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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2009

Volume 8 Issue 257



Santa Monica Daily Press

SPECIAL DELIVERY TO CUBA?
SEE PAGE 7

We have you covered

THE SMOKE FILLS THE AIR ISSUE

Fireworks may have downside

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SM PIER When the fireworks are launched in one week into the dark evening sky, celebrating 100 years of the city's most recognizable landmark, there could be an environmental price to pay.

That's according to a recent city staff report that explored possible issues related to the highly anticipated pyrotechnics display for the Santa Monica Pier's Centennial Celebration on Sept. 9 when approximately 6,400 individual fireworks will be set off.

The fireworks will contain potassium perchlorate — an oxidizer used as a propellant — and various metals including chromium, copper, mercury, strontium and zinc, which together create the colorful show.

"Ideally they are designed so that all the propellants and all of the metals that produce the colors will burn up so that the only thing you really are going to have is the paper residue from the fireworks," Dean Kubani, the director of the Office of Sustainability and the Environment, said. "But obviously you do get some remains that are on the paper and some duds that don't go off."

Kubani said that while there's very little research on the environmental and public health impacts from fireworks, he did find a report by the Environmental Protection Agency that found increased levels of perchlorate at a lake after several fireworks shows. High levels of perchlorate can affect thyroid function, especially in pregnant women and children.

It's also been known to be a concern in drinking water, but Kubani points out that it shouldn't be an issue locally because the fireworks will be ignited above the ocean from a barge.

"Based on the fact that fireworks are being launched daily around the world and thousands of times a year, we're not really

SEE **FIREWORKS** PAGE 10



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

WHAT A SHOW: **Fireworks light up the sky over Redondo Beach during a Fourth of July celebration earlier this summer. A similar show at the SM Pier may have an impact on environment.**

Cleaning house

Bayside District Corp. focuses on improving parking structures

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Editor in Chief

DOWNTOWN While on a recent tour of the Downtown parking structures, Bayside District Corp. CEO Kathleen Rawson passed by a sticker slapped onto a wall and began to peel it off with her fingernail as if she was at home cleaning up after one of her children.

It was a simple act that may have gone unnoticed if not for the fact that Bayside, the public-private management company now in charge of over $3 million in property assessment funds, is moving aggressively to thoroughly clean and maintain the structures, which are used by millions of drivers each year and have earned a reputation for being filthy and soaked in urine.

For 30 minutes Rawson, along with Bayside's director of operations, Andrew Thomas, walked up stairwells, visited bathrooms and rode elevators to demonstrate how clean Parking Structure 4 was in the weeks following an intense pressure washing by H20, a company hired by Bayside for $542,000 a year to routinely clean each Downtown structure (aside from those attached to Santa Monica Place).

Structure 4 is the first structure to undergo the intense cleaning, but others are to follow, with hopes that within a few months visitors will start to look at the structures, and Downtown, in a different light, ensuring that the shopping district remains vibrant for another 20 years.

"We had a well-deserved dicey reputation in terms of the cleanliness of Downtown because the resources weren't there to maintain the amount of square footage we had, so people have these perceptions of what Downtown looks and smells and feels like," Rawson said Tuesday. "It will take some time to realize there has been a change in how clean Downtown Santa Monica is.

"We don't expect to get flooded with calls from people saying, 'My goodness, it's clean. Thank you,'" Rawson added. "Most people don't really notice when something is clean, but they certainly notice when it is filthy and when it smells. That is being addressed right now and will continue to be addressed for the next 20 years."

SEE **STRUCTURES** PAGE 11



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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Ballroom by the bay
Santa Monica Bay Women's Club
1210 FourthSt., 7 p.m. — 11 p.m.
Enjoy free dance lessons, followed by dancing on the club's 3,000-square-foot floor. Waltz, foxtrot, swing, hustle and more — no partner necessary. Admission is $10. Call (310) 487-0911 for more information.

Salsa the night away
Club Main
2941 Main St., 7:30 p.m.
Get down and shake off your stress and troubles with fun salsa dancing. Isabelle's salsa nights are offered every Wednesday at Club Main. Dance until you drop for free after 9 p.m. Drink specials last from 7 p.m. — 9 p.m. Beginner and intermediate salsa lessons are available from 7:30 p.m. — 9 p.m. for $15. Call (310) 392-3493 for more information.

LeTip Business Referral Club
Best Western Hotel meeting rooms
Santa Monica Blvd. and 19th St., 7 a.m. — 8:30 a.m.
Business owners and professionals meet each Wednesday morning to share tips or referrals to help one another grow their businesses. Come at 7 a.m. for breakfast. First visit is free. Call (310) 920-9649 for more information.

Walk the labyrinth
First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica
1008 11th St., 1 p.m. — 2 p.m.
Quiet your mind and nurture your soul as you walk the permanent labyrinth laid in the floor of Simkins Hall at First United Methodist Church. The labyrinth is an ancient walking meditation tool. The church's labyrinth is a replica of the Chartres Labyrinth laid in the floor of the cathedral around 1220 AD. Walking the Labyrinth provides a contemplative time for prayer and meditation, and all are invited to participate. Call (310) 393-8258 for more information, or e-mail mary.garbesi@santamonicaumc.org.

Thursday, Sept. 3, 2009

What's new this week?
Fairview Branch Library
2101 Ocean Park Blvd., 1 p.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Come for a free-wheeling review and discussion of the week's key news stories at home and abroad moderated by Jack Nordhaus.
Call (310) 450-0443 for more information.

Pier in pictures
First United Methodist Church
1008 11th St., 9 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.
The First United Methodist Church presents a beautiful, free photo exhibit by church member Allan Walker to coincide with the Santa Monica Pier's 100th anniversary. The exhibit features contemporary images of the famous structure. This exhibit will be open daily through Sept. 9. For more information, call (310) 393-8258.

Santa Monica Laughter Club
Shakti's Elements
717 Broadway, 11 a.m. — noon
Come join the laughter club every Thursday and laugh your socks off. This form of body-mind exercise is for all ages and fitness levels. Kim Selbert leads the laughter club and is a certified laughter yoga leader. Call (310) 849-4642 for more information or visit www.kimselbert.com. Cost is $10.

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.



JUST FOR KICKS

Raymond Solano *news@smdp.com*

Jennifer Perez, 17, shows of the self-defense skills that she learned over the two years she spent at the Virginia Avenue Park boxing program on Tuesday. At the annual 'Back To School Safety' event children were also given free school supplies for the start of the new school year next week.

Students post high marks on state test

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMMUSD HDQTRS They may only be in the 10th grade but graduation is clearly on many of their minds.

The state Department of Education on Tuesday released results of the 2009 California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), showing students in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District continuing to post high marks in the subject areas of math and English language arts (ELA) with 92 percent of 10th graders passing both.

The test is administered to all students starting their sophomore year as a graduation requirement and must be taken every year thereafter until they pass. The results are used to calculate the Academic Performance Index for state accountability purposes and the Adequate Yearly Progress, which determines whether districts have met requirements of the federal education bill No Child Left Behind.

The district has overall shown gradual improvement in both subjects since 2004 when 89 percent of sophomores passed math and 91 percent in English language arts.

"It is rewarding to see continued progress toward our goal of 100 percent passage rate for all 10th graders," Superintendent Tim Cuneo said. "We are pleased to see many of our students passing this exam on their first try and will continue to provide additional support and tutoring for students who need to retake the exam in the 11th or even 12th grade."

Schools in Los Angeles County and the state have also increased their scores but still sit well below the SMMUSD. Approximately 77 percent of 10th graders in the county passed math and ELA, while 80 and 79 percent of students in the state passed math and ELA, respectively.

The results also show a narrowing of the academic achievement gap in Santa Monica and Malibu. African-American and Latino students have improved their scores in math by 12 and 14 percent, respectively, since

SEE **SCORES** PAGE 10

Fires a sign of looming season

GREG RISLING
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES Firefighters reported some progress Tuesday against a gigantic blaze on the edge of Los Angeles, but warned that this one might be just a preview of even greater dangers ahead. The peak Southern California fire season hasn't even started yet.

The worst fires typically flare up in the fall, when ferocious Santa Ana winds can drive fires out of wilderness areas and into suburbs. As a result, Southern California could be in for a long wildfire season.

"When you see a fire burning like this, with no Santa Ana winds, we know that with the winds, it would be so much worse, so much more intense," said Los Angeles County fire Capt. Mark Whaling.

The Santa Anas are so devastating when they carry fire because they sweep down from the north and reach withering speeds as they squeeze through wilderness canyons and passes and plunge into developed areas.

Even though winds have been mostly calm since the blaze began along the northern fringe of Los Angeles and its suburbs, the flames have spread over 190 square miles of forest in a week. Some 12,000 homes remained threatened as 3,600 firefighters and aircraft battled the blaze across a 50-mile line.

But it was not the only significant blaze in Southern California.

In the inland region east of Los Angeles, 2,000 homes were being threatened by a fire of more than 1.5 square miles in the San Bernardino County community of Oak Glen, and a nearby 1.3-square-mile blaze was putting 900 homes at risk in Yucaipa.

"There's action everywhere," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said as a helicopter interrupted his comments at a news conference in San Bernardino County.

The big fire, known as the Station Fire, was just 5 percent surrounded, but U.S. Forest Service incident commander Mike Dietrich said that figure could double by the

SEE **FIRES** PAGE 13

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Compassionate care

Editor:

In the Aug. 15 issue, Randy Walburger states, "It's time all cities stop uselessly criminalizing the homeless and start supporting homeless existence, leading to enabled recovery." In the Aug. 18 issue, in response, Mr. Medlin says, "To which I ask, why?"

I have a simple answer to Mr. Medlin's question, "Because as human beings, we need to care for our fellow human beings."

Before I go further, I will say that I live in the Pico Neighborhood, in a socio-economically, racially-mixed neighborhood. We have homeless people searching through our trash cans in our alley every day. I do not "evacuate to my safe and quiet neighborhood north of Wilshire, Montana and east of Lincoln or better still to Pacific Palisades and Brentwood," nor am I a "Limo Liberal" as Mr. Medlin apparently feels is a description of anyone who has compassion for his fellow humans.

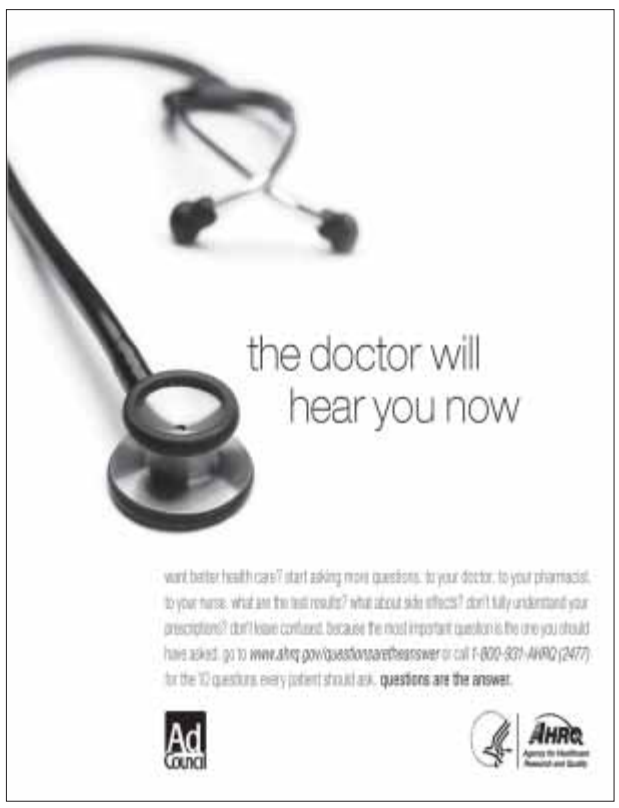
I have talked to many homeless people. Some are so mentally disturbed, they simply cannot cope. Some are decent people who have lost their job, had a debilitating accident, or for some other reason have run out of money and have to live on the street or in their car. They are usually truly surprised about what has happened to them and had felt like "it could never happen to me." Some are hard working people who collect bottles, cans and other items to recycle and have a bit of money for food for that day. And, yes, some are aggressive panhandlers who abuse the system. You will find others in the corporate/business, professional, military, political and all other worlds who also abuse the system.

I, fortunately, have no idea what it is like to lose my job, become mentally or physically disabled and be forced to live on the street for months. I imagine it is very difficult to pull oneself out of such a situation. It must be truly psychologically damaging to have people staring at you with pity/anger/hatred day after day. I don't think most of the homeless people actually choose that lifestyle.

Personally, I am happy to have some of my tax money help those less fortunate. Food, shelter and some sort of help "getting it back together" seems like a good use of my money; much better than spending billions fighting needless wars. I don't really like seeing people starving on the street, I don't mind someone who needs it having a free lunch on my dollar.

