

FREE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2004

Volume 3, Issue 191

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

FANTASY 5

1 3 4 7 27 Draw #3880

DAILY 3

4 8 9 Midday Draw #5048
4 6 7 Evening Draw #5049

DAILY DERBY

Draw #2345

1st: 10 SOLID GOLD
2nd: 03 HOT SHOT
3rd: 12 LUCKY CHARMS

RACE TIMES: 1:41:48

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ An 18-year-old man survived (but was in critical condition) after losing at a variation of Russian roulette (six open cans of Mountain Dew, one spiked with antifreeze) at a party (Princeton, W.Va., May). A high school student survived (at one time in critical condition, bleeding from the mouth) after drinking an unidentified chemistry-lab substance in order to win a \$2 bet (Odessa, Texas, May). And Fidel Cueva, 41, survived with only scrapes and bruises after he bailed out of an emergency window of a Greyhound bus, at 55 mph, in the fast lane of California's 101 freeway at rush hour because the bus, an "express," had just bypassed his stop. (Ventura, Calif., May).

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Hard work never killed anybody, but why take a chance."

— CHARLIE MCCARTHY

LOCAL WEATHER

Low clouds followed by some sun; pleasant in the afternoon
High 71° F
Winds SW at 7 mph
Wind Gusts 16 mph
Maximum UV 7

Partly cloudy in the evening followed by low clouds late
Low 61° F
Winds N at 2 mph
Wind Gusts 15 mph
Maximum UV 0

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Lincoln M.S. is lacking in principal

BY JOHN F. MULLER

Special to the Daily Press

WILSHIRE-MONTANA — After two years at the helm, Hank Harris will step down as principal of Lincoln Middle School to take an administrative post at district headquarters, officials said Tuesday.

Despite some rumbling among teachers dissatisfied with Harris, officials said the move was voluntary.

"He was not reassigned," said John Deasy, superintendent of schools, adding he hadn't hired a replacement yet for next year. "Hank came to me and asked to fill a position. It was his decision. We talked about it for the last two or so weeks, and we came to a decision last ... Wednesday."

Deasy said that he hopes to find a new principal by August.

Harris, who replaced Illene Straus as principal in June 2002, will be in charge of overseeing various assessment tests throughout the district. He starts work at his new post in July.



HANK HARRIS

Sources in the Lincoln administration, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that the faculty had expressed some discontent with Harris. One commented that Harris had a difficult road to follow as Straus' replacement. Straus, a long-time Lincoln principal, is currently the principal of Santa Monica High School.

Harris initially refused to comment when he was contacted by phone, but later changed his mind and contacted the Daily Press.

"I had a great opportunity," Harris said. "It's an opportunity to impact change on a wider scale. Assessment is connected to instruction."

Harris said that outside pressure did not play any role in his decision, and that he did not notice any discontent among the faculty. Deasy explicitly denied the presence of any such pressure, saying that any suggestion was totally erroneous. He claims the move is a way to expand his skills.

A graduate of the Harvard University, Harris earned a Masters of Arts in Secondary Education at the University of Michigan, and was a Danforth Fellow at the Center for Education Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Washington. He served as the assistant principal at two middle schools in Oregon and as the executive director of the Global Learning Charter School in San Diego before coming to Lincoln.

Harry Keiley, president of the local teacher union, said Harris had a normal relationship with teachers.

"We hear our members are sometimes very pleased and sometimes not so pleased, and that's just the nature of the job," Keiley said. "There's nothing different about Mr. Harris. Nothing out of the ordinary."

Note worthy



Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II/Daily Press

Melvin Whittington plays the day away at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and the Third Street Promenade on Tuesday afternoon.

Leaving on a jet plane: Bosses take flight on city

City Hall staff spent \$224,000 on travel over the past year

(Editor's note: This is the second installment in a two-part series on City Hall's travel expenses. An article in Tuesday's paper focused on City Council spending.)

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Department bosses here spent nearly \$20,000 over the last year on airfare, rental cars, meals and other expenses to attend professional conferences throughout the United States, a recent report shows.

All but two of City Hall's 14 department heads took at least one trip, with several taking three or more. Most of the conferences pulled the managers away from their desks during the work week, but allowed them to learn new skills, network, and air Santa Monica's needs and con-

cerns to a national audience, officials said. Travel bills for department heads ranged from zero to nearly \$5,000.

Police Chief James T. Butts spent \$4,869, more than any other department head, according to the report. Butts attended a leadership symposium in San Francisco and conferences in San Diego, Santa Barbara and San Antonio, Texas. In addition to airfare and hotel, Butts was reimbursed for taxi rides and meals, including a \$90 room service tab from The Westin Hotel in San Antonio.

Butts said attending conferences is important because the "cross pollination of ideas prevents jurisdictions from continuing to reinvent the wheel separately." As to the room service bill, Butts said the \$90 was amassed over the course of the April 21-23 conference, adding he usually eats dinner in his hotel room.

Second on the list was Stephanie Negriff, head of the Big Blue Bus, who

See JETTING, page 6

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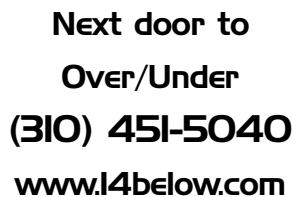
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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SMC wants U for Bond Committee

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica College is offering two positions on the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee in order to help oversee the implementation of Measure U, a \$160 million bond that will pay for a range of improvement projects at the college. One of the two positions will be as a representative of a taxpayer's organization, and the other position will represent the students of SMC.

Measure U, which was approved by 70 percent of Santa Monica-Malibu voters, includes projects such as constructing replacement buildings, seismic retrofitting and general safety and technology upgrades.

All applicants must be at least 18 years old, but may not be an official, employee, vendor, contractor or consultant at the college. The deadline for applications is May 28. A screening committee will recommend qualified candidates to the Board of Trustees who will make the final appointments.

Applications are available at:

<http://www.smc.edu/admin/trustees/CitizensBondOversightCommittee/default.htm> or by calling (310) 434-4402.

Art professor draws accolades and award

By Daily Press staff

The first Francis/Sosin Chair of Excellence in art award at Santa Monica College was given to professor Marian Winsryg, a 17-year veteran at the college known for her work with fine art and digital technology. Winsryg will receive \$15,000 over a period of three years to use for projects that will, in her opinion, enhance her teaching.

