



Santa Monica Daily Press

SATELLITE PHONE COWBOYS
SEE PAGE 9

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE WILDLIFE ISSUE

Coyote sightings keep canyon residents on edge



Photo courtesy National Park Service
MAKING APPEARANCES: Coyotes have been spotted in Santa Monica Canyon recently.

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SM CANYON A series of coyote sightings and related cat disappearances here have left residents on edge about the safety of their small pets.

The wild animal, which is often seen in residential areas around hillsides, parks and vacant lots, has been spotted in the western part of the canyon numerous times since the spring, reemerging after staying clear of the area for several years, according to George Wolfberg, the president of the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association, a neighborhood group.

Wolfberg said he has received a number of e-mails from residents who reported seeing coyotes near their homes, some even

sadly noting that their cats have since disappeared.

While coyotes mainly prey on rodents, small mammals and insects, they are opportunistic and have been known to kill cats, small dogs, poultry, sheep and goats, according to Los Angeles Animal Services. Coyotes can survive on whatever food is available, from rodents to rubbish, from insects to fruit to carrion.

Many well-meaning residents of urban hillside and rural areas have promoted an unnatural boldness in coyotes by intentionally or unintentionally feeding them. This has led to a significant spike in the number of coyotes, who have expanded their range to include residential areas, according to a report by the County Of Los Angeles Agricultural Commission.

A coyote was spotted most recently on Wednesday in Santa Monica. Margherita Donatoni was walking her dog around 9 p.m. on 14th Street near Carlyle Avenue when she saw a coyote. She immediately brought her dog back home and began frantically searching for her cat, which she lets out every night around dusk.

About two hours after spotting the coyote, Donatoni saw her cat's body on a neighbor's lawn.

"I want to start making some (warning) fliers and hand them out to neighbors," Donatoni said. "I've seen a lot of fliers for lost cats lately."

Donatoni said she hadn't seen a coyote in the area for years and was surprised to see it

SEE COYOTES PAGE 10

Back to (after) school for CREST staffers

BY CHRISTINA YOON
Special to the Daily Press

CIVIC AUDITORIUM While kids throughout Santa Monica gather fresh pencils and notebooks in anticipation for the first day of school, staff members at the Youth Office of Santa Monica are making preparations of their own.

About 80 staff members gathered at the Civic Auditorium last week for a two-day training session for the Youth Office's CREST program, picking up tips on everything from discouraging a "scoreboard mentality" to new yoga poses.

CREST, which stands for Childcare Recreation Enrichment Sports Together, provides after-school programs for students in Santa Monica's elementary and middle schools.

"Every single employee will be there," said Julie Kim, the administrative analyst for CREST and one of the training session organizers. "The vast majority of the staff are veterans of the program who have been here for the past several years."

Despite the staff members' expertise, the training still proved valuable to them as they prepared for another school year, and with that, new challenges.

"A lot of it is a refresher course, but it's always good to hear and take what you learn and make it your own," said Alex Morales, who has worked with CREST for six years.

CREST is run by a small, full-time staff as well as an extensive network of part-time workers who are called on an as-needed basis. Some staff members are students and



Christina Yoon news@smdp.com

TAKING NOTES: Abraham Badillo, a CREST staff member at Will Rogers Elementary School, attends the yearly back-to-school CREST training. CREST provides after-school activities for students.

others work for the school district. Morales works during the day as the physical education teacher at Edison Elementary School before coaching the CREST after-school sports programs.

While the group skews to those in their early- to mid-20s, there are some exceptions, such as one staff member who decided to

participate after his retirement.

At the training, the staff received a review of all of CREST's programs and heard specialized presentations on topics including working with youth with special needs and the school district's policy on child abuse.

"Because it's usually pretty compartmentalized here we like to give them an overview

of everything," Kim said.

On Thursday morning, staffers heard a presentation from Nick Davidson, who spoke about positive coaching techniques. He led the group through topics including how to discourage a "scoreboard mentality" and dealing with over-emotional parents.

"I definitely learned something new," said Jackie Aguilar, who coaches volleyball, basketball and soccer at Lincoln Middle School's CREST program. "There's always different ways of implementing ideas you might already know about."

Although many of the instructors, including Aguilar, work at CREST programs during the summer as well, she said the back-to-school training is an essential part of switching from vacation mode to the more intense atmosphere of the school year.

"It's different because during the summer the only point is for the kids to have fun," Aguilar said of the sports programs. "In the fall it becomes more competitive because they play other teams, and you also have to be sure to teach them the fundamentals of the sports."

The staffers must brush up on more than sports strategies before the first bell of the year rings. CREST also offers enrichment programs such as yoga, karate and tennis for kids in kindergarten through eighth grade as well as general after-school childcare for kids in fourth and fifth grades.

There has been some confusion in the past as there is a similar program called

SEE CREST PAGE 11

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Calendar

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS

Write away

2101 Ocean Park Blvd., 12 p.m. — 2 p.m.

Inspiration, guidance, direction, and support are offered for all writers every Tuesday at the Fairview Branch Library. For more information, call (310) 450-0443.

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.

Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008

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 guests 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.

Heal your body

1844 Lincoln Blvd., 5:30 — 7:30pm

Come for free energy Pranic Healing for asthma, arthritis, cancer, addictions, depression, and phobias with Master Choa Kok Sui at the Kathmandu Boutique. The no-touch, painless, and effective healing art helps the body to repair itself. This healing treatment is offered as a service to the community, and all are welcome with no appointments necessary. For more information, call (310) 396-4036.

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.



Water collectors work to ease recent shortages

BY MALIA WOLLAN
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Tara Hui climbed under her deck, nudged past a cluster of 55-gallon barrels and a roosting chicken, and pointed to a shiny metal gutter spout. “See that?” she said. “That’s where the rainwater comes in from the roof.”

Hui is one of a growing band of people across the country turning to collected rainwater for non-drinking uses like watering plants, flushing toilets and washing laundry.

Concern over drought and wasted resources, and stricter water conservation laws have revitalized the practice of capturing rainwater during storms and stockpiling it for use in drier times. A fixture of building design in the Roman empire and in outposts along the American frontier, rainwater harvesting is making a comeback in states including Texas, North Carolina, and California.

“We call it ‘the movement that’s taking the nation by storm,’” said Robyn Hadley, spokeswoman for the Austin, Texas-based American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association, whose membership has jumped by more than 40 percent this year.

Hui, 37, got her first 55-gallon plastic barrel for free five years ago. The barrel had been packed with maraschino cherries, so when rain first filled it the water smelled like candied fruit.

Now, she has a daisy chain of 25 linked barrels under her back deck with a combined capacity of nearly 1,250 gallons. She built the system herself, after searching the Internet for information and buying the necessary plumbing parts at a hardware store. The whole setup cost her \$200.

The average American uses 101 gallons of water a day at home and in the yard. Add in agricultural and industrial water use and that climbs to an average of 1,430 gallons per day per person.

Scientists warn that climate change will result in more severe droughts and erratic storms worldwide, and this spring was the driest in California’s 114 years of record-keeping. Extreme drought and abnormally dry conditions persist across large swaths of the country, with states in the West and Southeast hardest hit.

Even in a drought, it only takes a few hours of heavy rain to fill all 25 of Hui’s barrels.

SEE WATER PAGE 12



GETTING UP

Morgan Genser news@smdp.com

Evelyn Lopez (left) of the East Los Angeles College Huskies jumps into the air with Jennifer Hager of the Santa Monica College Corsairs during a match at Santa Monica Airport Park on Friday. SMC beat ELAC 3-0 for their first win of the season to improve their record to 1-0-1.

Morton to be honored at ACCC conference

Daily Press Staff

MID-CITY A doctor with Saint John’s Health Center who is credited with revolutionizing patient care for those diagnosed with malignant melanoma will receive the Association of Community Cancer Centers’ 2008 Clinical Research Award.



MORTON

Dr. Donald L. Morton, who founded the John Wayne Cancer Institute at Saint John’s, will be honored later this month in San Francisco for his extensive research, leadership, and commitment to individuals with melanoma, officials with the center said.

Morton is chief of the Melanoma Program and director of the Surgical Oncology Fellowship Program and the cancer institute.

Morton is an accomplished surgical oncologist and a renowned clinical scientist whose fundamental discoveries have profoundly changed the treatment of human cancer. His pioneering work with intratumoral bacille Calmette-Guerin for melanoma represented the first successful clinical application of immunotherapy against a metastatic human cancer, officials with the center said.

His innovative studies of sentinel node mapping changed the standard of care for patients with early-stage malignant melanoma and other solid cancers that drain via the lymphatic system.

He will receive the award on Thursday, Sept. 18, during the center’s 25th Oncology Economics Conference. ACCC’s Clinical Research Award is given to an individual whose research has significantly and positively impacted oncology patients, their families, and the community.

Morton has received NIH peer-reviewed research funding for 35 years; in the year

SEE MORTON PAGE 10

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Smelling something rotten

Editor:

A recent "Nova" science program on local PBS channels reported on the importance of tree leaves on the environment. Their action of absorbing poisonous gas emitted by autos, and producing oxygen, is now being studied by scientists, but so far attempts to imitate it have been unsuccessful. Instead, we are advised, "keep planting trees."

But not Ginkgo bilobas!

I have just learned that these female types bear a fruit that has a horrible odor – best described as vomit. Ugh!

Why is our City Council continually pushing actions that are destroying our city. There's something rotten in Santa Monica, and let's get rid of it.

Cecilia Rosenthal

Santa Monica

More money than common sense

Editor:

Once again our brilliant city leaders spring to the forefront. Save water, cut back on the yard watering, etc., etc., etc. And at the same time these morons are in the process of putting in center islands on Colorado Avenue with about 20 sprinkler heads in each unit. Our leaders, if you want to call them that, are setting a fine example for us all to follow.

