



FREE!

Santa Monica Daily Press

July 24-25, 2004

A newspaper with issues

Volume 3, Issue 218

DAILY LOTTERY

FANTASY 5

3 8 22 24 34

DAILY 3

Daytime: 9 4 9

Evening: 7 9 3

DAILY DERBY

1st: 02 Lucky Star

2nd: 06 Whirl Win

3rd: 03 Hot Shot

RACE TIME: 1:45.44

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ In 1999, a federal judge in Syracuse, N.Y., rejected another in a series of lawsuits by Donald Drusky of East McKeesport, Pa., in his 30-year battle against USX Corp. for ruining his life by firing him in 1968. Furthermore, Drusky sued "God ... the sovereign ruler of the universe" for taking "no corrective action" against any of Drusky's enemies and demanded that God compensate him with professional guitar-playing skills and the resurrection of his mother.

TODAY IN HISTORY

ON JULY 24, 1969, the Apollo 11 astronauts, two of whom had been the first men to set foot on the moon, splashed down safely in the Pacific.

■ In 1783, Latin American revolutionary Simon Bolivar was born in Caracas, Venezuela.

■ In 1862, the eighth president of the United States, Martin Van Buren, died in Kinderhook, N.Y.

■ In 1866, Tennessee became the first state to be readmitted to the Union after the Civil War.

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State Greens delve into Feinstein fiasco

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

Nearly a year after he was cleared of any criminal wrongdoing for allegedly misappropriating a \$10,000 political donation, Santa Monica City Councilman Mike Feinstein is still suffering political fallout from the muddled controversy, which now is in the hands of the state Green Party.

At issue is a \$10,000 check intended for the Los Angeles Green Party donated by former member Bill Pietz three and a half years ago. Feinstein admittedly took the check and deposited into a private bank account that only he controls.

After more than a year of requests from Green Party officials for Feinstein to hand over his bank records and explain how the

money was spent, a subsequent criminal investigation was conducted by the Santa Monica Police Department. But the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office didn't file any charges, citing a lack of evidence.

After still more failed attempts by Green Party officials to get Feinstein to disclose where the money went, party members filed a small claims lawsuit against

him. But it was dropped, a decision Feinstein was able to be involved in. Feinstein, an elected member of the local Green Party County Council, was both a plaintiff and the defendant in the lawsuit — a fact some Greens contend is a conflict of interest.

Local Greens have recently accused Feinstein of breaking a party bylaw by participating in the vote within the local chapter to drop the small claims lawsuit against him.

In a series of private meetings over the last two weeks, state party officials agreed to review the alleged bylaws violation — which some members hope will force Feinstein out of the party. They've also met behind closed doors with Feinstein's lawyers regarding the missing money. Yet, Feinstein still refuses to explain how exactly the donation money was spent.

"The smartest thing Mike could do at this point would be to open those records," said local Green Party leader Joe Crompton, a vocal critic of Feinstein. "A lot of people want to just brush this thing under the rug."

State officials expect resolution on the missing bank records by the end of the year. They have alleged recently that Feinstein deposited still more contributions intended

See GREEN, page 5

Membership has its privileges



Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II/Daily Press

As part of a weekly contest, the first reader to accurately describe where this mystery photo was captured will win a free prize from the Daily Press. E-mail your answers to sack@smdp.com.

Up all night: Meeting curfew curbed in court

Judge discredits suit; councilmen poised to appeal

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN LA — After being rebuffed by a judge last week, two elected leaders suing City Hall in an effort to put a curfew on City Council meetings are poised to launch a new effort in court.

Because meetings regularly run past midnight, when most people are home asleep, City Councilmen Bob Holbrook and Herb Katz claim members of the public are

kept out of the public process. What's more, they say making staffers stay up late has a bad impact on service at City Hall.

In a written ruling handed down last week, Los Angeles Superior Court David Yaffe said Holbrook and Katz had no grounds to sue the City Council on which they serve. What's more, Judge Yaffe said the councilmen failed "to show that they bring their action solely in the public

interest, without regard to their personal preferences regarding working hours."

Katz and Holbrook are poised to appeal, as soon as Assistant City Attorney Joe Lawrence files the final paperwork with the court, something he said he'd do in the next few days. Meanwhile, the councilmen also are working with lawyer Rosario Perry to find residents willing to sign onto a class-action lawsuit. They reason that while Judge Yaffe barred them from suing the City Hall, there's nothing to keep a normal citizen

from doing so.

"I disagree with the judge," said Katz, who has offered to meet more regularly in order to end meetings earlier. "It isn't about the council. It's about helping our people be able to give more input ... It is not right."

"We should end our meetings long before we do."

City Hall has the ability under Judge Yaffe's ruling to seek reimbursement for legal fees, an amount Lawrence estimates to be about \$10,000. With an appeal and

See BROWN, page 6

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)
***** Emphasize what is good in your life as opposed to the problems. You will discover that everyone smiles and responds positively. Many clamor around the Ram, wanting you to join in this or that activity. Stay busy. Stay happy. Tonight: Your biggest problem is which invitation to accept.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
**** A dear friend or loved one begs you to stop and mellow out. He or she is willing to do whatever it takes to help you relax. You might find this position a bit difficult, but chill out and act like the Bull sniffing the flowers in his or her favorite pasture. Tonight: Easy does it.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
**** You're in the swing of things right now. Be more in touch with your feelings, especially those that are quite childlike. Laugh and play away all you want. Your words have a strong effect on a close friend or loved one. Tonight: Go until you are tired.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
**** You might decide that your place is where the action is. Decide to throw a spontaneous party. Get on the phone and invite friends. Don't hesitate to ask others to bring a platter or favorite dish. Don't get tense about money. Tonight: A host or hostess who enjoys his or her own party guarantees a fun time for everyone.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
**** Investigate new possibilities involving a relative, neighbor or friend that might impact you. Speak your mind; others will respond enthusiastically. Tension builds around a family member or real estate venture. Tonight: Easy does it.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
*** Make that extra effort financially. Pitch in and help someone you really care about. He or she will not forget your efforts. You might find it difficult to extend yourself this far and be a bit uncomfortable. Tonight: Stretch.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
***** You have a way that draws others. During the daylight hours, don't hesitate to go for what you want or to do something special you have coveted. Later in the day, some tension builds around a friendship or plans. Tonight: Fun doesn't have to cost.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
*** Take your time this morning completing something personal and key to your well-being. Think "nap," because you will find that later on you are a whirlwind of energy. Share a problem with a trusted loved one. Tonight: You sparkle.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
*** Use the daylight hours to your advantage, as success greets you. Plan on a slowdown by late afternoon. You might want to rent some movies and lie low. You cannot always be a bundle of fire. Give yourself permission to slow down. Tonight: Hide out (not necessarily by yourself).



