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NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

The Living Word Tabernacle in Waverly, Ohio, terminated the membership of Loretta Davis recently, according to a July report by WCMH-TV in Columbus, because she had stopped paying her tithe. Davis' contributions ended in January after she was hospitalized the first of 15 times this year for congestive heart failure. The church's founder said non-member Davis could still attend, but Davis' daughter said, "In the time of (her) need, (the church) should be caring, supporting, asking what she needs, help her if she needed help." (When healthier, Davis was donating \$60 a month out of her \$592 Social Security check.)

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 225th day of 2005.
There are 140 days left in the year.

On Aug. 13, 1961, Berlin was divided as East Germany sealed off the border between the city's eastern and western sectors in order to halt the flight of refugees.
In 1521, Spanish conqueror Hernando Cortez captured present-day Mexico City from the Aztec Indians.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It is always too late, or too little, or both. And that is the road to disaster."

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE
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Color me mine



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Rice artist Tiffany Bromley, who hails from Vancouver, Canada, personalizes a grain of rice at Venice Beach.

LOCAL

Suspect in 20-year-old murder stands trial for 1984 shooting

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

LAX COURTHOUSE — After eluding authorities for more than two decades, a former Santa Monica business owner accused of fatally shooting one of his patrons is now on trial for murder.

A jury heard opening statements on Wednesday from attorneys about Antonio Pedraza's alleged murder of Javier Garcia, 25, who was shot to death on June 21, 1984, in front of the Jalisco Cafe, a now-defunct bar once located at 1811 Olympic Blvd. Pedraza, 58, maintains he acted in self-defense.

If convicted, Pedraza faces 16 years to life in prison.

The fatal shooting occurred late at night, after an intoxicated Garcia was kicked out of the bar for breaking a beer bottle over the bar's pool table, witnesses and police said. Pedraza, who owned the bar, demanded that Garcia

See TRIAL, page 6

Up in smoke: Arsonists still elude Santa Monica authorities

BY ROBERT FATURECHI

Special to the Daily Press

Their motives vary — revenge, spite, a craving for attention.

They set fire to bathrooms, cars and buildings intentionally, and though few are ever prosecuted, arsonists have taken their toll on local firefighters, businesses and City Hall, as at least four arson fires have hit Santa Monica over the course of the last fiscal year, from July 2004 to June 2005.

"Sometimes people are just pyromaniacs and get satisfaction in setting fires," said Santa Monica Fire Marshal Jim Glew.

Some of the local spots set ablaze by arsonists this past year include parking structures No. 2 and No. 5, along with a commercial building on Lincoln Boulevard and a car parked in a Berkeley Street carport, Glew said, adding that the four blazes have resulted in more than \$30,000 in damages.

Though the crime wreaks a costly burden on its victims, many arson case investigations fall flat, as much of the physical evidence burns down with the crime scene itself.

"The crime of arson is one of the hardest to determine because you actually need someone to watch it go down," Glew said.

Glew attributes the low prosecution rate to society's lax attitude toward the crime, which is a felony in California.

"Society, for some reason, just looks at arson differently from other crimes like murder and rape,"

City settles suit against itself, must pay \$229K

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Untold hours and money City Hall used to sue itself and lose over a voter-approved initiative might finally pay off for residents who supported Proposition LL and attorneys who helped shoulder the cause.

City Attorney Marsha Moutrie announced on Tuesday after a closed session that the Santa Monica City Council agreed to settle the case in which City Hall sued City Clerk Maria Stewart in a strategic effort to challenge the constitutionality of Proposition LL, an initiative

See SETTLED, page 7



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Vern Perry saws a sheet of plywood while Oscar Andino observes. The two men work for West Coast Specialties, which is sealing off the bathrooms in parking structure No. 5 after the portion of the building burned down several months ago.

Glew said. "And the judicial system doesn't view arson as a serious crime either."

Of the 32 fires last fiscal year, four were deemed arson, a yearly total Glew said is typical. On average, about 30 percent of arson cases in Santa Monica end in conviction.

Most arsonists are young men under the age of 25, and their motives vary from revenge to envy to hatred.

One profile Glew described is the "hero" arsonist,

See ARSON, page 6

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Rent a movie, Libra

Santa Monica Daily Press

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Learn to sort through confusion and get to the basics. Partners often cause more difficulties because of their coming from a different space. Listen to everything that comes forward without feeling compelled to make a decision. Tonight: Be with your favorite person.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Others only confuse matters more. Confirm what you hear by asking appropriate questions. You don't need to do anything but gather as much information as possible. Lie back and allow others to play their cards. Tonight: Do what you want.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ Fatigue and mixed messages have you only too happy to greet the weekend. You might not totally grasp what is going on in someone else's mind, but you will, given time. Focus and concentrate. Do not scatter. Tonight: Take care of yourself. Put your feet up.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Recognize when others are out of kilter. You might need to nudge others along in certain ways or in different projects. You find creative solutions to different situations. Think and relax. Let humor ease up some stress. Tonight: Let off steam.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ If you can take the day off, you might as well. Confusion and fatigue make a powerful combination that slows you down considerably. Do as much as you can from home, where you can relax and enjoy yourself. Tonight: At home.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Others communicate, but you might be coming from a different point of view. Listen well and don't think there are any absolutes here. Matters can change rapidly. At the right time, express your views. Tonight: Munchies with a friend.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Make no money agreements, if possible. You could be stepping into deep water. Your imagination could scale Mount Everest right now. In some ways, this talent could be very helpful, as long as you don't play games with your head. Tonight: Rent a movie.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ You have the energy and skills to deal with what happens today. Understand that you might be vested in seeing someone in a particular light. This perspective could be causing you problems. You might be disappointed by this person, but your expectations are the problem. Tonight: Out on the town.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★ Understand that sometimes you need to play ostrich. You also might be well-advised not to take others' comments to heart. Give events, people and concepts time to change and mellow out. Tonight: Be unavailable.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Friends want certain responses from you. Meetings might make unusual demands. Though you might like to be the nice guy or gal and say yes, be easygoing and just hold. Much more information could be coming forth. Tonight: A summer get-together.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Responsibilities are dumped on you. What you discover quite quickly is that you cannot meet everyone's expectations. Prioritize and make appropriate choices. You might want to touch base with a trusted adviser. Make sure you are on the same page as others. Tonight: Out late.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Your mind might not be where your body is. In light of this fact, postpone making key decisions. Also, if you can take off and start your weekend early, do so. You need perspective and time. Someone might be giving you incomplete facts. Tonight: Opt for different, romantic and somewhat exotic.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SM Red Cross chapter makes fundraising push

By Daily Press staff

The American Red Cross of Santa Monica has a lot going on this month — garage sales, car washes and a dedicated day for business donations — all to support local youth.

On Thursday, Aug. 25, the Santa Monica chapter will hold its fourth annual “Neighborhood Youth in Action Percent Day.”

Local businesses will donate a percentage of their daily receipts to support the Santa Monica Red Cross youth services effort.

More than 436 youth from ages 11 to 18 are involved, representing numerous ethnic and religious backgrounds and speaking 17 different languages.

Donations go towards supporting Red Cross school clubs, leadership development programs, peer training, the Red Cross holiday toy drive for underprivileged children, intergenerational outreach and international youth projects, such as the tsunami relief efforts that three of the chapter’s teen volunteers participated in this summer.

Businesses can participate by donating a percentage of their Aug. 25 retail sales to the Santa Monica chapter’s youth programs. The exact dollar amount or percentage given is left up to each business owner’s discretion; however, it’s usually between 2 and 5 percent.

To sign up as a participating merchant or to find a participating merchant, call Jerry Washington, director of volunteers and youth services, at the Santa Monica chapter at (310) 394-3773, ext. 112 or go online at www.redcrossofsantamonica.org.

■ On Saturday, Aug. 27, the American Red Cross of Santa Monica will hold a community garage sale from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The annual event will be held in the chapter parking lot and basement at 1450 11th St.

“The sale gives bargain hunters a chance to pick up unique and useful items for a very good price,” said Carlos Menendez, the chapter’s office support associate.

