

FREE

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 193

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

SUPER LOTTO PLUS

28-25-9-17-22

Meganumber: 10

Jackpot: \$12 million

FANTASY 5

36, 29, 13, 05, 16

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 4, 2, 8

Evening picks: 0, 3, 4

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 01, Gold Rush

2nd Place: 10, Solid Gold

3rd Place: 06, Whirl Win

Race Time: 1:48.98



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

The Florida Legislature finally amended its open-government law in May to prohibit sex-crime inmates from getting access to photographs of their victims. Under the previous version of the law, a state appeals court had ruled that convicted sex-assaulter Dale W. Weeks was entitled, under the liberal public-records procedures, to investigative photos that depicted his victim's genitals.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament."

— Florynce Kennedy



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Evidence laid out against accused killer

DA attempts to link Victor Paleologus to Johnson murder

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

A call was made on the cell phone of the man accused of allegedly killing a Santa Monica woman from the same area her body was found on the day she disappeared.

The Los Angeles District Attorney's office laid out its case against Victor Paleologus during a preliminary trial on Wednesday. Prosecutors say the evidence links the convicted felon to the events leading up to the February killing of 21-year-old Kristi Johnson.

Paleologus, 40, is charged with capital murder in the killing of Johnson, a Santa Monica College student. If convicted, he could face the death penalty.

Santa Monica Police detectives were able to track Paleologus' cell phone activity, which places him on Laurel Canyon Drive, a street that runs through the Hollywood Hills, at 10:06 p.m. on Feb. 15, the day Johnson disappeared. Police testified that Johnson's cell phone had been used that day in the same area.



Kristi Johnson



Victor Paleologus

Paleologus has been convicted of six felonies since 1998 ranging from grand theft to burglary to assault. He was released from state prison on Jan. 20, just three weeks before Johnson disappeared.

Johnson vanished after telling her roommates she was going to meet a photographer for a publicity shoot for an upcoming James Bond movie.

Johnson was found by passersby on March 3, her body partially clothed, ankles bound and covered in a sleeping bag on a steep hillside off of Skyline Drive, a remote neighborhood in Laurel Canyon.

Five women have come forward who said they were approached by Paleologus, who claimed to be a publicity photographer for an upcoming James Bond movie, four Santa Monica Police officers testified. Some women were told they could make between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in the film starring Sean Connery and Pierce Brosnan. All of the

women were either able to escape or were suspicious enough not to meet Paleologus a second time.

In each of the cases, Paleologus asked the women to wear a men's white dress shirt, high heel black stiletto pumps, nylons and a short, black mini skirt, according to police officers' testimony.

See EVIDENCE, page 5



John Wood/Daily Press

A visitor to the Santa Monica Pier practices his dribbling in front of the stage for the annual Twilight Dance Series, which kicks off tonight with a performance by the Preservation Hall Jazz Band and runs every Thursday through August.

Twilight series returns to Santa Monica Pier

By Daily Press staff

The Twilight Dance Series kicks off the summer season on the Santa Monica Pier today with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, renowned as the world's greatest purveyor of Dixieland jazz.

Now in its 19th year, the Twilight Dance Series is a free weekly event that attracts hundreds of people to the pier on Thursday nights throughout the summer.

All concerts take place from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on the pier's parking decks. Parking is available in beach lots and concert goers can ride The Tide, a shuttle that serves some beach lots and goes from downtown to

the pier for 25 cents.

Next Thursday Aloha Live! featuring Willie K & Amy Hanaiali'i and special guests Ernie Cruz Jr. and Makana will take the stage. On July 10, look for Grammy nominees The Afro Celts and on July 27 the Wailing Souls is tentatively scheduled to play. Dark Star Orchestra plays on July 24 and the 14-piece band known as Salif Keita will play on July 31st.

Maraca will kick off the August portion of the series and on Aug. 14 Latin group The Sidestepper and Los Amigos Invisibles will play. The series will conclude with an Aug. 21 performance by The Platters with Billy Richards' Coasters.

Wedding photographer has charges reduced

Juli Anne Armitage returned missing photos

BY JOHN WOOD
Daily Press Staff Writer

The criminal prosecution of a local wedding photographer who allegedly cheated more than 50 couples out of their nuptial photos appears to be reaching its end.

Juli Anne Armitage met with prosecutors four times in the past month to return to her clients boxes of slides, negatives and photos from weddings she was hired to shoot but never actually delivered a finished product for.

Because of her cooperation, prosecutors on Tuesday reduced the four grand theft charges down to one. Armitage pleaded guilty to four

of 17 counts against her in May.

A restitution hearing will be set July 15 and Armitage is expected to refund thousands of dollars to the couples who hired her.

"An overwhelming majority of these couples are going to get their pictures back," said Santa Monica Deputy District Attorney Adam Radinsky. "Pictures they thought they would never see again."

Armitage became the focus of a criminal investigation late last year after a string of small claims cases were won against her by former clients and a handful of complaints were made to the Santa Monica City Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit.

