

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

11 24 25 26 41

Meganumber: 17

Jackpot: \$29 Million

FANTASY 5

1 9 21 26 35

DAILY 3

Daytime: 7 7 8

Evening: 2 2 8

DAILY DERBY

1st: 07 Eureka!

2nd: 11 Money Bags

3rd: 04 Big Ben

RACE TIME: 1:41.30

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

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

In May, a Philadelphia Daily News columnist described a cattle-call-type ritual at the local airport Sheraton hotel, by which most of the candidates for the city's judgeships in that month's Democratic primary shuffled into a room and offered checks of \$1,000 or \$2,000 to each of the city's ward leaders for "election day expenses," with each leader accepting the checks of those he would support. At a similar gathering at the Ritz-Carlton, one candidate said, "I thought to myself, 'What if we all just walked out. Refused to pay.' But none of us had the courage."

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 252nd day of 2005.

There are 113 days left in the year.

On Sept. 9, 1776, the Second Continental Congress made the term "United States" official, replacing "United Colonies."

In 1830, Charles Durant flew a balloon from New York City across the Hudson River to Perth Amboy, N.J.

In 1976, Communist Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung died in Beijing at age 82.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal."

HANNAH MORE

ENGLISH AUTHOR AND SOCIAL REFORMER

INDEX

Horoscopes	
Do your thing, Sag	2
Surf Report	
Water temperature: 65°	3
Opinion	
Where were they?	4
Entertainment	
Imbiber's tips for football season	9
State	
Hostage in Iraq freed	10
National	
Billions for relief	11
Comics	
Strips tease	12
Classifieds	
Have some class	13-15

Perry's Beach Cafe on auction block

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

SANTA MONICA BEACH — The owner of four mom-and-pop beach concession stands fears his operation may soon be swept away by big business, while City Hall contends it will avoid legal sand traps by opening up the bidding process.

Last month City Hall issued a request for proposals that offers bidders a chance to replace Perry's Beach Cafe and Rentals, four concession stands that have been a Santa Monica trademark for more than 25 years.



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press
Cruz Bahena, who is in charge of the rentals at Perry's, sets up shop on Thursday morning by bringing out the tables, chairs and umbrellas for the day. City officials are considering other operators to take over concessions at the beach.

Perry's owner, Richard Chacker, says City Hall's request for a proposal is an invitation for large food-service corporations, such as McDonalds, to take over

the sites he leases from Santa Monica. Meanwhile, City Hall says it's following basic legal procedure and that the request is as broad as possible in order to allow

the city to choose the best fit. Perry's locations offers 142 kinds of food on its menu served

See PERRY'S, page 6

New hotel faces road of red tape

Landmarked site will require multiple approvals before building

BY ROBERT FATURECHI
Special to the Daily Press

BAYSIDE DISTRICT — Plans to build another Santa Monica hotel are underway, as architects rev up to renovate a city landmark on Wilshire Boulevard and Seventh Street, and build a new structure on a nearby parking lot.

The new hotel, with smaller, less expensive rooms than the city's other luxury hotels, will be geared toward those who stop in Santa Monica on business.

The Santa Monica Landmarks Commission deemed the 710 Wilshire Blvd. site — formerly an office building — a landmark last month, a status that adds some red tape to the renovation process.

Before getting a building permit, developers will have to get



File Photo
This site at 710 Wilshire Blvd. received landmark status last month.

See HOTEL, page 10

LOCAL

A \$1M Los Angeles toast to New Orleans

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

BARKER HANGAR — In true LA fashion, about 1,000 people are expected to raise their glasses and buck up tonight for Hurricane Katrina victims by drinking wine, eating food from some of the area's hottest restaurants and bidding on auction items donated by businesses throughout the country.

LearnAboutWine is hosting an encore edition of its "TASTE" summer events for hurricane relief, which is dubbed "LA to LA — Los Angeles Supports Louisiana." The event will be held at Barker Hangar at the Santa Monica Airport.

