at alleys and intersections.  
The construction is part of a multi-year and multi-million city pedestrian improvement plan. Wilshire is part of phase 2, which also includes improvements to Broadway, Santa Monica and Ocean Park boulevards and 26th Street.  
Phase 2, expected to cost \$4.8 million, is 75 percent funded by state transportation money. Santa Monica City Hall is picking up the other 25 percent of the cost.



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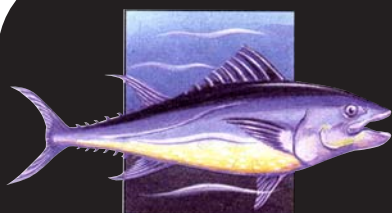
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# Police: Suspect lured women by posing as photographer

PLEA, from page 1

DA if you have additional evidence, you better show it to us right away.”

Flier added the evidence presented by the DA is all circumstantial — there are no fingerprints, DNA or blood samples that link Paleologus to Johnson’s murder.

In addition to the evidence gathered in the Santa Monica Police Department’s investigation, Deputy District Attorney Eleanor Hunter plans to present witnesses at the preliminary hearing, which is expected to last up to two days.

Johnson’s mother, Terry Wark, who lives in Los Gatos, Calif., said she is confident Paleologus is guilty of murdering her only daughter. She said she hopes the judicial system doesn’t fail her, her family or the public.

“The focus of the legal process now initiated is to serve justice and protect our citizens from the horrible creature who committed these acts,” she said. “Shoddy, predictable legal antics and courtroom dramatics sustaining a criminal are sludge burdening the system. May the truth prevail.”

After national attention of Johnson’s disappearance on Feb. 15 and a two-week search, Johnson’s body was found on March 3, partially clothed, wrists bound and covered in a sleeping bag on a steep hillside off of Skyline Drive, a remote neighborhood in Hollywood Hills.

Santa Monica Police zeroed in on Paleologus as a suspect in the case a little more than a week after Johnson disappeared. Based on anonymous tips and around the clock investigating by Santa Monica detectives, authorities were able to link Paleologus to Johnson’s disappearance and subsequently, her murder.

After completing its investigation, the SMPD turned the case over to the DA which charged Paleologus on May 12 with capital murder. The DA won’t determine whether to seek the death penalty against Paleologus until he is ordered to stand trial, said DA spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons.

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### “May the truth prevail.”

— TERRY WARK  
Johnson’s mother

Paleologus, who apparently met Johnson at the Century City Mall previously, allegedly lured her by claiming to be a publicity photographer. He then allegedly killed her and dumped her body in Laurel Canyon in Hollywood Hills, the DA alleges.

Johnson disappeared after telling her roommates she was going to Beverly Hills to meet a man claiming to be a publicity photographer.

Paleologus has an extensive criminal rap sheet including luring and victimizing young, attractive women by claiming to be a photographer in the entertainment indus-

try. His criminal history dates back more than a decade and he is described as a predator.

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

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

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

Paleologus has been convicted of six felonies since 1998 ranging from grand theft to burglary to assault.

## L.A.: Not the murder capital this year

By The Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES** — Murders have dropped 21 percent citywide and 61 percent in the San Fernando Valley in the first five months of the year.

Police attribute the decline to a clamp down on gangs and efforts to get guns off the streets and share more information with other agencies.

“We’ll never reach the perfect society where nobody takes anybody else’s life, but this is certainly a positive sign,” said Ronald Bergmann, chief of the LAPD’s Valley Bureau. “We’ve cut our homicides by 35. That’s

35 people this year that are not in a cemetery.”

Through June 1, New York had 219 homicides, followed by 217 in Los Angeles and 216 in Chicago. The LAPD recorded nine more in the next week, bringing the total through June 7 to 226, compared with 287 during same period in 2002.

The San Fernando Valley had 22 homicides through June 7 compared to 57 during the same period last year.

Last year, Los Angeles was the nation’s murder capital with 658 homicides. Chicago had 645 and New York City has 584.

## Chula Vista couple charged with fraud

By The Associated Press

**SAN DIEGO** — A two-year federal probe into a suspected Ponzi scheme that targeted Filipinos in southern San Diego County has resulted in the arrests of a Chula Vista couple and their business associate.

