

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ **Only-in-California Rage:** Ms. Cathomas Starbird, a member of the Sausalito, Calif., school board, was sentenced to 15 days in jail in 1999 for assaulting a female friend who had joined her and her husband to celebrate the husband's birthday. At the couple's houseboat after dinner, Ms. Starbird became furious at her friend, jumped on her, and bit her on the face because she had refused to engage in oral sex with the husband.

■ A 49-year-old woman in Scotland passed away in 1999, only the third starvation death among the world's alleged 5,000 disciples of Australian Ellen Greve who follow a no-food, no-water, "breatharian" diet. Greve sells her philosophy ("liberation from the drudgery of food and drink") to Westerners in part as conferring a spiritual connection with third-world hunger.

■ A 1998 Los Angeles Times report described the unusual, sustained success, in turbulent economic times, of the Cat Theater of Moscow, Russia, whose 300-seat shows remained sold out weeks in advance. Despite conventional wisdom that cats are untrainable, proprietor Yuri Kuklachev had them climbing poles, walking tightropes, pushing toy trains, leapfrogging over human backs, and balancing atop tiny platforms.

TODAY IN HISTORY

On Aug. 19, 1812, the USS Constitution defeated the British frigate Guerriere east of Nova Scotia during the War of 1812.

■ In 1929, the comedy program "Amos and Andy," starring Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, made its network radio debut on NBC.

■ In 1934, a plebiscite in Germany approved the vesting of sole executive power in Adolf Hitler.

■ In 1974, U.S. Ambassador Rodger P. Davies was fatally wounded by a bullet that penetrated the American embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus, during a protest by Greek Cypriots.

■ In 1976, President Ford won the Republican presidential nomination at the party's convention in Kansas City.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

"One can live in the shadow of an idea without grasping it."

— ELIZABETH BOWEN
IRISH AUTHOR (1899-1973)

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File photo

Developers, merchants and shoppers disagree about how the Brentwood Country Mart, pictured here in the 1950s, should look.

Mall of yesterday struggles to hold onto its image

Plans to revamp the struggling Brentwood Country Mart inch forward

BY GENEVA WHITMARSH

Daily Press Staff Writer

26TH STREET — The long-cherished Brentwood Country Mart is suffering from an identity crisis.

And while developers hope to change the face of the 56-year-old, colonial-style mall, many longtime tenants and customers feel the shopping center has reached the end of an era.

The Country Mart, which has experienced a drop off in customers and longtime businesses, is expected to have several new stores by January.

In 2003, local developer James S. Rosenfield put down \$30 million for the property with plans to fill the empty spots with unique retail stores and specialty shops, and restore some of the splendor of the early days. This week, he said that plan is on track.

"We're searching all over the world for great stores

See MALL, page 7

City Hall overtime pay tops \$13 million

Top 25 overtime earners take home tens of thousands of dollars in extra pay

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Police officers, firefighters and bus drivers were the top overtime earners here in 2003, taking home millions of dollars for extra hours worked and, in some cases, doubling their wages, city records show.

Topping the list was a police sergeant who took home \$66,825 in extra wages, to complement his \$95,493 salary. Below him were four police officers who each earned more than \$50,000 last year in overtime pay.

Rounding out the list of the 25 workers with the most overtime compensation in 2003 were two firefighters, four bus drivers and many more police officers. Each of the bus drivers earned a \$41,000 annual salary, plus between \$36,000 and \$46,000 for covering extra shifts and other additional work.

Each of the workers also received a

Extra shift

City Hall spends millions of dollars each year in overtime. Here's a breakdown of how much has been spent over the last five fiscal years.

1999-2000	\$11,759,948
2000-2001	\$13,845,120
2001-2002	\$14,610,271
2002-2003	\$13,133,106
2003-2004	\$13,229,765



File Photo

Police officers often earn overtime to patrol film shoots and other events in Santa Monica.

third source of income by cashing out vacation days or other City Hall benefits. Those cash-outs ranged from \$993 for one bus driver to more than \$20,000 for a fire engineer.

Citing privacy reasons, city officials didn't provide workers' names.

City Hall spends more than \$170 million on salaries, wages and fringe benefits annually and last fiscal year \$13.2 million of that was for overtime, said finance director Steve Stark.

All city employees are eligible to earn overtime except those in managerial positions, like department heads. Overtime pay is typically one-and-a-half times a worker's wage, and kicks in for long shifts and workweeks which exceed 40 hours.

Of the \$13 million spent on overtime last year, 36 percent went to the police department, 34 percent to the Big Blue Bus, 16 percent to the fire department and the rest was spread between other departments, Stark said.

Officials said they are constantly striving to limit overtime expenses, but say that some of it is necessary to keep

See OVERTIME, page 6

Samohi entrepreneurs reboot used computers

BY JOHN F. MULLER

Special to the Daily Press

SAMOH — For one local non-profit organization, school isn't just about papers, problem sets and grades. It's about teaching students the skills to succeed in life.

However, getting the tools required to teach those skills is often easier said than done.

Project ECHO, a program that teaches more than 500 public high

school students leadership and life skills through in-class exercise and on-campus businesses, received a boost Tuesday. USC's Marshall School of Business donated a pair of computers and a printer to Santa Monica High School's chapter of the project, which stands for Entrepreneurial Concepts Hands-On.

