



PLAYING THROUGH PAIN
SEE PAGE 14

Santa Monica Daily Press

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE MAKING THE SWITCH ISSUE

A solution to gas prices

NORA SORENA CASEY
Special to the Daily Press

CITYWIDE In a society powered by a consumer economy, gas prices seem to be driving drivers to different types of vehicles.

Across the city, car dealerships have noticed a steady increase in the percentage of hybrid cars being purchased. As gas prices continue to soar, the popularity of hybrids shows no signs of decreasing.

Roger Zamignani, the sales manager of Toyota Santa Monica, estimates that roughly 40 percent of all their car sales are hybrids. He said that those numbers are up at his lot from 10 to 15 percent just five

years ago. Nationwide, Zamignani estimates that sales are more like 30 percent.

Toyota has proven to be the industry leader in hybrid technology. According to data collected by the online car review Edmunds.com the company makes up 74.3 percent of the hybrid market. Over 50 percent of all hybrid sales are of the popular Prius, with over 91,440 already sold this year.

"We don't have enough to attend to everyone," Zamignani said. "I'm pretty sure that if we had more hybrids, we'd be selling more."

Thus far this year, hybrid sales make up just 2.468 percent of all car sales nationally,

according to Edmunds.com figures. This number has steadily increased from .05 percent in 2000, and 2.15 percent in 2007.

Santa Monica Lexus General Sales Manager Alan MacLoughlin reported that hybrid sales have especially taken off these past few months, which he attributes in part to rising gas prices.

Jonathan Wahl, Edmunds.com spokesperson, said that the demand for the Toyota Prius and other hybrid cars is now so great that it has outstripped the supply. Toyota and other companies are selling fewer hybrids than the consumer market

SEE TRENDS PAGE 11

Parking upgrades in the works for downtown area

Editor's note: This story is part of an ongoing series that tracks the city's expenditures appearing on upcoming Santa Monica City Council consent agendas. Consent agenda items are routinely passed by the City Council with little or no discussion from elected officials or the public. However, many of the items have been part of public discussion in the past.

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL The stylistically outdated public parking garages in Downtown Santa Monica, their sea-green exterior accentuated with rust, will soon receive a facelift.

Los Angeles-based construction company AWI Builders is expected to receive a \$3.3 million contract to carry out the facade improvements to structures 1-6, which line Second and Fourth streets between Broadway and Wilshire Boulevard.

The agreement for the beautification project, which includes artist-designed entryways and a fresh splash of paint, is part of an estimated \$13.1 million spending package the City Council is slated to approve tonight, its other purchases including new buses and recycling bins. The makeover is part of the Downtown Parking Program Task Force's recommendations, which called for the seismic upgrade and renovation of structures 2, 4 and 5 and demolition and replacement of 1, 3 and 6, which are the three smallest in the neighborhood. The council conceptually approved these suggestions in 2002.

The project will include artistic entry signs and light tubes at the entrances to structures 2, 4 and 5 only. All of the garages will receive a ceiling paint job with a bright color gradient that will give each a unique identity.

"The concept is a simple and economical way to enhance the appearance and differentiate the garages from one another," the staff report states.

Structures 1, 3 and 6 will be demolished starting in late 2009 to early 2010, its interim upgrades constituting of about \$260,000 each.

The Civic Center Garage is also among the parking facilities expected to receive some monetary attention by the council, which will be asked to spend about \$270,000 in tenant improvement costs. Located on

SEE CONSENT PAGE 10



MOVING DAY

A work crew from the Landscape Center on Tuesday afternoon dig around mature palm trees planted on the Fourth Street side of Santa Monica Place. The seven trees will be relocated to the Palisades Garden Walk, where they will join other palms on the site.

Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

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Calendar

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Kicking it with Kiwanis

1332 Sixth St., 12 p.m. — 1:30 p.m.

The Santa Monica Kiwanis Club is holding its weekly luncheon at the Santa Monica YMCA. There will be a guest speaker at the event. For information, call (310) 613-1249.

Midday labyrinth walks

1008 11th St., Noon — 1 p.m.

Give yourself the gift of some quiet moments in the middle of the week. Walk and meditate on the new permanent Labyrinth in Simkins Hall. Walks are available every Wednesday throughout the summer.

Children's summer program

1501 California Ave., 8:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Help your child shake off the dog days of summer with the Council of PTAs' Summer Adventure program. Summer Adventure is going to be held at Franklin Elementary, Lincoln Middle School and Point Dume Marine Science School from June 30 — July 25th from 8:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. Reading, writing, computers, science, math, drama, sports and art are all a part of this fun and educational summer experience. You can find brochures and applications online at www.smmpta.org.

Thursday, July 24, 2008

'Can't Stop the Music'

601 Santa Monica Blvd., 6:45 p.m. — 9 p.m.

The Main Library's Incredibly Strange Film Series continues with "Can't Stop the Music," the box office bomb starring disco superstars The Village People. This free screening takes place in the MLK Jr. Auditorium. Seating is first come, first served.

What's new this week

2101 Ocean Park Blvd., 1 p.m. — 2:30 p.m.

Join in for a free-wheeling review and discussion of the week's key news stories, at home and abroad — politics, the economy, society, and culture. Discussion moderator, Jack Nordhaus, is a former college history professor.

Workouts for teens

3026 Nebraska Ave., 3:30 p.m. — 5 p.m.

Max offers two daily classes teaching teens how to exercise and eat properly in a cool and fun environment. They get to hang out afterwards in the wi-fi lounge, play Nintendo Wii, or simply surf the Internet. For information, call (310) 867-1650.

The Meathands have it

4455 Overland Ave., Culver City, 8 p.m.

The "Magic Meathands" perform an hour of fully improvised hilarity based on audience suggestions and participation. The show is presented by director Bill Johnson, in a great cafe that offers delicious coffee, food, drinks and comfortable couches. What sets this improv group apart is their personal connection with the audience and community, so their best material comes directly from the people around them. For information, call (310) 559-8868.

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com and click the "Events" tab for the given day's calendar.



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JULY 31
Michelle Shocked
Mike Farris

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Oliver Mtukudzi
Rocky Dawuni

AUGUST 14
Carmen Consoli
Juana Molina
Samantha Crain &
The Midnight Shivers

AUGUST 21
Peter & Gordon
Gerry & The Pacemakers

AUGUST 28
Toots & the Maytals

Alexandra Bissonnette news@smdp.com

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK: French citizen Benoît Legendre peruses the Santa Monica 2008 Official Visitors Guide while arranging a limousine for him and the 14 teenagers who he has been leading on a two-week holiday camp tour of the United States. The California Travel and Tourism Commission recently presented the Santa Monica Convention and Visitors Bureau with the award for the best visitors guide of the year.

Let Santa Monica be your guide

BY ALICE OLLSTEIN
Special to the Daily Press

DOWNTOWN During a ceremony under the scorching Palm Desert sun, the California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC) recently presented the Santa Monica Convention and Visitors Bureau (SMCVB) with the award for the best visitors guide of 2008.

The judges officiating at the California Conference on Tourism wrote that Santa Monica's Visitors Guide was "engaging," with "great reflection of brand and lifestyle." Santa Monica tied with Mammoth for the award. More than 300 California Travel

Industry professionals and marketing experts voted.

Back in March, CTTC invited cities in California to "strut their stuff" by submitting entries for one of nine categories ranging from best overall marketing campaign to best Web site and best visitor's guide to best TV advertisement.

Kim Baker, SMCVB director of marketing, submitted SMCVB's visitors guide. She noted that the original goal behind the guide was to attract international long haul travelers.

"Our recent economic impact studies showed that Santa Monica visitors were actually both domestic and international,"

Baker said. "With this knowledge, we took both audiences into account when developing the 2008 guide."

The cover of the new guide depicts a couple and their daughter at sunset, dressed in all-white California casual, walking along the sandy beach. Inside are new items, including "Only in Santa Monica" information and an introduction to Santa Monica that touches upon issues such as the environment, health and smoking, human dignity and homeless, safety and crime. The new color photos illustrate Santa Monica's beach views, public art, walking streets, world-

SEE AWARD PAGE 13

Parents hoping to introduce Chinese language to students

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SAMOH A language that has more than 5,000 years of history could soon be in the textbooks here, its tongue joining the likes of Spanish, Japanese and French.

A group of parents are lobbying district officials to begin offering a Chinese language course at Santa Monica High School, pointing out the growing Chinese-American population in the city.

"The demand is here," Wei Chen, one of the parents rallying for a course, said.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District is currently in the process of coordinating a foreign language course through its Dual Enrollment program with Santa Monica College, possibly offering one class in the 2008-09 academic year at the SMC campus.

The dual enrollment program allows high school students in the district to take courses for credit at the college.

The district is currently gauging student interest to see whether it can get together a fully-enrolled course in the fall, according to Sally Chou, the chief academic officer with the SMMUSD. About 20 students would be needed to make the class possible.

Chou said interested students should contact their counselors.

If successful in the dual enrollment program, the course could be moved to the Samohi campus in a few years.

"We don't know how many people we'll have yet," Chou said. "To hire a teacher at Samohi, you would basically have to have five sections.

"It would be a perfect set up if we have somebody teaching Chinese and they teach math (the rest of the day)," she added.

Though the course will be offered at SMC, it will be free to Samohi students. The only cost will come from the textbooks.

Ron Furuyama, who heads the Dual Enrollment program at SMC, said the course will most likely be scheduled in the after school hours for high school students. The class will also be open to the SMC community.

Parents have been asking for a Mandarin language class for more than a year, pointing out the growing level of interest in the culture by high school students. Among the arguments in their case is the fact that China has

SEE CLASS PAGE 11



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

City-sponsored rave. Why?

