

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

FANTASY 5

...

DAILY 3

Daytime: 3

Evening: ...

DAILY DERBY

1st: 01 Gold Rush

2nd: 07 Eureka

3rd: 04 Big Ben

RACE TIME: ...



NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Games Floridians Play: Shannon Kramer, 35, was hospitalized with serious burns after (according to police) trying to toss a lighted firework at his girlfriend from his car during an argument; however, he overestimated the burn time, and it went off in his hands (Jacksonville, Fla., March). And Aravis Walker, 23, was killed when his car exploded during a session in which he would light fireworks and toss them out the window at passersby; one of the fireworks didn't clear the window but ricocheted to the back seat, where it ignited the rest of Walker's fireworks.

■ In July, a transit system police officer in Washington, D.C., arrested, handcuffed and searched Stephanie Willett, 45, an Environmental Protection Agency scientist, detaining her at a police station for about three hours because she was finishing up the chewing of her PayDay candy bar inside a Metrorail station, in violation of the no-eating rule. Transit officials pointed out that Willett had been warned by the officer a minute before not to enter the station while eating the candy bar, but she thought if it was completely in her mouth as she walked in, she was safe.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It isn't easy being green."

KERMIT THE FROG

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Laying it on thick



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Alexander Carias (left) and Frank Valqui freshen up the Third Street Promenade lamp posts on Thursday with a new coat of paint. The painting crew will work on the three-block-long mall for two weeks.

Modern day slave story a common tale in Los Angeles

After a \$1.6M verdict, woman speaks out

BY GENEVA WHITMARSH

Daily Press Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES — Just days after a Santa Monica jury awarded Nena Jimeno Ruiz \$1.6 million for the year she spent enslaved in a Sony Pictures executive's home, she began publicly telling her story in an effort to help other victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

Ruiz, one of about 18,000 people trafficked to the United States



each year, spoke Thursday at a press conference at the Radisson Wilshire Plaza in Los Angeles. The 60-year-old former schoolteacher told of being lured from the Philippines under false pretenses, then forced to work 18-

See SLAVE, page 6

Student achievement gap closing at local schools

BY PAM WIGHT

Special to the Daily Press

DISTRICT HDQTRS. — Evidence released Wednesday shows that being poor in Santa Monica doesn't have to impede academic progress.

While most California students affected by poverty have suffered under continued educational budget cutbacks, those living in Santa Monica and Malibu have shown significant improvements in performance, according to recent test scores.

Schools Superintendent John Deasy announced this week the results of the district's scores from the Academic Performance Index

(API) and the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) tests. The low income demographic group improved 32 points on a scale in which gaining points becomes more difficult as improvements are made.

The SMMUSD's overall API score rose 12 points — from 780 to 792. But the district still falls short on state standards, which is at least 800. Until a school reaches the targeted 800, it must meet a minimum increase of 5 percent of the difference between the base score and the 800 level. Tests are usually administered in the spring of each school year.

Growth at higher levels of the

API continuum is more difficult to attain than an increase at lower levels of performance.

"An increase in 12 points at the level where SMMUSD operates requires significantly greater effort than the levels of the county or the state," Deasy said. "These gains are remarkable, especially at schools which serve large numbers of impacted youth."

All Santa Monica and Malibu schools have APIs over 700, and nine of the 14 schools that report data have API scores over 800. Pt. Dume Marine Science Academy scored 912 out of a possible 1,000. Five elementary schools, Cabrillo, Edison, Grant, Pt. Dume and

Roosevelt; one middle school, John Adams, and both comprehensive high schools — Santa Monica and Malibu High Schools — made double-digit gains in the last year. Especially noteworthy were the gains of Edison, Samohi, John Adams and Malibu because they all serve large populations of underprivileged students, Deasy said.

See STUDENTS, page 6

Police crack down on drunk driving this weekend

By Daily Press staff

POLICE HDQTRS. — Police will be on the lookout for drunk drivers this weekend, and specifically on Lincoln Boulevard tonight.

Throughout the evening, Santa Monica Police Department will conduct a sobriety checkpoint in the 2600 block of Lincoln Boulevard, which is between Ocean Park Boulevard and Hill Street. The checkpoint is in accordance with a State of California Office of Traffic Safety grant. The grant entitled, "You Drink & Drive. You Lose" is part of a national campaign to reduce the number of people killed or injured in alcohol-related crashes.

Police also are warning drivers and passengers that officers will be issuing tickets to people not wearing seat belts. The crackdown will occur from Sept. 2 through Sept. 8. The special enforcement period is part of the California Seat Belt Compliance Campaign.

In July, a family of eight traveling on a California highway lost five members in a rollover crash, in which no one was secured by a safety belt or child passenger seat. They were all ejected, and the three who survived were seriously injured, police said.

"What does it take to convince people to buckle up?" asked SMPD Chief James T. Butts Jr. "Taking the few seconds to buckle a seat belt is the most effective thing a person can do to save their life."

From the editor ...

Hundreds of readers called the Daily Press office Thursday morning, inquiring why the paper hadn't been delivered to our 750 locations throughout Santa Monica.

Due to a mechanical malfunction at the pressroom, the Daily Press was delayed hitting the streets. All copies were delivered by noon on Thursday.

We apologize for any inconvenience. If you missed Thursday's edition, log onto smdp.com and download the PDF version of the paper, which is delivered via e-mail to more than 5,000 subscribers daily. To sign up, call (310) 458-7737.

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Taurus, hop out the door!