Edmundo Rubi, Luisa Rubi and Genaro Aquino were arrested this week for the scheme in which the allegedly cheated 450 local investors out of nearly \$25 million.

Prosecutors say the three operated as Knight Express Limited and other companies. The trio told investors their money would be used to buy and resell federal reserve notes in an international trading program that

could return profits of 9 percent a month, according to investigators.

The three are charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud, wire fraud and money laundering.

Edmundo Rubi was arrested Monday in the Philippines and was to be returned to San Diego. Luisa Rubi and Aquino pleaded innocent Tuesday to charges in San Diego federal court.

Authorities have recovered and returned about \$1.5 million of the \$25 million raised from investors, said Tami Stine, spokeswoman for the Internal Revenue Service in San Diego. IRS and U.S. Customs investigators conducted the investigation.

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WORLD BRIEFLY

Liberians look to U.S. to end misery

By The Associated Press

**MONROVIA, Liberia** — Killers with AK-47s — empowered by their weapons, whiskey and warlord-president Charles Taylor’s sanction of savagery — prowl an electricity-less capital named in homage to a long-ago American president.

Refugees fill Monrovia’s decayed, overgrown, high-columned mansions, built in faithful memory of the American South.

Bloodied bodies fill the city’s main hospital, John F. Kennedy Memorial.

Even in their torment, few in the west African nation of Liberia have forgotten their country’s proud founding as Africa’s first republic, created by freed slaves returned from America.

But isolated in their misery, few Liberians today realize how much Americans have forgotten them.

“America is our elder brother. They led us from Day One,” said Bobby Jacob, a street peddler. “Let them remember us!”

Jacob, 23, stood in the rain at the closed steel gates of the U.S. Embassy complex, where thousands of Liberians clamored for shelter as war closed in on Liberia’s capital again.

“Take action now in Liberia to end war as they have in Iraq. They are our brothers, and we are suffering,” said Cyrus V. Zaway, a jobless refugee in the same churning crowd.

Army Sgt. dreams of beer in Iraqi heat

By The Associated Press

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — On Abi Nawas Street, the heat shimmers off the blacktop and the blue-green leaves of the eucalyptus trees droop in defeat. And though he stares at the Tigris River, U.S. Army Sgt. Donald Stretz sees something else: a Mexican restaurant in Mt. Kisco, N.Y.

“I wish I was there right now, drinking a cold Corona with a lime,” says Stretz, his face basted in sweat.

At 3 p.m., it’s 110 degrees in the shade. With the legendary Mesopotamian sun hammering down, U.S. troops swaddled in long-sleeve uniforms and gear look like ants roasting under a magnifying glass.

“It feels like someone’s holding a hairdryer to your face,” says Army Sgt. Daniel Conforti, 22, of Selden, N.Y.

And it’s going to get worse. To hear Iraqis tell it, June is mild. “This is nothing,” they repeat, sometimes laughing. “Wait until July. Wait until August.” In those months, the mercury challenges the 130-degree mark.

For U.S. soldiers patrolling Baghdad, there’s no escaping the heat. There is no air conditioning. No swimming pools. Cooling off means a seat in the shade with a baby wipe to cut the grime. Sleeping is a fitful affair, with men stripped to their shorts, spread-eagled on cots.

Crisis brings fund-raising to new level

By The Associated Press

**NEW YORK** — It sounds like a fund-raising event from a prestigious private school: A benefit performance by a celebrity graduate and an upscale silent auction including a chance to have actor Kevin Kline record your answering machine message.

But Wednesday night’s event featuring young jazz performer Peter Cincotti won’t be hosted by one of the city’s elite private schools.

Instead, it’s the first event from the 10-month-old P.S. 6 Alumni Foundation. That’s P.S. as in public school.

Fund-raising at the elementary school is going beyond the car washes and candy sales normally associated with public schools, a trend seen around the nation. With public schools facing budget cuts, many are turning to the private sector.

“We’ve seen organizations do all sorts of things from golf tournaments to celebrity auctions to partnerships with local restaurants ... (things) that would have been unheard of” years back, said Howie Schaffer, media director of Public Education Network, a national public school advocacy group.

Credibility at stake over weapons search

By The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** — Unless the Bush administration takes definitive action to prove its assertions about Saddam Hussein’s destructive weapons, it could sacrifice credibility as a leader in future world crises.