While nothing bad can ever happen to Mr. Medlin, because of his moral, financial and spiritual superiority, if by some unfortunate chance a calamity does happen to him, I hope people are more compassionate than himself will be there to help.

Peter Davison
Santa Monica





Going Postal

Steve "the Mailman" Breen — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

ObamaCare flatlining

I HAVE WRITTEN A COUPLE OF COLUMNS for the SMDP detailing my own health and lifestyle habits. Even with the indulgence of my weekly Cuban cigar and a professional adulation for single malt scotch, my QALY (Quality-Adjusted Life Year) is pretty damn spectacular for an ardent martial artist in his sixth decade of life.

Want good health? Take responsibility for your lifestyle choices, be they smart, stupid or indifferent.

So can someone please explain why left-leaning Astroturf wing nuts are now boycotting Whole Foods? Folks, shrub huggers boycotting an organic food market makes about as much sense as Hugh Hefner boycotting Viagra.

Could it possibly be that Whole Foods CEO John Mackey is also an ardent opponent of the political proctological nonsense called ObamaCare and is now considered an enemy of the state?

Is it an inconvenient truth that, in promoting a healthy lifestyle, Whole Foods' philosophy is free-market capitalism operating at its highest level? Under free-market capitalism, you, as a customer at Whole Foods, pay a premium price for an awesome array of high-quality products at checkout. Your patronage provides a decent living wage to healthy, hard working, committed people as well as funding for 100 percent company-paid health insurance premiums without the putrescent moonshine from Dr. Macdaddy Squealgood's snake oil stinking up the marketplace.

It was recently reported that U.S. Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) has prostate cancer. Obviously Chris hasn't been eating his veggies. Unfortunately, under the provisions of the Kennedy/Dodd health care initiative, Sen. Dodd's surgery would have been done by Joe the Plumber.

The initial cost estimates of the Kennedy/Dodd dog-and-pony rodeo was an appalling $4 trillion over 10 years and would force approximately 79 million Americans off of their private insurance and onto the "public option."

Folks, if you think that waiting in line at the Post Office during Christmas is a hassle, then picture yourself waiting in line to see your government-apportioned doctor. You pull a number from that little paper ticket gizmo at the back of the line. As you look down to see that your lucky number under LottoCare is "78,999,993," you then think to yourself, "Whew! Thank the senator from Chappaquiddick that I wasn't last!"

Hopefully you brought along a good book to read while lolling in the paddock with the rest of the cattle. "War and Peace," all five volumes in the original Russian, would be a pretty good choice. You don't know Russian? Don't worry, you'll have plenty of time to learn as the loud speaker overhead blares, "Now serving number 63,451,239!" If, however, your breast cancer metastasizes and kills you in a fashionably grotesque manner during your wait, there will be another set of government forms for you to fill out later to dis-enroll you from LottoCare.

Thanks for playing!

I find it hysterically comical and fortunate though that Obama pulled the plug on the Kennedy/Dodd health care initiative back in mid-June. I just love watching Democrats eat their own.

ObamaCareTM, however, is considering adopting McDonalds' old motto of "millions and millions served" but do you really want to eat that kind of crap? The Oxymoron-in-Chief, while attempting to choke the American taxpayer on his healthcare crap sandwich, clowned himself when he said at a recent sycophant-infested town hall in New Hampshire " … Fed-Ex and UPS are doing fine … it's the Post Office that's always having problems."

Was Obama reading from Joe Biden's teleprompter that night?

How big of a bowl of stupid does a guy have to eat in order to preach to his own choir about how splendiferous a government-run kumbaya health care system will be for their benefit on the one hand while simultaneously citing the financially dysfunctional woes of the government-run USPS on the other and then not expect that the rest of the country wouldn't get all wee-weed up about it? Here, Bozo, you dropped your nose.

Would you want your brain tumor removed with the same governmental aplomb as "postal efficiency?"

The Oxymoron-in-Chief recently kvetched to a group of rabbis about ObamaCareTM, "We do God's work of life and death." Excuse me, but aren't matters of life and death above Obama's pay grade as he once expressed to Pastor Rick Warren? Since the government-sanctioned and taxpayer subsidized murder of the unborn is part of ObamaCareTM, is abortion now part of God's resume? Did the Oxymoron-in-Chief then Twitter himself to pass the smell test?

Eating right and exercising is a hell of a lot cheaper than a quadruple by-pass, ladies and gentlemen. And like abortion, it is a lifestyle choice, after all.

STEVE BREEN'S conservative QALY is better than the Camel-smoking president's QALY and is still "the best looking mailman in 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

Not so neighborly

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, MY ROOM MATE and I have shared a two-bedroom apartment on a nice, quiet block in Mid-City. A few weeks ago, he told me he'd be moving out. More accurately, he told me he was moving in with his brother who had been couch surfing with us for two months (while supposedly looking for a place for himself and his "friend from college"). As it turns out, there was no friend, it was all a lie, and I was on the horns of a dilemma. I didn't want to move, but I couldn't swing the rent by myself. Nobody I knew was looking for a roommate situation and didn't want to live with some stranger I found on Craigslist or Westside Rentals.

I liked the apartment, I love the area, and I really love my neighbors. Well, not all of them. There is one incredibly lousy neighbor on 23rd Street who actually helped me make the eventual decision to move to Sunset Park. This neighbor is probably the biggest landowner in the area with a property that spans the entire block between 20th and 23rd streets and Santa Monica Boulevard and Arizona Avenue. I've lived in Boston, New York City, San Francisco and Los Angeles and I've never seen a property owner show less regard for its neighbors or its community than this one. Of course, I'm talking about Saint John's Health Center.

In a transparently disingenuous, half-hearted attempt to get "input from the community," Saint John's recently held a meeting to discuss the next phase of its decade-long construction project and the abatement and demolition of the South Tower. And to ensure a limited turnout, they scheduled the hour-long meeting at 3 in the afternoon on a Thursday.

The community was represented by about a dozen good people and by me, your friendly neighborhood columnist. Saint John's sent their director of marketing and business development, Greg Harrison, and the mission and ethics vice president, LaTisha Starbuck. From the construction side, the Shane Miller Co. (listed as the "Owner's Representative," whatever that means) sent Project Executive Jake Keshishyan and President Shane Miller. Believe me when I tell you, I did my best to stay cool.

Jake went over the schedule for the next year or so — starting with the South Tower abatement this October through to the beginning of the North Lawn and entry plaza work next May. Then a guy (whose name I didn't get) talked about the abatement process. Contractors use the word "abatement" because when they say "toxic waste removal," people tend to freak out. The guy informed us the three-month process would involve getting rid of the building's insulation, at which point I wanted to know if there were any toxic or hazardous materials in the building. He said there weren't, then went on to talk about the removal of lead and asbestos. I was confused.

"I thought you said there were no hazardous or toxic materials," I said. "Now you're saying there's lead and asbestos."

"Well there's lead, but there's no lead," the guy responded.

"I don't understand that."

"There's lead in the building, but not in the insulation," he explained.

At that point, my B.S. antenna was activated, so I asked if an environmental impact study had been done. Both Jake and the guy gave me that blank stare that kids give you when you catch them in a lie, then looked at Shane Miller (who was sitting in the front row and hadn't yet identified himself) to rescue them. He turned to me and said, "No."

I was still cool, though I could tell where this was going. So I asked if they at least had a plan to re-direct traffic out of the parking garage at 20th or their new ER on Arizona Avenue. Their answer was no — and I could feel my face getting hotter when I heard it. After the rest of my neighbors got fired up, I asked my final question. "Do any of you live in Santa Monica?"

"I do," replied LaTisha Starbuck with a totally straight face. "Well, I live in Santa Monica, six miles outside the border." That was even more confusing to me than "there's lead, but there's no lead," so I let 'em have it — then went to find an apartment as far away from Saint John's as I could get.

Jake and Shane should be ashamed of themselves for claiming to care about the community, but doing nothing to stop construction workers from pilfering parking spaces on a daily basis. LaTisha should be ashamed of herself for lying about where she lives when the word "Ethics" is in her job title, and Greg should be ashamed of himself for his dismal failure in publicizing the meeting when he's supposed to be a marketing professional.

Most importantly, Saint John's should be ashamed. When your mission statement says, "We will in the spirit of the Sisters of Charity, reveal God's healing love by improving the health of the individuals and communities we serve, especially those who are poor and vulnerable," then there is no excuse for endangering the health of that community with your sewage and toxic waste. I'm talking to you, Lou Lazatin.

KENNY MACK is a multi-platform content provider with four-quadrant crossover appeal who loves his new neighborhood. His past columns are archived at www.ifyoumissedit.com and he can be reached at kennymack@gmail.com

The Q Line

Road work

A pilot project that converted a stretch of Ocean Park Boulevard from four lanes to two is currently being studied by city officials. Some say the new configuration helps keep pedestrians safe while others believe it creates more traffic.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Do you think Ocean Park Boulevard should be kept two lanes or should it be restored to four?

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press.


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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Consideration of proposed resolution to automatically adjust the Affordable Housing Unit Development Cost for new market-rate multi family development pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 9.56.070(c)

WHEN: Tuesday, September 8, 2009
5:45 P.M.

WHERE: Santa Monica City Hall, Council Chambers, Room #213
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, California

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City Council will conduct a public hearing regarding the proposed adoption of a resolution which would automatically adjust the Affordable Housing Unit Development Cost that developers of multi-family projects may pay to the City pursuant to Section 9.56.070(c) of the City's Affordable Housing Production Program. The existing Affordable Housing Unit Development Cost of $277,585 would be increased by $7,217. Effective November 9, 2009, the adjusted Affordable Housing Unit Development Cost would be $284,802.

The adjustments to the Affordable Housing Unit Development Cost reflect changes in land and construction costs based on a methodology adopted by the City Council on June 13, 2006. An explanation of this methodology and the resulting adjustment to the fee are set forth in a letter prepared for the City by HR&A Advisors, Inc. A copy of this letter is now available at the City Clerk's Office in Room 102 of City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, California or the Housing Division Office at 1901 Main Street, Suite B, 1st Fl., Santa Monica, California 90405. This information is also available on the City's web site (Housing and Economic Development Department section).

HOW TO COMMENT:

The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment on this matter. You or your representative, or any other persons may comment at the City Council's public hearing or by writing a letter.

Letters should be addressed to: Mayor and City Council
City Hall
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401

MORE INFORMATION

Further information may be obtained from the City Housing Division at the address above or by calling (310) 458-8702.

The meeting facility is handicapped accessible. If you have any special needs such as sign language interpreting, please contact the Office of the Disabled at (310) 458-8701.

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica, at or prior to the Public Hearing.

ESPANOL

Esto es una noticia de una audiencia pública para aumentar una tarifa sobre el desarrollo de alojamiento "multi-familiar" en Santa Monica. Si deseas más información, favor de llamar a Susana Rodriguez en la División de Viviendas y Desarrollo al número (310) 458-8743.

WALL STREET

Stocks take hit on news of bank failure rumors

SARA LEPRO &
TIM PARADIS
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK A stock market ripe for a big pullback succumbed Tuesday, plunging when rumors of a bank failure revived investors' anxiety about the banking industry and the economy as a whole.

A batch of economic reports that just weren't good enough added to the mix as the major indexes all fell about 2 percent and the Dow Jones industrials slid 185 points. Treasury prices, usually the beneficiary of a slide in stocks, ended only moderately higher.

A break in the market's rally was widely expected because pressure to sell has been building for some time. While the major indexes finished August with respectable gains, including a 3.4 percent rise in the Standard & Poor's 500, trading was erratic and there was little conviction behind the advances. Analysts warned that investors were doubting whether they should have bid stocks so high in the rally that began six months ago.

So it wasn't surprising that, after the Dow was up 60 points in response to a seemingly better-than-expected reading on manufacturing, something like a rumor about a possible bank failure could take the market down.

"Some time midmorning, rumors came out that a large bank could be in trouble," said Ryan Detrick, senior technical strategist at Schaeffer's Investment Research. "That's all it takes to spook this market."

The Dow's drop virtually equaled a 186-point slide two weeks ago that the market later recovered from, sending stocks to their highest levels in almost 10 months. Dan Deming, a trader with Strutland Equities in Chicago, said it didn't appear much had changed in the market since then, but investors have grown more nervous as stocks have pushed higher and that was enough to tip off heavy selling.

"It's really more psychological right now than anything. The first day of September — the market shows some weakness and then it just kind of starts to feed on itself," he said. "Everybody is kind of looking over their shoulder."

Deming referred to the fact that many investors had some fear of what might happen in September, which historically has been the worst month for stocks. Many analysts said the change in calendar was one of many factors that created a critical mass of sorts for the market and fueled Tuesday's drop.