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
*** If you must, go to work and deal with a supervisor. Review your side of a job. Brainstorming brings results. Plan on hooking up with others later in the day. Don't forget your social life, as it is important to your well-being. Tonight: Where the party is.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
***** You might want to take off ASAP. Sometimes you like wandering and exploring other neighborhoods. Getting away from it all helps renew your perspective. Mull over a problem with a different view. Tonight: In the limelight.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
***** A partner or associate needs time alone with you. Understand more of what this person desires through key conversations. Be ready to explore and think of different options. Go to the movies together or somewhere where there is music. Tonight: Let your mind wander.

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LOCAL



Relay for Life begins today

By Daily Press staff

Today, Santa Monicans will rally together for 24 hours to battle cancer.

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life is an overnight team event that raises awareness of cancer in the community and raises money to fight the disease.

The team event begins Saturday, July 24, at 9 a.m. and runs continuously until 9 a.m. on Sunday, July 25.

Leading up to the event, the Daily Press will highlight volunteers' stories:

Joanne Sell

I'm 43 years old. I live in Torrance and am currently serving as the "Thank You Chairperson" for the Santa Monica Relay for Life. I proudly belong to the "Fighting (against cancer) Flamingos" team and this is our second year participating in the Relay for Life. I am a purchasing and logistics Specialist at the Toyota Technical Center in Gardena.

I became involved with the Relay when a dear friend of mine, Linda Lovett, decided to form a team. Linda is a survivor of breast cancer and had inspired me so much with her sheer willpower to overcome this horrible disease. When she asked me to join, I gladly agreed.

My daughter Melanie and I participated in the Relay for Life last year. I was humbled by the level of commitment, good nature and dedication of the people I met there. Our team raised \$5,000 and we hope to double that this year. My favorite part was the Luminaria ceremony, which was quiet and reflective. I purchased luminarias for a couple of special people in my life who I've lost to cancer: My mother, grandfather, former pastor, and a family friend who died at age 16 many years ago. This year I will be walking in honor of my cousin, David Grant, who died of lung cancer a few weeks ago at age 42.

I enjoy telling people about the Relay for Life. The motivation derived from Starz Entertainment kept us going for the entire 24 hours last year. Game shows, movies, exercise class, bands/music, games, etc. They were wonderful. The other great thing about the Relay for Life was that it gave me the opportunity to walk with some of my friends, to talk without the interruption of TV and phone. I learned a lot of interesting things about them during that 24-hour period that I may not have learned otherwise.

When asked why I am involved with Relay instead of any other event, I don't exactly feel like I chose Relay as my "charity of choice." I believe Relay chose me through Linda's strength and enthusiasm.

The Santa Monica community has raised more than \$100,000 since 2002, when the first American Cancer Society Relay For Life was held. This year, the third annual Relay will be held at Santa Monica College's Corsair Field on today at 9 a.m. through Sunday at 9 a.m.

Teams are made up of at least 10 to 20 people who will walk or run around the SMC track in shifts, with the goal being that someone is on the track at all times. Each team member raises money in the weeks leading up to the event. The event is not only to raise money to fight cancer, but also to remember loved ones who lost their battle to the disease and celebrate the lives of those who have survived.

There will be dozens of cancer survivors — representing all forms — walking the opening lap on Saturday morning. From there, the weekend is all about fun, community and raising money. To participate, recruit friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors to form a relay team. People camp out and create a community party atmosphere together.

For more information, contact the SMRFL Committee at (310) 348-0356.

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SURF REPORT

Look for 2-3 ft - knee- to waist-high sets, occasionally 4 ft., and fair conditions throughout the weekend.

Saturday look for a mix of NW windswell to go along with small SSE to S swell (170-185) from former Hurricane Celia. By later Saturday, but best on Sunday, some new Southern Hemi S swell (180-195) will fill in and keep the surf playful.

Sunday should see a slow fade as the mix of swells begin to back down. More playful Southern Hemi S swell is expected to show at select areas.

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

Today the water is:

68°

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	8:19	1.5	10:24	1.7	2:11	3.6	3:22	4.9
SUNDAY	9:07	2.0	11:49	1.0	3:56	3.2	4:15	5.3
MONDAY	10:11	2.4	N/A	N/A	6:00	3.1	5:13	5.7
TUESDAY	12:55	0.3	11:26	2.6	7:31	3.3	6:10	6.2
WEDNESDAY	1:50	-0.5	12:36	2.6	8:31	3.6	7:06	6.7
THURSDAY	2:38	-1.1	1:37	2.5	9:17	3.9	7:59	7.0
FRIDAY	3:23	-1.4	2:31	2.2	9:58	4.2	8:49	7.2

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CHECK OUT THIS WEEK'S Q-LINE
RESPONSES ON PAGE 4.**

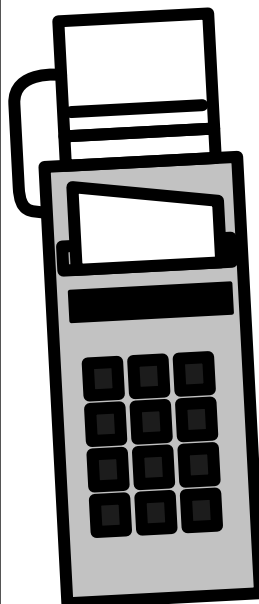


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Chock full o’ Cheney

Editor:
Rich Lowry, editor of the National Review, has said “What a fool Dick Cheney is.” This is amazing to hear from William Buckley Jr’s journal. According to a Newsweek poll cited in that “The Cheney Factor” article, 63 percent of the people think that Cheney has strong leadership qualities.
It’s a real eye-opener when a conservative, such as Mr. Lowry, apparently sees that the problem with Cheney is that he’s been leading Bush 43 in the wrong direction.
Could Mr. Lowry be capable of sarcasm? Later in that article Rich cheers Cheney for our success in bringing a “popular government” to Iraq. That puppet “sovereign” government our occupation is propping up is supposedly “waging the fight against terror,” according to Lowry. To me, it looks more like Vichy France trying to stop deGaulle’s resistance during World War II.

John Wisdom Dancer
Canoga Park

Criticism don’t pay the bills

Editor:
I hope Phil Hendricks and Carl Gettleman (SMDP, July 21, page 4) are not wag-ing war with the college during school time. Remember, folks, tax dollars pay your salary.

Alan Farrell
Malibu

The QLine

THE BUZZ ON THE STREET

This past week, Q-line asked:
“How concerned are you about West Nile Virus? What steps, if any, should the city take to protect residents?”
Here are your responses:

☉ “I have always been leery of mos-quitos due to their capacity of carrying an epidemic disease, tuberculosis being one. The chain reaction begins when a mosquito bites a diseased person and then bites a healthy person. Mosquitos love to hang around water puddles and water drains. Mosquitos are also known to fly into a person or an animal’s eye for the moisture. Repellents help, but are not a sure thing. Prudence dictate that a person shy away from areas of standing water.”