"There still may be thousands of useful hours that can be used for individual students who could

really use these computers," said Richard Schreinert, the chief of staff of the Marshall school's academic information services. "Thousands of hours may not be a lot for us (where there are a lot of users), but it could last a whole year for students here. It just makes sense for us to give it to people who can use it."

Over the last two weeks, the

See ECHO, page 7



John F. Muller/Special to the Daily Press
Tania Gonzalez, 16, shuts down the old student store computer for the last time.

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Eddie Guerboian

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Virgo, shop your way home

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

*****-Dynamic *****-Positive ***-Average **-So-so *-Difficult



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
*** Others do what appears to be a complete reversal. What was a hassle yesterday becomes a pleasure today. A family member dotes on you. Friends and associates think in terms of success by breaking past black-and-white thinking. Tonight: Out and about.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
*** Focus on your long-term aims. A superior has a great imagination; you need to harness this person's ideas or find a way to make his or her concepts work. You might be overly doting on others, but you cannot be too nice. Tonight: Work late. Let your ingenuity pitch in.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
***** You might be more into a relationship than your work. Try, if possible, to harness your thoughts and focus on what is important in the here and now. Stop at lunchtime and buy a card or two. Let others know how you feel. Maybe then you will be able to concentrate. Tonight: Start your weekend early. Have fun.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
*** Your gentle approach softens key people in your life who acted like evil trolls yesterday! Find a way of bringing work home, if possible. You will relax more in this manner. Check out and be cynical about a piece of property. Tonight: Stay close to home.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
*** You have a way of charming others that helps you and them forget yesterday. Still, you might question another's sincerity. Take your time getting to know this person. You tend to see the best in everyone. You like your rose-colored shades. Tonight: Bubbly and dinner with a friend.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
*** Take your time making a financial decision. You really don't need to commit. What seems too good to be true probably is. Experiment and see what is going on with an investment. Do something special for a friend or family member. Tonight: Shop on your way home.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
***** You are all smiles as others applaud a job well done. Consider what might be appropriate for you to say and/or do. Use your imagination and choose something or do something very special. Let your feelings flow. Tonight: What makes you happy?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
*** How others respond to you could be quite generous. Do not assume anything right now. Think carefully about what you desire. Talk to a trusted adviser who knows and understands you. Tonight: Lie back.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
***** You get what you want because of your ability to see many paths to the same goal. Sometimes you have a hard time explaining your perspective to others. Be ready to try many different styles of communication. Tonight: Where you are, everyone has a good time. Dote on your sweetie.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
*** Others might be smiling; that is because of your attitude yesterday. You also have the ability to assume responsibility and sort through problems. Others welcome your troubleshooting abilities. You could be up for a raise or promotion. Tonight: Don't even think of calling it an early night.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
***** You come up with concepts that others might have trouble grasping. Be sure of yourself when dealing with others, even if you feel like you need to feed them one piece of information at a time. Dote on someone at a distance. Tonight: Try something different.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
***** Your imagination goes haywire, and you might read more into someone's actions or words than is there. Listen well and take each moment for what it offers. Let your creativity flourish. Charge it into your work, if possible. Tonight: You flirt!

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Scholars delve into historic Santa Monica writer's life

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of author Christopher Isherwood with two talks and book discussions by Isherwood scholars.

Dr. Carola Kaplan, professor of English at California State University at Pomona, presents "The Unaccidental Tourist: Christopher Isherwood in Down There on a Visit," and leads a discussion of Isherwood's 1962 novel on Sept. 9, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Montana Avenue Branch Library, 1704 Montana Ave.

James White, author and executive director of the Christopher Isherwood Foundation, presents "Isherwood — A Personal View of his Work" and leads a discussion of the author's 1964 novel, *A Single Man*, on Oct. 2, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Fairview Branch Library, 2101 Ocean Park Blvd.

Born in England in 1904, Isherwood immigrated to America in 1939 and lived in Santa Monica Canyon until his death in 1986. The featured author for Santa Monica Citywide Reads held last spring, Isherwood's novels published during the 1960s are the focus of the library's fall 2004 programs. For more information on the free, public programs, contact the library at (310) 458-8600, or visit www.smpl.org.

A 'classic' night at the pier

By Daily Press staff

Tonight's pier concert will be classic.

On tap is Billy Vera & the Beaters and Thee Midnitters with special guest Little Willie G.

The subject of numerous television and movie appearances, Billy Vera is a legend in Southern California. His band the Beaters, "the baddest band on any stand," is a collaboration of top notch studio musicians playing their hearts out. Formed in 1979, the guitar/rock and roll/horn band made a name for themselves and developed a cult following playing Monday nights at the Troubadour. They hit a high point in their careers in 1986 with Billy's "At This Moment," which barreled up the Billboard charts after being featured in an episode of the then wildly popular show "Family Ties." Fame led to numerous TV appearances and opportunities to perform, but Billy and his musicians still love playing music they love for their fans in clubs.

What some call the greatest Latino rock band of the '60s, Thee Midnitters took their inspiration from both the British Invasion sound and more traditional R&B. Hugely popular in their native East Los Angeles, the group, featuring both guitars and horns, had a local hit with their storming version of "Land of a Thousand Dances" in 1965. Much of their repertoire featured driving, slightly punkish rock/R&B, yet lead singer "Little Willie G" Willie Garcia, who has now rejoined the band, also had a heartbreaking delivery on slow and steamy ballads. After a years-long hiatus, Thee Midnitters is back in action.