Editor:

So I attended the city-sponsored rave on Saturday night, also known as Glow. I actually looked forward to this public art event that went from 7 p.m. Saturday to 7 a.m. Sunday. After all, I wanted to see how \$300,000 was spent, of which the city of Santa Monica ponied up \$100,000.

One hundred thousand dollars of taxpayers' money ... that could have been allocated to a more permanent piece of art, or fixing potholes? Speaking of potholes, I observed a lot of young people smoking pot and doing other drugs, not to mention scores of presumably underage kids sipping from Gatorade bottles that must have had more than Gatorade, based on the way they were acting.

I saw quite a bit of paramedics activity carting away people who appeared intoxicated or on narcotics. Not to mention all the traffic congestion, people speeding past traffic enforcement officers, jaywalkers galore. I even witnessed two police officers commenting on all the marijuana smoke in the air.

Don't get me wrong. I like art. My wife is an artist. I support the Santa Monica Museum of Art as well as several other art museums and organizations. Art is subjective, I know that. But, if anything, this was like a rave.

It's just that so many young people (I am in my 30s so I am talking about teens and those in their 20s) were there for the partying, drinking and tripping. While I am not suggesting that despite the art exhibit in the senior center' windows displaying the word "ecstasy," which is a popular narcotic among young people, it seemed that the vast majority of the attendees weren't there to appreciate or even experience art.

Rather they were there to get high or drunk. If the parents don't mind or care, then neither do I.

But next time let's not do it on the city (and ultimately) our dime.

Steve Barry
Santa Monica

Pick up a phone

Editor:

In response to Carlos Pineiro's letter ("Where are the Cops," page 4, July 21), I have to take a certain amount of umbrage to his letter. As an employee of one of the many businesses in Santa Monica, I have seen the officers respond promptly to our calls of disorderly conduct on our premises. I have also seen them issue citations for public intoxication, and write tickets for traffic violations. I have seen them respond to silent alarms, and did so with the utmost professionalism. I personally have called them on a couple of occasions when I saw someone behaving erratically on our streets.

What Mr. Pineiro fails to realize is that the police cannot be everywhere all the time. Nor can they enforce laws if they are not informed laws are being broken. Unless Mr. Pineiro wants a Big Brother city with closed-circuit cameras all over the city, he should do the simple alternative of picking up the phone and calling in the problem. It's a simple matter of being interactive with the police department. If not, then some of the fault belongs with him for not performing his civic duty as a resident of this city.

Rodney Thilliampalam
Santa Monica



Going Postal

Steve "the Mailman" Breen

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Why so serious?

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY, on behalf of Vast Right Wing Conspiracy Inc. [a subsidiary of Halliburton], to thank the operatives of our sleeper cell in our Character Assassination Division imbedded at the cartoon department of New Yorker magazine for their great work and zeal in furthering the mission of the New World Order.

We. Are. Everywhere.

Observing the prissy reactions of The Obamaessiah over a mere magazine cover impugning his thin-skinned "cool factor" was so reminiscent of his Islamic brethren's vinegary response to a handful of Danish cartoons. Media created sensations like Mr. Obama often prefer image management to substantive accomplishment. It's called the "Riefenstahl Corollary."

It doesn't get any better than watching a grown man, hunkered down in his paranoid-chic, unicorn and rainbow curtained bunker mentality, behaving like the nerdy kid coming home after school and squealing, "Mom! The big kids are pickin' on me again! Will you send my little sister out to beat them up for me?"

Please recall that this "Man Who Would Be King" has been photographed eating fried chicken with a napkin wrapped around it because there were no utensils. Who in the name of Colonel Sanders eats fried chicken with a fork? Hasn't the Obamalicious One ever heard of the term, "finger lickin' good?" Obama is going to have to seriously "cowboy up" and eat his chicken like a man.

Meanwhile, there has been no similarly self-inflicted righteous indignation from the McCain campaign over the cartoon that appeared in a recent edition of Rolling Stone magazine which depicted him attired in Vietnam era POW pajamas, trussed up like a Christmas goose and locked in a bamboo tiger cage while Asian-esque caricatures of Obama and Hillary, festooned in conical rice hats, jabbed gleefully at an anguished McCain with sharp, pointy sticks.

McCain never blinked.

After being stabbed with a bayonet a couple times, for real mind you, a cartoon doesn't seem to amount to much, I guess. It's the mark of a more mature character to know what's important and what's ephemeron.

While race doesn't seem to matter at Rolling Stone, it is evident that one man's years of near starvation, broken bones and teeth in the Hanoi Hilton is another man's morally equivalent megalomaniacal prudery among the liberal media strumpets of politically correct "taste."

Obama should put on his big boy panties and grow a sense of humor to fill them. If, during a recent interview on The Daily Show, Jon Stewart can ask if Obama plans a "... bait and switch ... and enslave the white race ..." then what's the twist in Obama's knickers with a liberal flagship like the New Yorker doing a cartoon of Obama bin Laden "terrorist fist bumping" with his Angela Davis-styled gun moll near an Oval Office fireplace fueled by Old Glory?

Smart people got the joke. Why didn't Obama?

Let me get this straight, the last time I checked we're Americans. Our humor quotient runs the gamut from low-brow to uni-brow. One man's "South Park" is another man's David Mamet.

Any stand-up comic will tell you that in humor there is truth, and in truth there is humor especially if there is a fart joke involved.

Obama's routine stinks.

If Mr. Fussy-britches is so offended by a cartoon then how would he go head to head with Vladimir Putin in a discussion over Russian aid vis-à-vis Iranian nuclear proliferation? Putin was in the KGB for 16 years in the First and Fifth Directorates that handled foreign intelligence, internal security [killing people], controlling political and religious dissent [torture] and censoring the media while Obama was smoking pot, chasing skirt and playing basketball in Hawaii.

Obama is to Putin as Bambi is to Godzilla.

My Dad always emphasized that taking oneself too seriously leads inevitably to an "irony deficiency." Even as Julius Caesar's sandaled foot found an errant banana peel named Cleopatra, he belatedly discovered that a disaffected enclave of his electorate could deliver a more pointed punch line to his poorly timed joke.

Any decent stand-up comic/politician knows that you should be able to handle hecklers/voters because it's a tough crowd out there.

And I can understand the consternation of the Party of Tolerance's inability to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous comedy; after all, the chuckleheads at the DNC have only been able to win three out of the last 10 Presidential elections in the past 40 years.

And that's the funniest joke of all.

STEVE BREEN is a conservative curmudgeon for V.R.W.C. Inc [a subsidiary of Halliburton] and still "the best looking man in the U.S. Post Office." He can be reached at dulcamarax@yahoo.com

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Word in Edgewise

Kenny Mack

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Bush needs to get off the SOFA

LAST WEEK WAS TOUGH FOR PRESIDENT

Bush, mainly because of Iraq. With most Americans wanting U.S. troops out of that country, the Democrats in Congress wanting U.S. troops out, most Iraqis wanting U.S. troops out, and the Iraqi government wanting U.S. troops out, our boy-in-a-bubble finally caught on that it may be time to start thinking about pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq.

I'm old enough to remember all the way back to the summer of 2006 when ethnic cleansing in Baghdad and other places was leading to millions of Iraqis being displaced as the country teetered on the brink of all-out civil war. Donald Rumsfeld, not-yet-indicted war criminal, was still in charge at the Pentagon and the metric for success in Iraq was mind-numbingly simple: If we stay we win, if we leave we lose. In November of 2006, millions and millions of my fellow Americans rejected that idea and voted for a new strategy in Iraq — one designed to bring our troops home. Too bad our president doesn't read the newspaper, so he never got the message.

Right now, the Bush administration is negotiating a Status of Forces Agreement with the Iraqis that will allow for U.S. troops to remain in Iraq for a good, long time. The Iraqi government, like everyone else not directly connected to the White House or the McCain campaign, would like to have some kind of idea of when they can reasonably expect to no longer be living under U.S. military occupation. The McBushes, as convinced as ever that staying equals winning, see continuing the occupation as their goal. The problem is that the president (and the Republican candidate who would like to succeed him) has gone on the record saying that the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq is based entirely on the Iraqi government's wishes. Last May, the president said, "We are there at the invitation of the Iraqi government. This is a sovereign nation. ... It's their government's choice. If they were to say, leave, we would leave." He even said it with a straight face.

Of course, he doesn't want to leave, so he's going to drag out these SOFA negotiations as long as possible. It won't work, though, because there are Iraqi elections scheduled for this fall and no Iraqi candidate can hope to win on a platform of allowing U.S. troops to stay indefinitely. All that will happen if the U.S. doesn't agree to some kind of timeframe, timeline, or timetable for withdrawal is the Iraqis will look

elsewhere for military support. And it's a safe bet that the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government won't have to look much further than Shiite-dominated Iran. That's why President Lame Duck (the great resistor of timetables) finally broke down last week and agreed to a "general time horizon" for troop withdrawal. And it only took him two years.

Clearly, this was the signal that somebody inside the White House clipping service was waiting for because the day after Yale's most famous male cheerleader made this seismic shift from "we can't leave" to "we can't leave yet," an e-mail intended for internal distribution was sent to thousands of people who signed up for official press releases, announcements, and etc. It contained a Reuters article about the prime minister of Iraq supporting Barack Obama's plan to withdraw U.S. combat troops within about 16 months. Maybe it was an honest mistake, but I highly doubt it. In this White House, Barack Obama is like Harry Potter's Voldemort in that his name must not be spoken (the closest the president ever comes is referring to him as "a particular presidential candidate"). So the only thing worse than an article appearing under the headline, "Iraq PM backs Obama troop exit plan" is calling attention to that story by giving it wide distribution on a Bush administration mailing list. Congratulations, White House clipping service, you have done more to bring our troops home with one keystroke than the Democrats have managed to do in the year-and-a-half that they've controlled Congress.

