

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

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Daytime: 7 0 2

Evening: 9 5 9

DAILY DERBY

1st: 09 Winning Spirit

2nd: 11 Money Bags

3rd: 02 Lucky Star

RACE TIMES: 1:42.89



NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ George Stanichuk, trying to convince a Boston Herald reporter in March of his innocence in his girlfriend's disappearance, insisted that the woman having previously gotten a restraining order against him was not telltale evidence: In fact, he said, "every girl I've gone out with has put a restraining order against me." And in New Port Richey, Fla., in February, Robert Scott Schwartz, representing himself in a domestic violence hearing, admitted that he had beat his girlfriend for "a few minutes," slammed her head into the stove, pulled her hair, and stuck his thumbs into her eye sockets, but nonetheless turned to her in the courtroom and said, "I'm willing to overlook a lot of things if you can just get along with me."

■ In Albany, Ga., high school English teacher Carla Murray, 32, resigned after officials found a poem she had allegedly written to one of her students (among other notes that indicated an affair between the two). The poem: "The smell of your cologne mixed w/ sweat / The sounds you make while (omitted in the Associated Press story) / The touch of your hands / There's more, but I won't embarrass myself by mentioning them."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I was the person in contact with all the graffiti writers in New York, through them, I had gotten into contact with the Rocksteady Crew and other b-boys."

— HENRY CHALFANT
STYLE WARS

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About to be fired



Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II/Daily Press

Although it's illegal, a group of Santa Monicans have amassed thousands of dollars in fireworks. Police were reportedly called to the area, just north of Interstate 10, near the Pico neighborhood on Sunday, where at least one person was cited. Apparently the fireworks weren't confiscated as the group planned to light the remaining M-80s, bottle rockets, mortars, dynamite sticks and firecrackers Monday night.

A league of their own: Voting group not just for women anymore

Local chapter of the League of Women Voters kick starts 2004 election activities

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN — It has less than 150 members, but its nonpartisan message reaches thousands of Santa Monicans every election year.

The local chapter of the League of Women Voters kicked off its election-year activities late last month with a forum for potential political candidates on the November ballot. Later this summer and into the fall, the league will host a series of educational forums and partner with other groups to broadcast election information.

"During an election, voters very commonly will look to the league," said Barbara Inatsugu, president of the local organization.

A variety of powerful local women spoke at the June 26 candidate workshop,

which was held at the Ken Edwards Center downtown. Among the panelists were former Mayor and City Councilwoman Judy Abdo; school board member Emily Bloomfield; Santa Monica College trustee Carole Currey; City Attorney Marsha Moutrie; Betsy Rosenfeld from the Center for Governmental Studies and City Clerk Maria Stewart.

Born out of the suffrage movement 84 years ago, the League of Women Voters is a national, nonprofit group with state and local offices. Not just women belong, though. Its 130,000 members and supporters cross cultural and gender divides.

In Santa Monica, there are about 140 members, and each pays \$55 in annual membership dues, with discounts for multiple members from the same household, officials said. Even with small grants from other outside groups, including a \$1,000 contribution from City Hall, the local chapter of the league commands an

See LEAGUE, page 7

Schools to get overhauled with new leadership

Samohi loses two-thirds of its principals

BY JOHN F. MULLER

Special to the Daily Press

SMMUSD — The school district has undergone a wide-ranging personnel shuffle in the weeks following graduation, leaving parents concerned about the future of education here and school officials scrambling to fill positions.

Entering its second year of existence, Santa Monica High School's six house system lost four of its house principals to jobs in and out of district and retirement, officials said. The district has found replacements for three of the four house principals.

The district also found a new principal for Lincoln Middle School — Kathy Scott. She will replace Hank Harris, who stepped down as principal of Lincoln in June to take an administrative post at district headquarters, Superintendent of Schools John Deasy said. Scott was the most qualified for the job as a long-time Lincoln teacher and administrator, he added.

"The main problem at Samohi is there are too many kids."

— NANCY NOVA
Local parent

Mark Kelly, Patricia Flynn, Anuar Shalash and Kathleen Martin are stepping down from their posts as house principals at Samohi. Kelly will replace Mike Mathews as the principal of Malibu High, Deasy said. Kelly had been at Samohi for five years.

The new system at Samohi divides students into different "houses," in an effort to reduce class size and give students more personalized instruction.

Within three to five years, the houses should serve as smaller communities within Samohi where teachers and advisors will know their students and each other well.

"Because of the redesign, we've gotten some really great new people," Straus said. "People are applying here to become part of the cutting edge work we're doing. I think we've made some really great hirings."

Wendy Waxgeller, long-time principal of McKinley Elementary and an advisor at Samohi last year, will fill one of three house principal positions, Straus said.

See SCHOOLS, page 6

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Don't decide on your own, Leo

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)
★★ The less said, the better. Extremes motivate you, but your best action is no action. Do research and search your feelings if need be. What you might gain through reflection could cause you to veer in another direction. Tonight: Read a book. Relax to a movie. Play it easy.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Someone has strong feelings about you. Be sensitive to this person and don't lead him or her down a path where he or she might be very unhappy. Head for exactly what you want. Success becomes your middle name. Tonight: Where your friends are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Take your bows. A boss or associate cannot praise you enough. Your hard work pays off in a big way. Laugh and enjoy yourself to the max. Be delighted by all the approval. Use good sense with finances. Tonight: Out late.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ You could make a wish or vision a reality. Back off and get a new perspective with others. You also might want to gain a perspective on a close friend. Yes, play amateur psychologist. Understand rather than judge. Tonight: Flip through some travel brochures.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Someone cannot do enough for you. Think about what you need to do in order to make a situation work. Others willingly help, even if it means getting a loan or changing some insurance plan. Check in with an accountant. Tonight: Don't make a decision on your own.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Others seek you out. You might enjoy being with others too much to get any heavy work done. A public appearance can only bring forth more of what you want. Know that others envy your persona and presentation. Tonight: Say "yes."

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Others push you hard to get a job or project done. What is true is how much you can accomplish with perspective and a willingness to revamp your approach. Realize that an expert, especially one in efficiency, might fit the bill. Tonight: If you must, bring extra work home.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Your imagination is a source that you often tap into. Why not do it one more time? In fact, a partner appreciates the extra touch that you add. Someone might be holding back some facts. Loosen up this person. Tonight: A meeting or get-together could be right up your alley.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Someone might be making a play for you, wanting your attention. Enjoy the flirtation, or work with this person's good will if he or she is a co-worker. You might have difficulty with funds someone owes you. Tonight: Happy at home.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Your abilities save the day. You also express an unusual perspective and gentleness with someone you care about, possibly at work. Take an overview if possible. You learn a lot about those around you. Tonight: Out and about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ Deal with finances by refusing to take a risk or go overboard treating another. How you see a changing situation at work might depress you. Stay on top of work. Tap into your creativity and think about ways to enhance your funds so that they go further. Tonight: Go over your budget.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Your personality magnetizes others, especially someone who makes a difference in your life. Others appreciate your friendship, even if you work with them. Don't be hard on a kid or new friend. Tonight: You're top dog.

Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday
Phone: 310.458.PRESS(7737) • Fax: 310.576.9913
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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Farmer's Market crash anniversary nears

By Daily Press staff

A ceremony will be held to remember the tragedies incurred and the lives lost in the Farmers' Market tragedy which occurred in downtown Santa Monica on July 16, 2003.

The Santa Monica Bay Interfaith Council will host the Farmer's Market Remembrance Community Service on July 16 at 1:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, located on Second Avenue and Arizona Avenue.

There also will be a non-perishable food drive to benefit the Westside Foodbank, in lieu of flowers and other offerings.

The remembrance memorial site, where an elderly man drove through the Farmers' Market, killing 10 and injuring dozens of others, will be at Third Street and Arizona Avenue from 9 a.m. on Wednesday, July 14 to Friday, July 16.

For further information, e-mail at SMBayInterfaithC@aol.com

Disabilities complex recognized

By Daily Press staff

A nonprofit organization that created a new apartment complex in Santa Monica for people with disabilities recently got a leg up.

The Westside Urban Forum honored United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties last month for developing the Hacienda del Mar housing complex for people with disabilities.

The oldest existing government building in Santa Monica, Hacienda del Mar was designed as a county health facility more than 80 years ago. Through a partnership with the city of Santa Monica, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the local philanthropic community, UCP transformed the Hacienda del Mar into an apartment complex for people with disabilities. Each year the Westside Urban Forum recognizes community development projects, programs, policies and academic studies that demonstrate excellence in urban development and community building.

The 2004 Westside Urban Forum award recipients also included the Lee Group and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservatory.

For more information about United Cerebral Palsy, visit www.ucpla.org, or call (818) 782-2211.



MYSTERY PHOTO WINNER

Patrick McGilligan is the winner of this week's mystery photo, which was taken in front of 14 Below and Over Under sports grill on Santa Monica Boulevard and 14th Street. McGilligan has won a gift certificate to Nawab, an Indian restaurant on Wilshire Boulevard. Check out the upcoming weekend edition for this week's mystery photo.

CORRECTION — The woman whose husband is serving in Iraq was misidentified in the July 3-4 edition, and improperly described in the July 5 edition. Her name is Sonja Wilson and she lives in Santa Monica.

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SURF REPORT

Look for a modest mix of SW swell and NW wind swell today. The better exposed SW/combo breaks see knee- to waist-high surf. Look for those waves to then slowly fade on Wednesday.

We'll also see some SSE swell later on Tuesday and through Wednesday mix with the SW swell to reinforce surf in the two- to three-foot range at the best exposed breaks. The Southern Hemi swell mix will be on the way down on Thursday.

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

Today the water is:

66°



LOW TIDES

HIGH TIDES

	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	5:07	-1.6	4:16	2.2	11:47	4.1	10:32	7.0
SUNDAY	5:54	-1.6	5:13	2.3	12:36	4.2	11:22	6.5
MONDAY	6:41	-1.1	6:16	2.3	N/A	N/A	1:26	4.3
TUESDAY	7:28	-0.6	7:28	2.4	12:15	5.9	2:16	4.4
WEDNESDAY	8:14	0.0	8:51	2.3	1:13	5.1	3:08	4.6
THURSDAY	9:00	0.7	10:22	2.0	2:20	4.3	3:59	4.8
FRIDAY	9:48	1.3	11:47	1.5	3:44	3.6	4:48	5.0

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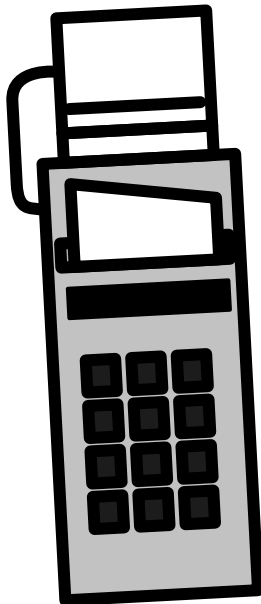
The **Q**Line

There has been some debate lately over the perceived increase of graffiti in Santa Monica. City Hall-sponsored murals, which line walls throughout town, have been the latest targets.

Some people consider graffiti as art, while many believe it's nothing more than vandalism. Its roots derive not from gang activity, but from the hip hop culture when individuals created it to express themselves.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Why can't graffiti be considered an art form, regardless of its illegality? Why isn't it socially accepted?"

Call (310) 285-8106 with your responses by 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 think about the wording of your of response.



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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letting greed ring

Editor:

This Fourth of July brings sad faces to the residents of Santa Monica. Every weekend for a decade, a group of 40 residents join together for volleyball and camaraderie at the Santa Monica courts in front of Perry’s Café. The grandest day for these volleyballers is Fourth of July. They come in masses with food and happy faces. Well, this Fourth of July the tax paying residents were denied access to their beloved courts because the city of Santa Monica chose money over their citizens. They sold all of the volleyball courts for the entire holiday weekend to a company for a tournament that lasted all day on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. It is absolutely ridiculous to turn your residents away on their favorite holiday. Who wants to celebrate America when money is chosen over its people. Thanks so much for the greed, Santa Monica.

Jamie Szusko
Santa Monica

Show a little compassion

Editor:

On behalf of Santa Monica’s homeless population, I humbly extend my deepest apologies to the Santa Monica community concerning the death of the homeless man at the YMCA, who had the termidity to die there instead of in the streets. The police report the deceased was apparently the victim of an assault. By whom? Skinhead neo-nazis? Drunks from one of the local bars? Just someone who doesn’t like homeless people in general? It really doesn’t matter — just shame on the victim for not crawling out onto public property before passing away. I’m sure he’ll try harder next time. Even here in Santa Monica, it is a rough life living on the streets every day wondering where your next meal will come from, if you’ll be hassled by the police, where you’ll sleep at night, and if you’ll be safe sleeping there. Please forgive the homeless, they’re only human. Homeless people are attacked, beaten and die. Some drink themselves to death. Homeless people do get ill and die, neglected by society. Some simply give up hope and stop living. If you must blame someone for Santa Monica’s homeless problem, don’t scapegoat our City Council. Instead, blame our dear departed President Reagan who closed mental facilities across the nation, forcing those in need of treatment to receive it at their local clinic instead of a government run facility. Guess what — there are no local clinics. If those who need and deserve treatment were to receive it, the number of homeless would be cut by half and the number of antisocial incidents would decrease tenfold. Or blame President George Bush, whose policies have forced many Americans into poverty and homelessness during the last four years while he spends billions paying Haliburton to provide housing and social services to Iraq. Even full-time American workers often cannot afford to keep a roof over themselves and their families. Many low paying starting-position jobs require a knowledge of Spanish but not necessarily English. Don’t lump all homeless into the same basket — each soul has traveled a different road to reach the streets. Instead of whining, how about doing something positive to help them out of the abyss? Ever wonder why public urination is such a theme among homeless bashers? It’s because nearly all retail operations, including Barnes & Noble, have closed their restrooms to the public, including the homeless. The human body is not designed to just “hold it.” A few porta potties strategically placed where the homeless could use them would go far towards relieving the problem of people relieving themselves. And, speaking from experience, signs in languages other than English would help.