Banks and insurance companies were among the most notable losers amid the fears of bank failures, but they also had been pumped up the most in the rally that lifted the market more than 50 percent since hitting 12-year lows in March. With the government reporting last week that 400 banks were in trouble during the second quarter, investors' anxiety about the health of the financial industry was heightened and so rumors that investors might shrug off in less fractious times became powerful enough to cause sustained losses.

The plunge in stocks came even as the Institute for Supply Management reported that U.S. manufacturing grew in August for the first time since January 2008. The market also shrugged off another positive economic report, the sixth straight monthly increase in pending home sales.

On the surface, the day's economic numbers were good. A deeper look at the data gave some cause for concern.

Analysts said both the manufacturing and housing reports got a boost from government stimulus efforts, including the Cash for Clunkers program that has since expired, which means the recovery in those industries may not continue at the same pace.

"In both cases it seems headlines overstate details by a touch," said Tom di Galoma, head of U.S. rates trading at Guggenheim Capital Markets LLC. "People reviewed the numbers and said this type of demand is just not sustainable."

Investors were also uneasy ahead of Friday's employment report from the government, which could reveal more bad news about the job market, one of the worst remaining problem areas in the U.S. economy.

The Dow dropped 185.68, or 2 percent, to 9,310.60. The index is down 270 points, or 2.8 percent, since Friday, its biggest drop over three days since July 7, when it lost 341 points.

The S&P 500 fell 22.58, or 2.2 percent, to 998.04, while the Nasdaq composite index fell 40.17, or 2 percent, to 1,968.89.

The day's retreat was broad:

• Of the 30 stocks that make up the Dow industrials, only Wal-Mart Stores Inc. rose.

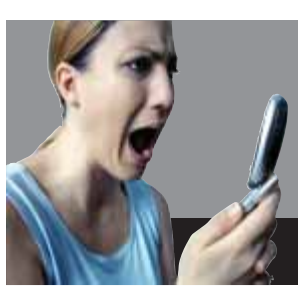
• Five stocks fell for every one that rose on the New York Stock Exchange, where volume came to 1.6 billion shares compared with a light 1.4 billion Monday.

• The Chicago Board Options Exchange's Volatility Index, known as the market's fear index, surged 12.1 percent, its biggest jump since Aug. 17. The VIX stands at 29.2 and is down 27 percent in 2009 and its historical average is 18-20. It hit a record 89.5 in October at the height of the financial crisis.

In other trading, the Russell 2000 index of smaller companies fell 14.01, or 2.5 percent, to 558.06.

Bond prices turned mostly higher after stocks began to fall and investors went in search of safer assets. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, which moves opposite its price, fell to 3.38 percent from 3.40 percent late Monday.

While the pullback in stocks Tuesday was significant, even with the drop, stocks have risen so much that only one of the roughly 3,100 stocks traded on the NYSE hit a new annual low. And, 53 carved new highs.


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COMMUNICATION

U.S. may resume direct mail to Cuba

MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON The United States and Cuba will start talks this month on resuming direct mail service between the two countries for the first time in nearly half a century as the Obama administration continues to try to engage the communist island, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

The negotiations, set for Sept. 17, will follow the resumption in July of talks on the legal immigration of Cubans to the U.S., according to the officials. The two sides agreed on the two sets of discussions in late May, a month after President Barack Obama eased travel and financial restrictions on Americans with family members in Cuba.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because details of the negotiations are not yet completed.

Direct postal service between the United States and Cuba was terminated in 1963 and since then mail has had to go through third countries. Previous attempts to restore the link have failed and experts believe Cuba's communist government remains sensitive about what kind of material might be sent to the island from the United States.

Obama wants to improve relations with Cuba and has taken several steps to gauge the Cuban leaderships' interest in doing so, including supporting a recent decision by the Organization of American States to revoke Cuba's 1962 suspension from the 34-country group.

But he has also said the U.S. embargo on the country enacted in 1960 will not be lifted until Cuba enacts democratic and economic reforms, such as freeing political prisoners and allowing freedom of speech. Several U.S. lawmakers have proposed intermediate measures, such as ending the ban on travel to Cuba by all Americans.

"The idea of postal service is in keeping with what appears to be an administration policy of moving ahead in a measured way and to try to engage with the government of Cuba," said Peter DeShazo, a former senior State Department official who dealt with Cuba and Latin American officials until his retirement in 2004.

"It is a careful, measured outreach to Cuba," said DeShazo, who is now the Americas program director for the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "No one has any expectation that these kinds of steps will lead to (reform in Cuba), but they could improve the relationship and the environment for cooperation between the U.S. and Cuba that eventually could open doors."

Cuba has responded warily to the overtures, insisting on the removal of the embargo. However, when it agreed to restart the immigration talks and the postal negotiations, Cuba also expressed a willingness to cooperate with the U.S. on fighting terrorism and drug trafficking, and on hurricane disaster preparedness.

Before the U.S.-Cuban immigration talks were suspended by the Bush administration in 2003, the twice-yearly meetings in alternating countries had been the highest level contacts between the two countries.

The talks were created so the countries could track adherence to 1994 and 1995 accords designed to promote legal, orderly migration between the two countries. The aim was to avoid a repeat of the summer of 1994, when tens of thousands of Cubans took to the sea in flimsy boats.

On July 14, U.S. and Cuban officials met in New York to resume the immigration negotiations in what the State Department said at the time was a sign of "our interest in pursuing constructive discussions with the government of Cuba to advance U.S. interests on issues of mutual concern."

TECHNOLOGY

Gmail leaves users disconnected

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO Google Inc.'s Gmail service was knocked offline Tuesday in a severe outage that the company said affected a "majority" of users.

It wasn't immediately clear what caused the disruption, which led Gmail users to get an "Unable to reach Gmail" error message as their computers tried repeatedly to reconnect to the service.

Google representatives did not immediately return messages left by The Associated Press.

Mountain View-based Google notified users in a posting on the company's Web site that problems with Gmail surfaced Monday, wiping out e-mail to a "small subset" of users. On Tuesday afternoon the company said an outage affecting "a majority of users" had hit Gmail. Google didn't say whether the outages were related.

Google restored service to some users. The company said it expected to have the problem fixed later Tuesday.

Though occasional disruptions are common, widespread outages involving Google's services are rare. They are becoming a bigger threat to Google as it tries to sell more of its services to businesses.

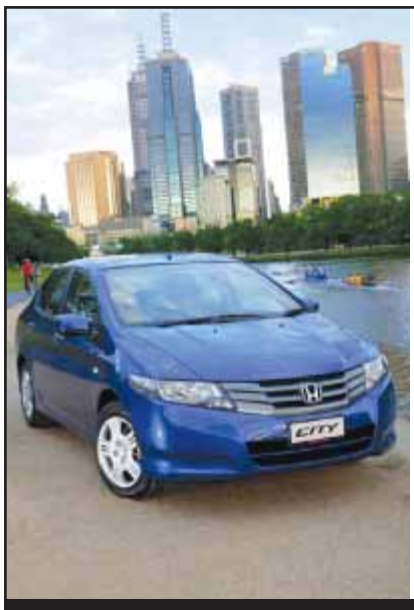
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Consideration of proposed resolution to automatically adjust the Affordable Housing Base Unit Fee for new market-rate multifamily development pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 9.56.070(b)

WHEN: Tuesday, September 8, 2009
5:45 P.M.

WHERE: Santa Monica City Hall, Council Chambers, Room #213
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, California

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City Council will conduct a public hearing regarding the proposed adoption of a resolution which would automatically adjust the Affordable Housing Unit Base Fee that developers of multi-family projects may pay to the City pursuant to Section 9.56.070(b) of the City's Affordable Housing Production Program. The existing Affordable Housing Unit Base fee for new market rate apartments of $26.45 per square foot would be increased by $0.69 per square foot of floor area and the existing Affordable Housing Unit Base fee for new market rate condominiums of $30.89 would be increased by $0.80 per square foot of floor area. Effective on November 9, 2009, the adjusted Affordable Housing Unit Base fee would be $27.14 per square foot of floor area for new market rate apartments and would be $31.69 per square foot of floor area for new market rate condominiums.

The adjustments to the Affordable Housing Base Unit Fee reflect changes in land and construction costs based on a methodology adopted by the City Council on June 13, 2006. An explanation of this methodology and the resulting adjustment to the fee are set forth in a letter prepared for the City by HR&A Advisors, Inc. A copy of this letter is now available at the City Clerk's Office in Room 102 of City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, California or the Housing Division Office at 1901 Main Street, Suite B, Santa Monica, California 90405. This information is also available on the City's web site (Housing and Economic Development Department section).

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City Hall
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ECONOMY

Wary consumers temper signs of mild recovery

BY TALI ARBEL
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK New signs of economic recovery emerged Tuesday only to be overshadowed by new worries that they won't last.

The U.S. manufacturing sector grew in August for the first time in 19 months. A gauge of future home sales surged in July to its highest point in more than two years. And auto sales — boosted by the Cash for Clunkers program — appeared in August to have marked their first year-over-year monthly gain since October 2007.

Yet hopes for a sustained recovery remain clouded by a big concern: consumer spending, which fuels about 70 percent of U.S. economic activity.

Americans are hamstrung by flat wages and job losses and aren't borrowing and spending enough to nourish a lasting rebound. That raises the vexing question of who will buy all the goods that manufacturers are producing?

Skepticism about a recovery contributed to a nasty tumble on Wall Street Tuesday, following a monthslong rally. All the major averages fell about 2 percent, with the Dow Jones industrials sliding 185 points, as concerns grew about the fragility of the banking industry and the global economy.

Stock market analysts noted that the manufacturing and housing gains were boosted by temporary government stimulus steps, including the Cash for Clunkers program, which has since expired. The clunkers program helped lift sales at Ford, Toyota and Honda in August, though Chrysler Group LLC and General Motors Co. withstood another month of falling sales.

"People reviewed the numbers and said this type of demand is just not sustainable," said Tom di Galoma, head of U.S. rates trading at Guggenheim Capital Markets LLC.

At the same time, the National Association of Realtors said its seasonally adjusted index of sales contracts signed in July for previously occupied homes rose 3.2 percent to 97.6. It was the sixth straight increase and 12 percent above the same month last year.

U.S. construction spending dipped in July as weakness in nonresidential building and government projects offset the best showing for home building in 10 months.

At the moment, manufacturers may be the economy's strongest pocket of strength. Yet even that might prove short-lived if demand doesn't pick up, analysts said.

The better-than-expected report from the Institute for Supply Management showed the highest number for its manufacturing index since June 2007. New customer orders jumped to a level not seen since late 2004.

"Manufacturing will continue to expand," said Daniel Meckstroth, chief economist for the Manufacturers Alliance, a trade group. But he said capital investment likely will slip because plants have too much excess capacity.

"You're going to see ups and downs," Meckstroth said.

Most manufacturers are simply restocking depleted stockpiles of goods — a process that will run its course within six months, said Joshua Shapiro, chief U.S. economist at MFR Research.

Beyond that, it's hard to say how much the U.S. manufacturing sector can expand as long as credit for consumers and businesses remains tight. If loans remain out of reach for many, shoppers and companies can't spend and grow.

Apart from the boost from the clunkers program, "we feel that the headwinds for consumer spending remain too brisk to expect much help on this front," Shapiro said.

The ISM, a trade group of purchasing executives, said its manufacturing index rose to 52.9 in August, from 48.9 in July. That was its first reading above 50, which indicates expansion, since January 2008. The index has been trending lower since a peak reading this decade of 61.4, in May 2004.

The index, based on a survey of the group's members, includes such factors as new orders, production, employment, inventories and prices. New orders jumped nearly 10 percentage points to 64.9 in August — their highest point since December 2004.

President Barack Obama said the manufacturing gains mean companies are starting to invest and produce more. "It is a sign that we're on the path to economic recovery," he said.

Sam Ko, president of Philos Technologies Inc., a supplier for the aerospace, auto, electronics and energy sectors, said he's gained 20 new customers in the last two months. Ko is assigning overtime to employees and even looking to add five employees to his staff of 40 in Wheeling, Ill. They would be his first new hires since June 2008.

"Some companies we haven't heard from in six months started calling us for orders," Ko said.

That's not to say all, or even most, companies are returning to full strength. John Rosmarin, president of Saunders Manufacturing Co., which makes clipboards, portable desktops and other office supplies, said the company's factories are running below full capacity.

Still, sales at the company in Readfield, Maine, have been rising since February. And Rosmarin hopes to shift employees from reduced workweeks to full-time hours within the next three months. Yet any improvement will be limited, because the retailers he supplies are keeping their stockpiles low in the face of slack demand.

"It's going to be at least another 18 months before we get back to where we were 12 months ago," Rosmarin said.

A fall in the dollar's value helped U.S. exports grow for the second straight month, after having shrunk for nine months, according to the ISM. A weaker dollar makes U.S. goods cheaper for overseas buyers.