Local residents are invited to donate household items, furniture, works of art, wearable clothing, sporting goods, tools, bric-a-brac and toys they no longer use.

Proceeds from sales will be used to help support the chapter’s health and safety education, youth services, CPR and first-aid training, as well as local disaster awareness and disaster relief efforts in the coming year.

The Santa Monica chapter will be cleaning out its own closet and selling old office furniture and other unused items donated over the past years.

“We can always use contributions from the public,” Menendez said.

Donations of items and merchandise for the community garage sale will be accepted at the chapter during regular Monday-through-Friday business hours up to the day of the event.

“What is one person’s junk is often another person’s treasure,” Menendez said. “We only ask that donations be in good condition and in working order.”

■ Youth volunteers will be washing cars on Tuesday, Aug. 23, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the parking lot at the Santa Monica chapter of the American Red Cross. Money raised will go toward supporting a wide range of youth activities at the chapter.

Cost for an “expert” hand wash of any car, small truck or sport utility vehicle is \$5.

A deluxe car wash package also is available. For \$15, customers can have their vehicles washed and receive discount coupons for Red Cross first-aid or CPR courses offered at the Santa Monica chapter. A personal first-aid kit also is included as an added bonus.

The car wash is one of many youth activities sponsored by the Santa Monica chapter. Last year, more than 450 youth of middle school and high school age levels participate in programs that included disaster training, classes in first aid and CPR, working at various chapter public events and generally assisting around the chapter itself.

For additional information, contact American Red Cross of Santa Monica at (310) 394-3773 or online at www.redcrossofsantamonica.org.

CORRECTION — The photo caption in Aug. 10 edition contained an error. The event held at the Santa Monica Pier was the 2005 Nike Run Hit Wonder kick-off event and training run. This year’s official Nike Run Hit Wonder race will be held on Sept. 24.



SURF REPORT

There has been no surf anywhere in the Santa Monica Bay, but alas, we should be seeing a little southwest starting this morning. Size is looking to run about knee- to waist-high. Wave size will increase as you search north.

Expect areas of low clouds and fog during the night through morning, otherwise mostly clear. Highs will be in the upper 60s to mid 70s. Lows in the upper 50s.

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

Today the water is:

72°



LOW TIDES

HIGH TIDES

	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
MONDAY	5:56	0.3	5:50	2.1	12:24	4.3	11:41	4.9
TUESDAY	6:19	0.7	6:39	2.1	12:51	4.5	12:20	4.3
WEDNESDAY	6:41	1.2	7:40	2.0	N/A	N/A	1:21	4.6
THURSDAY	7:03	1.7	9:04	1.9	1:10	3.6	1:59	4.8
FRIDAY	7:24	1.9	9:42	2.3	1:59	4.8	N/A	N/A

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The Q Line

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Owners of the Robinsons-May store in the Santa Monica Place Mall recently announced they plan to sell off the 137,000-square-foot location in 2006. This announcement comes at the same time that plans for redeveloping the entire mall are in the works.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, “What would you like to see move into the large hole that will be left when Robinsons-May closes up shop?”

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we’ll print your responses in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Religion taken to the extreme

Editor:

Perhaps the best response to Mr. Nichols' faith-based assertions (SMDP, Aug. 8, page 5) are on page one of the SMDP's Aug. 8 edition. If there needs to be evidence of Christian extremism, it's the protesters from the Cornerstone Ministries at the Hare Krishna Festival.

The notion that Christianity is the only true faith, that Christ is the only true savior, and that the billions of other worshippers on the planet are damned is prejudicial, prideful and unprovable. When Christianity was still developing as a faith in the first two centuries after the death of Jesus, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism had been around for centuries. The preachings of Jesus, if they're accurate at all outside of Paul's letters, made their way into the various gospels anywhere from dozens of years to generations after his death. How interpretive did they become in support of various sectarian divisions within the faith, even at that early stage? And how much did they draw on Greek writings from the same era, as some scholars of scripture have shown?

The fact is that every major religion shares the same core precepts found in Christianity, and they breed the same extremists. Atrocities have been committed in the name of every faith, and Christianity is not exempted. Consider the Spanish Inquisition, the Salem witch trials, sexual abuses by priests or the homophobic rantings of televangelists who otherwise profess to "love thy neighbor as thyself" ... as long as he's the right kind of Christian, of course.

As Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician, observed, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." It was an observation made, by the way, in the mid-1600s.

I can think of at least 100 different ways to get from my house in Santa Monica to my wife's office in West LA. I can also imagine that, if there were only one route, many people who left at 8 a.m. might never arrive before it was time to go home. The routes to reach God are, more than likely, just as numerous because, like those 100 ways to reach West LA, some work better for some people than they do for others. Yet fundamentalist Christians, Muslim extremists, Hindu radicals and Jewish right-wingers all insist that there's only one way — their way — and you're either with them or against them.

If Mr. Nichols took his own advice — as stated on his Web site home page — to provide "creative and committed work toward the best possible outcome," he'd worry less about attacks on his faith and, instead, work against those whose actions provoke such attacks. He'd help people find their own best way to God ... even if it were not his ... just as Gandhi (in the film version, at least) told a Hindu who had killed a Muslim child to adopt a Muslim orphan and raise him... as a Muslim.

The more that Christians insist on having everyone else do what the Christians tell them to do, the more extreme the responses against those Christians will be, especially here in America. Tolerance is a cornerstone of our society, not an option you can decide should be restricted when your own point of view is not accepted. Yet I've been to two fundamentalist sermons where the minister proclaimed that civil law in the United States had outlived its usefulness and now was the time to replace it with Biblical law. That's not just a point of view. That's anarchy.

If the world is too much with us, join a sect like the Amish. Retreat into a community of like-minded souls. Just don't insist, in this country at least, that it's OK for you to claim the supremacy of your beliefs without allowing someone else the freedom to make the same claim. Do, however, remember that this is the country in which

a member of Congress declared, during a debate on teaching foreign languages in American high schools, "If English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for me."

Peter Altschuler
Santa Monica

Pick yourself up and take responsibility

Editor:

Thank God someone hit the nail on the head regarding the homeless issue in Santa Monica ("My Write," SMDP, Aug. 8, page 4). Beach cities such as Santa Monica attract homeless people because it's easier for them to survive a weather-friendly place. This column brings up a lot of correct insights, that people seem to miss because they're so involved in making their Band-Aid efforts such as feeding the homeless.

I feel that by now after spending millions of dollars on the homeless problem, which has increased, that the city of Santa Monica ought to realize the futility of their efforts. Why can't/don't/won't homeless people contribute/give back/respond to the free services they receive? I don't think this is too much to ask, and it would show their appreciation.

I came to Santa Monica in 1970 with only a high school diploma, no job waiting for me, and not knowing a single person here. Within a week I had a job in an office, then I enrolled in a school for job training. When I finished school I got a job in what I'd trained for. I never applied for welfare or unemployment. These were not a goal in my opinion because I wasn't going to degrade myself. I had pride and motivation to do something with my life and to get an education. I continued this throughout my life and continued to work at jobs, including cleaning bathrooms and washing floors, to support myself. I didn't feel degraded because washing floors and cleaning bathrooms supported me.

When I walk around Santa Monica running errands, going to appointments and/or work, I can't help but notice the same people on the streets as when I came here in 1970. These same people have made this their career and lifestyle choice. They have no reason to get off welfare and/or unemployment. Not many people are handed a silver platter in life. Most people have to work to support themselves and their families. Feeding the homeless on any given day should be temporary, but it seems that "any given day" continues from Sunday through Saturday and then starts all over again, week after week, year after year.

I hate the sociological problem of homelessness anywhere in the world. I feel sad, as well as at a loss of what happened to these people that they ended up homeless — no matter where they struggle to exist.

I disagree that the homeless czar should be a person of national reputation because I don't know what being well-known has to do with anything except it would be that person's personal public relations. I agree that other communities should share the burden of homelessness. I think it's an offensive contradiction that this czar be paid \$200,000 a year, considering that they'd be working to hopefully resolve the social problems of the homeless population.