I've been known to turn the proverbial phrase and I fancy myself quite the writer, but I'm not good enough to come up with "time horizon." As a concept, it's too abstract for me to even try to wrap my head around. No matter how much "time" you're talking about, you can never actually reach the "horizon." As a unit, it's unmeasurable, but when applied to the president's Iraq policy, the "time horizon" makes perfect sense. After all, the reason we went to Iraq isn't the reason we're still in Iraq, if the "surge" is working we can't leave, and if it isn't working, we have to stay. It reminds me of that Eagles lyric, "you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave."

KENNY MACK is a writer, comedian, and social commentator living in Santa Monica. He can be reached at kennymack@gmail.com

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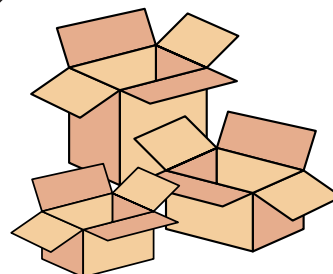
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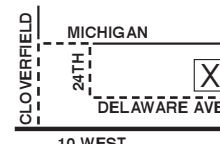
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The Q-Line

Empty cups

Coffee giant Starbucks has decided to close one of its 15 locations in Santa Monica. The company has plans to close 600 locations nationwide.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Do you think there are too many Starbucks in the city?

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press. Please limit responses to a minute or less.



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Credit dos and don'ts before buying a home

BY ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES Decide to become a homeowner and, inevitably, you'll have to confront your credit score.

You can try to improve your odds of qualifying for a home loan by saving more for a bigger down payment, but your credit score is the most important factor in determining what interest rate you'll pay — or whether you qualify for a mortgage at all.

Your credit score, commonly known as the FICO score, is derived from your history of taking on debt and paying it off. Make the wrong financial move in the weeks or even months before you sit down with lenders to buy that dream home and you could end up paying a lot more for your loan.

"With the way the economy has been, it takes a higher FICO score now to get the best (interest) rate than it did a couple of years ago," says Barry Paperno, manager of consumer operations for Fair Isaac Corp., the company behind the FICO score.

FICO scores range between 300 and 850, with the highest reflecting the best credit risk. The median FICO score nationally is around 720-723, according to Fair Isaac.

Unless you are a first-time buyer or have a large down payment, lenders will want to see a FICO score of 680 or higher, says Robert Satnick, chairman of the California Mortgage Bankers Association and CEO of Prime Financial Services in Van Nuys, Calif.

"The higher their credit score the more flexible the lender is going to be, because it's just a believable benchmark of their ability to manage their finances and their credit," he says.

How your FICO score is generated

depends on your credit history, which is collected by three major credit reporting agencies: Equifax Inc., Experian Group and TransUnion LLC.

The first step in gauging your FICO-worthiness is to pull your credit report from each of the credit bureaus.

The reports show how much you owe, what kind of debt and your bill-paying habits. They also show any serious credit problems, such as a bankruptcy.

The next step is getting your FICO score.

This can be confusing because the major credit reporting agencies each sell their own versions of an overall credit score, so-called educational scores, which can vary from the real FICO score.

The companies' calculations for your score can also vary depending on the type of loan you're applying for, because they tailor credit scoring formulas to different types of lending, such as auto loans or credit cards.

To get the FICO score mortgage lenders will be using when they evaluate whether to underwrite your loan, go to myfico.com, a unit of Fair Isaac. Obtaining a FICO score and credit report from one of the credit bureaus costs \$15.95; the combination of all three scores and reports costs \$47.85.

Customers can get a free credit report from each of the three credit reporting agencies once a year — www.annualcreditreport.com — but FICO scores are not included.

The credit factors that determine the score are: a person's payment history (35 percent of the score), how much they owe (30 percent), the mix of credit and installment loans they have (10 percent), the length of their credit history (15 percent), and whether they have applied for new credit recently (10 percent).

Still, the weight these variables have on a credit score can vary somewhat depending on the makeup of each person's credit file.

Credit experts say the single best way to improve one's credit score is to make payments on time and keep credit balances at 30 percent or below your total available credit.

People with department store credit cards, in particular, can be susceptible to taking negative hits on their credit score because those cards typically don't have a grace period for repayment and the companies will quickly report consumers to the credit bureaus as being late even after only one day.

Being reported as currently past due can whack off 100 points from a credit score, warns Virginia "Ginny" Ferguson, who chairs the National Association of Mortgage Brokers' credit scoring committee.

And, she says, "They need to make sure that they're not opening new accounts, because that can drop their scores slightly."

Maxed out credit cards are another red flag and can significantly hurt one's FICO score.

So, if possible, aspiring homebuyers should pay down or pay off their credit cards, and avoid big credit purchases.

"Don't go out and start buying a bunch of furniture in anticipation," Satnick says. "Save as much as possible."

Sometimes a credit score is lower than it should be because errors have crept into the credit reporting agencies' records.

Obviously, it's crucial to get any errors fixed before applying for a home loan, but this can take weeks or months, especially if the mistake shows up on more than one credit bureau report.

"Unfortunately, if that account you paid off two years ago is still showing not paid at

all three bureaus, you're going to need to dispute that at all three bureaus separately," says Paperno.

The Federal Trade Commission has warned consumers against firms offering services claiming to improve a person's credit report for a fee.

"They can't do anything for you that you couldn't do yourself," Paperno said.

Credit bureaus are required to check disputed information on a consumer's credit report within a few weeks, or remove it. A typical tactic of credit repair firms is to spam credit bureaus with such requests in hopes the negative items end up being dropped.

But Paperno says often those items will show up again the next time the credit card company or other creditor issues an update to the credit bureaus.

The credit bureau reports typically include reasons why a credit score isn't as high as it could be, such as too many collection items or delinquencies in the past seven years, or too much credit being used.

Some of these issues can be addressed quickly, like paying down balances, but there's no quick fix for derogatory items still on file. Only time can wipe those away.

Negative credit information can typically stay on one's credit report for seven years, although some bankruptcies can stay on 10 years.

Generally, the more recent a credit blemish, the worse it's going to drag down the credit score.

Experts also warn against closing accounts suddenly in an attempt to improve one's score.

That merely narrows one's available credit and, depending on how much debt one has, hurt their score, Ferguson says.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Real Estate 101

Mike Heayn

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Getting back to basics

IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT you are doing when you purchase a property, especially a home. You want to know the responsibilities homeownership entails. Of all the responsibilities that home ownership requires, paying the mortgage should be at the top of the list.

When you get a loan from a bank, they use a debt-to-income ratio or DTI to determine how much of a loan you can afford. Before the California real estate market appreciated to astronomical levels, many lenders allowed 25 to 32 percent of a person's gross income to go toward a house payment.

Many years ago, one bank figured out that they incurred the lowest number of loan losses on home loans where 28 percent or less of a person's income paid for the mortgage.

For example, if you made \$12,000 a month a bank would allow \$3,360 of your income to go toward your mortgage. If you do the math, with an interest rate of 6.50 percent you would be able to afford a fully amortizing loan of \$440,000. If you put a 20 percent down payment on a property, the price would be \$550,000.

These numbers are probably shocking to people who purchased homes with interest only or 100 percent financing loans due to the simple fact that qualifying for loans was much easier 18 months ago. A year and half ago many lenders used aggressive DTI ratios, sometimes allowing as much as 55 percent of a person's income to go toward a house payment.

However, using lower DTI ratios is the way many lenders used to allow homeowners to borrow money. Many lenders, due to large loan losses and stupid lending, are paying the price for aggressive lending and reverting to the days of conservative lending with lower debt-to-income ratios.

Achieving the dream of a home is nice, but that dream quickly turns into a nightmare if you cannot make the mortgage payment.

As much as "stretching" for that home seems doable, keep in mind owning a home while being house poor, meaning you are eating canned soup every night and watching every cent you spend, is not what banks want for their borrowers.

When your loan officer explains the loan payment on your home purchase, run the numbers and see if it makes sense for yourself. Only you know what you can really cut out of your expenses.

Do not allow someone to talk you into a loan with a payment that will be difficult for you to pay each month.

I have noticed that many investors prefer interest only loans for their investment properties, and for good reason — they want a property to produce cash flow as soon as possible.

As I have stated many times before, an investor purchases an income property for the income stream.

The premium the investor pays for the income stream is determined by the marketplace and the investor. However, I have also

noticed that many of those same investors have free and clear homes.

Over the last month I asked many of my clients with free and clear homes or homes they live in without mortgages why they do not have loans on their homes. The majority of them gave the same obvious answer — peace of mind.

ACHIEVING THE DREAM OF A HOME IS NICE, BUT THAT DREAM QUICKLY TURNS INTO A NIGHTMARE IF YOU CANNOT MAKE THE MORTGAGE PAYMENT.

They wanted the security of knowing that no one can take their home away. Some investors refinanced income properties and used the cash out proceeds to payoff the mortgage, while others made large principal payments over time until the property's loan was paid off. Of course, not everyone can make large principal payments, but everyone who owns a home should put some money toward the principal of the loan to pay it down.

Paying down the principal amount on your home loan helps when you sell the property and protects you from a drop in value.

For example, if you owned a home worth \$500,000 with a principal loan balance of \$400,000, and you paid an additional \$1,000 a month, over two years the loan would be paid down an additional \$24,000. If the property's value dropped 5 percent or \$25,000 and you had to sell the property due to a job loss or other circumstance, you would come close, with the sale of the property, to making enough to cover the loan balance.