Other countries also reported a revival in trade. In China, a state-sanctioned survey and a private bank report showed the manufacturing sector grew at its fastest rate this year in August as the government's stimulus spending plan boosted production.

"The underpinnings for manufacturing in this country are solid," said Neil Dutta, U.S. economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch — but that's mostly due to the Asian consumer, not the U.S. shopper.

TRANSPORTATION

Clunkers yield mixed results for car makers

DAN STRUMPF & KIMBERLY S. JOHNSON
AP Auto Writers

DETROIT The Cash for Clunkers program boosted sales at Ford, Toyota and Honda in August as consumers snapped up their fuel-efficient offerings, but rivals Chrysler Group LLC and General Motors Co. withstood another month of falling sales.

The program, which ended on Aug. 24, drew hordes of buyers into quiet showrooms by offering up to $4,500 toward new, more fuel-efficient cars and trucks. The hefty rebates gave automakers and dealers a much-needed lift, spurring 690,114 new sales, many of them during August, at a taxpayer cost of $2.88 billion.

Other automakers are expected to release U.S. sales figures later Tuesday. Combined, the results are likely to mark the first year-over-year monthly sales gain since October 2007.

Ford Motor Co. sold 181,826 cars and light trucks compared with 155,117 in August 2008, when high gas prices and growing economic uncertainty kept people away from showrooms.

Two of Ford's vehicles — the Focus and Escape — were among the top selling cars under the clunkers program. Sales of the Focus rose 56 percent while those of the Escape crossover vehicle climbed 49 percent.

Japanese automakers Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co. also posted gains year-over-year gains in August. Toyota sales rose 6.4 percent to 225,088, lifted by small cars like the Corolla, the best-selling clunkers vehicle.

Honda sales rose 9.9 percent to 161,439, also largely on the strength of its fuel-efficient offerings.

Meanwhile, low supplies of fuel-efficient vehicles at Chrysler kept the automaker from benefiting more from the clunkers program, whose rebates encouraged customers to buy gas sippers in exchange for guzzlers with gas mileage of 18 mpg or less.

Chrysler sales fell 15 percent to 93,222 units. That was less than the combined sales of Hyundai Motor America and affiliate Kia Motors America, whose smaller sedans helped boost sales to a combined 100,665 for August.

Going into August, five of Chrysler's most efficient vehicles were already at low inventory levels. Those vehicles — the Dodge Caliber, the Chrysler Sebring, the Jeep Patriot, the Jeep Compass and the Dodge Avenger — all qualified as Cash for Clunkers purchases.

To make up for the shortfalls, Chrysler is boosting production by 50,000 vehicles of most of its vehicles through the end of the year.

At General Motors Co., sales fell 20 percent to 245,550. GM said its inventory levels hit an all-time low of 379,000 during August.

GM vehicles like the Chevrolet Aveo subcompact, the Cobalt sedan and Equinox crossover got a lift from the clunkers program. No GM vehicles made the closely watched list of top-10 Cash for Clunkers.

FOOD & DRINK

Coca-Cola jumps into coconut water game

EMILY FREDRIX
AP Food Industry Writer

Soft drink giant Coca-Cola Co. has taken a minority stake in a coconut water company, continuing its move into juices and teas as consumers spurn soft drinks for health and cost reasons.

The Atlanta-based maker of Coke and Sprite and ZICO Beverages LLC announced the investment on Tuesday. Coca-Cola declined to say how much its investment was worth, other than to say it was a stake of less than 20 percent in the company.

Hermosa Beach, Calif.-based ZICO (pronounced ZEE-ko) said in a statement that it has received a $15 million investment from partners including Coca-Cola, beverage entrepreneurs, distributors, celebrities and others. So Coca-Cola's stake was worth less than that.

The move means another major drink maker is eyeing coconut water as it looks to boost sales.

Last month PepsiCo Inc. announced it was buying Brazil's biggest coconut water company, Amacoco Nordeste Ltda and Amacoco Sudeste Ltds. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Sales of soft drinks have been falling in recent years as consumers seek out healthier juices and teas and limit their purchases to save money.

Coconut water — the fat-free, potassium-rich liquid inside young, green coconuts — is popular in other countries and just starting to catch on in the states. According to a report from Merrill Lynch, sales in Brazil are worth more than $300 million a year, while sales in the U.S. are about one-tenth of that.

Coconut water is not to be confused with coconut milk, the liquid that comes from pressed coconut meat.

The product has long-term potential in the U.S. because it has several attributes many consumers are looking for now in beverages, said John Sicher, editor of the trade publication Beverage Digest. The drink is relatively low in calories, natural, new and functional — meaning it provides a purpose to consumers, he said. In this case, some consumers consider it a natural sports drink. Given the potential for the product, he said it makes sense for the big soft drink makers to invest in the category.

"The beverage companies need to innovate and have new kinds of products and the products need to appeal to what consumers want today," he said. "I think that coconut water, it's too early to tell, but it does have some potential."

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Film fest puts focus on the environment

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA MONICA A four-day Labor Day film festival will put an interactive spotlight on animal welfare and the environment.

Mira Tweti, who put Blue Planet Film Fest together, says 47 films will be screened and many will be followed with demonstrations. For example, a movie on pelicans will be followed by the release of some rehabilitated birds. A film on urban gardening will end with some of the farmers demonstrating how they work the earth.

Tweti's movie, "Little Miss Dewie: a Duckumentary," will be shown. She hopes the festival becomes an annual event.

Even tickets for the festival at the Santa Monica Playhouse and Women's Club will keep with the theme. A green ticket service will make sure they use non-tree stubs, a tree will be planted for every ticket sold and $1 of each ticket will be donated to the cause the movie is promoting.

Eco-friendly fireworks cost six times more than normal

FROM **FIREWORKS** PAGE 1

seeing any acute impacts," Kubani said. "This isn't going to create any more significant problems than just a regular fireworks show we have on the Fourth of July."

There have been more environmentally friendly alternatives developed that use nitrate-based oxidants instead of perchlorate, producing less smoke and reducing the potential for water contamination, Kubani said. The fireworks are however new to the market and cost about six to eight times more than conventional counterparts.

The fireworks show, which will be put on by Pyro Spectaculars, is estimated to cost about $120,000.

Ben Franz-Knight, the executive director of the Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corp., said he doesn't believe that the fireworks will results in any significant environmental impacts.

"We did look at the alternatives … but the fireworks used by Pyro Spectaculars are the safest for the technicians and is the industry standard," Franz-Knight said.

The show is scheduled to start around 8:50 p.m. and will go no longer than 25 minutes. It's the first such show at the pier in more than 20 years.

City staff began studying the issue after City Councilman Kevin McKeown in June requested that more environmentally-friendly alternatives be explored to keep up with City Hall's sustainable reputation.

"The issue of toxic chemicals released by such displays has come up before the council several times in the past years," McKeown said. "The pier has become a symbol of Santa Monica's commitment to the (Santa Monica) Bay and the environment, and I hope this information from staff pushes us all to demand cleaner, greener fireworks for all local events in the future."

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Dean Kubani
director, Office of Sustainability and the Environment

melodyh@smdp.com

African-American students scores in English on decline

FROM **SCORES** PAGE 3

2005. Economically disadvantaged students have similarly seen their scores go up by 14 percent in math.

But there's been some regression in ELA for African-American students since 2005, dropping by 3 percent while Latino students have increased their scores by 8 percent. Asian students have also dropped their ELA scores by 4 percent.

Overall about 74 percent of African-American students passed the ELA section this year.

Peggy Harris, the director of curriculum and instruction, said she was hopeful that the new adopted language arts materials and professional development will provide teachers with additional tools to address the issue of achievement in English language arts.

"It is unacceptable to us as a school district to see that approximately one quarter of 10th grade African-American students did not pass the English language arts section of the CAHSEE," Harris said. "It is deeply troubling to realize that this year's passage rate is essentially the same as it was four years ago."

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Private firms help crews keep Downtown clean

FROM **STRUCTURES** PAGE 1

When property owners voted in July 2008 to form a new business improvement district that included three zones, each with varying assessments to reflect benefits received and frequency of service, attacking the dirt and grime in the parking structures was a top priority. Some felt City Hall with its limited resources needed help in the form of a private maintenance company and ambassadors to help serve as guides for visitors as well as another set of eyes and ears to help police and city maintenance crews.

Once funds were collected and dispersed in June 2009, Bayside's board of directors, now comprised of representatives chosen by property owners as well as City Hall to provide equality in input, moved quickly to hire Block by Block to manage the ambassador program to a tune of $1.2 million a year. For another $473,000 Block by Block was also contracted to provide daily maintenance of the structures, such as sweeping and cleaning signs and walkways. H20 was brought in to do the dirty work, blasting away hundreds of pieces of gum as well as thick layers of carbon soot from autos.

"It's not just wetting the surface," said Thomas, who is supervising the maintenance effort daily. "They point the high pressure washing system at a piece of gum and they don't move until the gum is evaporated."

All the water used is collected and treated before being released, Thomas said, and all chemicals are environmentally friendly. Stairwells and elevators, which served as impromptu restrooms, are cleaned regularly and an ambassador is stationed at the entrance to Parking Structure 4's restroom to make sure people feel safe and secure. There are even fresh flowers from the Farmers' Market

Those looking closely can see the changes.

"It's unbelievable. What a difference," said Bayside board member and property manager Barbara Tenzer of Parking Structure 4, which she has parked in for 20 years. "The stairwells used to smell and now they don't. They took off all the dust. Just the whole feeling is different. It feels cleaner and safer. Before, it was like a dungeon."

Barbara Bryan, owner of the Interactive Cafe on Second Street and a Bayside board member, said she too could see and smell the difference in Structure 4 and believes keeping it clean will encourage others to do the same.

"People are less likely to trash a place when you can see someone is taking care of it," she said. "I think this has been a very good improvement and a necessary one because the structures are often the first impression people have when they visit Santa Monica."

City Hall earlier this year repainted several Downtown structures, giving each a distinct color. City maintenance crews still perform many of their former duties but under the new arrangement with Bayside, the structures are solely the responsibility of the management company. This, along with a collective management agreement, creates a system of checks and balances, Rawson said, where both sides, Bayside and City Hall, can inspect each others work.

Before the new assessment was approved, there were concerns raised about overlapping services and the potential for city employees to lose their jobs. Rawson said that isn't the case. H20 and Block by Block help city crews and so far the relationship has been working. The job is just too big to do it alone.

"When you have a 20-room house, it's easier to clean with five people than with one," Bryan said.

Officials with City Hall could not be reach for comment.

Not only is Bayside having to prove itself to City Hall, but now more than ever property owners are demanding results since they are paying more.

"We are constantly going to have to prove to them what we are doing makes sense and that we are spending their money wisely," Rawson said.

It will be challenging to change perceptions after so many years, Rawson admits, and judging from a few comments from visitors, she's right. While some said they had noticed a difference while leaving Parking Structure 4, others could not and still felt the structure needed work.

"I can still smell [pee]," said Jeff N., who is a frequent visitor to the Third Street Promenade. "It's the same ... I think it can be improved. I feel like the bathrooms and the lobby areas are a bit messy."

Robert Oppel had a different opinion.

"Yes, actually, I have noticed the crew with mops doing the stairwell," he said. "Compared to other structures, this is very nice."

Bayside is currently developing benchmarks to measure its progress. Rawson urges residents and visitors to check out Structure 4 and compare it to others to see the changes made.

"We have a lot to provide, especially in these difficult economic times, so it is our intention to not only keep up this pace, but to exceed people's expectations as often as possible," Rawson said.

And that includes sticker removal.



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

STEPPING IT UP: **John Moynahan and Jennifer Shepp use the stairs at Parking Structure 4 on Second Street on Tuesday morning. Bayside District Corp. has hired private firms to pressure wash Downtown structures regularly.**

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Cost of wildfires puts state in pinch

JULIET WILLIAMS
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) The costs to fight the wildfires raging through California are adding up quickly for the cash-strapped state.

The state has spent $106.5 million of its $182 million emergency firefighting fund — just two months into the fiscal year, Department of Finance spokesman H.D. Palmer said. The budget was increased this fiscal year from $69 million a year ago to more accurately reflect annual firefighting costs, he said.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said Tuesday the unpredictable costs were also the reason he wanted to ensure California had a $500 million reserve fund this year.

To restore the reserve fund, the Republican governor used his line-item veto authority to cut $489 million from social service programs in the budget the state Legislature sent him in July.

"This is why this reserve is so important, when you get into situations like this when there's unexpected fires coming up," Schwarzenegger said during a news conference in San Bernardino County, where wildfires threatened nearly 3,000 homes.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency approved six grants to help California fight fires. The state will be reimbursed for 75 percent of the costs to contain and put out those fires, said Kelly Huston, assistant secretary of the California Emergency Management Agency.

The grants only apply to extraordinary wildfires that force local and state governments to incur large costs "because of the magnitude of the fire and the threat to life and property," Huston said.

