

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

■ News of the Weird reported in 2002 and 2003 on ever-more-daring exploits of "extreme ironing" athletes, who set up boards and press creases under competitively difficult circumstances, such as while sailboarding or bouncing on a trampoline. Several British "ironists" made a publicity tour of the United States in May in their campaign to make their obsession an Olympic sport. (Events are now judged at 120 points each, half of which is based on the quality of the pressing.) Founder Phil Shaw said he got the idea one day in 1997 when he faced a load of wrinkled shirts and thought he would be less bored if he hooked up a long extension cord and ironed while he went rock-climbing.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom."

— MALCOM X

LOCAL WEATHER

TODAY
Low clouds, then some sun
Tonight: Partly cloudy
HIGH 71° F
LOW 55° F

FRIDAY
Low clouds, then some sun
Night: Clear to partly cloudy
HIGH 71° F
LOW 55° F

SATURDAY
Low clouds, then some sun
Night: Mainly clear
HIGH 75° F
LOW 61° F

SUNDAY
Low clouds, then some sun
Night: Clear
HIGH 74° F
LOW 60° F

MONDAY
Low clouds, then some sun
Night: Mostly cloudy
HIGH 72° F
LOW 60° F

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Save it, don't spray it



John Wood/Daily Press

Amateur graffiti artists recently tagged over artist Daniel Alonzo's 1983 "Whale of a Mural" on Ocean Park Boulevard at Fourth Street. The mural had undergone a recent restoration but hadn't been treated yet with an anti-graffiti coating, meaning it will be more difficult to repair. Taggers who paint over murals are often called "toys" by more skilled members of the graffiti-art community.

Feeling carsick? Flexcar offers SM alternative to ownership



Photo Courtesy

Santa Monica's Flexcar is a hybrid sedan.

BY JOHN F. MULLER

Special to the Daily Press

DOWNTOWN — Officials hope Santa Monica can help dispel the old adage that everybody in Los Angeles needs to own a car to survive.

A company that rents cars at an hourly

rate launched its first station based in a residential building on Wednesday in downtown, and city officials were on hand.

Flexcar members can walk up to the hybrid sedan after making a reservation — for now, there's just one car — and press their card against the rear windshield to unlock the doors automatically. Inside are car keys and a gas card. Members can drive starting at \$10 an hour.

City Planning Commissioner Terry O'Day said he supported Flexcar because of the potential environmental benefits it could bring to Santa Monica. City Council members Pam O'Connor and Robert Holbrook also expressed their support.

"We have a comprehensive set of goals for Santa Monicans to reduce their environmental footprint," O'Day said. "In particular, reducing vehicle ownership of our citizens by 10 percent is one of our goals. Flexcar is a way to help us get there."

Lance Ayrault, Flexcar president and CEO, said the company's growth in Santa Monica and the Los Angeles area could take a huge bite out of traffic, parking and

See FLEXCAR, page 7

City Council considering \$175M bond

It might partner with Santa Monica College on controversial measure

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Despite deep-seeded reservations and an often tumultuous relationship, elected leaders here agreed Tuesday evening to consider partnering with Santa Monica College in its push for a \$175 million bond on the November ballot.

If passed, the college bond could be used to fund several city projects with educational bents, such as the former Discovery Center aquarium at the Santa Monica Pier, the Marion Davies estate at 415 Pacific Coast Highway, botanical gardens at the planned civic center downtown, or new soccer fields and other open space around Santa Monica.

The bond, which would cost the average homeowner \$6.40 a month and the average renter \$1.12 a month, follows on the heels of a \$160 million bond called Measure U that was passed in 2002. Money from the new bond would be used to fund various SMC projects, such as an improved athletic center and the Madison Project, a \$17 million theater.

Members of the City Council expressed frustration at their Tuesday meeting that college officials hadn't raised the issue earlier, but ultimately decided the bond proposal warranted further consideration. Because it would be overseen by officials at SMC, the college bond would require only 55 percent approval from voters.

The City of Malibu has indicated its eagerness to partner on the bond in exchange for some targeted spending, including

See BOND, page 6

Man disrupts meeting, asks for \$21.95 for lithium

By Daily Press staff

CITY HALL — A man who said he had just been released from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center hijacked a meeting of the City Council Tuesday. The man said he suffered from manic-depressive psychosis and needed \$21.95 to fill a prescription for lithium.

Members of the City Council, City Hall staffers and others in the council chambers froze in their seats as the man took control of the meeting from resident Ed Moosbrugger, who was standing at the podium to discuss a proposed \$175 million bond.

"There's no need for the police," the distraught man said, facing the audience with his back to the dais. "I'm coming from (the) psychiatric hospital. I'm the one who's afraid. I don't want to go to jail. My name is Dr. Brenson. I'm going to tell you what I need. You need to be educated. Don't laugh at me — I'm in trouble."

After a few moments, a Santa Monica Police Department officer approached

See DISRUPTION, page 7

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5-6:30 13.⁹⁵

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

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Entrench yourself in work. You are coming into a very desirable period when others want you, and you want to be available. Postpone plans in order to achieve what you must right now so you can free yourself up. Tonight: Work late.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Be very playful and express your fun-loving personality. Do not stomp on a partner's feelings. You could be so happy and carefree that inadvertently you cause yourself a problem that could occupy a good part of your day. Tonight: Be the sedate Bull.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★ Basics count when dealing with a loved one or family member. Others could become reactive and seem to be playing control games. What is your responsibility here? Determine what is happening on your side and then you can make a difference. Tonight: Stay close to home.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Tell it like it is and express yourself in a more meaningful manner. Others could be touchy and emotional. You might want to pull back with associates and those you deal with daily. Work on putting your best foot forward and understanding. Tonight: Out and about.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Avoid all risk-taking, especially when feelings or finances are involved. Know when to bail out. Consider playing it conservatively, as opposed to being flamboyant. In the long run, you will be much happier with the end results. Tonight: Balance your checkbook.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ You smile, but others could challenge your positive attitude. Others toss a boomerang in your path, and you jump right over it. Your personality melts a natural resistance from another. Tonight: As you like it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★ Take your time with others. If you act quickly or say something very quickly, you'll get unusual reactions. Others might stonewall you for what you believe is no reason. Be open to looking at your reactions in this realm. Tonight: Schedule private time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Gather others to work as a team. Success becomes you. You gain as a result and make headway. You find that a financial matter or an emotional moment could dominate your thinking in the p.m. Let go, Scorp. Tonight: Where the gang is.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Your resistance to a superior could cause you more problems than you might be immediately aware of. Reconsider your approach and use of words. Remember who butters your bread, and follow through accordingly. Tonight: A must appearance — don't fight it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Detach and see where you might be a player in what happens. Know that you can move past a problem instead of fostering it. Process accordingly and take a leap of faith. Tonight: Think "unusual."

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Work with others individually. Your message could be derailed within a group. Understand the need for more eye contact and individual relating. You'll gain as a result. Handle all money dealings on your own. Tonight: Dinner for two.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Others push and pull, mainly because they want you. Pressure builds and points you in a new direction if you are willing. Pressure from a boss or others could be more than you can handle. Defer to others. Tonight: Where the crowds are.