The bottom line is that I resent paying taxes for a problem that will probably never be resolved enough to make a difference or be totally resolved. Everywhere I go in Santa Monica the homeless population seems to increase. So how is the city of Santa Monica solving this problem?

See LETTERS, page 5

Special election presents a special problem



HERE'S THE THING

BY LARA M. BROWN, PH.D.

This is unbelievable. On Tuesday, an appeals court blocked the redistricting initiative from the November ballot, and unless there is some miracle it does not look like that reform is going anywhere.

I've written before that the redistricting initiative is about the only hope we have of ever having some sanity in our state government again — with or without Arnold. It was the only initiative that I was fired up about and thought, "OK, it is worth having a special election over."

Now, to be honest I have been considering not voting, which would be a first for me.

I've voted in every election in which I have been eligible to vote. I've voted mostly in California over the course of my life, though I've also voted in Arizona and in Arkansas. Typically, I get to the polls early (around 7:30 a.m.) because I'm so excited to be part of our democracy. After casting my ballot, I proudly take my "I voted" sticker and wear it all day long in the hopes that it

will engender guilt in those who have not partaken of their civic duty.

I enjoy voting so much that I try never to use the absentee voter option. In fact, I think that in all of the times I've voted I've maybe voted absentee twice. Even when I've worked on campaigns and have been required to work on Election Day, I've always made time to sneak away to the polls to cast my ballot.

If you're not getting the picture, what you should understand is that I love the process. It isn't about who wins, per se. It is about engaging with my community and my country in what I believe is a sacred act. It is during the act of voting that we transfer authority to those whom we are choosing to represent us. So few people in the world have the opportunity to be part of their own governance. We are blessed.

For the past few elections, however, I've been made angrier and angrier when I go to vote. The reason is that my choice means absolutely nothing in the vote for U.S. representative, state senator and assemblymember.

For those of you who know me, you know that this argument does not fly with me, if you are complaining about your vote for president or your vote for the U.S. Senate. The reason is that those offices have

different constituencies and according to the Constitution, they are not supposed to operate off of the "one man, one vote" principle. And I'm OK with the Constitution. I don't mind that my vote for president in California is "wasted" or that my vote for U.S. senator may be diluted as compared with a person's vote for senator from Wyoming. Again, those are constitutionally designed differences, and they make perfect sense to me.

The gerrymandered districts of the U.S. House and the California Senate and Assembly, however, are a whole other ball of wax. I'm annoyed that these politicians have decided that their electoral safety is more important than their electoral duty. I'm annoyed that they have no competition. And why would they? No rational competitor would mount a campaign that is rigged against his candidacy.

This means that most times these incumbents run unopposed in the general election. They are always Democrats because a Republican could not win this gerrymandered Westside district. As a result, the only time there is a race at all is when one of these seats becomes open. And even then, when I am choosing in a primary election between the various Democrats, all I am doing is casting a ballot in a beauty contest. All of the Democrats in my district have to be liberal

otherwise they're vulnerable to a challenge in the primary election by someone further to the left of them. In other words, my voting for these offices is just for show. The elections mean nothing.

And this was why I couldn't wait to get my hands on that redistricting initiative. I couldn't wait to undercut these members' electoral safety. I want them competing and working for my vote. I want them trying harder in the House, in the Assembly and in the Senate because they are scared they are going to lose their next election. Competition is good.

Here's the thing:

While I am certain that I will find a way to get to the polls this November and vote (if I don't then I have to stop complaining), I hope that you will join me in finding some way to get redistricting back on the ballot for another election. Otherwise, our state representatives and our House members will continue to enjoy their free rides on your authority.

(Lara M. Brown, Ph.D., is a political scientist from Los Angeles and is teaching this semester at California State University, Channel Islands. She can be reached at larambrown@aol.com.)

OPINION



LETTERS CONTINUED...

LETTERS, from page 4

A lot of homeless people hide from the world, their responsibilities and themselves. The women live in the parks with men, both homeless. One good thing is that I don't see them producing baby after baby.

I just don't understand how a Band-Aid effect is helping these people other than they don't go hungry today at noon or tomorrow at noon, etc. In the long run, a lot of these people will never help themselves because the people who feed them make it easier for anyone who's homeless to survive. Why would anyone who feeds them want to make it easier for the homeless to continue in their lifestyle?

The sleeping modules is not a new idea: It's been kicked around for at least 10 years. I know because I was invited to help design them.

If someone really wanted to help the homeless, they should help them change their lifestyle of being homeless with the ultimate goal being to reduce the homeless population and get professional help for those who really want to change their homeless lifestyle. People are homeless for a lot of different reasons, as well as for the same reasons. I don't deny that they need help, but it's a waste of time and money if homeless people aren't willing to help themselves.

I agree that Santa Monica cannot continue to save everyone who comes here for services they can't get, or stayed in so long they were no longer eligible, elsewhere. We're becoming a welfare state

Cheryl Erb
Santa Monica

Get real

Editor:

Mr. Bauer stated the (homeless) problem very concisely (SMDP, Aug. 8, page 4). Thus I wish to add only a couple of points: Since there are likely upwards of 1 million "homeless" in North America, since Santa Monica has one of the best climates anywhere, since there is an official tolerance (or even welcome) coupled with the previously (Bill Bauer's article) mentioned increasing services, it would seem logical that the lure of all of this will increase new arrivals by the bus load. The residents and business owners of Santa Monica can begin to foresee a new "Hell's Kitchen."

I am curious as to why some benevolent groups have not already begun advertising and assisting with mass transportation for those who are enduring the more hostile climates and environment of the rest of the continent.

I would suggest that some forethought be given to this realistic probability before you plunge further into this malaise.

Ted Mackey
Santa Monica

Homelessness is not a choice

Editor:

If you want to complain about the homeless, complain to those who are making it increasingly harder to get off the streets. Case in point, there is a 700-plus affordable housing complex which is being taken to build condominiums. The tenants are fighting tooth and nail to keep this complex from being gobbled up by a management company based in Colorado. They are abusing the law to take these units. This is a prime example of the way people in low-income brackets become homeless.

Some of you seem to ignore this fact. You seem to think that the homeless population just appears out of thin air and is there to plague your community. Well, you are seeing one of the causes first-hand going on right now in Venice Beach. This has been going on for well over 10 to 20 years now. Affordable housing being literally taken from those who live there to make way for higher income living.

This has gotten to the point of which even a family making \$50,000 a year cannot afford to live almost anywhere in Los Angeles County. Many of those who are squeezed out to the streets are those in poverty. Homelessness is the visible sign of poverty in this

city, county, state and nation. In addition, some of you cannot stand to see this. It makes you uncomfortable to see this because the income bracket that is being affected is getting higher and higher. In addition, it is getting to the point where you yourselves will be affected eventually.

How long do you think this will take? How long do you think your own wealth will save you from being out here with the homeless community? How long do you think this economic bubble will keep being inflated until it will burst in your faces and you lose everything?

Well instead of blaming the homeless for all of your woes, which some are very ludicrous to say the least, such as the driving down of property values and chasing away business, you should be looking to the causes of homelessness and poverty, and trying to stop it in its tracks. You should be coming together instead letting yourselves be divided. Conservatives against liberals, poor against rich, ethnicity against ethnicity, religion against religion, sexes against sexes. Look at how foolish this looks on paper as you read this. Look how anyone can conquer by just pitting one against the other as a smoke screen while the backroom politics goes on and our very society is raped, pillaged and plundered before our very eyes. Our Constitutional rights being eroded and taken in the name of freedom.