President Barack Obama has said he would do what he could to help state and local governments.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the White House is receiving regular updates on the wildfires and will monitor the situation.

Gibbs said Obama and first lady Michelle Obama send their condolences to the families of two Los Angeles County firefighters who died battling the Station fire over the weekend.

Mount Wilson still threatened

FROM **FIRES** PAGE 3

end of the day, and he was pleased with progress.

"There's a lot more work to be done," Dietrich said. "It's still a very treacherous situation. It could still turn around."

Weather was more humid, which helps brush resist burning, but the downside was a possibility of dry lightning. Some sprinkles were reported, but no significant rain.

Officials were worried about the threat to a historic observatory on Mount Wilson northeast of Los Angeles. But on Tuesday, the flames near the facility appeared much tamer than the infernos that boiled up out of the mountain range in previous days.

Authorities could not immediately ascertain whether the fire at the top of Mount Wilson was the result of the overall advance of the blaze or backfires set by fire crews.

From a helicopter above the 5,700-foot peak, small flames could be seen creeping under trees. Firefighters had doused the peak with flame retardant before withdrawing when the fire appeared to be too dangerous.

Mount Wilson is home not only to the observatory but numerous television, radio and cell phone antennas serving the metropolitan area.

"The fire is still eventually going to impact around the site," Dietrich said. "The amount of damage is yet to be seen."

The fire is one of hundreds of wildfires in a season that usually does not gather steam until October, when the Santa Ana winds arrive.

This year's destructive Southern California wildfires began in May, when 80 homes were destroyed and more than a dozen others were damaged in the Santa Barbara area. "Sundowner" winds, a localized version of a Santa Ana, whipped a brush fire into an inferno in neighborhoods on the edge of the Los Padres National Forest.

Wind has not been a problem in the current fire, but drought has. The region is in the midst of a three-year drought, and the tinder-dry forest is ripe for an explosive fire.

Residents had a range of emotions as they watched the fire — and they knew the lack of wind was a godsend.

"I'm a little concerned but not overly worried," said retiree Paul Westmoreland, 77, who lives in the Seven Hills neighborhood in Tujunga. "But if we had had high winds, this whole area would have gone."

Some of the spectators were residents who followed orders to leave but could not resist coming back to their neighborhoods.

Jennifer Pelon, 43, came back Tuesday morning to see if her 3,000-square-foot home on a hillside was still standing. She nervously watched as flames licked a ridgeline only yards from her home.

"It's a lot of stress and anxiety, watching," she said. "It's your whole life up there."

At the huge fire command center, Glendale firefighter-paramedic Jack Hayes, 31, recounted how he manned a 2,000-gallon water truck to extinguish flames bearing down on backyards.

"We've been knocking them all down and saving some homes," he said.

Hayes said he had not taken a day off for a week.

"You can't sleep," said Hayes, who had the beginnings of a beard and bloodshot eyes. "You're ready to go and there's always something you could be doing."

Two firefighters — Capt. Tedmund Hall, 47, of San Bernardino and firefighter Specialist Arnaldo "Arnie" Quinones, 35, of Palmdale — were killed Sunday when their vehicle plummeted off a mountain road. Quinones' wife is expecting a child soon, and Hall had a wife and two adult children.

In Washington, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama sent their condolences to the firefighters' families. Gibbs said the White House will do whatever it can to assist state and local governments.



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Jackson hoax video causes stir

KIRSTEN GRIESHABER
Associated Press Writer

BERLIN A hoax video purportedly showing Michael Jackson emerging from a coroner's van was an experiment aimed at showing how quickly misinformation and conspiracy theories can race across the Internet, German broadcaster RTL said Tuesday.

The video was posted by RTL on YouTube for a single day a week ago and received 880,000 hits. The broadcaster has since removed the video from YouTube, but it has been picked up by other Web sites around the world.

"We wanted to show how easily users can be manipulated on the Internet with hoax videos," spokeswoman Heike Schultz of Cologne-based RTL told The Associated Press. "Therefore, we created this video of Michael Jackson being alive, even though everybody knows by now that he is dead — and the response was breathtaking."

Jackson died June 25 in Los Angeles.

The video — posted under an "anonymous source" — shows a coroner's van entering what seems like a parking garage and the King of Pop getting out of the back with another person. The lighting is bad, the sound muffled and the footage appears amateurish.

"Unfortunately, many people believed it was true," Schultz said. "Even though we tried to create the video in a way that every normal user can see right away that it is a fake."

She said the video was shot near Cologne — "definitely not in the U.S." The van in the video had the word "CORONER" printed in English, suggesting it had been recorded in America.

RTL admitted to the hoax in an Aug. 26 report on its daily news show Explosiv.

Hoaxes and rumors commonly spread like wildfire on the Internet. Videos of flying saucers and impossible stunts routinely are among the most-viewed on video-sharing sites, though purported evidence of the deceased being alive is less common than false rumors of someone's death.

The rise of Twitter and its real-time microblogging has quickened the pace. American actor Patrick Swayze, who is battling pancreatic cancer, had to declare that he is still alive this year after thousands of Twitter users spread news that he was dead. Actor Jeff Goldblum had to do the same.

The RTL spokeswoman said some Jackson fans were upset by the German broadcaster's actions.

"We didn't want to dishonor Michael Jackson, but we needed a strong name to get this experiment going," Schultz said. "Had we used Britney Spears, then the fans of Britney would have complained."

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Lockerbie steals headlines from coup anniversary

ALFRED DE MONTESQUIOU & BEN CURTIS
Associated Press Writers

TRIPOLI, Libya Libya staged a lavish spectacle Tuesday, parading white-robed horsemen and gold-turbaned dancers as jets streaked overhead to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the coup that brought Moammar Gadhafi to power in the oil-rich nation.

The four-day festivities were designed to highlight the volatile leader's acceptance on the world stage, but were overshadowed by new controversies about the return of the only man convicted of the Lockerbie bombing. While African leaders held a summit to coincide with the celebrations, most Western leaders stayed away.

The Libyan leader, known for his outlandish outfits and penchant for conducting state business in tents, kicked off the celebrations before dawn Tuesday, timed to coincide with the start of the coup, with a feast at a former U.S. air base that was later turned into a Libyan military camp.

Addressing the audience, Gadhafi said that as a young Libyan lieutenant he'd been barred from entering the base by an American soldier.

"I told the soldier: 'You'll see what the future has in store,'" said Gadhafi. "I don't think the American soldier quite measured the scope of my words."

The return home of Abdel Baset al-Megrahi, the only man convicted of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing that killed 270 people, overshadowed the celebrations. Scottish officials released him Aug. 20 on compassionate grounds because doctors said he was suffering from terminal prostate cancer and had only three months to live. But his release and warm homecoming in Libya outraged many of the victims' families and U.S. officials.

Intense public pressure over al-Megrahi's release has sent the British and Scottish governments scrambling to respond. On Tuesday, both governments made public their correspondence on his release showing some British officials advised Scotland's government that there were no legal obstacles to returning al-Megrahi to Libya.

Other documents showed British Justice Secretary Jack Straw initially believed al-Megrahi should be excluded from a prisoner transfer agreement signed between the U.K. and Libya, but later changed his mind — saying he did not wish to damage the "beneficial relationship" between the two countries.

"Developing a strong relationship with Libya, and helping it to reintegrate into the international community, is good for the U.K.," Straw said in that letter to Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond.

"Libya is one of only two countries to have ever voluntarily and transparently dismantled its weapons of mass destruction program. Having sponsored terrorist attacks in the past, it is now an important partner in the fight against terrorism."

The man at the center of the spiraling debate has been hospitalized in Tripoli this week, and Libyan officials said Tuesday his health was quickly deteriorating since his return home. Asked how long al-Megrahi still has to live, the head of Libyan State Information Agency, Majid al-Dursi, said: "Only God knows ... but he is dying now."

The Lockerbie controversy was not the only one dogging the celebrations.

In a sign of how tightly the government was trying to control the festivities, Italy said Libya wanted an Italian air force acrobatic team flying over Tripoli to only emit green smoke — a color Gadhafi associates with his regime.

Italy threatened to ground the planes, and, in a victory for the former colonial ruler, when the jets did fly Tuesday night, they emitted their traditional red, white and green colors of the Italian flag.

Rome has maintained generally good relations with Gadhafi, and Libya is a major supplier of gas and oil to Italy, Libya's former colonial ruler. Italian Premier Silvia Berlusconi met with Gadhafi in Libya on Sunday to mark the one-year anniversary of a friendship treaty with Tripoli.

Gadhafi, 67, has courted many controversies during his rule. He toppled Libya's king in a largely bloodless coup on Sept. 1, 1969, and has been at the helm of the North African country ever since, sometimes referred to as "The Guide," or more frequently "Brother Leader."

His rule has been erratic, blending a local form of socialism with Islam in a largely government-less state where masses are meant to rule through local assemblies. In practice, this has meant an autocratic regime.

The son of modest desert Bedouins, Gadhafi was a 27-year-old army captain when he led a group of young officers to power. After the coup, Gadhafi nationalized most of the American and other Western assets in Libya, fast souring relations with much of the outside world.

During the following decades, he promoted a hard-line form of pan-Arabism, recruiting militias, funding rebellions and sending his army to fight across much of northern Africa. He was accused of harboring several prominent terrorists and hosted militant training camps, while sponsoring other attacks himself.

These included a 1986 bomb blast at a Berlin discotheque frequented by U.S. troops that led to U.S. retaliatory airstrikes that Libyan officials said killed 41 people, including Gadhafi's adopted baby daughter.

There were also erratic moments, including a shouting match at an Arab League summit where he insulted the king of Saudi Arabia live on television.

More recently, the Libyan leader has tried to restore his country's standing in the world and transform it from a pariah state to an accepted member of the international community.

Gadhafi surprised the international community by agreeing to dismantle his country's weapons of mass destruction programs. The United States restored ties with Libya in 2006 after Libya agreed to resolve the Lockerbie case in a deal that included paying compensation to the victims' families.

Libya is now one of the world's largest oil producers and a key European supplier of natural gas.

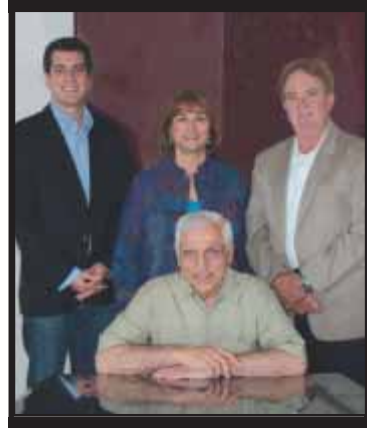
Gadhafi will make his first visit to the U.S. later this month to address the United Nations in what was expected to be the culmination of years of effort to repair his international image.

George Joffe, a Libya expert at the Center of International Studies at Britain's Cambridge University, said while there has been outrage over al-Megrahi's release and homecoming, the West is clearly holding back its criticism of Gadhafi because they are interested in the country's oil.

Joffe said he doubted the controversy will have any real long-term repercussions.

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Thousands flee as hurricane nears

MARK STEVENSON
Associated Press Writer

LOS CABOS, Mexico Heavy winds, battering waves and bands of intense rain pummeled residents and tourists in this vacation resort as Hurricane Jimena, one of the largest hurricanes this year, neared the coast on Tuesday.

The center of the roaring hurricane, which weakened to a still threatening Category 3, was on course to pass west of Los Cabos late Tuesday or early Wednesday, close enough to punish the picturesque beaches and fishing villages that fringe the harsh desert.

Ashley Legeyt, 62, a retiree from British Columbia who lives in Cabo San Lucas, pushed through the oncoming storm onto an exposed rocky point where he leaned against the onslaught of the hurricane's outer winds.

"It's like getting sandblasted with water!" said Legeyt, his back to the wind, sand and spray blowing in from the ocean. "It's quite strong."

The Mexican government declared a state of emergency for Los Cabos and the Baja California Sur state capital of La Paz and schools, many ports and most businesses were closed. Rescue workers from the Red Cross and the Mexican military prepared for post-hurricane disaster relief, and two Mexican Army Hercules aircraft loaded with medical supplies arrived.

Francisco Cota, head of Los Cabos civil defense, said that more than 2,000 people from low-lying neighborhoods and squatters' camps had sought refuge in shelters at local schools, and many more were staying with relatives in safer areas.

Another 5,000 people have been evacuated, and 159 shelters with a capacity for 29,000 people now stand ready, state civil protection spokesman Luis Armando Diaz.

While the storm's eye was forecast to pass west and north of the city, another 20,000 were expected to evacuate elsewhere in the peninsula. Schools, many ports and most businesses were closed.

Children ran through strong gusts of wind Tuesday waving pieces of paper and trash bags under bands of intermittent rain. Forecasters expect the hurricane to leave between 5 and 10 inches of rain in Baja, but already the dry stream beds had turned into gushing torrents.