The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. and officials recommend walking, biking or riding the Big Blue Bus to the concerts, as parking is limited. A free shuttle is available from the 2030 Barnard Way lot south of the pier starting at 6 p.m. each Thursday.

Calling all poets

By Daily Press staff

A \$1,000 grand prize is being offered in a special religious poetry contest sponsored by the New Jersey Rainbow Poets, free to anyone who has ever written a poem. There are 50 prizes in all totaling almost \$5,000.

The deadline for entering is Sept. 22. To enter, send one poem only of 21 lines or less: Free Poetry Contest, 103 N. Wood Ave., PMB 70, Linden, NJ, 07036. Or enter on-line at www.rainbowpoets.com.

"We think great religious poems inspire achievement," said contest director Frederick Young. "Our desire is to inspire amateur poets and we think this competition will accomplish that. California has produced many wonderful poets over the years and we'd like to discover new ones from the Santa Monica-area."



SURF REPORT

S swell will be slowly fading on Thursday as it continues to mix with some background NW windswell. South Bay spots will stay shadowed from the S swell but NW windswell will offer some knee- to waist-high surf at the better-exposed spots. Northern LA breaks with good exposure to the S swell see waist- to shoulder-high waves through the morning, while the standout spots pull in some bigger sets. Expect less size and consistency as we head into the afternoon. Look for mostly light wind on Thursday morning with building W winds in the 8-12 knot range through the afternoon.

Today the water is:

70°

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



LOW TIDES

HIGH TIDES

	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	3:42	-0.3	2:53	2.4	10:12	4.1	9:01	6.2
SUNDAY	4:08	-0.4	3:27	2.2	10:34	4.2	9:34	6.2
MONDAY	4:34	-0.3	4:01	2.0	10:57	4.4	10:06	6.0
TUESDAY	4:59	-0.2	4:39	1.9	11:21	4.6	10:40	5.7
WEDNESDAY	5:25	0.1	5:20	1.8	11:47	4.7	11:17	5.3
THURSDAY	5:50	0.5	6:08	1.7	N/A	N/A	12:15	4.9
FRIDAY	6:17	1.0	7:07	1.6	12:00	4.7	12:47	5.0

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The  Line

There recently have been several opinion pieces printed in the Daily Press from residents complaining about the increase in jets taking off and landing at Santa Monica Airport. They are concerned about jet fuel emissions, environmental damage, noise and the increased likelihood of a plane crashing into nearby homes.

The letters to the editor were fueled by a guest commentary printed in the Aug. 11 edition by a Santa Monica resident who is heading up a group called "Concerned Residents

Against Airport Pollution" that plans to make its concerns an election issue this year for City Council candidates.

So, this week Q-Line wants to know, "Does the increase of jet traffic in Santa Monica concern you? What can local politicians do to solve the problem?"

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

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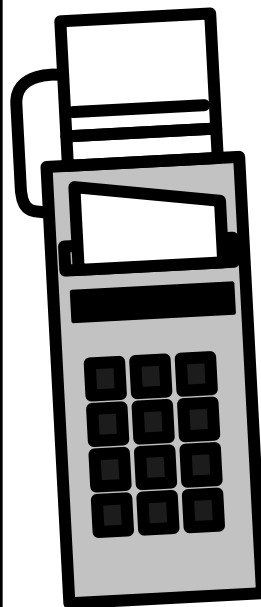
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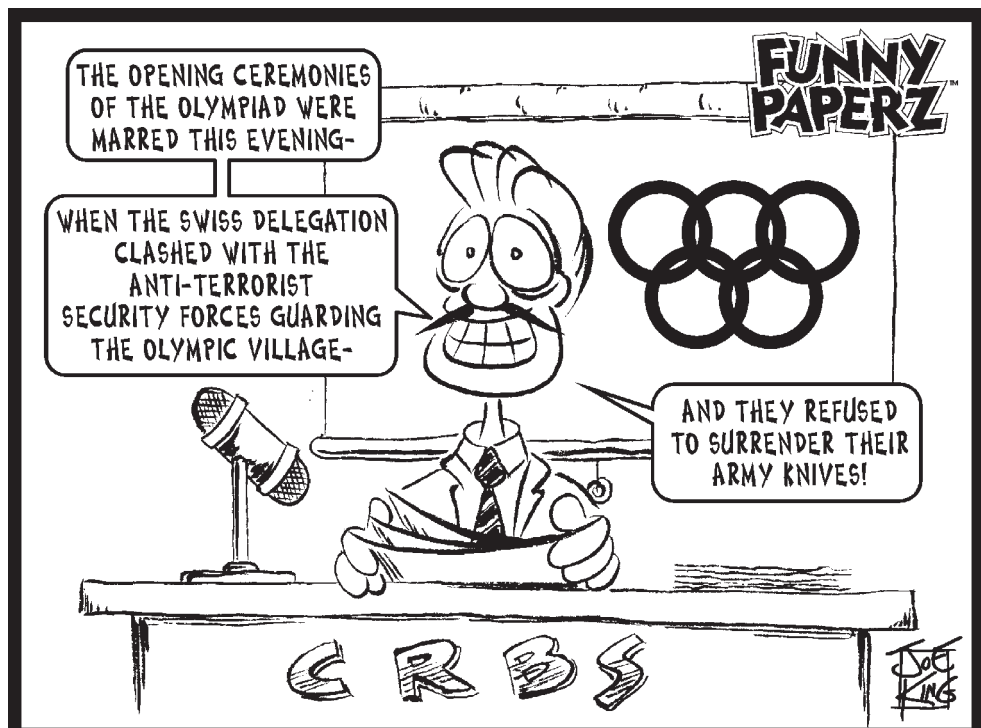
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OPINION



My favorite model is the one with the switch-blade tooth pick!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Priority check needed in City Hall

Editor:

Your article (SMDP, Aug. 17, page 1) about the brouhaha and lawsuit over the little boy's playhouse is just but another example of the city of Santa Monica, its City Council and city boards, going out of their way to unfairly persecute homeowners and small business owners.