Kenneth McCrae
Santa Monica

Something to celebrate

Editor:

I would like to thank Santa Monica College for hosting such a wonderful fireworks presentation on Saturday. My husband and I had a great time, and we look forward to next year’s event.

Jan Keller
Santa Monica

Despite our problems, America is still great



I am sitting by the pool on this Fourth of July holiday and watching my friends partake in beer and barbecue. As I watch the children swim in the pool and listen to the adults talk about politics, I can’t help but feel proud to be an American. On this one afternoon, I am experiencing some of the privileges of living in a free society. My friends and I can sit by the pool and criticize the government without fear of repercussions. We can drive to the super-market and find every kind of food item imaginable. There is rarely a shortage of anything and most items are reasonably priced. Watching the children, I can’t help but notice that they are healthy and precocious — thanks to a world-class health and educational system. Even my opportunity to enjoy a beer would not be possible in certain countries. With all the negative reports about this country coming from certain media outlets and pundits, it’s easy to become disillusioned with living in the United States. But despite these “nattering naybobs of negativity,” I still believe this is a great nation, full of opportunity, and I feel blessed to be living here. In the spirit of Independence Day, here are some of the reasons that I love America. I love America because: ■ Brave men and women have fought and died to keep our country free. ■ We fight for what we believe is right. ■ We saved the world during World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and now we are fighting terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq, and wherever evil is found. ■ We have a Bill of Rights that protect our civil liberties and freedoms. ■ Americans can speak their minds without fear of being arrested, tortured, or killed. ■ We believe that morality and liberty are not mutually exclusive. ■ I can go to sleep at night without worrying that a government death squad will knock down my door and take me away because of something I wrote in my SMDP column. ■ I can have friends who are Asian, African-American, Latino, White, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Catholic, Buddhists, and Atheists. ■ A ‘C’ student can become President of the United States. ■ A man married to a billionaire can run for the presidency on a “I represent the common person” platform. ■ I can visit the mountains, the beaches, the desert, and the forest all in the same weekend. ■ Our daughters can grow up to be anything they want to be. ■ We created the Internet and can use it to freely express our views and beliefs. ■ Our government gives billions of dollars to other countries for humanitarian aid. ■ You can start you own business without needing government permission. ■ You can stand on a street corner and speak your mind. ■ We hold peaceful elections without needing the military to monitor the polls. ■ We are free to practice or not practice the religion of our choice. ■ We are innocent until proven guilty and are guaranteed the right to a trial by jury. ■ We have a separation of powers in our government. ■ We have some of the best colleges and universities in the world. ■ Capitalism, although it has its problems, works very well and has led to unprecedented prosperity. ■ An ordinary person can lead an extraordinary life. ■ Less fortunate families can work hard to provide their children with a better life. ■ We have a law enforcement system that is generally fair and just. ■ We have come closer to providing equal rights for our population than most other countries. ■ Despite the problems with paying for health care, our doctors and medical technology is among the best in the world. ■ We create art for art’s sake and study science for the sake of knowledge. ■ On any given night, I can attend dozens of cultural events including a gay film festival, an Asian art exhibition, a Latino street festival or a church choir performance. ■ I can order chocolate Frappuccino espresso latte on any street corner. What do you love about living in America? Send me your thoughts and I will publish them in a future column. Happy 228th birthday, America.

(Matthew Glasser can be reached by e-mail at mediamatthew@yahoo.com)

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



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OPINION



Hurry up and wait to build your dream house

LEGAL NEWS & VIEWS

BY DAVID PISARRA



Santa Monica is a hotbed of activists. People here like to rant and rave about nuclear weapons, the homeless, President Bush and anything having to do with the City Council.

One of the things that people do not realize about being a councilmember is that they are the most important player in the real estate game.

Ask any developer who their greatest competition is, and they are likely to say it's the City Council. For it holds the keys to the kingdom of development.

Projects can be delayed in this city to the point where they are not financially viable, so the land goes unused. For example, the old Pioneer Boulangerie property on Main Street.

Now I know the council will say it was Architectural Review Board's fault in dragging the approval process on for years. And the ARB will blame the planning department, and planning will blame building and safety, and they will say they take orders from the City Council.

But at the end of the day, after all the buck passing, who gives a rat's patoot. The city is not reaping the positive rewards from a proactive government at all levels.

The ARB should be thinking of ways to accomplish the twin goals of allowing development and maintaining the character of the city.

Planning officials should be considering how to best accommodate the increase in population.

The City Council should be facing the reality that Santa Monica, like all other beach communities, is going to be developed. One look up and down the coast at any large city, and anyone can see that the

way of the future is bigger and denser.

Redondo, Manhattan, Hermosa, are all gorgeous beach communities that have systematically grown up. Yes they are crowded, yes they are stupidly expensive, but the reality is, if someone is willing to pay for it, it is not overpriced.

The home we just bought in April is a ramshackle, 864-square-foot home on a 7,100-square-foot-lot. We paid a stupid amount of money for it. But we did so because we have the land to expand to a decent sized home.

The problem is that the home is located in the R-2 zoned part of the city. This means that we could theoretically build a two-story apartment complex, or condominiums on the lot.

Our goal is to build a 2,000-square-foot home that we can entertain in, and have a backyard.

Now the fun begins. Because we are located in an R-2 zone, we must go through the following process to get a building permit. We start with plans at Building and Safety. They tell me to safely assume a eight-week process for them to review the plans. That's two months of waiting, while they review plans for a single-family home on a huge lot.

Then, assuming they find the plans acceptable, we have to go in front of the Architectural Review Board, and that is another eight weeks for them to review the plans.

Finally, we go to plan check, which takes between three and five months to review the plans, and let us get back to them if they have any modifications. And they always do.

So in order for us to put a simple extra 15 feet on the back of our home, and add a second story, it is seven to ninth months of approvals.

As a comparison, we spoke with the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. They said that a second story addition should take between four to six

weeks to be approved.

City Hall on the one hand wants to limit development to maintain the unique character of Santa Monica neighborhoods, or so the agenda for May 11, 2004 says, specifically in Attachment A, subsection C, which reads, "The City Council adopted this moratorium to provide the city sufficient time to evaluate the effects of this high rate of development and to develop appropriate requirements and programs to preserve the city's character, diversity, and quality of life in this period of drastic change."

City Hall wants to preserve character. This is a laudable cause, and one that I fully support. But, as usual, with the law of unintended consequences, by delaying and frustrating the process for those, who like me, want to develop a single-family home, they are making it financially untenable. My property is a prime condominium development parcel. Anyone other than my partner and I, would develop it as condos, because City Hall is making it so hard to build a home there.

There is no reason why our second story addition should take so long to get an approval. But the fact that it is taking so long made us consider developing condominiums rather than a home.

The City Council wants less dense development, so it should allow those who want to keep air and light available to

have the ability to do so quickly.