Hosted by TV, radio and

See LA TO LA, page 7

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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)
★★★★ With all that goes down or could go down, you will be thrilled to skip into the upcoming weekend. Of all signs, you can detach and not trigger. But you might lose your temper if you aren't careful. If you become angry, you could say words you cannot take back. Try to chill out. Tonight: Follow the music.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Getting through the day will take serenity and maybe a longer-than-normal coffee break. You don't want to trigger, if possible. A partner or friend is most supportive. Share your frustration; you will feel better. Tonight: Add more spice to your life.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ Others seek you out left and right. You might feel a bit frustrated if you need to get something done. Your mind drifts to thinking about your weekend plans for an escape. You might need a walk in order to chill out. Tonight: Say yes to an invitation.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Do as much as you can. Get errands done, clear your desk and return calls. You might find that you cannot escape into the weekend as soon as you would like. Someone has to hold down the fort, and it appears to be you. Tonight: Relax as soon as you can.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Your job will be to find solutions and bypass problems. Many people around you are somewhat frayed and uptight. Some might lose their temper. Stay cool and together. Your humor and perspective could make a big difference. Tonight: Find your favorite playmate.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Tension surrounds your home, domestic life or a family member. For everyone's sake, try to stay cool, calm and collected. Ultimately, that behavior will help everyone. A misunderstanding could brew. Don't get too plugged into an issue. Tonight: Don't get uptight.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ You will say what you want. However, the reactions of others could stun you. Recognize that a lot of confusion lurks in your mind, and upheaval seems inevitable. Dig up your sense of humor. Forget sharp words. Tonight: Swap your day's war stories with your pals.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ You might be disappointed by someone, but avoid sharp words. Everyone is a bit upset. You might feel pulled between a friend and a loved one. They both want you exclusively. Who is more important ultimately? Tonight: Skip away from problems.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ You are full of vim and vigor. You still might feel as if you are walking through a minefield. Listen to a child or loved one who impacts your daily life. Confusion surrounds others in general. Tonight: Do your thing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★ Hide out, if you can. You won't be happy with others. Plans change or actually become disruptive. People do the unexpected. Also, misunderstandings run rampant. Confirm any meetings before you head out. Tonight: Take some personal time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Your friends make an effort to connect with you. Don't obsess about a problem you cannot change. Your finances could be unpredictable. A partner or someone you deal with makes an error, hopefully in your favor. Tonight: The more the merrier.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ You do the unexpected, especially when others become difficult and quarrelsome. Be good with the boss and curb this wild behavior. In fact, your professional or community life actually could develop into an outlet. Tonight: Take off as soon as you can.

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LOCAL



Making a stand



Yolanda Lewis/Special to the Daily Press

This operation at the corner of 24th Street and Pearl was one of several lemonade stands run by children throughout Santa Monica to raise money for Hurricane Katrina survivors.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SM Red Cross bucking up for Katrina victims

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica chapter of the American Red Cross is hard at work, providing aid of all kinds to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

A "Hurricane Katrina Relief drive-through" fundraiser has been scheduled at the Santa Monica chapter at 1450 11th St., Saturday, Sept. 10, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event is being co-sponsored by the Santa Monica chapter and KTTV Fox 11. The event will allow persons who wish to donate money the opportunity to drive in, drop off monetary donations to a Red Cross volunteer and go on about their daily activities.

Since the disaster, hundreds of Santa Monicans — ranging from children who've sold cookies and lemonade to raise money to local businesses and individuals who have written and personally delivered five-figure checks.

In addition to the estimated \$200,000 in donations received, the chapter has recruited and has begun training hundreds of volunteers — many of whom may be deployed in disaster relief work anywhere the American Red Cross has shelters and service centers.

The American Red Cross has set up a "fast track" system to make it easier for volunteers to get basic disaster relief training so they can get in the field fast, and provide aid and comfort to hurricane victims. Two recent orientation classes saw 180 people filling out questionnaires, going through orientation and taking the two required "condensed" classes. Some individuals drove to the Santa Monica Chapter from as far away as San Diego to begin the process of becoming a Hurricane Katrina disaster relief volunteer.