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Musical scholarships resound

By Daily Press staff

The 55th Annual Music Scholarship Awards were presented to students of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District by the city's Kiwanis Club and First Federal Bank on June 16. Scholarships were awarded to 24 students in vocal and instrumental categories at three different levels, grades 6-8, 9-10 and 11-12.

The Kiwanis Club created these awards to encourage students to participate in the music programs at SMMUSD. By taking part in the competition, students can showcase their talent to outside judges who critique and comment on the performances and music.

The winners are listed below:

Instrumental — Grades 11 and 12:

1st Place	April Paik	11th Grade	Santa Monica High
2nd Place	Jerzy Fischer	12th Grade	Santa Monica High
3rd Place	Caroline Reilly	12th Grade	Santa Monica High
4th Place	Carl Schoellhammer	11th Grade	Santa Monica High

Vocal — Grades 11 and 12:

1st Place	Megan Gillespie	12th Grade	Santa Monica High
2nd Place	Emma Korvin	12th Grade	Santa Monica High
3rd Place	Illana Summers	11th Grade	Santa Monica High
4th Place	Zachary Avshalomov	11th Grade	Santa Monica High

Instrumental — Grades 9 and 10:

1st Place	Alex Kim	9th Grade	Santa Monica High
2nd Place	Julianne Bruce	9th Grade	Santa Monica High
3rd Place	David Litwak	10th Grade	Santa Monica High
4th Place	Theodosia Roussos	10th Grade	Santa Monica High

Vocal — Grades 9 and 10:

1st Place	Dasha Jensen	9th Grade	Malibu High
2nd Place	Alica Escarce	10th Grade	Santa Monica High
3rd Place	Ivan Rodriguez-Pinto	10th Grade	Santa Monica High
4th Place	Theodosia Roussos	10th Grade	Santa Monica High

Instrumental — Middle School:

1st Place	James Hodges	8th Grade	John Adams M. S.
2nd Place	Christie Glaser	8th Grade	John Adams M.S.
3rd Place	Jarrett Furst	8th Grade	Lincoln M.S.
4th Place	Brady Chiu	8th Grade	Lincoln M. S.

Vocal — Middle School:

1st Place	Ananya Kepper	8th Grade	John Adams M.S.
2nd Place	Tam Visser	8th Grade	Malibu M.S.
3rd Place	Maren Jensen	8th Grade	Malibu M.S.
4th Place	Madelyn Ross	6th Grade	John Adams M.S.

Wanted: Tennis players for benefit

By Daily Press Staff

Tennis players of all skill levels are invited to participate in the seventh annual "Westside Challenge to Beat Breast Cancer" at the UCLA/Los Angeles Tennis Center on Oct. 3.

The event features a round-robin tennis marathon, as well as family activities, entertainment and a post-tournament reception that includes a silent auction and an awards ceremony. All players receive a souvenir tennis bag and are invited to pre-event instructional clinics run by tennis professionals.

Proceeds will benefit the low-cost mammography-screening program at the Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, which provides affordable screening and diagnostic mammograms and follow-up care to eligible women in the community. For more information, contact tennis coordinator Rick Grant at ricgrant1@earthlink.net or (310) 573-1606.



SURF REPORT

On Thursday look for a slowly fading mix of SW Southern Hemi and NW wind swell. North LA spots will work the swell mix for semi-consistent waist- to chest-high surf at the better exposed SW/combo breaks with occasional shoulder-high sets at best breaks, especially on the tide push. South Bay spots pick up the mostly wind swell for 2- to 3-foot faces, while best combo breaks in the north half of the Bay see 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.

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

Today the water is:

68°



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 seri-

ous 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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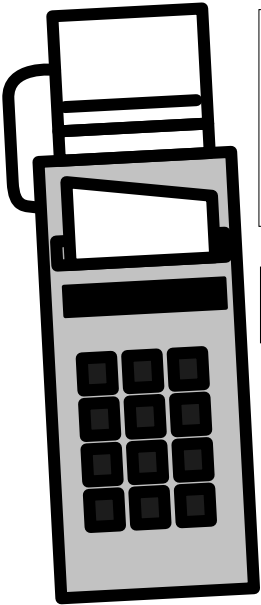
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OPINION

Dear President Bush, There are now over one million students in our public schools that are children of illegal aliens in our state. Since California spends almost \$9,000 per student-per year- it all adds up to more than 9 billion dollars stolen from us kids.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dumbfounded by council

Editor:

Again members of the City Council prove themselves to be so out of touch with reality that we must remove them. Councilman Ken Genser suggests that we disregard Los Angeles County Health officials over the squirrels. Just think what would have happened if the people with the tall hedges told the Council that they would disobey the ordinance. Great example he's setting. And then we have the idea from Councilman Kevin McKeown to de-flea the squirrels. I'm dumbfounded by these people. These creatures are creating burrows throughout the hillside, which could cause a landslide, along with the disease they harbor. Maybe they should be more concerned with the murals that are being destroyed, such as the whale mural on Ocean Park Boulevard that just weeks ago was renewed, or maybe controlling the vagrant problem, and I could go on and on.

Richard Miller
Santa Monica

Whoa, Britney

Editor:

Wow! Now I know the secret of getting a fast response from SMPD. Just mention the name Britney Spears. Anybody who watched the fiasco on Ninth Street on Sunday evening will know what I'm talking about. I lost count of police cars and officers that responded to the call that involved Britney and her mother there in the parking lot of the pet store. When I saw the police response and the taping off of Ninth Street & Wilshire Boulevard I thought at least it was Osama Bin Laden holed up in the pet store threatening all the puppy dogs until we handed over the current White House occupant, but no — apparently it was because Spear's mother had accidentally (I'm sure) run over a photographer's foot.

Bad luck. Aim for the head next time Mrs. Spears. Such harassment should be against the law. It's sad when a trip to the pet store has to turn into such a nightmare. Well done SMPD.

May Miles
Santa Monica

Tear down this sign

Editor:

Why does SMC get away with having such a huge (approximately 625 square-foot) sign? As per Judy Rambeau, a sign can have no more than one square foot for each foot of building frontage. The sign, in this case, is on the north side of the auditorium on Pico at 20th Street, which has a frontage of approximately 115 feet. That sign exceeds the standard by almost 6 to 1. Ah, but I am also told that SMC is exempt from this regulation, so that they can freely flaunt this visual blight in the faces of their neighbors.

If you or I had a sign or, for that matter, didn't have the correct sign, the city would be swarming all over you with some division of their massive cadre of code police or other monitors of political correctness. What other laws is SMC exempt from? Well, they aren't exempt from the laws of good taste, and this sign flat sucks. They talk about public process, and yes they listen, but do they hear? When was the last time they forthrightly addressed your concerns, or even took the time to answer your mail?

During the upcoming campaign they will spend tens of thousands of dollars to make you forget what kind of neighbor SMC is, or isn't, so that they can shove more traffic, more pollution, more noise — and if the sign in question is any indication — more blight down our throats. Never forget.