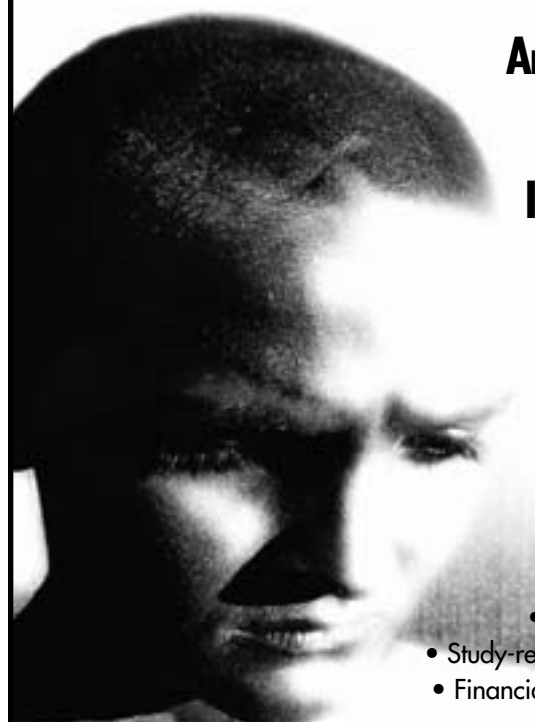
I ask you, how long will we the people let this go on? When will we look at the reasons for the Constitution being formed in the first place as they unfold before our very eyes and become one nation again? Some of you might get angry with me for writing this. You will say I am crazy and on drugs or lying or just because I am homeless I have no voice. Well, where is your voice in our government right now? When you deny me my rights you deny yourself your rights by keeping these divides going.

I ask you this, when will you begin to see the truth in front of your face and put aside the pettiness you hold so dear and break the wall of these divides to come together and demand this insanity stop so we can all live in this country as Americans again? I may be homeless and you may say what you will about me, but you cannot take away my American citizenship. You cannot take away my determination to make a change for the good. You cannot take away my integrity. You cannot take away my self-esteem as a human being, because every time you do, you take away your own humanity.

How long will we continue to sleepwalk through life and not hold those who are our elected officials accountable for what is going on in front of our faces? If we do not wake up soon, one day we may wake up and find ourselves under the gun.

Charles Springer
Homeless in Santa Monica

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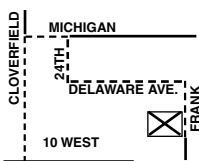
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No suspects in three of last year's blazes

ARSON, from page 1

who sets fires, puts them out and basks in the attention he gets for his "good deed."

One of the four Santa Monica spots struck by arsonists — a bathroom in parking structure No. 5 — is still feeling the effects of the fire, though nearly six months have passed since the Feb. 22 blaze.

"It's been closed for some time, and it'll remain closed for some time," said Kathleen Rawson, the executive director Bayside District Corp., adding that the claim with the insurance company is ongoing.

The fire in the parking structure No. 5 bathroom was especially costly — rounding out to \$20,000 — because the flames spread to the room adjacent to the bathroom, where Bayside stores many of the kiosks that line the Third Street Promenade.

Along with light fixtures and paneling in the bathroom, many of the kiosks suffered smoke and water damage, Glew said.

Pedraza arrested for homicide in July '03

TRIAL, from page 1

leave. Garcia waited outside the bar until Pedraza confronted him from the front side of the building.

Pedraza told Garcia that he didn't want to kill him and he should go home. Garcia opened fire on Pedraza, using all six rounds of his .22 revolver. A bullet hit Pedraza's chest during the shoot-out, but he avoided fatal injury because of a bullet proof vest he was wearing, his public defender said.

Pedraza took cover around the corner, then shot Garcia at least eight times with his .38 semi-automatic pistol. After that, Pedraza walked up to Garcia — lying face-first on the sidewalk in a pool of blood — and shot Garcia three more times in the back of the head.

Garcia suffered a total of 14 gunshot wounds from 11 bullets. Some of the gunshots entered and exited multiple parts of his body.

Pedraza was never questioned by police at the time of the shooting. He fled the scene, and abandoned his bar and family. He was on the lam for 19 years before being arrested in Los Angeles in July of 2003 on drug charges. He allegedly sold narcotics out of a parking lot at which he worked.

Shortly after the shooting, police found Pedraza's tan Ford pick-up truck abandoned in Santa Monica. They believe he went to Mexico. He returned to the United States 10 years after the incident and lived here for nine more before his latest arrest.

Pedraza appeared in court on Wednesday wearing a dark sport coat, dress shirt and a red-striped tie. He had streaks of gray in his dark hair, with a white mustache. He seemed calm, at one point returning from recess chewing gum. The bailiff poured him a glass of

Police took a suspect into custody, after receiving eyewitness accounts, though it's up to the district attorney whether to prosecute, Glew added. Police have not rounded up any suspects for the other three arson blazes, Glew said.

"You can't measure the impact (of arson) because of the domino effect on the people who work (at the businesses affected)," Glew said. "Anytime a business is interrupted, it loses business and jobs."

The bathroom fire was declared arson after firefighters ruled out all other possible accidental causes — chemical, mechanical, natural and electrical.

The typical arson investigation — ranging from a few hours to several days depending on the extent of the fire — entails interviewing eyewitnesses, eliminating accidental causes and scoping out the scene for ignitable fluids that could have been used to start the blaze.

Out of the 16 fires whose causes were left undetermined, few very likely were started by arsonists, Glew said.

water.

Seated between his attorney and interpreter, who spoke into a microphone, Pedraza listened to the proceedings through a headset. He didn't speak during the court proceedings. He glanced at the jurors and occasionally turned around to check the time on a clock on the wall, and to look at the handful of people who had come to hear the case.

Set to testify in the case is Ramon Garcia, who was 25 years old at the time and present during the shooting, as well as other witnesses who saw events leading up to Garcia's death. Police and crime lab experts also are expected to testify.

The trial is expected to be complete next Friday.

Deputy District Attorney Larry Droeger said in his opening statement that the point at which Pedraza walked up to the body and proceeded to shoot Garcia three more times in the head is what distinguished the incident from a possible case of self-defense to murder. Prior to that move, there was a chance, however remote, Garcia may have lived.

"It was simply an elimination, execution style," Droeger said.

Mojgan Aghai, Pedraza's public defender, characterized Pedraza as a hard-working immigrant businessman who lost everything because of the shooting, including his bar and family.

"He knew they were going to come back and kill him," Aghai said. "This wasn't a dispute in the Pacific Palisades. This was the streets."

Aghai said, considering the circumstances, Pedraza acted reasonably.

"The most important right we have as Americans is the right to be safe," Aghai said. "Who

LOCAL

City spent up to \$180K on its outside legal fees

SETTLED, from page 1

approved by Santa Monica voters in 2000 that prohibits public officials from receiving gifts and campaign contributions from companies that contract with the city of Santa Monica for more than \$50,000.

The Supreme Court's March decision to not review the case means that the lower courts' decisions to make the initiative a law will likely be final, since the measure has never been put into effect in Santa Monica.

As a result, City Hall agreed to pay \$229,191 to attorney Fred Woocher, who represented the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights (FTCR), for his efforts in helping the nonprofit group succeed in upholding the case.

Carmen Balber, one of the foundation's consumer advocates, said her group warned City Hall officials that their decision to try to fight the initiative would ultimately end up being costly.

"They spent a big expenditure in order to try to violate the voters' will," Balber said.

Representatives from City Hall didn't comment on how many hours and how much money it spent trying to fight the constitutionality of Prop. LL. Several in-house attorneys worked on the case, and an outside law firm was hired to handle a portion of the legal battle.

"The (settlement) is for the proponents of the initiative who challenged the city's ability to obtain a ruling on the constitutionality of the initiative," said Deputy City Attorney Jeanette Schachtner. "So, as it stands, we don't have a judicial determination as to whether the initiative is constitutional.

"There is nothing more we can do with this particular lawsuit."

City Hall has spent up to \$180,000 in outside legal expenses for services related to the case, Schachtner said.

City Hall officials didn't comment on how they will enforce the initiative.

Nearly 60 percent of Santa Monica voters in November of 2000 voted in favor of Prop. LL, which was designed to stop city workers and elected leaders from collecting cash, gifts and other perks from individuals who are affected by their decisions.

City Hall officials immediately criticized the new proposition, calling it poorly written, overly broad and a threat to the constitutional rights of everyone from low-level city workers to elected leaders sitting on the Santa Monica City Council.

The city argues that a zoning administrator — an appointed official who has discretion to approve routine applications for zoning permits — would violate the law if he accepts sports tickets from a family friend who happens to be a partial owner of a construction company that does business in Santa Monica.