Next Tuesday the City Council considers yet another zoning ordinance, (unless it extends the existing ordinance again) this one specifically exempts single-family homes from the ARB process. The council needs to know that residents want homes developed, not apartments and condominiums.

I have a vested interest in this. We cannot move forward with an architect, a contractor or a structural engineer until we know what the codes are. I've spoken with two members of the council. One of them was very helpful, but suggested that we wait to apply for our permits, because the upcoming zoning changes could affect the outcome for us. The other one, when asked what the council is doing about the process, said, "we have a consultant looking into that." Not hard to figure out who I'd vote for again.

The truth is, we're lucky. We have the resources to wait, but if we didn't, we would have sold this home to a developer and let condos be built. The reward we get from the city is delays, delays, and an outside consultant "looking into" the situation.

(David Pisarra is a business development lawyer in the Santa Monica firm of Pisarra & Grist). He welcomes your questions and comments. He can be reached at dpisarra@pisarra.com or (310) 664-9969).

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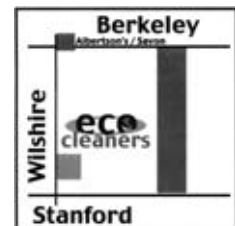
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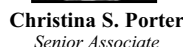
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New principals will come to school district

“Every time there’s change, people are concerned,” she said. “I think people need to understand that people have professional reasons for change. How can you blame people for shortening their commute, retiring or promoting? There’s always change in personnel. People are worried that we are going to continue to

Martin is retiring after 36 years in education. The end of the 2003-2004 school year marked the end of a two-year commitment she made to the high school.

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LOCAL



League plans to host a variety of political forums

LEAGUE, from page 1

annual budget of just \$10,000.

That's why collaborative partnerships with neighborhood organizations and other nonprofit groups are so important, officials said. Perhaps the most visible partnership the league enjoys is with City Hall's television station. City TV each year is given between \$33,000 and \$36,000 to disseminate election-year information, Inatsugu said.

In conjunction with City TV, the league will spend most of September taping and producing interviews with interested candidates, at no cost to the candidates. Four seats will be open on the City Council this November, and three seats on both the local school and college boards, as well as two seats on the Rent Control Board. The field of possible contenders already includes several veteran community activists and civic leaders.

But the league won't be taking sides, officials said.

"We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization," said Inatsugu, a former league

president at the state level. "We are not allowed, by law, to take positions on candidates. We don't even take positions that would give the perception of support of a candidate. There's a strength to having at least one organization who does not take a position, but devotes a tremendous amount of energy to getting the voices of all candidates out."

League officials pride themselves on a broad base of support in Santa Monica and count among league members numerous civic and community leaders, male and female, from local governing boards and commissions.

"I don't think one could overstate the importance of the League of Women Voters in Santa Monica elections," Mayor Richard Bloom said.

"There's no question in my mind — coming from one that's been involved in four elections, both successful and not successful," Bloom added. "They absolutely play an important role. They are the only neutral organization to provide information to the public."

"I don't think one could overstate the importance of the League of Women Voters in Santa Monica elections."

— MAYOR RICHARD BLOOM

In addition to the City TV segments, league officials will be working with local chapters of the Parent Teacher Association to hold forums at various schools, something they've done for several elections. The group also will meet with leaders at St. Anne's Church and hope to stage a bilingual candidate forum. Additionally, Inatsugu plans to partner with various neighborhood groups and other nonprofit organizations — though the league will not join with the local chamber of commerce this year, because the chamber has formed a political action committee and will be endorsing candidates.

Though it strives to remain nonparti-

san, the league has been criticized at times by people on the opposite side of whatever issue it takes a stance on. But Inatsugu said those criticisms usually are short-lived and lack merit.

"In terms of the kinds of positions that we take on issues, our positions last over time," she said. "What we have found is that our stand will remain consistent with our position over time. The environment around us may change. So, sometimes the league has been accused of being on the side of the conservative party or on the side of the liberal party, depending on the environment around us."



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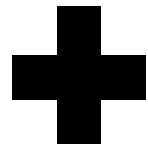
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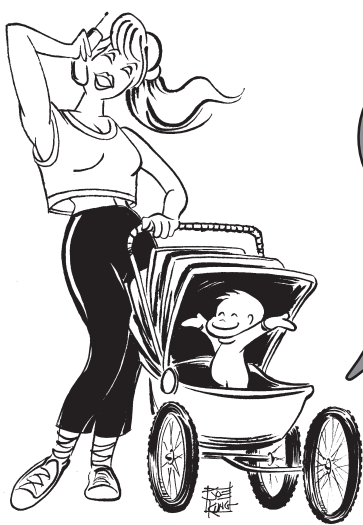
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Recipe for raising helpless teens



How Much Is Enough?

By David J. Bredehoft Ph.D.

What parent doesn't want the best for her child? What parent doesn't want to protect his child from the same painful struggles he had to face as a child? What parent doesn't want to make life easier for her son or daughter?

But could this strategy actually backfire? Yes. Goodhearted well-meaning parents sometimes, unknowingly, raise helpless teenagers.

How do we know this? My colleagues and I recently conducted a study with college students who were overindulged as children. Mostly college freshman ages 18-19. We found some startling things. In particular, parents who overindulge, were over-loving by giving their children too much attention — ones who didn't require chores or enforce rules — raised teenagers who believe that they are helpless, incapable young adults.

The more parents overindulged their teens as children, the more the teens ascribed to the following self-defeating thoughts:

■ I am incapable of dealing with most of life's problems.

■ I give up on new things if I am not successful.

Teens whose parents were over-loving and gave them too much attention when they were growing up, also accept as true the following dysfunctional beliefs:

■ People will not respect me if I do not do well all the time.

■ It is a sign of weakness if a person asks for help.

■ It is best to give up on your own interests in order to please other people.

Our sample indicated that parents who didn't expect their children to do chores when they were growing up, the more likely they believed in dysfunctional thinking:

■ There is little point in doing it at all if you cannot do something well.

■ It probably indicates that he does not like me if

someone disagrees with me.

■ If a person I love doesn't love me I am nothing.

Finally, the more our college age sample said parents did not enforce rules when they were growing up, the more likely they accepted the following self-defeating thoughts:

■ I soon give up if I am not initially successful when trying to learn something new.

■ I stop trying if I can't do a job the first time.

■ I have problems because I cannot get down to work when I should.

When parents overindulge they unknowingly train their children to become helpless, and as a result, these overindulged children will have greater difficulty in reaching future vocational, educational, and monetary goals.

Don't give up hope. It is never too late to make adjustments in your parenting. Difficult, but not too late. Focus on one thing at a time and make small changes. When you hit resistance, which you will, be firm and resolved because after all, you want what is best for your children.

Tips for parents:

■ Gradually give your teens freedom appropriate for their ages.

■ Encourage your teens to solve their own problems.

■ Teach your teens to do chores and expect them to complete them.

■ Agree on a set of rules and enforce them.

■ Decide which of your rules are negotiable and which are nonnegotiable.

To participate in a new study on overindulgence and parenting styles log onto our Web site at www.overindulgence.info.