Steve Keats
Santa Monica

You've got mail: President sends thanks to columnist

NEWS ON THE EDGE

BY RON SCOTT SMITH



"Dear Ron Scott,
The campaign is in high gear. A tough opponent is running against me, we cannot take him lightly. This is going to be a close election. I appreciate all you have done for me already. I have been able to get my message to the American people because of your generous support.

Sincerely,
President George W. Bush"

No kidding, I received this e-mail from my old buddy the other day, and it was flattering to know that he's apparently aware — even if some angry local letter writers aren't — that we come to Page 4 not to bury, but to praise. Curious to know what exactly put me in such good favor, I went through the archives.

Perhaps the piece that won him over for good was the one back on Feb. 26 when I waxed nostalgic about the good old days, when "...me and W — back when we were 18, 19 or 20 years old and facing the prospect of slinging an M-16 over our shoulder and heading right into the heart of Vietnam for a couple of the prime years of our life — chose not to go..." We were our own sort of band of brothers back then, all of us who avoided that mistake, and surely the President still feels that bond.

On March 25, I answered the question: Who would the terrorists rather see elected in November, Bush or Kerry? Although the President says it's Kerry they'd want, he's too modest for his own good sometimes. I rushed to his defense and declared straight out that it would be him they'd want re-elected, and I know he was glad to see somebody sticking up for him. "Truth be known, that bunch would vote for Bush in a heartbeat," I wrote. He might have stopped reading before he got to the part where it said, "He's accelerated the terrorists' worldwide movement at warp speed, presenting them with a scenario their best fiction writers couldn't have conjured up. More kids with more Bin Laden screensavers are signing up for more suicide missions than were ever dreamed of." The important thing to GW is I'm the only expert pundit to have given him the nod over Kerry for that all-important terrorist swing vote, and he appreciated it.

I had already told him in the Jan. 15 piece that he's got no worries about the outcome of the election because a man who gets the message from the very top,

Pat Robertson, got this message: "George Bush is going to win in a walk. I really believe I'm hearing from the Lord that it's going to be a blow-out election." The President was surely glad to read, even if only in a free, small-town daily, that the Lord gives him carte blanche according to Robertson, who went on, "It doesn't make any difference what he does, good or bad."

The President also knows when he visits Page 4, he's likely to see high praise heaped upon his close circle of friends. He's seen John Ashcroft commended in here. Way back in an October 2002 column entitled, "Ashcroft to terrorists: This looks like a job for me," I pleased the President by writing, "John Ashcroft is a man on a mission. He's hunting down terrorists, and he's not stopping until he gets them. Good. It keeps him too busy to pursue his fundamentalist social-engineering agenda, where things like taking away a woman's right to choose used to be at the top of his things-I-need-to-do-today list."

We've praised Dick Cheney here too, even quoted him on Feb. 5, as he alluded to himself as the Bush administration's behind-the-scenes mastermind. "Am I the evil genius in the corner that nobody ever sees come out of the hole? It's a nice way to operate actually." I went on to say that I got goosebumps from that statement, and the President, when he read it, must have gotten them too, although he might have put the paper down before I said, "They're not the good goosebumps."

And as for Condoleezza Rice: On April 22, we passed along her inspiring remarks to the 9/11 Commission that "we would have moved heaven and earth to prevent those attacks, had we known." When the President later expounded on Rice's statement to the commission, I gushed about him, "In the everyman verbiage a nation has come to love and embrace, he reassured us all, 'We would have moved heaven and earth to prevent those attacks, had we known. Had I known, we'd acted. Of course I'd acted.'"

So, you see, it's not without foundation that the President thanks me for my "generous support" and for "all you have done for me." It's comforting to be on his good side. It would be no fun to turn around and see Ashcroft gaining on you. So I'll continue to do the work that has apparently caught his attention and earned me the praise.

Democracy requires participation, so I think he likes it, too, when I remind you of the upcoming election. On Feb. 19, I said, "There are 257 days left before the first Tuesday in November. Leave no chad hanging."

Now it's down to 131. Please join the President and me at the polls.

(Ron Scott Smith can be reached at edgeofthewest@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.

BUSINESS



Changing social security for a changing nation



IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

BY JOHN KIM

As a large portion of the American population nears retirement, the rules of social security are changing. The normal retirement age is being increased, and social security recipients will no longer be penalized for working beyond normal retirement age.

NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE ON THE RISE

Under present social security regulations, normal retirement age is 65, at which time you are eligible to receive full benefits. However, the normal retirement age will be incrementally increased until it will top out at age 67 for those born in 1960 or later.

The effect of this change is twofold. First, because you cannot receive full benefits until you reach normal retirement age, you might want to continue working until then. Second, this change will affect individuals seeking early retirement. If you choose, you might still begin receiving reduced social security benefits at age 62. However, the longer the period between when you begin receiving early retirement benefits and your normal retirement age, the more your annual benefit is reduced. This will become an even greater factor as the normal retirement age increases. If you begin collecting social security at age 62 and your normal retirement age is 65, your annual benefit will be reduced by nearly 20 percent. If you begin collecting benefits at age 62 and your normal retirement age is 67, your annual benefit will be reduced by 30 percent. This loss of future benefits due to early retirement underscores the advantage of staying in the working world as long as possible.

EARNINGS LIMIT ELIMINATED FOR SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS AGES 65 TO 69

Until recently, if you worked while receiving social security, your benefits were subject to a reduction. Now only those who are age 62 to 64 and who also have earned income greater than \$11,520 will have social security benefits reduced. After age 65, there is no reduction in benefits for those with earned income.

HOW MUCH WILL I GET FROM SOCIAL SECURITY?

Many people are confused about exactly how their monthly social security benefit will be computed. However, now each year the Social Security Administration mails participants a statement illustrating their updated earnings record and their projected benefits. Because your benefits are based on your lifetime earnings record, be sure to read your statement carefully and notify the Social Security Administration of any discrepancies by calling (800) 772-1213. Also, the Social Security Administration has recently made available interactive retirement planner calculators on its Web site. After you input annual income information, the calculators will figure an estimate of your monthly social security benefit. The calculators can be found at www.ssa.gov/retire/calculators.htm.

SOME FINANCIAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Deciding when to retire involves more than just your social security benefits. Be sure to get the financial advice you need to determine if you can support yourself throughout your retirement. Some factors you will have to consider include:

Health insurance: Where will your coverage come from and how much will you have to pay for premiums?

Company pension benefits: When does your company pension, if any, begin?

Company retirement plan distribution: If you have a 401(k) or similar retirement plan to which you have contributed, be sure to get information on your alternatives regarding distribution from this plan so you can handle and invest this money in a tax-advantaged manner.

For many retirees, social security and Medicare play important roles in providing dependable monthly income and insurance coverage. The key to making the most of these benefits is coordinating them with any employer-provided plans and with individual savings accounts and insurance policies. Work closely with your financial and tax advisors as you select from the various options available to you.

