



DISPATCH FROM DENVER
SEE PAGE 3

Santa Monica Daily Press

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE GREEN MEANS GO ISSUE



Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

MOVING THINGS ALONG: The long-awaited effort to modernize the city's traffic lights, estimated to cost \$21 million, is designed to synchronize all of the city's lights, allowing control over the entire system from a traffic management center. The plan aims to reduce delays for commuters.

A cure for what ails you

City Hall installing integrated traffic signal system to improve traffic flow

BY MELODY HANATANI

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN City Hall is hoping to minimize the "stop" in stop-and-go traffic.

While it might seem an impossible task given the notorious level of congestion on the Westside, city officials believe that a new integrated traffic signal system will go a long ways toward improving the flow of traffic on city streets.

The second phase of a five-year program to install the new network, which would interconnect all 160 signals city-wide to a centralized location, is nearing completion. The long-awaited effort, estimated to cost \$21 million, is designed to

synchronize all of the city's stop lights, allowing control over the entire system from a traffic management center.

"It synchronizes movement so that the traffic flows more smoothly," Eileen Fogarty, the director of planning and community development, said. "It basically works better and works more quickly."

Part two of the project includes upgrading 47 signals in Downtown. Estimated to cost \$3.5 million, all components of the phase will be up and running this winter. The first phase, which was completed in 2006, covered a stretch of Fourth Street from California Avenue to Olympic Drive.

The third phase, which will begin in

early 2009, will cover the major transit boulevards — Wilshire, Santa Monica, Pico and Lincoln — and include new technology that would reduce delays on the Big Blue Bus and Metro Rapid lines. The new system will also provide real-time information tracking bus locations.

The bus portion of the project will be paid through \$4.7 million in grant funding provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

"It will make sure that transit can move if we have buses," Fogarty said.

The new network will heighten communication between the signals and allow

SEE TRAFFIC PAGE 11

A third strike for robbery suspect?

BY MELODY HANATANI

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN, L.A. A Los Angeles man with two strikes on his criminal record was charged on Tuesday in connection with three robberies in Santa Monica and the Westside this summer.

Jeffrey Wayne Langford, 53, is believed responsible for a string of home invasion robberies that victimized elderly residents who lived by themselves, usually committing the crimes in the middle of the night while wearing a ski mask and gloves.

He was charged with 10 felony counts of residential burglary and robbery, receiving stolen property and false imprisonment by violence and assault. The so-called "Silverware Bandit," dubbed this because he allegedly asked victims for their china and silverware, was also charged with one misdemeanor count of cutting a phone line, stemming from a robbery in Sunset Park on Aug. 8.

The case was filed as a "third strike" offense, meaning that if Langford is convicted, he could face life in prison.

Authorities believe that Langford, who has an extensive criminal background, has committed 15 robberies on the Westside since May 27. The charges cover three of those break-ins, one of which took place on the 1200 block of Ashland Avenue. The Santa Monica Police Department has collaborated with the Los Angeles Police Department on the investigation since the most recent incident in early August.

LAPD detectives arrested Langford Friday at 3:30 a.m. after observing him apparently studying several locations within the target West L.A. area. A suspicious individual was also reportedly sighted in the Sunset Park neighborhood earlier that evening. Detectives recovered pieces of evidence at the arrest scene that linked Langford to the

SEE ARREST PAGE 13



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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS

Maximum Security

1211 Fourth St., 7:30 p.m.

A prison of the mind? A prison of the soul? A joyously turbulent, all-female rock musical expresses just that. Maximum Security tells the story of a woman struggling for identity and reaching for the light in the straight-jacketed prison of indifferent social contract and authority. General admission is \$20. For more information, contact Sandra Zeitew at (310) 394-9779 ext. 651.

A time to heal

1844 Lincoln Blvd., 5:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Master Choa Kok Sui offers free sessions on Pranic Healing, an effective, no-touch, painless healing art that helps the body repair itself. No appointment is required. For more information contact Isabel Lacayo at the Kathmandu Boutique at (310) 396-4036, or at isalacayo@yahoo.com.

Get lost in thought

1008 11th St., Noon — 1 p.m.

Stressed out at work? Then take an hour to revitalize by walking and meditating at the First United Methodist Church's new permanent labyrinth in Simkins Hall. The labyrinth is open every Wednesday until Sept. 10, 2008. For more information contact Mary Garbesi at (310) 393-8258, ext. 106 or via e-mail at mary.garbesi@santamonicaumc.org.

Kicking it with Kiwanis

1332 Sixth St., Noon — 1:30 p.m.

Join members of the Santa Monica Kiwanis Club for their weekly luncheon where quests connect and hear from a rotating panel of speakers. The club has been serving the needs of the community and its children since 1922. For more information, call (310) 613-1249.

Thursday, Aug. 28, 2008

What's New This Week

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

Join us for a free-wheeling review and discussion of the week's key news stories, at home and abroad -- politics, the economy, society, and culture. Discussion moderator, Jack Nordhaus, is a former college history professor. For more information regarding this event at the Fairview Branch Library, call (310) 450-0443.

Calling all gymnasts

5433 Beethoven St., Multiple times

Broadway Gymnastics School offers youth, kinder, special education and competitive team camps every weekday through Aug. 29. Sign-ups are available for the day, week or entire summer. The spectacular gymnastics and sports camp incorporates exercise and education into a fun-filled day program. Gymnastics paired with other sports as well as art, drama, fieldtrips, and swimming ensure children will get the most out of each day. Camp is filled with an exciting array of activities to captivate all ages. Before and after care is available and can be arranged at registration. Visit www.broadwaygym.com/summercamps2008.php or call (310) 450-0012 for more information.

Workouts for teens

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

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

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





POWER PLAYERS

Jay Hirsch (right), of New Energy Construction, talks with Roger Jalo (left) about the fundamentals of solar power at the Solar Awareness Event at the Santa Monica Pier Tuesday morning. The event, hosted by the California Energy Commission, brought several companies together.

Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

Experiencing the American dream

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SAMOH — When Nafiesa Imlani first stepped onto the campus here, it was like walking into a whole new world.

Coming from a small 600 student-body school in the Philippines, Santa Monica High School looked like it was in a league of its own.

“They don’t have school uniforms,” the 16-year-old high school student said.

Such was the culture shock the teenager from Mindanao experienced upon arriving in Santa Monica last year as part of a year-long foreign exchange program with AFS,

which places young adults with host families from across the country.

Imlani stayed with Samohi student Ariel Bandasch and her mother, Cheryl Downey, who is the executive director of the Costume Designers Guild IATSE Local 892. She is one of a handful of international students who come to the city every year through various foreign exchange programs to study the American way of life, attending the local school, learning the language and appreciating the culture.

AFS — which stands for American Field Service — sends approximately 2,600 students to more than 44 countries each year. Last year, approximately 20 international

students came to the Los Angeles area, one region of the country the company is trying to expand upon.

The tuition for the program ranges from \$5,900 to \$11,000, depending on whether the student is interested in a summer, semester or year-long stay, covering essentials such as the airfare, transportation to and from the host family, and health insurance. The cost of room and board is provided by the host family.

The experience is often described as eye-opening by many participants who gain a new perspective on foreign cultures. The

SEE STUDENTS PAGE 12

Expecting big things at Democratic convention

BY ADRIANA WONG
Special to the Daily Press

DNC In downtown Denver, blurs of red, white, and blue can be seen in every direction. Street vendors and shops display Barack Obama merchandise all over the streets while “Words of Democracy” illuminate the sidewalks at night. A refreshing air and atmosphere of patriotism has excited the city for the 2008 Democratic National Convention and me, especially.

I fundraised my way to Denver to attend this week’s convention events with a student group. My involvement in politics has become an inherent interest to me. As a Santa Monica High School junior, raised within a considerably liberal community, it is thrilling to be at an event where the most active members of the Democratic Party congregate. Being able to walk down the street and see some of America’s greatest leaders such as former President Jimmy Carter, and Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry has opened my eyes and shown me that politics can be accessible and that democracy is not just a spectator sport.

Citizens of all walks of life and backgrounds have gotten involved in the Democratic Party’s efforts to win the election. I have met delegates, congressmen, and senators, of all ages who are ecstatic for this week’s upcoming events and are also incredibly fervent in their support of Sen.’s Barack Obama and Joe Biden in their race for the presidency.

During an interview at a California state delegation breakfast in Denver’s Sheraton hotel, Los Angeles’ Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa shared some enthusiasm with me about Obama’s campaign.

“Americans are looking for a change, Angelenos are looking for a change. We want to get out of the war quickly and as safely as possible, and we want to address this economic crisis that is soaking the life and blood of American’s economy and impacting working families around the country. We’re looking for universal health care for the 47 million uninsured and the more than one-and-a-half million uninsured

SEE DNC PAGE 13



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Our community deserves better Editor:

A recent issue of your paper contained a report on the late support that Jose Escarce received from the Santa Monicans for Renter's Rights (SMRR) Steering Committee. It is important that readers understand that this support from the Steering Committee came after membership failed on three separate votes to support Escarce's endorsement.