You would lose the money you put into the property, which is a tough pill to swallow. However, you would not owe the bank any money or be put in a situation where you have to do a short sale, which would save your credit and allow you to purchase another home faster than just walking away from the property.

If you save enough money for a down payment and legitimately qualify for a loan, homeownership can be one of the greatest accomplishments a person can achieve. Remember that qualifying for a loan you can afford and paying down loan principal are two of the most important things a homeowner can do.

MIKE HEAYN is a Washington Mutual multi-family loan consultant. He can be reached at (310) 428-1342, or e-mailed at michael.heayn@wamu.net.

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ECONOMY

Report: Booming West needs federal partnerships

BY STEVEN K. PAULSON
Associated Press Writer

DENVER Western cities are developing into “megapolitan” areas that deserve more support from the federal government if they’re going to continue to grow, according to a blueprint prepared by the Brookings Institution.

Areas where western communities are seeking partnerships with the federal government include water, transportation, immigration and energy to provide the labor and supplies needed to continue growing.

“We cannot be a red-headed stepchild where the federal government is involved,” said Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter, who said the current federal policies aren’t working in the West.

According to the Brookings report, the so-called “Mountain Megas” include Las Vegas and surrounding communities, the Wasatch Front in Utah, the Front Range surrounding Denver, the Sun Corridor in Arizona and northern New Mexico.

The report concluded that the Intermountain West, dominated by megapolitan areas, has emerged as America’s fastest changing, most surprising urban region that will require the federal government and those communities to come up with unique solutions.

“The region is neither the Old West, nor the New West. It is the New New West, continuously unfolding,” the report noted.

Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman said one of the biggest challenges will be developing a water policy that works for the entire region, not

just one state. He said Nevada is already knocking on Utah’s door threatening to take more water.

“I haven’t committed troops to the border yet, but I’m darn close,” he joked as the report was presented Tuesday at a news conference in Denver.

He said the western states need more electric transmission lines, highways and a workable immigration policy that doesn’t harm western states.

“We can’t do it without federal help,” he said.

The report suggests federal incentives would reward communities that work toward regional solutions instead of their own self-interests.

Brandon Scarborough, a researcher for the Political Economy Research Center in

Bozeman, Mont., a think tank that promotes free market solutions to problems in the West, said bringing in the federal government on major issues that will determine the future of the West would be a mistake. He said federal programs always come with strings attached that give Washington substantial control.

“We should keep government out as much as possible, especially if it’s going to get billed to the taxpayers. This was a result of a lack of planning by those communities,” Scarborough said.

The report concluded that self-help would remain the primary source of progress in the West, but the time has come when western leaders need a steady, supportive partner on issues that cross borders.

REAL ESTATE

Mortgage giant rescue could cost government as much as \$25B

BY JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON A federal rescue of troubled mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac could cost taxpayers as much as \$25 billion, Congress’ top budget analyst said Tuesday.

But Peter R. Orszag, director of the Congressional Budget Office, predicted in a letter to lawmakers that there’s a better than even chance the government will not have to

step in to prop up the companies by lending them money or buying stock.

Congress is expected to vote this week on a housing measure that would give the Treasury Department authority to throw Fannie and Freddie a temporary lifeline.

Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson, who has been pressing for the power, says it’s intended as a backup plan to help calm investors and stabilize financial markets.

Orszag said it’s most likely that the com-

panies will remain afloat and the government won’t have to put up any money, but there’s a very small possibility that Treasury will have to step in to help cover losses at Fannie and Freddie topping \$100 billion. The \$25 billion estimate reflects his office’s best guess of how big a federal infusion would be needed.

With financial markets now assuming the measure will be approved, Orszag suggested the cost of inaction could be steep, too.

“It is arguable that if it were not enacted at this point, that the consequences could be quite severe,” he told reporters.

Paulson said in a New York speech Tuesday that Congress needs to quickly approve a support package for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac — which guarantee or own almost half of the home mortgages in the country — to make sure they maintain their critically important role in housing finance.

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Market Matters

Brian Hepp

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Adding some style to investment strategy

IF YOU'RE JUST GETTING YOUR FEET WET in the world of investing, stocks may seem to be the best way to get started. While financial advisors will likely suggest that a certain portion of your portfolio contain stocks, it is important to realize that there are two primary styles of stock investing — value and growth.

At any given time, one style or the other may be the best bet for you. Oddly enough, at times you may even be better off employing both styles. Even if you start off with one style, changes in your lifestyle or the market may lead you to make a switch to the other or use both at once.

VALUE INVESTING

Value investing involves choosing stocks that may have an unappreciated potential — those that may not be the most popular in the market at the moment but that have sound fundamentals and might be poised for a turnaround. Value investing involves searching for a company that appears to have a good financial future, but that the market either doubts or has not yet noticed. It includes buying stock in these companies before the market fully recognizes them, and then waiting for the market to see their true value.

To help identify a value stock, look for some of these characteristics:

- Value stocks generally trade below their intrinsic value (private market value per share). In other words, their stock price does not reflect what the company actually would be worth if all its assets were sold.
- Value stocks often have higher dividend yields. These companies can be more oriented toward paying a dividend rather than reinvesting for growth.
- Value stocks may have hidden value such as land, assets, property, patents or other investments that investors may overlook.
- Value stocks often have a lower growth rate than growth stocks.

- Value stocks may be more sensitive to the economy than growth stocks. An improving economy may spur higher earnings and drive up a value stock's price. Thus, value stocks often outperform growth stocks early in an economic cycle.

GROWTH INVESTING

Growth investing focuses on stocks that experience faster-than-average growth and are expected to continue such positive trends. Past performance, however, is no indication of future results.

When deciding whether a certain stock is a growth stock, you may want to look for the following characteristics:

- A growth stock usually shows higher revenue and earnings growth potential relative to its industry.
 - Growth stocks are often industry leaders in sales and profits and often have the highest price-to-earnings ratios.
 - Growth stocks usually have low or non-existent dividend yields because the profits are generally reinvested back into the company as opposed to being paid out as dividends.
 - Growth stocks' earnings often compare best when the overall economy's growth begins to slow. Thus, growth stocks have tended to outperform value stocks later in the economic cycle.
- Before deciding on what style is best suited for you, and to avoid some of the volatility any particular investment may offer, you may want to use a more defensive technique by combining both these types of investments. This strategy would allow you to capture blended returns with blended risk. Your financial advisor will also be able to help you decide the best investment style for your needs.

BRIAN HEPP is a financial consultant and can be reached at (310) 453-0077 or at brian.hepp@agedwards.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

Leno heads into final year

BY LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

BEVERLY HILLS Conan O'Brien will take over the "Tonight" show next June — and what happens to deposed host Jay Leno after that is anybody's guess.

Leno's last show will be Friday, May 29, and O'Brien will start the following Monday, June 1, NBC executives told a Television Critics Association meeting Monday.

NBC is angling to keep Leno with NBC Universal but the late-night king has indicated he's ready to jump ship. Eager NBC competitors, including other networks and syndicators, are prepared to help him make the leap.

Ben Silverman and Marc Graboff, NBC Entertainment co-chairmen, were asked about the specter of Leno being hired by ABC and overpowering O'Brien and top-rated "Tonight."

"We really believe in the decisions we've

made with our partners, including Jay," and stand by them, Silverman replied.

Graboff disagreed with the premise of the question, saying talks aimed at keeping Leno within NBC Universal post-"Tonight" are continuing.

But, Graboff added, "we've made our decision, we're happy with it, we're very confident the 'Tonight' show will remain dominant in its time period."

Despite its prime-time woes, NBC has managed to maintain its late-night ratings dominance, although O'Brien has been challenged lately by Craig Ferguson on CBS. Now NBC is attempting a tricky transition based on a promise made nearly four years ago that O'Brien would succeed Leno.

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MEASURE V – CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 30, 2008 at the Office of Sustainability and the Environment.

Applications are invited to fill 5 vacancies on the Measure V Citizens Oversight Committee. All persons who reside in Santa Monica are invited to apply regardless of race, sex, age, disability, religion, marital status, national origin, sexual preference, or ancestry. Appointment will be made at a City Council meeting in September or October, 2008.

The Oversight Committee is being assembled to audit the use of the proceeds of the Clean Beaches and Ocean Parcel Tax (also known as Measure V) adopted by voters in November, 2006.

The State Political Reform Act requires Commission (Committee) members to disclose their interest and income which may be materially affected by their official action by filing a Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) with the City Clerk's office upon assuming office and annually thereafter.

Application forms and information are available on the internet at www.smeprd.org. Applications are also available at the Office of Sustainability and the Environment, 200 Santa Monica Pier, Suite J, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Applications may be received and/or submitted by mail, email or fax. Disability related assistance and alternate formats of this document are available upon request. Contact information: phone: (310) 458-2213; fax (310) 393-1279 or email: environment@smgov.net.

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Alexandra Bissonnette news@smdp.com

CHANGES IN STORE: Los Angeles-based construction company AWI Builders is expected to receive a \$3.3 million contract to carry out facade improvements to parking structures 1 through 6, which line Second and Fourth streets between Broadway and Wilshire Boulevard.

Big Blue Bus asks council to approve fleet upgrades

FROM CONSENT PAGE 1

Fourth Street at Olympic Drive, the multi-story lot is a mixed-use development that includes retail spots along the ground floor, none of which have been filled since the opening last year.

The contract with TLD Construction will make the ground and second floor spaces ready for office use by City Hall departments. The 3,500 square foot second floor designed with a full-scale restaurant operator in mind will now be sliced into two spots — one for a city department and the other for a small lunch-time cafe.

"The proposed tenant improvements are consistent with the short-term city office space goal of centralizing city services in the Civic Center for added public convenience, and will save the monthly expense of leasing private office space," the staff report states.