You have reported about homeowners being threatened by the city because of their hedges, about small business owners being threatened over harmless business signs, and about the long and unreasonable delays and arbitrary decisions faced by homeowners and business owners in the planning process and at the planning department.

In this case, it was the city going after a little boy because a neighbor who is connected to Councilman Ken Genser didn't like the little boy's playhouse. The neighbor got her friend to intervene, and she apparently was able to dictate colors and other design features, and later was able to find a way to get the city to declare the playhouse illegal.

This is just another sorry example of the city interfering with the rights of homeowners and children by allowing well-connected neighbors to arbitrarily decide what their neighbors can do. Instead of persecuting our children and trying to destroy their playhouses, the city should focus on getting the homeless out of our parks so that our children can actually use our public parks.

Deborah Klein
Santa Monica

Not voting for enablers

Editor:

I'd like to chime in on your recent article about needing public bathrooms on or near the Promenade (SMDP, Aug. 16, page 1).

As a resident and occasional visitor to that section of town I have not had a problem finding a bathroom. I go there to shop, eat or see a movie and as a patron I've never been turned away when in need.

Should the city "buy or rent land," as Councilman Herb Katz suggests for this purpose, I am absolutely sure that residents and tourists will not want to use them.

With the ever increasing vagrant problem one can imagine the nightmare that will exist in these public facilities.

City Council candidate Matteo Dinolfo has even advocated for port-a-potties in alleys and more comfort services for the vagrants.

It's strikes me as funny that two of the three potential Chamber of Commerce endorsees would consider such plans. The merchants must be livid. I know I am.

As a resident I will look for leaders and candidates who will work to reduce vagrancy in Santa Monica — not facilitate it.

Imagine having your child use one of these public toilets side by side with the felons in hiding, drunks and raging street element that has come to define this city.

Linda Lancaster
Santa Monica

'Battleground' states have all the fun

NEWS ON THE EDGE

BY RON SCOTT SMITH



Toby Keith won't be able to make it, but Bruce Springsteen hits the road soon with Dave Mathews, Pearl Jam, REM, Neil Young and a host of others including Keith's nemesis, the Dixie Chicks, to give musical voice to a widely-held sentiment that Bush must go. The series of all-star rock-and-roll shows begins in October throughout the so-called "battleground" states that are still up for grabs in the presidential race.

That tour won't be coming to California, where there's not much of a battleground to be found. A poll released Tuesday by the Public Policy Institute of California shows the Bush-Cheney ticket to be trailing Kerry-Edwards here by the blowout margin of 54 to 38 percent. Though it's clear this state will choose to fire the incumbent, others across the nation are not of a like mind, and with 75 days to go the race is being called a dead heat.

Since the national popular vote — and thus the statewide margin of victory — means nothing, many Californians feel their vote for President is a moot point, dead heat or no dead heat. They know their 55 electoral votes are destined for Kerry, while only a handful of states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Florida will fight the truly crucial fights to determine who will be the next President. Perhaps it's time school is out for the Electoral College. It turns each state into a self-contained entity with a set number of votes that must total 270 nationwide, and it has outlived its usefulness, especially in the glaring light of the 2000 election. That's when Gore pulled in a half-million more American votes than his opponent, but still lost the thing because patches of wilderness like Wyoming and Idaho threw in with key "electoral votes" that overshadowed huge pluralities in California, New York and the like.

With the power and prestige of incumbency failing to yield an advantage for the Bush campaign so far, they're going back to what they know best — the good, old, tried-and-true smear. Bush has called on some old dogs to join him, but they don't appear to be hunting, as they might say in Texas. That "Swift Boat Veterans Against Kerry" group has been blasting the Senator in every imaginable way — with books, TV ads, talk-show appearances, low-flying aircraft, you name it — accusing him of everything from lying about his war injuries to cowardice under fire, all of which flies directly in the face of official Navy records and first-hand accounts from those who stood shoulder-to-shoulder with him on the boat he cap-

tained up hostile Vietnamese rivers into the heart of darkness. All the while, his opponents for the White House, perhaps scared of the dark, were stumbling over each other to avoid going off to that war. Cheney obtained five different deferments while he was in the prime health of his youth — while the well-chronicled Bush absences from stateside National Guard duty mounted.