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

★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★-Positive ★★★-Average ★★-So-so ★-Difficult





ARIES (March 21-April 19)
 ★★★★★ Finances punctuate your day as well as your weekend. Don't let another convince you that something will be less expensive than you know it is. Friends want you with them, but you might not be able to handle the cost. Tonight: Treat yourself and another, if you want.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
 ★★★★★ You cannot stop, even if you want to. The Moon in your sign energizes you. You find others' responses somewhat surprising right now. Your imagination adds a special touch to plans or a project. Tonight: Hop out the door.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
 ★★ Take your time. You might be thinking about something that you choose not to verbalize. Let your dreams lead you, but also write down some of your ideas. You might not be up to sharing right now. Tonight: Reflect, read and relax.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
 ★★★★★ You might want to carefully think through a problem that involves a partner and this person's handling of his or her funds. You might find that the best idea is to separate the money tie between you. Tonight: Celebrate the beginning of the weekend.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
 ★★ You take a stand, but others could disagree with you in a major way. Otherwise, someone might not be telling you the whole story. This person might think he or she is, but is leaving out details that might not be relevant to him or her. Tonight: Out late.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
 ★★★★★ Don't take others' information as if it were written in stone. Do your own checking. Concentrate at work, as you might be quite distracted. Leave visualizing new ideas for later. Break past rigidity. Tonight: Think deeply.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
 ★★★★★ Someone has a lot to say. Even though you might feel like you have better ideas, listen. Share your thoughts, but defer to this person like the typical Libra. You will claim your power soon enough. Tonight: Vanish quickly.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
 ★★★★★ Others seek you out and come from a very different spot. Listen to suggestions, as many people have the same objective as you do. You might have a hard time focusing, as you might be thinking of the weekend ahead! Tonight: Go off and do. Find your friends.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
 ★★★★★ Emphasize work and what you can do. Laugh and enjoy what is going on around you. A joke or intuitive feeling lightens you up, as well as those around you. Emphasize what you can do. Clear out as much as you can. Tonight: Romp out the door.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 ★★★★★ Your imagination takes you in a new direction financially. You might be up for a risk, but you also need to be up for the end results, if you experience failure. Allow more flirtation and fun into your day. Tonight: Let the weekend begin with your great style.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 ★★★★★ Your imagination appeals to others, even if they don't let you know it. Everyone seems like business as usual, which might be the case. They know that the weekend is coming, and they want to clear out extra work. Tonight: Happily lead others out the door.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
 ★★★★★ You say what you want, and you get it. Use your strong ability to manifest. Others appreciate your leadership because they want to get out for the day. You have a vision. Don't share it yet. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

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LOCAL



The convention: A pep rally and a courtship

BY MARK WRIGHTON

Special to the Daily Press

For many around the nation this week, the 2004 Republican National Convention may be going relatively unnoticed. Almost one-half of the nation might not be tuning in because of a visceral dislike of the president. Another large portion has made up its mind in support of George W. Bush. Add that to the notion that party conventions have become nothing more than multi-million dollar commercials and one should not be surprised that few people are watching. As a result, the television networks have trimmed their coverage.

Regardless of whether you are watching, the convention is in full swing here in New York City. "Swing" took on its literal meaning Wednesday afternoon in Madison Square Garden as the future of the party took its turn when it convened in the Youth Convention portion of the program. The protests spilled into the arena as — clad in the Republican uniform of coats and ties — a handful of protesters managed to infiltrate the floor and, at a predetermined signal, began demonstrating against the policies of George W. Bush.

While this is not a conventional way of participating in the political process, this episode — along with the Youth Convention — underscores the continuing importance of conventions. Despite the media's apparent determination to the contrary, party conventions remain relevant — even when everyone knows who the parties will nominate.

While they appear on the surface to be a gathering which produces a sharp focus on the party once every four years, the conventions set the organization's tone for the following four years and well into the future. They serve as both a pep rally and a courtship vehicle for party members. Behind the scenes — and mostly out of the eye of the media — the 2004 RNC has been sowing the seeds of its future this week in New York.

Parties — like any other organizations desiring to perpetuate themselves — must do things to pass on their "lore." The stu-

dents are going through this process this week. They are participating in the mad scramble for convention credentials, not only to get me onto the floor when the president makes his acceptance speech, but also to meet and to develop relationships with party members from their state delegations. For the students, those connections may result in positions in the party or in the business world. For the party, those connections strengthen the organization by providing supporters and the next generation of candidates to carry the standard.

Along with passing the torch, the conventions serve as a large pep rally and courtship for future presidential candidates. For those few watching on television, the pep rally is obvious. But, behind the scenes this process is even more evident and effective.

To a person — and in addition to courting the party officials of the state with the first-in-the-nation presidential primary — they have exhorted the delegates from the Granite State to return to New Hampshire, prepared for the final push for the party and its candidates.

Conventions also play an important role in the political socialization process. Delegates bring their children and other family members along to experience the circus atmosphere and learn about the political process. Important societal values of our political society are passed on to the next generation. Thus, the republic is reenergized once every four years as both parties meet in convention.

Political parties — once dreaded by the founders of the nation — serve as institutions through which our political selves find expression. Conventions will remain relevant (if reluctantly covered by the press) into the future because their main purpose: Partisan family reunions — no matter how dysfunctional the family happens to be — will endure over time.

(Mark Wrigton is an assistant professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire and is spending the year in Washington, D.C. as a congressional fellow. Wrigton and his students are in New York this week for the convention). He can be contacted at Cajunman@aol.com).



SURF REPORT

Today the water is:

72°

We'll see a mix of increased NW wind swell and small S to SW swell (180-215). Many breaks see surf in the knee-waist high range, good NW/combo breaks hit chest high and standout spots through San Diego see a few bigger sets.

Expect 2 to 3 foot, knee- to chest-high waves and fair conditions.

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LOW TIDES

HIGH TIDES

	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	- 1:42	1.0	1:42	0.3	7:32	4.5	8:03	5.2
SUNDAY	- 2:21	0.3	2:12	0.4	8:20	4.5	8:28	5.7
MONDAY	- 3:01	-0.4	2:44	0.7	9:09	4.5	8:58	6.1
TUESDAY	- 3:44	-0.1	3:17	1.1	9:59	4.3	9:31	6.4
WEDNESDAY	- 4:30	-1.3	3:51	1.5	10:52	4.1	10:08	6.5
THURSDAY	- 5:20	-1.4	4:29	1.9	11:52	3.7	10:49	6.4
FRIDAY	- 6:16	-1.3	5:12	2.3	1:02	3.5	11:37	6.1

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The QLine

Some 2,500 delegates descended upon New York City this week for the Republican National Convention.