In your article you quote Patricia Hoffman, a member of the Steering Committee saying "One of the things that I have rarely seen in an elected official is that he (Jose Escarce) realized that one of the positions he held for while was actually wrong, and he publicly apologized"

When did Escarce actually change his position on Special Education? And do we have confidence that he believes he was wrong, and will behave differently in the future? He has said, as an apology "if" anyone was hurt by his previous decisions, but only when humiliated into doing so by the City Council and the Barber Report, and then pushed the idea of "not dwelling in the past" and "not placing blame" almost as soon as the report was presented. He now says he wants to be "an even better" school board member than he has been.

But, significantly, he has not reached out to the district's board-appointed Special Education District Advisory Committee (SECDAC) or the general Special Education community to give them confidence that his damaging positions and actions of the last four years have changed.

Ms. Hoffman, and the Steering Committee should do their homework, and see whether candidates, particularly those not supported by the membership, are actually doing what they say before overruling the general membership. Overruling a democratic process continues the experience of marginalization that is the very reason the special education community sought the help of the City Council when the SMMUSD Board of Education, with leadership from Jose Escarce, failed to protect the rights of our most needy students.

Hoffman's comments reinforce the belief in the Special Education community that our concerns continue to fall on deaf ears. Escarce long supported a closed door, failed policy of coercion and intimidation implemented by the district's administrator, Tim Walker, that skirted federal law and has put increased city funding for our schools at risk.

Holding Escarce accountable for those actions is reasonable, and the community should understand these actions as they make choices in this fall's election. Unfortunately that ability to choose was significantly diminished with last weeks' withdrawal of Judith Meister, leaving only newcomer Chris Bley as an alternative to the four remaining candidates supported by SMRR.

I would hope that the leadership of SMRR, collectively and as individuals, would take the time to learn in depth the issues before speaking or taking positions that marginalize the rights of our community members, or support positions posited by candidates that are not supported by the record or action of those same candidates.

Our community deserves better.

Craig Hamilton
Santa Monica



Going Postal

Steve "the Mailman" Breen

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Foreign policy follies

IT HAS BEEN A FASCINATINGLY FUNNY

affair for me to watch Barack Obama's once implacable interest in the Iraqi War to fade into a mere side show distraction at his new renovated BarryWorld theme park. After his recent overseas party junket to inflate the tires of his foreign policy Moped, Obama crashed his anti-war scooter into the didactical ditch since Gallup-ing headlong into some rather painful polls upon his return from Barack-a-Palooza.

Wear a helmet next time, dude.

All of us clingy, bitter voters who treasure our guns and commune with archaic sky gods have determined that the erstwhile "anti-war candidate" now finds himself without much of a war to whimper about. As he has routinely done with problematic people, places and possessions that no longer buttress his ascension into Messiahness, the foremost theme of his candidacy has been predictably pitched beneath the crowded under-carriage of a large Humvee.

Imagine Obama's chagrin, after his bloviated op-ed piece in the NY Times touting his amended posture on ending the Surge, upon the discovery that Lame Duck Dubya had announced that the last of the brigades that inaugurated the Surge were already headed back to the U.S. the day before Obama's piece published. Earth to "Big O"...the Surge is over.

Well, so much for that 3 a.m. moment!

How'd that bogey slip in under Obama's radar? Somebody from his staff should've sent him a text message.

And what of Obama's subsequently amoral equivocations that the Surge has actually worked? While maintaining that it was still the "wrong thing to do" in a messy state of affairs bespeaks of a man clearly lacking not only tempo and authority on the matter but also dispossessed of a reasonably cogent clue concerning endeavors "above his pay grade." Sometimes the remedy for broken eggs is to make an omelet.

At the beginning of the surge, Frequent Flyer mileage club member Condi Rice rolled over to Baghdad to eyeball the situation. She gamely showed up wearing a Nancy Reagan-esque scarlet power suit that screamed, "Shoot me! I dare you!" much to the horror of her hosts concerned with enemy sniper/RPG fire. After being accessorized with body armor in fetching digital camouflage and a Kevlar helmet squished down on her Betty Boop hairdo, she was further delimited by a phalanx of Army Rangers and expeditiously ushered to Petraeus' HQ. She didn't really need the helmet. She has enough VO5 hairspray in her hair that could

probably stop a pick up truck.

You gotta hand it to Condi, though, the gal's got brass.

Obama, conversely, showed up for a one day "grip and grin" after 931 days MIA. With the heavy lifting already done due to the efforts of folks like my son, Obama proceeded to safely trounce a female Army specialist in a game of HORSE after a quiet breakfast while casually attired in a Polo shirt, Benetton khakis and Cole Haan loafers. He says that "...[he] may be skinny, but [he's] tough..."

Smells like Hillary Clinton in Bosnia all over again.

After his quasi-Homeric homecoming aboard O Farce One, limping from an aggravated basketball injury, he jetted off to Hawaii for some fun and sun. While on holiday, in order to fortify the indigence of his foreign policy bona fides, Obama then launched his own Surge by picking ol' blue haired Joe Biden, as his CO-president. When you look up "Washington insider" in the dictionary, up pops Joe's picture. Political triage seems to be the order of the day over at Camp Obama. Is it an inconvenient truth that many of Obama's campers hadn't even been born when Biden was sworn in at his first term of office?

Why vote for a ticket with a grouchy old white guy in the number two slot when you can vote for the grouchy old white guy at the head of the ticket? Among Democrats, only Teddy Kennedy has a lower number on his AARP card than Joe Biden.

I seem to recall, however, Democratopian catcalls in 2000 about Dubya's lack of relevant foreign policy rudiments and his pick of Satan, a.k.a. Dick Cheney, as his running mate. Cheney actually picked himself but then Satan can do that.

If Dick Cheney were Dubya's Svengali then Joe Biden would reasonably follow as Obama's Rasputin. Folks, is it another inconvenient truth that Biden has been marinating in public office longer than Obama and McCain combined? Biden has been around since John Travolta pranced about in a white polyester disco suit. Joe Biden has outlived half of the Bee Gees, fer cryin' out loud!

That's "change" you can hardly believe in unless you're changing into adult sized Pampers. But we shouldn't hold his age against him now, should we?

STEVE BREEN is five years away from getting his own AARP card and is still "the best looking mailman at the U.S. Post Office." He can be reached at dulcamarax@yahoo.com

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Word in Edgewise

Kenny Mack

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Living off one teat or another

BEFORE WE REACHED OUR SOPHOMORE year of high school, my best friend's parents had built themselves a new showpiece home, bought a ski house in New Hampshire, and a beach house on Nantucket. It wasn't uncommon for a family in Weston, Mass. to own a second or third home and whenever someone's parents were in the market, it was definitely a topic of conversation in the cafeteria at Weston High. That's why it blows my mind that John McCain thinks I'll believe him when he says he doesn't know how many homes he and his wife own. He must really think I'm stupid.

The question was put to him last Wednesday and it wasn't complicated or even nuanced. A reporter wanted to know how many houses the McCain's have. The senator's response was priceless. "I think ... I'll have my staff get back to you. It's condominiums ... I'll have them get to you." I hadn't heard a more ridiculously convoluted statement compressed into so few words since Hillary Clinton's "I did not say it should be done, but I certainly recognize why (he) is trying to do it" gaffe on driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. Any McCain supporter who likes him because of the whole "Maverick" thing has got to be seriously reconsidering voting for this guy because the wheels have come off the Straight Talk Express.

His mumbling, stuttering answer to what may be the simplest question anyone will ever ask him also undercuts the argument about his experience. The most skilled American politician of the last half-century is speaking this week in Denver and he would have handled the question much differently. I'm not talking about Barack Obama or even Bill Clinton, I'm talking about Ted Kennedy. He would have mentioned the compound in Hyannis Port, the one in Florida, their place in Washington, and whatever else they own, but he would have done it right away. That's what a truly experienced politician does with an uncomfortable question, answers it directly the first time and never again.

Contrast that to how McCain handled it. First, he bungled the answer to the question. Then his response didn't come in a statement from his staff, but in an interview his brother gave to a local cable news network in Washington, D.C. Joe McCain claimed that it's the women who run the finances in a McCain household saying, "the person who took care of all the business was my mother."

My father had no idea about the family

business, what oil leases he owned in Oklahoma." Note to Joe McCain: When your brother lies to a reporter to hide the fact that he and his wife are so wealthy that their grandchildren's grandchildren won't have to work and you make a statement referring to your family's oil leases, you're not helping.

John McCain almost got it right when he talked to Katie Couric over the weekend. She asked how it could be possible for him not to be able to recall how many houses he owns and his response was, "first of all, let me say that I am grateful for the fact that I have a wonderful life." Then he spewed some crap about how his wife's late father worked hard and made a bunch of money after the obligatory reference to the time McCain spent in Vietnam "without a kitchen table."

Then he mentions how grateful he is one more time. He's grateful Cindy didn't care that he was almost 20 years her senior, and married to another woman, when they started seeing each other and eventually tied the knot with him despite the fact that he's an adulterer?