Last week, Bush was able to use the full power of the Presidency to name Republican Congressman Porter Goss as new Director of the C.I.A. Many are questioning the appointment of a career politician to the highest intelligence post in the land, but the appointee himself may have questioned it hardest. From his cutting room floor, Michael Moore retrieved footage of an interview with Goss last spring that never made it into his movie, "Fahrenheit 9/11." In it, the newly named Director of the CIA tells Moore's crew, "I couldn't get a job with the CIA today. I am not qualified." Apparently, the new Director is somewhat computer-illiterate, and he went on to say, "As my children remind me every day, Daddy, you gotta get better on the computer." Goss, having successfully completed a Pierce College "Introduction to Computer Applications" course, takes over for George Tenet on the front lines of Bush's War on Terror as soon as he receives Senate approval.

"Knowing what we now know, would you have given the President authority to use military force in Iraq?" Bush challenged Kerry with that in one of his recent campaign speeches, and when a reporter later lobbed the softball up to the Senator, did he knock it out of the park with an emphatic "no"?

No, Kerry said, "Yes." In one of the huge missteps of his campaign, he sanctioned the ill-conceived and deceitful rush to war and the resulting disastrous occupation by saying "yes." He went on to explain, albeit correctly, that — bla — a President should be fully armed to make military moves as are deemed necessary; that — bla — he would have never rushed into it the way the President did; that — bla — there was no plan for management of the aftermath of war. When a simple, emphatic "no" would have sufficed, the Senator instead went to the bla bla bla, something he'd best get over soon if he is to take those aforementioned battleground states and win the heart of America, a heart that is no longer with tragic foreign misadventures.

Knowing what we now know, perhaps Kerry should leave it up to wife Teresa to handle the tough queries from the press. "Knowing what you now know, Mrs. Kerry, would you have given the President authority to use military force in Iraq?" She'd have said, "What are you smoking?"

(Ron Scott Smith knows what he's smoking. Reach him at EdgeoftheWest@aol.com.)

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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.

OPINION



A user reflects after seven days out of the loop



INSIDE OUT

BY AMY PERRITT

If someone told me I was going to spend seven days without access to a computer and the Internet, I would have laughed, mumbled "impossible" and called the person crazy.

I haven't been without a computer for over five years at least. I certainly wasn't going to try it now.

Let's face it. We don't even sit in Starbucks anymore without turning on our laptops and logging on. Cruise ship passengers (like my husband's parents) willingly spend a dollar a minute in an Internet cafe just to be able to e-mail news from the far seas to family members. And, more importantly, while our friend was working in Baghdad this summer, we e-mailed reports and photos from Santa Monica to keep him in touch.

But two weeks ago I found myself in this very predicament — a week-long vacation at my parents' cottage in Canada where there would be no computer and where it was highly unlikely my cantankerous cell phone would find reception.

"You haven't set up a computer?!", I said to my mom a few nights prior to my departure. Suddenly, the fact that my parents still had not bought a dishwasher or microwave for the cottage didn't seem to matter like it had in past years.

There were several campaigns scheduled to go live while I was going to be away. I wouldn't be able to access my Hotmail account to find out if a girlfriend of mine, due any day, had given birth to her first child. There was a possibility therefore that I would be late in receiving the birth announcement and baby's first photos. I couldn't follow final bidding on the various items I liked watching on eBay. And, as for getting up-to-the-minute news ... well I would have to rely on the daily ten o'clock report on TV.

"Well, we don't really need one, dear," my mom said. "You can always call work if you really have to."

While she was fully experienced in e-mail, and had even dabbled with instant messenger (until she received an upgrade notification), my mom preferred talking on the phone and for hours.

"Yeah I suppose," I said. "Calling would be much more efficient," she added.

"Yeah but then I would have to have a conversation with someone." I was frustrated. It was going to be my vacation after all. She didn't get it.

"So I think everything is set," I said to a colleague during my last day in the office. I had downloaded the key work items to another colleague who was going to cover for me and I had worked closely with my clients in preparation and provided them with contact information in my absence.

"OK, great," he said. "You'll be checking e-mail right?"

"Um ... I actually won't have access to e-mail," I murmured. I decided not to tell him that I wouldn't be able to read and respond to

any of them for ... oh ... at least eight days.

"Really?" He was astounded. "Where are you going?" "My parents' cottage." I walked sullenly out of his office. The next day, I boarded a plane en route to Toronto and from there another to Halifax.

... and for seven days I went without a computer ... and survived. Each passing day became a little easier.

On the Monday night I awoke between three and four o'clock, and tossed and turned for four hours thinking about work until I finally got up, made coffee and walked down to the lake to watch two loons glide gently across the water. While walking with my mom on our daily four-mile route, she let me talk about work for 10 minutes and then would cut me off to tell me about an aunt twice removed who had a mysterious illness. But by mid-week when my brother asked me about my job while lying on the dock basking in the sun one afternoon, I replied: "I don't want to talk about it."

"I hope it won't be too busy for you at work tomorrow," my mom said as we were saying good-bye at the airport.

"I'm sure it will be OK," I responded.

"Next year we'll have a computer set up," she said. Her eyes widened. "Then you can stay for longer!"

"Great," I smiled.

The next day I returned to the office. I immediately turned on my computer to find more than 270 e-mails awaiting me and to learn that except for a couple of outstanding action items, business had gone on like I had never left. Some colleagues hadn't even noticed I had been away.

And, I hoped that my parents would buy a dishwasher and microwave for the cottage next year.

(Amy Perritt can be reached at aperritt@hotmail.com)

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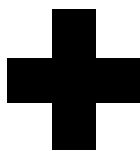
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LOCAL

Overtime paid partially
by private contracts

OVERTIME, from page 1

the city running.