Pre-convention polls showed the race to be evenly split, as Democratic challenger John Kerry has lost some of the steam garnered in Boston a month ago. Candidates traditionally enjoy a bounce in popularity immediately following conventions. A Time magazine poll suggests that Bush has gained ground on Kerry on the

economy and Iraq.

This week, Q-Line wants to know, "Do the national conventions typically affect the way you vote? Can President Bush's speech sway you one way or another in light of your current leanings?"

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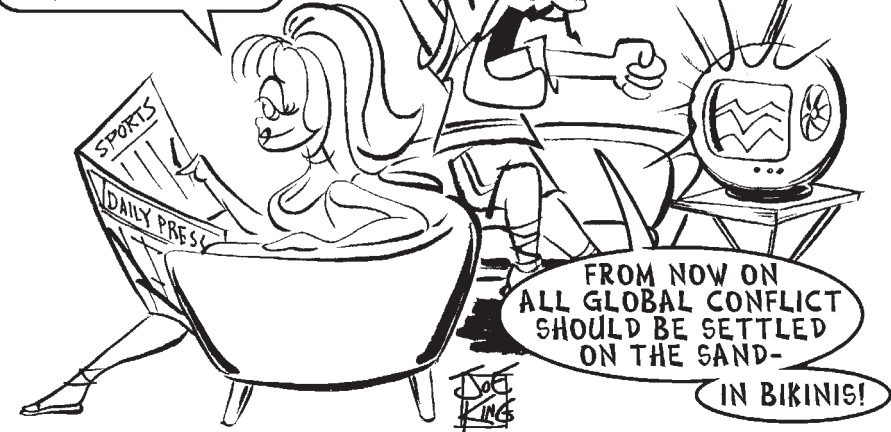


OPINION

KERRI WALSH & MISTY MAY WIN THE GOLD!

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SO WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE SPIRIT OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES?



Citius - Altius - Fortius! (From the Latin, "You Go Girls!")

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Former resident says 'be gone'

Editor:

I never though I'd agree with the mindset of the pony-tailed, sixties, hippy-dippy, protesters, but I do. The outcome of this next election can change this disastrous course we are on. I've heard from many that this is the most important election of their lifetime.

So, I say regime change now. Don't let "the man" hold us down. Throw the bums out. We shall over come.

Oh, I wasn't talking about the Bush administration. Actually, I was talking about the SMRR-backed incumbents.

Power to the people.

Tony Street
Bend, Ore.

Keep the labor in the U.S.

Editor:

David Pisarra in his essay, "Remember the laborers but don't forget bosses" (SMDP, Aug. 28, page 4) argues that the interests of employees and employers are linked "if even in a life and death struggle." While he urges us to remember and honor labor this weekend, he emphasizes that those who write the paychecks merit equal homage. Most reasonable people would agree.

But what about the employers who export jobs to India or China? Do they deserve honor as well?

The Sunday Los Angeles Times describes job outsourcing as a growing industry. Included are brokerage firms, investment banks, law firms, copy shops as well as librarians, software designers, accountants and graphic artists, among others. The Times quotes Celent Communications, a consulting firm, that calculates that 2.3 million U.S. are at risk.

So what about workers whose bosses are focused abroad, searching for cheaper labor that results in higher profits. For those workers, the linkage between them and their supervisors may be looking a bit tarnished.

Joanne Gamlin
Los Angeles

GUEST COMMENTARY BY DONNA J. WARREN

Social Security needs 'doctrine of preemption'

The president's convention speech last night makes it clear that the final months of the 2004 presidential election will be fought on the wisdom and implementation of President Bush's "doctrine of preemption," which boils down to "getting the enemy before they get us." Sen. John Kerry and his Democratic colleagues have not argued that the doctrine is wrong, but instead have argued over what is "an imminent threat."

Surprisingly, the debate over preemption isn't limited to the war in Iraq or even to the broader war on terrorism. In fact, an identical debate over preemption is at the center of the candidate's difference on Social Security. During his prime time convention speech, and in other speeches around the country, President Bush has argued that Social Security's looming insolvency is an imminent threat to the economic security of tomorrow's retirees. For this reason, he has called for preemptively overhauling Social Security by moving our nation's retirement program from a pay-as-you go system, where current taxes pay for current retirees, to a partially pre-funded system where a portion of a worker's Social Security taxes would be placed in personal investment accounts that would provide a nest egg to workers in their retirement. The balance of our Social Security taxes would continue to provide benefits to seniors who are already in or near retirement.

Sen. Kerry is not necessarily opposed to preemptive action on Social Security. In fact, in an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press" earlier this year, he admitted that in 1995, when he thought Social Security was going broke, he favored raising the retirement age and means testing Social Security benefits. Since that time, however, he has come to believe that Social Security is not in jeopardy and now believes that "economic growth" can delay any need for action. In fact, earlier this month, he noted that a "tweak here and a tweak there" can put Social Security on a sound footing for decades to come.

So, once again, the primary difference between the candidates on whether or not to take preemptive action boils down to their differing views of the threat that lies ahead. What does exist-

ing intelligence tell us about the threat of an unreformed Social Security?

A week ago, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan gave the gravest and clearest warning yet. In a speech in Jackson Hole, Wyo., Greenspan pointed out the significant demographic changes our country has undergone. Due to the low fertility rates of American women and aging of the baby boom, we are faced with a dramatically growing elderly dependency ratio. Greenspan noted that this population shift will pose "substantial challenges" to Social Security, which he noted is already in a long term "chronic deficit." His warning came with a caveat that while "stark choices" must be made in order to put Social Security on sound footing, that these changes if done sooner rather than later could stem the need for changes that would be both "abrupt and painful."