MONEY FOR RECYCLING

In order to meet the escalating demand for recycling bins following City Hall's takeover of solid waste commercial services, the council will be asked to purchase nearly 2,000 receptacles.

U.S. Transportation is expected to receive a \$1 million contract to deliver recycling containers to local business customers. Approximately 1,100 bins will be delivered through the end of the year.

"Approximately 1,900 new bins are required in fulfilling the refuse and recycling needs of existing and new commercial customers," the staff reported stated.

Recycling consultant GBB, which provides analysis of the Solid Waste Division's operations, is also anticipated to receive a

\$50,000 raise in its contract with City Hall. The agency's services will be called upon to assist City Hall in reviewing service agreements.

NEW RIDES FOR THE BIG BLUE BUS

Five gasoline/electric hybrid buses could soon join the Big Blue Bus fleet.

The council will be asked to approve a \$4 million contract to Creative Bus Sales to provide five transit coaches and spare parts. The vehicles will replace several existing outdated Mini Blue Buses, which serve the neighborhoods and business districts.

Included in the consent agenda is also a \$176,000 contract with Harley Ellis Devereaux to design the interior of Big Blue Bus' operations building on the 1600 block of Seventh Street. The redesign will include new cubicle and desk configurations, improved bathroom amenities and break area for bus drivers.

"Sustainable materials will be used as much as possible in all changes to the building and ergonomics will also be an important part of the process," the staff report states.

BEAUTIFYING OCEAN PARK BOULEVARD

Ongoing efforts to improve a stretch of Ocean Park Boulevard that's often compared to a speedway will get a financial boost.

Urban Studio, which has been facilitating the redesign of the street, will receive a nearly \$30,000 increase to its contract to provide additional services.

Residents living along Ocean Park Boulevard, west of Lincoln Boulevard, have

SEE CONSENT PAGE 13

Hybrids are a popular choice

FROM TRENDS PAGE 1

would allow because their battery manufacturers have not been able to keep up with the rate of sales.

"It looks like there's been a pretty significant shift in the American psyche away from the large gas guzzling SUVs," said Wahl.

Rising gas prices seem to have inspired a greater level of consumer awareness while purchasing cars.

"What's been happening is that people are doing a little more homework before they pull the trigger," MacLoughlin said, recalling that in earlier times people were much more likely to get excited by a car and just buy it.

Edmunds.com addresses this new concern with a new feature called the Gas-Guzzler Trade-in Calculator.

The calculator takes the vital statistics of the car being sold and the hybrid being purchased. From there it calculates the savings in gas costs, given the driver's average mileage, to produce an estimate of how many months it would take for the consumer to begin saving money.

"It's important to calm down, set aside our feelings and look closely at the dollars and cents," Philip Reed, Senior Consumer Advice Editor on Edmunds.com, stated in a press release. "In some cases, people who make a panicked car-buying decision could sacrifice thousands of dollars of value just to save a hundred at the pump."

While each consumer's experience cannot be perfectly estimated by the calculator, it provides a general idea of the average costs. As a typical example, the calculator estimates that trading in a four-year-old standard GMC Yukon for a hybrid Toyota Prius would take two years and one month, driving 1,500 miles a month, before the investment saved money.

For those, like Michelle Salonga, who own a gas guzzling car, the switch to a hybrid may be beginning to look enticing. Salonga's Audi Q7 costs \$85 to fill the tank, and she's getting fed up with it after only a year.

"I love luxury and my car is luxurious, but with the gas prices, forget it," she said. "I'm ready to swap it for a Prius."

Both Zamignani and MacLoughlin believe that there are other factors behind the boost in hybrid sales in Santa Monica.

"We are located in a place where people

I THINK PEOPLE ARE GOING TO GET USED TO THE FUEL SAVINGS AND I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO FEEL BETTER FOR WHAT THEY'RE DOING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. I THINK THEY ARE GOING TO REPLACE THEIR HYBRID WITH A HYBRID."

Alan MacLoughlin
General Sales Manager
for Lexus of Santa Monica

want to buy hybrids to be environmentally correct and politically correct," Zamignani said.

Ruben Nava has loved fancy Italian sports cars since he was a boy, and currently owns a Porsche convertible, a Mercedes CLS 500 and a Jeep Wrangler.

"For the first time ever in my life I'm interested in not an exotic Italian car but in something more Earth friendly," he said. Nava added that he was not motivated by the expensive gas prices, but guilt. He is currently looking into an electric car that is currently being developed.

"I think that will appeal to the sexy-macho [kind of people]," he said. "But it will also be cool with all the greenies that we can all hopefully become."

MacLoughlin believes that all this will make surging hybrid sales more than just a current trend.

"I think people are going to get used to the fuel savings and I think they're going to feel better for what they're doing for the environment," he said. "I think they are going to replace their hybrid with a hybrid."

news@smdp.com

Chinese language considered tongue of future commerce

FROM CLASS PAGE 3

one of the fastest growing economies in the world, seeing the value in the future workforce to have fluency in the language.

"There are a lot of people here already doing business with China," Chou said. "There will be a lot more, so why not (offer a class)?"

Hui-Ling Chen, the mother of an incoming freshman at Samohi, said the similarities between Chinese, Japanese and Korean will also allow her son to have some comprehension in the other Asian languages. One of the Japanese systems of writing — Kanji — was adopted from China.

"If he can read Chinese, he can read Korean and Japanese," Chen said. "He'll be able to learn a completely different language and have a chance to learn a different culture."

Wei Chen, who first approached Lincoln Middle School officials last year about starting

"THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE HERE ALREADY DOING BUSINESS WITH CHINA."

Sally Chou
Chief Academic Officer

a Chinese language course, said she expects non-Asian students will also sign up for the course.

She said one of her daughter's friends, who is Jewish, has expressed interest because it might give him an advantage later on in life.

"This is the language of the future," Chen said.

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Cotton farmers face foe in invasive weed

BY GREG BLUESTEIN
Associated Press Writer

IDEAL, Ga It's only a few months into the cotton growing season, but already the budding rows of cotton are dwarfed by towering weeds that starve them of sunlight, nutrients and water.

This pesky pigweed species, called palmer amaranth, has long been held in check by powerful herbicides.

But three years ago, scientists discovered a far-from-ideal development in this central Georgia farming hamlet: The first species that's resistant to all but the most aggressive chemical treatments.

Now, this powerful new breed has spread to farms throughout the Southeast and is threatening to move further west, baffling farmers and bringing comparisons to that deadliest scourge of cotton.

"Since the boll weevil, there's been no pest as challenging as this one — without a doubt," sighed Stanley Culpepper, a University of Georgia weed specialist, as he plucked a particularly tall weed.

In Georgia alone, researchers expect to find it in about 40 counties this year. It's steadily spread throughout the Southeast, afflicting farms in the Carolinas, Tennessee and Arkansas. With each farm it devastates, it's brought comparisons to the boll weevil, the beetle that lays eggs in the plant's boll and ruins them.

"You tend to exaggerate whatever is hot at the moment," said Alan York, a weed science specialist at North Carolina State University. "But having said that, this is a bear. It's resistant. It's very prolific. It grows very fast. It's very competitive — and it's relatively hard to control to start with."

Farmers have indeed found a formidable foe in the palmer amaranth, which crowds out cotton plants with stalks that can grow eight feet tall. For one thing, the plant is productive. Each female produces as many as 500,000 seedlings, meaning just one plant can birth an entire field.

Unlike other pests, pigweed can continue to grow an inch a day even without water, making it particularly adept during the epic drought gripping the region. It also thrives in hot weather, continuing to grow when temperatures top 90 degrees and other plants shut down.

"It's happy as it can be when other crops are suffering," said York. "It simply outcompetes other weeds."

Much of the pigweed plants were held at bay by cheap herbicides deployed by farmers from Virginia to California. But only the most aggressive and expensive chemical treatments have worked against the resistant variety, and even those hardly manage to contain them.

Even handpicking isn't foolproof. The weed has the mind-boggling tendency to grow back if the top is chopped off or if any point of the root is touching the ground.

"You control one thing, and another crops up. Crabgrass was our biggest nemesis for years. And now it's pigweed," said Gordon Sutton, a 74-year-old who owns the Ideal farm where the new breed was first discovered.

There are no estimates yet on the scourge's economic impact, but scientists estimate untold thousands of acres of cotton — worth millions of dollars — have been plowed under. And York said it could cost \$20 an acre to fend off much of the plant, costing the industry millions more.

Exhibit illustrates advances in prefab home construction

BY DAVID MINTHORN
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK Prefabricated houses don't have to be tacky-tacky.

Contemporary prefab homes now possess all the flair and durability of traditional housing. Computerized designs and innovative materials are behind this architectural revolution, replacing cookie-cutter forms and flimsy materials from prefab's heyday after World War II.

That's the message of "Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling," an engrossing survey of the prefab movement opening Sunday at the Museum of Modern Art. It lasts through Oct. 26.

Visitors can stroll through five model homes built outside the museum to experience major architectural advances in prefabrication. Distinctive profiles, open floor plans, energy efficiency and off-the-shelf components are shared objectives.

Built in a black-topped lot next to the museum, the model homes form a kind of urban village in the heart of Manhattan.

Cellophane House is a five-story, steel-frame town house from Philadelphia. Burst 008 is an Australian beachhouse of laser-cut plywood. Micro compact home was

designed and built in Britain and Germany, with all the comforts in just 76 square feet of living space. System 3 is a modular home prototype from Austria in the shape of shipping containers.

The fifth model is a digitally fabricated, one-room "shotgun house" designed for flood-ravaged New Orleans.

An accompanying exhibit inside MoMA traces the history of prefab housing dating to 1833, when H. Manning of London began selling portable colonial cottages for emigrants to Australia, boasting that the homes could be assembled in a day.