(David J. Bredehoft Ph.D., Jean Illsley Clarke Ph.D., and Connie Dawson Ph.D., are co-authors of "How Much Is Enough? Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likable, Responsible and Respectful Children — From Toddlers to Teens." Bredehoft chairs the social and behavioral sciences department at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minn. and can be reached at bredehoft@csp.edu. To read more about overindulgence go to www.overindulgence.info).

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SPECIAL EVENTS

SATURDAY, JULY 10TH
SING-a-LONG SOUND OF MUSIC at the Hollywood Bowl

This sensation returns to the Bowl! Join in the costume parade, boo the villains, cheer for the Captain and Maria and, best of all, sing your heart out to some of the most memorable songs ever on a newly restored print with digital sound. Sure to sell out so get your tickets now! Hosted by Melissa Peterman, featuring The Singing Nuns.

Pre-show: 6:00 p.m., Movie presentation: 8:00 p.m. Call 323-850-2000 or visit www.hollywoodbowl.com on the web for more info.

WEDNESDAYS in JULY – MS. BETSY'S STORYBOOK TREE

12:30 – 1:15 p.m. Meet the new school on the block! The Delphi Academy is sponsoring a free storytime for children ages 3-8, featuring quality children's books and a craft activity. Parents can join their children or take advantage of the EARLY READING WORKSHOP for PARENTS in the room next door. 1610 Broadway, 526-2700.

THE MAGIC of MUSIC for CHILDREN – THE DELPHI ACADEMY

Children will share in the fun they create with Grammy award-winner David Spear. Call 526-2700 to schedule a time and date. 1610 Broadway.

SUMMER CAMPS, SWIM and COMMUNITY CLASSES offered by the City of Santa Monica. The city provides children of all ages with a variety of recreation enrichment activities including camps, sports, dancing, crafts and yoga. For details pick-up a brochure at Joslyn or Reed Park, or call 458-2239.

SUMMER SOUNDS at the HOLLYWOOD BOWL Mondays, 10:00 and 11:15 a.m. shows. This program introduces kids to a variety of musical styles and cultures. Ages 3 – 10. Shows: \$5 per person, \$30 a series. After the performance, kids can get creative in the Fine Arts Outdoor Studio - \$3 per child. 2301 Highland Ave., LA, 323-850-2000.

PARENTING WORKSHOP – Falling in Love and Staying in Love with your Kids Saturday, July 10, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Skirball Cultural Center, LA. Register now for this parent training course conducted by Connie Lillas Ph.D. MFT, RN, parent, nurse, marriage, family and child therapist and psychoanalyst. Keynote Address by Mary Hartzell: Raising a Child to Thrive – It's All About Relationship. To register call 888-992-9199 from 7:30 a.m. – noon. Limited to 175 people, first come/first served. \$40 includes training, parking, coffee and lunch.

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms!
"Spider-Man 2", starring Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst and James Franco. 11:00 a.m., Loews Broadway, 1441 3rd St.

Promenade – for Moms and babies newborn – 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. www.enjoytheshow.com/reelmomms.

Storytelling

Main Library

Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 & 10:30 a.m. thru August 17. For 2 year olds with adult.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Cuentos Para Pequenos – 10:00 a.m., June 22 – Aug. 10. Six-week series in Spanish for 24 – 36 month olds with adult.

Lap Time – 11:00 a.m., June 22 – Aug. 10. Six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant and Family Support Programs.

Twilight Story Time -7pm – an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Family Story Time – 7:00 p.m., all ages.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.

Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30. Music, rhymes and stories for 24-36 month olds with adult. Next session is July 27 – Aug. 31, required registration begins July 14th.

Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis

Themes change weekly; for ages infant to 3. 11:00 a.m. 116 North Robertson, Plaza A, LA. 310-358-2500, www.storyopolis.com

Barnes and Noble at the Grove

Storytime for ages 2 – 6. 10:00 a.m. 189 Grove Drive, LA, 323-525-0270

Summer Activity Programs at the Montana Branch Library, 1704 Montana Ave.

Tuesdays thru August 10th at 2:30 p.m. (no program Aug. 3rd).

Programs are approximately 45 minutes, appropriate for ages 4 and up.

July 6th – "Home on the Range" – stories of the Old West; make a paper patchwork quilt.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

10:00 – 11:00 a.m and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Thursday nights 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.

Itsy-Bitsy Yoga at Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Ave.

Tots (crawling to 24 months) – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.; Babies (6 wks. to pre-crawling) – 11:30 – 12:30 a.m. On-going 6-week series; \$120. Pre-register at 458-8190; visit www.khefri.net for more info or contact khefri@earthlink.net.

Yoga Baby (Venice) – 310-306-9381 – Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) – 10 – 11 a.m.; Pre-natal yoga – 7- 8:15 p.m.

Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Mommy Care – 11870 Santa Monica Blvd, at the Dance Factory, West LA, 310-394-6711.

Pregnancy Exercise – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise – 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout

at the end)

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Storytelling

The Talking Stick Coffee Lounge – 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., 450-6052

10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4 at this neighborhood coffee shop.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Preschool Story Time – 10:30 a.m., June 23 – Aug. 11; six-week series for 3-5 year olds with adult.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Lap Time - 10:00 & 10:30 a.m., for children ages 0-2. Next session begins July 21st.

Toddler Story Time – 11:15 a.m., for 2 year olds. Next session begins July 21st.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 392-3804.

Preschool Twilight Story Time – 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Parents/children ages 3-5.

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 2 pm – ages 2-5 – 310-475-4144

Border's, Westwood – 11am – 310-475-3444.

Summer Activity Programs at the Ocean Park Branch Library, 2601 Main St.

Wednesday, July 14th and 28th at 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. Tickets are required and must be picked up on day of program.

July 14th – "Come and Get It" – Chuckwagon stories for cowboys and cowgirls; ages 4 and up.

July 28th – "Comic Cowhands" – stories and puppet show with Mr. Jessie and Lester, ages 3 – 7.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) – 310-306-9381 – Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) – 10 – 11 a.m.; (infants only) – 1 – 2 p.m.. Pre-natal yoga – 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow – 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN – 408-1717

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774, no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

Other

Puppetolio – 1:00 p.m., 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

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Main Library – Reed Park

Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 a.m.; thru Aug. 19th. For 2 year olds with adult.

Preschool Story Time at Reed Park; 10:30 a.m.; thru Aug. 19th. For ages 3-5.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Toddler Story Time – 10:30 a.m.; June 24 – Aug. 12; for ages 2 – 3.

La Hora Del Cuento – 7:00 p.m. Spanish stories, songs and rhymes for all ages.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Toddler Story Time – 10:15 a.m., for 2 year olds.

Preschool Story Time – 11:15 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.

Lap Time – 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., next session July 8 – Aug. 12. 6-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Program.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

7:30 – 8:30 p.m.; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.

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Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 4-8 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

July 8th - Nature Walk (Children's Nature Institute) 10 a.m., Sullivan Canyon, 13500 Bayliss Rd, West LA.