Greenspan's warning only adds to the chorus of alarms that have recently been sounded on the need to reform Social Security. On the issue of "imminent threat," almost every independent and non-partisan organization that has studied Social Security has come to the same conclusion: The shrinking worker to retiree ratio is putting Social Security's finances in jeopardy. Within two decades, Social Security will be running substantial deficits that will eat away at the security of future retirees, and will put significant strains on the tax burdens of future workers. In short, Social Security is on a certain path to insolvency — a path that can only be changed by immediate and decisive action.

To counter the looming deficits and mounting taxes that constitute Social Security's twin threat will require a president willing to put his reputation and legacy on the line — one who recognizes the danger and is willing to act despite severe short-term opposition. America's future depends on electing a president that sees and understands this threat.

(Derrick Max is the executive director of the Alliance for Worker Retirement Security, a broad-based coalition of 40 organizations representing large and small employers. He is available at dmax@awrs.org).

OPINIONS EXPRESSED are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to sack@smdp.com. All letters must include the author's name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.



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OPINION



Wisdom was found in the case of the missing molar

PISTACHIO PERSPECTIVE

BY SUSAN ANN CONNOR



I woke up happy. For no particular reason, just that I was feeling cheerful. After gliding out of the right side of the bed, I proceeded down the hall with a spring in my step. I brushed my teeth with vigor, flossed with a smile, and sang while sudsing in the shower.

Beautiful day for a drive, as my dad used to say. Without further adieu, I grabbed some fruit for nutrition's sake, jumped in my roadster, and started cruising down PCH on this gorgeous, clear Saturday morning.

Soon hunger struck. Heeding, I lithely picked up a perfect plum from my fruit stash. One of the great joys in life has to be biting into a succulent plum on a summer's day and letting the juice trickle down your mouth.

Windward Beach had become my desired destination, but I hadn't quite reached Sunset when I realized what happened. I couldn't believe it. This cannot be. What? Where was my tooth? My tongue searched feverishly for the missing molar. Here, there, everywhere. But it was gone. Gone. Lost forever. I had swallowed the sucker. That plum ... that dog-gone plum. If only I hadn't heeded.

Suddenly Saturday's step wasn't as springy. I was in a daze. It is very disconcerting to consume a tooth, let me tell you. Just plain weird. Like you just lost a part of yourself. Well, swallowed really.

No longer was I interested in heading down the highway, so I turned onto Sunset. Not quite a mile up, I saw signs for the Self-Realization Center. I quickly drove in, hoping to realize what condition my condition was in.

After parking, I dared myself to look closer in the mirror. Usually one to accept a dare, especially to learn the truth, I peered cautiously at my reflection. I smiled wide. Not so bad, I thought. I opened wide. Yup, sure as shootin', there

was a hole where my tooth used to be.

It was a crown that had evidently worn out its welcome. I tried to think of something good about this situation. Thinking ... thinking ... thinking more. Well, it didn't hurt. And it was a back bottom tooth, so it wasn't really visible. That's two good things.

But, ugh, I have to get a new one. The mere thought of going to the dentist sent me into a quagmire, not to mention the expense. Dental insurance isn't exactly liberal with its benefits. Where was the tooth fairy when I needed her?

The only thing to do was to get out of the car and soak up the tranquility of my current surroundings. If you have ever visited here, you know what I mean when I say it's a timeless place of peace. And as reported in the LA Times, September 2001, it's "a little serenity in a city of madness."

As I walked the grounds, my mind quieted, but my tongue kept winding its way to the newly acquired space in my mouth. About the time I conjured up a giggle at the ludicrousness of it all, I stumbled upon a metaphysical thought. Maybe I was clearing away (or gulping down) the old to make way for the new.

Later I googled "teeth" for the fun of it. I learned there's a patron saint of dentistry, Saint Apollonia. After having her teeth knocked out in 249 A.D. during a riot in Egypt, she threw herself into a fire rather than renounce her Christianity. In art, she is shown holding pincers and wearing a gold tooth around her neck. Given the circumstances of Apollonia's martyrdom, I'd prefer praying to Mr. Ed for tooth safety.

I also found several dream interpretations about losing teeth. Many validated my own thoughts that it's about a time of change. I'm not sure if that's true or not. But at this point, it doesn't matter. The plain truth is my tooth is gone. It's been ingested and inevitably will be replaced with a brand new porcelain one. Lalalala...

(Susan Ann Connor can be reached at pistachiocolumn@aol.com).

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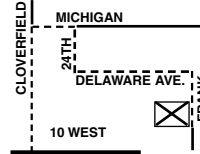


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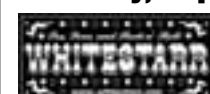
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LOCAL

Former slave ready to live out her 'hopes and dreams'

SLAVE, from page 1

hour days at James and Elizabeth Jackson's Culver City home.

James Jackson is currently on leave as the vice president of legal affairs at Sony Pictures, according to a company spokeswoman. Elizabeth Jackson, like Ruiz, is of Filipino descent.

"I had to cook, clean, wash clothes, iron, hem dresses and tame the two dogs," Ruiz said through tears. "I cooked for the dogs, but I was given leftovers that had been in the fridge for days. I had to clean (the dogs') ears and give them vitamins, but I was forced to sleep on a dog bed.

"If I complained, Mrs. Jackson said she'd call the police, they'd lock me up and I'd never see my family," she said.

Ruiz's story, though shocking to many, is not uncommon, said Kay Buck, executive director of the Los Angeles-based Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking.

"This is a sad reminder that slavery is alive today," Buck said. "It's remarkable that (Ruiz) was identified, as most victims of extreme isolation are at the hands of their traffickers. They work in restaurants, massage parlors, sweat shops and your neighbor's house, as was the case with Nena."