"Two disaster volunteers from the Santa Monica chapter are already on scene," said Robert Chatman, director of disaster services for the chapter. "Karen Sue Donoho has been deployed to Picayune, Ala., and Christy Courtemanche is working in a shelter in Houston, Texas, where flood victims were bussed from New

See BRIEFS, page 5

CORRECTION — In the Thursday, Sept. 8, issue of the Santa Monica Daily Press ("Sheraton Delfina is finally HERE"), luxury hotels that have become unionized in Santa Monica were listed. Loews is one of them.



SURF REPORT

Friday the SW hovers around waist to chest high, and NW wind swell should remain minor in the knee- to waist-high range. Saturday the last, lagging periods from the SW swell that rolled in Thursday arrive, making for surf mostly waist to at times chest high.

Today the water is:

65°

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	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
MONDAY	4:45	0.5	4:53	1.3	11:00	4.5	10:52	5.0
TUESDAY	5:05	0.9	5:32	1.3	11:22	5.0	11:28	4.5
WEDNESDAY	5:25	1.3	6:18	1.3	11:46	4.3	N/A	N/A
THURSDAY	5:43	1.8	7:15	1.3	12:12	4.0	12:14	5.2
FRIDAY	6:02	1.7	7:40	0.9	12:40	3.2	12:09	4.6

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The State Senate approved legislation last week that would legalize same-sex marriages in California, the most populous state in the country. The 21-15 vote made the Senate the first legislative chamber in the nation to approve a gay marriage bill, setting the stage for a showdown in the Assembly, which narrowly rejected a similar bill in June.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know: **Do you support the state's official sanctioning of gay marriages, or do you feel our elected leaders are off track? Why?**

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

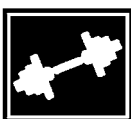
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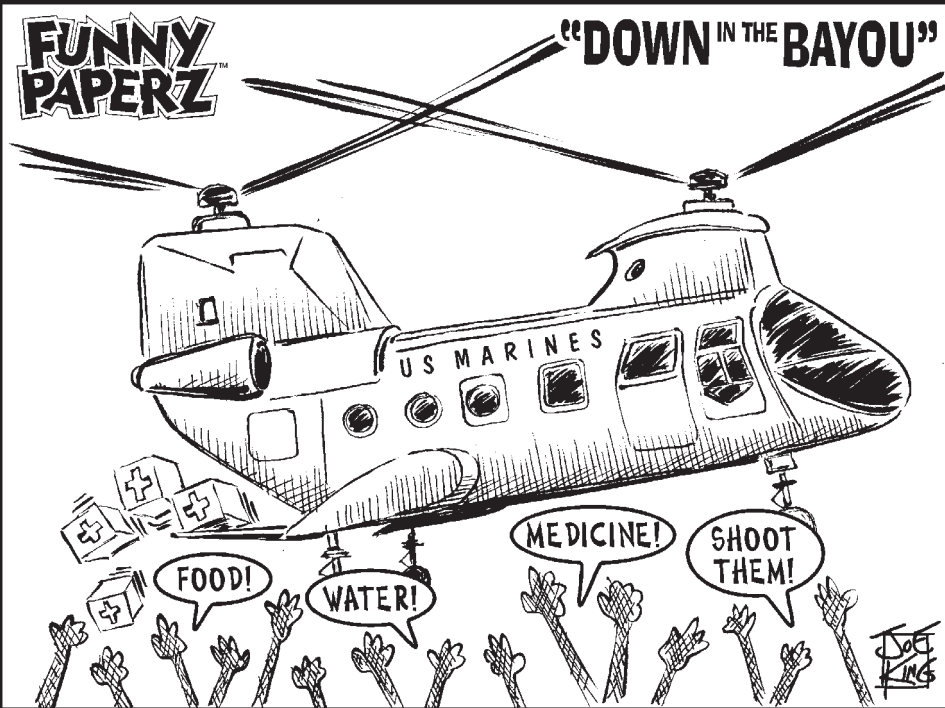
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Story on the wrong flight path

Editor:

In your article "Lawsuit against airport won't be landing in court" by Ryan Hyatt, (SMDP, Sept. 8, page 1), there is an incorrect statement. "Meanwhile, the Douglas Aircraft plant adjacent to the airport was closed and homes constructed in the area" is incorrect. When the Douglas Aircraft plant was closed in the 1970s, a business park was built in its place, the area now known as the Airport Business Park. The business park includes office buildings, restaurants, a gym and a park. The incorrect statement implies that the homes were built after Douglas closed and now there is a problem with aircraft noise. Homes have always been around the airport, that is nothing new.