☉ “Keep your window screens fixed. Report any puddles of water, of course the bums don’t have to worry about WNV, they stink so much no mosquito will go anywhere near them.”

☉ “I think LA County is doing a wonderful job. If you call them and tell them about stagnant water, they’ll come out with the permit control unit.”

☉ “I think it’s an excellent idea for everyone to be inoculated against the WNV.”

INTERESTED IN YOUR DAILY FORECAST?
CHECK OUT THE HOROSCOPES ON PAGE 2!

Somewhere over the rainbow, terror alert up high



MODERN TIMES
BY LLOYD GARVER

Am I the only one who’s confused by the various color-coded threat alerts? I know they range from “Low Risk Green” to “Oh, boy! Red.” But exactly what are we supposed to do during each one? Every few weeks somebody from the government tells us that there is an increased risk of terrorism. Later that same day, somebody else from the gov-ernment tells us that he disagrees, and there is no increased risk. Other days, they tell us that there is an increased risk, but they’re not elevating the alert level. At all of these times, they tell us to increase our vigilance, but go on with our normal behavior. Huh?
Suppose they told us this morning that the terrorist risk has increased. What should we do differently today from yes-terday? Should we look over our shoul-ders all day, as we buy more bottled water and freeze-dried food? Are we supposed

to avoid talking to that new guy at work, the one with the mustache? Should we still bother getting our hair cut?
When I was a kid, we had air raid drills for nuclear attacks, and all the children were supposed to go under their desks. After a while, someone either figured out that this wouldn’t protect anyone from a nuclear attack, or too many kids were hit-ting their heads on the desks. Regardless, they abandoned the drill. Is it time to get rid of the terrorist threat alert system, too?
Since 9/11, we’ve known that there is a constant threat of terrorist attack. If peo-ple are told every single day that they might be attacked, they probably react in one of two major ways: They are in a con-stant state of fright and panic, or they are in denial. Since it’s probably impossible to go about your life in a constant panic, most of us tend to be in denial. We just don’t think about what level of risk we’re in. I don’t know anybody who checks the Homeland Security web site every morn-ing to see what color threat condition we’re in before getting dressed for work. (If such people do exist, maybe that’s how they choose the color of their wardrobe).
So most people are confused. And those who aren’t scared to death by the

announcements have fallen victim to the “boy who cried wolf” syndrome and stopped paying attention to them. So why does the government keep making them?
They say it’s to keep the public in-formed. Some people think there are more sinister reasons. They believe any time there is a dip in the president’s popu-larity, the government announces a new terrorist threat to scare the public. The thought is that the frightened public will want to stay with the current leadership. Not only am I not so cynical as to buy into this, but I’m not sure I even get the logic. If people become frightened about future attacks, why would that necessarily make them want to stay with the leaders who were in charge during the last attack?
In other words, none of this makes sense. But there has been so much confu-sion, intelligence failures, committees, and investigations that credibility is a rarer commodity than Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction. People don’t know what to believe.
So I’d like to find out what you believe. Please send me the answers to this survey, and I’ll forward them to the Department of Homeland Security:
1. Ask the person next to you if he or

she knows what color alert is on for today. If they do, what are they going to do about it?
2. Do you ever change your behavior when the threat level goes up? For exam-ple, do you buy more duct tape, finally call up that love from high school, or make sure to wear a hat when you go out-doors?
3. How do you react when the threat level goes down? For example, do you breathe a sigh of relief or go directly to worrying about Lyme disease and West Nile virus?
4. Are you one of the cynics who thinks there will be an announcement of an increased threat right before the November election?
5. Should the government just abandon this system?
6. BONUS QUESTION: Wouldn’t you like to know how many meetings it took and how much we paid the person who decided that green is a safer color than blue?

(Lloyd Garver writes the “Modern Times” column for CBSnews.com. Send your opinion poll responses to smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.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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LOCAL



Strife of the party: Greens rift deepens over lost loot

GREEN, from page 1

for the state party, in addition to the \$10,000 check in question.

Though Feinstein apparently spent some or all of the money on Green Party business, party officials maintain they're required by state law to report exactly how the money was spent. Several Green Party members also believe they're still owed several thousand dollars.

The dispute has driven a wedge in the local Green Party that appears to grow more contentious by the week. Some party officials don't think Feinstein broke any conflicts of interest laws.

The unresolved issue was sent to the state bylaws committee to determine if any rules were indeed broken. The bylaws committee agreed on July 12 that the issue is within the purview of the state's coordinating committee, or general assembly. One of those groups is expected to discuss the matter at a future meeting. Some Greens feel the conflict is serious enough to remove Feinstein from the party.

The controversy has become so divisive that picketers stationed themselves in front of a recent Feinstein fundraiser for reelection to the Santa Monica City Council. Another disgruntled Green Party member said she moved to town solely to fight Feinstein from winning a seat on the City Council.

At the most recent meeting of the County Council, an item to censure Feinstein was at the top of the agenda. However, since Feinstein supporters missed the meeting, the reported unanimous vote in favor of censure wasn't binding. But it might not have mattered anyway, as Green Party officials said it was unclear whether censure is even permitted under the grassroots party's bylaws.

Feinstein, a Green Party pioneer who helped establish Los Angeles County as the state's strongest Green Party base, has refused to comment to the Daily Press about the disputed money.

Pietz has since quit the party, saying he was displeased by both sides' response.

Supporters point out Feinstein has been cleared of criminal wrongdoing and contend that he fears handing over the bank records because they may be used against him politically, though he's done nothing wrong. As to his participation in the vote to drop the small claims lawsuit, backers hold that it didn't constitute a conflict of

interest because Feinstein spent the money on Green Party business.

"It seems the people who are after Mike Feinstein, they are not into resolving issues, they are into making it more complicated," said Sara Amir, a member of the County Council. "I don't think there would be any end to it. If they don't get their way, they bring something else on."

On the other side are elected Green Party members like Santa Monica City Councilman Kevin McKeown, who said it's time to resolve the matter, rather than continue to ignore and delay it.

"We've seen the \$10,000 check, canceled as deposited by Mike at his credit union. The donor has said in writing that he intended it to go to the County Green Party, not to Mike, who apparently decided how to spend it and on what," McKeown said. "The law absolutely requires that political expenditures be publicly reported. We all want to put this difficult situation behind us, and we won't get there by ignoring it or delaying it, but rather by resolving it."

While they work to help resolve the local dispute, state Green Party officials expressed a desire to promote a local resolution of the matter — an ideal of the grassroots Green Party. Still, the state officials acknowledged that wasn't likely with the Feinstein controversy.

"It's a work in progress and we choose not to be police," said Michael Borenstein, a veteran state Green Party leader from El Dorado and a member of the bylaws committee. "Many people are working very hard, including Mr. Feinstein and the state party. Everybody is on the same page."