Statistics show there are 600,000 to 800,000 victims of trafficking on an international scale, with 15,000 to 18,000 of those trafficked to the United States. Annual prof-

its for traffickers is estimated at \$9 billion and the crime ranks third next to arms and drug trafficking in organized criminal activities, according to the coalition.

Los Angeles trails New York and Miami as the U.S. city most people are trafficked to, Burk said. The coalition, which opened its doors in 1998, has seen more than 200 victims and is currently helping 70 trafficked persons meet immediate food, shelter, medical and legal needs.

"Most trafficking survivors speak no English, have no passport and don't have the life skills to survive in an urban setting, such as crossing streets, taking a bus or calling 911," Burk said.

Ruiz said the Jacksons were with her the three times she left the 25-unit gated condominium complex where they lived. She was discouraged from talking to outsiders, but eventually approached neighbor Sandra Sheridan for help.

"Nena took my hand, said, 'Please help me' and started to cry," Sheridan said at the press conference. "I tried so many times to get Nena to let me call the police, but she was afraid the police or immigration services would put her in jail."

But Sheridan eventually called law enforcement authorities, jump-starting a chain of events that led to Ruiz being removed from the Jacksons' home and obtaining help from the coalition. "The

Jacksons might have been successful in getting Nena to cook and scrub the floors, but they failed to break her will to survive," Sheridan said.

The Jacksons have not been criminally charged and maintain that Ruiz's work slowly evolved with them providing her room and board, and paying her \$400 a month. They subtracted money from her paycheck for phone calls and items they bought her.

Ruiz's story began receiving widespread attention last month after a civil lawsuit she filed in 2003 was heard during a jury trial at the Santa Monica Superior Courthouse.

Ruiz's team of lawyers spent more than a week describing her year-long plight to jurors. They said she originally came to the United States in early 2001 to work as a traveling companion for Elizabeth Jackson's sick mother. A few days after arriving in the country, she was moved to the Jacksons' home, where she said she was forced to work more than 18 hours a day, seven days a week, while suffering physical and emotional abuse.

The jurors agreed the Jacksons were liable for each of the claims Ruiz filed in the lawsuit: Involuntary servitude, violation of the California Labor Code, false imprisonment and invasion of privacy, as well as fraud, assault and battery, and intentional and negligent infliction of

emotional distress.

Ruiz was awarded \$551,000 in back wages, penalty and other damages. The jury also found that the Jacksons should each pay \$137,872.92 in punitive damages. Those amounts will double by state statute, according to Ruiz's lawyers.

Today, Ruiz is employed as a certified nurse's assistant and shares a Los Angeles apartment with a roommate. She is currently awaiting approval of a T-visa application filed in March. The T-visa, created for victims of trafficking, would allow her to stay and work in the country for three years, at which time she could apply for permanent residence.

There also are plans to try and reunite Ruiz with her husband and three grown children who she hasn't seen since 2000, Burk said.

"I miss them very much," she said. "I really can't wait for the day I can be reunited with them."

On Thursday, Ruiz took the podium and in a firm, loud voice spoke to the victims of trafficking and slavery. Her demeanor was much different than it had been in the courtroom just days before, where she appeared timid.

"I want to tell the men, women and children who are suffering like I was that they don't have to be afraid," Ruiz said. "It gives me strength to know that justice has been served. Now I have hopes and dreams."

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Not all schools achieve

STUDENTS, from page 1

Not all schools experienced growth. Six schools had declines, ranging from three points to 20 points. Four of the schools remain well above 800. Each of the schools that experienced a decline, however, had been growing consistently in previous years, Deasy said.

"The long-term trend indicates steady and outstanding growth," he said. "Moreover, the district looks forward to each additional piece of data we receive from the state as it helps us refine our efforts to help all students achieve at high levels."

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 established accountability requirements, which is the AYP. The AYP appraises all

schools independently by the same standards. It also measures the growth of each school and district in the nation to determine if it is progressing at an acceptable course.

There are up to 46 different criteria for schools and districts to meet in order to make AYP targets. Most of the criteria fall into one of two umbrellas: Proficiency, which measures student achievement, and participation, which measures the number of students who take the test. In Santa Monica and Malibu, there are 34 criteria to be met, and this year the district met 33 of them. The district didn't meet a component of the participation criteria relating to special education students who took the state assessment in mathematics.

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Starring: Emily Mortimer

COLLATERAL
Cruise makes for one bad-ass bad guy in this unsettling thrill ride from director Michael Mann.
Starring: Tom Cruise, Jamie Foxx

OPEN WATER
If you thought the crew in "Jaws" were screwed out there in their little boat, wait 'til you see what happens to the unfortunate young couple in this one.
Starring: Daniel Travis, Blanchard Ryan

LITTLE BLACK BOOK
No one deserves to watch this movie—and its pot-holed, nonsensical plot—unfold.
Starring: Brittany Murphy, Ron Livingston

CODE 46
It's difficult to wrap one's head around the film's basic conceit because as lovers, Robbins and Morton generate less heat than a meat locker.
Starring: Tim Robbins, Samantha Morton

THE VILLAGE
The final act shocker isn't worth enduring the rest of the film for.
Starring: Joaquin Phoenix, Bryce Dallas Howard, William Hurt

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Wicker Park a weak and misguided film

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

“Whacko Park” is more apropos — a nod to the misguided creative team who cooked-up this phantasmagorical remake of the 1996 French film, “L’Appartement.” Though visual-

Review

ly engaging — Montreal, where the film was shot, makes for a really good-looking Chicago — director Paul McGuigan’s (“Gangster No. 1,” “The Acid House”) film, from a scattershot script credited to Brandon Boyce and Gilles Mimouni, is an unintelligible collection of curious coincidences, bad music, far-fetched narrative twists and some deadwood performances. Ostensibly a romantic thriller about a couple torn apart by jealousy and deception, “Wicker Park” sloggers along until it ultimately, and accidentally to be sure, becomes a comedy. At a recent screening, the giggles started about halfway through, right around the time everyone in the audience realized the whole mess Josh Hartnett’s charisma-challenged character was in could have been avoided had the guy only heard of a wondrous new device called a cell phone. Instead, he and the other players in the film, which includes Matthew Lillard providing strong comic relief as the dopey best bud, pass notes, slide keys under doors, and hastily arrange meetings in snow-covered parks. Of course the notes get misdirected, keys lost and meetings are missed. And Hartnett’s Matthew just gets sadder and sadder.