Who is to blame? Traffic engineering, city parks department? Who knows. The city obviously has more money than common sense. It is time to elect a group of leaders that might not know how to set an example and think, damn it, think!

David Darling

Santa Monica

Questioning McCain's pick

Editor:

It looks like Senator Experience just used his good judgment to select the prettiest girl to be his running, er, mate. No more long, lonely hours on the, ahem, Straight Talk Express! The old codger still has a few tricks! Whadda [sic] guy.

Doncha [sic] just love the way Republican pundits are spinning her "executive experience!"

Clearly, the Republican candidate and his party have put political game playing way above concern for governance, and yet their slogan is "Country First." Go figure.

Bruce Joffe

Piedmont, Calif.

Playing the record backwards

Editor:

Jim Adkisson walked into the Unitarian Universalist church in Knoxville, Tenn. shooting eight people, killing two. His reason: He hates gay people and liberals. How many hours a day did Mr. Adkisson listen to hate radio and Michael Savage spew out hate on gays and liberals? There is a correlation between weak minds being pushed over the edge and listening to the constant attacks by right wing radio jocks.

In another incident a man burst into the Arkansas Democratic headquarters, killing party chairman Bill Gwatney. Did the killer, Timothy Dale Johnson, listen to Rush Limbaugh every day as he poisons the airways and atmosphere with his hate everything Democrat and Liberal?

Ron Lowe

Santa Monica



What's the Point?

David Pizarra

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Honor the worker, but respect the employer

YES, IT WAS LABOR DAY AGAIN.

Amazing how quickly it arrived this year. Last week, the next president of the United States came out swinging for the little guy, the worker.

I've always believed that your staff can make or break you. No venture can grow, and remain a one man band. It's simply not possible. One person cannot be the marketing guru, the finance chief, the human resources department, perform all the work, and still provide a vision for advancement.

I've hired a number of people from a distinct ethnic background. I've had the same problem with all of them. They were unrelated by family, geography or work history. It's not even a major problem, it's a cultural issue. They don't like confrontation, in any form. They want to keep a happy face on everything and that façade cost me a lot of money and a lot of time.

I don't believe that any one of them intentionally set out to do damage to me or the company. As an employer I have to know what is going on. I want to hear about the problems, more than an endless parade of "everything's fine." It's not easy for employees to hear that. They get scared for their jobs, they are afraid that they'll make me angry.

Which is ironic, because I am not an angry person generally. What does make me angry is precisely what they are doing. Hiding the truth from me, and then letting it become a major problem.

I have fired people for many reasons, but by far the most common is not incompetence, or thievery, but simple inability to confront a situation. The head in the sand mentality works well somewhere, but I don't know where.

As an employer, I'm under attack a lot these days. The government wants me to provide more benefits to my employees, insurance companies want me to do it cheaper, quicker and with better quality, my employees want more money and better benefits, and no one wants to look at my needs.

The world sees employers in a love/hate fashion. On the one hand they are crucial to the system, they are the source of income for most people. They are the providers for the many.

On the other hand, many people see employers as the source of the world's sorrows, and wonder why we need them. They fail to see the crucial role that an employer plays in the circle of life. These people want

to have goods provided for them and have vacation time. They want health insurance for all, but don't see why people should have to work low paying, unskilled jobs like being an orderly.

Labor Day is about profit. It is profit for the worker and for the employer. If an employer cannot make a profit, he will soon be out of business, and then no jobs. The interests of the employee are linked, in a life and death struggle with the employer in this way.

This is a hard concept for many people. They want to limit the profits that a company can earn. They say it is immoral for a company to make vast amounts of money at the expense of the lives and labor of others. I disagree.

Our employees depend on the checks we write them being negotiable at the bank. The money must be there when they need it. I carry the responsibility of making sure that employees are paid, so that they in turn can pay their nanny, to provide care for their children.

There are those who would say that the level of profits should be reduced so that more people could have our services. That if more people had our services it would be better for society. Maybe. But these people are not the ones who invested the money, who worked late nights at the copy center getting the presentations ready for the salesmen, who make the company profitable.

I've always found it curious that those who most condemn employers, have never actually been one. The people who champion the rights of the worker the loudest, and bemoan the profits of the employer the most, have never actually had it all on the line. They have not spent sleepless nights wondering how they were going to make payroll.

It is important to remember, and honor, labor this coming weekend. But let's remember that the boss is also part of the equation. You can't have one with the other, and they both make society operate. CEO's have been getting a lot of abuse these days. Sometimes they deserved it. But no good CEO would forget that their employees are the lifeblood of the company.

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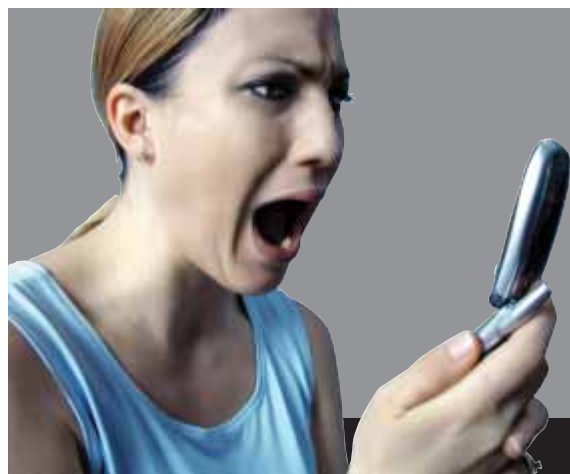


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Your column here

Teri Goldman

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Sharing a lane with an Olympic champ

LET'S FACE IT. MICHAEL PHELPS ROCKS! He is the greatest swimmer of all time! Phelps's physical prowess and determination are an inspiration to everyone who has a dream, whether athletic or sedentary.

But, I have a little gripe with Mr. Phelps. Well, now, don't get your Speedos in a bunch. It's not a personal gripe. My frustration is with that very inspiration Phelps has instilled in people, particularly those who live in Santa Monica. Yesterday, I went to the often deserted sporting goods store to buy a new pair of goggles, only to find the usually well-stocked shelves empty.

"We've had a run on swim accessories," said the sales assistant to the seven of us searching for items.

No problem. I just ventured into a hole-in-the-wall scuba shop and purchased my favorite goggles, which still leak despite my best adjustment efforts. Yes, Michael, we all empathize with that water in the goggles. It's a pain.

But, the inconveniences have not stopped there. During summer months, Santa Monica College makes multiple lanes of its beautiful Olympic-sized fitness pool available for public use. As a freelancer, I can escape midday for a relaxing swim. Usually, I have a lane to myself or share with one other swimmer. Now, thanks to Phelps, my little oasis has become a Mecca for wannabes. This past week, I was lucky to find a lane with only four people.

Today was the clincher. I had just completed lap No. 40 when my lane partner exited the pool. I was alone! I decided to backstroke, since backstroking in a straight line is a refined skill that I have yet to refine. I pushed off the edge and reached my arms overhead. My body floated, soft, cool water stroking my fingertips. The sun beat down on my face and chest, my eyes squinting at the turquoise sky, my swimsuit straps fluttering. A sense of serenity slinked through my bones as my feet chopped the surface and I breathed the fresh air. A trickle of water entered my mouth. Splashes of divers fell away into the white noise whoosh of water in my ears. Nirvana shifted inside me.

Then — THUMP! A powerful whack to the head knocked me beneath the surface. Apparently, some teenager had jumped into the back of my lane and pummeled me. Once I regained my wits, I stopped him and explained that he must alert people when he gets into the pool. He gave me a vague look,

swam off, and continued to bump me each time we passed. I stopped him again and suggested that he look at the black line on the bottom of the lane to help him stay on his side. To this, he objected. He said that he was trying to swim faster like "that guy in the Olympics," which he could only do if he closed his eyes. I did not know whether to laugh or cry, so I pointed out that Michael Phelps has to keep his eyes open in order to win races. Okay, perhaps Phelps did swim blind in the 200m Butterfly in Beijing, but that's not the point. The kid finally stuck to his side.

I am not a competitive swimmer. As someone with injuries, I frequent the slow speed lanes. But, I make a concerted effort to practice pool etiquette

■ Let a swimmer know you are about to share the lane. How? Wave a hand at the edge of the water, stick your feet in, or yell if necessary.

■ Stay on your side of the lane and in your lane. While "Junior" was swaying about, Mr. "Trying to Teach Himself a Flip Turn" in the next lane actually kicked me from across the plastic divider.

■ If you must attempt the "Phelps Butterfly Power Swim," create your storm in the fast lanes of the pool. Tidal waves are for the ocean. Slow lanes are for those of us who need to go slow.

Swimming is a community activity. None of us can do it without a little guidance or inspiration. I, too, am motivated by Phelps. I even tried to teach myself a flip turn and dolphin kick. I failed, but at least I did not take anyone out in the process. I am also working to improve my strokes. Yes, we may all want to be "just like Mike," but too much enthusiasm can lead to pool disaster. I have the bruises to prove it.

So, Michael Phelps, thanks for inspiring so many, and feel free to stop. In the meantime, for everyone who is moved to start swimming, ask any lane swimmer about pool etiquette. We are happy to answer questions. And if, as winter chills approach, you find that goose bumps are not for you, those of us who enjoy the tranquility of a calm pool will wish you good luck and bid you a fond farewell.

Teri Goldman is a writer and swim enthusiast living in Santa Monica. She can be reached at scrabblegirl2@earthlink.net.

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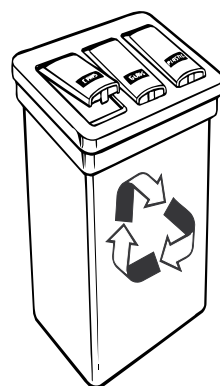
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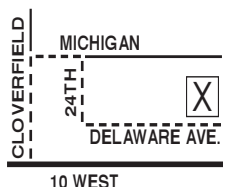
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The Q-Line

Cheers

The Amethyst Initiative, a group of college and university presidents from around the country, claim the current legal age to drink needs to be lowered. It has sparked a nationwide debate regarding the controversial subject.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

How would lowering the legal drinking age play out? Do you think it would lead to more problems or make young adults more responsible when it comes to binge drinking?