(Smith Barney does not provide tax or legal advice. Please consult your tax and/or legal advisor for such guidance. John S. Kim is a financial consultant with Smith Barney, located in Beverly Hills. Call (310) 205-4939 or visit his Web page at www.fc.smithbarney.com/jkim. This article is based, in whole or in part, on information provided by the Consulting Group of Smith Barney. Smith Barney is a division and service mark of Citigroup Global Markets Inc. Member SIPC.)

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LOCAL

Committee to discuss details of SMC bond this month

BOND, page 1

expenditures on open space. The local school district is considered by some a fourth partner because it could benefit from many of the bond projects.

A LEAP OF FAITH

During her presentation to council, Dr. Piedad F. Robertson, president of SMC, urged City Hall to make a leap of faith and partner with the college to support the proposed bond, on which the SMC board of trustees was scheduled to make a final decision on July 7. That cramped timeline left several council members feeling wary.

"I understand it's a leap of faith, but this is \$175 million in public money," said Mayor Richard Bloom. "I don't see how we can, as a responsible body, take a leap of faith with \$175 million of public money in a period of three weeks ...

"I'm kind of surprised that council direction we made a year ago — a year ago — is coming back now, to us," Bloom added later during the two-and-a-half-hour discussion. "It's as if the college is saying, 'We talked about working together and partnerships, and here we are — and, by the way, we're taking this forward 17 days from now.' Trust is built over time. Trust is built step by step, brick by brick, item by item. I don't believe trust is built by saying, 'Here we are. We have a concept. You ought to like this concept ...'"

Other council members said City Hall couldn't afford to miss the bonding opportunity. They pointed out that the college still would go forward without city support.

"If we indicate our willingness to partner, then the city benefits from the college bond, if it passes. If the bond passes, and we choose not to partner, then we get nothing," said City Councilman Bob Holbrook. "It's really not a leap of faith. It comes down to, basically, trust and integrity. I heard the college president and her senior staff stand before us tonight on radio and television, pledging trust, integrity and partnership.

"It'd be awfully hard for me to believe that they don't mean that. And I accept that as a genuine expression of what they'd like to do and how they'd like to partner."

JULY 7 DEADLINE?

In response to the council's concerns, the SMC board of trustees is expected to consider delaying a final decision on the bond until its August meeting. City Hall staffers were told to draft such a request, alongside specific language for how the city would partner with the college, and a list of the types of projects deserving of bond money.

Tom Donner, the college's executive vice president of business and administration, said officials waited to make the proposed bond public until City Hall resolved negotiations with the cash-poor local school district, which ended up receiving an additional \$3 million annually from the city, starting next year. That

agreement averted an unprecedented and controversial charter amendment that a parent group threatened to place on the November ballot. Had it gone to a vote, the SMC bond would have been held.

"You've got the city being torn apart by that initiative and people being torn apart about whether to support education or not support education," Donner said on Wednesday. "It would have made the (SMC) bond a low priority, to voters."

Still, some on the council said much more public process is needed.

"I don't see how there can be any excuse for not having adequate public process," Bloom said Wednesday. "The question is, 'Is there going to be a significant public process, prior to the time that the agencies are being asked to commit?' And it appears as though there's not going to be. And to say that hasn't happened because there was another issue in the city does nothing to satisfy the need for process. It just sounds like an excuse to me."

FEUDING NEIGHBORS

Also raised by several members of the council was whether SMC could be trusted to spend part of the bond revenues in a way that benefits City Hall and local residents. The two agencies, by far the largest landowners in Santa Monica, have feuded in the past over parking issues and the development of the Madison Theater, among other issues. Some have accused the college of operating behind closed doors without input from residents or the city.

Donner dismissed the notion that SMC hoped to use the bond money to enter into a bidding war with City Hall over various properties in Santa Monica. He said SMC had never bought a property on which the city had made an offer or in which it had shown serious interest.

Ed Moosbrugger, one of only two members of the public to speak on the subject at the Tuesday meeting, said SMC hadn't notified the local neighborhood group of its plans, despite the group's deep concern with the ongoing growth of the college.

"Our neighborhood group, which surrounds the college, was not contacted for any input before the plan was presented to the board of trustees," said Moosbrugger, a co-chair of the SMC committee of Friends of Sunset Park. "I think the basic point is the short time frame to try to really assess this and get input from the community."

The next step in the process is for officials from City Hall, SMC and the local school district to meet June 30 in a liaison committee meeting to work on details. SMC officials also will be conducting a phone poll later this month to gauge interest in the bond.

Meanwhile, Robertson said she hopes for a stronger relationship with City Hall.

"I want to thank all of you," she told the council. "Very good questions, we appreciate them. The only way that we can get to any kind of sort of partnership is by asking clear questions, and making sure that we all are nervous about this — and I am the most nervous of all of them."

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LOCAL



City hopes Flexcar can ease traffic, parking problems

FLEXCAR, page 1

pollution problems. The Seattle-based Flexcar was inspired in 1999 by earlier European models.

"The European statistics are very clear," Ayrault said. "Any single car placed in share-car usage tends to eliminate six vehicles from circulating on any given day. So ... if we can build a fleet of 100 vehicles (in the Los Angeles area), that's 600 vehicles that don't have to drive around Los Angeles. Go to 1,000 vehicles, and you start to see the impact."

Ayrault said that Flexcar was designed to reduce traffic, pollution and car operating costs. Flexcar offers members the use of vehicles stationed throughout Santa Monica, Los Angeles and 18 other cities around the country for a \$25 annual payment and additional usage-based payments around \$10 an hour depending on the plan. In the Los Angeles area, Flexcar has become most popular in Hollywood, Ayrault said.

The \$10 base rate — which goes up depending on the plan and mileage — covers the cost of the car, gas, insurance and maintenance. The company has accumulated over 20,000 members and 400 vehicles nationwide, with 30 of those vehicles in the Los Angeles area. The new location at 1535

Sixth St. will use only hybrid vehicles.

The residential location of Flexcar's new station resulted from its new partnership with JSM Construction. Craig Jones, JSM president, said that the partnership would allow his company to promote "smart growth" and provide JSM's apartments with additional amenities.

"We are working hand in hand with the City of Santa Monica Planning Commission and City Council to study whether or not we can actually reduce parking requirements in the area and actually provide more opportunities for a company like Flexcar but still provide the tenant, the consumer, the ability to get into a car and drive somewhere," Jones said.

Ayrault stressed that Flexcar was only a part of the solution to the greater problem of transportation in Santa Monica and the Los Angeles area.

"This is not the solution to transportation in Los Angeles," he said. "This is a solution that fits into a whole continuum of transportation alternatives. You can walk, you can ride a bike, you can take a bus, you can take a Flexcar, you can take a taxi... This is a solution that fits very nicely into certain lives — people who elect to live in densely populated urban areas like these properties around here."

SMPD removes disruption

DISRUPTION, page 1

the man, put his hand on the man's arm, and asked him to calm down. The man, whose identity is unknown, then pulled back from the officer.

"I didn't do nothing wrong sir," the man said, striking himself in the head and face twice. "I didn't do nothing wrong — it's code four."

The man was escorted out of the building and released shortly thereafter. SMPD Lt. Frank Fabrega, a spokesman, said the officer conducted a field interview before releasing him. It's a misdemeanor to disrupt a public meeting, but no charges were pressed.