Hank and Maureen Butt, from Los Gatos, California, snapped photos outside their Cab San Lucas Hotel, enjoying the driving winds.

"The waves have been great," said Maureen Butt, an intensive care nurse.

"I think we're going to be out of harm's way as far as major damage," her husband said. "We're in a very good structure here."

Most tourists had already fled by Tuesday, leaving 75 percent of hotel rooms vacant. But some of those who remained came out to see the storm with avid anticipation, fighting the winds and intermittent bands of rain at the shore.

Hurricane chaser Brian Osburn of Pensacola, Florida, stood on a beach in high tech gear and protective padding while holding a plastic-encased, submersible Hi-definition video camera to take shots of the pounding surge and gusts.

"I think Cabo San Lucas is still in for a good blow," said Osburn, holding his waterproof microphone into the shrieking winds.

Others wandered the now-deserted streets, some ankle-deep in water, enjoying the storm.

"We're going to go, get some more liquor and go back to the room and just watch it," said Mark Lopez, 29, a truck dispatcher from San Jose, California, as he walked near a marina with a half-dozen friends. "We're making the most of it."

Many slum dwellers concerned about looting refused to leave their imperiled shanties.

Marco Nina, 24, a bricklayer, warily eyed a growing stream that rushed past his plywood and sheet metal home.

"We are here with our nerves on edge," he said. "If this hits, the roof is not going to hold. Other storms have passed but not this strong."

By Tuesday afternoon, Jimena had weakened slightly, with winds of 125 mph (205 kph), still a major hurricane with potential to do huge damage. It was located 110 miles (175 kilometers) southwest of Cabo San Lucas and traveling north-northwest near 12 mph (19 kph).

Local officials say Hurricane Juliet, also a Category 4 hurricane on a similar course that killed several people and caused $20.5 million in September 2001, was the most damaging hurricane in the storm-prone state's history. That 145-mph (230 kph) storm made a raging 12-day trip through Mexico and the southern United States.

Farther out in the Pacific, Tropical Depression Kevin had top winds of 35 mph (55 kph) and was expected to weaken to a remnant low.

Meanwhile, Tropical Storm Erika has formed in the open Atlantic, east of Antigua and Barbuda. The storm has top winds around 50 mph (80 kph), and could grow stronger in the next couple of days.

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NYC offers swine flu vaccinations

SARA KUGLER
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK The nation's largest school district said Tuesday it will offer free swine flu vaccinations to its 1 million-plus schoolchildren as New York City takes bold steps to avoid becoming the country's flu epicenter again in the fall.

Hundreds of school districts nationwide have agreed to allow vaccinations in school buildings, once the vaccine becomes available in mid- to late October as the nation prepares for a spike in swine flu cases in the coming months.

New York's announcement may influence other large cities. Brenda Greene, director of school health programs for the National School Boards Association, said the city could wind up being "a great role model."

Federal health authorities have been pushing the idea of school vaccine clinics for months. A few small states, including Maine and Alabama, previously announced plans to do as New York is doing — offer the vaccine to all schoolchildren.

Many large districts are still awaiting details from their state health departments on how to carry out vaccine clinics. Others like California, Ohio and Massachusetts, are focusing first on other elements of flu planning, like when to close schools. Some cities, like Boston and Dallas, have rejected school vaccinations.

However, New York was the first large metro area in the country to have hundreds of children sick from swine flu last spring. The virus rapidly spread among high school students, beginning with a private high school in Queens. Officials estimate as many as 1 million people were sickened in the city, and more than 50 people died. Nationwide, swine flu has killed about 500 people.

"We know New Yorkers are concerned, very understandably, about the risks that they might face," New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said. "Our job is to plan in case it is a big deal."

In Washington, President Barack Obama said Tuesday that while swine flu vaccinations will be voluntary, the government will "strongly recommend" that people get them.

"I don't want anybody to be alarmed, but I do want everyone to be prepared," the president said of the second, more serious wave of the virus expected this fall.

A White House report suggests up to half the U.S. population could be infected.

The vaccine is still being tested and analyzed. Once it is deemed safe and effective, the government — which has bought 195 million doses — will ship the vaccine to state health departments in portions, starting with about 45 million doses in October.

New York City Health Commissioner Thomas Farley said the city expects to receive 1.2 million doses of the vaccine in October, and half a million doses for every week after that.

The vaccine given to school children — in private as well as public schools — will mostly be a nasal mist rather than a shot.

Bloomberg and officials from his health, schools and emergency departments announced the vaccine plan as part of the city's multi-pronged strategy Tuesday to manage the next wave of swine flu.

The city also plans to post data online about influenza-like symptoms at hospital emergency rooms, and post daily updates on public school absences and other schools reporting five or more cases of flulike illness.

The administration plans to send out hundreds of volunteers known as "flu fighters" to visit senior centers, houses of worship, schools and other gathering places to educate New Yorkers about the flu.

Certain groups have shown to be more vulnerable to swine flu, including children and young adults.

City officials say if a school sees five or more cases of flulike illness in one day, the school will send a letter to parents stressing the need to keep sick children home.

Schools that experience "excessive" flu activity — 4 percent of the student body on a single day — will get a visit by a doctor or supervising nurse to further assess the situation.

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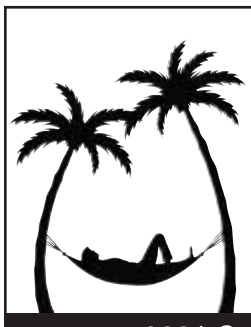
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BRB: be right back
MUSM: miss you so much
A/S/L: age, sex, location
BF: boyfriend
OLL: online love
LULAS: love you like a sister
POS: parent over shoulder
WTGP: want to go private?
LMIRL: let's meet in real life

HDOP: help delete online predators

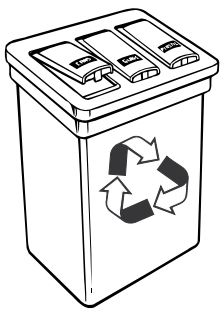
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NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Candidate steps forward to replace Sen. Kennedy

STEVE LEBLANC
AP Political Writer

BOSTON The race for the U.S. Senate seat left vacant by the death last week of Edward Kennedy got off to a cautious start Tuesday, despite a tight five-month election schedule that leaves little time for campaigning.

By the end of the day just one major candidate — state Attorney General Martha Coakley — opted to take out nomination papers. A campaign aide declined to comment.

Other possible contenders decided to hold back in part to see whether a member of the Kennedy family might decide to enter the race — including Kennedy's widow Vicki Kennedy or his nephew, the former U.S. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II.

Another possible contender — former U.S. Rep. Martin Meehan — said he is "thinking about" a run for the seat and hopes to make a decision by the end of the week.

Meehan, now chancellor of the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, is waiting to see whether a Kennedy jumps in. Meehan has $4.8 million in his federal campaign account, the largest sum of any potential candidate.

"There's a lot of speculation about whether Joe Kennedy or Vicki Kennedy would run and I think either of them would make a great senator," he said. "Certainly if one of the two Kennedy candidates decided to run, I would support them."

Other possible candidates include several members of Massachusetts all-Democratic congressional delegation — Reps. Stephen Lynch, Michael Capuano and Edward Markey. All three have sizable federal campaign war chests, including $1.3 million for Lynch, $1.2 million for Capuano and $2.8 million for Markey as of June 30.

Capuano said he hopes to make a decision in the next week or so, and in the meantime he's reaching out to political allies and completing more mundane tasks like upgrading computers.

"I'm doing my own gut check now," Capuano said. "This is not something I take lightly. I want to make sure there's a legitimate path to victory for me."

Capuano, who has Joe Kennedy's old House seat, suggested he would be unlikely to run if Kennedy seeks the seat.

"If Joe's in it, it's awfully hard to run against someone you respect so much," Capuano said.

Another Democrat weighing a run is Gloucester attorney Edward O'Reilly, who unsuccessfully challenged Sen. John Kerry in last year's Democratic primary.

"I am very seriously considering it. I ran for the same office less than a year ago and received 31 percent of the vote," O'Reilly said.

On the Republican side, potential candidates were even more tightlipped.

Former Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey, former U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan and state Sen. Scott Brown, R-Wrentham, have all been mentioned as possible candidates, but none responded to requests for comment.

Other political figures decided to take their names out of the running.

Lt. Gov. Timothy Murray issued a statement saying that despite receiving "words of encouragement from many supporters suggesting that I consider running for the United States Senate seat," he will keep his day job.

"I look forward to running and winning re-election with Governor Patrick in 2010," Murray said.

Gov. Deval Patrick, in response to a reporter's question on Monday, also snuffed out a suggestion that he might have his eye on the Senate seat, saying he remains focused on his job as governor.

Potential candidates will have to decide fairly quickly if they're in or out given the quick pace of the special election.

The first major deadline, Oct. 20, is less than two months away. That's when candidates vying for their party's nomination must deliver the signatures of at least 10,000 voters to local officials for certification to secure a spot on the Dec. 8 primary ballot.

The final election is just six weeks later on Jan. 19.

Voters are facing their own deadlines. The last day to register for the primary is Nov. 12, and for the general election the registration deadline is Dec. 30.

While possible candidates have their eye on the special election, Massachusetts lawmakers were gearing up for a public hearing scheduled for Sept. 9 on a contentious bill that would change state law to let the governor make an interim appointment to the seat until the election.

Gov. Patrick supports the change, but House Speaker Robert DeLeo, D-Winthrop, and Senate President Therese Murray, D-Plymouth, haven't said whether they back it.

Democrats are facing charges of hypocrisy from critics who point out that just five years ago, they changed the law to block then-Gov. Mitt Romney from naming a fellow Republican to fill the seat if Kerry, the Democrats' presidential nominee, won his White House campaign.

Before that change, the governor was allowed to appoint a nominee until the next general election. As part of the 2004 change, Democratic lawmakers also blocked the possibility of Romney naming an interim senator.

Patrick said it's unfair to let Massachusetts to go five months without two voices in the Senate. He said he'd ask for a guarantee from whoever he named as interim senator not to run in the special election.

National Democratic leaders including Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., also support the interim appointment. They say they need as many votes as they can during the debate on President Barack Obama's health care overhaul.

Kennedy died last week of brain cancer at age 77.

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Dems hope health care debate shifts

CHARLES BABINGTON
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON For backers of health care overhaul, it's TGIS: Thank goodness it's September.

August was brutal, as lawmakers faced raucous crowds denouncing Democratic plans and polls showed support for President Barack Obama and various proposals dropping fast. Now, with Congress to reconvene next Tuesday, proponents hope to change the dynamic by holding quiet, closed-door sessions with nervous Democratic lawmakers and arguing that far-reaching health care changes can be good politics as well as good policy.

They also hope GOP-led opposition has peaked. But that's far from clear, and Republicans are eager to hand Obama his first major defeat.

Obama plans to meet with top Democratic lawmakers next Tuesday, and some supporters are urging him to associate himself more directly with key elements of health care bills that have cleared four congressional committees. Obama plans a Sept. 15 speech on health care in Pittsburgh.

White House officials and top congressional Democrats concede they were caught flat-footed by the ferocity of attacks against their health care plans during the August recess.

A new CNN/Opinion Research poll found that 53 percent of Americans disapproved of Obama's handling of health care, while 44 percent approved. In March, far more people had approved than disapproved.

In a Kaiser Health Tracking Poll in August, 40 percent said they favored passing some sort of health care revision this year, a dramatic drop from 62 percent in June.

Conceding that opponents have the momentum, Democratic leaders plan a round of big and small meetings in the Capitol next week, focusing on moderate senators and House members from competitive districts who fear that voting for a sweeping bill could cost them the next election. Liberal groups have held hundreds of events in a bid to show that a robust overhaul is more popular than August's news reports would suggest.

"The message they'll be hearing coming back to Washington will be very different than what they heard when August started," said Jacki Schechner of Health Care for America Now. One idea her group will stress, she said, is that the politically smart vote, even in toss-up districts, will support widespread changes meant to expand health insurance coverage and options.

Nervous Democratic lawmakers need to be told, "you got elected to do something," she said. "And you might get re-elected if you actually do something."

Many first- and second-term House Democrats believe the noisiest protesters, who often dominated last month's town halls, do not represent most of their constituents, said Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., who is tasked with getting his colleagues re-elected. Democratic leaders will try to build on that point, he said, listening to members' concerns and emphasizing the political and societal risks of doing nothing.

Some Democrats say Republicans blundered by basing so much of the opposition on demonstrably untrue claims, such as assertions that the House legislation would lead to "death panels" for elderly patients. In the Capitol's cool, calm setting, party leaders hope to persuade lawmakers that such claims are easily refuted.

Republicans "have hooked their wagon to a misinformation truck that at some point will run out of gas," said Democratic Party spokesman Doug Thornell. Republicans say many of the criticisms are defensible.