Officials said Winsryg plans to use the money for the latest training and to do research about the use and impact of digital technologies in fine art. SMC President Dr. Piedad Robertson said she was the ideal recipient for the award.

"Not only is she a gifted artist and distinguished teacher, she has been on the cutting-edge of the use of technology in fine art, developing and teaching new digital courses at SMC," commented Robertson. "She has become keenly aware that digital technologies are rapidly changing, and she plans to keep current through research and training at leading digital imaging workshops and programs."

The art chair of excellence was established through contributions of Sosin, a retired Santa Monica attorney, as a tribute to his friend Francis, a prominent abstract painter who spent much of his career and life in Santa Monica.



SURF REPORT

On Wednesday, look for a mix of holding SW swell to go along with steep NW wind swell. North LA spots will work the swell mix for inconsistent waist- to chest-high surf at the better exposed SW/combo breaks in the morning, along with some occasional shoulder-high sets at best breaks, especially on the tide push. South Bay spots pick up the mostly wind swell for 2-3' faces, while best combo breaks in the north half of the Bay see occasional chest-high+ sets. Look for light wind in the morning to build out of the SW to W in the 8-12 knot range for the afternoon

Today the water is:

67°

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	5:30	-0.5	4:05	2.7	12:21	3.4	10:27	5.7
SUNDAY	6:07	-0.4	4:43	2.8	1:06	3.4	11:02	5.5
MONDAY	6:45	-0.2	5:29	3.0	1:52	3.5	11:40	5.2
TUESDAY	7:23	0.0	6:32	3.0	N/A	N/A	2:39	3.6
WEDNESDAY	8:03	0.2	7:56	3.0	12:24	4.8	3:22	3.8
THURSDAY	8:45	0.5	9:32	2.7	1:20	4.3	4:01	4.1
FRIDAY	9:28	0.9	11:00	2.1	2:35	3.8	4:37	4.6

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The Q Line

A group of citizens in Santa Monica is launching a campaign in favor of converting a portion of Santa Monica's beach into a leash-free zone where dogs would be allowed to run and play under the supervision of their owners. The idea has sparked debate among city residents. Some argue that a dog beach would be an important addition to Santa Monica's community. Others worry that allowing dogs to run free on a portion of the beach would bring serious safety and

public health concerns with it.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Should a portion of Santa Monica's beach be designated an off-leash zone for dogs? 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 limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to first think about the wording of your response.

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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Profile was on the nose

Editor:

Oneida Rodriguez is a mother who models the values she expressed in your community profile (SMDP June 21). I have really enjoyed her spirit here at church. She is also supporting four children in Catholic education here at Saint Anne's Parish School and volunteers time in the lunch program as well on Sunday with our children's mass.

Your profile was on target and she models what our Church mission is in this neighborhood.

Fr. Michael D. Gutierrez
Pastor
St. Anne's Church and Shrine
Pico Neighborhood

Be afraid of the Dark

Editor:

Nancy Reagan has endorsed stem cell research. Unfortunately, President Bush listens to the religious nuts. These so-called 'Christians' believe a few cells must not be killed, even if it could lead to cures for millions of people. These people want to take us back to the Dark Ages. Research should go on. If the religious fundamentalists are against it, let them refuse to be cured if they get sick. It is time they stop imposing their will on everyone else.

Mike Kirwan
Venice

Main Street one of plenty

Editor:

I'd just like to thank and acknowledge the Main Street Merchants Association and all of the people involved in putting on a wonderful day of music, events, and community fun in Ocean Park on June 20. What a very special and wonderful experience to stroll up and down Main Street, greeting familiar faces and getting to know new faces amidst the colorful wares, sidewalk bargain tables, and multiple music stages providing entertainment for the afternoon. A special round of applause and thanks to all of the merchants who made generous prize donations for the scavenger hunt, which was truly loads of fun.

Since I live in the neighborhood, I consider myself to be familiar with most of the shops on Main, but I realized that there were new shops I'd never been in and got to meet and chat with the owners and sales people of both new and old establishments. I love the mix of people in our neighborhood, as well as the mix of restaurants, nightclubs, retail stores and businesses that continue to come and go. It definitely established the sensibility of diverse, community involvement that defines the Santa Monica many of us are used to.

Thank you again to all involved in the event. Hopefully, it will happen more than once a year.

Judy Avery
Santa Monica

How long can we be ignored?

Editor:

Every week when the Q-line answers are printed, there are usually some responses regarding bums. No matter what the question is about, a lot of them, especially budget considerations, come back to bums. The people are fed up with the bums, but the City Council is clueless. Perhaps a question about the Lakers may be free of responses about bums ... Perhaps not.

Mike Kirwan
Santa Monica

Burning Bush: A prez gone wild



INCITES

BY ED SILVERSTEIN

Culling through my clipping file, I became aware of a disturbing pattern. The following is the gist, along with some commentary, of L.A. Times articles and editorials that I clipped over the course of the past month, minus two weeks of travel. Even within this short time span, when viewed together, these articles offer a stark commentary on an administration that has spun wildly out of control.

5/20/04 — The Bush administration produced and distributed to local television stations a mock news report promoting Bush's Medicare Prescription drug program. The report was aired as actual news without disclaimers and violated a federal law that prohibits the use of taxes for covert propaganda.

6/2/04 — Bush signed an order bringing the number of executive branch offices to ten that are devoted solely to helping religious organizations tap into federal money. Rev. Barry Lynn, executive Director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, charges that the administration's initiative was designed to curry favor with evangelicals and other core Bush supporters, and accused Bush of state-sponsored discrimination, as these groups base hiring on religious belief.

6/2/04 — Ahmad Chalabi, a Bush-backed former member of the Iraqi Governing Council and favorite of neo-conservatives, is accused of providing top-secret information to Iranian spies. Subsequent articles revealed that Chalabi told Iranian spies that the U.S. had broken their codes, that he got this top-secret information from a drunk administration official and that the questionable Iraqi intelligence provided by Chalabi and used by the Bush Administration to promote war with Iraq, may have been part of an Iranian plot to manipulate the U.S. into getting rid of Iran's number-one enemy — Saddam Hussein.