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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STATE BRIEFS

SACRAMENTO

Bill establishes chemical review

Potentially harmful chemicals found in consumer products would undergo a review that could lead to an outright ban under a bill that has been approved by California lawmakers.

The legislation by Democratic Assemblyman Mike Feuer of Los Angeles develops a process that would identify and evaluate chemicals posing a potential human health threat.

Feuer said establishing a process to review all such chemicals is preferred to the current, piecemeal approach in which lawmakers submit bills to restrict or ban individual compounds.

Under the bill, the Department of Toxic Substances Control must establish the review procedures by Jan. 1, 2011.

Chemicals would be subject to a range of possible actions. They include additional labeling requirements, prohibiting use in certain products and requiring manufacturers to provide recycling or disposal options.

The bill had bipartisan support and was approved 52-6 Sunday by the state Assembly, which concurred on Senate amendments and sent it to the governor.

Democratic Assemblyman Jared Huffman of San Rafael, who co-authored the bill, called it a "critical step toward a comprehensive chemical policy in California."

He noted that studies have shown high levels of reproductive toxins in the tissue and breast milk of Californians.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLOVIS

Bush signs 'sole survivors' benefits bill

Peggy and Jeff Hubbard, the Clovis couple who lost two sons in the Iraq war, were at President Bush's side when he signed a law inspired by the family's ordeal.

The president on Friday signed the Hubbard Act, which protects bonuses and other benefits for members of the military who are discharged early under the Pentagon's "sole survivor" rule.

The Hubbard's eldest son, Jason Hubbard, was given an early honorable discharge from the Army following the death of his youngest brother, Nathan, in Iraq a year ago. The middle Hubbard brother, Jared, was killed in Iraq in November 2004.

Despite the circumstances surrounding his discharge, the Army originally sought to revoke \$2,000 of Jason Hubbard's signing bonus and to deny him veteran's education and health care benefits. His wife was pregnant at the time. Two California congressmen intervened and sponsored the bill signed by Bush.

AP

LOS ALTOS

Blackmailed john aided by police

Los Altos police are looking for men who may have been blackmailed into paying hush money to prevent videos of them having sex with prostitutes from being posted on the Internet.

Authorities made the unusual request for extortion victims to come forward following the arrest Thursday of three people who allegedly threatened to expose a married Silicon Valley businessman unless he paid them \$250,000.

The businessman went to police after the alleged extortionists sent him an email containing explicit photos of his recent encounter with a prostitute. Police had the man, who is in his 50s and has children, meet them at a local park, where they were arrested.

Cameras and computers containing footage of other men visiting prostitutes were found in the home of one of the suspects, which leads investigators to think there may be more victims, says Los Altos Detective Sgt. John Korges.

AP

SACRAMENTO

Sierra foothill blaze doused

Firefighters have contained a 100-acre blaze in the Sierra foothills that destroyed a trailer and burned through a thick stand of oak trees.

Just one other fire was burning in Northern California on Sunday, a small grass fire along Interstate 5 near Redding. State fire officials are warning campers and others headed outdoors over the holiday weekend to be cautious because of dry conditions and steady winds that can quickly spread embers.

Firefighters from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the U.S. Forest Service and local departments contained the Yuba County fire Saturday night, several hours after it began.

While it burned an unoccupied trailer, no injuries were reported. The fire charred a woodland near Oregon House, a tiny foothill community about 35 miles northeast of Marysville.

State fire spokesman Daniel Berlant says the wildfire's cause has not yet been determined.

AP

SACRAMENTO

Patient death rates high in ERs

A newspaper analysis shows that Sacramento County has the second highest rate of emergency room deaths in the state, behind tiny Inyo County.

The Sacramento Bee reported Sunday that 27 of every 10,000 patients die in emergency rooms in the capital region. The statewide average is 17 deaths per 10,000.

The analysis relied on data from the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. It also found that emergency room deaths tend to be higher in the inland areas of California than they are in coastal counties.

Mercy San Juan Medical Center in Carmichael, with 52.5 deaths per 10,000 patients, and UC Davis Medical Center, with 31.7 deaths per 10,000 patients, had the highest rates in the Sacramento area.

AP

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Hollywood rings up \$4.2B record summer bonanza

BY DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES Times may be tough in the real world. Not in Hollywood.

As it usually does during economic downturns, the movie business has come on strong, expected to set a summer revenue record of about \$4.2 billion from the first weekend in May through Labor Day, according to box-office tracker Media By Numbers.

That would put Hollywood a fraction ahead of the previous record of \$4.18 billion in summer 2007, though accounting for inflation, the actual number of tickets sold — about 587 million — is down 3.5 percent.

Still, given the sluggish economy, studio executives are happy their business held up so well. It's almost a tradition dating back to the Depression: When the economy goes sour, the escapism and relative cheapness of a night at the movies is an attractive prospect for audiences.

"Let's face it. It is truly one of the least-expensive ways to entertain yourself for a few hours," said Rory Bruer, head of distribution at Sony, whose summer releases included Will Smith's latest \$200 million hit, "Hancock."

The behemoth of summer was the Warner Bros. Batman sequel "The Dark Knight," whose haul — \$500 million and counting — amounted to nearly one-eighth of overall Hollywood revenues.

"The Dark Knight" passed "Star Wars" to rank No. 2 on the all-time domestic revenue chart, behind only "Titanic" at \$600.8 million.

Batman mania already was high as production wrapped last fall, but it grew to a fever after Heath Ledger, who co-stars as the Joker, died in January.

"We would not be looking at a \$4 billion summer if not for 'The Dark Knight,'" said Paul Dergarabedian, Media By Numbers

president. "In this case, one film made a huge difference."

"The Dark Knight" and four other superhero tales — "Hancock," Paramount's "Iron Man," and Universal's "The Incredible Hulk" and "Hellboy II: The Golden Army" — rang up \$1.25 billion, 30 percent of the summer box office.

Add in the \$315 million take for Paramount's "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" and it's clear that audiences were looking for pure adventure this summer.

On the family front, the animated tales "WALL-E" from Disney and "Kung Fu Panda" from DreamWorks both topped \$200 million. There was a healthy dose of chick flicks during the male-dominated summer with Warner's "Sex and the City" and Universal's "Mamma Mia!" — both \$100 million hits.

Raunchy comedy also packed in crowds with the R-rated hits "Tropic Thunder" from Paramount and "Step Brothers" and "Pineapple Express," both from Sony.

Some major flops accompanied the successes. Eddie Murphy bombed with his sci-fi comedy "Meet Dave" from 20th Century Fox, as did Mike Myers with Paramount's comedy "The Love Guru."

Warner's family-action tale "Speed Racer" and 20th Century Fox's sci-fi sequel "The X-Files: I Want to Believe" also crashed and burned.

Yet most big studio films delivered, finding both commercial success and better-than-usual reaction from critics, who typically tear many summer blockbusters to shreds. "The Dark Knight" and "Iron Man" earned some of the best reviews ever for summer popcorn flicks, the acclaim helping to keep the theaters packed.

"It's the old story," said Dan Fellman, head of distribution at Warner Bros. "Give the people what they want and they'll come out in big numbers."

Union officer steps down amid new financial probe

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES A third leader of the Service Employees International Union stepped aside in the midst of financial probes, and her ex-boyfriend was told to repay tens of thousands of dollars in union funds, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday.

The SEIU acknowledged Saturday that its top California officer, Annelle Grajeda, has taken a leave of absence while it investigates allegations that she was improperly involved in making payments to her former boyfriend.

Grajeda was executive vice-president of the national organization, president of the SEIU's state council and president of the Los Angeles local representing 77,000 county workers.

Grajeda was "very confident" that she would be exonerated, she told the Times on Saturday.

The SEIU also said that it has demanded that her ex-boyfriend, former Los Angeles chapter president Alejandro Stephens, return money he received from the local and the state council.

He was paid nearly \$89,000 in consulting fees and "disbursements for official business" by those entities last year, according to the union's financial filings with the U.S. Labor Department.

The union's national office reimbursed the state council for the \$75,000 it spent on consulting fees for Stephens, records showed.

That money was part of a severance agreement made with Stephens when he lost his presidency of the local chapter when it consolidated with some others, SEIU spokeswoman Michelle Ringuette said.

The union contends he violated that agreement by taking money from the local chapter while working as a county employee.

Two other SEIU leaders have been placed on leave recently amid allegations that the group's largest local, United-Long-Term Care Workers, misspent \$1 million of members' dues.

The local, which represents thousands of health care employees, is the subject of a U.S. attorney's investigation and a congressional inquiry into payments that were made to companies owned by relatives of local President Tyrone Freeman.




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Labor daze

Laboring longer a growing trend for many Americans

BY DAVE CARPENTER
AP Business Writer

CHICAGO Americans are changing the game plan for retirement, with millions laboring right past the traditional retirement age and working into their late 60s and beyond.

While the average retirement age remains 63, that standard may soon be going the way of the gold watch — a trend expected to accelerate as baby boomers close in on retirement without sufficient savings.

For 64-year-old John Lee, “retirement” bears a strong resemblance to his full-time working career — full of 40- and 50-hour weeks as an IT technical support specialist. He’s not strapped but likes the extra cash and the feeling of being needed.

But for Melissa Fodor, a retired travel agent who works part-time as a caregiver for the elderly, the extra work “keeps my head above water” and there’s no end in sight to that financial need at age 68.

Although the work is satisfying, she confides that “financially I’m kind of scared most of the time. Because what should happen if my health and my body fail?”

Growing evidence documents that people are working longer as they live longer.

Twenty-nine percent of people in their late 60s were working in 2006, up from 18 percent in 1985, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nearly 6 million workers last year were 65 or over.