I guess if I was John McCain and I had married a trust fund baby with daddy issues who was still in diapers when I graduated from high school, I'd be grateful, too.

When asked how much money a person would have to earn to be considered rich, McCain said, "I think if you're just talking about income, how about \$5 million?" In John McCain's America, if you make \$2 million you're middle class, if you make \$250,000 you're poor, and if you make \$50,000 you're screwed.

He can't relate to the average person because he's never lived in the same world as the average person.

The government provided all of his food, clothing, shelter, and medical care when he was growing up. Then he went into the Naval Academy, served in the Navy, and became a member of Congress.

So everything he's ever needed has been provided by the taxpayers. Basically, the man went from living off the government teat to living off of Cindy's.

It's no wonder he's out of touch with the 99.5 percent of us who will make less than \$5 million this year.

KENNY MACK is a writer, comedian, and social commentator living in Santa Monica who refuses to give John McCain a pass because he was a POW 40 years ago. He can be reached at kennymack@gmail.com

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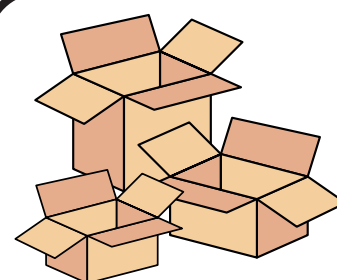
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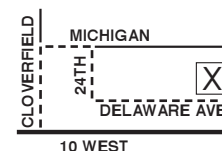
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The Q-Line

Keeping it local

While Santa Monica features a number of attractions that consistently draw visitors from outside the city, there are some that believe they attract trouble. A gang-related shooting last Thursday appears to have occurred just as the Twilight Dance Series concert was letting out at the pier confirming some of those fears.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Would you rather have the city become an isolated, sleepy beach town that would lack many of the superb services we covet, or continue with high-profile events and attractions that bring prosperity to the area?

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



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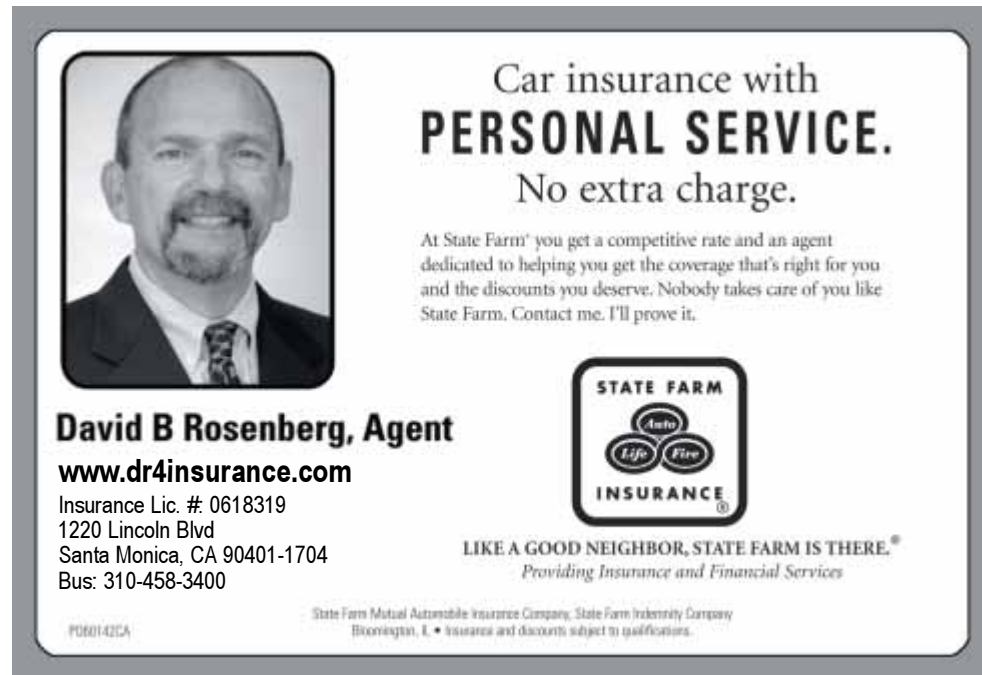


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Schwarzenegger says he'll sign rail ballot measure

BY STEVE LAWRENCE
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO Backing off his pledge to sign no bills before lawmakers adopt a state budget, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has decided to approve legislation designed to strengthen wording of the high-speed rail measure on the Nov. 4 ballot.

"The governor believes that just because the Legislature's two months overdue on its job, that shouldn't keep Californians from voting on these important measures," Schwarzenegger spokesman Aaron McLearn said Tuesday.

He said Schwarzenegger would sign the bill later Tuesday or Wednesday.

The Republican governor announced Aug. 6 that he would sign no bills sent to him before lawmakers approved an overdue budget. He had hoped the threat that their bills could end up being vetoed would force lawmakers to compromise.

But on Monday night, Schwarzenegger sent legislative leaders a letter urging them to immediately send him four bills so he could sign them in time to put them on the November ballot.

Besides the high-speed rail bill, he asked for passage of a \$9.3 billion water bond and bills to implement his plans to increase state lottery revenue and create a special reserve fund as a way to avoid future budget deficits.

The high-speed rail bill, by Assemblywoman Cathleen Galgiani, D-Tracy, is the only one of the four that's anywhere close to going to the governor's desk. Lawmakers approved it Aug. 13 but have been holding on to it and dozens of other bills because of Schwarzenegger's veto threat.

The Galgiani legislation would modify Proposition 1, which would provide \$9.9 billion to pay for a Los Angeles to San Francisco route — the first leg of the pro-

posed high-speed rail line.

Among other things, the bill would establish a panel of experts on high-speed rail systems in Europe and Asia to evaluate the state's construction plans.

Other key provisions would limit how much of the bond money could be spent on administration and environmental and engineering studies. It also would require the state's high-speed rail board to prepare detailed funding plans before starting construction of each segment of the line, which eventually would extend to San Diego, Sacramento and Oakland.

The 700-mile system is projected to cost \$40 billion to complete.

The revised measure would be called Proposition 1a.

Kate Folmar, a spokeswoman for Secretary of State Debra Bowen, said lawmakers could include the bill's language in a supplemental ballot pamphlet, although that step would add millions of dollars to election costs and get the information to voters "significantly later" than usual.

Folmar said Bowen had estimated earlier that a supplemental pamphlet covering two ballot measures would cost between \$4 million and \$11.7 million, depending on its size and when it was mailed. Folmar did not have a cost estimate for a pamphlet containing just one measure.

Lawmakers were supposed to approve a new budget by June 15, but the toothless constitutional deadline is frequently missed, mainly because California is one of the few states that require a two-thirds majority of lawmakers to pass a budget.

The new fiscal year started July 1, leaving the state unable to pay many of its bills, including payments to businesses that supply state prisons and hospitals, paychecks for certain state employees and some payments to schools.

STATE BRIEFS

SACRAMENTO

Parolees released without proper review

A state audit says nearly 5,000 California parolees — including hundreds of sex offenders and those convicted of violent felonies — have been released from supervision without proper review. When ex-cons are approaching the end of their parole terms, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation must file what's called a discharge report. Those reports can recommend that a violent parolee remain under supervision. If no report is filed, the parole automatically ends.

The Bureau of State Audits released a report Tuesday saying corrections officials failed to file discharge reports for about 9 percent of 56,000 parolees between January 2007 and March 2008. As a result, about 775 ex-cons who had committed violent or sexual offenses were automatically released from parole. They might have been retained on supervision had discharge reports been completed. About half the 4,981 convicts in question were deported immediately after their parole ended.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

Smoke from fire chases residents from homes

A brush fire in the hills of Agoura is generating heavy smoke that is prompting some residents close to the blaze to leave their homes. The smoke is also slowing down traffic on the 101 Freeway. Los Angeles Fire Inspector Frank Garrido says the fire started shortly after noon Tuesday and has burned at least 40 acres of state park land near a subdivision. The smoke prompted fire officials to issue a voluntary evacuation and the California Highway Patrol to shut all but one southbound lane on the freeway. Firefighters aided by six water-dropping helicopters are battling the fire, which is 60 percent contained.

AP

PASADENA

Mars rover heading out of huge crater

The plucky Mars rover Opportunity is driving out of a giant crater nearly a year after a dangerous descent to examine exposed bedrock.

NASA says Tuesday engineers noticed a power spike in Opportunity's front left wheel and decided to pull it out before it became stuck. Its twin, Spirit, lost function in its right front wheel in 2006 after a similar spike.

AP

Feds doubt men were credible Obama threat

BY KRISTEN WYATT
AND LARA JAKES JORDAN
Associated Press Writer

DENVER Authorities investigating a possible plot to assassinate Barack Obama at the Democratic National Convention have three men in custody — including one found with high-powered rifles, three fake IDs and two wigs in a truck — but they expressed doubts Tuesday that the suspects had posed a credible threat.