6/3/04 — Seniors are confused and disappointed by the Medicare drug plan and few have signed up for the myriad of discount drug cards offered by insurers. The Democrats claim the plan is a total disaster and even some Republicans have begun to push for importing cheap drugs from Canada, a policy that Bush strongly opposes.

6/3/04 — The Bush reelection campaign may have broken federal laws and endangered tax-exempt status of churches by sending out letters

urging these religious non-profits to use their facilities and congregations to recruit voters for Bush.

6/14/04 — A pair of car bombs in Baghdad kill at least 20.

6/14/04 — After House Republicans refused to launch an official investigation into the torture, sexual humiliation and murder of prisoners in Abu Gharaib, Democrats launched their own investigation. President Bush, however, is not cooperating and has refused to provide requested documents.

6/14/04 — Secretary of State Colin Powell claimed that politics were not behind the State Department's erroneous report that claimed that worldwide terrorist attacks had gone down significantly in 2003, when, in fact, they had increased to record levels. The report, which was offered as proof that Bush's terrorism policy was working, had numerous mistakes and omissions as well as a suspicious cutoff date that left out several November 11 terrorist attacks in Turkey that left 62 people dead.

6/14/04 — It was revealed that the multi-billion dollar, no-bid contract awarded to the vice president's former employer, Halliburton, was awarded by a Bush political appointee rather than the normal Defense Department procurement agents. Representative Henry Waxman issued a letter to Dick Cheney demanding full disclosure. Cheney has not responded.

6/15/04 — The USDA has declared that frozen French fries are a "fresh" vegetable, inviting comparisons between Bush and former President Reagan, who during his tenure, declared ketchup to be a vegetable.

6/15/04 — Government auditors and ex-workers claim that Halliburton intentionally wasted billions of dollars and equipment in Iraq. According to auditors and whistleblowers, among Halliburton's many transgressions were paying third-party suppliers without determining if they had done the work and removing spare tires from brand new \$84,000 vehicles, then torching those vehicles if they got a flat tire so that they could charge the government for additional vehicles. Rep. Thomas Davis, the Republican Chairman of the Reform Committee, blocked an investigation into the matter prompting Democratic Rep. Waxman to release the results of the audit.

6/15/04 — Bush refused to join a case that would have required that Bell Companies continue to lease local phone lines at lower costs to rivals. This decision is expected to cost consumers \$16 billion.

6/15/04 — Justice officials want

to use the Patriot Act to charge Steven Kurtz, a Buffalo art professor, with bio-terrorism even after they learned that the Petri dishes and lab equipment discovered in his home when he called 911 to report the death of his wife were part of an art exhibit that had been touring for two years and posed no danger.

6/16/04 — Cheney has, for months, repeatedly denied knowing about the controversial \$7 billion, no-bid, Halliburton contract and even stated, during a September appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press," that he hadn't been informed about the contract and that no political appointees were involved in the awarding of the contract. However, the Pentagon has disclosed that Cheney's office was briefed twice prior to awarding of the contract by the political appointees who awarded the contract.

6/17/04 — Administration officials acknowledged that Donald Rumsfeld and George Tenet broke two international laws when they ordered the secret detention of a suspected terrorist captured in Iraq.

6/17/04 — Bomb hits NATO convoy in Afghanistan, killing 4.

6/17/04 — Suicide bombing kills 18 at Iraqi army center.

6/17/04 — White House asks FCC to delay dramatic telephone price increases, resulting from Bush Administration policies, for one year, which, coincidentally, is after the election.

6/17/04 — Twenty-seven former diplomats and military officials, most of whom had served under both Democratic and Republican administrations, called for the defeat of President Bush, citing his disastrous foreign policy.

6/17/04 — On Monday (June 14), Vice President Cheney declared that Saddam Hussein "had long lasting ties with Al Qaeda." Tuesday, President Bush suggested that Abu Musab Zarqawi provides the best evidence of a connection between Al Qaeda and Iraq.

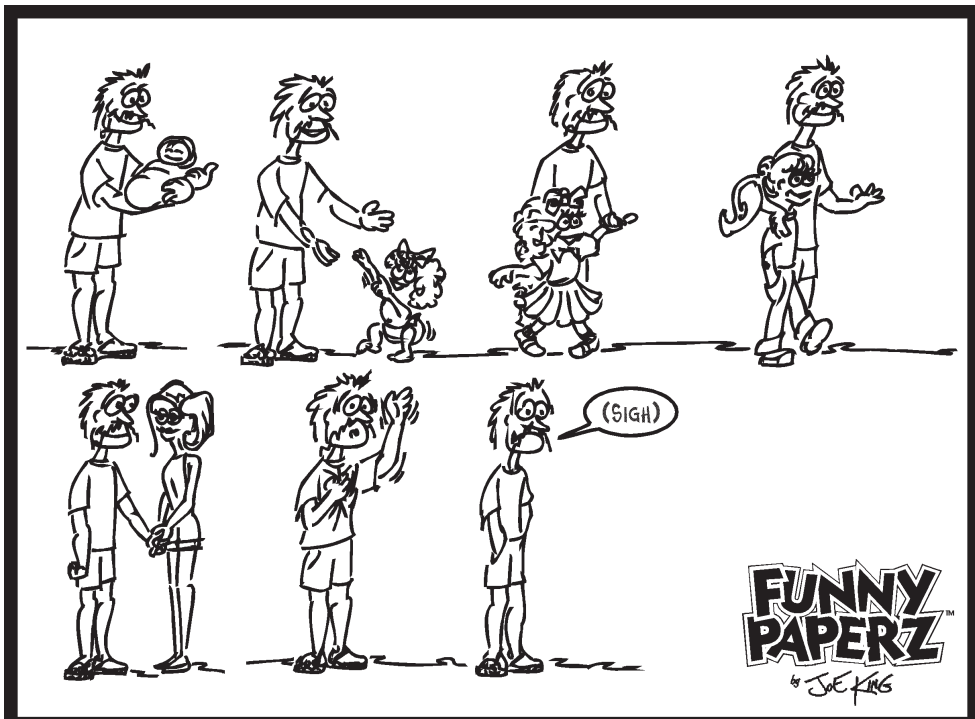
6/17/04 — The 9/11 Commission announces that there is no credible evidence of cooperation between Iraq and Al Qaeda.