Reservations required - 310-998-1151 or www.childrensnatureinstitute.org

FRIDAY

La Leche League of LA/Mar Vista – meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Call 310-390-2529 for info. (next meeting May 14)

July 8th - Nature Walk (Children's Nature Institute) 10 a.m., Sullivan Canyon, 13500 Bayliss Rd, West LA.

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Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow – 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN – 408-1717

458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow – 10:30 – 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness – noon – 1 p.m Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN – 408-1717

Prenatal Breath and Movement – a Continuum Movement and Yoga-based program designed to support women through various sound and movement explorations that celebrate pregnancy and labor as powerful rites of passage. 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

With Deborah Raout at the Continuum Studio, 1629 18th St., #7. For more info call 625-3739, www.openskymovement.com. \$108 for a six-week session.

SATURDAY

Storytelling

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade – Kid's Story Time – 10am – 310-260-9110

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 10:30am – ages 2-5 – 310-475-4144.

Children's Book World, 10580 1/2 Pico Blvd, LA - 10:30 a.m., 310-559-B00K.

Village Books, 1049 SwarthmoreAve, Pacific Palisades – 10:30 a.m. – 454-4063.

Yoga & Exercise

Santa Monica Yoga – Pre- & Post-Natal Yoga, Saturdays – 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

1640 Ocean Park Blvd, 396-4040, www.santamonicaayoga.com

Yoga Baby (Venice) – 310-306-9381; Prenatal yoga – 9:15 – 10:45 a.m., \$13

Mommy Care – 11870 Santa Monica Blvd. at the Dance Factory, West LA, 394-6711; Pregnancy Exercise – 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise – 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow – 10:30 – 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness – noon – 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN – 408-1717

Other

Snowwhite, a brand new musical for kids of all ages, at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m. thru Sept. 26, \$12 adults, \$10 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 1 for reservations, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com

Puppetolio – 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

Yoga Baby (Venice) – 310-306-9381; Prenatal yoga – 9:15 – 10:45 a.m., \$13

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Puppetolio – 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

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NATIONAL

Counterculture 'Rainbow Family' gathers for peace

BY DON THOMPSON

Associated Press Writer

MODOC NATIONAL FOREST, Calif. — Lucky Sunshine Day says he arrived at this year's Rainbow Family Gathering "a moon cycle ago," measuring time much as he has the 20 years of his life.

He spent much of his youth traveling aboard a Rainbow bus with his parents, Flower and Two Rock. To reach this year's Gathering, he hitched a ride deep into the woods of Northern California.

"It's about love, it's about community, it's about family," he said. "We're here to restore the earth to its natural state."

This year's annual peace Gathering got off to a bad start when one participant beat another nearly to death with a shovel for driving too fast through a campground.

The early violence was an aberration for an event where violations generally involve recreational drugs, occasional nudity or an unleashed dog, said participants and law enforcement officials, who have had a running 30-year dispute over policing the event.

The counterculture festival reaches its high point Sunday when more than 16,000 self-described hippies from at least 40 states and eight nations are expected to hold hands in a circle, silently praying for world peace from dawn until noon.

Twenty years ago the Rainbows hitchhiked and shared rides in peace buses and Volkswagen vans to these same lovely hills and meadows tucked in the Modoc

National Forest, 26 miles over rough gravel roads from the tiny town of Likely. The pilgrimage more than doubled the population of Modoc County, hidden in California's remote northeast corner.

Though the Gathering officially is July 1-7, some of the "road dogs" had been in the area for weeks, helping find and set up the camp, and will spend weeks more cleaning up. The later arrivals were just as likely to arrive in Audis, Volvos or sport utility vehicles, "weekend hippies" who had pulled out their tie-dyed T-shirts and Grateful Dead stickers for the occasion.

"You find a vast segment of society here, from lawyers to people who are living on the street trying to get along," said Happy, 46, who like most participants gave only his Rainbow name.

"Everybody with a bellybutton is a Rainbow. Some people just don't know it yet," said Sarieah, cradling her 2 1/2-year-old daughter Zakiaya on her hip.

For some, the event is a religious experience.

"While other people are shooting off fireworks, we're praying for world peace," said Faith, a 29-year-old midwife from Texas. "My hair is standing on edge just thinking about it."

For others, the annual Gathering is a party in the woods.

Marijuana is omnipresent, though alcohol is discouraged. The reason is that thousands of drunken hippies are a riot waiting to happen, while thousands of stoned hippies are merely mellow,

explained Glowing Feather, a Vietnam veteran who has been a Rainbow since the first event in 1972.

Though donations are accepted, the food is free, served communally at kitchens each with their own specialty: organic food, vegetarian, vegan, Hare Krishna fare, coffee, even a bakery — the only place where drumming was discouraged because the cakes might fall.

Elsewhere, as the full moon came up the drums came out, filling the woods with a hypnotic tribal beat. Rainbows consider themselves a tribe, or a gathering of tribes, and have drawn much of their language and tradition from American Indians.

Yet their choice of a site drew protests from the Fort Bidwell Indian Community Council, which worried diggings of latrines in particular would harm ancestral artifacts.

The U.S. Forest Service has been trying to regulate the Rainbows' activities since the first Gathering in 1972, but only since last year has it succeeded in issuing the group a group-use permit for what previously had been officially illegal events.

The Rainbows have no leadership, only unofficial elders and organizers, and decide everything by consensus at council meetings. Most refuse to acknowledge they need a permit to freely assemble on public land.

"Whenever there's a problem, we deal with it. We call the sheriff," said Kalif, the head gatekeeper. "They spend an enormous amount of money for no purpose, to harass Americans camping in the national forest for the Fourth of July — what's more American than that?"

Kalif turned in his longtime friend, Harry "Hugs" O'Neill, 47, of Whitehorn, on June 22 after O'Neill allegedly used a shovel to smash the windshield of a pickup truck and beat the vehicle's two occupants. O'Neill remains jailed on felony

assault and battery charges.

By Saturday afternoon, there had been 11 arrests, most for interfering with a police officer.

Christopher Witcher, 47, of Roan Mountain, Tenn., nearly died from injuries that included a punctured lung, ruptured spleen and head injuries, police said. Kelly Cook, 44, of Brosnan, Texas, suffered a head wound but later returned to the Gathering.

The hostility between law enforcement and Rainbows echoes from the '60s, with both sides well practiced at their roles.

A half-dozen Rainbows held hands and sang "Give Peace a Chance" as Forest Service rangers on horseback with riot batons and bulletproof vests enforced an order that one kitchen be moved because it was within 300 feet of a waterway.

Sheriff's deputies and senior Forest Service officials said the event was going smoothly with the grudging cooperation of most Rainbows.

The Forest Service has budgeted \$720,000 for a National Incident Management Team to oversee this year's event in much the same way the service would react to a large wildfire, though overall costs will run much higher.

The impact on Modoc County has been minimal, officials said, aside from extra patrols and placing portable toilets where they can be used by Rainbows headed to or from the Gathering.