"Yeah, there's a lot of arguing going on, but everybody in their heart wants the same thing," Borenstein added. "I know it doesn't look like it."

Beth Moore Haines, a Green spokeswoman, said officials are trying hard to keep the controversy from tarnishing the reputation of the underdog party. The state is only getting involved as a last-ditch effort, she added.

"The state tries very hard not to be involved in local issues," she said. "We respect our grassroots democratic mechanisms. We pride ourselves in being different from other parties, in that it's not orders from on high on how to run things."

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LOCAL

No-doze meeting nudge called an election ploy

BROWN, from page 1

second lawsuit pending, that amount is only expected to increase. Lawrence said the class-action suit likely will produce the same result.

"The lawsuit is a frivolous lawsuit," he said. "The basic issue becomes the Brown Act (which requires government actions to be open to the public), which does not create a curfew on public discussion."

The issue of late meetings was first raised in January of 2002 by Holbrook, who at the time was working as a pharmacist at the University of Southern California. He said he had difficulty functioning well at the meetings, as well as his job, because of how late they ran. He simply wasn't getting enough sleep.

Threatened with a lawsuit, Mayor Richard Bloom raised the matter before the council, and members implemented a several measures in attempts to shorten meetings. They also agreed to be more economical in their comments.

While the extra measures appeared successful at first, the council quickly slipped back into its old, shabby ways, Perry said. The lawsuit claimed nearly half of recent City Council meetings went beyond midnight, with some packed agendas prompting meetings that lasted until after 2 a.m.

For critics of the lawsuit, the late meetings are a sign that the public process is alive and well. Attorneys for City Hall

have argued they are protecting residents' rights to be heard by allowing the meetings to stretch late into the night. They also accused Holbrook and Katz of trying to stifle speech.

Bloom called the lawsuit a political stunt — Katz is running for reelection — and he accused the councilmen of not diligently pursuing a resolution with their colleagues on the City Council. He said the council regularly reviews its rules and members would be open to discuss ideas for improvement.

"It's very hard to balance the need to move the meeting along with the need to have appropriate and adequate discussion," said Bloom, adding more City Council meetings would likely translate into more long meetings. "I don't believe that simply having more meetings is the solution, personally. All seven of us are people who like to talk and be heard — and we also want to talk with and hear from the community."

"The subject is a complicated one, and it's one that we need to always discuss as colleagues, but the thing I don't believe council members Katz and Holbrook have really kept in mind here ... is that we all should have a common goal of doing the public business and doing it responsibly," Bloom added.

"When the public sees two members of the council suing the council over issues like this, we all tend to lose credibility," said Bloom. "Frankly, I think their credibility tends to suffer the most."

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STATE



'Sue your boss' lawsuits put snag in budget deal

BY JIM WASSERMAN

Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — Attorney Alan Harris has become an unwitting actor in California's budget showdown over the state's so-called sue your boss law.

Harris and his ilk — labor lawyers — have irked Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, his fellow Republicans and business groups by filing about five dozen lawsuits to enforce labor codes under a law signed by former Gov. Gray Davis in his final days in office after being ousted.

Republicans, who claim the law has spurred worthless lawsuits, are withholding support of the budget unless the law is repealed.

"This is absolutely the classic frivolous joke lawsuit mill, and it is exactly the kind of lawsuits we have to stop," said Assemblyman John Campbell, R-Irvine, the Capitol's leading critic of the law. "It's costing us jobs and costing us tax revenue."

But Democrats and labor lawyers said the law lets workers hold employers accountable for rules the state doesn't have the manpower to enforce and it provides funds to the state's ailing treasury.

Harris said most of his lawsuits are against Hollywood production companies for allegedly failing to pay overtime to off-duty and retired Los Angeles police officers who provided crowd control at filming sites.

While Harris said he could have filed the suits under other laws, the new law lets him act on behalf of the state and his clients to enforce labor regulations and penalize companies.

The bill, passed last year by single-vote majorities and signed by Davis days after his recall, sets fines starting at \$100 a violation for each employee per pay period. The fines double for subsequent violations.

Half the fines recovered go to the state's general fund, a quarter to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the rest to employees and their lawyers.

Though officially named the "Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act," Republicans quickly dubbed it the "sue your boss" law and mounted unsuccessful efforts to repeal it in May.

The governor has repeatedly criticized the law for driving business out of state, and the California Chamber of Commerce, which represents the state's small businesses, has compiled a list of nearly 60 workplace lawsuits it considers frivolous.

Nearly all of Harris' 23 suits are class-action claims that officers didn't receive double-time pay after working 12 hours.

"I don't think this is the kind of issue that

should hold up the budget," Harris said.

In one case, officer Michael Bissett claimed he was shortchanged \$54 in overtime after working 15 hours at the set of a Paramount Pictures movie, "Clockstoppers." In another, officer Michael Harrington alleged Pixpay Services Inc. underpaid him on eight occasions while filming "V.I.P.," "American Family" and "Project 95."

All seek interest and civil penalties that critics of the law said could run into millions of dollars.

Pasadena attorney Allen Graves, who was cited by the Chamber of Commerce for suing biotechnology giant Amgen Inc., and Vivendi Universal Entertainment, said he's stepped in where the state stopped enforcing.

He alleged that Thousand Oaks-based Amgen inadequately posted labor information regarding whistle-blower hot lines and workers' compensation issues. He said conservatives should embrace what he does.

"It empowers private enterprise to do what the government cannot do," Graves said.

The union-sponsored law — said to be the nation's first — is one of three issues blocking a proposed \$103 billion budget deal that was 22 days overdue Thursday.

Democratic leaders say the law will stay, though they are discussing changes to blunt some criticism, such as providing grace periods for employers to comply with labor codes before lawsuits can be filed.

"They are talking as we speak," said Rick Battson, aide to the bill's author, Sen. Joe Dunn, D-Garden Grove. "As far as repeal, it's not going to happen."

A revision of the original law could rein in lawyers such as Harris and Graves. A new bill from Dunn that has already passed the Senate would eliminate suits over posters, let judges reduce civil penalties and only allow lawsuits for alleged violations that occurred after the start of this year.

Attorney Charles Barker, defending Vivendi, agrees with emerging Capitol notions about a grace period for employers who have to familiarize themselves with voluminous labor codes.

"It's impossible to keep abreast of all of them. I can't even keep track of them and I'm in this kind of law," he said. "If we're trying to get compliance, it's better to give them time to clean up their act."

But Campbell said the proposed changes are merely a "Band-Aid" that would still allow private lawyers to target companies on behalf of the state.

"That's just not acceptable," he says.

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Santa Monica Daily Press



California warms up to suit against power firms

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Accusing the federal government of neglecting the threat of global warming, California, seven other states and New York City sued some of the nation's largest power companies this week to force them to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court, does not ask for money. Instead, Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal said the goal is to "save our planet from disastrous consequences that

are building year by year and will be more costly to prevent and stop if we wait."