As British and U.S. teams continue their as-yet fruitless searches for proof of Iraq’s firepower, and President Bush insists there were weapons of mass destruction,

Reduced City Budget  
Set for Adoption

To narrow the gap between escalating costs and declining income, the Santa Monica City Council will consider both expenditure cuts and revenue increases in adopting the 2003/04 municipal budget on June 17. Review the budget online at [www.santa-monica.org](http://www.santa-monica.org) or at city libraries.

BUDGET HEARING  
Tuesday, June 17, 2003  
6:45 p.m., City Hall  
1685 Main Street

Cablecast on Channel 16  
Netcast at [www.santa-monica.org](http://www.santa-monica.org)  
On KCRW 89.9 FM, 8 p.m. - midnight

No need to attend the Budget Hearing to make your views known. Communicate your opinion to the Council by email ([council@santa-monica.org](mailto:council@santa-monica.org)), phone (458-8301, TDD 917-6626) or fax (917-6640).



A public hearing on the proposed FY 2003/04 Action Plan (allocating Federal Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership Act funds) will be held in conjunction with the city budget hearing and adoption.

some former officials, experts and lawmakers are seeing potential damage for the administration by the failure to find arms.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser in the Carter administration, suggested that U.S. officials make an effort to determine whether there are residual weapons in Iraq that were hidden but not used. Also, he said, questions must be answered whether U.S. intelligence agencies were misinformed or had been pressured into making exaggerated claims and “whether the top policy-makers knew that they were vastly exaggerating the facts.”

“What is clear is that the assertions by our top policy-makers, from the president down, to the effect that Iraq was a powerful threat armed with extremely dangerous weapons, was not accurate,” Brzezinski said. “American global credibility has been badly hurt.”



briefs

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL

Get In The Loop On Line 175

Metro Bus Line 175 links two exciting LA areas – trendy Sunset Junction and the lively Latin Quarter around Santa Monica Boulevard and Western Avenue. Find everything from music stores to medical centers along this line. Visit [mta.net](http://mta.net) or call 1-800-COMMUTE for details.

New Seats For Metro

Thousands of new seats are being installed on Metro Buses and Metro Rail trains as part of an ongoing service improvement program. The reupholstered seat inserts are currently going in 1,900 Metro Buses and 69 Metro Rail cars to improve interior cleanliness.

Development Set For Metro Rail

MTA has agreed to work with a developer to build a retail and residential complex at the Wilshire/Western Metro Rail station. Plans call for developing 50,800 square feet of retail and restaurant space, 200 apartment units and a 700-space parking garage at the site.

Try The New Dodgers Shuttle

Get to LA Dodgers Friday night home games aboard their new \$2 shuttle from Union Station’s Patsaouras Transit Plaza. Call the Dodgers ticket office at 323-244-1-HIT for more information. For Metro Rail and Metro Bus connections to Union Station, visit [mta.net](http://mta.net) or call 1-800-COMMUTE.

30,000 Get Metro Freeway Help

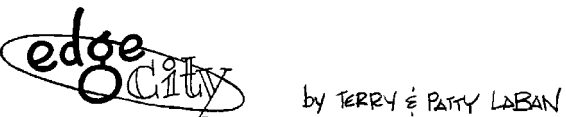
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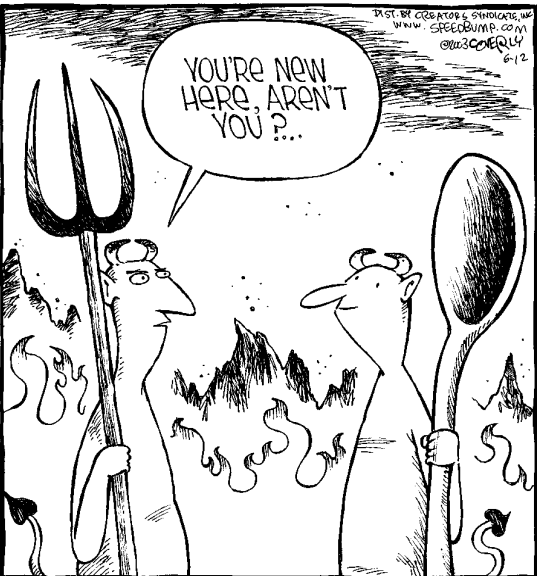
The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