Rod Weed, who with his wife owns both The Most Likely Cafe and the Likely General Store, two of the nearest town's three retail businesses, hired eight extra employees and ordered more groceries to handle the rush. Rainbow organizers offered to fix any problems he might encounter, as they did the last time in 1984, the last time they were in Modoc County.

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Vegas monorail to open July 15 after nearly six months of 'costly' delays

BY ADAM GOLDMAN

Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — The Las Vegas monorail is back on track for a scheduled July 15 opening after nearly six months of costly delays during which engineers worked out various kinks that threatened the rail system's reliability.

"This has been a very difficult time for us," said James Gibson, chief executive of Transit Systems Management, the private company that will operate the monorail for the nonprofit Las Vegas Monorail Co.

"We needed to ensure the system was reliable and safe," he said Tuesday.

Gibson said the \$650 million monorail was supposed to begin running Jan. 20 but a drive shaft problem and later software glitches pushed back the starting date.

The four-car trains were stopping unexpectedly between stations, train doors were not opening properly when pulling into the stations, and the trains weren't maintaining the proper distance between one another, he said.

"None of those things suggest we have a lemon," Gibson said. "It was just a matter of staying after it and figuring out the cause."

The delays cost Canadian manufacturer Bombardier Inc. and project partner Granite Construction Co. of Watsonville, Calif., about \$85,000 a day in construction penalties. Bombardier built the monorail cars.

The monorail stills needs a certificate of operation before it can begin shuttling people, said Ron Lynn, head of the Clark County Building Division. The certificate could be issued in the next several days, he said.

The monorail will run 3.9 miles on a Z-shaped route that links seven stations, including one at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Walker said it could take a passenger under 14 minutes to travel behind some of city's largest hotel-casinos from one end of the Las Vegas Strip to the other. Fares are \$3 for one-way trips.

The monorail is being built in three phases and is expected to be extended to downtown Las Vegas and later to the airport.

Las Vegas hosts about 35 million visitors a year, including 5 million convention delegates. Project officials predict 19 million people will ride the monorail a full year after it opens.

NATIONAL

Microsoft looks to customer service as competition grows

BY ALLISON LINN

AP Business Writer

SEATTLE — For years, Richard Thompson tried everything, but he couldn't get anyone at Microsoft Corp. to reply to his e-mails.

Thompson isn't a nagging wannabe employee or a deranged computer geek. He's the chief executive of a company that sells Microsoft products to other companies. Even so, for years, "We couldn't seem to find someone to explain to us how to join that merry band at Microsoft."

Things have improved recently for Thompson's Surrey, England-based TVision Technology Ltd., and it's not a coincidence.

As Microsoft enters more competitive markets and faces increased grumbling over its litany of security flaws, the company is trying what — for it — is an unusual tact: paying more attention its customers.

Yes, it sounds obvious. But even some at Microsoft concede that when you're the world's largest software company it's easy to lose focus. That is, until your customers start to balk — and look to other options, such as cheaper Linux-based technology.

Kevin Johnson, Microsoft's group vice president in charge of sales and marketing, says the company realized about two years ago that it had significant customer satisfaction problems.

Computer viruses targeting vulnerabilities in Microsoft software were clogging computer networks, sometimes even shutting down businesses for days. Updating Microsoft products to ward off attacks was onerous, costly and time-consuming.

Amid a weak economy and tight corporate budgets, customers complained that some of Microsoft's latest technology, the cool factor notwithstanding, wasn't helping solve real workaday problems. The image-tarnishing antitrust cases against Microsoft didn't help either.

Such factors fed interest in competing technology, led by the Linux operating system. Proponents say such open source software is cheaper to run and less of a target to security threats because the underlying code — and any improvements — are freely shared.

Johnson says Microsoft's decision to completely revamp the way it deals with customers is just beginning to pay off.

One big customer complaint was simple logistics: there were no good systems in place to respond to difficult complaints — or even to track whether a number of customers were having the same problem.

So Microsoft created a sort of heat map to track which problems are systemic and which are individualized, and it developed a response system to more efficiently route questions to the appropriate business units.

With security complaints, employees took things a step further. They set up phone trees so key people could respond to threats quickly, and they ran middle-of-the-night drills. In a specially designated situation room, the company can now track security threats much like a chemical company might monitor a toxic spill.

Microsoft also says it is talking more to customers about what changes they want to see in software.

For its latest small business server product, Johnson sent Microsoft employ-

Microsoft also says it is talking more to customers about what changes they want to see in software.

ees to spend time at small businesses and report back on what improvements were really needed.

"The whole thing about driving satisfaction, it's not just a tag line, it's not just a slogan," Johnson said. "We've really re-engineered the company to enable us to serve the customer."

Many analysts say it's too early to tell whether Microsoft's efforts will produce results, though they credit the company for its work on meaningful security improvements.

Even so, some analysts say security problems linger as an issue.

"Frankly, that gets in the way of a lot of discussions Microsoft might have with customers," said Al Gillen, an analyst with IDC.

In some ways, Microsoft has become a victim of its own success. Its huge and pervasive presence in the technology world may comfort some, but it's a turnoff to others.

The city of Paris recently said it would consider using open source software rather than Microsoft products for a nearly \$200 million upgrade to its obsolete systems, prompting Microsoft France chief executive Christophe Aulnette to say the company might cut prices.

French officials say the choice will come down to security issues and how open the two systems are to upgrades. But they also concede that political pressure to move away from Microsoft's dominance may be a factor.

The governments in Brazil and Munich, Germany, also have embraced Linux in a big way.

Michael Cherry, an analyst with Directions on Microsoft, thinks some of Microsoft's efforts to improve customer relationships are a response to the perception that the Linux community is more open and collegial while Microsoft is "seen as a faceless corporation."

Along with soliciting feedback and offering more technical support, Microsoft has begun giving software vendors tips such as how to build an effective business plan, said Barry Baker, chief technology officer for eOptimize Inc. in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Baker, whose company's products include scheduling software, also credits Microsoft with doing a better job of communicating useful information, such as when products will be released.

After years of unanswered e-mails, TVision's Thompson believes Microsoft has realized it needs to build better relationships if it wants to succeed in competitive markets such as his own.

"They're a big company, so it takes people time to sort things out," Thompson said. "But there are key people there that I've spoken to (and they) understand that they do need to listen to what people like ourselves have to say."