Blumenthal said he expects more states to join California, Connecticut, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin and New York City in the legal action.

"Some may say that the states have no role in this kind of fight or that there's no chance of success. To them I would say think tobacco," he said. "We're here because the federal government has abdicated its responsibility as it also did with tobacco."

California Attorney General Bill

Lockyer, at a news conference in Los Angeles, agreed, calling it a "pioneering effort." "It hasn't been applied yet. ... But somebody's got to do it," he said.

The plaintiffs want a federal judge to force five power producers — American Electric Power Co., Southern Co., Xcel Energy Inc., Cinergy Corp. and the federal Tennessee Valley Authority — to reduce emissions 3 percent annually for 10 years.

They say those power producers own 174 fossil fuel-burning power plants that generate 646 million tons of carbon dioxide annually — about 10 percent of the nation's total.

"Of course they say, 'We're making good-faith efforts,'" Lockyer said. "Well, the good faith efforts they're making actually pollute more every year."

Jeffrey Marks of the National Association of Manufacturers, which represents AEP, Southern and Cincinnati-based Cinergy, said regulating carbon

dioxide emissions would severely depress the U.S. economy, limit the use of fossil fuels and hinder environmental improvements.

Pat Hemlepp, a spokesman for Columbus, Ohio-based AEP, agreed, saying, "A lawsuit is not a constructive way to deal with climate change. There is nothing one company, five companies, or one country can do to resolve global warming. It will require a global commitment including developing nations."

New York City's counsel, Michael A. Cardozo, said global warming could lead to flooding someday of runways at Kennedy Airport or of the Holland and Lincoln tunnels linking Manhattan and New Jersey. Others claimed that the effects of global warming are already being seen, in asthma cases in the young and bronchial disorders in the old, and in the spread of disease-carrying insects such as ticks.

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Greenpeace not so slick, attracts criminal charges

BY MATT VOLZ

Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Alaska prosecutors have filed criminal charges against Greenpeace, saying the activist group broke environmental laws by not submitting oil spill prevention documents before its ship entered state waters.

The Greenpeace ship Arctic Sunrise, with 27 activists on board, is touring Southeast Alaska to protest logging in the Tongass National Forest.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation cited the ship on July 14 for not filing an oil spill response plan or having a certificate of financial responsibility in case of a spill.

Greenpeace officials said it was a paperwork mishap that was quickly corrected.

Department of Law spokesman Mark Morones said the misdemeanor charges were filed Thursday after DEC completed an investigation.

"They had no plan to show they were capable of responding to (an oil spill), they had no way to show they were financially responsible for paying the cost," Morones said. "You'd think that they'd be out in front of this."

State law requires a non-tank vessel larger than 400 gross tons to file an oil spill response plan application five days before entering state waters.

Prosecutors filed charges against Greenpeace, Arctic Sunrise Capt. Arne

Sorenson and the ship's agent, Willem Jan Beekman. The criminal negligence charges carry a maximum sentence of a year in prison and a \$10,000 fine for an individual and \$200,000 for an organization.

A Greenpeace spokeswoman said Thursday she did not know charges had been filed. Carol Gregory said the matter was an oversight and the proper forms were filed as soon as it was discovered.

"It was a clerical error about paperwork and not about environmental protection," Gregory said. "We're Greenpeace. Of course we want to work within all environmental laws."

DEC commissioner Ernesta Ballard in a statement said there was no such thing as a paperwork violation.

"Compliance is not a mere technicality. We require evidence of spill response capability because we know that any ship can hit a rock at any time," Ballard said in the statement.

The ship was ordered to anchor July 14 until the documents were filed. The ship resumed its passage in violation of the order and was stopped again, according to DEC.

The ship and the activists were in Angoon on Thursday, headed to Juneau.

"We're dealing with the issue but we're maintaining focus on the forest," said spokeswoman Mary MacNutt from the Arctic Sunrise.

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NATIONAL



9/11 panel: Lack of intelligence led to attacks

BY HOPE YEN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Congress and the White House must swiftly overhaul the nation's intelligence agencies or America will remain susceptible to another deadly terrorist attack, the two leaders of the Sept. 11 commission said Friday.

"We're in danger of just letting things slide," said commission chairman Thomas Kean, a former Republican governor of New Jersey. "We believe unless we implement these recommendations, we're more vulnerable to another terrorist attack."

Kean and the panel's vice chairman, former Democratic Rep. Lee Hamilton of Indiana, told reporters that Congress should get to work immediately upon returning in September from its summer recess and that the next president — either President Bush or Democratic challenger John Kerry — must push for the overhaul soon after taking office in January.

"Time is not on our side," Kean said.

The panel of five Republicans and five Democrats on Thursday released the findings of its 20-month investigation into the deadliest terror attack in U.S. history. Citing multiple government failures, the report called for a national counterterrorism center headed by a Cabinet-level director to centralize intelligence efforts.

"If these reforms are not the best that can be done for the American people, then the Congress and the president need to tell us what's better," Republican commissioner James Thompson, a former Illinois governor, told a news conference.

"But if there is nothing better, they need to be enacted and enacted speedily, because if something bad happens while these recommendations are sitting there, the American people will quickly fix political responsibility for failure," he said.

The idea of a new national intelligence director with budget authority and power to oversee the 15-agency intelligence community already has met with skepticism in Congress, where some key lawmakers are concerned that the position would create more bureaucracy and politicize the business of gathering and analyzing intelligence.

Bush's national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said Friday in television interviews that change was needed, but she stopped far short of endorsing the creation of a national intelligence directorship.

"Any specific recommendation has to be looked at for both its up sides and its down sides. But this president is going to

want to make decisions and to act because we understand the importance of moving forward with intelligence reform," Rice said on NBC's "Today" show.

Democratic commissioner Jamie Gorelick said she believed the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks represented a "tectonic moment" in history that would force speedy changes. Nearly 3,000 people were killed when 19 Arab hijackers organized by al-Qaida flew airliners into New York City's World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the Pennsylvania countryside.

"There are bad consequences to being in the middle of a political season and there are also good ones, because everyone who is running for office can be asked, 'Do you support these recommendations?'" she told reporters.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., expressed doubt that lawmakers would have time to consider a sweeping intelligence overhaul this year. Congress began its summer recess Friday and was to be out of session until after Labor Day. But efforts began in both the House and Senate to build bipartisan coalitions for the commission's proposals. Relatives of Sept. 11 victims said they too would lobby.

"We're going to hold these people's feet to the fire," said Debra Burlingame, whose brother Charles was the pilot of the hijacked plane that struck the Pentagon.

During the presidential campaign, the report could spell trouble for Bush, who has made his handling of terrorism the centerpiece of his re-election bid and insisted he fully understood the threat.