The city in December charged her with 17 counts of grand theft,

See ARMITAGE, page 6



Juli Anne Armitage

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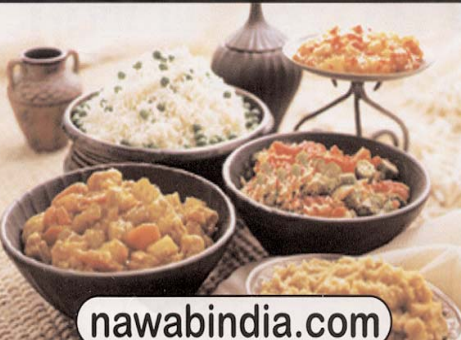
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HOROSCOPE

Happy 1st Birthday, Jaden Olson



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)
★★★★★ What happens right now is volatile, to say the least. You might have difficulty digesting some of the information that passes your way. Be careful how you express your anger. Discuss your feelings so that others can hear them. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ You might think you're on cruise control, but quite the contrary, much comes down your path that you didn't anticipate. A friend might have given you some bad advice. Be your own person. Trust yourself. Tonight: Redo your budget if need be.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Obstacle upon obstacle could be thrown in your path, but you will not succumb if you're really the spirited Twin we think you are. Bosses push hard. You might want to give a hard kick back — don't. Play it cool. Think long term, then you'll be in the driver's seat. Tonight: As you like it.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Knowing when to listen is one of your best trademarks. The time is NOW. Others might throw a boomerang in your path. You can hop right over it. You don't need to address any issues. Your actions speak for themselves. Tonight: Catch up on some sleep.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Just because a close associate might be a raging bull doesn't mean you have to let it ruin your day. Be that happy-go-lucky Lion and find greener pastures where others might be easier-going. Groups and meetings prove to be your strong suit. Tonight: You attract what you want.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Others indeed seem to be on the warpath. Even if you held out a white flag, it might make little difference. Focus on what you do best: your work. Your concentration helps you let go of external stress. Allow others the space to chill. Tonight: A must appearance.

♏ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ If you look at the long term in your day-to-day life rather than reacting to each bump, today could make a lot of sense. Be willing to incorporate new technology into your life and work. That willingness could separate you from the flock. Tonight: Togetherness works.

♐ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Take the high road, even if others seem to be taking the low road. Brainstorm with a most trusted associate, and you'll find answers to your questions. Why try to work out a puzzle alone? Together you make an exceptional team. Tonight: Say "yes" to a loved one or friend.

♑ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Work through your problems on a domestic level. What might be of concern is that this specific other party is in the same mindset. You will find others most helpful and instrumental right now. Tonight: Let others lead the conversation.

♒ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Communications continue to be startling at best and sometimes even shocking. Your best bet is to focus on your work rather than getting into it with someone. Be open to different ideas, but don't feel like you need to give a "yes" or "no." Tonight: Put your feet up.

♓ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Your playfulness delights a child or loved one. But be careful where you let in this devil-may-care attitude. Use restraint with finances and your professional life, even if you might not want to right this very moment. Tonight: Get into the Friday night spirit.

♐ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ You could cause yourself some trouble if you do not curb your anxiety and fiery nature right now. Do what you need to do to stay centered and to not get off-kilter. A family member helps you out by just being who he or she is. Check out an investment. Tonight: Keep on smiling.

CORRECTION — In the June 25 edition, the date for when free service begins on Line 4 of the Big Blue Bus was omitted. It begins June 29 and runs until July 3.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Elks host 'Gold Star' moms

By Daily Press Staff

The mothers of a handful of veterans who lost their lives in the line of duty had a day out courtesy of the Elks last weekend.

The Santa Monica Elks on Sunday hosted six "Gold Star" mothers for brunch and entertainment at their local lodge.

President Woodrow Wilson in May of 1918 declared that women should wear a black arm band on their left arm with a gold star for each son who had given his life in service to the nation.

Two of the mothers that visited the Elks Lodge on Sunday had lost a son in World War II, three had lost a son in the Korean War and one had lost a son in Vietnam. All of the mothers now reside in a home specifically for Gold Star mothers.

In 1929, American Gold Star Mothers Inc. was incorporated in Washington D.C. and in 1940 President Franklin Roosevelt designated the last Sunday of September as Gold Star Mothers Day. Each Year the Santa Monica Elks #906 pick up the ladies and bring them to the lodge for the day.

Free HIV testing tomorrow

By Daily Press staff

Be safe, smart and well fed. Get an AIDS test this Friday.

Common Ground, a Santa Monica-based AIDS services organization, and Night Light Youth Outreach, a project of Ocean Park Community Center that serves the needs of homeless youth on the Westside, are preparing special services for national HIV Testing Day, Friday, June 27th.

Free testing and information will be offered from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the new Youth Drop-In Center, located at 2012 Lincoln Blvd. in Santa Monica. Snacks and refreshments will also be served.

Common Ground and Night Light Youth have worked together since 2000 in assisting homeless and runaway youth with emergency services, case management, living skills, HIV and hepatitis testing and counseling, referrals and advocacy.

Thanks to a March 2003 California Endowment grant, Common Ground through its Homeless Youth Peer Education project runs the Youth Drop-In Center every Tuesday and Friday evening. The center gives kids a hot meal and access to a range of programs and services.

The drop-in center is operated in collaboration with Night Light Youth Outreach services and staffed by employees from both agencies as well as a generous base of community volunteers.

Ex-SMMUSD official named superintendent of schools

By Daily Press staff

Once the local assistant superintendent of schools, Sue Gee has moved on to take the helm of a district in Massachusetts.

Gee has been appointed superintendent of the Gill-Montague Regional School District. Previously, she was assistant superintendent in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District and the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union as well as principal of Arlington Memorial High School in Vermont and O'Maley Middle School in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Most recently, Gee directed a nationwide school improvement program based at the Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts. She began her career in public education in 1966 as a teacher. Her husband, Thomas Gee, a former college president and member of the Santa Monica Housing Commission, is now senior vice president of FCD Educational Services in Newton, Massachusetts. They live in Rockport and have four children, and five grandchildren.