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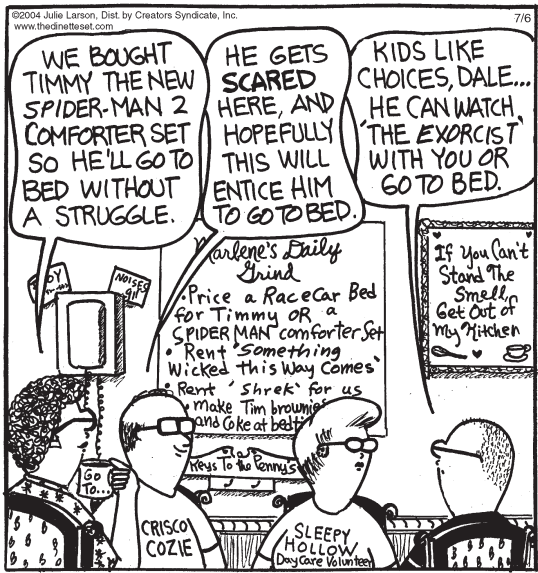
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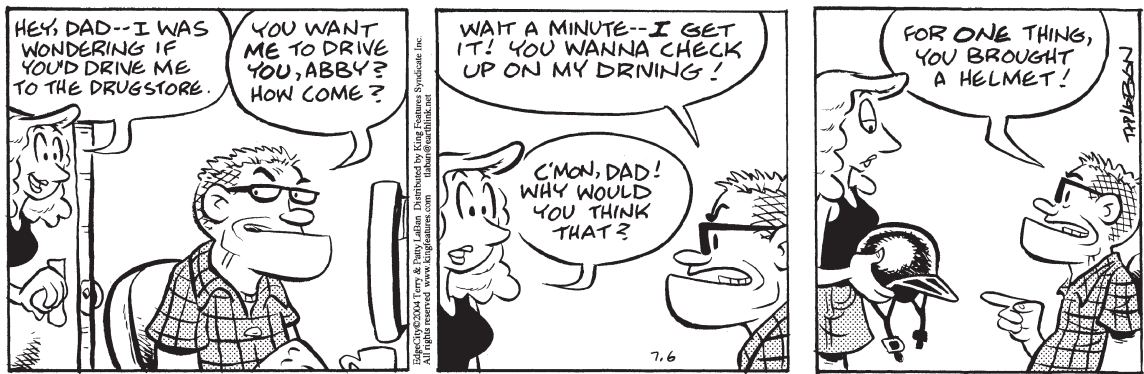


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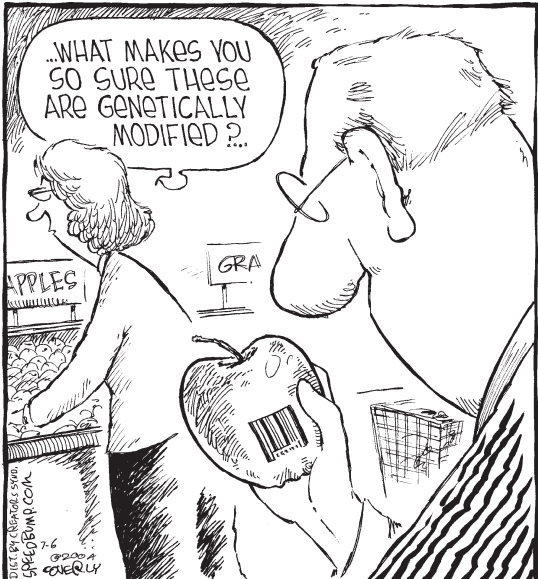
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Cigars ignite in popularity at the state's capitol

By The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's personal label cigars have become a coveted currency at the state Capitol.

Political insiders who've received a stogie straight from Schwarzenegger or lifted handfuls from his open humidor save the cigars as keepsakes or pass them on to friends.

"It's not a status thing," Assemblyman Greg Aghazarian told The Record newspaper in Stockton last week. "It's more like you know when someone's been to the governor's office when they have a cigar in their hand."

Aghazarian, who doesn't smoke because of asthma, said the cigars have helped him break the ice with constituents.

Assemblyman Guy Houston said he gave one to his brother and smoked another. "It was OK," Houston said. "It's not a Cuban or anything, but it's a quality cigar."

Some lawmakers prefer other types of celebrity keepsakes from the superstar governor. Sen. Charles Poochigian said he might frame the pen the governor used to sign the workers' compensation reform bill Poochigian carried for the administration.

LONDON — "Baywatch" star David Hasselhoff will appear in the London stage production of the hit musical "Chicago."

Hasselhoff will play scheming lawyer Billy Flynn in his debut on the British stage at the Adelphi Theatre. The show has run in the West End for seven years.

Hasselhoff, 51, is booked for 60 performances starting July 16.

"This is not about making money — this is about following my heart, challenging myself and having fun," Hasselhoff said.

STAMFORD, Conn. — Four men claim the

Wayans brothers stole the idea behind the movie "White Chicks" from them.

Mario Pittore and brothers Jason, Jon and James Coppola sued last week in federal court, seeking \$15 million in damages.

"We feel not only does it rip us off, but it's not even as good" as the Pittore-Coppola script, said Pittore, 30.

"White Chicks" stars the Wayans as black FBI agents who pose as young white hotel heiresses. The movie has grossed \$37.3 million since it opened June 23.

The mens' script, titled "Johnny Bronx," is about a bumbling black FBI agent who impersonates a white man to infiltrate the mob.

EL PASO, Texas — Former college basketball coach Don Haskins had been approached before about doing a movie on his 1966 Texas Western team — the first to win a national title with five black starters.

When Walt Disney Pictures came to him a few years ago, Haskins did not hesitate.

"I always liked their movies and I thought they were movies kids could watch," said Haskins, who coached 38 years at the school now known as the University of Texas at El Paso.

The movie, "Glory Road," will star Ben Affleck as Haskins. Filming is tentatively scheduled to begin this year.

Haskins, 74, said he simply picked the best players for the team that beat Kentucky's heavily favored basketball powerhouse 72-65.

CARSON CITY, Nev. — Twenty-four years ago, Elizabeth Muto was abandoned as a baby at the Reno airport. Now she's considered royalty — the newly crowned Miss Nevada.

The Las Vegas woman beat out 11 other women Saturday night to become the first black Miss Nevada and to advance to the Miss America pageant in Atlantic

City, N.J., in September.

"I've been Nevada's own since I was 10 days old," Muto said. "Since then, the people of Nevada have loved and supported me."

Muto, a University of Nevada at Las Vegas, graduate who majored in international business, was the winner of last year's Miss Black USA pageant in Miami.

She was abandoned on Jan. 17, 1980, atop a counter at Reno-Tahoe International Airport. The Reno couple who adopted her thinks her biological mother flew to Reno to abandon the child before returning home to the San Francisco Bay area.

Muto's cause for the pageant was a group she formed called Heal Evaluate Learn and Progress, or HELP, which is designed to help children overcome adversity.

CONCORD, Mass. — A day after becoming a U.S. citizen, three-time Boston Marathon winner Uta Pippig won her first race as an American in her hometown of Concord.

Pippig was first among women runners at the annual Fourth of July Minuteman Classic Road Race, a five-kilometer race.

The East German-born runner became an American citizen in a special ceremony Saturday before a rehearsal of the Boston Pops on the city's Esplanade.

"Coming from East Germany, where there was a dictator, and we were living behind the Iron Curtain, we had not the freedom of speech, or religion, or Bill of Rights," said Pippig, who escaped East Berlin as a teenager. "I really hope everyone on earth can enjoy those things."

Pippig is the only woman to have won three consecutive Boston Marathons since the women's division was created in 1972. She won the first in 1994, setting what was then a course record of 2 hours, 21 minutes, 45 seconds. She is best known for her grueling come-from-behind win in 1996.

Pippig last ran in the Boston Marathon in 1997, finishing fourth.

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