"Determining which officials are actu-

ally covered ... presents a question of some complexity," wrote Deputy City Attorney Tony Serritella in his brief to the Court of Appeals. "This court can save the initiative by reforming the term 'public official' to mean only those persons who hold local elective office."

The city also asked that the initiative not include nonprofit organizations, so that the officers, directors and volunteers would still be able to contribute to the campaigns of public officials. In addition, the city argued that the ban on campaign contributions to Santa Monica officials who subsequently pursue federal and state office can be severed without invalidating the law.

The city argued that the criminal and civil penalty provisions of the law could violate due process because "it's hard to imagine how a public official is supposed to know, for example, the identities of all persons who hold more than 10 percent ... equity, participation or revenue interest, or who is a trustee, director, partner or officer of a person or entity receiving a public benefit," according to Serritella's brief. City attorneys asked that the law be more specific to say that public officials "who knowingly or willingly" accept contributions are violators.

Just how to avoid those problems without blatantly ignoring the will of voters was a major concern to city officials. In May 2001, City Attorney Marsha Moutrie recommended, and the City Council agreed, that the city should file a lawsuit against itself. It sued City Clerk Maria Stewart, who, on Moutrie's advice, had refused to implement the law for fear of it treading on the constitution.

The City Council wanted clarification too, but it also wanted to make sure the city was honoring the "will of the people" — the majority of voters who approved the law. And suing the group that forced the measure onto the ballot, called the "Oaks Project," wasn't an option because city officials didn't want to appear to be going against the will of the people, officials said.

So the only way city officials thought they could clarify the law's constitutionality was to sue its own city clerk for not enforcing it, then wait for a judge to rule.

Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Debra Yang dismissed the suit in April 2002 because the city had no legal grounds to sue because no one had challenged the law. The trial court and the court of appeals agreed with the Oaks Project that there was no actual disagreement between the city of Santa Monica and the city clerk, and ruled that City Hall could not sue itself in order to get rid of a voter-approved initiative. The March 2004 announcement by the California Supreme Court defers to those previous rulings.



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VIOLET-At Violet restaurant the atmosphere is casual, comfortable, and, like its cuisine, is uncluttered. Chef Jared Simons' flavorful small plate fare has something to suit everyone, from light eaters to those with a taste for a more robust fare. The Braised Short Ribs with Shallot Potatoes (\$14.50) melt apart while the Multi-Colored Beet Salad with Eel delights with Kumquat and Ginger Vinaigrette (\$9) and the favorite among the regulars is the Baked Macaroni and Gruyere Cheese with Serrano Ham (\$7.50). Unique selection of new and old world wines by the bottle, glass or flight as well as an impressive list of domestic & imported artisan beers. Hours: Lunch: Tuesday-Friday, 11:30am-2pm. Dinner: Tuesday-Friday, 6pm-10pm & Saturday and Sunday, 5:30pm-10pm. 3221 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica. www.violetrestaurant.com (310) 453-9113.

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Entertainment

Tut tour 2005 is playing to packed houses

BY MICHAEL TITTINGER
Daily Press Staff Writer

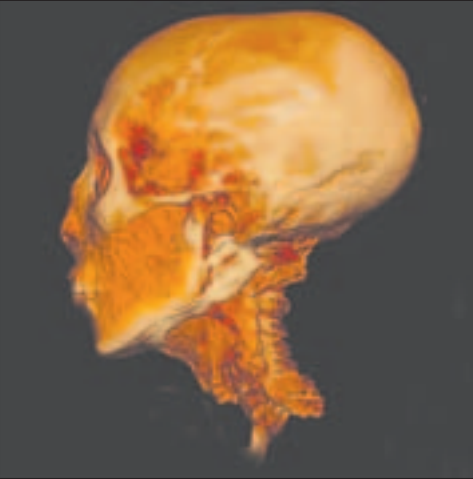
MIRACLE MILE — Young, power beyond all measure, and certainly a thing for the bling-bling — Tut, as they said in years past, was indeed the “mutt’s nuts.”

Today, Tutankhamun would be a rock star, a veritable “Golden God” with ample reality show gravitas, adored by pre-pubescent girls and Bravo viewers alike. Instead, he had to settle for being King of Egypt during the 18th Dynasty, ruling much of the civilized world and getting fanned ad nauseum by a gaggle of groupies.

Proving once again that nothing so attracts as youth, the boy king is still reeling them in. By flail or by crook, gawkers by the thousands are filing into the Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibit “Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of Pharaohs” — the first such showing of Tut’s golden goods in the United States since the mid ’70s.

Like Billy the Kid or Alexander the Great or James Dean, Tutankhamun will never get old, nor will the pull his tomb accompaniments hold over us in all their gilded luster. But if you learned as a kid of the opulence beyond comprehension bestowed upon the boy king following his untimely death at the age of 19, you might be disappointed to learn the most prized of his precious objects — such as his three golden coffins, placed inside one another

like Russian matryoshka dolls — are not lying in state north of Wilshire Boulevard.



CT Scanning equipment provided by Siemens AG; Data courtesy, the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Arab Republic of Egypt; National Geographic magazine, June 2005

Tut’s head, scanned in .62-millimeter slices to register its intricate structures, takes on eerie detail in the resulting image. With Tut’s entire body similarly recorded, a team of specialists in radiology, forensics and anatomy began to probe the secrets that the winged goddess of a gilded burial shrine protected for so long.

Still, there’s much to take in at the exhibit, if you have the time and don’t mind making some elbow room for your-

self among the mommies and mummies. Be prepared to say “sorry” and “excuse me” repeatedly, as the crowds can often swell inside of LACMA’s display rooms, and the A.D.D. contingent gets ornery.

But the continual stream of onlookers is testament to the enduring power and fascination we have with ancient Egypt, and the unparalleled preparations they made for the afterlife. Even if you don’t know your Amenhoteps (kings before Tut) from your canopic jars (used to store embalmed organs), the exhibit is worth a gander.

LACMA does a nice job of enclosing each piece in a display case viewable from 360 degrees, allowing extended looks from every vantage point, be it over a senior’s head or under a tourist’s ball cap. The exhibit also gets increasingly darker, providing a heightened sense of foreboding as you work your way toward the really good stuff, akin to exploring a tomb.

Some of the highlights include the golden Coffin of Tjuya (complete with lid intriguingly ajar), golden-laced crooks and flails (which people don’t seem to tote around much anymore) and a room full of jewels taken from Tut’s own mummified remains.

After having entered the tomb following his discovery in the Valley of the Kings in 1922, the British archeologist Howard Carter recalled the scene as “everywhere ... the glint of gold.”

Who living in the town of tinsel can’t appreciate that?

“Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of Pharaohs” runs through Nov. 15 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

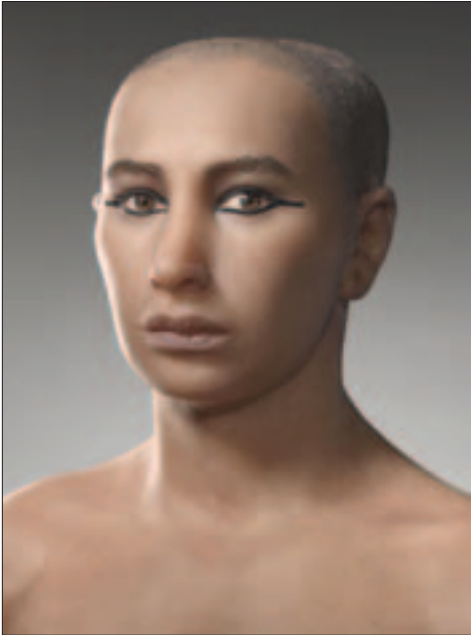


Photo courtesy Under the leadership of Zahi Hawass, secretary general of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities, National Geographic used the Siemens CT scan data of the mummy obtained in January 2005 as part of the multi-year Egyptian Mummy Project to create the most accurate forensic reconstruction ever of Egypt’s famous boy pharaoh.