ASIDE: The same Republicans who foamed at the mouth over the perceived use of Paul Wellstone's funeral for political gain by Democrats have remained strangely silent over the use of the week-long Reagan funeral festivities to promote George Bush.

(Ed Silverstein is a freelance writer living in Santa Monica. He can be contacted at incites@incites.net)

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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Facts can go by wayside in this age of Reality TV



POLITIGIRL

BY BETH SOLOMON

WASHINGTON — All the cameras were rolling on the beaches of Normandy three weeks ago, the world focusing on the anniversary of D-Day. Network anchors arrived solemnly. Scores of world leaders lined up to pay their respects. Following the inauguration of the World War II Memorial in Washington, even America quieted down to celebrate the Good War — World War II — the veterans, and to a lesser extent, the homegrown national effort that signaled the end of Nazi tyranny.

And then, poof. It evaporated faster than you can say, "Great Communicator." When the 40th president expired that weekend, a week of wall-to-wall tributes, 24/7 news coverage, appreciations, portraits and paeans began. Suddenly, Reagan, not WWII, was the most important event of the 20th Century.

Reagan was one of the greatest presidents of all time, the networks intoned. He restored America's optimism, cut taxes, crushed communism and ended the Cold War. The country fondly recalled Morning in America, "there you go again" and the ever affable president who never met an enemy he didn't like. Reagan loved his wife. He even loved the squirrels on the White House lawn. Like the Good War, Reagan symbolized — the back-to-back coverage explained — all that is good about America.

When the satellite dishes get going, watch out for the truth.

It's convenient not to remember that the Russians lost 30 million people vanquishing Hitler, beating him down so much by D-Day that his army was in trouble.

And it's more comfortable to remember Reagan's smiles than the souplines he created, the homelessness, the 13,000 air traffic controllers whose lives he damaged, the back-breaking deficits, the fear he caused in Europe by forcing new missiles into what he called the "European theater" of nuclear war.

One of Reagan's admirers and partners, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, came to Washington to pay respects to Nancy Reagan and to the man with whom he changed the course of histo-

ry. He praised Reagan as "an extraordinary leader," but he filled in some of the detail that the satellite transmissions missed.

Gorbachev was asked if Reagan won the Cold War. "That's not serious," he said. "I think we all lost the Cold War, particularly the Soviet Union. We each lost \$10 trillion."

That's a lot of bowls of chicken soup.

What ended the Cold War, Gorbachev said, was Reagan's shift in strategy in his second term. "When (Reagan) was elected to a second term, he, and especially the people close to him, began to think about how he would complete his second term — by producing more and more nuclear weapons and conducting 'special operations' around the world?"

No, Reagan knew that the bigger way to go down in history was as a peacemaker. When Reagan decided to seek peace with Moscow, he found a willing partner in Gorbachev. "The new Soviet leadership wanted to transform the country, to modernize the country, and we needed stability, we needed cooperation with other countries," he said. "And we both knew what kind of weapons we each had. There were mountains of nuclear weapons. A war could start not because of a political decision, but just because of some technical failure."

Reagan and Gorbachev first met to discuss peace in Geneva in 1985 — the first Soviet-American summit in seven years. It did not begin well. But the two met again at Reykjavik in 1986, in Washington in 1987 and in Moscow in 1988.

Meeting, talking, people deciding jointly to make peace. It didn't happen in front of TV cameras, it doesn't lend itself to a tribute at Normandy or cannons firing, or fireworks exploding.

In this age of television, history is instant — and often fictional. Facts give way to fantasy. Information can't compete with impressionism. It's almost as though if you're watching it on TV, if you hear it on TV, what you're seeing — crunched by signal converters and beamed by satellite dishes — is the opposite of reality.

What's the next big event in America? Clinton's book tour? Paris Hilton? American Idol XIV?

It seems like Reality TV is the least real thing you can see.

(Beth Solomon is a Left Coast writer reachable at bethsolomon@earthlink.net)

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LOCAL

City Attorney foregoes reimbursement for travel

JETTING, page 1

spent \$3,649 to attend four transportation-themed conferences in California and one in Salt Lake City. Negriff said her participation in the conferences has helped bring in more than \$1 million in federal discretionary funds for transit and kept Santa Monica at the forefront of a push for stronger legislation to protect bus drivers and passengers.

"I don't attend a lot of the individual meetings, so it's important for me to make the annual meeting (of the American Public Transportation Association) when I can," said Negriff, who also attended a retreat at the Sheraton in San Diego as a new member of the executive committee of the California Transit Association.

Jeff Mathieu, director of City Hall's resource management, went to three conferences in the past 12 months, spending a total of \$2,905, the third-highest amount by any department head. Mathieu went to

housing and redevelopment conferences in Tampa and Dallas, and attended a seminar for airport executives in San Francisco. Mathieu rented a car for each of the conferences, for a total bill of \$500.

After Mathieu, expenses dropped to \$1,816 for Gordon Anderson, assistant to the city attorney, who attended two conferences, and \$1,324 for City Clerk Maria Stewart, who went to an annual clerk's conference in Monterey.

Steve Stark, the city's finance director, spent \$1,193 to attend a League of California Cities conference in Sacramento. Stark said there's a balance to be found between attending too many conferences and attending too few. Saving City Hall money is important, but so is staying sharp professionally, he added.

"I believe attending professional trainings and conferences keeps a department head current with the latest trends and technologies — the skills required to best

perform their duties and to interact with other professionals," Stark said. "You pick up new and creative ideas that may apply to your city."

Below Stark was Suzanne Frick, who directs the planning department. Frick spent \$1,057 to attend an urban land-use conference in San Francisco.

The seven other department heads spent less than \$1,000 on travel over the past 12 months, according to the report, with City Attorney Marsha Moutrie and City Librarian Wini Allard not seeking any reimbursement at all. Moutrie, who attends three or more conferences each year, said for the 10 years she has been the city's top prosecutor she has avoided charging City Hall for travel, in part because she has a high-profile position and wants to avoid appearing partisan or influenced in any way.