Over the next decade, the number of 55-and-up workers is expected to rise at more than five times the rate of the overall work force, the BLS reported.

A slowing economy and stock market, squeezing funds set aside for retirement, also are contributing.

In an April survey conducted for AARP,

27 percent of workers age 45 and over, and 32 percent of those 55-64 said they had pushed back their planned retirement date because of the economic downturn. The telephone poll by Woelfel Research interviewed 1,002 respondents and carried a sampling error margin of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

“We have people who are healthier, who are living longer and have more economic reasons to stay in the work force,” said David Certner, AARP’s legislative policy director. “On the employer side, you have greater demand for experienced (older) workers. That all adds up to longer work lives.”

Lee never envisioned putting in long work weeks in his mid-60s.

The Marietta, Ga., resident battled frequent work stress before taking early retirement from Coca-Cola Co. at 55. He lay wide awake for many restless nights thinking about the job, and believes all the strain caused health problems in the form of fibromyalgia and chronic back pain.

But when his old employer called offering contract work at his specialty, mainframe systems, he gladly accepted. Tennis and golf hadn’t worked out as retirement hobbies, and he decided he could use the money for occasional trips overseas and to help out his children and grandchildren.

“Going back to work wasn’t the plan,” he said. “But after I retired, before they called me, I really didn’t have anything to do. So when they called, I jumped on it.”

Lee, who makes more than \$50,000 from the contract work, isn’t the only one in his house working after retirement. His wife Joyce, 60, also took early retirement but went right back to work as a real estate agent.

They say the extra household income supplements their combined \$3,000 a

month in company pension payments and adds to \$1.3 million in assets to assure their retirement will be financially comfortable — if and when it happens.

“If there’s some project to be done next year, when they call I’ll just go do it,” he chuckled.

Working longer is generally the best option for those who come up short on retirement savings. And with many people’s investment portfolios and 401(k)s down significantly in recent months, it has become a compelling alternative for many retirees or near-retirees to having to live on less.

“It’s always been a good idea, but right now it can be an especially good idea,” said Christine Fahlund, a senior financial planner with T. Rowe Price. “You really don’t want to be pulling more money out of a portfolio that’s already down.”

In a recent report, the investment management group said continuing to work full time past one’s anticipated retirement date could increase annual retirement income by about 7 percent for each additional year of work.

Working another three years — from 62 to 65, for example — and continuing to save 15 percent of salary could raise annual income from investments by 22 percent. Make it five years and boost savings contributions still higher — even better.

Putting off retirement also may enable people to delay when they start taking Social Security benefits, which can significantly increase payments.

“The longer the delay, the better” financially, said Fahlund. “To me the ideal would be 70, because you get the biggest Social Security benefit possible and all those additional years of employment. And it keeps you going mentally and physically too.”

If toiling extra years doesn’t sound very palatable, a wanna-be retiree may wish to consider spending some of the additional work earnings on hobbies, travel, education or other retirement dreams to make it seem more worthwhile.

“Delaying retirement retirement does not necessarily mean delaying gratification,” Fahlund said.

Such a strategy, she said, could still increase retirement income from investments by 4 percent per year, or 12 percent after three years, since the retiree would not have to tap existing savings.

Fodor says that “to work is to have dignity.” But she has little choice but to keep laboring because otherwise she couldn’t pay her bills.

The Morrison, Colo., woman ended her more than three-decade career as a travel agent when work dried up following the 9/11 attacks, but hasn’t stopped working through her 60s. First she sold paint at a home improvement store for seven years. Now she puts in 17 hours a week as a certified nursing assistant and another 10 to 15 hours walking dogs and pet sitting.

Divorced and with no children, she says she will have to work “forever” to make up for a lack of savings since Social Security doesn’t go far enough to make ends meet.

Caring for seniors, a job she loves, pays just \$9 an hour and dog walking pays less. Squeezed by rising prices and still \$20,000 in debt on her condo, she stopped buying meat, beer and pricier vegetables and cheeses this year and is making other cutbacks.

“I feel blessed with the good health that I have. But I’m a little bit bitter because I don’t think I should be scared financially at 68,” she said, adding that she blames only herself for not saving more.

New search kicks off for missing adventurer Steve Fossett

BY BRENDAN RILEY
Associated Press Writer

HAWTHORNE, Nev. A year after aviator and adventurer Steve Fossett vanished on a Labor Day solo flight over western Nevada, friends and admirers are waging a new search for some sign of him in an area of rugged mountains.

Steep canyons and gulches choked by concealing trees and brush on the west slope of the Wassuk Range are being combed by 28 searchers headed by explorers Robert Hyman, Lew Toulmin and Bob Atwater.

They’re relying in part on new information from another pilot who was in the area that day that alters earlier assumptions about Fossett’s likely path on what was supposed to have been a short flight. He had flown over the area many times since the mid-1990s and once hiked to the top of the

Wassuk Range’s 11,239-foot Mount Grant.

“This is the right thing to do,” Hyman said in a weekend interview at the search team’s isolated camp. “Explorers don’t leave fellow explorers lost. ... We want to find out what happened to our friend and colleague, no more and no less.”

The main search area just west of Hawthorne and only 10 to 15 miles from the Flying M Ranch of longtime Fossett friend and wealthy hotel magnate Barron Hilton, where Fossett had borrowed a plane for his flight.

The terrain was flown over repeatedly last fall in what was described as the largest aerial search for a downed plane in U.S. history — the Nevada National Guard and the Civil Air Patrol scoured 20,000 square miles — and also was extensively searched on the ground.

However, Hyman said there’s a lot of area that didn’t get close scrutiny.

“While I feel he’s under our nose here, he’s in an area that’s extremely hard to get to. It’s the vertical terrain, it’s the dark terrain, and it’s the trees, the vegetation,” Hyman said.

“If that aircraft didn’t go straight down and kind of angled in under a stand of pine trees, it’s going to take someone physically walking upon that scene to find it,” said Lyon County Undersheriff Joe Sanford.

“It’s hard to believe in this day and age that someone could disappear like this — until you go up in an aircraft and look at how rough the terrain is. It’s absolutely amazing,” said Sanford.

The difficulty of finding Fossett’s wreck prompts comparisons to pioneering aviator Amelia Earhart, who disappeared on an around-the-world flight attempt in 1937.

“They’re both incredibly inspiring people,” Toulmin said.

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Satellite telephones make cowboys wildfire sentinels

BY JOHN MILLER

Associated Press Writer

SILVER CITY, Idaho The craggy gullies where Idaho cowboy Paul Nettleton runs 1,200 head of cattle are often precious minutes from reliable cell phone coverage.

That could spell disaster in this region where sudden summertime storms howl in from eastern Oregon, bringing dry lightning that can ignite fast-moving wildfires on sage- and juniper-covered hillsides. Unchecked, the flames could quickly turn this old mining town's historic wooden buildings to ashes.

This spring, Nettleton and six other Owyhee County ranchers who make their livelihoods in some of America's most remote backcountry began carrying satellite telephones provided by the federal Bureau of Land Management and the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security.

It's an effort to turn men whose ranching families have been wedded to this land for more than a century into a high-tech advance guard against devastating wildfires.

"Minutes count in that country," Nettleton told The Associated Press one morning last week after parking his four-wheeler outside the town's 145-year-old Idaho Hotel. "Right now, it's pretty quiet. But it'll come."

The BLM says Owyhee County — the name comes from South Pacific explorer Captain Cook's spelling of Hawaii and honors Hawaiian trappers who disappeared in the uncharted region in 1818 — is the first place the agency has armed cowboys with satellite phones.

Silver City's summer residents feel a little safer, knowing Nettleton is always connected to one of Bethesda, Md.-based Iridium Satellite LLC's 66 satellites orbiting overhead, not just the cell phone tower on nearby War Eagle Mountain that's often blocked by the region's terrain.

"He's kind of our voice on the mountain," said Jim Hyslop, who helps run the local Silver City Fire and Rescue and has family roots here dating to 1916.

However, the ranchers have yet to use their new phones to report a fire.

After nearly eight years of uninterrupted drought, last winter's ample snowfall and this spring's rain has made much of Owyhee County's high country greener than normal this year, limiting the fire danger. Typical summer storms with dry lightning and sudden gales just haven't materialized.

A year ago, however, wildfires blazed across 3,000 square miles of Idaho — an area three times the size of Rhode Island.

It took three weeks to contain one of those wildfires, a lightning-caused complex of blazes that covered nearly 1,000 square miles, killing wildlife and livestock, blackening grazing ground and charring habitat for

seasons to come for sensitive species such as sage grouse. It was the largest single fire ever fought by the BLM in Idaho.

As the embers were barely cool, BLM managers and ranchers began discussions last fall about improving communication before the next conflagration.

For an initial agency investment of \$10,000, the seven Iridium satellite phones seemed a reasonable bargain, said Janet Peterson, the BLM's safety manager in Boise — especially considering that 1,000-square-mile complex alone cost more than \$13 million to fight and will likely set taxpayers back \$34 million more to restore the blackened landscape.

"The ranchers are a pretty key partner," she said. "They know the country."

Iridium has nearly 230,000 commercial and government voice subscribers, along with a unit that supplies equipment for companies and the U.S. Department of Defense to track assets in remote areas where there's no conventional cellular communication. Voice users include soldiers, the maritime industry, oil and gas companies, utilities, construction and mining — "Basically any industry where you've got workers out in the middle of nowhere," Iridium spokeswoman Liz DeCastro said.

Should one of Idaho's cowboys spot a fire and place a call, firefighting planes could be scrambled out of the Boise Airport about 50 miles northeast of Silver City.

The ranchers have been told to use the phones in medical emergencies, too. The state's disaster agency, the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, is chipping in for the service costs.

"If you see a fire and have no connectivity, you can't tell anybody," said Col. Bill Shawver, the agency's director. "To have a satellite phone with you, you can make that immediate call and get firefighters mobilized."