The S swell should hold through today, producing some pretty fun sets. And the NW is hanging on in the background, sending some love to the less-exposed breaks.

BAD NEWS: The S fades going into the weekend.

GOOD NEWS: A new but very inconsistent SW swell will arrive sometime this weekend.

OUTLOOK: A S swell off of South America will be pumping sets into the bay starting July 2nd. In the meantime, those thunderstorms off of Mainland Mexico are still forming...

(Get stoked on an epic sesh? Get burned by a bad report? E-mail wood@smpd.com and tell us.)

Today the
water is:

67°

Sunrise: 5:50 a.m.
Sunset: 8:15 p.m.

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	10:09	0.7	11:34	2.1	3:19	3.9	5:16	4.6
SUNDAY	10:55	1.2	N/A	N/A	4:45	3.5	5:53	4.8
MONDAY	12:37	1.6	(11:38)	1.5	6:08	3.3	6:25	5.1
TUESDAY	1:26	1.0	12:17	1.9	7:19	3.3	6:54	5.3
WEDNESDAY	2:06	0.5	12:53	2.1	8:17	3.3	7:23	5.6
THURSDAY	2:42	0.1	1:27	2.3	9:05	3.4	7:53	5.8
FRIDAY	3:16	-0.2	2:00	2.4	9:47	3.5	8:23	5.9

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The Q Line

To help meet a \$16.1 million budget shortfall, city officials agreed last week to raise the cost of most parking tickets issued by the City of Santa Monica.

Now, for example, parking in a "preferential" spot will cost \$47 instead of \$38. That's right, nearly 50 bucks. The fee for an expired meter is set to go from \$28 to \$35.

There are more than 50 types of parking violations in Santa Monica and the city controls the fee levels for 30 of them. The increases are expected to generate \$2.2 million for city coffers.

Councilman Bob Holbrook, who cast the sole dissenting vote against the increases said, "The rates that are proposed are excessive."

So this week Q-Line wants to know, "Is \$47 too much to pay for a parking ticket? In what other areas could the city make some extra cash?"

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

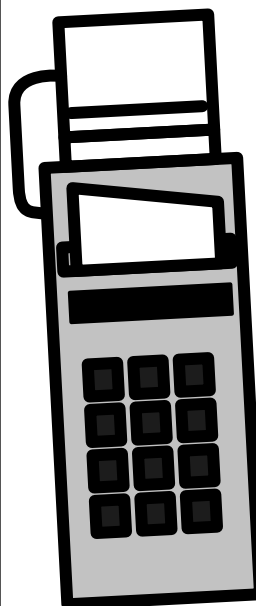
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OPINION

LETTERS

Sidewalk ramps are necessary

Editor:

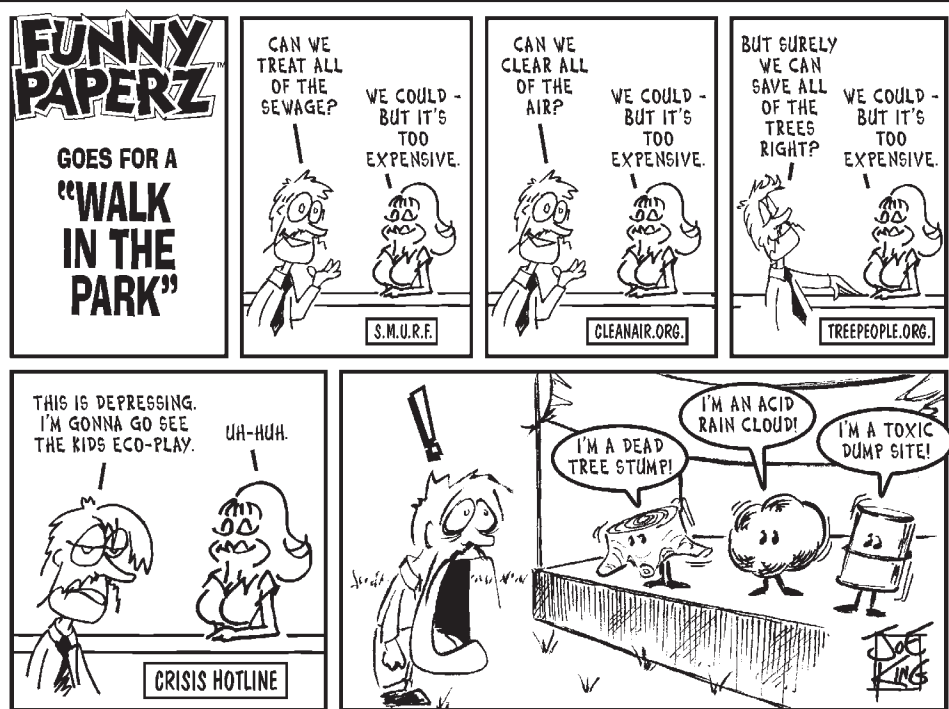
In reply to Ms. Reeves' letter (SMDP, June 18) and Mr. or Ms. Iles' letter (SMDP, June 20) regarding street construction, I would like to correct their misconceptions about the curb ramps or "down/up handicap ramps."

The curb ramps are required by both state and federal law to allow full physical access to sidewalks for people with a physical disability that does not permit them to step up on (or down from) a curb. Some of Santa Monica's curb ramps were constructed in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s before the current guidelines for curb ramps were established by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (called the Access Board), which is a federal agency. As a result, they were not very accessible to many people — most were too steep or too narrow and lacked grooves in the concrete designed to signal people who are blind or partially sighted who use a cane that a curb ramp was there. State and federal laws also require that curb ramps be installed, replaced or repaired, if necessary, when major construction is undertaken on a street.