Photo by Kenneth Garrett © June 2005 National Geographic magazine Inside King Tut’s subterranean burial chamber, against a backdrop of murals, Hawass removes padding to reveal the young pharaoh’s remains.



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Check Out the Question of the Week on Page 3 and let us hear what you have to say

The Q Line

‘Pretty Persuasion’ over the top, pure waste of its talent

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

An exclusive Beverly Hills private school serves as a microcosm of our screwed-up society in “Pretty Persuasion,” an off-putting dank comedy bloated with smug, simplistic observations about racism, international strife, celeb worship, the media and sex. In this, his motion picture directorial debut, music video hotshot Marcos Siega wastes the considerable talents of rising starlet Evan Rachel Wood (“Thirteen”) on meandering material about outwardly pretty popular girls with ugly souls who exist in a spiritual dead zone. Siega’s film is technically uninspiring and populated with characters that are mostly devoid of the qualities that make us human (and movies watchable). He seems to be making up his mission statement as he goes along, leaving us to wonder whether he intended to rip off “Heathers” or “Wag the Dog.” That doesn’t work, so Siega falls back on shock for shock’s sake, firing away, and missing, at a number of sacred cows.

Wood’s Kimberly Joyce is a 15-year-old vamp who accuses a leering teacher (Ron Livingston) of sexual assault guided by the improbable notion that the resultant attention will launch her acting career. A media circus ensues led by Jane Krakowski’s hard-charging lesbian television reporter, along with a trial that — like every



other set piece in this film — plays woefully over the top. Kimberly apparently hasn’t met the guy or gal she won’t go down on to get what she’s after, and here she’s offered up as little more than a Machiavellian sex fiend. Siega leaves very little to the imagination, and we’re subjected to several “climactic” scenes in which Kimberly — her mission accomplished — slides into frame and practically winks at the camera while wiping a sleeve across her lips. This is disturbing enough given the target audience (the film’s trailer is running repeatedly on MTV), but it’s downright shameful once you consider the star was hardly old enough to drive when the film was shot.

(Running time: 104 minutes)

‘Deuce’ short on good taste

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

The good news is that Rob Schneider left this country. Unfortunately for us, they filmed him over there. Actually, Schneider isn’t always as bad as the rap he’s gotten — in fact, his charming performance in “50 First Dates” was the only decent thing about that movie — but let’s face it, the guy knows his audience, and he usually plays to the lowest common denominator with everything he’s got in that diminutive frame of his. Never before has Schneider aimed so far below the belt as he does in this sequel to his 1999 hit about a hapless male



prostitute with the gold-plated heart. The humor in “Deuce Bigalow European Gigolo” is so relentlessly blue, politically correct types in the audience will surely be seeing red long before the scene in which the poor Russian gal with a phallic nose penetrates a woman with a hole in her throat.

After a contrived set-up involving agitated dolphins and unsuspecting septuagenarians, Deuce is forced to go on the lam and tracks down his former pimp T.J. (Eddie Griffin), who has set up shop in Amsterdam’s red light district. T.J. gets fingered for a string of man-ho murders, so it’s up to Deuce to find the real killer and clear his buddy’s name. To that end he goes on a series of dates with some prime suspects: women with unfortunate afflictions that become the butt of a slew of dumb jokes. Deuce’s love interest is a real stunner named Eva (Dutch model Hanna Verboom) who falls for the little lug because he’s unfazed by her erratic behavior, the result of an obsessive-compulsive disorder (yep, more stupid jokes). Shot on location in the Netherlands, the film is a visual delight. And to be fair, there are some bona fide laugh-out-loud moments in “European Gigolo,” but ultimately the film suffers irreparable harm due to its arrant disregard for anything resembling good taste. Cameo alert: Adam Sandler and a puffy Norm MacDonald appear briefly and forgettably as members of The International Man-Whore Society.

‘Four Brothers’ fails to please

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

A saintly old woman gets killed in a grocery store robbery, and the four foster sons she raised go after some serious payback in this latest disappointment from director John Singleton, whose career started off with a bang (1991’s “Boyz n the Hood”) and hasn’t popped again since. With duds like “Poetic Justice,” “Baby Boy,” the disastrous “Shaft” remake and now this on his resume, evidence continues to mount that Singleton is more of a one-hit wonder than the wunderkind many once hailed him to be.

The titular sibs, the Mercers, include paroled tough guy Bobby (Mark Wahlberg, Hollywood’s great enigma), lady killer Angel (Tyrese Gibson), rockstar wanna-be Jack (Garrett Hedlund) and family man Jeremiah (Andre Benjamin). The boys hail from Detroit, a cold and angry place that as depicted here makes South Central LA and its ilk look like Mr. Rogers’ neighborhood. Lawlessness abounds, and traditional cultural boundaries have been eliminated. White, black, yellow, good, bad, ugly ... it all

goes together in one ferociously violent mix, and the only thing that’s certain is that asses are getting whupped from start to finish.

The production design and soundtrack effectively give “Four Brothers” a retro-feel, like the ghetto gangster flicks of the 1970s. The buffed actors mostly deliver in roles that don’t require much finesse. Where the movie comes up dreadfully short is the area where it all began: the script. Clearly, co-writers David Elliot and Paul Lovett didn’t have to work too hard to connect the dots on the pedestrian plot, so you’d think they might have dedicated a little time and energy to crafting the dialogue. Alas, nearly every word that comes out of someone’s mouth is the stuff spoofs and straight-to-DVD Van Damme flicks are made of, like when Bobby tells Jack, “The only thing that scares people more than getting burned to death is people getting eaten alive.” Maybe so, Bobby, but I for one, find the direction this director’s career has gone to be pretty damn scary as well.

(Rated R for strong violence, pervasive language and some sexual content. Running time: 109 minutes)

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ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

‘Wonder Years’ talent reunite in Santa Monica

By Daily Press staff

The Ruskin Group Theatre has announced that Fred Savage and Olivia d’Abo — who played siblings in the hit television series “The Wonder Years” — are scheduled to appear in the “L.A. Café Plays” Sunday, Aug. 21.

Dubbed the “Fastest Theater in Town” because five short plays go from conception to execution in just 10 1/2 hours, the “Café Plays” will be staged at 7:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. at Ruskin Group Theatre, 3000 Airport Dr. at Santa Monica Airport.

Although several theaters throughout the country have staged 24-hour plays, Ruskin producers Markus Flanagan, Mike Myers, Erin Kelly and Michael Laurie have upped the stakes and cut that time by more than half. In addition, the speed plays are produced monthly.

At 9 a.m. the day of the performance, five writers gather at Back on Broadway, a café-restaurant in Santa Monica. Each writer picks, at random, two manila envelopes containing actors’ headshots. They are then given four hours to write a seven- to 10-page one-act play that takes place in a café. The directors then take over, meet their actors, and begin rehearsals.

“The collaboration and partnership of the Café Plays yields amazing results, and trust must be instantly forged and absolutely relied upon,” said actor David Bosnak, who has been in several of the speed plays. “And the beauty is, it is good.”

Savage, a highly successful child actor, has gone on to star in and direct several films and television episodes as an adult. Best known for his starring role in the long-running “Wonder Years,” Savage was, at 12, the youngest person ever to be nominated for an Emmy as best leading performer.

His film credits include “Dinosaur,” “The Boy Who Could Fly,” “Vice Versa” and “Little Monsters.” He also directed an episode of the television sitcom “Boy Meets World” that starred his little real-life brother Ben Savage.

D’Abo, who played Savage’s older sister in “The Wonder Years,” is an accomplished film, TV and stage actor, as well as a singer who has performed with Julian Lennon, Jon Bon Jovi and others. Film credits include “Wayne’s World 2” and stage credits include “Scenes from an Execution” at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles.

D’Abo is scheduled to play Gwendolyn Pigeon in the Broadway revival this October of Neil Simon’s “The Odd Couple,” which will star Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick.

The Ruskin Group Theatre, founded in 2002, has not only produced several critically acclaimed shows, it has done extensive outreach, teaching and performing in correctional facilities, boys’ homes, nursing homes and more throughout Southern California.

Ruskin is currently presenting Christopher Durang’s “Beyond Therapy” through Aug. 20.