Nearly three years after the attacks Americans are safer because of improvements in homeland security and the war against terrorists, the report said. "But we are not safe."

The report follows House and Senate reports that documented U.S. intelligence failures and undermined the major claims cited by Bush to justify the war against Iraq. The commission report repeated its earlier finding that al-Qaida did not have a close relationship with Saddam Hussein's regime.

Bush welcomed the commission's recommendations as "very constructive" and pledged that "where government needs to act, we will" without being more specific.

Bush had opposed creation of the commission, resisted release of some documents to it and fought against letting national security adviser Rice testify publicly under oath.

Kerry, campaigning for president in Detroit, said Bush administration disputes

had delayed the commission's work and improvements to the nation's security.

"Nearly three years after terrorists have attacked our shores and murdered our loved ones, this report carries a very simple message for all of America about the security of all Americans — we can do better," Kerry said.

The report does not blame Bush or former President Clinton for government missteps contributing to the attacks but did say they failed to make anti-terrorism a more urgent priority.

"We do not believe they fully understood just how many people al-Qaida

might kill and how soon it might do it," the panel said.

"We also believe that they did not take it as seriously as it should be taken. It was not their top priority," said Kean. "We do believe both presidents could have done more in this area."

The commission identified nine "specific points of vulnerability" in the Sept. 11 plot that might have led to its disruption had the government been better organized and more watchful. Despite these opportunities, "we cannot know whether any single step or series of steps would have defeated" the hijackers, the report concluded

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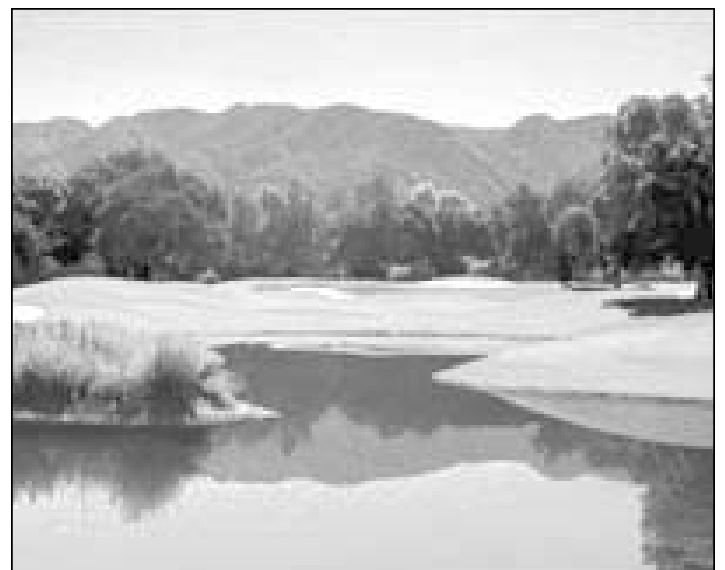
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NATIONAL

Down with GOP? Bush suggests Dems take black vote for granted

BY PETE YOST

Associated Press Writer

DETROIT — President Bush acknowledged on Friday that "the Republican Party has got a lot of work to do" to gain the support of black voters and suggested that the Democratic Party is taking them for granted.

"I know plenty of politicians assume they have your vote," the president told the National Urban League. "But do they earn it and do they deserve it?"

Bush's remarks came as a new poll showed overwhelming support for John Kerry among black voters. The poll also showed blacks have yet to entirely warm up to the presumptive Democratic nominee.

The president's speech followed his refusal to address the NAACP, whose chairman, Julian Bond, has condemned the administration's policies on education, the economy and the war in Iraq and has urged high black voter turnout to defeat Bush.

Bush pointed to the fact that blacks such as national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell are key members of his administration. To periodic smatterings of applause from the black audience, he asserted that his prescription of tax relief, education reform and compassionate conservatism is doing far more than the traditional programs of Democrats to address the nation's ills that hit particularly hard at blacks.

"Has class warfare or higher taxes ever created decent jobs in the inner city?" Bush asked. "Are you satisfied with the same answers on crime, excuses for drugs and blindness to the problem of the family?"

He invited blacks to "take a look at my agenda" of boosting small businesses, demanding high standards in the nation's public schools and defending "the institutions of marriage and family."

He proposed an initiative that seeks to expand business ownership among minorities by creating one-stop centers for business training, counseling, financing and contracting.

"Is it a good thing for the African-American community to be represented mainly by one political party?" the president asked. "How is it possible to gain political leverage if the party is never forced to compete?"

Bush drew on a line from a former Illinois state legislator who once said, "Blacks are gagging on the donkey but not yet ready to swallow the elephant," references to the symbols of the Democratic and Republican parties

respectively.

Repeating a line that is part of his stump speech to Republican crowds, Bush declared, "I'm here to ask for your vote." The line drew weak applause from the Urban League audience.

"I know, I know, I know," Bush added. "The Republican Party has got a lot of work to do. I understand that," prompting laughter and louder applause and apparently provoking a vigorous nod of the head from the Rev. Jesse Jackson who was sitting in the crowd.

"You didn't need to nod your head that hard, Jesse," Bush said, triggering more laughter.

After the speech, Jackson said that Bush "has done some gestures, but he talked to us, not with us."

He cited cuts in after-school programs and reduced support for police departments resulting in substantial layoffs.

Jackson said he told the president that a million blacks had been disenfranchised in the 2000 election and that it is of paramount concern to the black community that this not be repeated.

"We want to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the president so that we can learn from each other and we haven't had a meeting with him or the attorney general in three and a half years," said Jackson.

Kerry's campaign said the Republican Party has a lot of work to do when it comes to earning the votes of African-Americans and that Bush "hasn't done any of it."

"The challenge for the president is for this not to be a one-time conversation," said National Urban League President Marc Morial, who said it was important for Bush to have made a direct appeal.

Kerry spoke at the Urban League conference the previous day and he "addressed more of my personal concerns than Bush's did," said one conference participant, Ayanna Ramsey, 27, of Pittsburgh, Pa. Ramsey, who has an infant daughter, pointed specifically to Kerry's mention of early childhood education.

Ramsey said that while Bush raises "a very valid point" about Democrats perhaps taking the African-American vote for granted, she added, "I don't think they" do.

Bush's speech was "a very shrewd, theatrical attempt to put the Democrats on the defensive rather than to deal with his own record," said the Rev. Al Sharpton, among the group of former Democratic presidential candidates. Sharpton said Bush had failed to address high unemployment among blacks.

Father confronts son, who denies any link to wife's disappearance

BY DEBBIE HUMMEL

Associated Press Writer

SALT LAKE CITY — Confronted by his father, Mark Hacking denied he had anything to do with the disappearance of his wife who vanished early Monday, the father said Friday.

Police have called Hacking, who has lied about his academic career and future plans, a person of interest in the case.