In addition to allowing people with mobility impairments to access shopping, dining and other businesses and services, curb ramps see heavy use by people pushing baby strollers and shopping carts, and skaters. While it is true that the curb cuts allow easy access to the sidewalks for bicyclists who illegally ride on the sidewalk, the benefits of the curb ramps to all types of pedestrians far outweigh the drawbacks. And don't forget, they're required by law as well as being the right thing to do to help make it possible for people with many different kinds of disabilities be independent.

In regard to the comment by Ms. Reeves that she "... rarely, if ever see(s) (them) being used by a handicapped person..." I can confidently say that many of the people she sees using them have a permanent or temporary physical disability — it just isn't obvious. Non-apparent disabilities that limit mobility include arthritis, heart disease, respiratory illness, multiple sclerosis and a host of other conditions.

Janet Hand
ADA Coordinator
City of Santa Monica



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Solving the world's problem from above the palm trees



TITTINGER'S TAKE

By Michael J. Tittinger

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle walk into a bar ...

Well, actually, the three walk out of a Santa Monica bar, but their night is just beginning. "Last call" is really just a call to order for the weekly gathering atop a local rooftop. Yes, it's 3 a.m. on a Monday morning and while the rest of the city sleeps in preparation to tackle the dreaded, upcoming work week, it's time for yet another edition of the "Rooftop Café."

Armed with just a sack of Pacifico longnecks, Heineken pounders and enough cigarettes to suffocate a series of lab rats, the trio ascends the wrought iron ladder to their tar swept dais with an unwritten agenda in mind. And while the players may change from week to week, and the philosophies vary, the goal remains constant — to discuss the world, to change the world, ... or, at least, to question their world in the hopes of making some sense of it.

There are no hard and fast rules at the Rooftop Café, except for a lack of pretense. Egos are left on the asphalt and pavement below, with all the other assorted trash and personal baggage that litters any bustling metropolitan street. In the dipping ocean breeze air and clouded cover of night, openness reigns with the only witnesses being the stars and heavens above.

"I'm gonna call my brother," says

Plato, reaching to corral his cell phone which inevitably slides down the sloped rooftop, stopping as it clinks against a Heineken. "He's probably already headed for work and here I am sitting on a rooftop in Santa Monica, drinking beers and howling at the moon."

"Man, where I come from," he turns back to the others on the roof, "people are born and raised in their hometown and never leave. They never venture outside their little worlds. I'm 32 and married and feel like I'm 13 again up here, drinking and looking at palm trees. I go back home and it's sad. They're all still living the exact same lives they were five, 10 years ago."

"Don't they know there's a whole world out there?" questions Socrates.

If nothing else, the Rooftop Café provides one with a different perspective, a chance to step away from the every day and see the city in a new light. Socrates likens it to the famous scene in "Dead Poet's Society," when Robin Williams' English teacher character beseeches each of his students to stand atop his desk at the front of the room, if only to see the world through another's eyes for a moment.

Each of us "trying to suck the marrow out of life."

"You see the city and area through others' eyes when they come out to visit," offers Socrates. "They're like 'wow.' Sometimes it's easy to forget or lose track of how beautiful it is out here. You lose perspective."

Aristotle smiles simply.

"It's when you see people collecting a sea shell from the beach, like 'this is from the Pacific.' Or, they just want to put their feet in the ocean to say they were here and

we have all this around us every day."

Things are most definitely different up here on Rooftop Café, where the run of the mill and the in your face is taken out of the equation. There is a broader perspective, a sense of the bigger picture where rumination eclipses frustration.

The pestering transients who beg for favors each day, rudely interrupting residents' peaceful moments of sunshine and mocha lattes with their incessant appeals, appear different from the rooftops, as they settle in for the night on the cold, hard concrete to gain some much-needed mental harmony.

The open trench that is the current state of Wilshire Boulevard begins to hint at the safer thoroughfare the city promised when they green-lighted construction of the lane-dividing safe havens for walkers. Sitting amongst the calming stars and the clouds, it's hard to remember why we'd get so irate being slowed down on the afternoon commute knowing the whole situation is just temporary. It's all just a blip in time and a safer city for our kids and our grandparents should be the intended result.

A series of local auto dealer storefronts can be seen from the perch — Mercedes and Jaguars, Ferraris and BMWs — and it's harder and harder to get as riled up about those \$38 street-cleaning parking tickets as it was in the heat of the afternoon ... from ground level.

"Man, I needed some money and just liquidated my car," offers Aristotle. "I didn't even have to think about it. It's pointless trying to keep up with the Joneses here anyway."

"What's the point?"

The topic transitions from keeping up to meeting up, as the three philosophers of the night liken the making of friends in Santa Monica to dating, complete with a wooing stage and a sudden burst of excitement when plans are set with a new acquaintance. All three are transplants from other parts of the country.

"It's like everyone's looking for someone to go to Catalina with or something," says Aristotle, lamenting the fact that a new acquaintance will be calling him the next day, as he does each day off, just to "check in."

"It's like we are all a bunch of transplanted organs sitting in igloo ice chests in search of a host."

The three chew on that one for a moment, before adjourning.

Solutions are not always forthcoming at the Rooftop Café, but the questioning does not cease. There are no notes, no minutes taken, no roll call. It's a quasi-version of the "Socrates Café" promoted by author Christopher Phillips in his book of the same name, whereby individuals from all walks of life meet and discuss everything under the sun, questioning and questioning as the great Athenian philosopher did some 2,400 years ago.

Questioning and questioning. It seems to be a start.