The phones were distributed to ranchers based on where they run their cattle and the existing grid of cell phone service. Cowboys call in once a month, to make sure the phones are working.

Ken Tindall, whose family has ranches Owyhee County since 1885, has 1,000 head of cattle on 100,000 acres on both sides of the Idaho and Nevada state line. In Nevada, he has no cell phone reception at all.

"From some of the ridge tops, I can see 80, 90 or 100 miles in any direction," Tindall said. "If I see smoke, I can get it reported very quickly. I could have used it last year a lot, that's for sure."

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Coyotes claim cats

FROM COYOTES PAGE 1

so earlier in the evening.

"They're usually out late at night around 2 a.m.," she said.

Many residents have also noted coyote sightings during the day time, Wolfberg said.

He suspects the coyotes are returning after a long absence because neighbors are unintentionally leaving food out where the wild animal might be able to reach them.

Some residents have reported seeing a pack of coyotes wandering the streets. A coyote was recently seen at one of the flight of stairs located along the edge of the canyon, frequently used by residents as part of their workout, Wolfberg said.

A few of the e-mails mentioned hearing coyotes howling at night, a reminder that they're lurking around.

On May 7, a resident near Rustic Canyon Park reported that their cat was missing. He had observed a coyote on the prowl for about a month before the disappearance.

Marilyn Wexler, who is a member of the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association, said her cat was nearly killed by a coyote three years ago.

The coyote came up to the kitchen door and grabbed the cat, named Paco, and took off.

"Fortunately my husband was right there and ran out and kicked him in the rump," she said. "He dropped Paco and took off."

The California Department of Fish and Game estimates that there are about 250,000 to 750,000 coyotes in the state. The animals weigh an average of 18 to 40 pounds and can sprint up to 40 mph.

Many urban coyotes die young by getting



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MY HUSBAND**

**WAS RIGHT THERE AND
RAN OUT AND KICKED
HIM IN THE RUMP."**

Marilyn Wexler

Santa Monica Canyon resident

hit by cars or becoming stricken with a disease.

Residents can keep coyotes out by putting fences that are at least 6 feet tall and buried down to at least 12-18 inches underground, according to Los Angeles Animal Services.

The agency also recommends keeping pets indoors at all times, walking with a leash when outside.

As coyotes are attracted to an area because of food, L.A. Animal Services advise that trash should be kept inside cans with a lid securely fastened. Spraying ammonia on trashcans several times a week can eliminate the odor of food.

Fallen or low-hanging fruit should be immediately picked and vegetable gardens should be protected with a heavy-duty fence.

If approached by a coyote, the animal can be scared away by shouting in a low loud tone, throwing objects and making a lot of noise. The point is to appear larger than life.

"When you're dealing with a wild predator, you want to look as large as possible," Wolfberg said. "Don't go out and walk a small dog that's going to be an hors d'oeuvre."

melodyh@smdp.com

Doctor to be honored

FROM MORTON PAGE 3

2000 he topped a list of clinical investigators who received the most grant funding from the National Institutes of Health. Morton's scientific contributions toward the immunology of cancer and surgical oncology have yielded more than 600 publications in peer-reviewed journals and have garnered him a long series of prestigious awards and honors, officials with the center said.

Morton is the past president of the International Sentinel Node Society, past president of the Society of Surgical Oncology, and past president of the World Federation of Surgical Oncology Societies.

Morton was chief of the division of surgical oncology at UCLA before establishing the John Wayne Cancer Institute. As chief of the Melanoma Program, Morton has guided the institute to its present position as an internationally respected melanoma center.

As director of the Surgical Oncology Fellowship Program, Morton has trained more than 100 postdoctoral fellows, most of whom hold academic positions in medical schools or cancer institutes.

He received his medical degree from the University of California in San Francisco, and completed his residency and fellowship in surgery at the Cancer Research Institute, University of California Medical Center in San Francisco.

The center provides a national forum for addressing issues that affect community cancer programs, such as regulatory and legislative issues, measurements of the quality of care, and clinical research. Its membership of more than 670 hospital cancer programs and oncology private practices includes all members of the cancer care team: medical and radiation oncologists, surgeons, cancer program administrators and medical directors, pharmacists, oncology nurses, oncology social workers, and cancer program data managers.

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Christina Yoon news@smdp.com

SPEAKING UP: Victor Torres, a CREST staff member at Grant Elementary School, explains the activities that his team provides for Grant students at the CREST back-to-school training session.

CREST program offers after-school enrichment in kids' own school yards

FROM CREST PAGE 1

Primary CREST for kindergarten through third grade, which is run by the school district office. All other CREST programs are run by the city of Santa Monica, Kim said.

Santa Monica students can also join a CREST program called Playground Access, which allows kids to use their school playgrounds in unstructured but supervised play after classes let out for the day.

The other programs range in price from \$70 for the sports program to \$340 a month for childcare, but Kim encouraged families to apply to receive discounts on the fees through City Hall. Aid is provided based on income and family size.

"We have really generous financial assistance programs," Kim said. "It's very easy to get, at the very least, a third of the cost taken off."

CREST provides camps and sports throughout break times as well, but with fall approaching the staff must switch gears to school mode.

"One thing we've been trying to encourage staff to do is to think creatively when

making up curriculum," Kim said.

At this year's back to school training, staff members heard from representatives of the police department, fire department and the Farmers' Market for ideas on how to integrate public resources into after-school activities.

"We've got an abundance of city resources," Kim said. "We want to be able to use local resources and expand on the options for our kids."

The yearly back-to-school training gives staff members a chance to tap into those resources before the rush of the school year begins as well as reconnect with other instructors that they may not get a chance to see every day. Michael Rosales has worked in CREST programs for eight years and was still reminded at Thursday's training how much he loves his job.

"I'm blessed to get paid to do something I love," he said.

More information about CREST programs can be found at the Youth Office website: CREST.smgov.net

news@smdp.com

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Enthusiasts use barrels to collect extra water

FROM WATER PAGE 3

rels. She uses that water throughout the summer to irrigate her backyard.

This fall, San Francisco will try to recruit more people to hoard the rain. The city will be putting \$100,000 toward hosting how-to workshops and offering rebates and discounts on rainwater catchment tanks.

In addition to conserving water, these efforts help alleviate the problem of storm runoff. Asphalt-covered roads, sidewalks and parking lots repel storm water, forcing it down storm drains and into creeks rather than allowing it to soak into soil. Big flushes of storm water in water treatment systems can send raw sewage flowing into the ocean. Overloaded streams can cause flooding and damage salmon habitat.

Elsewhere, roofs are being used to collect rain from Austin to Seattle. Santa Monica's new library sits atop a 200,000-gallon rainwater cistern, and in August the city launched a rainwater rebate program for homeowners. In Marin County, a recent seminar on rainwater harvesting attracted a standing-room-only crowd of several hundred.

Doug Pushard, a software entrepreneur and rain collection enthusiast based in Santa Fe, N.M., runs HarvestH2O.com, a Web-based organization providing information on rainwater harvesting. It got more than 23,000 page views in July, almost triple the number he got in the same month last year, along with numerous calls and e-mails.

New companies and ingenuity in plumbing and policy are pushing rainwater harvesting from the off-the-grid fringe to the core of 21st century green building design.

"You still have to be a tinkerer to make things work, but that's changing," said Pushard.

Every year, Sunset Magazine sponsors several "idea houses" featuring sustainable building design. As many as 40,000 people stream through each house to study the latest in green architecture. The 2007 idea houses in San Francisco and Lake Tahoe collected rainwater, as will this year's idea house in Monterey.

"We're going to see a lot more design features for recycled water and rainwater catchment," said Dave Walls, executive director of the California Building Standards Commission, which in July adopted new building codes for the state requiring new buildings to strictly conserve water.

In June, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation gave a Washington-based non-profit \$4.2 million to determine whether rainwater harvesting could provide potable water to the billions of poor people worldwide who lack access to clean water. Drought-prone and groundwater-scarce places like Australia, the Bahamas, Iran and parts of India are already busy pooling precipitation.

"People don't think about where their water comes from or how much they use," Hui said as she used her collected rainwater for irrigation. "We all need to."

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

ON PROPOSED VACATION OF A PORTION OF PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY ON HIGH PLACE IN THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA

The Community Corporation of Santa Monica proposes to develop a project that includes two components: a 45-unit condominium development (High Place East) and 47-unit rental housing on the adjacent site (High Place West), "Project". The project requires the vacation and incorporation into the project of the existing High Place between Virginia Avenue and Santa Monica Freeway.