"It's nothing," Fabrega said. "Just because somebody hits himself, it's not a crime. Just because somebody takes medication, it's not a crime."

Mayor Richard Bloom, who gave the council a break immediately after the incident, praised the officer's quick work at the meeting. Police officers are often stationed at meetings of the City Council — especially when large crowds are expected.

"It was a tense few moments for all of us," Bloom said afterward. "It was pretty clear we all needed to catch our breath, and it also would have been very unfair to Mr. Moosbrugger to put him on the spot after that happened."

— John Wood

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STATE BRIEFS

State murder trial deadlocked

By The Associated Press

HAYWARD — Gasps of dismay sounded in a courtroom as the trial of three men charged with killing a transgender teenager ended Tuesday with the jury declaring they were deadlocked.

Prosecutor Chris Lamiero said he would seek to retry the case, although that is not expected to happen for some months.

Jurors, who had been deliberating for about nine days, said according to their latest ballot they were stuck 10-2 in favor of acquitting Jose Merel and Jason Cazares on first-degree murder charges and 7-5 in favor of convicting Michael Magidson.

The three, all 24, were charged with killing a teenager known to most of her friends as Gwen but born Edward Araujo. Merel and Magidson had sexual encounters with Araujo in the months before her death and, according to prosecutors, the killing occurred after a showdown in which Araujo's biological gender was revealed.

Had they decided to convict, the panel of eight men and four women also had the option of returning verdicts of second-degree murder or manslaughter, but only if they agreed on the first-degree charge. First-degree murder is punishable by 25 years to life, second-degree by 15-to-life and manslaughter by up to 11 years.

Gunmen kill Mexican editor

By The Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico — Gunmen ambushed and killed a founder and editor of a crusading Mexican newspaper Tuesday, the latest in a series of attacks against the weekly's leadership.

Masked men in a pickup truck opened fire on Francisco Ortiz Franco as he left a clinic with his two children, the state attorney general's office said. The children, aged 8 and 10, were unharmed.

Zeta is known for its reporting on the influence of drug traffickers in Tijuana, home to several narcotics operations. Its editorial board demanded "an investigation that leads to the killers' capture."

State investigators re-enacting the slaying at the scene said a gunman jumped from a black Jeep and shot Ortiz four times as he sat in his driver's seat, according to Francisco Castro Trenti of the attorney general's office.

Virginia Monje, 30, said she heard the shots from her kitchen. She went outside to see Ortiz's two young children running from the scene shouting "Papi! Papi!"

Killer cops to murders with mother

By Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Convicted killer Kenneth Kimes told jurors Tuesday that he and his mother cut a trail of murder and greed from the Bahamas to the United States, killing an Arab banker, a wealthy New York socialite and a Los Angeles businessman.

Kimes, who was convicted with his mother, Sante Kimes, in 2000 of killing New York socialite Irene Silverman, testified last week that he also killed Los Angeles businessman David Kazdin in 1998 at his mother's direction and dumped his body in a trash bin near Los Angeles International Airport.

But Tuesday was the first time he admitted to killing Syed Bilal Ahmed. The 55-year-old Bahrain native was working at a bank in the Bahamas in 1996 when he vanished shortly after a meeting in Nassau with Kimes and his mother. His body has never been found, and the two have long been reported to be suspects in his disappearance.

In chilling testimony, Kimes told how, at a rented house in the Bahamas, he gave Ahmed a drink laced with a date-rape drug that knocked the victim unconscious. He said he and his mother then drowned Ahmed in a bathtub and that he took the body by boat off the coast of the Bahamas, weighted it with an anchor and threw it overboard.

Kimes, wearing an orange jail jumpsuit, his hair knotted in a ponytail, was called back to the witness stand Tuesday as a rebuttal witness to his mother, who proclaimed her innocence during rambling, often angry testimony on Monday.

LA Times cuts jobs

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Times is eliminating about 190 jobs at its newspaper and community publications as part of a cost-cutting plan ordered by its corporate parent, Chicago-based Tribune Co.

The Times said Tuesday that 42 editorial employees accepted voluntary buyouts offered by the paper while another 20 newsroom staffers were laid off. A Times spokeswoman declined to describe those staffers' jobs.

The Times also cut 30 jobs at its weekly and community publications. As part of those cuts, the paper closed two community papers in Claremont and Rancho Cucamonga.

"All of the people who are leaving have made meaningful contributions to the paper and to life in the newsroom," Times Editor John Carroll wrote in a memo to staffers. "We are sorry to be losing them. This is a wrenching time for them — and also for those who are staying, some of whom are taking on more responsibility."

Carroll credited his staff with making the Times stronger in recent years. The newspaper won five Pulitzer prizes in April, the second most won by a newspaper in a single year.

"With your inspired work, that trend can continue in the months to come, and it can continue rapidly," he said. "It is crucial that this episode of cost-cutting prove to be nothing more than that — a bump in the road, not a change in direction."

NATIONAL



Drought-stricken farmers are eager to cash in on wind power

BY JUDITH KOHLER

Associated Press Writer

LAMAR, Colo. — Mixed in with the sound of meadowlarks, tractors and the hum of the wind on Colorado's southeastern plains is a low, steady beat: "whoop, whoop, whoop."

It comes from a line of towering, pinwheel-like turbines that are producing electricity used across Colorado. The sound coming from a ridge south of this farming town has become a beckoning call for people struggling through a fifth year of crop-killing drought.

"I get calls pretty much on a weekly basis, 'How can I get a wind farm on my land?'" said Greg Emick, standing on a ridge top, the turbines trailing off in a curved line amid the yellow and dun-colored, rolling hills.

All but 10 of the 108 turbines are on Emick family land. Emick won't detail the agreement with the Colorado Green wind power project, but said the family gets royalties and a fee for each turbine, 375 feet tall. The power goes to Xcel Energy, the state's largest utility.

Besides lighting homes, the wind project on the windswept plains 200 miles southeast of Denver is bringing hope to an area battered by recession and a crippling drought that has forced farmers to abandon fields of stunted wheat.

"The Colorado Green project has really helped the morale of the area," said Chris Rundell, a Lamar-area farmer. "It used to be people would say, 'What is here?'"

Prowers County Commissioner John Stulp, a farmer and veterinarian, sees a potential chain reaction across the rolling patchwork of wheat fields and range.

Lamar, population 8,800, has already teamed up with the Arkansas River Power Authority, a consortium of municipal utilities, to construct four wind turbines; an estimated 14 percent of the town electricity will come from the project. A turbine whirring away in neighboring Springfield is expected to produce 40 percent of the town's energy.

The towns and utilities were able to take advantage of Colorado Green's volume discount when it came to buying the turbines, which cost about \$1.3 million each for parts, delivery and warranty.

Rundell and others are even considering wind power cooperatives like those in Minnesota, despite hurdles that include a lack of state tax credits and getting wind power to market through the nation's complex grid.

"Had Colorado Green not come to the area, all of this would have been highly unlikely," Stulp said.