Democrats also are portraying GOP leaders as cynics who pretend to want a bipartisan accord but have never intended to compromise in any meaningful way. Obama wants a bipartisan bill, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said this week, "but there have to be people on the other side of the table to respond."

"The people in those chairs seem to be leaving more rapidly than the American people want them to," Gibbs said.

Liberals are seizing this argument to urge Congress and Obama to push for full-blown health care changes. There's no need for Democrats to compromise when they are the game's only players, these activists say.

Without question, Republicans approach Labor Day feeling far more upbeat about the ground they gained during the August recess. Some are confident that no amount of closed-door hand-holding of nervous Democratic lawmakers will reverse the momentum.

"After a disastrous month at home, the fact that Democrats' new health care strategy is to hide in Washington from the people who elected them to get health care passed shows what bad shape they're in," said Antonia Ferrier, spokeswoman for House Republican leader John Boehner of Ohio. The problem is not the sales pitch, she said, but "the product they're pushing."

The GOP's most effective attacks, many Democrats say, deal with Obama's questionable claim that the nation can significantly expand health coverage without increasing the deficit over 10 years.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says none of the pending health plans would control long-term spending, and that ones with the elements Obama wants would expand the deficit by about $1 trillion over the next decade.

Some Democrats say the congressional leaders will have to trim more costs from the health bills that have cleared one Senate committee and three House panels, even though it would antagonize liberals and make it harder to cover uninsured people, one of Obama's top goals.

"That's the kind of thing we're going to look at," said Van Hollen, a member of the House Democratic leadership.

In the Senate, many members see almost no hope that a workable bipartisan plan will emerge from protracted negotiations in the Finance Committee. And the death of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy deprives Democrats of not only a leader on health care, but also a potential 60th vote to overcome Republican filibusters.

Democrats have not ruled out the possibility of using a strong-arm tactic, called "budget reconciliation," to pass some of the health care proposals with a simple majority in the 100-member Senate.

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Surf Conditions **Water Temp:** 67°

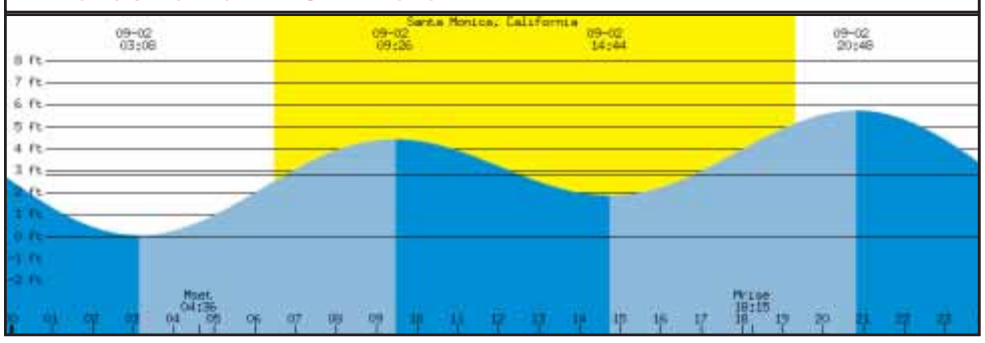
Swell Forecast

Today we should see energy from Jimena arrive in SoCal. This should be very steep angled energy from 150°-160°. This is a very difficult angle for most south facing breaks in SoCal, especially for those north of OC.

Long Range Synopsis

Would be pretty much a repeat of Wednesday as far as surf goes.

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 25, 2009**

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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 -- 40 / ns
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 6 / ns

The Beach Report Card is made possible by simplehuman, Goldhirsh Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, Ford

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
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth	A+	ns
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
El Pescador State Beach, between Lechasa and Las Alisos 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
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach	A+	ns
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
Solstice Canyon at Don Blacker County Beach	A+	ns
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth	A+	ns
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	A	ns
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence	B	ns
Surfrider Beach (breach location)- daily	A+	ns
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	D	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
Pena Creek at Las Tunas County Beach	A+	ns
Tuna Canyon	A+	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	ns
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain)	A+	ns

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence	C	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain	C	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua)	A+	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain	A	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	A+	ns
Santa Monica Municipal Pier	D	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain	A+	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms)	A+	ns
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A+	ns
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	A+	ns
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St.	A+	ns
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Bellona Creek mouth	B	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain	A+	ns
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty)	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	ns
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant	A	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. 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's Beach Report Card® is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A–F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

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.

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.

Heal the Bay

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BOXING

Ali traces roots to Irish town

SHAWN POGATCHNIK
Associated Press Writer

DUBLIN Boxing legend Muhammad Ali made a sentimental journey Tuesday to discover his Irish roots, and met distant relatives during celebrations at the local town hall and a nearby castle.

Thousands lined the streets of Ennis, western Ireland, to cheer the motorcade carrying Ali as the three-time world heavyweight champion visited the home of his great-grandfather Abe Grady.

Fans adorned streets with red, white and blue USA bunting and flags, while shop windows competed to display the most impressive posters honoring Ali — including one tongue-in-cheek portrait of him appearing ready to knock out an unpopular Irish politician.

Ali, who is 67 and battling Parkinson's disease, offered a few playful jabs to cameras but made no public comments and steered clear of throngs of autograph-seekers, among them hundreds of kids whose schools closed early for the event. Police blocked off roads and kept crowds in line with railings.

Grady settled in Kentucky in the 1860s and married a freed slave. One of their grandchildren, Odessa Lee Grady Clay, gave birth to Ali — then Cassius Clay — in 1942.

Genealogists pinpointed Ali's Irish links in 2002, but Ali had never visited Ennis before.

His visit to Ennis Town Hall was broadcast live on big-screen televisions outside, where locals also took in a live concert by Irish traditional musicians, including best-selling accordionist Sharon Shannon.

Ali's wife, Yolanda, said her husband's Irish blood might help explain his legendary ability to bludgeon his opponents with blarney as well as punches. She stayed close at Ali's side throughout the public events, talking to him and steadying him as they walked arm in arm.

"When you look at Muhammad's pugilistic skills and his loquacious ways, I am sure if his great-grandfather was alive, he would swear it came from him. If he were alive today I bet he would be in every pub talking about it too," she said.

Mayor Frankie Neylon presented Ali with a scroll as he proclaimed him Ennis' first "freeman," an honor conveying him special privileges in the County Clare town of 23,000. The mayor said the most valuable privilege would be free parking.

Yolanda Ali said the couple would return to Ireland "now that we know that Muhammad is an Ennisman."

People traveled hundreds of miles (kilometers) from across Ireland to see Ali, among them veteran Irish boxers who sparred with Ali in New York training decades ago.

Former Irish national champ Jim O'Sullivan recalled sparring with Ali and his trainer Angelo Dundee during a U.S. tour by Irish boxers in 1978 — and wished he'd known then that "The Greatest" was "just a Paddy like us."

"We'd have dearly loved to have known he was that wee bit Irish. We'd have given him some stick," O'Sullivan said, using an Irish expression for good-natured ribbing.

Ali was driven through the town to Turnpike Road, where his great-grandfather lived before sailing for America. He met several representatives of the Grady clan, most of them O'Gradys — the O connoting "son of" in the native Irish tongue.

Later, Ali was guest of honor at a fundraising banquet at nearby Dromoland Castle.

NBA

Rubio opts to stay in Europe

JON KRAWCZYNSKI
AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS After saying all summer long that his preference was to play in the NBA, Ricky Rubio apparently got a case of cold feet at the last minute.

Less than 48 hours after the Timberwolves, Rubio's agents and the Spanish team DKV Joventut agreed in principle on a deal to bring the 18-year-old point guard to Minnesota, Rubio changed his mind.

He told Timberwolves president David Kahn on Monday night that he wanted to stay in Spain for the next two years to better prepare for life in the NBA — a blow to a team that was hoping to have the popular passer on the court this fall.

"Of course there's disappointment, but I don't think that disappointment should overshadow the big picture, which is, he's still so young," Kahn said Tuesday during a call from Spain, where he spent the weekend negotiating the deal. "It appears now we will have a two-year wait. But if you frame it as he'll be 20 years old and he'll have two more years to develop, I can think of a lot worse things to happen to us as a franchise."

The Timberwolves drafted Rubio fifth overall in June, even though he was still under contract with DKV Joventut in a deal that included a $8.1 million buyout clause. Kahn made three trips to Spain over the summer to try and help Rubio's representatives negotiate that number down, a process that was hindered by NBA guidelines limiting the amount of money Minnesota could contribute to $500,000.

Kahn said Rubio's agent, Dan Fegan, delivered a package of endorsement deals and sponsorships that helped make the NBA deal attractive enough for Rubio and Joventut to enter into an agreement on Saturday night.

When Rubio backed out of the deal, DKV Joventut reluctantly agreed to trade him to rival Regal FC Barcelona, which will pay $5.3 million to buy out his contract. The buyout, Kahn said, is the largest in European basketball history.

In a statement, Joventut noted the "big effort" by everyone to reach a deal.

"In front of this situation, and in contradiction with what he has been saying to us and to Timberwolves' representatives from time to time, the player has announced the decision that he wants to be transferred to FC Barcelona," the team said.

The deal with FC Barcelona requires Rubio to stay in Spain through the 2010-11 season, at which time the buyout price tag plummets to about $1.4 million. That's a much more manageable number for Rubio to afford, but he said he was more concerned about being ready for the NBA.

"The reason leading me to take this next step is to have a period of preparation to better take the challenge of the NBA in better conditions as a player," Rubio said in a statement. "The Minnesota Timberwolves continue to be my first option."

MOVIE TIMES

Aero Theatre
1328 Montana Ave.
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Call theater for information.

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade

The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard (R) 1hr 29min
1:45

Funny People (R) 2hr 16min
4:00, 7:10, 10:20

The Hangover (R) 1hr 36min
2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

Play the Game (PG-13) 1hr 45min
1:50, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10

Taking Woodstock (R) 1hr 50min
2:00, 4:45, 7:40, 10:30

AMC 7 Santa Monica
1310 Third St.
(310) 289-4262

Shorts (PG) 1hr 29min
11:30am, 1:50, 4:20, 6:50

Ponyo (Gake no ue no Ponyo) (G) 1hr 40min
11:05am, 1:30, 4:05, 7:05, 9:40

The Time Traveler's Wife (PG-13) 1hr 48min
10:50am, 1:25, 4:10, 7:15, 9:55

Julie and Julia (PG-13) 2hrs 3min
10:45am, 1:35, 4:30, 7:30, 10:25

Halloween II (2009) (R) 1hr 41min
12:00, 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 9:20, 10:30

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (PG) 2hrs 33min
9:30

My One and Only (PG-13) 1hr 25min
11:00am, 1:10, 3:20, 5:35, 7:55, 10:20

Post Grad (PG-13) 1hr 29min
12:05, 2:25, 4:45, 7:00

Laemmle's Monica Fourplex
1332 Second St.
(310) 394-9741

Paper Heart (PG-13) 1hr 29min
1:00, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10

(500) Days of Summer (PG-13) 1hr 35min
1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:15

The Hurt Locker (R) 2hr 10min
1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:15

Flame & Citron (Flammen & Citronen) (NR) 2hrs 10min
1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:15

Mann's Criterion Theatre
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

Final Destination (R) 1hr 22min
12:30, 5:40, 10:40

The Final Destination 3D (R) 1hr 22min
11:30am, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

Inglourious Basterds (R) 2hrs 32min
12:00, 1:30, 3:40, 5:00, 7:15, 8:30, 10:30

G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra (PG-13) 1hr 58min
12:20, 3:30, 6:40, 9:40

District 9 (R) 1hr 53min
12:50, 3:00, 3:50, 6:50, 8:00, 9:50

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

Take a break, Libra

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Be optimistic and forthright in a meeting. You will need to help others stay focused and directed. Understand what is happening within your immediate circle. Tonight: Where the gang is.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ You might want to take control of a situation and move it along. Your words and leadership appear to have that needed extra oomph. Think positively about what is happening around you. Tonight: A must appearance.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You will want to understand more. Therefore, in a way, you need to get out of your head. How you see a situation when you don't identify with it could be a lot different. Tonight: Play a favorite piece of music.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ A partner takes a strong, positive stance, making it close to impossible to say "no." Your creativity comes forward when dealing with this person. He or she bottoms out problems. Investigate alternatives that come up. Be open to an adjustment. Tonight: Time to kick back.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Others seem to be in the mood to jump and act on their thoughts. You are the receptive audience, and you might not believe what drops in your lap. Keep an eye open for unusual possibilities. New areas of connection are likely. Tonight: Say "yes" to living.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Defer to others and be more open to creative, dynamic thinking. You could be somewhat taken aback by the possibilities. Be open to news, with an eye to potential and change. Review what is happening, and look for opportunities for more efficiency. Tonight: Easy does it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Your creativity remains high. Your responsiveness continues to be important to someone involved with a project. You seem to be unusually resourceful and dynamic. You come up with ideas from out of nowhere. Listen to what is being shared, as there might be a deeper meaning. Tonight: Midweek break.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ You feel much more relaxed than you have in a while. Your mellowness is much appreciated. A brainstorming session pays off far more than you thought possible. You might be weighing the pros and cons of a change. Tonight: Order in.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Listen to news with an open attitude. How can you make the best of a situation? A lot of people have suggestions. You might have more energy when communicating your ideas, and the back and forth might seem necessary. Tonight: An offer sounds too good to be true.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ No one handles and understands finances like you. You do a reversal in a situation; ultimately, the decision is great. You might want to rethink how much money you put into an investment if you really believe it will work. Tonight: Treat yourself too.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You naturally bound from one idea to another. Others find you extremely charismatic and want to join in. Tonight: Just wish upon a star.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Realize the power is not on your side, and, in fact, you need to lay low for a short while. What you decide to do and the direction in which you head could make a big difference. Just know that there are more facts coming in. Tonight: Take a personal night.