"Usually I pay for things myself," said Moutrie, who also voluntarily gave up two week's salary to help the city through struggling economic times. "We're obligated (as attorneys) to keep training, and I do — I just pay for it myself."

Officials prepared the report on travel costs at the request of the Daily Press. Also requested last month was a detailed breakdown of overtime pay at City Hall, and Moutrie said Tuesday her department was processing that request.

The money spent by department heads is just a fraction of the \$224,000 City Hall has paid to reimburse staffers for travel over the past year. More than \$318,000 was set aside this year and \$296,000 for next year, Stark said.

"Remember, that's \$296,000 on a \$391 million budget — so that's a very small percentage going to travel and training," he added. "It's a small number from a budget perspective."

On sabbatical

City Hall bosses spent \$19,849 to travel to various conferences over the past 12 months. Here is how that spending broke down:

James T. Butts Jr., Police Chief
\$4,869

Stephanie Negriff, Head of Big Blue Bus
\$3,649

Jeff Mathieu, Resource Management
\$2,905

Gordon Anderson, Assistant City Manager
\$1,816

Maria Stewart, City Clerk
\$1,324

Steve Stark, Finance Director
\$1,193

Suzanne Frick, Planning Director
\$1,057

Susan McCarthy, City Manager
\$965

Jim Hone, Fire Chief
\$808

Barbara Stinchfield, Community and Cultural Services
\$665

Karen Bancroft, Human Resources
\$576

Craig Perkins, Environmental and Public Works
\$21

Wini Allard, Librarian
None reported

Marsha Moutrie, City Attorney
None reported

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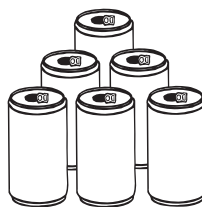
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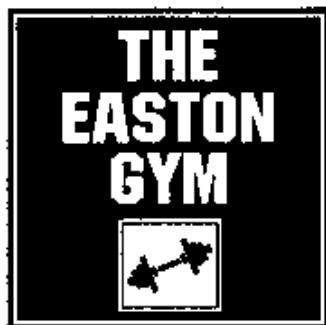
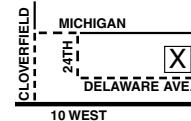
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STATE



They paved paradise: Developers eye fields, orchards for housing

BY JULIANA BARBASSA

Associated Press Writer

FRESNO — The population explosion in California's cities is sending ripples deep into farm country, with developers eyeing orchards and rolling fields within commuting distance as potential housing sites, or as a safe investment that counts on the population's steady growth.

Between 1990 and 2002, 166,364 acres of farmland in the Central Valley were paved over to accommodate the state's swelling population, according to preliminary results from the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring program.

During those same 12 years, a total of 3.2 million acres statewide were taken out of farming — 700,000 of them in the last three years — according to the state Department of Agriculture.

All that adds up to a lot of farmland lost — to speculation, to environmental concerns, but also to development. This is happening even as some farmers are finding they can't make ends meet in an industry where the production costs are determined locally, but the prices of their product are often determined globally.

The Central Valley leads the nation in farm production. The combination of fertile soil, water from the Sierra Nevada and steady sunshine have made agriculture the motor that drives the local economy.

Fresno County, in the heart of the Central Valley, is the most productive farm county in the nation. Its 1.88 million acres of fertile farmland grow more than 250 different crops and contribute more than \$3.5 billion a year to the state's economy. Other valley counties are close behind.

But the Central Valley also is the fastest growing region in the state. Demographers predict its population will double within a lifetime, growing from the present 5.5 million to 12 million or more by 2040. By then, the state's population will have grown from 36.1 million to an estimated 51.5 million.

Cultivated land near urban areas often has better infrastructure than land farther away, and that facilitates the march of the suburbs into farmland, said Allan Barros, a rural land appraiser and member of the California Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers.

The organization tracks trends in the agricultural land market, and publishes a yearly report showing land price fluctuations. Its 2004 study said in the Central San Joaquin Valley, demand for parcels with less than 40 acres was "strong."

"You've got good quality land, with good

water supply, good infrastructure," Barros said of farmland south and west of Fresno. "It's prime land, and it's going under."

The shift glimpsed in these numbers has the potential to slowly transform a traditionally agricultural area. The situation is far from a crisis, but experts, community leaders and farmers agree the acceleration of development is worrisome.

The Central Valley, flanked by the mountains and squeezed in by the San Francisco Bay area, Sacramento, and Los Angeles is the single most threatened agricultural resource in the nation, according to a survey by the American Farmland Trust.

About 86 percent of California fruits and vegetables are grown within commuting distance of urban areas, said Ed Thompson, of the California branch of the national organization.

"The Valley is a world-class resource, and it's being developed quickly," Thompson said. "The whole country depends on California agriculture, but we're not planning for agriculture in this state. We're planning for growth, and ag land is seen as more open space to put down malls."

The rate of development varies widely according to location, and it also follows factors that have traditionally determined the value of rural land: how productive it is, and how valuable that product is.

Shawn Stevenson slowly watched his pistachio and citrus farm in the northeast of Clovis shrink from about 1,500 acres to 1,250 acres.

He just pushed another 40 acres of citrus out of production, he said, not because he wanted to make way for houses, but because the plot just "hadn't made any money. The prices are low, and the cost of doing business is high."

With the growing interest in rural residential plots in the area, Stevenson said, "sometimes selling is the only economic alternative that makes sense."

Some farmers are riding out the trend. Large operations can survive price swings in particular commodities, buy land farther from urban areas, and compete with other investors.

This has helped push the average size of farms up in the state. USDA numbers show the average farm size in California grew by 27 acres between 2000 and 2003.

Jim Maxwell runs a 6,000-acre operation, growing pistachios, almonds, grapes, kiwis and other permanent crops in Fresno and Madera counties. He has been buying land to expand his business, but has seen many other farmers sell when encroaching development has raised the price of land beyond the value of what it can produce.