According to legend, the original Socrates, when faced with the choice of an unjust banishment or a cold cup of hemlock, chose the latter.

"The unexamined life is not worth living."

(Mike Tittinger is a freelance writer living in Santa Monica. To reach him, e-mail to Tooroam@aol.com).

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

LOCAL



File photo

This home, located at 8583 Skyline Drive, was toured by accused killer Victor Paleologus and a real estate agent before Kristi Johnson disappeared. Her body was found several hundred feet away in a ravine.

Preliminary trial of accused killer expected to end today

EVIDENCE, from page 1

Those items of clothing were what Johnson bought at department stores at the Century City Mall the day she disappeared, according to the last credit card transactions she made, SMPD detectives testified.

Johnson had apparently met Paleologus earlier that morning at the mall and agreed to meet him later in the day.

Shopping bags from department stores that Johnson visited were found by police in Paleologus' West Hollywood residence more than a week later, police testified.

Paleologus' attorney, Andrew Flier, argued that his client is being targeted by police based on his criminal past. He said the case against Paleologus is nearly all circumstantial.

Evidence also places Paleologus in the area where Johnson's body was found a week before she disappeared.

A real estate agent showed Paleologus on Feb. 8 a vacant two-story Spanish style home on Skyline Drive, several hundred feet from where Johnson's body was found, SMPD detective Larry Nichols testified.

When touring the properties, Paleologus asked the real estate agent to stand in specific areas of the residences and speak loudly so he could check the insulation of the homes, Nichols testified.

The real estate agent told police he showed 10 different vacant homes to Paleologus for seven consecutive days, each time picking him up at the Century Plaza Hotel, where the St. Regis Hotel is located and within minutes of the Century City Mall. Paleologus told the real estate agent he didn't have a car but was in the process of buying one.

Johnson's car had been valet parked at the St. Regis Hotel on Feb. 16 — the day after she disappeared, although it wasn't discovered for more than a week.

Paleologus was arrested the next day for allegedly stealing a car in Beverly Hills. He has been in jail ever since.

Paleologus allegedly tried to buy a car at Beverly Hills BMW using the name, social security number and credit history of Robert Wasvary, who owns a home on Wonderland Park Avenue in the Hollywood Hills — just blocks away

from where Johnson's body was found.

Flier said the DA's case is weak because the prosecution has no scientific evidence linking Paleologus to the murder — no fingerprints were found in her car, no blood or DNA was found in any of the places searched by police, or near her body.

Evidence also places Paleologus in the area where Johnson's body was found a week before she disappeared.

During cross examination, Flier attempted to find holes in the police officers' testimony, showing that much of it was based on information told to them by other people with little or no concrete evidence.

Paleologus claims he's innocent.

"They had information that Victor Paleologus was a dirt bag in the past and when they heard his name, they figured he did it," Flier said, adding that lying to women is not a crime. "There are some similarities of him meeting someone under a false pretense but how many men have picked up pretty women saying they are someone else?"

Whether or not he can convince a jury of that remains to be seen.

"Do I have enough to get around the pattern? I don't know," Flier said.

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

The DA's case will be heard today in downtown Los Angeles Superior Court with testimony from one more SMPD detective. After the prosecution rests its case, Superior Court Judge Dennis Aichroth will make a decision on whether the case should go to a trial.

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Dennis C. Hardin, M.F.T., Ph.D., is a licensed psychotherapist and marriage counselor specializing in personal growth and goal achievement. He is the author of THE ETHICS OF PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT. He has also been certified by the Albert Ellis Institute in the techniques of rational-emotive behavioral therapy. His specialty is developing self-help methods which enable clients to retake control of their lives and remake their own destiny.

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LOCAL □ STATE



Attorney: Armitage's plea was made under pressure

ARMITAGE, from page 1

saying she took an average of \$2,000 each from dozens of local couples and failed to deliver on their wedding images.

Since then, more than 50 couples have contacted the city, saying Armitage either didn't show up at all or failed to deliver the high-end product she advertised.

Armitage, who cleared about \$50,000 in debt in a bankruptcy filing earlier this year, said the whole matter rose out of bad bookkeeping. She said she never intentionally withheld pictures from her clients.

Many of the couples who worked with Armitage described her as flaky but well-intentioned and wondered how she allowed her problems to escalate.

Armitage's attendance in Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Bernard Kamins' courtroom earlier this year was so sporadic that Kamins was forced in April to issue a \$50,000 bench warrant for her.

A week later, Armitage was arrested for allegedly jaywalking in Ventura, where she now resides. She spent 11 days in jail while attorneys hammered out her plea agreement.

As part of the plea, Armitage has been assigned a formal probation officer and asked to complete 180 days of psychiatric counseling. She will not be barred from working as a photographer, though the court did demand she accept only 10 percent down payment for her jobs and take no more than 50 percent of her fee before photo shoots take place.

Armitage will not face any fines or penalties, prosecutors said, so that every available penny can go to the couples and

not to the court system.

Radinsky said consumers should learn from Armitage's story. He recommended contacting the Better Business Bureau before hiring a photographer and never paying full price until after the final product is delivered.

"Any deal probably sounded better than going back to jail that night."

— PAUL COHEN
Attorney

If she abides by all the parameters of her plea, Armitage will be taken off of formal probation.

When he negotiated the plea, Kamins said he was offering Armitage a life-saving rope that she could either use to climb out of trouble or hang over her head. He credited Kerry Golub, her fill-in public defender, with finding a resolution to a highly emotional and protracted case.

But others have questioned the way Armitage was treated by the justice system, saying she should have been pursued in civil — not criminal — court.