"I confronted my son yesterday morning, I looked him in the eye, and I said 'I need you to tell me if you had anything to do with Lori's disappearance,'" Douglas Hacking said. "I have to tell you that he looked me in the eye, and he said, 'No.'"

"And I know a lot of you will say, 'Well, who can believe that?' But I want you at least to know that much of it."

Hacking confirmed that his son had an episode early Tuesday morning that led to his medication and hospitalization in an unnamed Salt Lake City hospital, just hours after his wife disappeared.

"I'm just sorry that the attention on Mark has deflated the interest" in the search for Lori Hacking.

Around the time Mark Hacking called police Monday morning to report that his pregnant wife never returned from her morning jog, he was at a furniture store buying a new mattress, police confirmed Friday.

Hacking, 28, has not appeared publicly since Monday,

the day he said his 27-year-old wife, Lori, vanished.

At some point late Monday or early Tuesday, police got a disturbance call involving Hacking from the Chase Suites hotel. Detective Dwayne Baird said the call became a medical response and that the situation was turned over to medics.

Doug Hacking refused to discuss that incident or his son's health and instead tried shift the public's attention back to the search for Lori, insisting that finding her is the "main goal."

Family members said Lori Hacking was five weeks pregnant when she disappeared just days before the couple was to move to North Carolina, where Mark Hacking said he was going to attend medical school. But he had lied to his wife and family — he never graduated from college, nor was he accepted to any medical school, authorities said.

"I'm aware, and we're all aware of all the rumors and speculation about this case that are flying everywhere," Lori's mother, Thelma Soares, said Friday.

"They're being handled by the proper authorities," she said through tears. "I'm removing myself from all that because my baby is out there somewhere, and we need to find her."

Baird confirmed that in minutes before he called police to report his wife missing, Mark Hacking was buying a new mattress. The owners of the furniture store told The Salt Lake Tribune that Hacking came in about 9:45 a.m. and that a credit-card purchase went through at 10:23 a.m.

NATIONAL

Voters asked to decide whether Edwards is more than skin deep

BY CONNIE CASS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — It's not easy being beautiful — not for a politician, at least. Just ask John Edwards.

The Democratic vice presidential candidate endures endless joshing about his unofficial title as America's "sexiest politician." This fascination with his youthful looks shines a spotlight on a potential weakness — limited experience in government.

Voters might feel the one-term senator from North Carolina is too green to round out a presidential ticket, especially if they believe he's just window-dressing.

Republicans are eager to make that case.

"Some people say that Senator Edwards was chosen in part because of his boyish good looks," President Bush said in a speech this week. Bush joked about the prospects for getting his own running mate — the bald and bespectacled Dick Cheney — onto "People" magazine's sexiest list, then extolled Cheney's lengthy government experience and national security expertise, drawing a contrast to Edwards.

Some on the right have taken a cattier approach to belittling Edwards, dubbing him "the Breck girl."

They aren't the only ones suggesting gravitas and good hair rarely go together, however.

Newspaper columnists toss around terms like pretty boy. A national TV interviewer asked Edwards, 51, to respond to worries that he is "too cute." Even running mate John Kerry's wife got into the act.

"I have to say that John Edwards is beautiful," Teresa Heinz Kerry joked at a fund-raiser. "And my husband's very smart."

Edwards sometimes acknowledges the issue with self-deprecating humor. He opened his remarks to a dinner for journalists and politicians with the line, "I know what you're thinking. He's better-looking in person."

But he dismisses any suggestion that looks could kill his credibility. "The American people are good judges of character. I think they go right past the superficial," Edwards told CNN's Larry King.

Can a candidate be too handsome to be taken seriously?

"The issue is really how much substance there is behind the pretty face," said Joel K. Goldstein, a scholar of the vice presidency at St. Louis University Law School.

Dan Quayle, another senator considered easy on the eyes, was the surprise choice for the Republicans' No. 2 spot in 1988. Quayle stumbled in the media glare and soon found himself ridiculed as the political equivalent of a dumb blonde.

His attempt to recover by comparing his qualifications

to those of John F. Kennedy — America's most famously dashing and youthful president — was crushed by Lloyd Bentsen's famous debate line, "Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy."

"In Vice President Quayle's case, what many people found disturbing was that he seemed to have been put on the ticket simply because he was an attractive, new candidate," Goldstein said.

Nonetheless, George H.W. Bush won the White House, with Quayle in tow. Vice presidents rarely make or break a campaign.

Edwards won't be dismissed as readily as Quayle because he already has convinced many people he is "ready for prime time" through his own presidential primary campaign, Goldstein predicted.

So, if good looks don't harm his credibility, could they help attract votes — especially women's votes?

"Every time a good-looking man emerges as a candidate this question is asked," said Ruth Mandel, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. "I know of no data, no evidence at all to show that a man's good looks affect the way women vote."

But it appears Edwards isn't above capitalizing on sex appeal.

At campaign rallies, he often walks on stage in a suit, then slowly removes his coat and proceeds to roll up his shirt-sleeves slowly, almost teasingly, drawing "ooohs" of approval from women in the audience. "He's hot!" is a commonly heard phrase.

At a joint appearance, Kerry followed Edwards on stage and mimicked his coat-off, sleeves-up routine, to hearty laughter from the crowd.

Stephen Hess, a political analyst at the Brookings Institution, says history offers little evidence that voters will swoon.

"Yes, we do from time to time elect some quite good-looking people; John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan were considered good-looking," he said.

"We also elect a fair number of people no one would say were good looking — Richard Nixon, Calvin Coolidge," said Hess, who worked in the Nixon administration.

Looks might have an effect akin to celebrity endorsements, he said. "Are you going to really say you voted for somebody because Barbra Streisand or Tom Selleck endorsed them? Pretty much not. But maybe it affects some people."

Besides, who's to say who looks best to America's voters? "People" magazine doesn't speak for the nation, after all.

"My wife thinks Kerry is better-looking than Edwards," noted Hess.

That's what she told her husband, anyway.