The men arrested Sunday face drug and gun counts but are not expected to be charged with making threatening statements, conspiracy or other national-security-related crimes, according to a federal law enforcement official in Denver who spoke on condition of anonymity because the charges have not yet been filed.

Obama will become the first black nominee for president by a major party at this week's convention. One of the men arrested, Nathan Johnson, told a Denver TV station that others involved in the case had made racist statements regarding Obama and had discussed killing him Thursday, the day of his acceptance speech at Invesco Field at Mile High.

"He don't belong in political office. Blacks don't belong in political office. He ought to be shot," Johnson told KCNC-TV Monday in a late-night interview from jail, where he was being held on drug charges.

When asked whether he felt there was a plot to kill Obama, Johnson said, "Looking back at it, I don't want to say yes, but I don't want to say no." He said he wasn't involved in any plot.

By Tuesday, Johnson was declining media requests for interviews. He did not speak at a bond hearing where he was given \$10,000

bond. The low bond amount, though, indicated authorities don't believe he was capable of assassinating Obama.

"We're absolutely confident there is no credible threat to the candidate, the Democratic National Convention, or the people of Colorado," U.S. Attorney Troy Eid said in a statement.

The assassination investigation was triggered after police in Aurora, a suburb east of Denver, stopped a truck that was swerving erratically around 1:30 a.m. Sunday. The driver, 28-year-old Tharin Gartrell, had a suspended driver's license, and the truck was rented in the name of another person, said Aurora police Detective Marcus Dudley.

Aurora police Lt. Bob Stef said police saw two scoped rifles, two wigs, camouflage clothing, a bulletproof vest and two walkie-talkies in the truck. A search also revealed 4.4 grams of what police believed to be methamphetamine and three IDs in other people's names, Stef said.

Johnson, 32, and Shawn Robert Adolf, 33, were arrested in area hotel rooms after interviews with Gartrell. Adolf jumped out a sixth-story window of a hotel when police arrived Sunday. He broke his ankle in the fall but tried to run before police found him a short distance away.

Three senior FBI officials said it's unclear whether shooters could have had a clear path to hit the stage from outside the convention hall. At least two of the men may have had white supremacist ties, the officials said, adding that it was unclear whether any of them were serious about carrying out threats. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the case.

FAA says communication breakdown delaying flights

BY HARRY R. WEBER
AP Business Writer

ATLANTA The Federal Aviation Administration said a communication failure Tuesday at a Georgia facility that processes flight plans for the eastern half of the U.S. was causing flight delays around the country.

An FAA web site that tracks airport status showed delays at some three dozen major airports across the country. The site advised passengers to "check your departure airport to see if your flight may be affected."

FAA spokeswoman Kathleen Bergen in Atlanta said there are no safety issues and officials are still able to speak to pilots on planes on the ground and in the air.

She said she did not know how many flights were being affected, and she added that officials might not have figures until Wednesday.

Bergen said the problem that occurred Tuesday afternoon involves an FAA facility in Hampton, Ga., south of Atlanta, that processes flight plans. She said there was a failure in a communication link that transmits the data to a similar facility in Salt Lake City.

As a result, the Salt Lake City facility was having to process those flight plans, causing delays in planes taking off. She said there

were no problems with planes landing.

"There will be flight delays," Bergen said. "It could be any location, because one facility is now processing flight data for everybody."

Bergen said there was an unrelated hardware problem at the Hampton facility on Aug. 21 that resulted in issues processing flight plans, but she was unsure if there were any flight delays.

A spokesman for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the world's busiest airport, did not immediately return a call seeking comment on the impact there from Tuesday's episode. Bergen said officials at the Atlanta airport were entering flight data manually to try to speed things up.

Discount carrier AirTran Airways, which has its hub at the Atlanta airport, said in a statement that because of the suburban FAA center snafu it was taking up to an hour for the FAA to get clearances to the towers for departures. Delta Air Lines Inc., which has its main hub in Atlanta, said flights were processing for takeoff, but slowly.

The communication failure was causing delays for departures and arrivals at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, according to airport spokeswoman Cheryl Stewart. However, she did not have a number on delays.

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Market Matters

Brian Hepp

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Understanding the lingo

STOCKS AND BONDS COULD PROBABLY be considered the basic building blocks of an investment portfolio, and you've most likely heard of them before. But beyond just these two basic terms there is a whole world of investment opportunities, and sometimes the financial world seems to have a language of its own. Fortunately though, there are many resources available to help you understand what it all means. To get you started, let's discuss a few of the most common terms you might hear and what they mean to you.

Asset Class: A term used for categorizing different types of investments. There are basically three asset classes: stocks, bonds and cash.

Asset Allocation: The process of selecting and blending investments from different asset categories to reduce investment risk and reach long-term investment goals. This refers to how much of your money you put into stocks, bonds and cash equivalents (such as checking accounts, money market funds and CDs). Proper allocation keeps your money spread over different types of investments, so if one particular type is struggling, the other types could still be doing well.

Diversification: The process of deciding what mix of investments to own within each asset category. After you have determined

the proper asset allocation for your investments, diversification helps you spread your investments out even further. Owning stock in companies from a wide variety of industries, for example, puts you in position to see possible benefits from moves in different sectors of the economy.

Dividend: When a company decides to share profits with investors, it usually pays a dividend to stockholders. The company's board of directors decides when these payments are made, and how much they'll be, but typically dividends are paid on a quarterly basis in the form of cash or additional stock in the company.

Commodity: As opposed to stocks and bonds, which are simply valuable pieces of paper, these can include tangible products that are traded on an authorized commodity exchange. There are many different types of commodities, including agricultural products, metals, and petroleum. Foreign currencies and financial instruments and indexes can also be considered commodities.

Hopefully now you have a little better understanding of some of the basic terms associated with investments. In addition to knowing about these options, it may be helpful to know where you can find some of these investment vehicles. Rather than just going out and searching, there are many markets and systems set up to help investors

with the process of buying and selling:

Exchange: A system for the organized trading of securities. There are several major exchanges in the United States, including the New York Stock Exchange, American Stock Exchange and Chicago Board Options Exchange.

Several regional exchanges throughout the country also trade securities.

Over-the-counter (OTC): A highly sophisticated communications network on which dealers trade securities that are not listed on any exchange. All government bonds and all other nonlisted stocks and bonds are traded on the OTC network.

Nasdaq: An electronic information network that provides brokers and dealers with current price quotations on many actively traded over-the-counter securities.

While understanding these terms should help give you a good start, there is plenty more to learn about the world of investments. Another great way to educate yourself is to speak with someone who is well versed in the language. A financial advisor can take the time to explain what everything means, and help you make decisions about how to meet your own personal needs.

BRIAN HEPP is a financial consultant for A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc. He can be reached at (310) 453-0077 or at brian.hepp@agedwards.com.

ECONOMY

Number of uninsured drops; poverty holds steady

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON The number of people without health insurance fell by more than 1 million in 2007, the first annual decline since the Bush administration took office, the Census Bureau reported Tuesday. Incomes edged up for the middle class while poverty held steady.

The numbers represent a scorecard on President Bush's stewardship of the economy at the kitchen-table level. But they only went as far as the end of last year, before the current economic downturn started gathering force. Although there were some bright spots, it was a mixed picture.

While the overall poverty rate held steady at 12.5 percent, poverty did rise among some groups. Latinos, children and the foreign-born — demographic categories that overlap considerably — experienced significant increases.

And while the number of uninsured dropped to 45.7 million, down from 47 million in 2006, it was largely because more people were covered through government programs.

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Real Estate 101

Mike Heayn

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Learning from our mistakes

HAVE YOU EVER DONE SOMETHING utterly stupid and thought to yourself "if I had taken a second to think about that decision I could have prevented the bad outcome from happening?" I remember when I was younger I cut my hand open while opening a box. At the time, I placed my hand in front of the blade, the blade slipped and you can figure out the rest. I learned to never put my hand in front of the blade again, but an ounce of prevention would have been a worth a pound of cure.

I am a large advocate of homeownership if you can afford it.

The benefits of a home, which include physical shelter, tax shelter and a place you can call your own, can outweigh the largest con — home value depreciation.

No one likes buying something and having it go on sale the next week, or worse, buying something only to find out the price was reduce a day later. The same is true for assets, especially a home. However, as long as you can afford the payments, you can deal with a lower property value.

Having the foresight to step back and realize that purchasing a home may not be the best decision is a good move to make and follows the analogy that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Unfortunately, preventing a catastrophe is usually the last thing on anyone's mind when

the party is going on.

Over the last seven years, the party went on bigger than it had ever gone on before. People bought homes on "new, creative" loans that promised the world. Residential real estate prices rose to unfathomable levels. Everyone seemed happy. That was until it was time to pay the piper. The problem was many people were not able to make their mortgage payments, which caused a domino effect that is not over. As mortgage defaults mounted, lending institutions began showing astronomical losses. People lost their homes and some banks failed.

Now home prices in many parts of the country are declining to record levels. Homeowners that can afford their homes do not have access to equity lines of credit because lending institutions are tightening their credit criteria.