"Any deal probably sounded better than going back to jail that night," said Paul Cohen, Armitage's bankruptcy attorney. "There are many a criminal defendant that plead guilty for reasons that have nothing to do with their guilt or innocence."

Los Angeles: More drugs, less murder than last year

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Police Chief William J. Bratton said arrests by his gang and narcotics units rose significantly in the first half of the year while murders and violent crime continued to drop.

Gang enforcement teams, an outgrowth of Bratton's reorganization that specifically targeted gang activity, made 3,225 arrests — an 83.6 percent jump over the same period last year, Bratton told the Police Commission on Tuesday.

Drug units, which have also been overhauled, logged 3,014 arrests through June 21, a 90.4 percent increase over the same span in 2002.

Bratton attributed the higher arrest figures to his command staff, which has focused police resources on problem gang areas. He said the improvements came with the same number of personnel in the field.

Total arrests citywide increased 9.7 percent, to 65,880, through June 21, compared with 60,045 by that date last year.

At the same time, violent crimes like rape, robbery and aggravated assault fell 3.4 percent. Homicides dropped 21.9 percent, with 240 people killed through June 21, compared with 306 last year.

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NATIONAL □ INTERNATIONAL



WORLD BRIEFLY

Violence erupts in Liberian capital

By The Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia — Shells exploded in refugee-crowded neighborhoods of Liberia's capital Wednesday, sending thousands of civilians fleeing as President Charles Taylor's forces battled rebels pressing hard into Monrovia.

Fighting shattered a week-old truce and raised prospects of the deadliest possible end to Liberia's 3-year-old insurgency: an all-out battle among undisciplined armies for the city of 1 million, now packed with hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Battles Tuesday night and Wednesday appeared to mark the fiercest yet combat in the city. They also signaled the first time Taylor's forces and rebels had battled virtually through the night.

"This blatant act of terror will be fought all the way," Taylor declared on his private radio station Wednesday, denying, as artillery boomed, that he had fled the city.

U.S. Embassy re-opens, threat less likely

By The Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — The U.S. Embassy in Kenya reopened Wednesday after closing temporarily because of a Pentagon alert about a possible terrorist attack.

The embassy was first closed Friday as part of an ongoing process to close the mission at least one day a week.

The one-day closures have been taking place since May 15, when the U.S. State Department issued a beefed-up terrorism advisory for American citizens warning against travel to the East African nation.

But following a U.S. Defense Department terrorism alert Friday that raised the threat level in the country to "high," officials decided to keep the embassy closed on Monday and Tuesday.

Embassy officials, who do not ordinarily publicly discuss security matters, would not say if the embassy would be closed again.

Kenya has been the scene of two terrorist attacks — both blamed on al-Qaida — in the last five years, and recent intelligence has raised fears of another attack.

Cardboard gun allows inmate to escape

By The Associated Press

MONROE, Wash. — One day after he used a cardboard gun to escape from a courthouse, an inmate was fatally wounded Tuesday in a shootout that also wounded a police officer, authorities said.

Harold McCord Jr. was airlifted to a Seattle hospital, where he died, authorities said. The unidentified officer, also airlifted to Harborview Medical Center, reportedly was hit in the hand and arm.

The shootout took place at an apartment complex in Monroe, about 60 miles northeast of Tacoma. McCord, 36, had been sentenced earlier this month to life in prison under Washington's "three strikes" law.

McCord's handcuffs and shackles were removed while he was in court Monday. He ran from the courtroom and was tackled by a guard. As they were fighting, he pulled out what appeared to be a handgun. Other officers lowered their weapons and he fled.

The fake gun was found, officials said. It was made of cardboard from the backing of legal pads, stuffed with toilet paper and covered with newspaper blackened with ink from a ball point pen.

First Amendment saves cop, firefighters

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal judge has ruled that the First Amendment rights of two firefighters and a police officer were violated when the city fired them for riding in blackface on a parade float in 1998.

The government "may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because a segment of society finds it offensive," U.S. District Judge John E. Sprizzo said in his ruling Tuesday.

Sprizzo rejected statements by former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani that the firings stemmed from concerns over civil unrest, saying he concluded that the "true motivation" was Giuliani's belief that the float was a "disgusting display of racism."

Those on the Labor Day float threw watermelon and fried chicken to parade-goers and made it appear as if one of the men in blackface was being dragged — not long after the highly publicized case of James Byrd Jr., a black man in Texas who was dragged to his death from a pickup truck, city officials said.

The white employees — firefighters Jonathan Walters and Robert Steiner and police officer Joseph Locurto — sued the city to get their jobs back. They testified they had no racist intent and that their actions were protected by the First Amendment because the float was a parody.

Republicans pat themselves on back

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans are congratulating themselves for whisking the first bill financing the new Homeland Security Department through the House, winning unanimous Democratic support.

Despite their votes, Democrats said the \$29.4 billion measure came up short.

The GOP-run chamber voted 425-2 on Tuesday to approve the legislation, which increases spending for state and local emergency workers, steps to thwart bioterrorists and port protection.

"The House has fulfilled our promise to better secure America by ensuring the Department of Homeland Security has the tools it needs to thwart terrorist activity," House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., said after the vote.

Democrats said the bill was shy of a strenuous effort to shore up gaps in the nation's defenses against terrorism. They said the bill's \$100 million to buttress security at ports, for example, is a small fraction of the \$4.4 billion the Coast Guard has estimated will be needed over the next decade.

"There are gaping holes in our security, and at the rate we're going it will be many years before they can be filled," said Rep. Jose Serrano, D-N.Y.