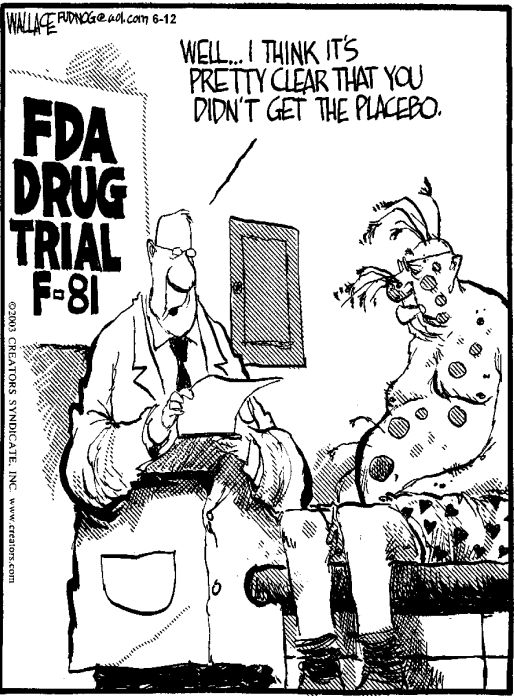
Reality Check® By Dave Whammond



Speed Bump® By Dave Coverly



Natural Selection® By Russ Wallace



CROSSWORD By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Gave a hoot  
6 Scenic painting  
11 Martini garnish  
12 Poison  
13 Shows nervousness  
14 Change  
15 Puzzle  
17 Snapshot  
19 Agent, for short  
20 Rebel grp.  
23 Peeved  
25 Mecca resident  
26 Maugham title  
28 Realized  
29 Bearlike marsupial  
30 "You betcha!"  
31 Hairy beast  
32 Music buys  
33 Noted cellist  
35 Deluge  
38 Debate fixtures  
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43 Exemplary  
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- 2 As done by  
3 Diet snacks  
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5 Wants  
6 Philatelist's find  
7 Deep sleep  
8 Lumberjack's prop  
9 Sewing aid  
10 Finish  
16 Heist follow-up  
17 Particular  
18 Silly  
20 Shore diner staple

DOWN

- 1 Flatfoot

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Yesterday's answer

- 21 Light lunch  
22 Helps, in a way  
24 Flock holder  
25 USN bigwig  
27 Hia-watha's grandmother  
31 Alpine sound  
33 Lotus position  
34 "Dracula" girl  
35 Cal. abbr.  
36 Top  
37 Fanciful poem  
39 Hosp. areas  
40 Pig's place

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6-12

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Jerry Springer ponders running for U.S. Senate

By The Associated Press

■ **COLUMBUS, Ohio** — Television talk show host Jerry Springer launched a Web site Wednesday to test voter support for a possible U.S. Senate campaign.

T-shirts, autographed photos and compact discs of Springer playing a guitar and singing country songs will be sold on the site, said Mike Ford, his political adviser.

The 59-year-old host of “The Jerry Springer Show” wants to reach people who don’t normally vote and who would be willing to make small contributions on his behalf, Ford said at a news conference at Ohio Democratic Party headquarters.

Response to the [www.runjerryrun.com](http://www.runjerryrun.com) Web site will help Springer decide whether to run.

“A lot of people are left out of the political system and they’re not supposed to be,” Ford said Tuesday. “We’re going to activate them.”

Springer has traveled the state for months to determine whether to run in the 2004 U.S. Senate race in Ohio. State Sen. Eric Fingerhut (D-Shaker Heights), who’s already announced his candidacy, criticized Springer’s Web site.

“It’s a cynical attempt to somehow manufacture support,” Fingerhut said.

The Democratic candidate will take on incumbent Republican U.S. Sen. George Voinovich, who isn’t expected to have serious competition.

Springer resigned from the Cincinnati City Council in 1974 after admitting in federal court that he wrote personal checks to pay prostitutes. He later was elected mayor and lost a bid for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1982.

He then worked as a TV news anchor and commentator before becoming a syndicated talk show host whose guests flaunt sexual secrets and anti-social behavior.