Thanks for a really good local newspaper. I look forward to reading it every morning.

Linda Tennant
Santa Monica

Bank bilking customers

Editor:

This letter is in response to the recent column on bank fees. I had an experience with bank fees right here in Santa Monica at First Federal of California. After they completely redesigned their Web site, it didn't work at all, or not completely for more than a week. I have a First Fed account tied to Paypal, so all my eBay payments go there. With all the phishing related to Paypal, I'm weary of keeping more money in that account than I need, so I only transfer from my other First Fed accounts when I need to. Their Web site stopped working just as I made a large number of payments as I prepared to go on vacation. Since their Web site was down, I couldn't transfer money to balance the account so they charged me \$23 for each payment, adding up to \$1,500. I took them to small claims court here and of course the judge (retired) couldn't understand the Internet part. Beyond that we both have hearing losses so we couldn't understand each other. The friendly First Federal simplified everything and told the judge I wrote a bunch of bad checks. They also claimed I should have called their automated phone line for my balance, which would have been difficult even if I didn't have a hearing loss. Not only did they take advantage of my lack of hearing, but the court offered me no accommodations even as I asked at least three times. Just last year the Supreme Court decided a case that courts are required to make these accommodations, but apparently that doesn't apply in Santa Monica since they spent all their money of security. There's more police there than citizens. From what I read (on the Internet of course), First Federal is for sale and they're milking their customers for every dollar to make themselves look profitable. I'm sure others here in Santa Monica had trouble with their Web site conversion, although the bank denied that in court under oath. There's endless discussion about homeless people in this paper, but what do you expect if the bank can drain your accounts with fees, and the law is only concerned with its own preservation?

Frank Palardy
Santa Monica

Seniors want quiet in the park

Editor:

I received a card from "Community Events; Open Space Management Division; Community and Cultural Services Department" (don't you love the sheer number of words they use?) announcing a "Senior Day in the Park" at Reed Park.

How nice, I thought, but what is this stuff about amplified sound?

We old folks like quiet little ditties.

Then I get a notice titled "Senior Day in the Park" again, but this time we are informed that the event is celebrating Mexican Independence Day and there will be live mariachi music!

I'm confused.

Is this a Mexican celebration that seniors are invited to or does the city think mariachi music is our music of choice for our big day in the park? NOT.

Caroline Jacobs
Santa Monica



OPINION

The disappearing act, subsequent cover-up



HERE'S THE THING

BY LARA M. BROWN, Ph.D

Nearly two weeks ago, the Gulf region was pounded by Hurricane Katrina, and the horrific images of people suffering and dying have yet to cease. No doubt many share the sentiment expressed by one of our founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton, who after surviving a hurricane on St. Croix, wrote: "My heart bleeds, and I have no power to solace."

Our hearts do bleed for our fellow Americans. And the awfulness comes not from the bleeding, but from the lack of power. Most of us have been unable to do anything, except to donate to the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity and/or PETA. Most of us have felt like yelling: "Please, somebody, do something! Please help all of those people stranded, hurt and in harm's way!"

What's made this situation so untenable was that most of the elected officials in the federal government — President George Bush included — were on vacation when this happened. Bush was still on his ranch in Texas, and neither Louisiana Senators David Vitter, nor Mary Landrieu, had the power to rouse their colleagues from their breaks. While Vitter is a Republican, he was elected less than a year ago, which means he has few favors saved up to ask for help. Landrieu, who has more seniority, also happens to be a Democrat, which means that her influence is severely constrained in Washington these days. In addition, since Bush believes in delegating authority, it is doubtful that he felt that he needed to micro-manage a storm, especially one that had already passed by his brother's state.