The source of his heartache is Lisa (Diane Kruger from “Troy”) an ethereal dancer who he falls for something fierce after spotting her



on a sidewalk. Lisa catches Matthew stalking her through the streets of Chicago, so she does what any woman would — invites the stranger up to her place for a game of mattress hockey. Hartnett is awfully cute, after all. From then on, the two lovers are inseparable ... that is, until a few months later when Matthew proposes that they cohabitate, and Lisa disappears. His lover suddenly, inexplicably gone, Matthew does what any guy would — moves to New York and gets engaged to somebody else. Two years later, they sort of meet again and from there, things get a bit implausible,

especially when another “other woman” arrives on the scene in the form of Rose Byrne (also from “Troy”). Thing is, as ridiculous and confusing as “Wicker Park” is, it’s undeniably fun to watch. There are so many gratuitous red herrings and throwaway flashbacks forced into the mix that it’s hard to ever really know what the hell is going on, but the confusion is oddly intoxicating.

(Rated PG-13 for sexuality and language. Running time 115 minutes)

Reese in character: Vulnerable and troubled

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

In taking on the part of one of the most dynamic women in English literature, Reese Witherspoon is sending a message: This legally blonde bombshell can carry considerable weight. As Becky Sharp, the cagey heroine of William

Makepeace Thackeray’s famous novel “Vanity Fair,” the 28-year-old actress flexes the comedic muscles honed in her most celebrated role (as that ditzzy lawyer from Beverly Hills), but she also burrows deep into the troubled psyche of a bewildered young woman desperate to find her place in the world. Witherspoon, on the other hand, is exactly where she wants to be: At the top of her profession, with her husband of five years — actor Ryan Phillippe — and their two beautiful children.

QUESTION: Your real-life pregnancy was incorporated into the plot of “Vanity Fair,” and there’s a love scene in which it’s evident you were pretty well along in the term. Did you have any reservations about doing that scene?

REESE WITHERSPOON: The reason I’m so attracted to (director) Mira Nair’s work is that she has this way of putting sexuality in her films in a way that is not gratuitous or overtly sexual. It’s a very female sensuality that has a lot to do with color and mood and lighting. I felt very comfortable with her, so when she said she wanted to make the most of my body and show my pregnant belly, I didn’t feel nervous at all. I knew she would do it in a beautiful way.

Q: How does being with child affect the way Becky Sharp will be received by moviegoers?

RW: It adds to the vulnerability of the character. There’s a sense that there’s something real happening in this woman’s life. She might never see her husband again, and she might have a child. It added a lot of dimension for me as I had to consider what it would be like to give birth in that time period.

Q: In period pieces such as this one, which is set in the 19th Century, often the biggest challenge is getting modern audiences to connect with the material. How does this film attempt to do that?

RW: The universality of being of one socioeconomic status and trying to reach up is something that everybody understands, particularly in America. We’re always reaching for something bigger or better or higher. There’s also the war element, which is on lots of people’s minds. The feelings associated with women staying behind and dealing with all the emotions involved in that. But overall, I think people will connect with the idea of wanting something so much, and then realizing that it might not be what you want once you get it.

Q: You became a big star at a young age. How do you stay hungry when you’ve seemingly already got it all?

RW: As much as people think that I’m in a great place, and that I get all the great job offers, I constantly feel like I’m striving to do better and striving to find a bigger challenge. In this business, you can always do that. It’s never about being “made.” It can be, but I see the opportunities there to always push myself and that’s what I do.

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'Vanity Fair' and Reese carry a strong delivery

BY CAROLINE BODKIN
Special to the Daily Press

In the latest reincarnation of William Makepeace Thackeray's opus, "Vanity Fair," Reese Witherspoon stars as Becky Sharp, one of the most cunning female heroines in English literary history. It's early 19th Century London and Becky, the orphaned child of a starving artist and a Parisian opera girl, desperately wants to

marry into high society and will utilize all of her considerable charms to do so. While users and social climbers aren't often likable characters, Witherspoon's Becky simply can't be despised. She is only crafty because she believes she needs to be, which makes her soulful and complicated enough to be lovable.

Director Mira Nair, who recently gave us the critically acclaimed "Monsoon Wedding," was born in India, so she knows first-hand what it means to live in a class system. What's certainly evident is

sympathy for the myriad of emotions that motivate a character like Becky.

The episodic story takes off when Becky earns a position as a governess to the Crawleys, a well-bred clan she succeeds in charming before capturing the heart of dashing Rawdon Crawley (James Purefoy), youngest son and heir to the family fortune. Becky and Rawdon marry in secrecy, and are subsequently cast out by the Crawleys, who see it as an unfit union. Soon after, when Napoleon invades Europe, Rawdon leaves pregnant

Becky to fight, then returns to hard times after the war. Becky sees a way out of hardship and back into high society in rich admirer Marquess of Steyne (Gabriel Byrne). In entertaining his pursuit she would finally get what she's craved for so long, but at a price she cannot imagine.

(MPAA Rating: PG-13 for some sensuality/partial nudity and a brief violent image. Running time: 137 minutes)



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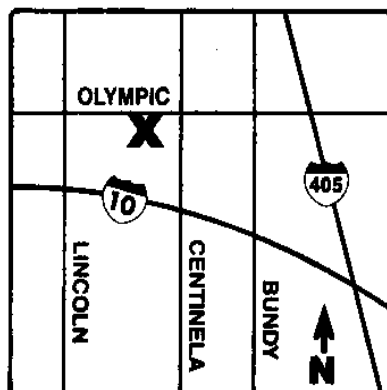


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STATE

Governor Schwarzenegger talks to fellow immigrants

BY ERICA WERNER
 Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — A day after using his prime-time convention speech to invite fellow immigrants into the GOP, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger encountered some immigrants who weren't sure they'd accept the invitation.