"I think one of the main things to bear in mind is the use of overtime for seasonal or temporary work is far more cost effective for the city than hiring full-time people that have to be paid 365 days a year, plus benefits," said Santa Monica Police Department Chief James T. Butts, Jr., who manages a team of 210 officers. "And remember that when you hire an officer, you pay not only his or her base salary, but you pay another 50 to 55 percent in benefits, medical, dental, retirement, etcetera."

Butts said his department set up an overtime monitoring program in the late 1990s to limit overtime use, but said he doesn't apologize for the amount used. He added the department's first consideration is keeping Santa Monica safe.

What's more, Butts said much of the overtime pay is funded by outside groups that hire police officers for movie shoots and other events in Santa Monica. Overtime also is used to respond to specific situations, Butts said, like when gun

violence escalates in the eastside Pico neighborhood, or when police believe gang activity is heating up.

Joe Stitcher, assistant director of the Big Blue Bus, said overtime is necessary to operate the city's bus system, which runs 21 hours a day.

"You can't think of it in terms of an office job, where you can tell everyone, 'Be here at 8, you're going home at 5,'" said Stitcher, adding that, like the police department, much of the overtime worked is paid for by outside groups contracting for the city's bus service. "In transit, there's just a certain amount of overtime built into the system."

In the end, Stitcher said because the Big Blue Bus is a union shop, it will always have workers vying for overtime pay. Though veteran workers have first access to overtime shifts, all workers get the opportunity, he added.

"We have some people, they enjoy their job, or they enjoy their work, and they obviously enjoy their money — and they're willing to work for it," Stitcher said.

Long hours

City Hall's top 25 overtime earners in 2003, by job title.

Job title	Overtime	Base pay	Other Earnings	Total Earnings
Police Sergeant	\$66,825	\$95,493	\$4,826	\$167,144
Police Officer	\$64,052	\$82,956	\$9,655	\$156,663
Police Officer	\$57,821	\$79,102	\$7,156	\$144,079
Police Officer	\$52,214	\$75,274	\$3,351	\$130,840
Police Officer	\$51,270	\$62,727	\$3,760	\$117,758
Fire Engineer	\$49,092	\$55,743	\$20,318	\$125,153
Police Officer	\$47,597	\$82,666	\$5,263	\$135,526
Police Officer	\$46,584	\$65,438	\$3,751	\$115,773
Bus Operator	\$45,897	\$40,776	\$1,325	\$87,998
Police Officer	\$45,572	\$70,932	\$2,456	\$118,960
Police Officer	\$45,388	\$79,243	\$3,980	\$128,612
Fire Engineer	\$42,536	\$62,581	\$14,307	\$119,424
Police Officer	\$42,017	\$79,191	\$3,790	\$124,997
Police Sergeant	\$40,774	\$92,591	\$2,167	\$135,532
Police Sergeant	\$40,735	\$96,307	\$9,605	\$146,646
Police Officer	\$40,699	\$79,184	\$4,431	\$124,313
Police Officer	\$39,796	\$65,561	\$6,068	\$111,425
Bus Operator	\$39,586	\$40,976	\$2,441	\$83,002
Comm. Operator	\$39,119	\$52,443	\$5,296	\$96,858
Police Officer	\$37,401	\$77,919	\$4,953	\$120,273
Police Officer	\$36,958	\$78,883	\$3,364	\$119,206
Bus Operator	\$36,926	\$40,976	\$1,113	\$79,015
Bus Operator	\$36,445	\$40,976	\$993	\$78,413
Equipment Operator	\$36,244	\$42,500	\$3,021	\$81,766
Police Officer	\$36,189	\$70,928	\$2,280	\$109,397
TOTALS:	\$1,117,736	\$1,711,364	\$129,671	\$2,958,771

Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy

The Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy is seeking donations. Situated in a courtyard garden visible to the community, the fountain will be a respite for those seeking faith, peace and hope amongst the challenges of the world.

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LOCAL



Tenants wonder where they fit in new Country Mart

MALL, from page 1

that are individually owned and unique to L.A.," said Rosenfield, who heads J.S. Rosenfield & Co., Inc., a real estate company that specializes in renovating unique retail properties. Rosenfield also owns the Aero Theatre and the Waterworks building on Montana Avenue.

Some retailers, including the pharmacy, have moved to nearby locations, many citing increased rent as the deciding factor. But many stores, including the barber shop and shoe repair, remain on the premises. So does Reddi-Chick, a barbecue chicken stand that has acquired a loyal following.

"The idea is to have a contemporary version of the past," he said, adding that increased rent at the mall is below what is being asked for in the immediate area and on Montana Avenue.

"We're working with the stores on the rent," said Dan Bercu, a partner in Rosenfield's company. "We don't treat it like a cookie-cutter thing. There's more of a human element to it than that."

Rosenfield's vision, met with applause by those who would like to see the mall return to the glory of its heyday and criticism by those who believe high-end stores will eliminate some of the home town feel, have left some store owners confused: Do they fit into the landlord's plan of what the Country Mart should be?

"(Rosenfield) has a certain image of what he wants," said Chana Firestone, manager of Mrs. Beasley's, a bakery that has called the mall home for nearly seven years. "Basically, if your lease is up and you don't fit into that image, he asks you to move out."