Tickets for “L.A. Café Plays” are \$10. Call (310) 397-3244 or go to www.ruskingrouptheatre.com.

Jazzin’ it up on Main Street

By Daily Press staff

Live jazz at the Vic on Main Street is geared up for a big month with some acts that can’t been seen anywhere else.

On Aug. 25, Eileina Williams will perform. Williams — a full-fledged budding star with the release of her tribute to jazz vocal classics titled “Introducing ... Eileina Williams” — she possesses a smooth and sultry style and innate sense of rhythm.

The late night show is the Septet, with Gerald Clayton playing piano, Taylor Eigsti playing rhodes, Harish Raghavan on bass, Ben Wendel and Dana Stephans on sax and Jody G. on drums.

On Aug. 25, Gretchen Parlato, from New York, will make her solo debut at the Vic. Parlato was the winner of the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocalist Competition. She will perform with the Gerald Clayton Trio.

The late night jazz show will feature Global Village, with Chris Mello on guitar, Jeff Novak on bass, Aaron Sefarty on drums and Bryan Brock on percussion.

The Vic is open on Thursdays, with two shows — one at 8 p.m. and one at 10 p.m. — for a \$20 cover and two-item minimum. The club, located upstairs at the historic Victorian, 2640 Main St., is open from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. with dinner service from 7 p.m. to midnight. Reservations are required for the 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. shows.

Late night shows are a \$5 cover and two-drink minimum from midnight to 2 a.m., with no reservation needed.

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EILEINA WILLIAMS

Rachael Sage set to perform in Santa Monica

By Daily Press staff

Be soothed by the sounds of Sage.

Hot on the heels of winning an Independent Music Award and opening for Judy Collins at the Wildflower Festival, Rachael Sage returns to the West Coast in support of her latest release. Her sixth CD, entitled “Ballads and Burlesque,” was released in September 2004. Sage’s summer tour will be hitting cities throughout the west coast, northeast and southeast.

“Sage has earned a place as a performer to be taken seriously, and should prove a force to be reckoned with throughout her career,” reads “Performing Songwriter.”

A self-taught pianist from age 5, Sage went on to study at The School of American Ballet in her adolescence, eventually earning a degree in drama from Stanford University. Following a one-year stint with New York City’s renowned Actors Studio, Sage rediscovered her passion for music. She has been compared to such artists as Rufus Wainwright for her piano-driven melodies and to Sarah McLachlan for her feminist-folk sensibilities, sources say.



In 1996, Sage formed MPress Records and released her debut CD “Morbid Romantic.” In the last eight years, Sage has earned several awards for her songwriting spanning a variety of genres, including the 2002 Billboard Songwriting Award in R&B and grand prize in the John Lennon Songwriting Contest in 2001 for rock. She is a founding member of New York City artist collective UrbanMuse as well as WomanRock and Indiegrl, and is a resident composer for the American Jewish Ballet.

Between writing, composing and running her own record label, Sage performs 150 to 200 dates a year in venues across the country, and she is set to perform in Santa Monica.

This event will take place on Thursday, Aug. 18, 7:30 p.m. at The Talking Stick, 1630 Ocean Park Blvd. For reservations call (310) 450-6052 or visit www.thetalkingstick.net.

Mount Olive Lutheran Church hosts Gospel Jubilee

By Daily Press staff

Get ready to clap your hands to the sounds of some gospel music.

The Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Santa Monica and JETA Entertainment presents Gospel Jubilee with Jean Shy and the Ron Bishop Trio. Together they will perform a mix of gospels and spirituals from the repertoire of gospel singer Mahalia Jackson.

Born in Chicago, Jean Shy’s vocal background had its beginning in gospel music. Her musical influences ranged from Mahalia Jackson to Elvis Presley and Ella Fitzgerald and Dinah Washington to Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight and many other gospel, jazz and soul artists.

After national and regional successes in the United States, Shy branched out and went to Europe, making Germany her second home. There she formed her own band called The Shy Guys, with which she has been performing to thousands of fans at festivals, concert halls and churches throughout Europe for nearly 20 years.

Many European press critics compare Jean Shy to the gospel queen Mahalia Jackson, sources say.

In 2004 Jean Shy returned to the United States after living overseas for more than 14 years. She is currently promoting her new United States gospel CD release, entitled “One Day,” which also includes songs that will be performed at the concert.

This event will take place on Sunday, Aug. 21, at 5 p.m., and doors open at 4:30 p.m. at 1343 Ocean Park Blvd. For more information, go to www.jeanshy.com.



JEAN SHY

SoCal Edison signs contract for a massive solar energy project

BY LAURA WIDES

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — A huge solar energy facility capable of producing more electricity than all other U.S. sun-power projects combined is being planned for the California desert.

Southern California Edison signed a 20-year power purchase agreement Monday with Phoenix-based Stirling Energy Systems to build a 4,500-acre project that would produce 500 megawatts, enough electricity for a small city — about 278,000 homes.

"We're very proud to be leaders in the country in bringing renewable energy sources into operation," said SoCal Edison Chairman John Bryson.

"California is heavily dependent on natural gas. Natural gas costs have climbed extraordinarily. Any sensible electricity policy for a large group of customers needs to have diversity to it, and renewable energy need to be part of it."

The deal is contingent on the California Public Utilities Commission's approval and would begin with a pilot project using 40 of Stirling's 37-foot-diameter dishes. The commission is scheduled to meet Aug. 25.

Solar energy makes particular sense in California, where peak usage coincides with the hottest hours and the sunniest days of the year.

The deal came a day after President Bush signed a bill that will give billions in tax breaks to encourage

new energy options, including renewable energy production.

News of the agreement rippled through the Solar World Congress in Orlando, Fla., on Tuesday.

"It helps the public understand that solar energy is not something that's going to happen in their grandchildren's days," said Brad Collins, head of the American Solar Energy Society, which sponsored the conference. "It's happening right now."

The 20,000-dish project would be built in the desert near Victorville, about 70 miles northeast of Los Angeles, with construction expected to be finished by 2010. It would be capable of expanding beyond the planned 500 megawatts.

Edison's 4.5 million customers won't have to wait until the project is finished. The project is expected to begin generating grid-ready electricity when the first dish is working, said Stirling CEO Bruce Osborn.

The systems look like giant mirrored satellite dishes. They harness the sun's rays to heat up hydrogen gas, which drives a small generator. The dishes are computer controlled and can rotate throughout the day to follow the sun across the sky.

Stirling dish technology has been tested for 20 years, but the proposed project marks the first time it would be used in a major commercial project.

"The real advancement is that this contract will make possible to take the technology from sound science to actually reality," Bryson said.

Dozens protest the proposed water diversion to Las Vegas

By The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Dozens of residents, government and education officials from western Utah and some of their Nevada neighbors gathered in front of the federal building to protest a proposal to transport Great Basin water to Las Vegas.

The protest Wednesday followed a 220-mile relay run from Baker, Nev., to deliver bundles of letters to congressional and state leaders.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority wants to drill wells on the Nevada side of the line and transport the water to Las Vegas via a 500-mile network of pipelines.

"This is one of the last prime areas of the West," said Ed Alder, principal of West Desert High School. "We need to protect it."

Residents of the Snake Valley on both sides of the border contend the pumping would devastate their livelihoods and the land they live on.

Callao rancher Cecil Garland said groundwater tables in the valley are already low following six years of drought, and the groundwater pumping would make

what is already a bad situation much worse.

"We have no surplus water in the Snake Valley," Garland said. "The taking of the water means the destruction of the habitat. And the destruction of the habitat is a not-so-subtle form of genocide."

Southern Nevada officials contend studies have shown that as much as 100,000 acre-feet of water is available annually in the aquifers under the valley. Their proposal calls for a yearly withdrawal of 25,000 acre-feet.

Water authority spokesman J.C. Davis said last week that no water will be taken from the region unless ongoing studies by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Land Management confirm those estimates.

Snake Valley residents say their publicity campaign is the only way to make their voices heard.

West Desert High students and area residents took part in the run, which began Monday in Baker.