Scale models, photos and architectural sketches range over the prefab work of modernist innovators like Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Jean Prouve in Europe and Thomas Edison, Frank Lloyd Wright and R. Buckmaster Fuller in the United States.

It includes a two-bedroom Lustron house of porcelain-enameled steel, one of 2,500 produced in the United States (1948-50); photos of World War II-era Quonset Huts; a model of Fuller's Dymaxion Dwelling Machine (1944-46); sketches of Wright's American System-Built Houses for the Richards Co. (1911-17); and an advertisement for Edison's poured concrete buildings.

Council considers changes to budget

FROM CONSENT PAGE 10

long complained about the risks present in its current configuration, which they claim invites drivers to operate at a high speed. The design concepts for the project will be presented to the Planning Commission in the fall.

DESIGNING PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS

The council is expected to approve a \$100,000 contract with Cowan Communications Arts to design outreach materials that promote sustainability, energy efficiency and other City Hall environmental initiatives. The graphic design firm will be responsible for producing advertising, outdoor signs and Web site development.

MORE BIODIESEL FOR CITY HALL

Following the goals of the Sustainable City Plan, the council is anticipated to sign a

\$3.4 million contract with General Petroleum to supply biodiesel fuel.

"The city strives to continue and expand its policies and programs by switching to less harmful reduced-emission fuels," the staff report states.

GRANTS GALORE

The council will do more than expend money, also approving the reception of two grants totaling \$1,060,000, approximately \$1 million of which will come from the county's Children and Families First Proposition 10 Commission to pay for water fluoridation.

The commission, which also goes by the name First 5 L.A. Commission, promotes early childhood development.

City Hall begin delivering fluoridated water in November 2007, an action that has been hotly contested by many Santa Monica residents. The second grant, worth about

\$59,500, comes from the state's Office of Traffic Safety, paying for local DUI enforcement and awareness programs.

"The program is necessary to enhance our efforts to address and reduce further incidences of injury and fatal collisions and improve our positioning in the statewide Office of Traffic Safety rankings," the staff report states.

NEW BREATHING CONTRAPTION

The council is expected to approve a roughly \$360,000 purchase of a self-contained breathing apparatus for the fire department.

The current supply of breathing apparatuses are at the end of their 15-year life-span.

CONSULTING SERVICES

The insurance-related issues of City Hall could soon be handled by Gallagher Benefits Services, which is anticipated to receive a

\$191,000 contract. The consultant will provide a variety of services related to employee benefits, including reviewing contracts, claims and renewals with carriers. Gallagher is being recommended based on its pricing and experience, offering 30 percent less for its services than other firms that submitted proposals.

CHANGES TO THE BUDGET

Several staffing changes in the Transportation Management Division could lead to alterations in the recently approved budget.

City Hall is expected to hire a transportation demand program manager and upgrade a vacant transportation management specialist position to a principal planner position, leading to an increase of \$166,000 in the fiscal 2008-09 budget.

melodyh@smdp.com

Visitors guide wins award from state tourism commission

FROM AWARD PAGE 3

renowned restaurants, beautiful sunsets and a bustling nightlife.

One new feature of the guide, "Green Facts," reflects Santa Monica's growing environmental consciousness.

"Our strategy was to show that if you are an eco-conscious traveler, the green theme is

woven throughout the experience of Santa Monica," Baker said.

Another feature, "Did You Know?" peppers the guide with Santa Monica historical facts, such as, "The original Muscle Beach was located in Santa Monica." The guide also includes traveler-friendly lists, such as "best place to watch the sunset" and "best family dining."

"It's an honor to win the award for Best Visitors Guide in 2008. We are very proud of Santa Monica CVB's entire publishing program and work hard to enhance their brand with each product we publish for them," said Lyndell Gooch, publisher of Striker Media Group, which publishes the Santa Monica guide. "To that end, unlike other publications in the market, the Santa Monica

Visitors Guide is printed on recycled paper, and through its ad sales remains self-sufficient."

The SMCVB publishes about 100,000 copies of the visitor's guide each year. The goal, Baker said, is to "spread the word about what Santa Monica offers as a brand"

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SURF REPORT



SURF CONDITIONS

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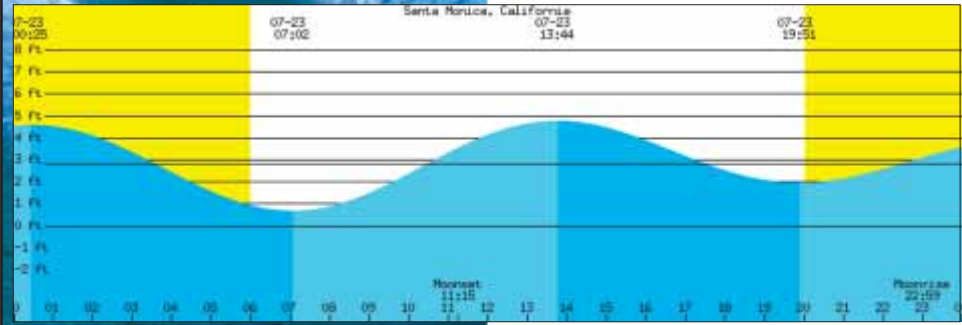
SWELL FORECAST (1-2 FT)

The southern hemi ground swell continues to fade. Some SSE swell from Hurricane Fausto is due. This will be mostly 9- 11-second energy, angled from a steep 170 degrees. This'll make it tough for many breaks to pull in. Overall, with the combo of diminishing southern hemi and incoming Fausto swell, most south facing breaks should see chest high surf with occasional pluses at the standouts, more so south of LA.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

SMALL SOUTHERN HEMI THURSDAY...

TIDE FORECAST FOR TODAY IN SANTA MONICA



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NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous four weeks up to the ending date of July 15, 2008

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QUICK STATS (for the last 28 days)

Number of sewage spills -- 0

Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0

Number of wet days -- 0

Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 40 / 50

Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 5 / 50

The Beach Report Card is made possible by



Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for 3 days after a rainstorm. After a rain, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually far exceed health criteria in the state's Beach Closures and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Canillo Beach, at Arroyo Soguit Creek mouth	A+	ns
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
El Pescador State Beach, between Lachasa and Las Aliso creeks	A+	ns
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach	A+	ns
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth	A+	ns
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth	A+	ns
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private)	A+	ns
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth	F	ns
Escamido Creek, just east of Escamido State Beach	A+	ns
Lariga Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
Selkirk Canyon at Don Blocker County Beach	A	ns
Puerto State Beach at creek mouth	A+	ns
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerto Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	D	ns
Surfider Beach at Malibu Colony fences	A	ns
Surfider Beach (beach location)- daily	B	ns
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	A	ns
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon	A+	ns
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (point zero)	A+	ns
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs	A+	ns
Pine Creek at Las Tunas County Beach	A+	ns
Tuna Canyon	A+	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	ns
Castroville Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	A+	ns
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at 17260 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain)	A+	ns

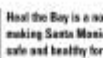
LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Del Air Bay Club drain near fence	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain	A	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chantrelle)	A	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain	A	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	F	ns
Santa Monica Municipal Pier	F	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kanter storm drain	A	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restaurants)	F	ns
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A	ns
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain	A	ns
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	B	ns
Venice Beach- projection of Tappan St.	A+	ns
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth	B	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Calver Blvd. drain	A+	ns
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty)	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	ns
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain	A+	ns

LEGEND

DRY -- each location is graded on an A-- F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone

WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days

ns -- no sample taken



Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.

Heal the Bay

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NBA

Camby still upset about the manner Nuggets traded him

BY JOHN NADEL

AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES Six days later, and Marcus Camby still can't believe what went down.

It does seem a bit difficult to fathom.

The Los Angeles Clippers acquired Camby, the NBA's leading shot-blocker the past three seasons, from the Denver Nuggets last Tuesday for the option to exchange second-round picks with the Clippers in 2010.

And that's all.

"When I heard of the trade, I said, 'Who did Denver get in return?'" Camby said Monday at an introductory news conference.

The answer was nobody, although the Nuggets are relieved of Camby's \$10 million salary-cap figure. Trading second-round picks certainly won't be a major development, no matter where the teams might be choosing.

"Yes," Camby answered quickly when asked if the Nuggets gave him away.

The 12-year NBA veteran was just beginning.

"I understand this is a business," he said.

"No one said a word (about the trade), I found out from my agent."

Camby had been in Las Vegas working out with several of his former teammates and was informed of the trade shortly thereafter, upon returning to his Houston home.

"I thought the way (the Nuggets) went about it was classless," he said. "I thought it could have gone down a whole lot better. I'll get over it once training camp begins when I'm around the guys. You never forget. I'm definitely looking forward to those couple games we play against Denver.

"Denver was a place my family and I really loved. It was kind of shocking. I felt I did everything possible for that team."

And, he added, in the community as well.

Camby, a 6-foot-11, 235-pounder, aver-

aged 9.1 points, 13.3 rebounds, 3.3 assists and 3.61 blocked shots last season, his sixth with the Nuggets. He joined Dikembe Mutombo as the only player to lead the NBA in blocked shots for three straight seasons, and his four blocked shot titles are tied with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Mark Eaton for the most in league history.

Camby, under contract for two more years, said the only calls he's received from people connected with the Nuggets have been from the trainer, strength coach and several former teammates including Carmelo Anthony, Allen Iverson and Kenyon Martin.

"They're sad to see me go," he said. "These guys were like brothers to me. It's kind of sad the way things ended up. I wish those guys a lot of individual success. Losing a great defender, they'll probably give up more points next year. That's something they'll have to deal with."