This is not to say that the state and local officials didn't make errors regarding Katrina. They did. But it was the disappearing act of almost all of the federal elected officials that worried me the most. And it wasn't just that Bush was missing in action, though of course, that was the most disturbing. It was that they all were, with the glaring exceptions of Senator Bill Frist and former Vice President Al Gore. Frist hopped on a plane and volunteered his medical services, while Gore chartered a plane and flew doctors into the region and evacuees out.

The Bush administration has said contradictorily that: (a) they couldn't get in because of the damage, (b) they weren't invited into the state by the governor, and (c) they thought the storm had passed without severe damage, but then the lev-

ees broke, which was why they were caught unaware. Simply put, they are nothing but excuses.

On Monday, Aug. 29, beginning at about 7 a.m., Katrina made landfall. By 11 a.m., two major levees were breached and massive flooding began to occur in New Orleans. By Tuesday morning, water had encompassed more than 80 percent of the city and New Orleans was without power, water, gas and phone service.

While it is true that during the storm FEMA and the National Guard were unable to move people and supplies into the city, the federal government still could have been acting on the region's behalf. Within the White House, there is an individual who is in charge of intergovernmental relations, and that person could have been on the phone with the National Governor's Association and he could have been working with the 47 governors not impacted by the storm to coordinate relief efforts. Instead of waiting for each state to offer assistance (days later), the federal government could have been organizing the state assistance program.

The same is true with regard to the private sector. The White House could have been on the phone with heads of Fortune 500 companies coordinating the private sector relief. Had the federal government been engaged in these types of efforts on Monday, FEMA, the Red Cross, and the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama would not have been scrambling as hard and as fast as they were late last week.

Here's the Thing:

While I could go on about the failures of the Bush administration, I'm more concerned about the failures of the presidential aspirants. Bush is a lame duck. The presidential aspirants — Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Evan Bayh, Rudolph Guiliani, John McCain, Rick Santorum (to name a few) — are the future and they were not there. They did not show themselves in Louisiana, Mississippi or Alabama any faster than did Bush. They are the ones who are telling me that they have the leadership skills to run this country. How am I supposed to believe that they are any better than what we have now, given that they didn't get there to help any faster than Bush?

Leadership is not simply about words. It's about action. And the only two who took action were two Tennesseans considered long-shots. Wonder what a Frist versus Gore race might look like?

(Lara M. Brown, Ph.D., is a political scientist from Los Angeles, and teaches at California State University, Channel Islands. She can be reached at larambrown@aol.com.)



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LOCAL



CRIME WATCH

By Daily Press staff

Money no object for hotel guest

At 4:20 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 31, the Santa Monica police responded to Doubletree Hotel on the 1700 block of Fourth Street regarding an investigation involving the defrauding of an innkeeper. When officers arrived to the scene, they spoke to the employee, who said the suspect had paid for the room with two checks that had been returned because the account was closed. The suspect had stayed at the hotel for a month, with a total tab of \$5,837. Mark Louis St. Juste, 37, from Los Angeles, was arrested for defrauding an innkeeper and transported to Santa Monica Jail. No bail was set.

At 2:02 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 29, the Santa Monica police responded to the 2400 block of Colorado regarding a theft investigation. When officers arrived to the scene, they contacted the employee, who said that they were watching television when they heard noises coming from the entrance to their apartment. When they looked, they saw the suspect standing at the door. After a brief conversation, the suspect left. Police officers stopped the suspect on Lincoln Boulevard and Michigan Avenue. A field show up was conducted. Daniel Arroyo Martinez, 20, from Arleta, was arrested for prowling and probation violation. Bail was set at \$20,000.

At 12:25 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 30, the Santa Monica police responded to the 1800 block of 11th Street regarding a prowling suspect. When officers arrived to the scene, they contacted the resident, who said that they were watching television when they heard noises coming from the entrance to their apartment. When they looked, they saw the suspect standing at the door. After a brief conversation, the suspect left. Police officers stopped the suspect on Lincoln Boulevard and Michigan Avenue. A field show up was conducted. Daniel Arroyo Martinez, 20, from Arleta, was arrested for prowling and probation violation. Bail was set at \$20,000.