The nation gets just three-tenths of 1 percent of its electricity from wind and the American Wind Energy Association trade group predicts no more than 6 percent by 2020. Still, the industry in the late 1990s began scouting Colorado, ranked 11th by the association among states with the most wind power potential.

Enron Wind, a subsidiary of Enron Corp., checked the Emicks' land and found a choice spot: The wind averages 18 mph with little turbulence. The family didn't have to be sold on the usefulness of wind: They had used windmills to run the wells watering their cattle long before.

GE Wind took over the project, building the wind farm and selling it for \$212 million to a partnership between PPM Energy of Portland, Ore., and Shell WindEnergy Inc., based in Amsterdam.

The turbines, spread over nearly 12,000 acres, began generating electricity early this year. The project has a capacity of 162 megawatts, enough for 52,000 homes a year.

During construction, hundreds of workers streamed over the rolling fields to finish the work last summer before federal tax credits for renewable energy expired. They built 43 miles of transmission lines, 25 miles of roads and buried 50 miles of cable.

The economic effects rippled from restaurants to gas stations to motels to concrete companies. Stulp said the wind farm will increase the county tax base by about \$2 million a year, with much of that going to schools. Colorado Green has 16 permanent employees.

No decision has been made whether to build a second phase of the wind project that would be about the same size. Area power lines could handle at least twice the electricity that would be generated.

The development near Lamar is something Colorado House Speaker Lola Spradley, R-Beulah, wants to see throughout rural Colorado.

The Legislature has repeatedly rejected bills from Spradley that would require utilities to get more of their power from renewable energy sources. She is now backing a similar initiative led by environmental groups that must collect nearly 68,000 signatures from registered voters by Aug. 2 to make the November ballot.

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Al-Zarqawi vows to assassinate Iraqi leader

ABY ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A recording purportedly made by the mastermind of bombings and beheadings in Iraq threatened to assassinate Iraq's interim prime minister and fight the Americans "until Islamic rule is back on Earth."

The audio, found Wednesday on an Islamic Web site, is supposedly from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the same Jordanian-born terrorist whose group claimed responsibility for the beheading of American hostage Nicholas Berg and Kim Sun-il, a South Korean whose decapitated body was found Tuesday evening between Baghdad and Fallujah.

South Koreans reacted with sorrow and anger to Kim's beheading Wednesday, with President Roh Moo-hyun calling it a "crime against humanity."

After the slaying, U.S. forces launched an airstrike on what the Americans said was an al-Zarqawi hideout in Fallujah. Three people were killed and nine wounded, said Dr. Loai Ali Zeidan at Fallujah Hospital. It was the second U.S. airstrike on Fallujah since Saturday.

"In both cases we believe we hit significant numbers of al-Zarqawi lieutenants and al-Zarqawi fighters," said Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, the coalition's deputy operations chief. The airstrikes also destroyed large ammunition stores,

Kimmitt said Wednesday in an interview with Associated Press Television News.

Kim's body was found two days after he appeared on a videotape broadcast by Al-Jazeera television, pleading "I don't want to die" and begging his government to pull its soldiers out of Iraq.

South Korea refused and said it would go ahead with plans to send another 3,000 forces here by August, which will make it the third-largest troop contributor after the United States and Britain.

"When we think of his desperate appeals for life, our hearts are wrenched with grief," Roh said Wednesday in a national television address.

In the audiotape, the speaker thought to be al-Zarqawi told Iraq's interim prime minister, Iyad Allawi, that "we will continue the game with you until the end." The speaker said "we will not get bored" until "we make you drink from the same glass" as Izzadine Saleem, the Iraqi Governing Council president killed last month in a car-bombing claimed by al-Zarqawi's group.

"We will carry on our jihad against the Western infidel and the Arab apostate until Islamic rule is back on Earth," the voice said.

An official with Allawi's office dismissed the threat, saying it would not derail the transfer of sovereignty next week.

A roadside bomb exploded near Baghdad's Kindi Hospital on Wednesday,

killing a policeman who was handling the bomb and a mother and her child who were riding in a taxi, Iraqi police said. Another man was seen being led away in handcuffs.

In Ramadi, an insurgent stronghold 60 miles west of Baghdad, gunmen killed two policemen and wounded a third in a drive-by shooting, witnesses said.

A roadside bomb also exploded as an Iraqi National Guard patrol passed in the northern city of Mosul, killing one Iraqi soldier and wounding four others, the U.S. military said.

The beheading of Kim, 33, who worked for a South Korean company providing supplies to U.S. forces, stunned South Korea and prompted the Seoul government to order all nonessential civilians to leave Iraq as soon as possible.

Late Tuesday, the Arabic language satellite television channel Al-Jazeera broadcast a videotape of a terrified Kim kneeling, blindfolded and wearing an orange jumpsuit similar to those issued to prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Kim's shoulders were heaving, his mouth open and moving as if he were gulping air and sobbing. Five hooded and armed men stood behind him, one with a big knife slipped in his belt.

One of the masked men read a statement addressed to 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." South Korea is a U.S. ally in Iraq.

Al-Jazeera did not show the actual beheading, saying it was too graphic.

American troops found Kim's body between Baghdad and Fallujah about 5:20 p.m. Iraq time, South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman Shin Bong-kil said. The body was identified by a photograph sent by e-mail to the South Korean embassy.

The killing and kidnapping was claimed by Al-Zarqawi's group, Monotheism and Jihad.

Also Tuesday, two American soldiers were killed and another wounded in an attack on a convoy near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad. The dean of the University of Mosul law school was murdered in another attack against the country's intellectual elite. Gunmen also killed two Iraqi women working as translators for British forces in Basra, Iraqi officials said.

In other developments Wednesday:

■ Iraqi engineers said they had resumed pumping crude oil through an export pipeline between northern Iraq and Turkey that was attacked last month. Officials with the State Oil Marketing Organization said they were unaware the pipeline was back up.

■ Top followers of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr rejected an invitation to join a national conference that will select a council to advise Iraq's interim government.

Habitat for recovery of species seen as shortchanged

BY JOHN HEILPRIN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration is approving only about one of every two acres that federal biologists propose setting aside to help vanishing species recover.

Between 2001 and 2003, the government cut 42 million acres from plans to create nearly 83 million acres of critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, a National Wildlife Federation study found.

The administration also more often cited economic reasons to justify decisions to reduce acreage. In 2001, that rationale was used to trim about 1 percent of the acreage; by 2003, that had risen to 69 percent.

The federation contends the administration is trying to undermine the Endangered Species Act. That conclusion is based on the group's interpretation of a study, provided to The Associated Press, of all critical habitat plans prepared dur-

ing the Bush administration by the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service and the White House's Office of Management and Budget.

The government is required by law to set aside areas that dwindling species need to survive and recover.

John Kostyack, the group's senior counsel, noted a budget office memo regarding a 2002 plan for designating critical habitat for the Topeka shiner, an endangered minnow.

The memo says "the benefits ... are not relevant to the policy decision at hand" — how much land should be set aside in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota.

In a second example, environmental groups sued the government over a decision to cut to 740,000 acres the nearly 1.7 million acres first proposed in California for protecting seasonal ponds that support 15 species of rare plants and tiny shrimp.