Mrs. Beasley's, facing a 200 percent rent increase, initially moved to a location on Montana Avenue but worked out a plan with Rosenfield that enabled them to return. The space the bakery previously occupied had already been leased by a high-end clothes retailer, so they moved into a smaller location.

"We're glad to be back because we love this area, but it's costing us a lot to move," said Firestone, who is having to take orders from a small table outside the

bakery's former location.

"The new store has patio space, and that will be good," she said. "We're just trying to turn lemons into lemonade."

Other tenants know they are going to have to leave. The American Cancer Society Discovery Shop initially had until January 2005 to vacate the space they'd occupied for the last nine years but were granted another year's lease. The Discovery Shop sells high-end, second-hand items to benefit cancer research.

"We reached an agreement," said Larry Meisner, vice president of Discovery Shops. "The landlord came back to us knowing we had a desire to stay but lacked the ability to find a new place."

Meisner said the rent agreed upon is "somewhere in the middle" of what was initially asked for and what the organization could afford. Rosenfield had initially talked about raising the rent from \$3.10 to \$8 per square foot.

"The rent (originally asked for) was above and beyond what we could pay and still give money to the (American Cancer Society)," he said.

Rosenfield denies ever having asked a tenant to move out.

"I can't blanketly say, though, that we're keeping all the tenants," he said. "It depends on the tenants. (For example), we might have to change out a children's clothing store that isn't doing enough business with one that is. We want the stores that are able to pay the market rent because they are able to do the business and pay the rent. But say we lose a toy store — if at all possible, we want to bring back a toy store."

The aging retail center, built in 1948 with a stylistic nod to the Farmer's Market in Los Angeles' Fairfax district, features two courtyards, renowned eateries and such services as a barber shop, shoe repair and post office.

In its heyday, the 30,000-square-foot mall located at San Vicente Boulevard and 26th Street drew large crowds and top-notch celebrities, but now struggles to draw patrons. In addition to drawing a limited clientele, developers say the mall is more than 30 percent empty, having lost its food market and pharmacy, among

other businesses.

Rosenfield initially said it cost more than \$1 million to renovate the property and make it attractive to high-end tenants he wants to sign while still preserving the ambiance. The neighborhood does have an appeal to merchants — the average annual household income within a one-mile radius is more than \$260,000.

New tenants have recently opened their doors, including Apartment Number 9, a men's clothing boutique from Chicago, and Jigsaw and Jigsaw, Jr., a family owned and operated company from London that specializes in women and children's clothing.

Rosenfield would not name the stores slated to move into the Country Mart before the start of next year, but sources at the mall say they include a sunglasses out-

let, a children's clothing retailer, a toy store and a New York-based shop specializing in pastries and gourmet food by the pound. Despite concerns, Rosenfield said there are no plans to draw designer outlets like Prada and Gucci.

"People in the community can distinguish quality on their own and are going to shop somewhere because it's a good, high-quality place," he said. "It's not so much about the name."

Steve McAdoo, a Santa Monica resident who comes to the mall weekly for breakfast or lunch, said he'd like to see more people take advantage of the mall.

"The place is empty," he said, gesturing to a nearly empty food court. "There are some nice shops and good food here. As long as it doesn't become pretentious, I'll keep coming."

'Vikes' Inn' gets upgrade

ECHO, from page 1

Marshall school has donated 37 computers, 18 laser printers, four monitors and two VCRs, all refurbished, to four local organizations: The Story Project, a Culver City based after-school program for at-risk youth aged 12-15 years; Pomelo Drive Elementary School, a Los Angeles Unified School District Elementary School; the Evangelical Free Church of Walnut; and Project ECHO.

Project ECHO's goal is to provide innovative and effective classroom-based opportunities for diverse groups of high school students to learn about the free market economy. At Samohi, students run "Vikes' Inn and Cafe" snack bar and student store. The previous computer students used at the student store was still running Windows 95.

Proceeds generated through the student run businesses are distributed to the students in the form of scholarships.

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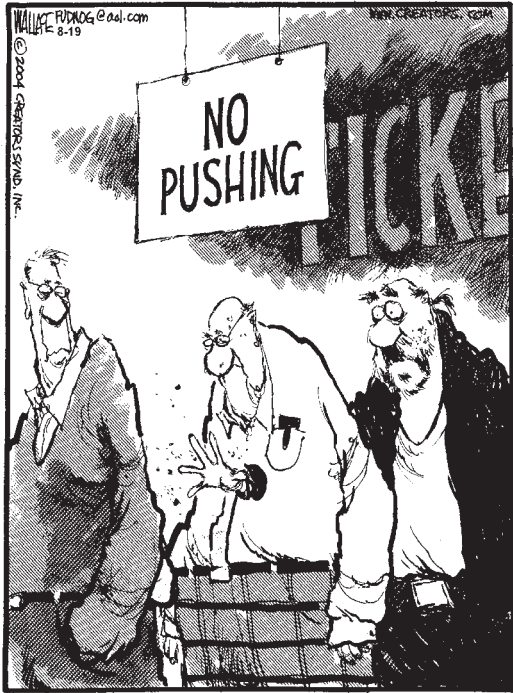
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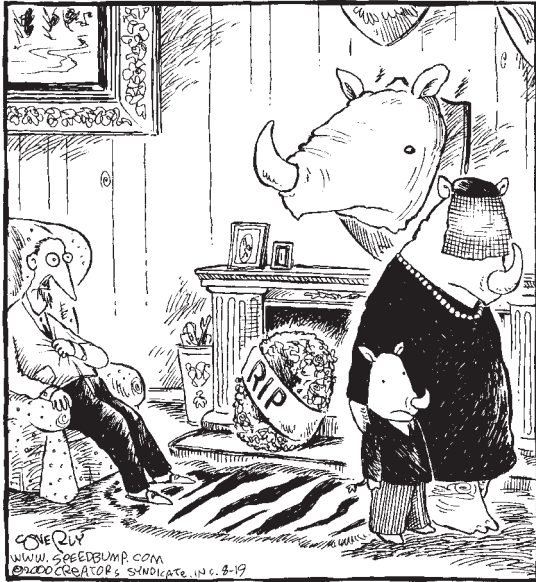
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Firth's 'Trauma' to open at Toronto film festival