At 6:30 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 2, the Santa Monica police responded to a church on the 1200 block of Fourth Street regarding a theft investigation. When officers arrived to the scene, they spoke to the employee, who said he heard noises coming from the kitchen on the first floor. As he walked to the kitchen area, he saw the suspect leaving through the door. The witness asked the suspect to stop. The suspect fled, and the witness chased the suspect. When the suspect arrived onto Fourth Street, a police employee was driving by and detained him. A preliminary investigation indicates the suspect had broken into the church and stolen items from the kitchen. The items were recovered. Willard Davis Thomas, 49, transient, was arrested for burglary and probation violation. Bail was set at \$20,000.

At 3:20 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 1, the Santa Monica police responded to the 1100 block of Sixth Street regarding a burglary. When officers arrived to the scene, they spoke to the resident, who said that while she was in her bedroom, she heard her dog barking and noise in the living room and steps leading away from the apartment and down the hall. When she looked in the living room, she saw the balcony sliding glass door was open. No items were taken. No arrests were made.

This police report was prepared by Daily Press staff writer Ryan Hyatt.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

Orleans 230 miles away.

"We expect that many more Santa Monica Red Cross chapter trained volunteers will be heading to the disaster area in the days and weeks to come."

Two "fast track" Red Cross classes also are required for those who wish to work in hurricane disaster relief. Volunteers must attend a brief orientation and take condensed versions of "Introduction to Disaster Services," "Mass Care" and "Shelter Management" required by the Red Cross. All sessions are held at the Santa Monica chapter. Persons wishing to volunteer for Katrina disaster relief should call the chapter at (310) 394-3773 for a current schedule of training sessions.

Volunteers going to the disaster area will serve for a minimum of nine days, although a two- or three-week period of availability is preferred. Airfare to and from the disaster locale, food and housing (shelter) expense are covered by the American Red Cross. Potential Katrina volunteers must be over 18 years old and in good health.

Many Hurricane Katrina shelters are located in areas with virtually no amenities. Volunteer housing will most likely be in a public shelter. At the current time, power is still off and water is scarce in most locales.

"Working in a disaster environment is likely to be very uncomfortable and not advisable for those who are used to creature comforts," Chatman said.

The Red Cross is now establishing long term shelters away from the impacted area.

"The Red Cross has 360 shelters in operation in nine states including Utah, Missouri, Oklahoma and Washington, DC," Chatman said. "Forty-two hundred Red Cross disaster volunteers are already deployed with another 600 persons going in on a daily basis."

The American Red Cross has launched the largest mobilization of resources for a single natural disaster in its history.

See BRIEFS, page 6



WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

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THE SLICE-A true neighborhood pizzeria serving authentic New York pizza & buffalo wings. We also offer a selection of hot & cold subs, pastas and salads. You can also create your own calzone. Eat in, take out, or delivery. Catering is available. Hours: open daily 11am-9pm. Visit one of our three locations: 915 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica (310) 451-7542, 1622 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica (310) 399-4060, 13151 Fountain Park Drive, Playa Vista (310) 437-7499.

VIOLET-At Violet restaurant the atmosphere is casual, comfortable, and, like its cuisine, is uncluttered. Chef Jared Simons’ flavorful small plate fare has something to suit everyone, from light eaters to those with a taste for a more robust fare. The Braised Short Ribs with Shallot Potatoes (\$14.50) melt apart while the Multi-Colored Beet Salad with Eel delights with Kumquat and Ginger Vinaigrette (\$9) and the favorite among the regulars is the Baked Macaroni and Gruyere Cheese with Serrano Ham (\$7.50). Unique selection of new and old world wines by the bottle, glass or flight as well as an impressive list of domestic & imported artisan beers. Hours: Lunch: Tuesday–Friday, 11:30am–2pm. Dinner: Tuesday–Friday, 6pm–10pm & Saturday and Sunday, 5:30pm–10pm. 3221 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica. www.violetrestaurant.com (310) 453-9113.