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Ray Harryhausen, the stop-motion animation master who created legions of movie monsters and aliens, now has earthly evidence of his achievements: a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The special-effects whiz, who turns 83 on June 29, told the crowd gathered Tuesday for the Hollywood Boulevard ceremony that he was inspired at 13 after watching a huge ape scale the Empire State Building on a screen across the street.

“It all started at Grauman’s Chinese Theatre when I was a kid and saw the movie ‘King Kong,’” he said. “Seventy years have gone by and I have a star near

where it all started.”

Harryhausen helped perfect the process of photographing poseable miniatures one frame at a time to make ocean beasts, two-headed birds, a white-winged Pegasus and flying saucers appear to move on screen.

Joining him at the ceremony were fantasy writer Ray Bradbury and horror-film aficionado Forrest J. Ackerman, founder of the “Famous Monsters of Filmland” magazine.

“We both had dreams about dinosaurs,” said Bradbury, 82. “I wrote about them and he made them for the movies.”

Harryhausen, now retired, worked on films including “Earth vs. the Flying Saucers,” “20 Million Miles to Earth” and “Jason and the Argonauts.” His last film was 1981’s “Clash of the Titans.”

Although the stop-motion process has been largely outdated by computer-generated imagery, many in the special-effects field were inspired by Harryhausen’s work. The computer-animated comedy “Monsters, Inc.” featured a tribute to him: Two creatures eat at a restaurant called “Harryhausen’s.”

■ **MESA, Ariz.** — Bidders on eBay have another month to buy the condominium where “Hogan’s Heroes” star

Bob Crane was murdered.

The actor threw wild parties at the Scottsdale condo before he was bludgeoned to death with a tripod on June 29, 1978.

Real estate agent Ardy Haines said the current owners, Ron and Pat Herbst, hope to cash in on the publicity surrounding the 25th anniversary of Crane’s death.

“Hogan’s Heroes’ is really popular in Japan, Australia and Germany. And we thought we were so close to that (the anniversary) that we would just extend it,” Haines told the East Valley Tribune.

The property, originally placed on eBay May 15, will be open for bids through July 5.

So far, the condo has received only one bid at the asking price of \$180,000, about \$70,000 more than the market value for similar units in the Winfield Place development.

The Herbsts, formerly of Wisconsin, bought the condo in 1986 for their daughter while she attended Arizona State University. They didn’t know about the condo’s history until a yellowed newspaper article about the killing was left on their doorstep.

Crane’s secret sex life and death at 49 were the subject of the 2002 film “Auto Focus,” starring Greg Kinnear.



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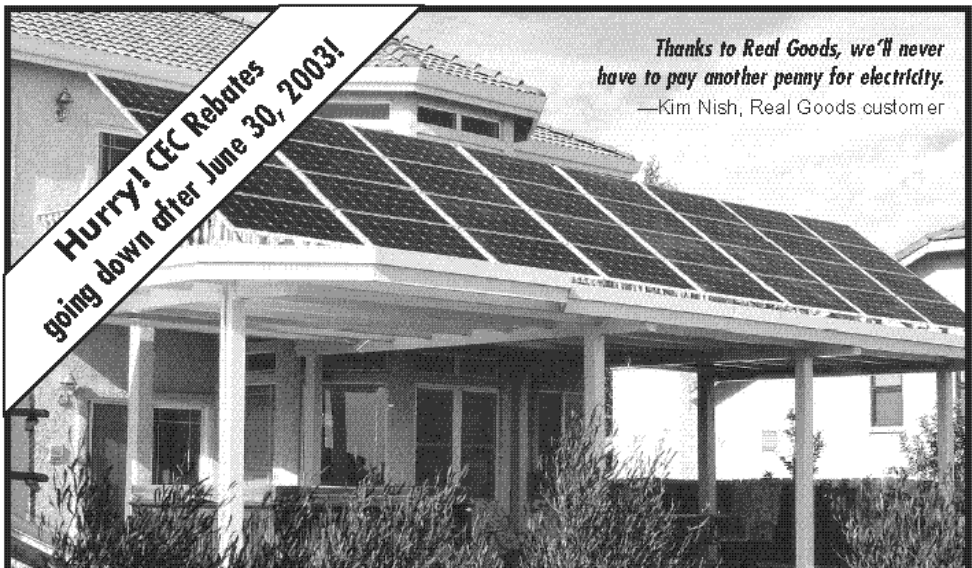



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