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COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



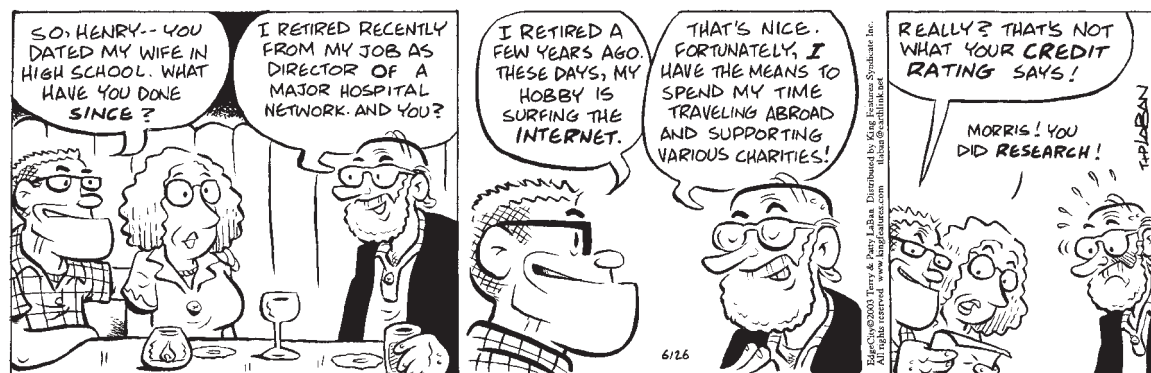
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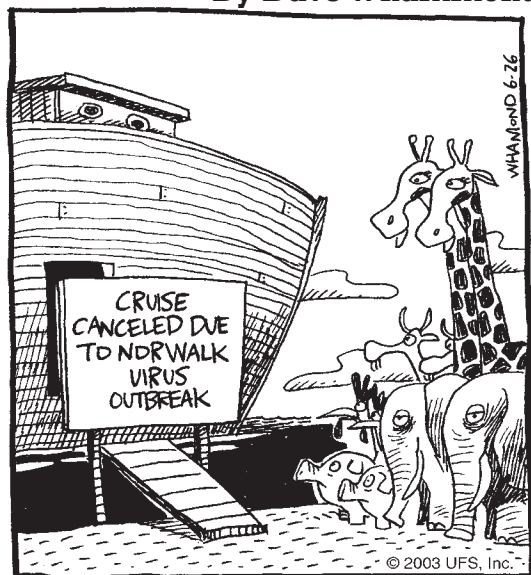
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CROSSWORD By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Addition-ally
- 5 Task
- 10 Incite
- 11 Mason's tool
- 12 Just
- 13 Intern's chore
- 14 Has fun, in slang
- 16 Lands
- 20 Anaheim team
- 23 Micro-scopic
- 24 Record material
- 25 Steamer trunk
- 27 Not — dare
- 28 Drinks to
- 29 Dampens
- 32 Disap-points
- 36 Ross's sister
- 39 Vivacity
- 40 Beast
- 41 Does something
- 42 Push off
- 43 Deep cut

2 Single

- 3 Shaker fill
- 4 Long voyage
- 5 Field fliers
- 6 Hunting dog
- 7 Possess
- 8 Wine choice
- 9 Golf's Ernie
- 11 Easy gaits
- 15 Valley
- 17 Has debts
- 18 Sunset site
- 19 Takes home
- 20 Swear
- 21 Broadway musical
- 22 Pesky insect
- 25 Intimi-dates
- 26 Purse
- 28 Complete
- 30 Gunk

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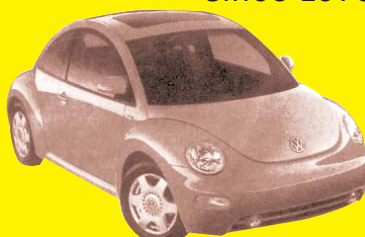
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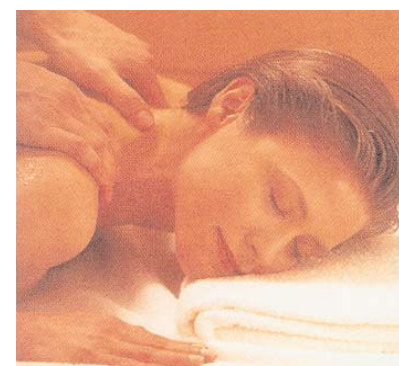
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Comedian Foxx's fight at Harrah's casino goes to court

By The Associated Press

■ **NEW ORLEANS** — Comedian Jamie Foxx's trial on charges from a fight with guards at Harrah's casino was delayed Wednesday until Sept. 8.

Police have said Foxx, his sister, Diedra Dixon, and others in the entertainer's 10-person entourage refused a guard's order to show identification when they entered the casino near the French Quarter on April 26.

Police said Foxx splashed water from a fountain, cursed loudly, refused to leave when security guards asked and fought with officers. Dixon was accused of hitting a police officer while partially handcuffed, sending the officer to the hospital.

Foxx pleaded innocent to the misdemeanor charges. Dixon, of Tarzana, Calif., also pleaded innocent to misdemeanor battery on a police officer and resisting arrest charges.

The 35-year-old comedian was not in New Orleans municipal court on Wednesday.

Foxx, who lives in Hollywood, had been in town to film "Unchain My Heart," in which he stars as Ray Charles. He created and starred in "The Jamie Foxx Show" (1996-2001) and has appeared in other television shows and movies, including 1999's "Any Given Sunday."