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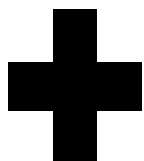
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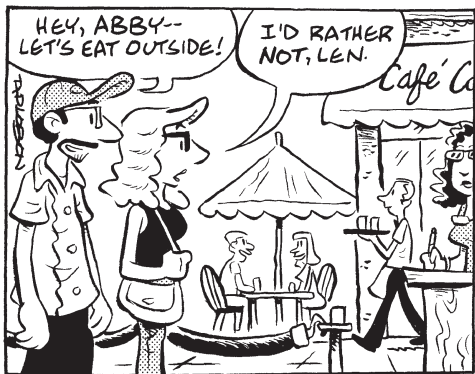


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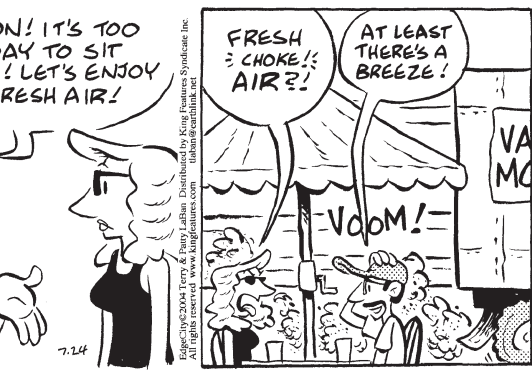
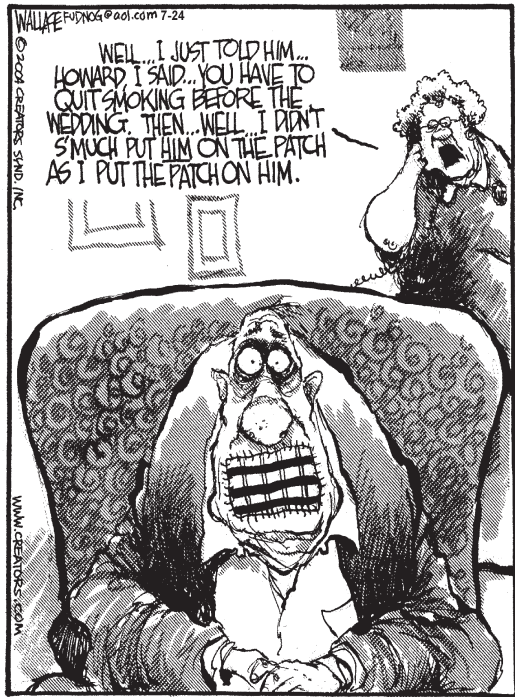
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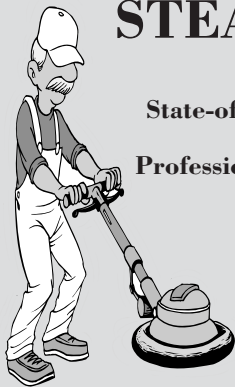
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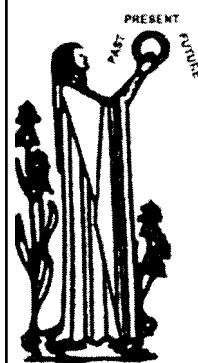
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Spain gets Woody: Director to premier 'Melinda'

By The Associated Press

■ **MADRID, Spain** — Woody Allen will open the 52nd San Sebastian Film Festival in September with the world premiere of his new film, "Melinda and Melinda."

The 68-year-old Allen also is to be honored with a lifetime achievement award, and the festival will show a retrospective of his work as a writer, director and actor, organizers said Friday.

"It is, indeed a great honor for us, a dream come true, to premiere 'Melinda and Melinda' at our opening, and with the presence of Woody Allen himself, no doubt one of the greatest film directors ever," festival director Mikel Olaciregui said in a statement.

Allen won a best director Oscar for 1977's "Annie Hall" and a screenwriting Oscar for 1986's "Hannah and Her Sisters." His movies also include "Interiors," "Broadway Danny Rose," "Crimes and Misdemeanors" and "Bullets Over Broadway."

"The Spanish people have always been very supportive of my films and it's a great honor for me to come to the film festival in San Sebastian," Allen said in a statement from London. "My family and I loved the city the last time we were there and we expect to have a wonderful time."

His new romantic comedy stars Radha Mitchell, Chloe Sevigny and Jonny Lee Miller. It will not be competing for the festival's top Golden Shell prize.

The festival begins Sept. 17 with 10 days of screenings in Spain's northern Basque region.

■ **NASHVILLE, Tenn.** — Naomi Judd didn't want to miss watching her daughter Ashley's latest film.

"I'm Ashley Judd's mother, and Ashley would not approve of this," said the 58-year-old country singer after a projector malfunction interrupted the showing of "De-Lovely" last weekend at the Green Hills Regal

Cinema. The singer's publicist said Judd made the remark to lighten the mood.

The crowd laughed and the movie later restarted.

The theater gave the filmgoers a refund.

"De-Lovely," the story of the life of composer Cole Porter and his wife, Linda, also stars Kevin Kline.

■ **NASHVILLE, Tenn.** — The Dixie Chicks have added another baby to their brood.

Lead singer Natalie Maines has given birth to a baby boy, her second son with actor-husband Adrian Pasdar, the group's Web site announced Friday.

Beckett Finn Pasdar was born July 14. He weighed 7 pounds, 7 ounces.

"Mother and baby are doing fine," the Web site said.

The couple's first child, Slade, is 3 years old.

Pasdar has appeared in movies and in a recurring role on CBS' "Judging Amy."

The Chicks' hits include "Landslide," "Ready to Run" and "Wide Open Spaces."

■ **HAVANA** — President Fidel Castro sat in the front row as Silvio Rodriguez, star of a ballad style known as Cuban trova, performed alongside conductor Leo Brouwer and a symphony orchestra at a free concert in Havana.

The event was dedicated to Antonio Gades, a noted Spanish flamenco dancer and choreographer who died Tuesday in Madrid, Spain, after a long illness. Gades, who was 67, had close ties to Cuba and supported its communist revolution.

Thousands of Cubans filled the Revolution Plaza Thursday night for the concert, which featured an orchestra comprised of 200 young musicians from various Cuban provinces.

Rodriguez performed nine songs spanning four decades, including "Quedate," "El Problema" and "Canto Arena," a crowd pleaser. He opened with "Oh,

Melancolia."

Cuban trova has its roots in the ballads that traveling singers — troubadours — composed during the island's wars of independence.

Modern Cuban trovas recall American protest songs of the 1960s and 1970s that focused attention on social problems through musical storytelling.

■ **KANSAS CITY, Mo.** — Lynn Johnston is going back home.

Her comic strip, "For Better or for Worse," is returning to Universal Press Syndicate after seven years at United Feature Syndicate.

Johnston launched her comic strip 25 years ago with Kansas City-based Universal Press. Newspaper syndication of the strip moved to United Feature Syndicate in 1997. She'll return to Universal Press in September, the company announced Thursday.

Universal Press said Johnston has committed to doing at least three more years of "For Better or for Worse." The strip is published in more than 2,000 newspapers worldwide.

■ **SAN FRANCISCO** — The Dave Matthews Band is putting on a free concert in Golden Gate Park to benefit several San Francisco Bay area charities.

A general admission ticket is needed for the Sept. 12 concert at the Polo Fields, according to the band's Web site. Tickets for the general public will be available through the Web site, www.davematthewsband.com, beginning Saturday.

Members of the Warehouse, www.warehouse.davematthewsband.com, the official fan association of the DMB, have had availability to tickets since July 20. A limited number of confirmed member orders will be selected at random to obtain access to an area in front of the stage.

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