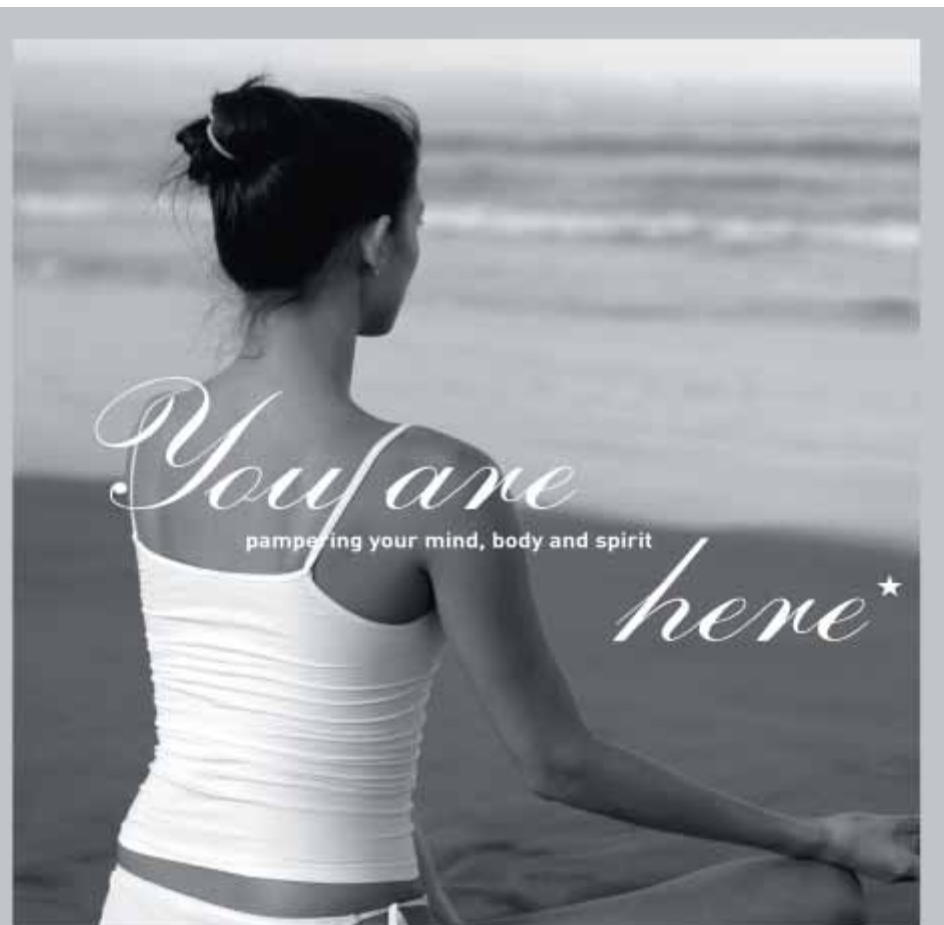
On July 23, 2008, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 10328 (CCS) declaring its intention to order vacation of a portion of public right-of-way on High Place, to allow for this development and set a public hearing for September 9, 2008 at 5:45 p.m. The Drawing No. 4726 of the portion of High Place proposed to be vacated is on file and is available for review in the office of the City Engineer located at 1437 4th Street, Suite 300, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Pursuant to Part 3, Chapter 3, "General Vacation Procedure", of the California Streets and Highways Code, the City Council directed the City Clerk to set a public hearing on the proposed vacation proceedings as follows:

DATE & TIME: 5:45 p.m. on September 9, 2008, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard

LOCATION: City Council Chambers
1685 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Santa Monica, CA 90401

All persons interested in or objecting to the proposed right-of-way vacation may appear before the City Council at the public hearing to offer evidence in relation thereto.

For more information contact City of Santa Monica at (310) 458-8721.



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Incremental Anbar drawdown expected

BY CHELSEA J. CARTER
AP Military Affairs Writer

SAN DIEGO The drawdown of Marines from the former Sunni insurgent stronghold of Anbar will take time because there is still much work to be done, a top U.S. commander said Sunday on the eve of the once violent province's transfer to Iraqi security control.

Monday's handover of Anbar, scene of some of the bloodiest battles of the Iraq war, marks a major milestone in America's strategy of turning security responsibility over to the Iraqis so that U.S. troops can eventually go home.

"The Marine force will be smaller soon," Marine Maj. Gen. John Kelly told The Associated Press in an exclusive telephone interview Sunday from Iraq. "I don't think it will be overnight. I think it will happen incrementally."

Kelly said he has already made his recommendation for troop cuts in the province to the top-ranking U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, and Petraeus' No. 2, Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin. Petraeus is widely expected to conclude in the coming weeks that the outlook in Iraq has improved enough to merit more troop reductions this fall.

Kelly's comments come after the top Marine Corps general, Gen. James Conway, said last week that fewer Marines were needed in Iraq and could be shifted to other places, such as Afghanistan.

Sen. Barack Obama, the Democratic presidential nominee, is said to have also told Petraeus some U.S. forces should be pulled out of Iraq and deployed to Afghanistan when the two met in July in Baghdad.

Since he took command of U.S. forces in western Iraq in February, Kelly said he has seen his troop level drop 40 percent from 37,000 troops to 25,000 today. He has also has seen a 60 percent drop in Iraqi troops in the region after several battalions were sent to fight Shiite militias in the southern city of Basra and Baghdad's Sadr City.

Kelly would not divulge the specifics of his troop cut recommendation. But he made clear that the U.S. military mission in Anbar was not finished.

"Our job until we leave, whenever that is, is to continue training the Iraqi police, training the Iraqi army, giving them advice... and continuing to be a force for stability," he said.

In recent months, Kelly said he has sent eight helicopters, including four CH-53 Sea Stallions and four Cobras, as well as several Marine detachments to Afghanistan to help with military operations there.

"There are things here that I can do without for sure. Things that we brought here in the bad old days that I simply don't need anymore," he said.

But Kelly said he disputes the view that "Marines in Iraq are bored."

"Everyone here is working 15 to 20 hours a day," he said. "This is still a dangerous

place."

He says he tells Marines in Iraq who express interest in going to Afghanistan that there is still work to be done.

"That is in the Marine DNA to be in a real fight. But this is the toughest part of what we have been doing here, putting the plug in the insurgency. It's very intellectual and requires a tremendous amount of patience," he said.

Kelly said he also has spent months trying to quell fears among Iraqis that once the handover was complete U.S. troops would leave Anbar.

"It's taken a long time to get to this point, and certainly mistakes were made on the ground in Anbar," he said. "Things were done that perhaps in retrospect alienated people and caused them to move against us."

Anbar, the largest Iraqi province that stretches from the western gates of Baghdad to the borders of Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, was once the centerstage in the Sunni insurgency, which broke out soon after the U.S.-led invasion of 2003 toppled Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated regime.

Anbar's fiercely independent Sunni tribes resented the presence of thousands of non-Muslim foreign soldiers. Many Sunnis turned to al-Qaida in Iraq and other insurgent groups.

In late 2006, however, many of those groups turned against al-Qaida because of the movement's attempt to dominate the insurgency. Many Sunni tribal leaders

opposed al-Qaida's brutal tactics, including mass killings of Shiite civilians and its attempt to impose strict Islamic rule.

Disaffected tribesmen organized awakening councils that joined forces with the Americans to push al-Qaida out of the province. That enabled U.S. forces to gain control of the provincial capital of Ramadi and other cities long considered killing zones for Americans.

Now Anbar is considered one of the quieter parts of the country, though Kelly said there are about 8 to 10 incidents a week, ranging from IED explosions to arrests. With the transfer of Anbar, Iraqis will control security in 11 of the country's 18 provinces.

Monday's handover comes after several aborted attempts. Initially scheduled for March, the transfer was pushed back to June.

U.S. officials blamed two delays in June on weather and then delays in July on a last-minute disagreement between the province's governor and the Iraqi government in Baghdad over control of security forces.

Security concerns also caused delays after a suicide bomber in a police uniform killed more than 20 people, including three Marines, in the town of Karmah, 20 miles west of Baghdad.

Kelly said there would be no further delays despite security concerns and the start of the holy month of Ramadan, when observant Muslims fast from dawn to dusk.

Lights out? Experts fear fireflies are dwindling

BY MICHAEL CASEY
AP Environmental Writer

BAN LOMTUAN, Thailand Preecha Jiabyu used to take tourists on a rowboat to see the banks of the Mae Klong River aglow with thousands of fireflies.

These days, all he sees are the fluorescent lights of hotels, restaurants and highway overpasses. He says he'd have to row a good two miles to see trees lit up with the magical creatures of his younger days.

"The firefly populations have dropped 70 percent, in the past three years," said Preecha, 58, a former teacher who started providing dozens of row boats to compete with polluting motor boats. "It's sad. They were a symbol of our city."

The fate of the insects drew more than 100 entomologists and biologists to Thailand's northern city of Chiang Mai last week for an international symposium on the "Diversity and Conservation of Fireflies."

They then traveled Friday to Ban Lomtuan, an hour outside of Bangkok, to see the synchronous firefly *Pteroptyx malaccae* — known for its rapid, pulsating flashing that look like Christmas lights.

Yet another much-loved species imperiled by humankind? The evidence is entirely anecdotal, but there are anecdotes galore.

From backyards in Tennessee to riverbanks in Southeast Asia, researchers said they have seen fireflies — also called glow-worms or lightning bugs — dwindling in number.

No single factor is blamed, but researchers in the United States and Europe mostly cite urban sprawl and industrial pollution that destroy insect habitat. The spread of artificial lights also could be a culprit, disrupting the intricate mating behavior that depends on a male winning over a female with its flashing backside.

"It is quite clear they are declining," said Stefan Ineichen, a researcher who studies fireflies in Switzerland and runs a Web site to

gather information on firefly sightings.

"When you talk to old people about fireflies, it is always the same," he said. "They saw so many when they were young and now they are lucky now if they see one."

Fredric VencI, a researcher at Stonybrook University in New York, discovered a new species two years ago only to learn its mountain habitat in Panama was threatened by logging.

Lynn Faust spent a decade researching



I KNOW OF POPULATIONS THAT HAVE DISAPPEARED ON MY FARM BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENT AND LIGHT POLLUTION."

Lynn Faust
Researcher

fireflies on her 40-acre farm in Knoxville, Tenn., but gave up on one species because she stopped seeing them.

"I know of populations that have disappeared on my farm because of development and light pollution," said Faust. "It's these McMansions with their floodlights. One house has 32 lights. Why do you need so many lights?"

But Faust and other experts said they still need scientific data, which has been difficult to come by with so few monitoring programs in place.

There are some 2,000 species and researchers are constantly discovering new ones. Many have never been studied, leaving scientists in the dark about the potential threats and the meaning of their Morse code-like flashes that signal everything from love to danger.

"It is like a mystery insect," said Anchana Thancharoen, who was part of a team that discovered a new species *Luciola aquatilis* two years ago in Thailand.

The problem is, a nocturnal insect as

small as a human fingertip can't be tagged and tracked like bears or even butterflies, and counting is difficult when some females spend most of their time on the ground or don't flash.