Many potential first time homeowners cannot attain financing because down payment requirements have sky rocketed in areas with high home values.

The current mess that the real estate and financial markets have found themselves in could have been prevented. Sure, it is easy to look back and point out the flaws, but it is more important to see what was the cause.

One of many causes was easy financing. I was, and still am, a proponent of 100 percent financing for the right person. One hundred

percent financing enables an individual with a strong income to get into a property with no money down. However, the financing also causes speculators to buy and sell property like penny stocks.

Many people did buy homes and are currently in them because of 100 percent financing and can afford the monthly payments. The problem is with the people who cannot afford payments. Unfortunately, a few spoiled it for the bunch. As stated earlier, I believe 100 percent financing has its place amongst loan instruments, but I also believe there needs to be a checks and balances system for such products to help keep this crisis from happening again.

Looking back on the real estate, credit and capital markets, what is sad is that greed was the root cause for much of the mess. It is going to take a lot to get us out. It is true that the current problems in the real estate market would have been worth an ounce of prevention versus a ton of cure. However, I also believe the resilience of the marketplace will shine through and we will learn from the mistakes that were made during this real estate cycle.

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

LEGAL NEWS

Jury awards Mattel \$40M in Bratz lawsuit

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press Writer

RIVERSIDE A federal jury awarded Mattel Inc. \$40 million in damages on Tuesday in a federal copyright lawsuit that pitted the house of Barbie against MGA Entertainment Inc., the maker of the saucy Bratz dolls.

Damages were awarded for contract interference and copyright infringement. No punitive damages were ordered against MGA.

The same jury that decided the damages phase concluded last month that Bratz designer Carter Bryant came up with the Bratz concept while working at Mattel.

In his closing arguments, Mattel attorney John Quinn said MGA owed Mattel at least \$1 billion in Bratz profits and interest, while MGA chief executive Isaac Larian aided in the breach of contract and owed nearly \$800 million for his complicity.

MGA attorneys countered that the jury should award Mattel as little as \$30 million because the company had built the doll line's value with smart additions, branding and packaging.

MGA hailed Tuesday's decision as vindication in the long-running case.

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Image courtesy City of Santa Monica

MAPPING IT: This map details the various phases of the traffic light improvement project.

New system will synchronize all traffic signals

FROM TRAFFIC PAGE 1

central control in times of planned and unforeseen circumstances that could impact traffic, including lane closures and accidents. The timing for each traffic signal is currently manually set.

"If we have a planned construction project or special event, we can plan to move the traffic knowing we have a different condition," Ellen Gelbard, the assistant director of planning and community development, said.

The new system will allow modifications to be made from a remote location on a computer screen as opposed to manually changing the timing.

Many areas of the city, including Downtown, could see newly replaced traffic signals, though none will be added to areas that are currently without one. Some signals will only require minor modifications and will not be replaced.

Congestion has long been the bane of commuters, many griping about the snail's pace of traffic in the city, particularly in Downtown where the problem worsens during special events and the holiday season.

"The traffic is very stop and go," Lauren Berger, who works in Santa Monica, said.

Berger estimated that during the height of congestion, it can take about 20 minutes to go from the parking garage at Arizona Avenue and Fourth Street to the I-10 Freeway entrance just a few blocks south. She added that she avoids the area on the weekends because the traffic seems to worsen.

Eric Andrews, who works in Santa

IF WE HAVE A PLANNED CONSTRUCTION PROJECT OR SPECIAL EVENT, WE CAN PLAN TO MOVE THE TRAFFIC KNOWING WE HAVE A DIFFERENT CONDITION."

Ellen Gelbard
Assistant director of planning and community development

Monica, said he would like to see the traffic signalization improved for pedestrians. While he drives to work, Andrews opts to walk during the day.

He said it would be beneficial for pedestrians if they can walk several blocks without having to stop for a light.

"It can take a long time to wait for the light," Andrews said.

The project is expected to conclude in 2011. City officials have not designed the later phases as they explore ways to use technology to bring the cost down, such as going wireless.

"It will decrease the time and increase the movement of transit and cars along the major boulevards," Fogarty said.

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Samohi students lost in translation in Argentina

FROM STUDENTS PAGE 3

same goes for the family that hosts international students, according to Tracy Winters, the western regional director for AFS.

"They look at the world in a new way and are much more open to how they perceive the world," Winters said.

Participation in the program is also said to be a major boost for students with college aspirations.

AFS recruiters find host families by canvassing communities across the country, promoting the programs to both new and veteran families who have already housed a student.

For Downey, hosting Imlani was a way to give back to a program in which she had participated in high school when she stayed in Finland.

Imlani said she decided to study overseas after a classmate who joined AFS the previous year came back with rave reviews. Coming from a poor family, Imlani was able to receive a full scholarship.

She admitted the stay was difficult at first, the teen self-conscious about her English speaking skills.



**THEY LOOK AT THE WORLD IN A NEW WAY
AND ARE MUCH MORE OPEN TO HOW THEY
PERCEIVE THE WORLD."**

Tracy Winters
Western regional director, AFS

The most challenging task was embracing American culture, she said.

"It was very different from mine," she said. "There were so many new and different things but at the end of the day, I changed for the better."

Times away from school were spent with the family, attending Sunday service at church — even though Imlani is Muslim — and visiting Downey's family out-of-state.

The religious differences never became an issue as both sides accepted each other's beliefs. At the end of her stay, Imlani made a speech bidding farewell to the entire church congregation.

"She was very much part of the community," Downey said.

Imlani also connected with other international students in the area through the Venice chapter of AFS, which covers West L.A., Santa Monica and Malibu.

The group gatherings with other AFS students not only provided a support network, but presented opportunities to make friends with teenagers from other countries.

It's there that she met friends like Boom-Nattawut Wetprasit, a student from Thailand who stayed in Playa Del Rey.

Wetprasit came to the United States to learn English and experience the American dream.

While he still has a Thai accent, Wetprasit said his English has improved.

"My overall experience was phenome-

nal," he said.

Both Wetprasit and Imlani returned home at the beginning of the summer.

"I had a blast spending time with my mom Cheryl and sister Ariel and got new friends from all over the world, so it was worth it," Imlani said.

Studying abroad runs in Downey's family — her eldest son studied in Finland and her daughter is currently in Argentina for a semester program.

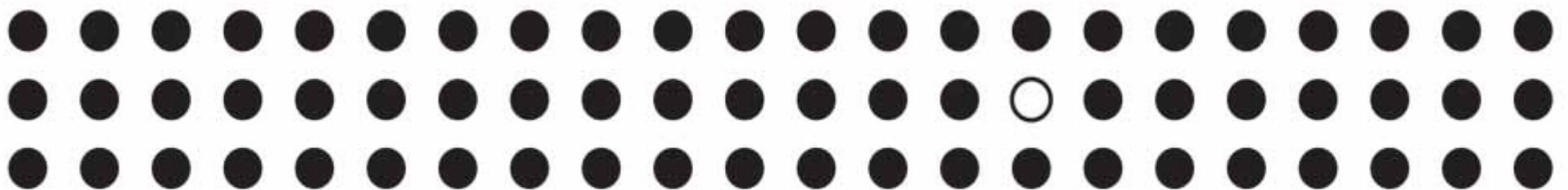
Bandasch said it was her turn to go.

She went to Argentina with a basic foundation of Spanish, knowing some verbs and a lot of nouns. The only difficulty is stringing them together, Bandasch said.

About a month into her stay, the Samohi student said she is still experiencing culture shock.

"Being far away is different from being a tourist," Bandasch said. "As a tourist, you only see the tip of the iceberg, but as an AFS'er, you get to see the whole iceberg because you live there and experience what the culture is like."

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A day in Denver

FROM DNC PAGE 3

Angelenos.

"This is an election that is important to L.A. County and to the nation and to the world," he said.

Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, also added on that in California, "if you're a senior and you care about MediCare, Barack Obama is right and John McCain is wrong" and that one should not support John McCain's platform on the War on Terror. She said firmly that 10 million children in America could be insured for a year with the funds spent on 40 days in Iraq. To both of these major political players, Obama clearly seems like the presidential candidate who can effectively lead the nation.

With our country's democratic leaders fired up by the desire for change within the government with passionate words for Obama, this week's convention speeches and

other official events are expected to be historical, Obama's speech, especially. The senator will accept the party's nomination on Thursday night and knowing him to be one of the greatest orators of our time, I anticipate this address to be groundbreaking. I was fortunate enough to be among a cheering crowd while Michelle Obama delivered her astounding speech live and will be watching her husband at Denver's Invesco Field on Thursday.

With the positive and enthusiastic way the public has already been responding to the convention so far, the Democratic Party can be sure to expect great things throughout the week.

ADRIANA WONG is a student correspondent and a junior from Santa Monica High School. The political world is one of her most intrinsic passions. She can be contacted at wongadriana@yahoo.com

Cops say robbery suspect has extensive criminal background

FROM ARREST PAGE 1

previous crimes.