The government had estimated the designation could cost developers \$1.3 bil-

lion over 20 years for additional consultant fees and modifications to projects. Kostyack said some counties had said they would have no added costs for protecting species.

Kostyack's group said not enough consideration is given to the benefits of protecting species, which include their uses in recreation, science, water and soil quality, and climate.

Even with the scaled-down plan, White House budget office spokesman Chad Colton said the administration was designating a significant amount of critical habitat.

Environmentalists say their suits are meant to force the government to do its job. Administration and industry officials say the legal action is meant to stop development.

The Interior Department has \$12 million for its endangered species listing program on public lands and in some marine areas. It asked Congress starting in 1997 to cap the amount for critical habitat, now at \$9 million, so environmentalists could not dictate priorities.

In an interview Wednesday, Manson said the administration is only putting to use a part of the law that says critical habitat can be excluded if the economic or other benefits of protecting species do not outweigh the costs.

Manson said the administration has used economic analyses to exclude critical habitat far more than in previous years because "critical habitat provides little additional benefit to species over and above" those when a species is designated as threatened or endangered.

He said that step leads the government to spend hundreds of millions through voluntary programs involving private landowners and farmers.

"All of those acres ... have done far more good than critical habitat, because those are actively managed parcels," he said. "The point is not that there's anything wrong with habitat; we're for it. We're for the recovery of imperiled species."



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WORLD BRIEFLY

North Korea willing to give up nuclear plans

By The Associated Press

BEIJING — North Korea is willing to give up efforts to develop nuclear weapons “in a transparent way” if the United States ends its “hostile policy” toward Pyongyang, the North’s envoy said as six-nation talks on his government’s nuclear program began Wednesday.

The comments appeared to be a reference to the North’s demand for a guarantee that it won’t be attacked by the United States if it agrees to abandon its nuclear weapons development.

Pyongyang will submit a proposal to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for aid and Washington’s withdrawal of its demand for a complete dismantling of the program, said Kim Gye Gwan, a North Korean vice foreign minister.

“Our trying to possess nuclear weapons ... is intended to protect ourselves from the United States nuclear weapons threat,” Kim told his U.S. and other counterparts during the opening session of the talks at a Chinese government guesthouse.

“Therefore, if the United States gives up its hostile policy toward us by (real) actions, we are prepared to give up in a transparent way all plans related to nuclear weapons,” Kim said.

Iran to release sailors

By The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran will release eight British sailors whose military patrol boats entered Iranian waters, after an investigation revealed the incursion was a mistake, Iran’s foreign minister said Wednesday.

The decision to free the eight, who have been held since Monday, defused a brewing diplomatic crisis between London and Tehran. Iran had earlier threatened to prosecute the men, while Britain insisted they had simply strayed off course while working as part of the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.

Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said they would be released later Wednesday.

The men were detained Monday in the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, which runs along the Iran-Iraq border and is known in Iran as the Arvand River. Iran said the vessels were about a half-mile inside Iranian territorial waters.

“Considering statements by British sailors that the boats carrying them mistakenly entered Iran’s territorial waters, the armed forces decided to release the boats and their occupants,” Armed Forces spokesman General Ali Reza Afshar told state radio.

DeMint wins runoff for ballot spot

By The Associated Press

SOUTH CAROLINA — Three-term Rep. Jim DeMint trounced ex-Gov. David Beasley on Tuesday to win a Republican runoff in South Carolina and earn a spot on the November ballot for a Senate seat that has been occupied by the same Democrat for almost 40 years.

In Utah, wealthy businessman Jon Huntsman Jr., a Bush administration diplomat who also worked as a White House aide under Ronald Reagan, defeated a lesser-known challenger by an overwhelming margin to cap-

ture the GOP gubernatorial nomination.

Huntsman will face a member of the state’s most prominent Democratic family in November: Scott Matheson Jr., dean of the University of Utah law school and the son of a former governor.

DeMint, 52, will face Democratic state Education Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum this fall in a race that could help determine the balance of power in the Senate.

Despite South Carolina’s conservative leanings, Democrats believe they have a serious shot at maintaining the seat that retiring Sen. Ernest “Fritz” Hollings has held since Lyndon Johnson was in the White House.

Wal-Mart suit goes class-action

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A sex-discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart Stores Inc. won class-action status Tuesday, allowing it to include up to 1.6 million current and former female employees in the largest private civil rights case in U.S. history.

The suit alleges that the retail giant set up a system that frequently pays its female workers less than their male counterparts for comparable jobs and bypasses them for key promotions.

U.S. District Judge Martin Jenkins decided to expand the lawsuit to include virtually all women who work or have worked at Wal-Mart’s 3,500 stores nationwide since December 1998.

Wal-Mart, based in Bentonville, Ark., and the nation’s largest private employer, had sought to limit the scope of the lawsuit and said it would appeal the ruling.

No trial date has been set in the lawsuit, which initially covered six women.

FTC accepts tobacco merger

By The Associated Press

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — The merger of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and Brown & Williamson has received the blessing of the Federal Trade Commission, removing one of the deal’s last significant hurdles.

The FTC voted unanimously to close its investigation of the proposed \$2.6 billion cash and stock transaction, saying Tuesday the combination of the nation’s second- and third-largest cigarette makers was unlikely to lessen competition in the U.S. cigarette market.

The deal, announced in October, still requires approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission and RJR shareholders.

It combines the American tobacco businesses of RJR and British American Tobacco PLC, the parent company of B&W. The new company will rank second in U.S. cigarette market share after industry leader Philip Morris USA of Richmond, Va., a unit of Altria Group Inc.

Food stamps program to be renamed

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Agriculture Department, hoping to modernize the staid image of food stamps, is taking the program for the needy fully electronic and looking for a snazzier name.

The paper stamps issued under the government’s Food Stamp Program will be phased out this month in favor of a plastic card much like a bank debit card, the department

said Tuesday.

In the electronic age, the term “food stamps” no longer has the right ring, said Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. She said her department will ask for suggestions for a new name “to better reflect the mission of this vital program” that subsidizes food purchases for 23 million low-income Americans every month.

Food stamps are the cornerstone of the federal government’s food assistance programs, but the use of coupons has been shrinking dramatically in recent years as most states shifted to the electronic system.

Bush repudiates memo defending torture

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration laid out its legal reasoning for denying terror war suspects the protections of international humanitarian law but immediately repudiated a key memo arguing that torture might be justified in the fight against al-Qaida.

The release Tuesday of hundreds of pages of internal memos by the White House was meant to blunt criticism that President Bush had laid the groundwork for the abuses of Iraqi prisoners by condoning torture. The president insisted Tuesday: “I have never ordered torture.”

But critics said the developments left unresolved some questions about the administration’s current guidelines for interrogating prisoners in Iraq and around the world. For example, a 2002 order signed by Bush says the president reserves the right to suspend the Geneva Conventions on treatment of prisoners of war at any time.

“These documents raise more questions than they answer,” said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.

The White House released Defense Department memos detailing some of the harsh interrogation methods approved— and then rescinded— by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld in 2002 and 2003. The administration continues to refuse to say what interrogation methods are approved for use now.