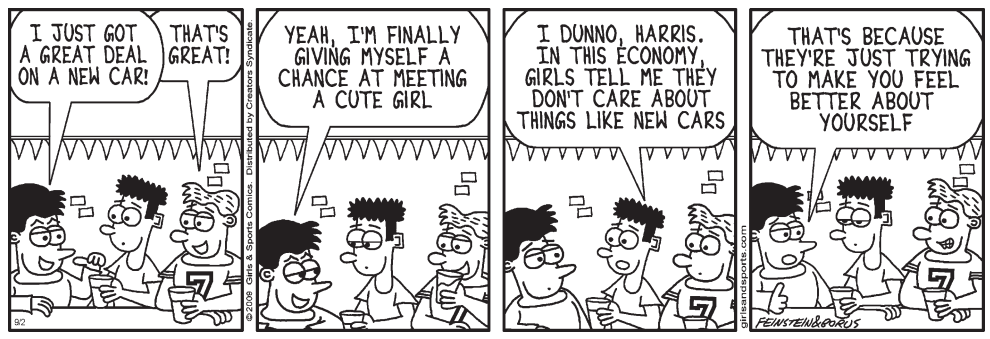
Happy birthday

This year, study ways to shorten your work hours, allowing you more free time. Sometimes you can be too diligent! You are about to release a very challenging few years. In the next few months, eye greater happiness. If you are single, greet a new beginning because of a special person. Don't decide that this is it. Use a year as a landmark. If you are attached, the two of you need to bond more deeply. Develop a common interest. AQUARIUS often introduces new technology.

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

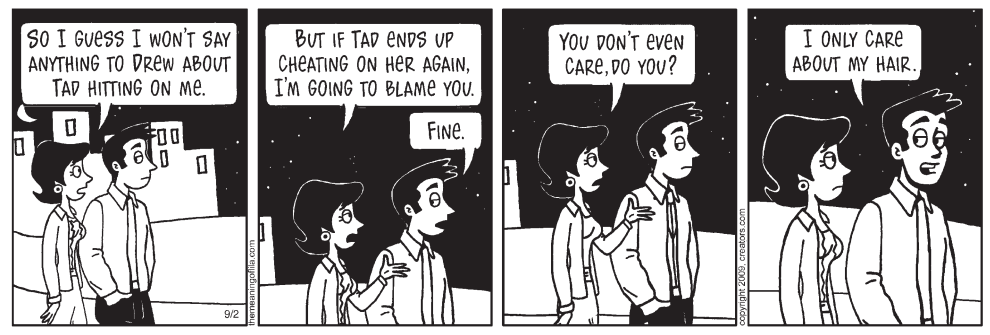
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



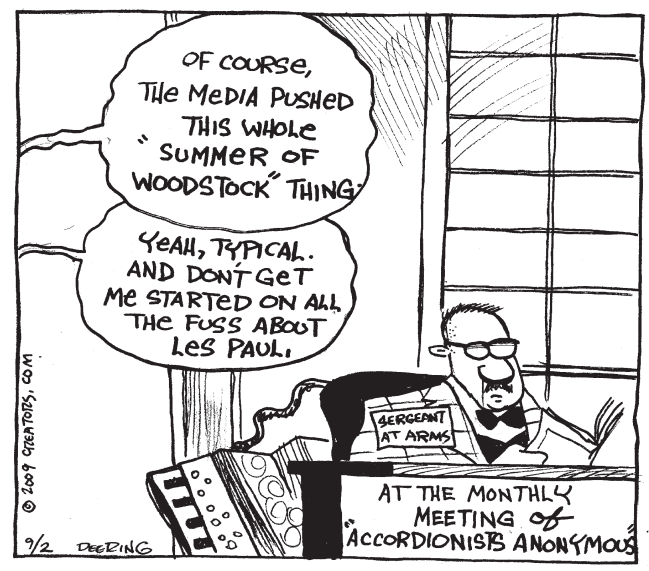
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



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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 ★★★

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

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

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

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MYSTERY PHOTO

Maya Sugarman *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

1 Program lines
5 Explorer Vitus
11 Sailor's call
12 Broad way
13 Odometer unit
14 Lease signer
15 Vote seeker
16 Investment choice
17 Regular hangout
19 Pinnacle
22 Planet circlers
24 Took an oath
26 Touch on
27 Singer Jackson
28 Valentine gift
30 British prince's nickname
31 Glimpse
32 Canine, e.g.
34 Moist
35 "Alley —"
38 Abs strengtheners
41 Enormous
42 Source of answers
43 Map dot
44 Trio plus quartet
45 Ooze

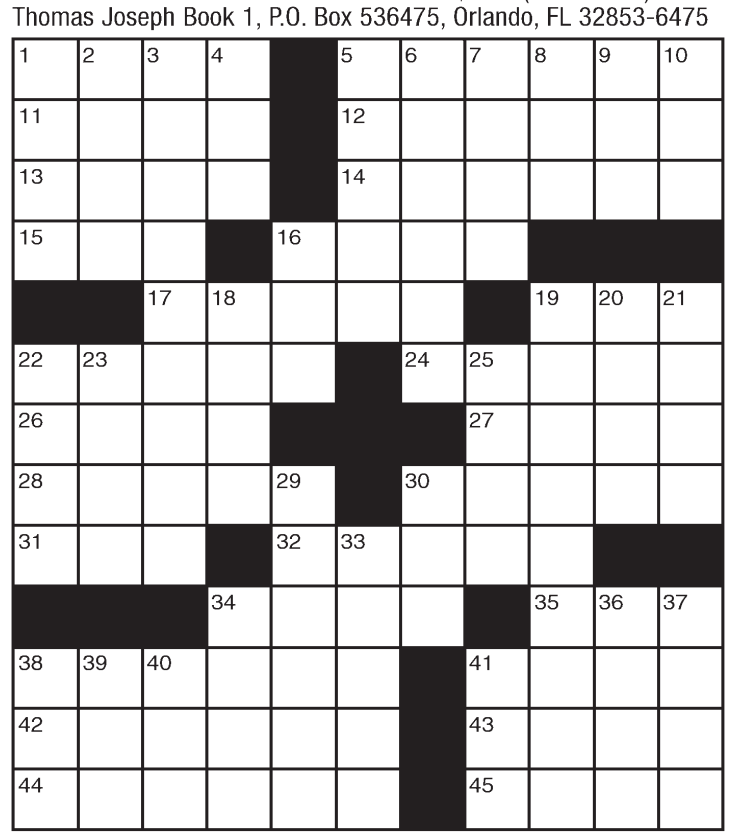
DOWN

1 Scout's base
2 Columbus setting
3 Toy-store buy
4 Potato part
5 Race stick
6 Calendar items
7 Split
8 — tizzy
9 Habit inhabitant
10 Understand
16 City vehicle
18 Hand cost
19 Turnpike sight
20 Test type
21 Signing needs
22 Warring god
23 English horn's cousin
25 Delay
29 Basic need
30 Stir-frying vessel
33 Start
34 Ventilation tube
36 Eyeball
37 Chick sound
38 Urgent call
39 Hot blood
40 Keg need
41 Towel word

A	L	I	T	■	■	G	N	A	T	S
S	A	N	E	R	■	R	E	N	A	L
I	T	S	N	O	B	I	G	G	I	E
A	T	E	■	Y	U	M	■	E	W	E
N	E	C	T	A	R	■	S	L	A	P
■	S	T	A	L	L	■	T	A	N	S
■	■	■	S	E	E	M	E	■	■	■
B	O	C	K	■	S	O	N	G	S	■
O	N	U	S	■	Q	U	O	I	T	S
Y	E	S	■	B	U	R	■	V	E	E
I	T	S	B	E	E	N	R	E	A	L
S	W	E	A	T	■	S	O	M	M	E
H	O	S	T	S	■	■	B	E	S	S

Yesterday's answer

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9-2

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SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 6 13 14 36 37
Meganumber: 12
Jackpot: $18M

Fantasy 5: 7 15 17 25 37

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 7 6 7
EVENING: 4 7 2

DAILY DERBY:
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2nd: 05 California Classic
3rd: 02 Lucky Star
RACE TIME: 1.43.95

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Among the exhibits at the Impulse to Collect show at San Jose State University in February 1998 were Chris Daubert's "Chromatic extrusions rodenta" (rats' droppings following their ingestion of various of his oil paints), Maryly Snow's collection of 696 toothbrushes (each catalogued on 13 attributes), and Bob Rasmussen's variety of unrelated items containing red X's. Among the exhibits rejected were a man's huge mass of dryer lint, another's assortment of cat snot on slides, and yet another's 15-year collection of umbilical cords. Said organizer Theta Belcher, on what makes a real collector: "They take it that one step too far."

■ Lonely Japanese men (and a few women) with rich imaginations have created a thriving subculture ("otaku") in which they have all-consuming relationships with figurines that are based on popular anime characters. "The less extreme," reported a New York Times writer in July, obsessively collect the dolls. The hardcore otaku "actually believes that a lumpy pillow with a drawing of a (teenage character) is his girlfriend," and takes her out in public on romantic dates. "She has really changed my life," said "Nisan," 37, referring to his gal, Nemutan. (The otaku dolls are not to be confused with the life-size, anatomically-correct dolls that other lonely men use for sex.) One forlorn "2-D" (so named for preferring relationships with two-dimensionals) said he would like to marry a real, 3-D woman, "(b)ut look at me. How can someone who carries this (doll) around get married?"

TODAY IN HISTORY

1898 Battle of Omdurman – British and Egyptian troops defeat Sudanese tribesmen and establish British dominance in Sudan.

1925 The U.S. Zeppelin the USS Shenandoah crashes, killing 14.

1945 Vietnam declares its independence, forming the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

WORD UP!

fecund \FEE-kuhnd; FEK-uhnd\ , adjective: 1. Capable of producing offspring or vegetation; fruitful; prolific. 2. Intellectually productive or inventive.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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PALMS 2+1 3633 Keystone ave #1 stove, blinds, tile flooring, carpets, ceiling fan, laundry,parking, AC, no pets. $1400/mo $500 off move-in (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

PALMS 3346 S. Canfiled #104 $850 Single, stove, fridge, blinds, on-site laundry, garage parking, intercom entry no pets. (310)578-7512 jkwproperties.com

PALMS 3346 S. Canfiled #205 $995 1+1 upper, stove, fridge, blinds, bamboo & vinyl floors, on-site laundry, garage parking, intercom entry no pets.$500 off move-in (310)578-7512 jkwproperties.com

PALMS 3540 Overland units 2 & 5 $950 Stove, fridge, carpet, blinds, laundry, street parking, no pets. $700 off move-in special. (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

PALMS ADJ/ LaCienga Hghts. $1075.00 1 Bdrm, 1Bath, NO PETS, stove, refrg, parking 2009 Preuss Rd., #10 Open daily 8am-8pm . Additional info in unit

Santa Monica $1195.00 1 Bdrms, 1Bath NO pets, gas, paid stove, refrigerator, parking 2535 Kansas Ave., #210 Open daily 8am-8pm. Additional info in unit. Manager in unit #101.

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3247 Mountain View Avenue

3 Bed, 1 Bath

$818,000

Wonderful Mar Vista Location

Traditional Bungalow

Open Sunday, September 6th

2:00 - 5:00 pm



123 Georgina Avenue #2

2 Bed, 2.5 Bath

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North of Montana

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4 Bed, 2.5 Bath

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Priced to Sell $979,000

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North of Montana	$2,795,000	$ 1,499,000
Between Wilshire & Montana	$ 1,895,000	$ 992,000
South of Wilshire	$880,000	$680,000
Sunset Park	$1,199,000	$644,250
Ocean Park	$1,598,500	$835,000

Statistics Updated Every Monday

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