Appearing relaxed and happy after delivering the well-received speech, Schwarzenegger visited a public school in Harlem that's home to a chapter of the national after-school program he founded. He urged the school-children to work hard and stay out of trouble.

"Read and study every day as much as you can. You maybe don't like it all the time, I didn't like it either, but my mother made me do it otherwise she whacked me with a yardstick over the head," Schwarzenegger said to laughter from several hundred students, parents and teachers.

"She made me do it, and today I'm glad that she made me do it, because the more you study the smarter you get, and the smarter you get the more successful you become later on."

The audience in the racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood included immigrants who'd heard Schwarzenegger's Tuesday-night overture: "To my fellow immigrants listening tonight, I want you to know how welcome you are in this party."

Some said they liked Schwarzenegger, and even welcomed the idea of amending the Constitution so foreign-born citizens like them could run for president. But they said he might not change their minds about President Bush or the GOP.

"If Arnold says to me 'I'm going to run for president,' I'll vote for him," said Elizabeth Anunkor, a Nigerian-born citizen whose daughter, Nneka, is in the after-school program. "But I don't think he can right away convince me to vote for Bush."

But the registered Democrat said Schwarzenegger was helping her see the Republican Party in a different light. "I think the Republican Party is opening its doors to immigrants, because I saw that last night," she said.

Dominican Republican native Ramon Vargas, who is 39 and came to the United States at age 12, said he considers himself an American, not an immigrant, so he didn't feel Schwarzenegger's words were addressed to him.

"He was speaking to probably the newly arrived, to people who were coming probably from Europe, not people from Mexico, because illegal immigrants can't vote," said Vargas, a teacher at the school.

Another Dominican native who teaches there, Rosa Caran, said she liked Schwarzenegger but wouldn't follow his lead on politics, "Because maybe I have my own way of thinking."

Schwarzenegger spent Wednesday afternoon lunching with mother-in-law Eunice Shriver, chatting by phone with former President George H.W. Bush and shopping on Madison Ave., his spokeswoman Margita Thompson said. And, he had an encounter with fellow multimillionaire Donald Trump, who came down to greet him in a pen store in Trump Tower, where the two "had a nice chat," Thompson said.

Schwarzenegger also dropped in on a party at the Ritz-Carlton to thank corporate and special interest donors who footed the \$300,000-\$350,000 bill for the parties and events Schwarzenegger and his entourage are hosting in New York. These include a tribute at the Central Park Boathouse organized by the motion picture and recording industries.

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NATIONAL



Venerable Wilderness Act stands the test of time

BY JOHN HEILPRIN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Forty years and 106 million acres after Congress decided the wilderness should not be spoiled by people, the law is such an icon that skeptics dare only try to slow its consequences.

Even President Bush has signed off on adding 529,604 acres at a time when environmentalists are attempting to use the Wilderness Act to block his pursuit of more oil and gas drilling and timbering on federal land.

Only Congress can designate wilderness, although the president has to sign laws doing it. The acreage added so far in Bush's tenure is the least of any president since Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act on Sept. 3, 1964.

Motorized vehicles and equipment, such as chain saws, are prohibited in wilderness areas. Camping, hiking, climbing, fishing, hunting, canoeing and horseback riding are allowed; grazing livestock is generally allowed. Off-limits are mountain biking, commercial logging, road-building, oil and gas leasing and mining, except for pre-existing claims.

Rep. Richard Pombo, chairman of the House Resources Committee, sends a form letter to colleagues who propose new areas.

"Wilderness designations often result in lasting controversy and a sense of resentment" if they don't have widespread local support, cautions Pombo, R-Calif.

Another California Republican, Rep. George Radanovich, who chairs the House subcommittee that oversees wilderness, said the pace of adding to it "needs

to be slowed down to keep some people from ... abusing the intent of the law by keeping the public off public lands."

"We may be slowing it down, but I don't think there's the interest in cutting them off completely," Radanovich said Thursday. "Where there's the interest, I think they can be designated as long as they're appropriate."

Last year the Bush administration directed the Interior Department to quit barring oil and gas drilling on land proposed for wilderness but not yet designated by Congress. Since then, the department has issued oil and gas leases on tens of thousands of these acres, mainly in Utah, Colorado and Wyoming.

Congress this fall might pass two proposals for new wilderness, Radanovich said. Those would create protections for nearly 770,000 acres around Lincoln County, Nev., and 11,000 acres dubbed the Ojito wilderness near Albuquerque, N.M.

Nearly 5 percent of the nation is protected as wilderness, in what author Wallace Stegner, an admirer of Western landscapes, famously described as "the geography of hope."

Wildernesses range in size from 5-acre Pelican Island in Florida to 9-million-acre Wrangell-Saint Elias in Alaska. Only six states — Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland and Rhode Island — have none.

"It isn't a lockup forever, but these areas do have a padlock on them and Congress has the key," said Doug Scott, a Seattle environmentalist who wrote a history of the law. Part of the law's staying power, he said, is that "it was designed, most of all, to put the Congress in the driver's seat."

Few of the 114 bills signed by Johnson and successive presidents creating 663 wilderness areas around the nation have been tinkered with, and there never has been an attempt to undo a wilderness designation.

"The magic is it requires Congress, which in turn requires the citizenry, to be engaged. That's where it gets its power," said William Meadows, president of The Wilderness Society.

His group believes another 200 million acres, much of it in Alaska, should be considered for wilderness protections.

Alaska already contains more than half the nation's designated wilderness, 58 million acres — or about 16 percent of the state. California has 14 million wilderness acres, or 14 percent of the state.

Nearly all the wilderness added during Bush's presidency is in Nevada; 14,000 acres are in Colorado.