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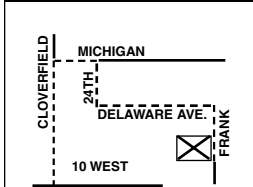


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Real Estate

Market ability: Jodi gets jiggy with your questions



DAYS ON THE MARKET

BY JODI SUMMERS

O.M.S.: We want to move. There is a senior care facility next door to our home, and one woman shrieks and wails in the middle of the night. It spooks our kids. I've notified the police and local mental health workers, but they say they cannot do anything unless this woman is a threat. If we decide to sell our home, do we need to inform new buyers about this nuisance? What could happen to us if we don't reveal this information?

Jodi Summers: If you do not disclose your howling neighbor problem to prospective home buyers, you may lose the sale. There is a court decision on this issue — Shapiro v. Southerland, (1998) 60 Cal.App.4th 666. In this appellate court decision, the seller was ordered to rescind the sale and return the buyer's money. That situation involved a home seller who

failed to disclose that his neighbors caused frequent disturbances. For better advice, consult a real estate attorney.

N.J.: What's a good way to get more birds and butterflies around your garden?

Jodi Summers: For birds, the word is to create a fountain or birdbath. Using a drip tube or pump keeps the water fresh and replenished. The experts at onthe-house.com suggest offering a nearby feeding mix of seeds like millet and sunflowers, and bright, colorful blooms.

For hummingbirds — 1/3 cup of sugar to 1 cup of tap water (because of the minerals in the water) is said to be the optimum mixture. Red or orange flowers are the biggest attraction, and the trumpet shape is appealing.

To attract butterflies, leave out a slice of melon near a clay pot saucer with moist stones.

R.W.: We want to buy a home in Venice. We're finding that some of the properties have unpermitted improvements. This includes privacy fences, patios, decks and converted garages. What

can we do to ensure that we won't have to tear down these additions in the future?

Jodi Summers: The frantic state of the Venice real estate market aside, the sage and the wise suggest consulting an experienced general contractor. Work with someone who knows how the city works. Have them inspect the improvements and give their opinion the best way to rectify the situation.

Another option is to go over and pay a visit to the Los Angeles Department of Building & Safety at 1828 Sawtelle Blvd. (310-575-8200). Explain your circumstances and ask what would be required to legalize the situation. It may involve obtaining retroactive permits and paying penalty fees.

Keep in mind, if you're going to remodel this property, you can take care of many of the issues in your remodel.

W.G.: My mom put me on title to her home as a joint tenant with right of survivorship. She owns her home free and clear, and doesn't earn enough income to file tax returns. I can use the tax deductions. Can I deduct her property taxes?

Jodi Summers: You'd want to prove that you paid the property tax bill. Proof can be a canceled check, or any other physical evidence. For more details, consult your accountant.

S.K.: What does 'homesteading' mean?

Jodi Summers: The owner of real property used as a principal residence may protect their home against unsecured judgment creditors by filing a declaration of Homestead at the County Record's Office. The homestead must be recorded to be valid.

In the state of California, the homestead exemption is \$50,000 for a single person. It grows to \$75,000 for married individuals and for one who is principle in the family unit. A \$125,000 exemption is allowed for any individual who is more than 65 years old, or if they are physically or mentally incapacitated.

(Have a real estate question? E-mail Jodi Summers at jodis@boardwalkrealty.com or call (310) 309-4219.)

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Sold 710 24TH ST SANTA MONICA 90402 Date Sold SqFt: 5,940 List Price: \$2,995,000 Bed: 6 06/10/2004 Lot Size: 8,700 Sold Price: \$2,861,000 Bath: 5	Sold 833 17TH ST #5 SANTA MONICA 90403 Date Sold SqFt: N/A List Price: \$1,349,000 Bed: 3 06/10/2004 HOD: \$375 Sold Price: \$1,322,000 Bath: 2.50	Sold 937 12TH ST #208 SANTA MONICA 90403 Date Sold SqFt: 805 List Price: \$389,900 Bed: 1 06/08/2004 HOD: \$325 Sold Price: \$440,000 Bath: 1
Sold 2511 BEVERLY AVE SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: N/A List Price: \$2,250,000 Bed: 5 06/10/2004 Lot Size: 16,000 Sold Price: \$2,100,000 Bath: 5	Sold 401 CALIFORNIA AVE #2 SANTA MONICA 90403 Date Sold SqFt: 2,022 List Price: \$1,275,000 Bed: 3 06/07/2004 HOD: \$535 Sold Price: \$1,325,000 Bath: 2.75	Sold 1255 10TH ST #203 SANTA MONICA 90401 Date Sold SqFt: 972 List Price: \$395,000 Bed: 1 06/08/2004 HOD: \$262 Sold Price: \$420,000 Bath: 1
Sold 1035 CENTINELA AVE SANTA MONICA 90403 Date Sold SqFt: 2,470 List Price: \$1,495,000 Bed: 3 06/10/2004 Lot Size: 7,500 Sold Price: \$1,505,000 Bath: 2.75	Sold 150 OCEAN PARK BL #327 SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: N/A List Price: \$1,175,000 Bed: 2 06/07/2004 HOD: \$615 Sold Price: \$1,150,000 Bath: 2	Sold 2621 CENTINELA AVE #10 SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: 634 List Price: \$289,000 Bed: 1 06/09/2004 HOD: \$206 Sold Price: \$314,500 Bath: 1
Sold 3035 PAULA DR SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: 1,443 List Price: \$825,000 Bed: 3 06/07/2004 Lot Size: 5,300 Sold Price: \$880,000 Bath: 1.75	Sold 852 21ST ST #B SANTA MONICA 90403 Date Sold SqFt: 1,116 List Price: \$545,000 Bed: 2 06/10/2004 HOD: \$224 Sold Price: \$602,000 Bath: 1.75	Sold 723 PALISADES BEACH RD #108 SANTA MONICA 90402 Date Sold SqFt: 1,404 List Price: \$699,000 Bed: 2 06/10/2004 HOD: \$450 Sold Price: \$817,000 Bath: 2
Sold 621 26TH ST SANTA MONICA 90402 Date Sold SqFt: N/A List Price: \$1,695,000 Bed: 3 06/09/2004 Lot Size: 9,900 Sold Price: \$1,695,000 Bath: 3	Sold 2307 32ND ST #1 SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: 1,628 List Price: \$696,000 Bed: 2 06/09/2004 HOD: \$0 Sold Price: \$700,000 Bath: 3	Sold 2445 28TH ST #E SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: 1,901 List Price: \$675,000 Bed: 2 06/08/2004 HOD: \$300 Sold Price: \$670,000 Bath: 2.5
Sold 1100 OCEAN PARK BL SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: 1,362 List Price: \$729,000 Bed: 3 06/10/2004 Lot Size: 5,000 Sold Price: \$729,000 Bath: 1.5	Sold 1811 OAK ST #A SANTA MONICA 90405 Date Sold SqFt: 1,345 List Price: \$699,000 Bed: 2 06/08/2004 HOD: \$150 Sold Price: \$730,000 Bath: 2.5	Sold 2718 ARIZONA AVE #2 SANTA MONICA 90404 Date Sold SqFt: 1,295 List Price: \$569,000 Bed: 2 06/07/2004 HOD: \$200 Sold Price: \$565,000 Bath: 3
Sold 1433 24TH ST SANTA MONICA 90404 Date Sold SqFt: 1,108 List Price: \$750,000 Bed: 3 06/10/2004 Lot Size: 5,532 Sold Price: \$765,000 Bath: 1.75	Sold 937 5TH ST #7 SANTA MONICA 90403 Date Sold SqFt: 1,079 List Price: \$589,000 Bed: 3 06/07/2004 HOD: \$225 Sold Price: \$664,000 Bath: 1.75	Sold 515 OCEAN AVE #307S SANTA MONICA 90402 Date Sold SqFt: 1,900 List Price: \$1,350,000 Bed: 2 06/10/2004 HOD: \$934 Sold Price: \$1,200,000 Bath: 2.5