The robberies have left many residents, especially senior citizens, in fear as the masked burglar continued to hit home after home on the relatively crime-neutral Westside.

All of the victims were between the ages of 70 and 97, the majority of whom lived alone. The suspect in many cases entered the home by prying the windows open with a screwdriver, waking his victims and taking cash and jewelry.

More charges could be brought forward as the investigation is ongoing, according to

Jane Robison, spokeswoman with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.

One of the robberies took place in late July on the 2300 block of 22nd Street where an 86-year-old woman living alone was awoken by a masked robber. The burglar took off with the victim's jewelry and money.

Another elderly woman was robbed in mid-August on Ashland. The victim was reportedly ordered to sit in a chair and was tied up with an electrical cord.

Langford is being held on \$1.2 million bail.

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ODDS OF A CHILD BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE:
1 in 16,000

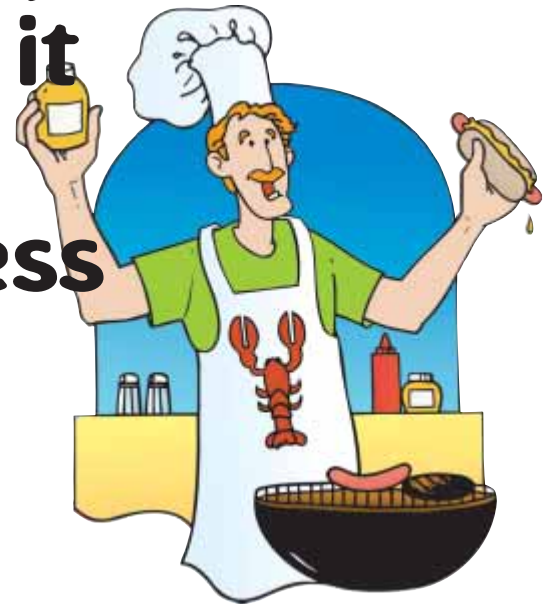
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SURF REPORT

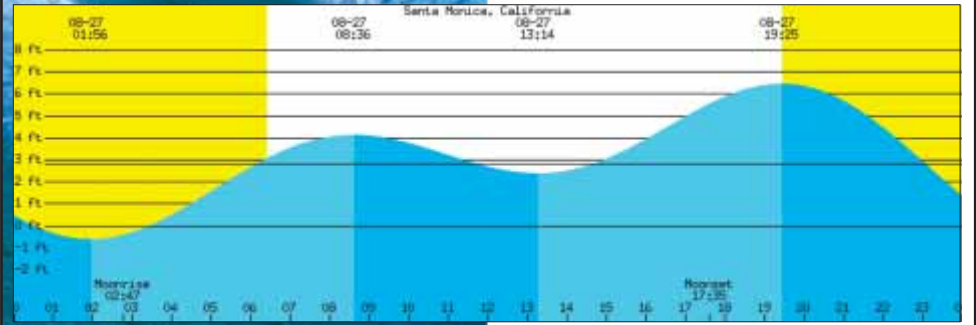


SURF CONDITIONS **WATER TEMP: 60°-68°**

SWELL FORECAST (2-4 FT)
Wednesday the 27th wind swell should increase a tad, but anything above chest high at west facing breaks would be rare. South facing breaks are looking much, much smaller (knee to waist). Winds should be light in the AM, and remain below 15 mph in the afternoon. Tide on Wednesday runs a tad high in the early morning, but really swings high to 6+ feet in the evening.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS
ON SATURDAY, SOME MODERATE SOUTHERN HEMI IS DUE ...

TIDE FORECAST FOR TODAY IN SANTA MONICA



BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous four weeks up to the ending date of **August 19, 2008**

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QUICK STATS
(for the last 28 days)

Number of sewage spills -- 0

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

Number of wet days -- 0

Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 38 / 0

Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 8 / 0

The Beach Report Card is made possible by **simplehuman**

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

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

LEGEND

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

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

ns -- no sample taken



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

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The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

MLB Baseball officials begin instant replay Thursday

BY RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK Major League Baseball reversed its long-standing opposition to instant replay and will allow umpires to check video on home run calls in series that start Thursday.

The start date comes nearly 10 months after general managers voted 25-5 to use the technology, and following MLB agreements with the unions for umpires and for players.

“I believe that the extraordinary technology that we now have merits the use of instant replay on a very limited basis,” commissioner Bud Selig said. “The system we have in place will ensure that the proper call is made on home run balls and will not cause a significant delay to the game.”

Three series are scheduled to start Thursday, with Philadelphia at the Chicago Cubs, Minnesota at Oakland and Texas at the Los Angeles Angels. For other games, replays will be available to umpires starting Friday.

For now, video will be used only on so-called “boundary calls,” such as determining whether fly balls went over the fence, whether potential home runs were fair or foul and whether there was fan interference on potential home runs.

Selig, who opposed replay in the past, said he won’t allow its use to expand to additional types of calls.

” My opposition to unlimited instant replay is still very much in play,” Selig said. “I really think that the game has prospered for well over a century now doing things the way we did it.”

Video from all broadcast feeds will be collected at the office of Major League Baseball Advanced Media in New York, where it will be monitored by a technician and either an umpire supervisor or a retired umpire. If the crew chief at a game decides replay needs to

be checked, umpires will leave the field, technicians at MLBAM will show umpires the video and the crew chief will make the call, overturning the original decision only if there is “clear and convincing evidence.”

Leaving the dugout to argue a call following a replay will result in an automatic ejection.

Selig said the use of replays may shorten games because it might eliminate some arguments.

“While the use of instant replay is an experiment, we hope that over the balance of this season it will prove to be a success,” players’ union head Donald Fehr said.

The players’ association agreed to replay for the balance of the season but retained the right, through Dec. 10, to ask for additional bargaining for future years.

If players don’t, the replay agreement will run through 2011.

Baseball had been the last holdout among the major professional sports in the United States. Replays were first used in the NFL in 1986.

In the NHL, video review has been in place since the 1991-92 season to check whether the puck crossed the goal line completely, went in before time expired or the net was dislodged, and wasn’t kicked or batted in intentionally.

In the NBA, replays have been viewed since the 2002-3 season to decide whether players got off shots before time expired and since last season to aid decisions following altercations and flagrant fouls. In grand slam tennis tournaments, a Hawk-Eye system has been used to decide close line calls since the 2006 U.S. Open.

International soccer has refused to embrace aiding referees, with FIFA’s International Football Association Board voting last March to stop all experiments with technology that could determine whether balls cross goal lines.

MLB Zell confirms Cubs bidders narrowed down

BY CANDICE CHOI
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK Tribune Co. CEO Sam Zell said Tuesday that the media conglomerate has chosen five bidders for the Chicago Cubs.

Zell said during a conference call with lenders that separate bids have been made on storied Wrigley Field, the nation’s second-oldest baseball stadium. The team’s sale must be approved by Major League Baseball.

“We hope to have a deal to MLB by the end of the year,” said Zell, the real estate mogul who led a \$8.2 billion buyout of the company last year. He said he expects “rapid” approval.

Tribune is selling the ballpark, baseball team and a 25 percent interest in a local sports channel to raise cash to pay down \$13.4 billion in debt, mostly related to the buyout.

Major League Baseball in June sent out financial books on the three properties to nine preapproved bidders.

The list reportedly included a group headed by John Canning, chairman of private equity firm Madison Dearborn Partners LLC; Internet billionaire and Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban; and the family of online

brokerage Ameritrade’s founder, Joe Ricketts.

In the conference call Tuesday, Zell assured lenders the company is on track to meet a \$593 million debt payment in June.

Tribune already repaid \$807 million in principal in the second quarter, using mostly the \$600 million it gained from selling the Long Island daily Newsday to Cablevision Systems Corp.

Zell also said the company is continuing to evaluate ways to squeeze money from its real estate holdings, including the iconic headquarters building in Chicago, Tribune Tower.

To trim costs, Tribune has made hundreds of layoffs at its papers and decreased the page count of print editions.

Zell said the company is still trying to figure out “what a newspaper of the 21st century should look like.” While redesigns should produce “more exciting and cheaper” versions of its papers, he said the company would have to readdress the matter if the revamped papers don’t get a positive response.

Fitch Ratings cut Tribune Co.’s credit rating further into “junk” status Friday — to “CCC” from “B-” — and said more reductions may come within a year if newspaper advertising revenue declines keep accelerating.