The Nuggets have been eliminated from the playoffs in the first round in each of the past five years. Camby said being traded the way he was left him feeling like a scapegoat. He was the NBA defensive player of the year in the 2006-07 season and finished second behind Boston's Kevin Garnett in the voting this season.

The 33-year-old Camby was the second big-name player to join the Clippers this month. Baron Davis left Golden State to sign a five-year, \$65 million contract with his hometown team. The Clippers also signed restricted free agent Kelenna Azubuike to a three-year, \$9 million offer sheet late last week.

With Elton Brand and Corey Maggette leaving as free agents, the Clippers will have a completely different look next season. Hit hard by injuries, they went 23-59 this season, two years after falling one victory shy of reaching the Western Conference finals.

OLYMPICS

Serena plans to play through injury

BY BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

CARSON Serena Williams plans to keep playing through a left knee injury despite advice from a doctor and her father that she rest with less than three weeks before the Beijing Olympics.

She figures her injured knee "will be old news" by the time the Olympic tennis competition begins Aug. 10.

Williams withdrew from Saturday's semi-finals of the Bank of the West Classic at Stanford after injuring her knee. She said that an MRI exam afterward revealed an inflamed joint.

"I've been playing a lot of tennis, that's basically what it is, a lot of use," she said Monday. "I haven't had enough time to train the way I normally do off-court because I'm playing a lot."

Williams, ranked fifth in the world and seeded second for this week's East West Bank Classic, received a first-round bye and is

scheduled to play her opening match Wednesday against Czech Petra Kvitova.

"I'm taking it day-by-day and I'll see how I go," she said. "I'm doing rehab for it three times a day, just to make sure that I'm ready."

Serena's older sister, Venus, and Lindsay Davenport already withdrew from Carson because of right knee injuries, making for a rash of knee injuries on the U.S. Olympic team.

Venus has said she plans to play next week's WTA tournament in Canada before going to Beijing, while Davenport has not indicated her immediate plans.

Serena said a doctor and her father, Richard, recommended that she skip this week's tournament near her hometown of Compton.

"He's always passive and I'm more aggressive," she said about her father. "I've been doing really well all year and I've been playing a lot. What I want to do is play tennis and play tournaments for this year and several years. I just feel like that's all I want to do."

MOVIE TIMES

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AMC LOEWS BROADWAY 4 1441 Third Street Promenade	WALL-E (G) 1hr 37min 12:20, 2:10, 2:50, 4:50, 5:20, 7:20, 7:50, 10:00, 10:10	The Wackness (R) 1hr 35min 1:50, 4:30, 7:20, 9:45
Meet Dave (PG) 1hr 30min 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45	Get Smart (PG-13) 1 hr 50 min 12:00, 2:30, 5:10, 8:00, 10:30	David & Fatima (NR) 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50
Hancock (PG-13) 1hr 32min 12:45, 3:00, 5:25, 7:50, 10:10	Journey to the Center of the Earth - 3-D (PG) 1hr 32min 1:45, 4:10, 6:50, 9:45	Garden Party (NR) 1hr 29min 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:15
Hellboy II: The Golden Army (PG- 13) 1hr 50min 12:30, 1:30, 3:30, 4:30, 6:30, 7:30, 9:30, 10:20	Wanted (R) 1hr 48min 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20	MANN'S CRITERION THEATRE 1313 Third St. (310) 395-1599
You Don't Mess With the Zohan (PG-13) 1hr 53min	Hancock (PG-13) 1hr 32min 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30	Dark Knight, The (PG-13) 2hrs 30min 10:10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12:30, 1:30, 3:00, 4:05, 5:00, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 10:00, 11:00
	Space Chimps (G) 1hr 21min 1:15, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:15	Mamma Mia! (PG-13) 1hr 48min 10:40 a.m., 11:40 a.m., 1:20, 2:30, 4:15, 5:10, 7:00, 8:00, 9:50, 10:50
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For more information, e-mail news@smdp.com

Think vacation, Leo

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ You feel as if you have another lease on life. Certainly your perspective changes, and your fiery and free-wheeling personality opens up situations. You might wonder where a situation begins and ends. Tonight: Do your thing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Knowing when you cannot change the status quo, even if you want to, could be very significant. Sometimes others are difficult and challenging. More likely there could be a difficulty moving a barrier. Tonight: Get some rest while you can.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Investigate and ask questions. You have waited quite awhile for answers. Soon information of significance heads in your direction. Think in terms of gains and growth in whatever area you choose to focus. Tonight: Say yes to an invitation.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ You are asked to take a stand or accept an additional responsibility. More than likely, you will do just that. Knowing your limits proves to be very helpful in this situation. Tonight: Burning the candles at both ends.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Finally you sense that you are in your element. How you deal with someone could change radically, though you might not be totally aware of the ramifications of your behavior. Others' reactions might be a signal of change. Tonight: Think "vacation."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Deal with a specific partner directly. You might feel a lot safer than in the past. As a result, you'll be more than willing to reveal what you are really thinking. Someone proves to be more receptive than you thought. Tonight: Do your thing.

Happy birthday

Spontaneity seems more natural this year. Often you discover that you like the benefits of impulsiveness, as it brings smiles, happiness and success. Still, you might want to consider establishing parameters. You will be a lot happier that way, without taking risks in vulnerable areas. Often you are forced to stop and rethink events. Detach whenever you trigger, as well as if you're questioning or seeking advice. Many of you will go back to school or head down a new spiritual path. If you are single, you could meet someone special on a trip, or possibly a foreigner could enter your life. This person could help you see the world through new eyes. ARIES helps you grow.

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS
The stars show the kind of day you'll have:
★★★★★Dynamic ★★ So-So
★★★★ Positive ★ Difficult
★★★ Average

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Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from ★ (easiest) to ★★★★★ (hardest).

Difficulty Level ★★★

5		9				6		
	6		7		8		3	
		4				2		
	7		3		5		2	9
				7				
	4	3	9	2	6	5	7	
		8				3		
		5				7		
			1	4	9			

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GETTING STARTED

There are many strategies to solving Sudoku. One way to begin is to examine each 3x3 grid and figure out which numbers are missing. Then, based on the other numbers in the row and column of each blank cell, find which of the missing numbers will work. Eliminating numbers will eventually lead you to the answer.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

1	8	5	9	4	3	2	6	7
4	7	9	5	6	2	3	8	1
3	6	2	8	1	7	5	9	4
2	3	1	7	8	4	9	5	6
7	4	8	6	9	5	1	2	3
9	5	6	2	3	1	7	4	8
8	9	3	1	2	6	4	7	5
5	2	4	3	7	8	6	1	9
6	1	7	4	5	9	8	3	2

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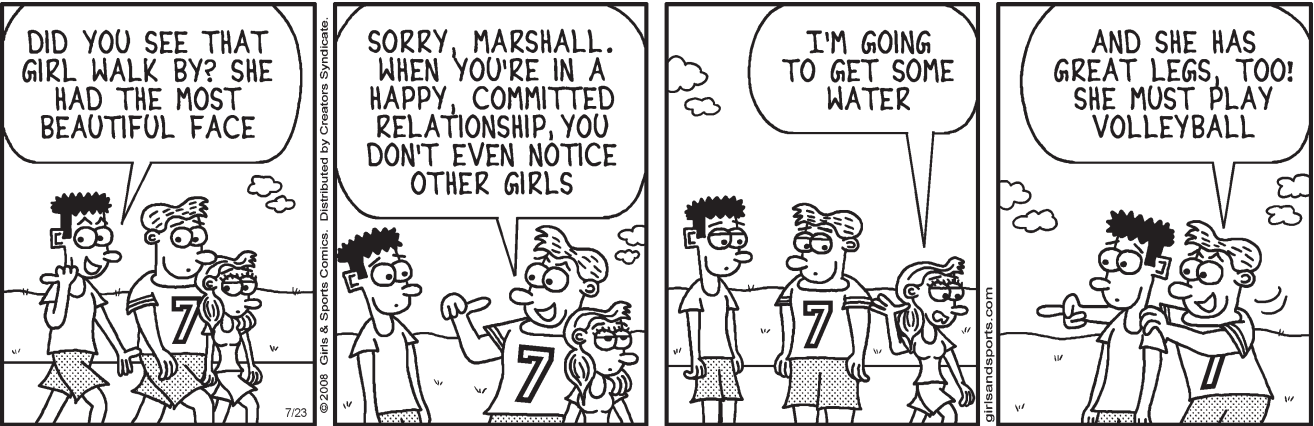
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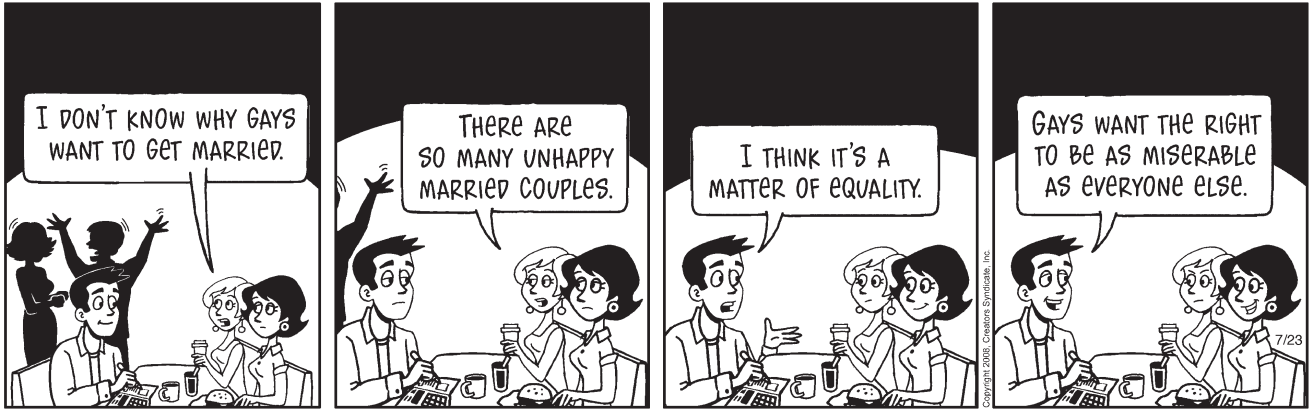
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By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