JODI SUMMERS AT BOARDWALK REALTY: 310.309.4219 jodis@boardwalkrealty.com.
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REAL ESTATE



Fools rush in: Businesses should take time moving



IN YOUR SPACE

BY CHRISTINA S. PORTER

The amount of time required to relocate your business is usually much more than anticipated. Some very smart people in my office came up with the six-month timeline below. It provides a realistic step-by-step description of the process.

1. Evaluate your needs: Identify and analyze your company's needs and special facility requirements (1-3 weeks).

2. Determine allocation priorities: Analyze your geographic need by identifying your customer base, employee preferences, support services and the potential impact of the relocation (1-3 weeks).

3. Evaluate prospective sites: Research the entire spectrum of prospective sites, incorporating the parameters obtained through the needs analysis process (1-3 weeks).

4. Tour selected sites: Tour proposed sites identified in step 3. Rank the sites in order of your preference (1 week).

5. Proposal process: Send an outline to the prospective landlords that includes all items of importance specific to your tenancy (1-2 weeks).

6. Planning your space: Interface with space planners to work out details and

layout of your internal space requirements. Determine what type of tenant improvements will be required (2-4 weeks).

7. Economic and amenity analysis: Prepare economic and amenity analyses for each site (2-3 weeks).

8. Negotiations: Negotiate the lease, coordinate and expedite the creation and execution of the final lease documents (4-8 weeks).

9. Construction of improvements: Build tenant improvements to your specification (8-13 weeks).

10. Move in: Make sure that all of the landlord's obligations have been completely fulfilled to your satisfaction (1 week).

Moving your business is not a simple process. In addition to anticipating your needs for the new space, your exit strategy for the space you are vacating is critical. At the beginning of the relocation process, have your commercial real estate broker check your lease for any special obligations you may have upon vacating the property. Among other things, your lease may require you to remove the tenant improvements that were done when you moved in — this could be expensive and time consuming.

Some leases can charge you for "holding over" (or, continuing to occupy the space after your lease has terminated). Holding over charges are generally somewhere between 150 - 200 percent of the

rent you are paying at the time. As you can see, holding over could get expensive.

The timing of when you vacate your office and when your new space is ready is something that should be planned carefully. Try to have some flex time with your existing landlord, just in case there is a delay in the completion of the tenant improvements in the new space (it happens all the time).

When relocating, the proper allocation of time can save you thousands of dollars. On the flip side, the improper allocation of time can cost you thousands of dollars.

The most efficient way to save time is delegating as many tasks as possible. Save some time and money by delegating the responsibility for the tasks above to a competent commercial real estate broker. It'll make a potentially difficult transition go smoothly.

(Christina S. Porter specializes in the business of leasing and selling office and industrial buildings Santa Monica and beyond. You can contact her by calling 310-806-6104 or e-mail at cporter@naicapital.com.)

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How the West was won: Kerry woos Hispanics

BY STEVEN K. PAULSON
Associated Press Writer

DENVER — Union member Tony Marquez is supporting John Kerry this election year. President Bush, he says, has left middle-class workers and Hispanics with lower-paying jobs and difficulty finding health care.

“The only jobs available today to Hispanics are flipping burgers,” he said.

Job losses and a growing Hispanic population have put Western states back in play in the presidential race, Kerry said Monday.

During his first campaign visit to Colorado, the Democratic candidate said a number of states, including Nevada and Arizona, are now competitive because voters are upset over a lack of jobs, health care, education and immigration policies.

“I think there are an enormous number of Western issues, beginning with jobs,” Kerry told The Associated Press. “Health care is an enormous issue out here. Education is a huge issue. The environment has some serious concerns.

“Folks moved out here, live out here and love it out here because of the quality of life. It’s important to hold on to it.”

Kerry raised \$500,000 during a fundraiser in Aspen and \$1.4 million more in Denver on Monday night, Colorado campaign spokesman Steve Haro said.

Kerry said that although Bush hails from the border state of Texas, his campaign is attracting Hispanic voters, who are upset with Bush.

“They should be very upset because he has broken every promise he made to the Hispanic community. He promised No Child Left Behind education funding, he didn’t deliver on it. He said he would deal with immigration reform, and he never has, never even tried. The Hispanic community tends to be entry level, not all, but a majority. They are struggling with health care issues and education issues and I think the president has walked away from those,” Kerry said.

Lisa Duran, spokeswoman for Rights for American People, a Hispanic lobbying group, said Bush administration policies have resulted in hundreds of legal immigrants being kicked out of Medicaid programs in Colorado.