MOVIE TIMES

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For more information, e-mail news@smdp.com

Get some exercise, Aquarius

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ★★★★ Your instincts give you insight and direction. You might even surprise yourself with the end results. You have a way of drawing in many of those with whom you relate daily. Allow greater security to build in a key domestic relationship. Tonight: Happy at home.	LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★★★ Others continue to choose to look up to you. It is much easier not to carry responsibility, or so it seems. Use your instincts with a boss who could be touchy or difficult. A talk could cause tension. Tonight: Make a must appearance.
TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ★★★★★ Keep talks open and flowing, even if it means being slightly uncomfortable. Realize that another person might see a situation much differently. Brainstorming results in greater creativity and openness. Tonight: Have a long overdue chat.	SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★★ Read between the lines, and understand what is happening in an important relationship. You want to honor someone else's fragilities. Try imagining what it is like to walk in this person's footsteps. Tonight: Where there is music.
GEMINI (May 21-June 20) ★★★★ Expenses keep piling up, forcing you to pull back and rethink a decision. You might feel as if radical action is necessary, especially after talking to a partner. Family and personal concerns mount. Tonight: Honor your budget.	SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★★★★ A key partner can make a considerable difference in your plans. You will want to incorporate other ideas. A boss is observing and most likely admires your ability to integrate different aspects of a situation. Tonight: Say "yes" to an offer.
CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ Achieve what you must in order to call it a complete day. Ask questions using a gentle, interested approach. You might be too tired to deal with last-minute upsets. Go for a walk to relax. Tonight: What would make you smile?	CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ Defer to others. If you're feeling reactive, make it a point to pull back and understand exactly what triggers you. Look and demand to see the big picture. Once you understand the mechanism at work, you will relax. Tonight: Sort through invitations.
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★ If you can and would like to, take a personal day. You will discover that you will be much more effective and efficient if you do. Everyone gets tired or bored with the status quo sometimes. Realize your limits and honor them. Tonight: Nap, then decide.	AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★ Do plunge into work and get as much done as possible. Find time to relate, discuss and get feedback from a key partner or associate. A misunderstanding with a friend can be worked out. Tonight: Get some exercise.
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ Keep key goals in mind so that you do not get distracted. The unexpected occurs when dealing with others. Call a spade just that, and you will be a lot happier. You can control only you. Conversations melt barriers. Tonight: Where the action is.	PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ You have solutions and humor. You seem to be able to handle any problems that head in your direction. Loosen up with a boss who often antagonizes you. Just remember: This person is the boss, so do what is necessary. Tonight: Let your imagination choose.

Happy birthday

Keep focused on the long term, and you will gain immensely this year. You will work well with others and groups. Network and touch base with many different people, and enjoy yourself as well. You will get what you want, if you simply remain yourself. You are far more charming than you might be aware. Tension surrounding home or family will dissipate this year. If you are single, you will meet someone, most likely through friends or a group. This person just might be the one. If you are attached, you need to work as a team toward a specific goal. The process, as well as the accomplishment, will bond you even more. CANCER helps you achieve what you want.

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



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Sudoku

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

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

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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Saturday 10am-2pm

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Insurance Lic. #: 0164884
Bus: 310-696-0555
Monday-Friday 8:30am-5pm

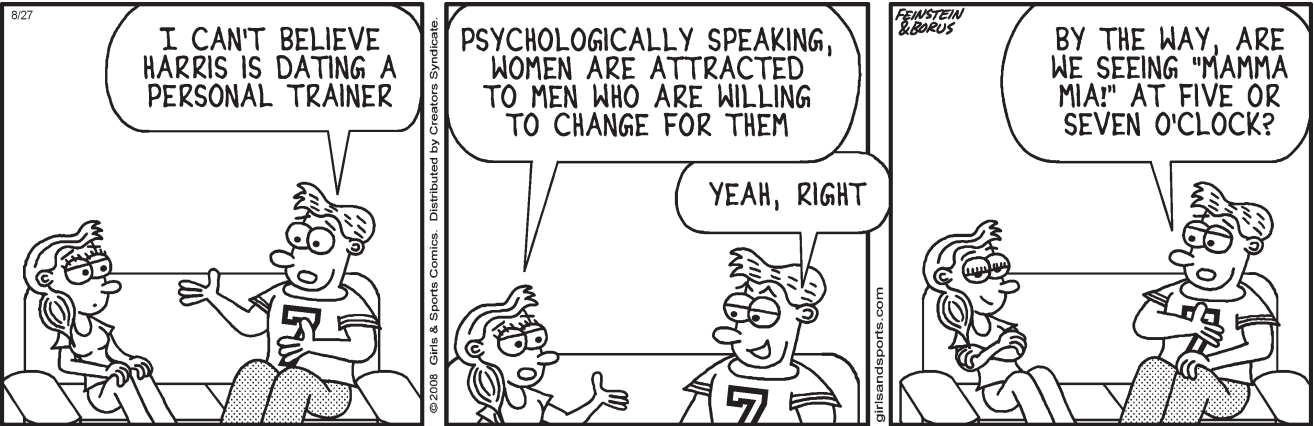
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P02827 11/06

Girls and Sports

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The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



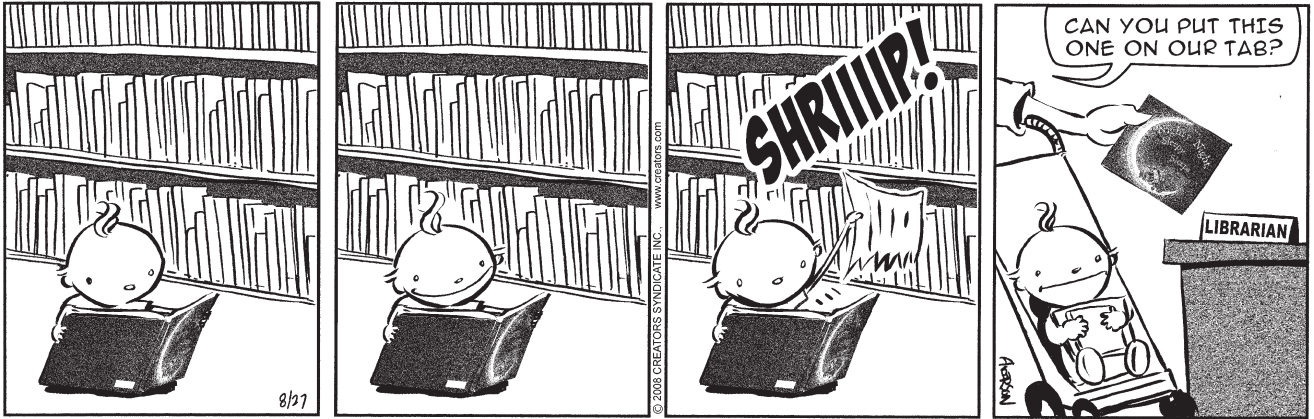
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Dog eat Doug

By Brian Anderson

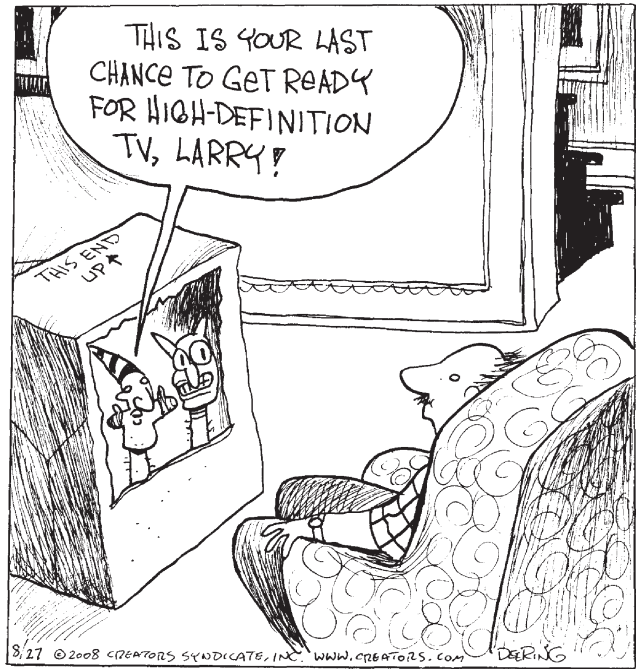


The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



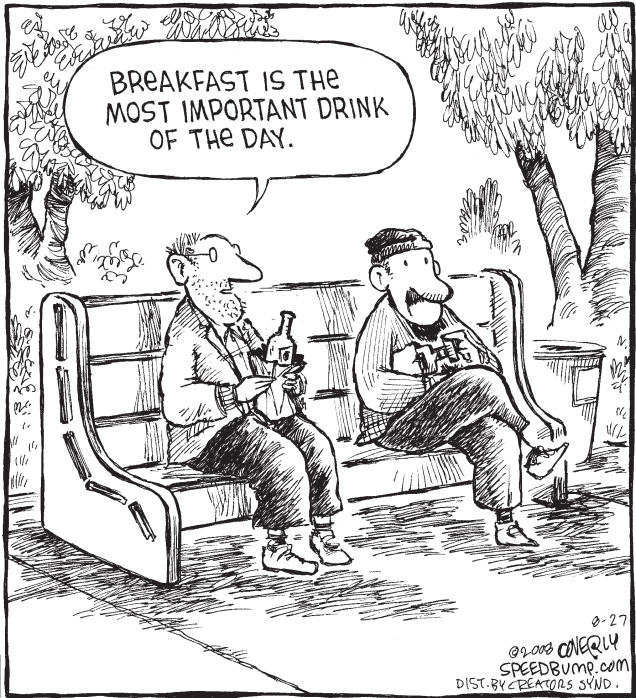
Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