And the firefly's adult life span of just one to three weeks makes counting even harder.

European researchers have tried taking a wooden frame and measuring the numbers that appear over a given time. Scientists at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia have

been photographing fireflies populations monthly along the Selangor River.

But with little money and manpower to study the problem, experts are turning to volunteers for help. Web sites like the Citizen Science Firefly Survey in Boston, which started this year, encourages enthusiasts to report changes in their neighborhood firefly populations.

"Researchers hope this would allow us to track firefly populations over many years to determine if they are remaining stable or disappearing," said Christopher Cratsley, a firefly expert at Fitchburg State College in Massachusetts who served as a consultant on the site run by the Boston Museum of Science.

Scientists acknowledge the urgency to assess fireflies may not match that of polar bears or Siberian tigers. But they insist fireflies are a "canary in a coal mine" in terms of understanding the health of an ecosystem.

Preecha, the teacher turned boatman, couldn't agree more. He has seen the pristine river of his childhood become polluted.

Russian support for separatists could generate ripples

BY PAISLEY DODDS
Associated Press Writer

LONDON Russia's conflict with Georgia and recognition of its small breakaway territories as independent states may have broad repercussions for separatist movements in the former Soviet sphere and around the world.

The crisis could give a jolt of energy to other breakaway regions, especially those with links to Russia, or embolden China to pursue a tougher line in Tibet and Taiwan in the absence of tough Western measures.

"Any country that has a potential separatist movement will view the events in Georgia through its own unique prism," Richard Holbrooke, the former U.S. envoy who mediated peace in Bosnia in the mid-1990s, told The Associated Press.

"But the greatest cause for concern lies in the Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova," all former Soviet states.

With the exception of the Balkans, post-Soviet era Europe has grown accustomed to the notion of territorial integrity as stable — if not sacrosanct.

Russia's push into Georgia and its recognition of the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia have undermined this status quo — and may start to warm up so-called "frozen conflicts" in Moldova's Trans-Dniester region and Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh, where Moscow backs separatist movements.

Azerbaijan and Armenia are locked in conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which is encircled by Azerbaijan but controlled by ethnic Armenian forces. Russia has close historical and economic ties to Armenia, which surrendered control of key sectors of its economy to Russia in exchange for debt forgiveness.



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SURF REPORT

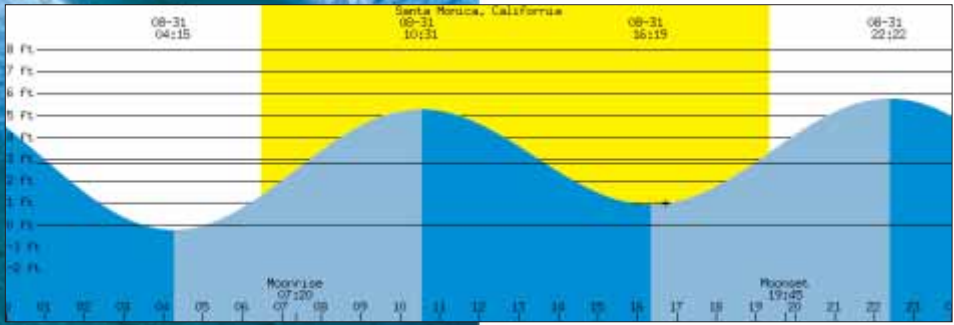


SURF CONDITIONS

WATER TEMP: 67°

SWELL FORECAST (3-5 FT)

Wind swell fetch has formed in full force along the NCal coastline. Angled though from a steep 315 degrees, most of this is skirting past SoCal. Mariners past the islands are dealing with victory at sea conditions, but nearer to the SoCal coast, only some of this energy is diffracting in. This wind swell should peak Monday, then diminish quickly Tuesday as the high pressure scenario mentioned above wipes out any chance for gradient/wind/fetch formation. As this wind swell backs down though, southern hemi swell will build.

TIDE FORECAST FOR TODAY IN SANTA MONICA



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 26, 2008

HEAL THE BAY - 1444 9th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401 - www.healthebay.org - brc@healthebay.org - 800 HEAL BAY

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 -- 37 / ns

Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 9 / ns

The Beach Report Card is made possible by

Goldhirsh FOUNDATION

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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 Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET	LOCATION	DRY	WET
Las Camille Beach, at Arroyo Sepul Creek mouth	A+	ns	Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence	A+	ns
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns	Will Rogers State Beach at Palga Canyon storm drain	A+	ns
El Pescador State Beach, between Locks and Las Aliso creeks	A+	ns	Will Rogers State Beach at Tennesson Canyon drain	A+	ns
Encinal Canyon at El Maradero State Beach	A+	ns	Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chatsworth)	A	ns
Bread Beach at Trancas Creek mouth	A+	ns	Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain	D	ns
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth	A+	ns	Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	F	ns
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildfire Rd. (private)	A+	ns	Santa Monica Municipal Pier	B	ns
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns	Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Venice storm drain	A	ns
Escandido Creek, just east of Escandido State Beach	A+	ns	Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restaurants)	C	ns
Lariga Canyon Creek mouth	A	ns	Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A+	ns
Selena Canyon at Don Blocker County Beach	C	ns	Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A+	ns
Puente State Beach at creek mouth	A+	ns	Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain	A+	ns
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puente Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	F	ns	Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	ns
Surfside Beach at Malibu Colony fence	A+	ns	Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	A	ns
Surfside Beach (beach location)- daily	C	ns	Venice Beach- projection of Topsoil St.	D	ns
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	C	ns	Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower	A+	ns
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon	A+	ns	Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth	D	ns
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (joint zero)	A+	ns	Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain	B	ns
Big Rock Beach at 18048 PCH stairs	A+	ns	North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach	A+	ns
Paseo Creek at Las Tunas County Beach	A+	ns	Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of DGVW jetty)	A+	ns
Tuna Canyon	A+	ns	Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	ns	Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hygienic Treatment Plant	A+	ns
Castroville Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	A	ns	Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain	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 these areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

NFL

Warner to start ahead of Leinart for Cardinals

BY BOB BAUM

AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. Experience beat out potential in the fight for starting quarterback for the Arizona Cardinals.

Coach Ken Whisenhunt said Saturday that Kurt Warner would be the starter over Matt Leinart when Arizona opens its season Sept. 7 at San Francisco.

“It was a fair evaluation of that position but it was also tough because both guys played well,” Whisenhunt said. “Both guys did a good job.”

The coach said he still considered Leinart, the No. 10 pick overall in the draft three years ago and a 16-game NFL starter in two seasons, the Cardinals’ quarterback of the future. But Warner is coming off a strong season and impressed the coaching staff with his consistency and willingness to adjust his game to suit Whisenhunt’s style.

Warner said he had mixed feelings when he was told of the decision.

“I was obviously excited for me and the opportunity but I’m also disappointed for Matt and know the position that he’s in,” Warner said, “Kind of bittersweet but definitely excited from my standpoint.”

Leinart was the opening day starter in Whisenhunt’s first season with Arizona a year ago, but the quarterback went down for the season with a broken collarbone on a vicious hit from St. Louis linebacker Will Witherspoon in game 5.

Warner came on to have one of his best seasons since his heady days with St. Louis, when he was a two-time MVP (1999 and 2001) and a Super Bowl MVP (2000).

He threw for 3,417 yards and 27 touchdowns for the Cardinals—compared with 17 interceptions—despite only 11 starts. Warner had multiple touchdown passes in each of his last eight games, the longest such

streak of his career.

Still, the day after last season ended, Whisenhunt said Leinart was the No. 1 quarterback. That changed sometime this preseason. The most obvious turning point came Aug. 23 in Oakland, when Leinart was awful, throwing three interceptions in less than two quarters.

Whisenhunt insists that wasn’t the major factor in the decision, and Leinart came back with a strong showing in Friday night’s preseason finale against Denver.

“It really wasn’t anything specific,” Whisenhunt said. “There were a lot of things that we were looking at. It was a whole bunch of information.”

Whisenhunt said Leinart was understandably upset by the decision.

“Great competitors get upset emotionally,” the coach said. “Part of being a good player is reining those emotions in and being able to control them. That was one of the things that we got to see last night. He was able to do that after last week.”

It wasn’t enough to save his job, though.

Instead, Warner was put at the controls of a team that, after going 8-8 last season, believes it can contend in the NFC West. Warner acknowledged it is unusual in today’s NFL for a veteran to unseat such a high draft pick at quarterback.

“The bottom line is you just want to be on the football field and you want to play,” Warner said. “I still feel like I can do that at a high level.”

He said he was happy to “have another chance to compete and hopefully take us to someplace we haven’t been in some time and have another run at a championship.”

Whisenhunt also announced two other decisions in close competition. Travis LaBoy will start over Bertrand Berry at defensive end/linebacker, and Deuce Lutui got the nod at right guard over Elton Brown.

NFL

Niners claim Brooks, waive Thomas

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

April.

SANTA CLARA The San Francisco 49ers claimed linebacker Ahmad Brooks off waiver from Cincinnati on Sunday, waiving linebacker Dontarrious Thomas to make room on their 53-man roster.

Brooks spent his first two NFL seasons with the Bengals, starting five games as a rookie. He appeared in just two games last year before a groin injury ended his season, and he was among Cincinnati’s final cuts Saturday.

Brooks, who is likely to back up Pro Bowl linebacker Patrick Willis, has a history of bad behavior. He was dismissed from the Virginia football team before his senior season after frequent trouble with coach Al Groh, and he was accused of punching a woman in the face in northern Kentucky in

The 49ers signed Thomas early in free agency after four seasons with the Minnesota Vikings, but he never earned a major role in the offseason program or training camp. San Francisco also signed linebacker Takeo Spikes during camp, waiving veteran linebacker Brandon Moore to make room.