Political consultant Rick Ridder said Kerry, who was born in Colorado and has a home in Idaho, understands Western issues. He said many voters are worried

that the Bush administration will continue to pursue policies that endanger the environment, such as expansion of oil drilling.

“There are some who fear that hunting and fishing areas won’t be around much longer,” Ridder said.

But Danny Diaz, spokesman for the Bush campaign, said Kerry is out of touch with Colorado values, supporting partial-birth abortion, and opposing healthy forests legislation that allowed the thinning of forests to prevent wildfires.

Kerry said he supports limited thinning of forests but that Bush went too far.

“There are some other areas where I think the administration has more logging policy than fire policy involved, and I’m concerned about that. I think there is a balance,” he said.

Kerry said the Endangered Species Act has been misused but still has a role in environmental policy.

“There have been some exaggerations. There have been some situations where I think you could be thoughtful in your approach so you’re not necessarily so confrontational, but I do think species preservation has been very important,” he said.

Kerry said if the nation developed bio-

fuels, it would not have to rely on oil from the Middle East, where terrorism and attacks on coalition forces have become a way of life.

“We need to face the reality that no young American in uniform should ever be held hostage to America’s dependence on oil from the Middle East,” Kerry told a cheering crowd at the Denver fund raiser.

Diaz, the Bush campaign spokesman, said Kerry flip-flopped on the No Child Left Behind Act, previously praising it as groundbreaking legislation that enhances the nation’s commitment to schools.

He also said Bush has a better record on the economy.

“John Kerry’s pessimism and misery tour ignores the reality that the president’s pro-growth policies have helped create 1.4 million jobs over the past nine months,” Diaz said.

Kerry’s campaign swing comes as the Western Governors Association holds its annual meeting this week in Santa Fe., N.M. Governors from several Western states hope to establish a regional primary in 2008 to give the fast growing region more political muscle in the presidential race.



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INTERNATIONAL



Militants behead hostage shortly after negotiations

BY TODD PITMAN

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — An Iraqi militant group has beheaded its South Korean hostage, Al-Jazeera television reported Tuesday, just hours after a go-between said the execution had been delayed and there were negotiations for the man's release.

The South Korean foreign ministry issued a statement confirming that Kim Sun-il had been killed but did not say he was beheaded.

Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, coalition deputy operations chief, said the body of an Asian male was found west of Baghdad on Tuesday evening.

"It appears that the body had been thrown from a vehicle," Kimmitt said in a statement. "The man had been beheaded, and the head was recovered with the body."

Kim's body was found by the U.S. military between Baghdad and Fallujah, 22 miles west of the capital, at 5:20 p.m. Iraq time, said South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman Shin Bong-kil.

After news of Kim's death broke, South Korean television showed Kim's distraught family members weeping and rocking back and forth with grief at their home in the southeastern port city of Busan.

"I don't want to die, I don't want to die," Kim pleaded in a first video released by his captors Sunday as he begged his government to end its involvement in Iraq.

The South Korean embassy in Baghdad confirmed that the body was Kim's by studying a picture of the remains it received by e-mail, Shin said.

"It breaks our heart that we have to announce this unfortunate news," Shin said.

Kim, 33, worked for Gana General Trading Co., a South Korean company supplying the U.S. military in Iraq. He was abducted last week, according to the South Korean government.

The videotape of Kim, apparently made shortly before his death, showed him kneeling, blindfolded and wearing an orange jumpsuit similar to those issued to prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Five hooded men stood behind Kim, one reading a statement and gesturing with his right hand. Another captor had a big knife slipped in his belt.

One of the masked men said the message was intended for the Korean people. "This is what your hands have committed. Your army has not come here for the sake of Iraqis, but for cursed America."

The video as broadcast did not show Kim being executed.

Al-Jazeera said the video claimed the execution was carried out by the al-Qaida-linked group Monotheism and Jihad.

President Bush condemned the beheading of a South Korean hostage as "barbaric" Tuesday and said he remained confident that South Korea would go ahead with plans to send thousands of troops to Iraq.

"The free world cannot be intimidated by the brutal actions of these barbaric people," the president said.

The grisly killing was reminiscent of the decapitation of American businessman Nicholas Berg, who was beheaded last month on a videotape posted on an Al-Qaida-linked Web site by the same group, which claimed responsibility for Kim's death.

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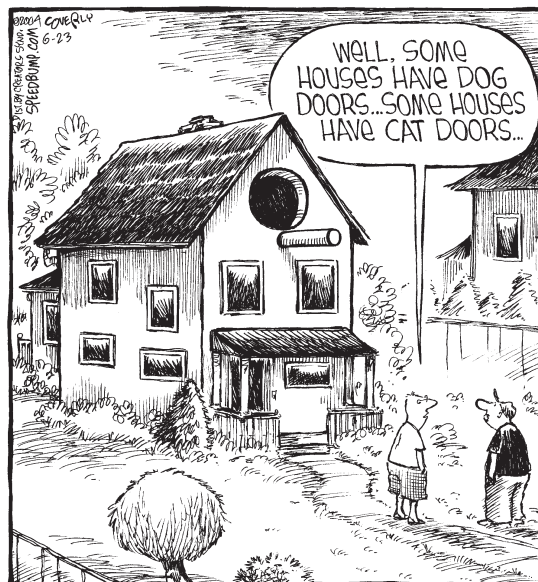
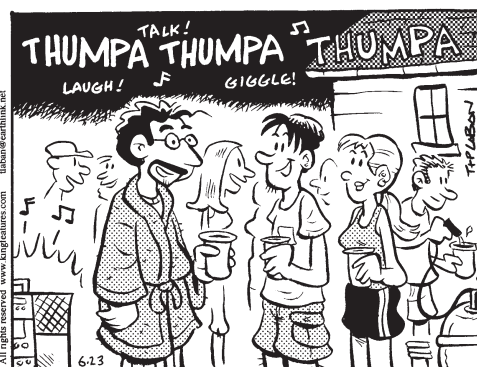
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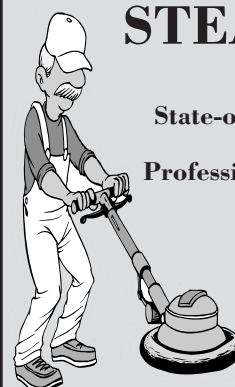
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