■ **NEW YORK** — Spike Lee, who's suing to stop Viacom International from renaming its TNN cable channel as "Spike TV," must post a \$2.5 million bond to cover the media giant's costs if it wins the case, a Manhattan judge said.

Lee had posted a \$500,000 bond June 13 after winning a temporary injunction against Viacom's plan to rename TNN. State Supreme Court Justice Walter Tolub gave him until Thursday to post the additional \$2 million.

The 46-year-old director of films including "Malcolm X" and "Do the Right Thing" got the injunction after claiming that Viacom, owner of the CBS network, MTV

and Showtime, was renaming TNN in a deliberate attempt to hijack his name, image and reputation.

On Tuesday, the judge revised the amount of Lee's bond after hearing testimony from TNN vice president Kevin Kay that the network had lost millions of dollars since the injunction and could lose millions more before the case goes to trial Aug. 18.

Examples of lost money, Kay said, include \$1.4 million for a launch party at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles and \$5.7 million to advertise TNN as Spike TV. Kay said Viacom would spend at least \$8.4 million after the trial to rename TNN, even if it must be called something besides Spike TV.

Lee's lawyers said Kay exaggerated Viacom's losses since much of TNN's printed matter, videotape and other material is reusable whether Viacom uses the name Spike or not. They said Viacom's losses were hundreds of thousands of dollars, not millions.

One of Lee's lawyers, Terry Gross, also suggested that Viacom's damages had been lessened by the extensive media coverage TNN had received because of Lee's lawsuit.

Viacom wants to change TNN's name to Spike TV to attract more men to an audience that's already about two-thirds male.

The network shows reruns of "The A-Team," "Baywatch" and "Miami Vice" and sports entertainment such as professional wrestling and "American Gladiators." It also carries an animated series featuring Pamela Anderson as the voice of Stan Lee's "Stripperella," an undercover agent who's also a stripper.

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Joey Fatone of 'N Sync, who has appeared on Broadway in "Rent" and is hosting the talent search show "Fame," is preparing for a new role — husband.

Fatone said Tuesday he asked his longtime girlfriend, Kelly, to marry him June 18 in Orlando, Fla. He told host Craig Kilborn on CBS's "The Late Late Show" that

the two have been dating for 10 years and have a 2-year-old daughter together.

The 26-year-old singer said his girlfriend had wanted to get engaged at the picturesque Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco but had never been there, so he draped a billboard of the building over the front of his house.

"So when I drove up I said, 'What's the one place that I didn't take you?'" Fatone said. "She saw the 'Palace of Fine Arts' ... I went on my knees, got all teary-eyed and I just froze for a second. So I was like, 'Hey, will you marry me?'"

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Lou Reed took a walk on the wild side down to Hollywood's RockWalk, where he placed his handprints and signature outside the Guitar Center music store on Sunset Boulevard.

"I think that's fantastic," he said of the honor Tuesday. "I'm very, very surprised and really get a kick out of this."

Best known for the 1972 hit "Walk on the Wild Side," Reed recently came out with a compilation spanning 35 years in music called "NYC Man — The Ultimate Lou Reed Collection." Other albums from the founding member of the seminal avant-garde rock group the Velvet Underground include "Berlin," "Metal Machine Music" and "Transformer."

Reed, whose lyrics often explore the urban underground, said a continuing theme in his music has been people living outside society's mainstream.

"I've tried to always think about and represent people who don't have very much: the underdog, people who are on the outside," the 61-year-old said.

He added that Tuesday's honor wouldn't change that. "I follow my passion and I'm not really concerned with what other people do," he said.

Other musicians celebrated on the RockWalk include B.B. King, Brian Wilson, Johnny Cash, Carlos Santana, James Brown, Carl Perkins, Bonnie Raitt and John Lee Hooker.



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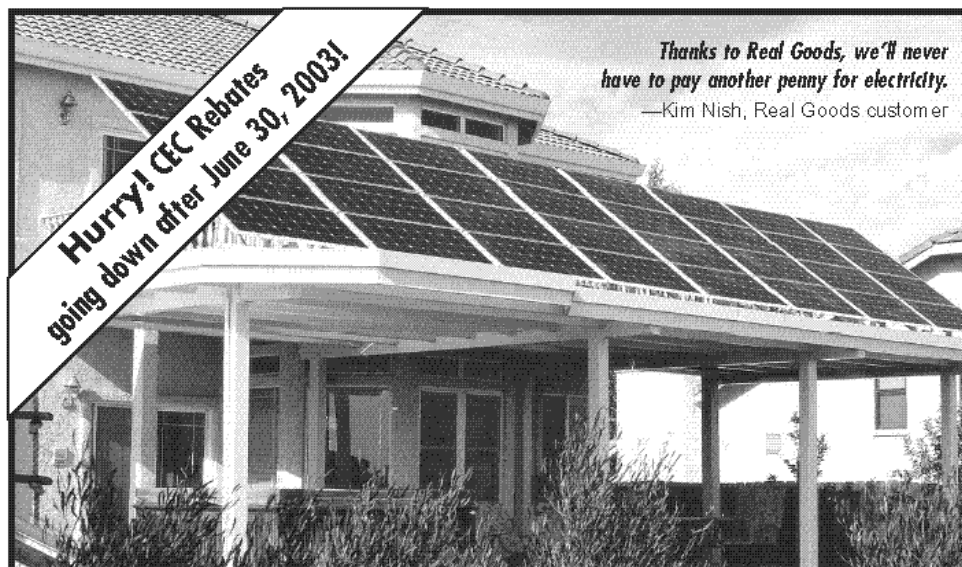
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