Bar Association critiques punishments

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Many get-tough approaches to crime don’t work and some, such as mandatory minimum sentences for small-time drug offenders, are unfair and should be abolished, a report from the American Bar Association said Wednesday.

State and federal laws requiring mandatory minimum prison terms leave little room to consider differences among crimes and criminals, a commission studying problems in the criminal justice system found.

More people are behind bars for longer terms, but it is unclear whether the country is safer as a result, the ABA said.

Long prison terms should be reserved for criminals who pose the greatest danger to society and who commit the most serious crimes, the report said. States and the federal government should find alternatives to prison terms such as drug treatment for many less serious crimes.

“The costs of the American experiment in mass incarceration have been high,” the report said.

It said states and the federal government spent \$9 billion on jails and prisons in 1982 and \$49 billion in 1999, an increase of more than 400 percent.



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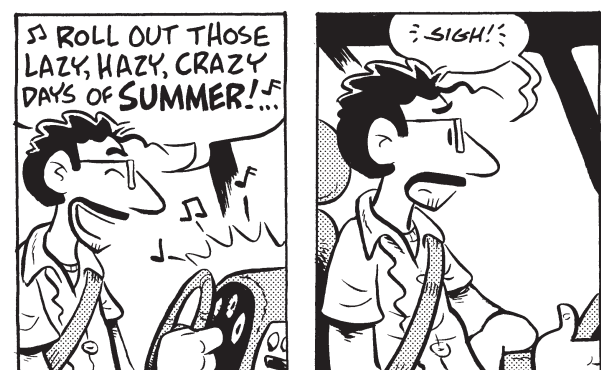


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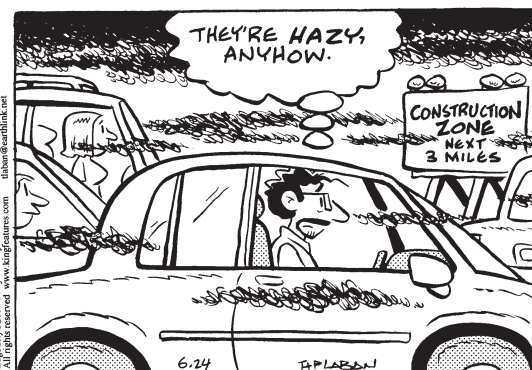
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25 Sum up	19 Snaky fish
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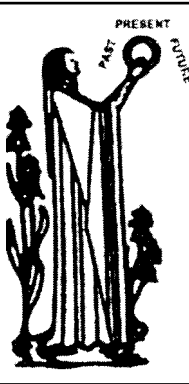


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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Queen strikes pose for holographic portrait

By The Associated Press

■ **LONDON** — Queen Elizabeth II has posed for many artists in her time, but she stepped up the technology ladder for her latest portrait.

The 3-D laser-light hologram, titled "Equanimity," was commissioned by the Jersey Heritage Trust. Designer Chris Levine's blue monochrome portrait shows the monarch wearing a crown, pearls and ermine cape.

Levine, who has previously designed high-tech laser representations for rock stars such as Liam Gallagher of Oasis, took more than 10,000 images of the queen.

"She took to it very well," he said of the photo shoot. "We were able to chat about how far technology had moved on. She was surprisingly well informed."

The process of hologram design is complex and time-consuming with a high resolution and 3-D computer scanner used to capture the figure.

Levine said the queen had to stay perfectly still for eight seconds to get a usable image.

"It was quite nerve-racking," he said recently. "She was really obliging given that a strange man was telling her what to do."

■ **WAILEA, Hawaii** — A record 20,000 people who attended the fifth annual Maui Film Festival honored Zach Braff's "Garden State" with the award for best feature film.

Braff, who plays Dr. John "J.D." Dorian on the NBC series "Scrubs," accepted the award as the five-day festival concluded over the weekend.

"Garden State," scheduled for release in theaters July 30, is Braff's directorial debut. He also wrote the screenplay.

Braff, 29, stars as a man who returns home for his mother's funeral and breaks free of a lifetime of medication-induced passivity, striking up a relationship with a quirky young woman (Natalie Portman). The film co-stars Peter Sarsgaard and Ian Holm.

■ **NEW YORK** — Tommy Hilfiger Toiletries has unveiled a new women's fragrance collection inspired by Beyonce.

True Star, which contains contrasting florals and notes of toasted grains, was introduced Monday at a launch party in London. The 22-year-old singer attended the event dressed in a blue gown.

The collection, which includes eau de parfum, body lotion, shower gel and fragrance satin shimmer, will be available in October, the company said.

Beyonce will be featured in a TV ad campaign singing "Wishing on a Star" a cappella. A national print campaign photographed by Mario Testino will show "Beyonce in a way she's never been seen before," the company said.

■ **NEW YORK** — Tom Cruise's new thriller, "Collateral," will open the eighth annual Urbanworld Film Festival Aug. 4 in Manhattan.

Cruise plays a contract killer who hijacks Jamie Foxx's taxicab. Jada Pinkett Smith and Mark Ruffalo also star in the movie, directed by Michael Mann, which is scheduled to open in theaters on Aug. 6.

"Collateral" is the perfect film to open this year's Urbanworld," festival founder Stacy Spikes said in a statement Monday. "This picture illustrates what the term 'urban' truly represents in 2004. Urban is about sensibility, not just ethnicity."

The five-day festival will include live staged reading, panel discussions and feature, documentary and short film screenings.

■ **MOJAVE, Calif.** — Among the thousands who traveled to the Mojave Desert to watch the flight of the world's first privately financed spacecraft was actor Cliff Robertson, who flew his own plane there from Los Angeles. The rocket plane, piloted by Mike Melvill, made the

first privately financed trip into space, soaring a little more than 62 miles above Earth during a 90-minute flight.

Robertson is a longtime friend of aviation pioneer Burt Rutan, who designed SpaceShipOne.

"When I talked to him later, his eyes were still burning with excitement and exultation. He was really hyped," the 78-year-old actor said Monday.

After SpaceShipOne's landing, Robertson flew to Beverly Hills to help promote "Spider-Man 2," which opens in theaters on June 30. He plays Ben Parker, uncle of Spider-Man's alter-ego, Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire), in the film.

■ **LAS VEGAS** — Comedian and celebrity fashion critic Joan Rivers will return to Sin City for the first time in nine years, appearing for four nights at the Stardust hotel-casino.

"The last time I appeared in Las Vegas, they were wearing hoop skirts and Davy Crockett hats," Rivers joked. "But they say 'What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.' And as far as fashion is concerned, that's a good thing."

Rivers will be performing her "Can We Talk?" routine, a candid discussion about everyday life. The four-night engagement begins Wednesday.

■ **ATLANTA** — A televangelist is tapping into mainstream celebrities — including Magic Johnson and India. arie — to attract people to his religious festival this week in Atlanta.

With his four-day Mega Fest beginning Wednesday, Bishop T.D. Jakes hopes to draw as many as 200,000 people to a series of events and concerts at three downtown venues.

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