City: Request not meant to shut out ‘little man’

PERRY’S, from page 1

in an outdoor, casual dining atmosphere. Visitors are also able to rent bikes, boogie boards, skates, umbrellas, or take lessons for various beach activities. His concession stands play classical music in the morning and pop tunes in the afternoon.

Over the years, Chacker says he and his staff have worked to broaden their customer base into a mix of which the community can be proud.

With visitors coming to his stands on recommendations from around the world, Chacker says he thought he was successful. However, he believes the city’s request to open up the bidding process is more than standard procedure and is aimed to undermine the “little man.”

“I’ve been involved in this process with the city five times, and I’ve never seen anything like this,” Chacker said, referring to the 70-page request for proposal the city has sent out into the business community seeking bidders.

He insists the “devil is in the details.” He cites that not only does City Hall’s request ask that the business community take over the four Perry’s concession stands, it also prefers that the candidates be able to provide concession service at the civic auditorium and the beach cafe at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway. He says the total minimal capital investment would be \$783,000.

“It is highly unlikely that a small business operator will have the financial or human resources to provide that,” Chacker said.

Police search for suspect after he hugs girl on way to school

By Daily Press staff

SUNSET PARK — A teenage girl was accosted by a unknown man on Thursday morning as she was walking to school, police said.

At about 7:45 a.m., Santa Monica police responded to the 1500 block of Ocean Park Boulevard, where they learned that the suspect approached a 12-year-old girl and hugged her. The victim got away from the suspect, ran to school and reported the incident to a school official. The suspect fled on foot westbound on Ocean Park Boulevard.

The suspect is described as a white male, 20 years old; 5 feet, 10 inches to 6

feet tall; with a thin build, light complexion, short dirty-blond hair, and a possible goatee. The suspect was wearing a white short-sleeved T-shirt with a skull and cross bone on the front, and blue jeans. He didn’t appear to be a transient, police said.

Anyone with any information regarding the incident is encouraged to contact the youth services division at the Santa Monica Police Department at (310) 458-8451 or the watch commander at (310) 458-8426. Callers who wish to provide anonymous information may also call the We-Tip national hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME (27463). Callers with information that leads to an arrest and conviction become eligible for a reward of up to \$1,000.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 5

“The organization, in conjunction with the Southern Baptist churches and other suppliers, is already providing in excess of 500,000 hot meals daily to displaced persons,” said Chatman, adding that plans are to establish shelters in other parts of the country, including Southern California.

Because of the scope of the disaster, hundreds of millions of dollars are needed to pay for food, services and supplies. Those interested in contributing to the Hurricane Katrina disaster relief fund can send a a check to American Red Cross of Santa Monica, 1450 11th St., Santa Monica, CA 90401. Checks should be made out to “American Red Cross” with the notation: “Hurricane Katrina.” The Red Cross does not handle clothing, food or other goods.

Blood donations are always needed. Donors can donate blood at the Santa Monica Chapter on Monday, Sept. 19, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Monday, Sept. 26, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Donors should call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE any weekday between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

However, representatives from City Hall said the aim in the proposal request wasn’t to shut the “little man” out, but to provide as much competition as possible, as required by law, so the city can choose the best candidate.

“It could be a big or small operator,” Councilman Richard Bloom said. “Nothing is determined. I don’t think the city’s request is intended to criticize Perry’s operation.

“I would think the incumbent would have as good a chance as any, because he has a read on Santa Monica’s needs.”

Elaine Polachek, open space manager for City Hall, said the request for proposals is often stressful for business owners, who have a lot riding on their success. The process is meant to abide by legal standards.

Polachek said last time City Hall went out to bid in the late 1990s, Chacker submitted the only proposal and he was awarded the agreement. This time around, City Hall hired a food services consultant to assist in the preparation of the proposal to help expand the process.

But it’s not meant to exclude the incumbent, either, she says.

“We’re obviously looking for the best rental offer along with an operation that provides a high quality of food, rentals and service to the public,” Polachek said. “Richard knows the market and business better than anyone having operated the concessions for decades.”