By The Associated Press

TORONTO — "Trauma," a twisting flick starring Colin Firth, is one of several movies to open next month at the Toronto International Film Festival.

In the Marc Evans film, Firth awakens from a coma after a car crash to learn his wife was killed. Or was she?

Other films to make their world or North American premieres at the Sept. 9-18 festival include German director Hendrik Holzman's "Off Beat," about a melancholy young man who meets the woman who has been appearing in his dreams.

From the United States comes Michael Skolnick's "On the Outs," about a trio of Latino teens from New Jersey whose lives intersect in juvenile detention.

Pete Travis' British-Irish production "Omagh" examines the 1998 IRA bombing of the small Irish town.

Michael Winterbottom of Britain brings his "9 Songs," which alternates between live music performances and a London couple's explicit sexcapades.

In an exploration of digital filmmaking, the festival will screen Lynn Marie Kirby's "St. Ignatius Church Exposure: Lenten Light Conversions," an experiment in which 16mm film is manipulated through a film-to-digital transfer machine.

Organizers hope to schedule more than 300 films from 50 countries on 21 screens during the two-week event.

NEW YORK — Fans of "Finding Nemo" will be able to find the little clownfish this winter _ on ice.

The Disney/Pixar film about a fish's oceanic adventure is getting the Disney on Ice treatment with elaborate costumes and choreographed routines inspired by the popular animated film.

"Finding Nemo" begins its 13-city tour in Lakeland, Fla., on Sept. 3. Other stops include Nashville, Tenn.; Richmond, Va.; Atlanta; and East Rutherford, N.J. The

final stop is scheduled Dec. 8-12 in Raleigh, N.C.

"This is completely unlike any other show," costumer designer Scott Lane told The Associated Press Tuesday.

Lane, who also designed costumes for 2003's "Monsters Inc." live-action production, turned the film's underwater computer-generated characters into an above water 145-piece costume extravaganza featuring fish, sharks, jellyfish, pelicans and turtles.

Creating the sea creature costumes proved to be a fishy endeavor for Lane.

"Fish are more horizontal," said Lane. "People stand up. Fish don't have a ground, they live on many levels."

For several of the costumes, which take nearly a year to create, Lane incorporated the legs of the performers so "the fish is as much of the performer as the performer is as much of the fish."

MEXICO CITY — Tom Cruise says he respects the right of entertainers to participate in political campaigning, but his vote in the upcoming presidential election will remain private.

During a news conference in Mexico's capital Monday to promote the local release of "Collateral," Cruise was asked his preference when it comes to President Bush and Democratic nominee John Kerry.

"Politics is something that is very personal to me," Cruise said. "I am not going to comment publicly (about) who I'm going to vote for. ... I don't want what I say to become a political football."

But when asked how he feels about other performers lobbying for their favorite candidate, Cruise signaled his approval.

"It's their right to do that and I respect that," said Cruise, appearing next to posters of the gray and grizzled hit man he plays in "Collateral."

"But I do believe and I encourage people to go out and study the issues, get beyond the propaganda," he

said.

Duke, already a Broadway star at 14, won a best supporting actress Oscar at 16 for portraying Helen Keller in "The Miracle Worker." In 1980, she won an Emmy for her portrayal of Keller's teacher, Annie Sullivan, in the TV movie.

She played identical teenage cousins Patty and Cathy Lane on the '60s comedy "The Patty Duke Show," which began each week with a theme song describing the two and noting, "Our Patty loves to rock and roll, a hot dog makes her lose control."

Duke, 57, also won Emmys for "My Sweet Charlie" and "Captains and the Kings."

"Her place alongside Hollywood's legends was cemented long before the actual ground was broken," Mackenzie Astin said.

Duke, who lives with her husband, Mike Pearce, in Idaho, said she was recently strolling the Walk of Fame with her 7-year-old grandson when she told him she had heard a rumor she might be getting her own star.

"He said, 'Oh Nana, people will remember you!'"

COVENTRY, Vt. — Fans who were turned away by police because of muddy conditions inside the site of last weekend's Phish farewell festival will be offered a refund.

Dave Werlin, president of concert promoter Great Northeast Productions, said it troubled him that people who obeyed police missed the concert, only to learn that many other fans reached the site by parking and walking.

Police decided to turn away fans after organizers considered canceling or postponing the show, and determined that cutting off cars would be a better choice, Werlin said this week.

Some 65,000 fans attended. Werlin said he doesn't know how many people were there; a count of scannable ticket stubs will eventually give a better number.

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