"We don't want to see a precedent like this set with west desert water," said Juab County Commissioner Neil Cook. "We need to keep it for the people who eke out a living there. We need to keep it a special place for everybody."

Gunmen attack and kill six people, including defense intelligence officer

BY ANTONIO CASTANEDA

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Gunmen killed at least six people Thursday in attacks across Iraq, including one that left a young girl wounded and her parents dead, police said. Negotiators pressed ahead on a draft constitution as a parliamentary vote deadline loomed.

Insurgent attacks have continued during the weeks-long effort by leaders from Iraq's disparate groups to write a constitution that is supposed to be approved by parliament Monday and put before voters in an Oct. 15 referendum. U.S. and Iraqi officials hope political progress will deflate the insurgency.

In the overnight attack that orphaned the 12-year-old girl, gunmen killed her mother and father, a pharmacist, in west Baghdad, police said. The girl was lightly injured and released to relatives, Dr. Muhannad Jawad of Yarmouk Hospital said.

Three Iraqi soldiers were killed and one officer kidnapped in separate attacks across the country. In one attack, gunmen burst into the home of an intelligence official from the Defense Ministry and killed him as he was preparing for work in Basra, 340 miles southeast of Baghdad, police Capt. Mushtaq Kadhim said.

A civilian walking to a Shiite mosque in Baghdad for afternoon prayers was killed by gunmen, police Capt. Talib Thamir said.

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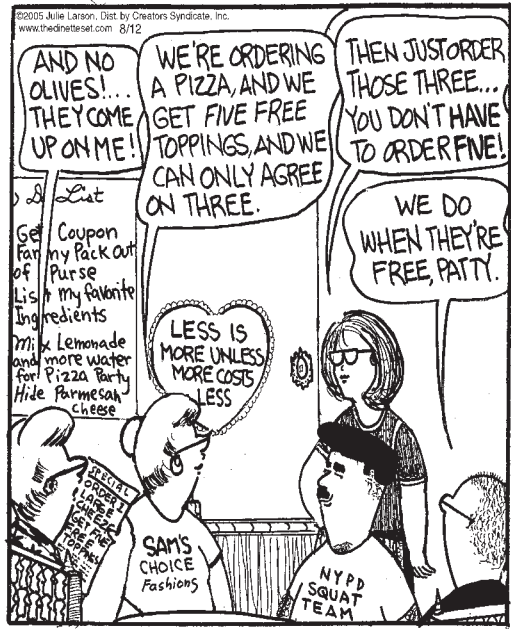
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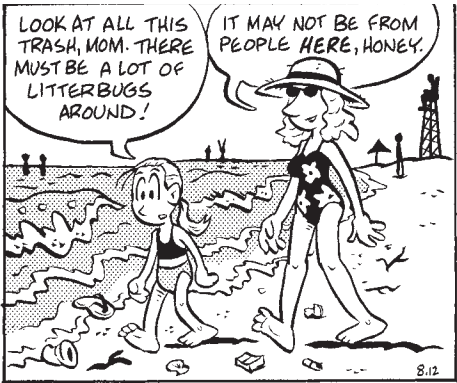


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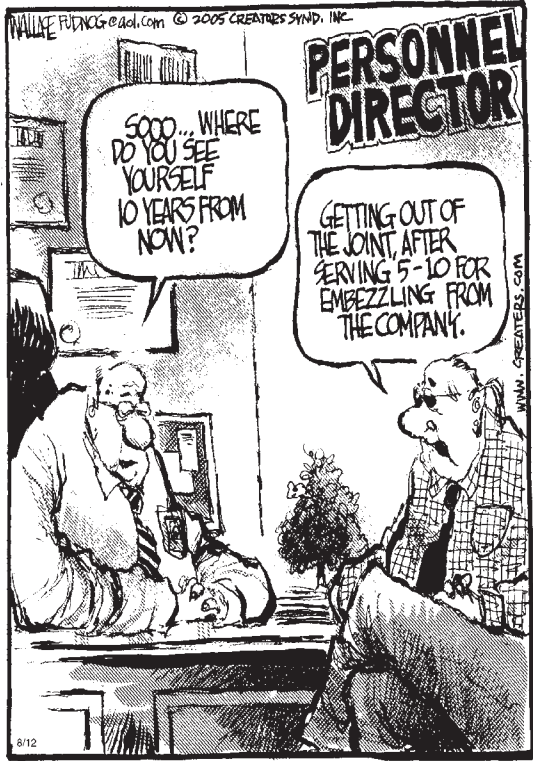


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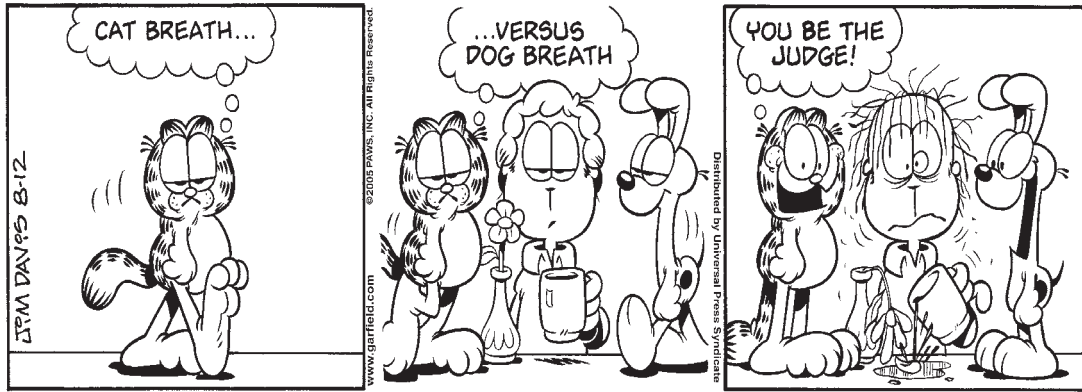


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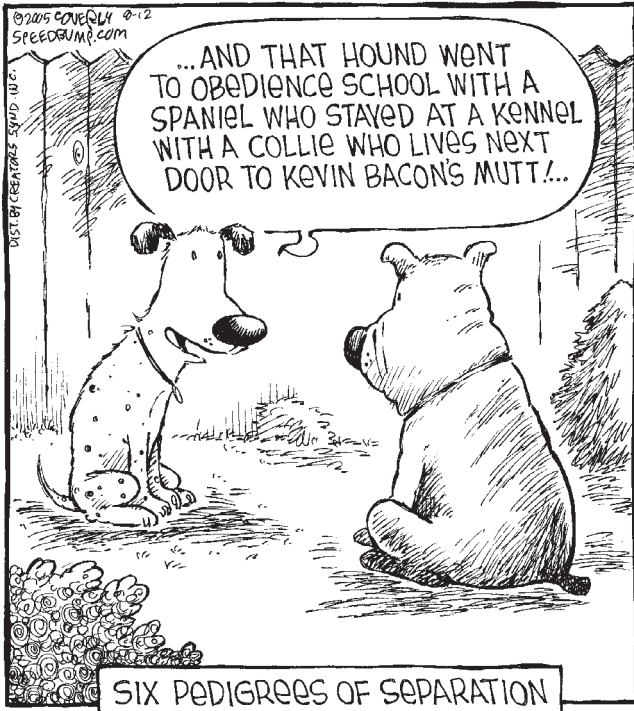
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- 20 Leia's brother
- 22 Dated
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- 28 Prologue
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- 33 Disorder
- 34 Airport sights
- 36 Melville character
- 38 Audibly
- 40 Standoff-ish
- 43 Aver
- 44 Rude thing to do
- 45 Traveler's stop

46 Ham-burger

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- 6 Break
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- 8 Caused trouble
- 9 Yon folks
- 10 Fast runner
- 16 Shade tree
- 18 Nut's partner
- 19 New Haven students
- 21 "Exodus" author
- 23 Forest plant
- 24 Eye part
- 25 Bumbler's utterance
- 27 Hairy
- 30 Suit — T
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- 34 Moolah
- 35 Choir member
- 37 Door fastener
- 39 Penna. neighbor
- 41 Table scrap
- 42 Tina of "SNL"

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