Supporters credit the law's success to the power of a revolutionary, uniquely American idea — leaving future generations some of the last remaining wild areas, free from human design. Other countries have since mimicked it.

Utah author and naturalist Terry Tempest Williams sees poetry in a law that defines wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

"Those who wrote this legislation into being understood the crucial and subtle relationship between language and landscape," Williams said. "How we speak about wild, open country is closely aligned with how we treat it. Open lands open minds."

Facts about the 1964 Wilderness Act

By The Associated Press

Under the 1964 Wilderness Act:

■ There are now 106 million acres protected as wilderness. Alaska accounts for more than half of them, 58 million acres, which is 16 percent of the state. California has 14 million acres, or 14 percent of the state. The other states with the most wilderness acres are: Arizona, 4.5 million, or 6 percent of its land; Washington state, 4.3 million, or 10 percent; Idaho, 4 million, or 7.5 percent; Montana and Colorado, 3.4 million each, or 4 and 5 percent, respectively; Wyoming, 3.1 million, or 5 percent; Oregon, 2.3 million, or 4 percent; and Nevada, 2.1 million, or 3 percent.

■ President Bush so far has signed four wilderness bills by Congress adding 529,604 acres, nearly all in Nevada; 14,000 acres are in Colorado. The most acreage was added during Jimmy Carter's years in the White House. Carter signed 14 wilderness bills covering a total of 66.3 million, mostly in Alaska. Ronald Reagan signed 43 bills adding 10.6 million acres. Lyndon Johnson signed six bills totaling 4 million acres. Bill Clinton signed 13 bills adding 9.5 million acres. George H.W. Bush signed 10 bills adding 4 million acres. Gerald Ford signed 12 bills adding 3.5 million acres and Richard Nixon signed 12 bills adding 1.3 million acres.

■ Four federal agencies manage the areas: the National Park Service, 43.6 million acres; the U.S. Forest Service, 35 million acres; the Fish and Wildlife Service, 20.7 million acres; and the Bureau of Land Management, 6.5 million acres.

■ California has the most wilderness areas, 130, followed by Arizona, 90; Alaska, 48; Nevada, 42; Colorado, 41; Oregon, 40; Washington, 30; New Mexico, 23; Virginia, 18; Florida, 17; Utah, 16; Montana and Wyoming, 15 each; Georgia and Michigan, 14 each; North Carolina, 12, and Tennessee, 11. The rest of the states are in single digits or have no designated wilderness areas.

Sources: The Interior Department; The Wilderness Society; Wilderness.net



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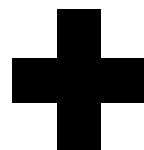
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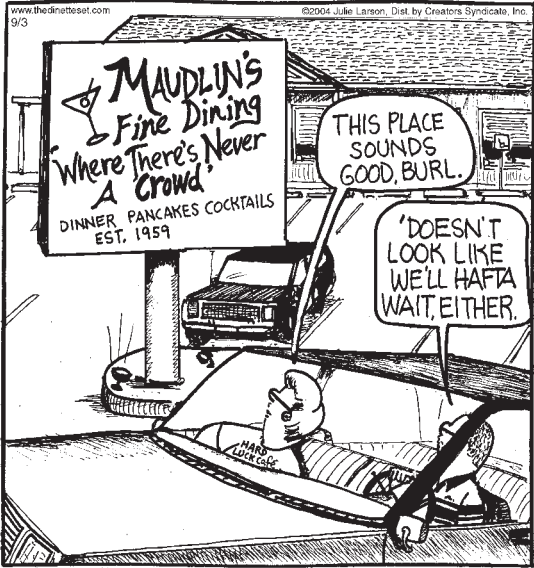
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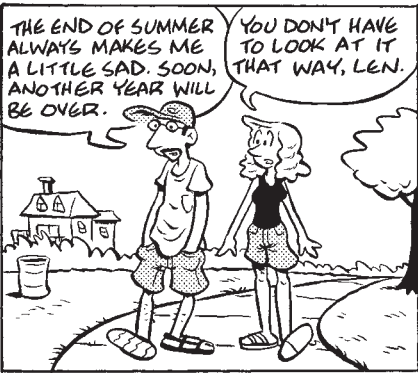


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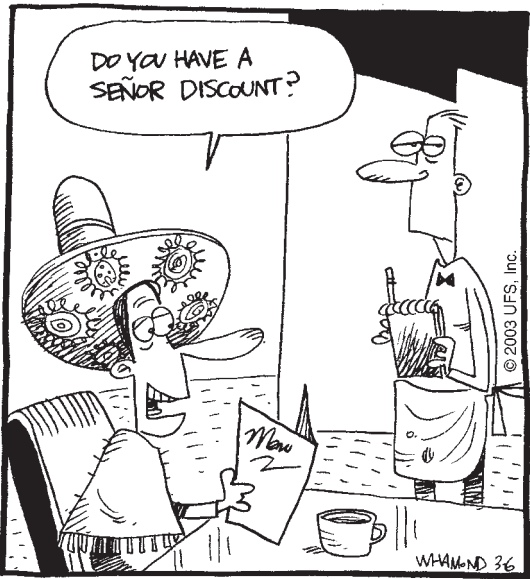
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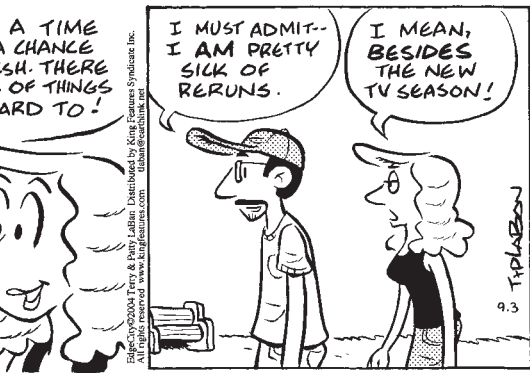
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