San Francisco also signed the first six members of its practice squad: running back Thomas Clayton, defensive tackle Atiyah Ellison, tight end J.J. Finley, linebacker Larry Grant, defensive end Louis Holmes and receiver Dominique Zeigler. Former California offensive lineman Brian De La Puente got away from the 49ers, signing with Kansas City after excelling in training camp with San Francisco.

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Difficulty Level ★★

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

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

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

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By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein

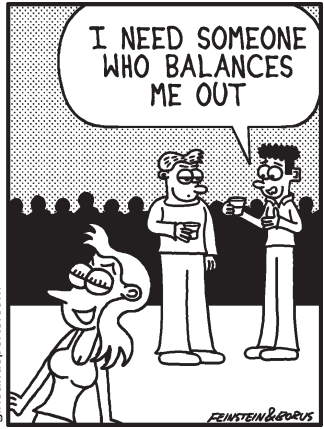


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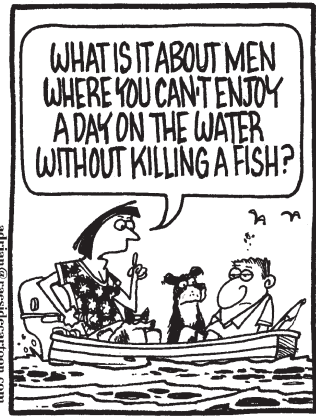


The Other Coast

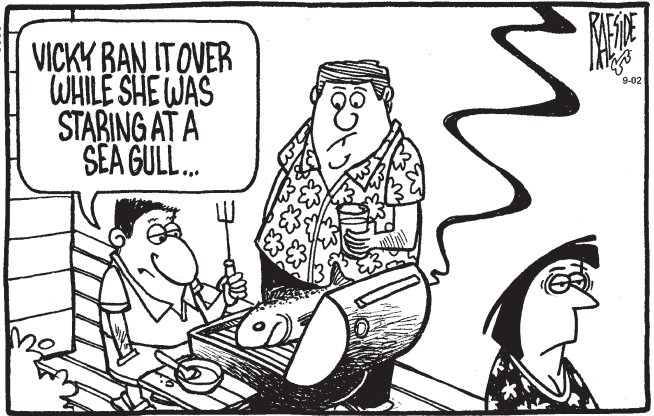
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RAESIDE 9-02

Garfield

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1/2



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Anderson

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



Strange Brew

By John Deering



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By Dave Coverly



MYSTERY PHOTO

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

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Sorry to say

1 Hard precipitation 43 Stagger

5 Outcry

10 Mystery-writing award

12 Hole — (golf feat)

13 Kid-nappers' mailings

15 Conceit

16 Rotten

17 French friend

18 Café worker

20 Jazz's Getz

21 Prophetic ones

22 Corrals

23 Recital piece

25 Riding whip

28 Print measures

31 Where jeans hug

32 Sneaker part

34 Broad st.

35 Avril follower

36 "The Crying Game" star

37 Internal reminders

40 Overuse the mirror

41 Serious

DOWN

1 Toast starter

2 Wise sayings

3 Disregard

4 — Vegas

5 Discover

6 First número

7 Turn

8 Kind of band

9 Pine products

11 Burns or Browning

14 Kangaroo, for one

19 Prexies' underlings

20 Blueprint data

24 Restau-rant activity

25 Title takers

26 Muralist Diego

27 Started the bidding

29 Blood lines?

30 Jacket part

33 Art stand

35 Lots of

38 Bus. card abbr.

39 Hockey legend Bobby

S	L	O	T		F	I	R	E	S	
P	I	P	E		A	R	E	N	A	S
I	V	A	N		M	O	B	I	L	E
C	E	R	T	A	I	N		G	I	N
E	N	T	A	I	L	S		M	E	T
				C	R	Y		P	A	N
B	A	D	L	Y		P	E	S	T	O
E	P	E	E		M	A	N			
A	R	F		D	I	R	T	B	A	G
D	O	A		O	N	T	A	R	I	O
E	N	C	I	N	O			C	A	L
D	E	T	O	U	R			L	I	E
				D	O	N	T	S		E
										S

Yesterday's answer

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

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ In a July ceremony, Minneapolis Police Chief Tim Dolan honored SWAT officers for their bravery and professionalism during a December middle-of-the-night raid of a house that supposedly contained a gang's guns. However, it was the wrong house, and the bewildered, frightened resident started shooting back. Said Dolan, "The easy decision would have been to retreat (but the) team did not take the easy way out." The house got riddled with bullets, but no one was hit, and the chief later apologized but still felt that it was "a perfect example of a situation that could have gone horribly wrong, but did not because of the (team's) professionalism." Believers: (1) Rocky Tyman of Washington, D.C., started Pray at the Pump, a brief, scattered national campaign in June to urge prayer to bring down gas prices. A colleague in St. Louis claimed his prayer sessions caused the price drop in July, pointing to his use of the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome" (and his new verse, "We'll have lower gas prices"). (2) In July, Salinas, Calif., Mayor Dennis Donohue, frustrated at this year's dramatic surge in gang violence, kicked off a campaign to urge a citywide fast, which he said was a proven technique in achieving social justice.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1945 Japan formally surrendered in ceremonies aboard the USS Missouri, ending World War II.

1666 The Great Fire of London broke out.

1789 The United States Treasury Department was established.

1807 British forces began bombarding Copenhagen for several days, until the Danes agreed to surrender their naval fleet.

1864 During the Civil War, Union Gen. William T. Sherman's forces occupied Atlanta.

1901 Vice President Theodore Roosevelt offered the advice, "Speak softly and carry a big stick" in a speech at the Minnesota State Fair.

1930 The first nonstop airplane flight from Europe to the U.S. was completed in 37 hours as Captain Dieudonne Costes and Maurice Bellonte of France arrived in Valley Stream, N.Y., aboard their Breguet 19 biplane, which bore a large question mark, instead of a name, on each side.

1935 A hurricane slammed into the Florida Keys, claiming more than 400 lives.

1945 Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam an independent republic.

1958 President Eisenhower signed the National Defense Education Act, which provided aid to public and private education to promote learning in such fields as math and science.

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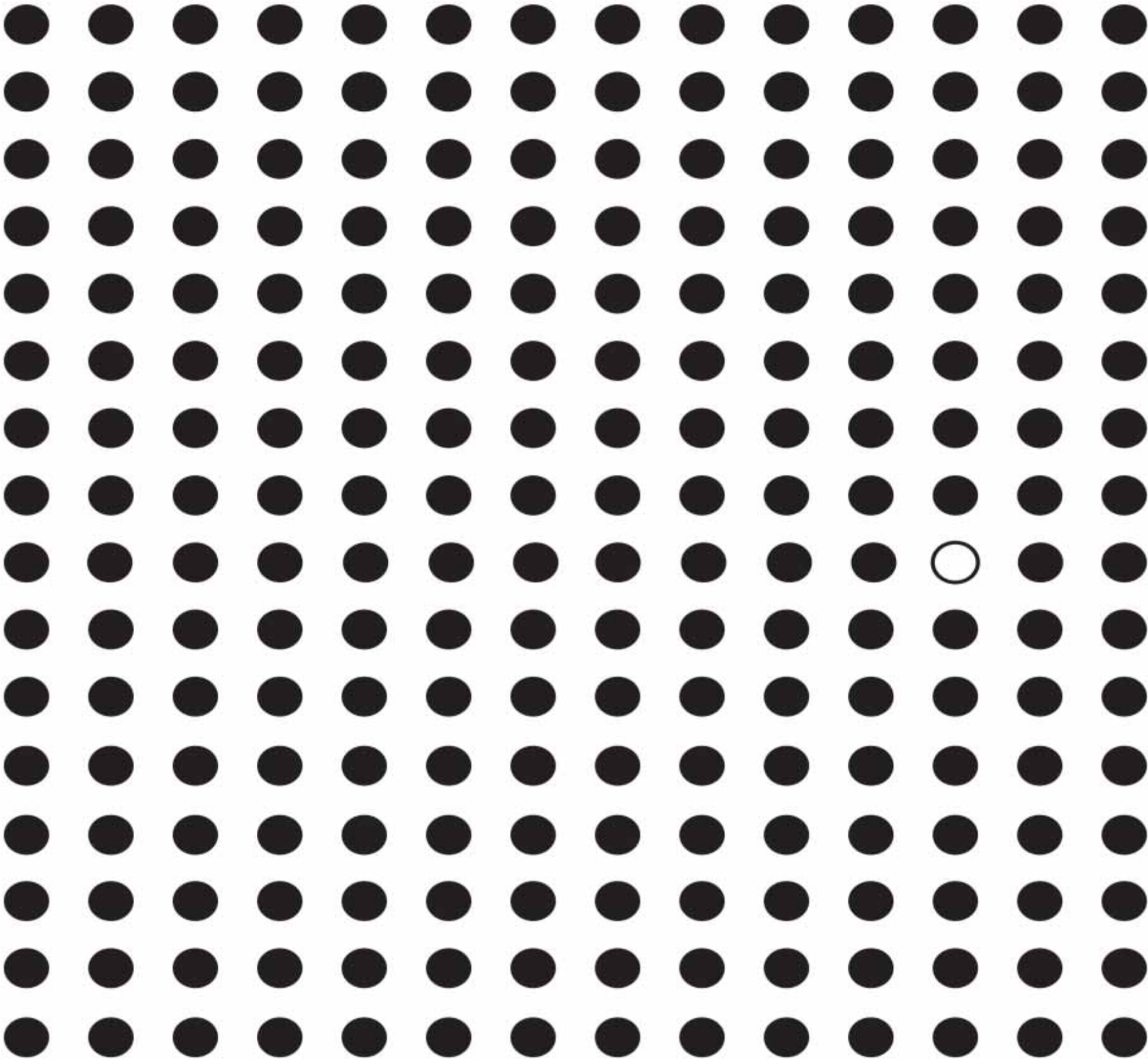
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