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

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Safari boss
- 6 Singer McEntire
- 10 Cruise ship
- 11 Talk at length
- 12 Change
- 13 Singer John
- 14 Downhill transport
- 15 Allergy sign
- 16 Badge metal
- 17 Clinic cost
- 18 Writer Stout
- 19 Levee items
- 22 Haleakala setting
- 23 Mystique
- 26 Pocket-books
- 29 Chemist's place
- 32 "My word!"
- 33 Collection
- 34 Brunch dish
- 36 Test-software version
- 37 Squad-car sound
- 38 Airport device
- 39 Snowy bird

DOWN

- 40 Upper crust
- 41 Take wing
- 42 Penalties
- 1 Wild parties
- 2 Prince Harry's brother
- 3 Reception aid
- 4 Must have
- 5 Sched. abbr.
- 6 Reign
- 7 Computer key
- 8 Hooch
- 9 Building wing
- 11 Outlaw

C	O	R	E	D		T	I	L	T	S
A	R	O	M	A		I	D	A	H	O
C	L	O	U	E	D	O	V	E	R	
T	O	T		A	L	A		E	R	R
I	N	S	T	I	L	L		R	O	O
			A	S	S		G	N	A	W
O	P	I	U	M		S	E	E	D	S
V	E	N	T			H	E	N		
E	N	S			C	O	N	T	R	A
R	A	T			R	O	D		A	G
S	N	O	W	E	D	U	N	D	E	R
A	C	R	E	S			P	A	I	N
W	E	E	D	S			S	P	O	T

Yesterday's answer

- 15 Mermaid's home
- 17 Mulder, for one
- 20 "Isn't that obvious?"
- 21 Deli order
- 24 Made a lot of (money)
- 25 Stir up
- 27 Tennis divider
- 28 Icy looks
- 29 Finishes last
- 30 Pedro's pal
- 31 Hall of Fame catcher
- 35 Lewd look
- 36 Island east of Java
- 38 Game caller

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send \$4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 1, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

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

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLION	12 13 15 41 42 Meganumber: 37 Jackpot: \$114M
Super LOTTO	13 22 29 43 47 Meganumber: 4 Jackpot: \$13M
Fantasy 5	8 10 16 18 25
DAILY 3	MIDDAY: 2 5 5 EVENING: 2 0 2
DAILY DERBY	1st: 04 Big Ben 2nd: 05 California Classic 3rd: 10 Solid Gold RACE TIME: 1:45.21

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at [California Lottery retailers](http://www.calottery.com). Visit the California State Lottery web site at <http://www.calottery.com>

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ The U.S. government's \$100 billion stimulus distributed to taxpayers this spring achieved mixed results, according to economists, but at least the Internet pornography industry flourished (according to a July trade association spokesman). Adult Internet Market Research Co. reported that "20 to 30 percent" of "adult" Web sites reported that sales rose during the time checks were being issued. However, Nevada brothels were suffering, even though Hof's Bunny Ranch ran a stimulus-check special: Hand over your \$600 check and get the usual \$1,200 "party" ("three girls and a bottle of champagne").

■ A July Los Angeles Times investigation revealed that professional fundraisers keep so much of the money donated to charity by conscientious, generous-minded people that 430 different California charities over the last 10 years got not one penny of the contributions. In fact, in 337 cases, the charity paid an additional fee on top of getting nothing back (but did come away with the donors' names and addresses, for further solicitation). Philanthropy watchdogs say fundraisers should never keep more than 35 cents on the dollar, but the Times found the overall average was 54 cents, and for missing-children charities, fundraisers kept 86 cents.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1858 the second debate between senatorial candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas took place in Freeport, Ill.

1859 Col. Edwin L. Drake drilled the first successful oil well in the United States, near Titusville, Pa.

1883 the island volcano Krakatoa blew up; the resulting tidal waves in Indonesia's Sunda Strait claimed some 36,000 lives in Java and Sumatra.

1892 fire seriously damaged New York's original Metropolitan Opera House.

1928 the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed in Paris, outlawing war and providing for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

WORD UP!
peregrination \pehr-uh-gruh-NAY-shun\, *noun*: A traveling from place to place; a wandering.

Santa Monica Daily Press

Classifieds

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CASHIER / RETAIL SALES Seeking energetic individuals. F/T including Sat. Some experience, a plus. Bldg Materials location. Will train. Apply in person: Bourget Bros. 1636 11th St. Santa Monica, CA 90404

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We require at least three years high-end retail experience in the Malibu area and we prefer a high school diploma and key-holder and/or management experience.

Please email your resume and a cover letter to mitraf@maxfieldla.com
No phone calls, please.

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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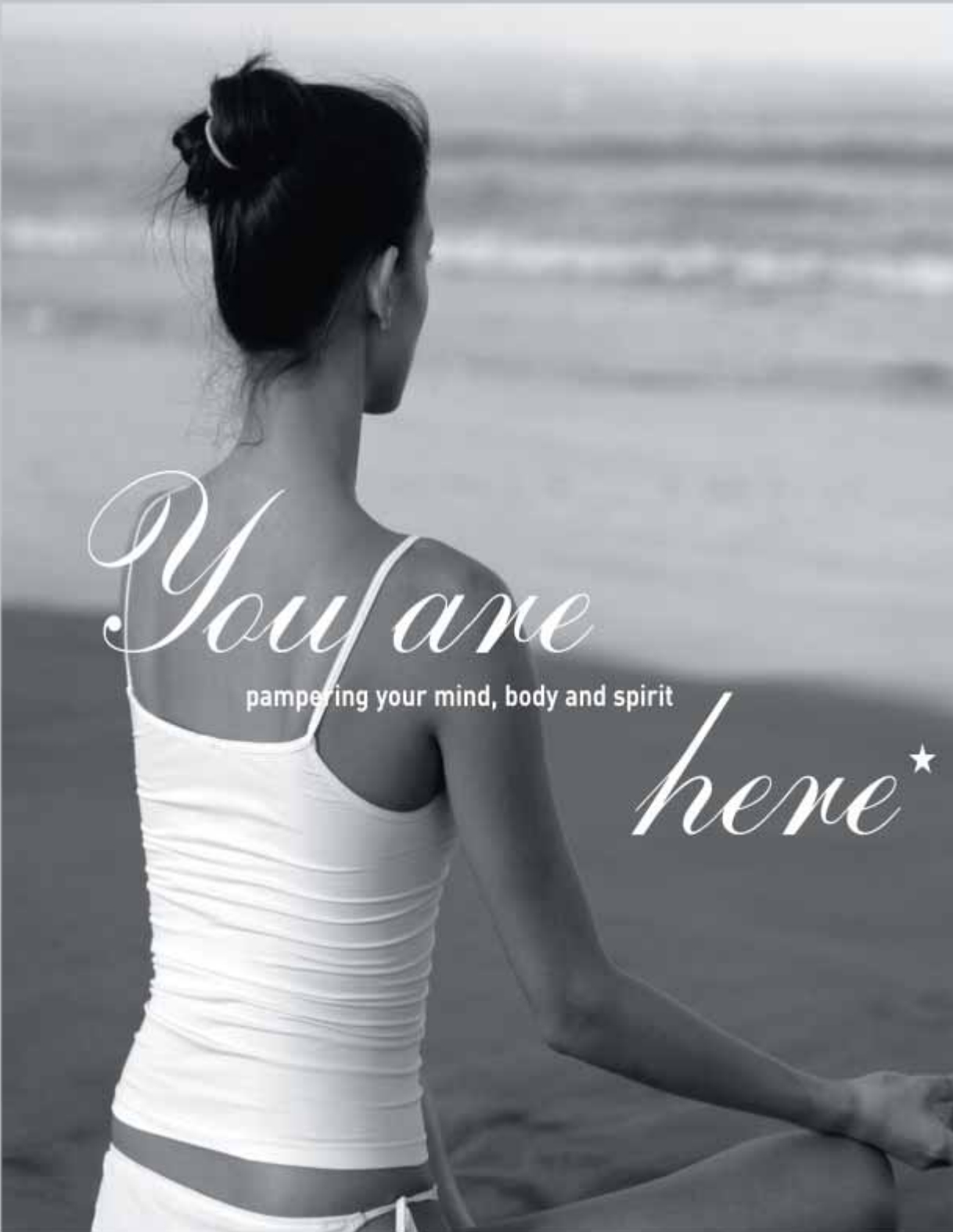
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		Single Family Homes	Condos & Townhomes
Santa Monica Canyon	=	\$ 3,139,273	\$ 5,730,000
North of Montana	=	\$ 4,029,435	\$ 1,993,833
Between Wilshire & Montana	=	\$ 3,640,875	\$ 1,013,096
South of Wilshire	=	\$ 1,075,395	\$ 713,671
Sunset Park	=	\$ 1,376,317	\$ 715,636
Ocean Park	=	\$ 1,621,583	\$ 1,206,958

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