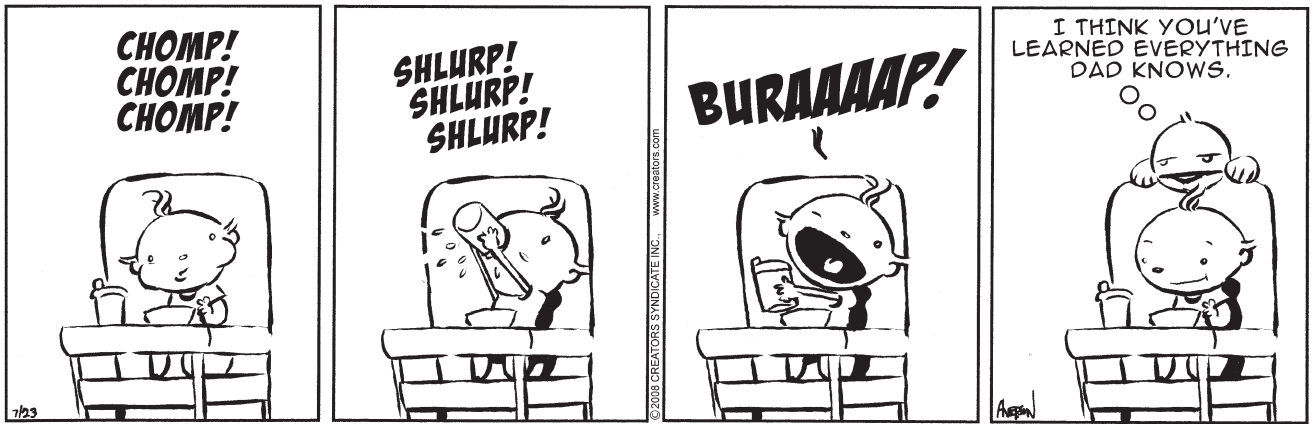
Garfield

By Jim Davis

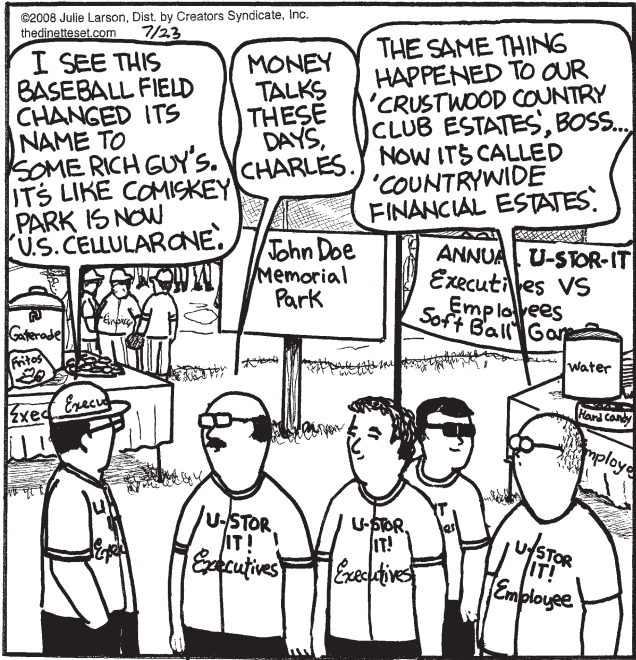


Dog eat Doug

By Brian Anderson



The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



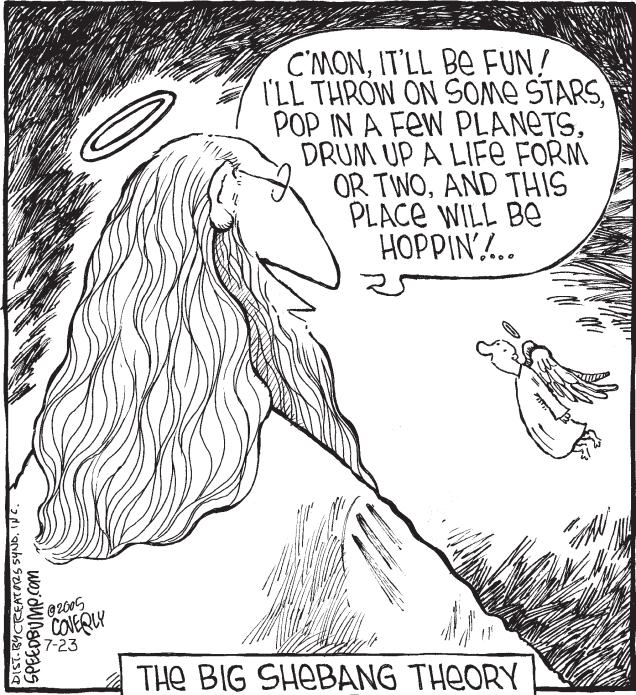
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Soraya Danesh news@smdp.com
The first person who can correctly identify where this image was captured wins a prize from the Santa Monica Daily Press. Send answers to editor@smdp.com.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Scone add-in
- 7 Land in the ocean
- 11 Florid
- 12 Doe's mate
- 13 Sore
- 14 Approx-imately
- 15 One-celled organism
- 17 Rainbow maker
- 20 White of TV
- 23 Base-ball's Mel
- 24 Riot queller
- 26 Gooney stuff
- 27 Hold
- 28 Gloss target
- 29 Goes by
- 31 Time for planning
- 32 Spock specialty
- 33 Carolina bird
- 34 Kitchen gadget
- 37 FDR pooch
- 39 Black Sea port
- 43 Skeptic's comment
- 44 Tacit
- 45 "Primal Fear" star
- 46 Was a fink

DOWN

- 1 Go bad
- 2 Common verb
- 3 Travel stop
- 4 Egypt's Anwar
- 5 News article
- 6 Notorious emperor
- 7 Weather map line
- 8 Horror movie sort
- 9 "Viva — Vegas"
- 10 Conceit
- 16 Photog-rapher Walker
- 17 Travel stop
- 18 Writer Calvino
- 19 One bring-ing up the rear
- 21 Artless
- 22 Ski resort
- 24 Puccini opera
- 25 Woolly mother
- 30 Free-booter
- 33 Take by force
- 35 See the sights

D	A	R	L	A		S	P	O	T	S
A	L	I	E	N		T	A	H	O	E
D	E	S	I	G	N	A	T	I	O	N
A	X	E		L	E	G		O	L	D
			M	E	T	E	R			
P	L	O	Y	S		S	A	V	E	S
C	O	R	N				F	I	L	L
S	W	E	A	R		I	T	A	L	Y
			H	A	R	M	S			
A	L	A		N	A	P		P	R	O
R	E	S	I	G	N	A	T	I	O	N
M	A	I	N	E		C	A	N	O	E
S	P	A	N	S		T	R	E	K	S

Yesterday's answer

- 36 Dame of comedy
- 37 Pear-shaped fruit
- 38 Presiden-tial nickname
- 40 Plunked down
- 41 "Sprechen — Deutsch?"
- 42 Throw in

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1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11							12			
13							14			
			15			16				
17	18	19				20			21	22
23				24	25					
26				27				28		
29			30					31		
32							33			
		34			35	36				
37	38				39			40	41	42
43					44					
45					46					

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EVENING: 0 6 9

DAILY DERBY 1st: 10 Solid Gold
2nd: 02 Lucky Star
3rd: 07 Eureka
RACE TIME: 1:41.64

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Shauntel Mayo, 29, was convicted in Tyler, Texas, in May of forcing four children (the youngest beginning at age 5) to perform sex acts on stage for something called the Mineola Swingers Club. Four other adults are scheduled for trial (including Patrick "Booger Red" Kelly, 41), even though Mayo's jury deliberated only four minutes before finding her guilty.
■ Todd Barkau, 35, and a 44-year-old woman were indicted in May in Kansas City, Mo., on charges of training the woman's daughter (beginning at age 12) to become a dominatrix whose services were for sale on the Internet.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1885 Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th president of the United States, died in Mount McGregor, N.Y., at age 63.
1914 Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia following the killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serb assassin; the dispute led to World War I.
1945 French Marshal Henri Petain, who had headed the Vichy government during World War II, went on trial, charged with treason. (He was condemned to death, but his sentence was commuted; Petain died in prison on this date in 1951.)
1948 American pioneer filmmaker D.W. Griffith died at age 73.
1952 Egyptian military officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser launched a successful coup against King Farouk I.
1958 Britain's Queen Elizabeth II named the first four women to peerage in the House of Lords.
1977 a jury in Washington convicted 12 Hanafi Muslims of charges stemming from the hostage siege at three buildings the previous March.
1982 actor Vic Morrow and two child actors, 7-year-old Myca Dinh Le and 6-year-old Renee Chen, were killed when a helicopter crashed on top of them during filming of a Vietnam War scene for "Twilight Zone: The Movie."

WORD UP!
gamine \gam-EEN; GAM-ee-n\, noun:
1. A girl who wanders about the streets; an urchin.
2. A playfully mischievous girl or young woman.

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North of Montana	=	\$ 4,119,200	\$ 2,280,474
Between Wilshire & Montana	=	\$ 3,111,000	\$ 1,066,246
South of Wilshire	=	\$ 975,619	\$ 680,048
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