City Hall is expected to announce who is awarded the five-year contract next summer.

LOCAL



Pitching in



Photo courtesy of Nancy Zelon

Local kids lent a helping hand to Hurricane Katrina victims this past weekend, raising \$531 at a lemonade stand on Montana Avenue and Euclid Street. Sophie Zelon, 11, Hannah Spiegelman, 11, both from Lincoln Middle School, and Olivia Zelon, 7, from Roosevelt Elementary School, gave their time on Saturday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 2 p.m. They donated the money to the Santa Monica Red Cross chapter.

Barker donates hangar for hurricane fundraiser

LA TO LA, from page 1

film personality Harry Shearer, the event is expected to attract more than 1,000 professionals from Los Angeles for a night of live entertainment, including DJ Paul Oakenfold and Berlin opera singer Brenda Jackson, as well as a silent auction, and food and wine from local establishments. One hundred percent of all proceeds will go to Hurricane Katrina charities.

The event was put together in one week, thanks in large part to dozens of well-connected people in the food and wine business, said Ian Blackburn, founder of LearnAboutWine. It has attracted more than 50 local restaurants and 100 wineries from the Southern California area.

Blackburn said he is determined to raise more than \$1 million from the event, funds that will support hurricane relief efforts. Blackburn hopes to send money to New Orleans as early as next week.

"It was supposed to be a 200-person event, but it ballooned to 1,000," said Blackburn, adding he's amazed that people came together so quickly. "It snowballed and it became this A-list of restaurants from all of the best parts of LA."

Businesses have bucked up, too, with more than 200 auction items, ranging from a stay at the Montage Resort in Laguna Beach to meals at some of the best restaurants in San Francisco and New York. About \$225,000 worth of art has been donated for the auction. Blackburn hopes to raise double the amount of money taken in from ticket sales.

Blackburn founded LearnAboutWine in 1995, which hosts classes, events and tours that delve into the industry and are designed to teach participants about wine in a fun atmosphere. After nine weeks of 300 or more attendees at "TASTE" events held at Two Rodeo in Beverly Hills,

LearnAboutWine took an annual rest during August. However, with the recent disaster, Blackburn and his colleagues were called to action.

By Friday morning — just five days after the tragedy struck in Louisiana — Tim Smith, one of Blackburn's colleagues in the food and wine business, spurred him to host a large-scale charity relief event. The idea blossomed into resurrecting TASTE for an encore performance, with Blackburn and Smith calling upon some of the most well-connected people in LA to rally around the cause.

"It's been an amazing group of people who get things done," Blackburn said. "Everybody has been flooding in."

More than 250 tickets have been sold, and Blackburn expected by the end of Thursday to have sold close to 500, given that he was selling about 10 tickets an hour.

Judy Barker, a longtime Santa Monica resident, donated the hangar she rents for events throughout the year.

The cost is \$100 per person. Tickets can be purchased directly online at www.LAsupportsLA.com. All proceeds from the event are tax deductible and will go to support three key charities in the stricken Gulf Coast: the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, the New Orleans Hospitality Disaster Fund for displaced hospitality employees in the greater New Orleans area and the New Orleans Musicians Clinic, which provides health care support to musicians and their families.

There also are \$1,000 VIP tickets available with a 6:30 p.m. "meet and greet" with Harry Shearer and a VIP listing on the Web site. Check for sponsorship opportunities at www.LAsupportsLA.com.

The Barker Hangar is located at 3021 Airport Ave. The event will go from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., with a 6:30 p.m. VIP admission.

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Entertainment

‘Unfinished’ is predictable

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

An all-star cast, gorgeous setting and a damn fine performance by a bear highlight this offering from director Lasse Hallström (“The Cider House Rules”), the latest in a recent spate of films being unceremoniously dug out of

the Miramax storage closet now that parent company Disney has parted ways with Harvey Weinstein. On the bright side, “An Unfinished Life” isn’t nearly as bad as the unfavorable release date and inadequate marketing campaign would suggest, especially when compared with other recent Miramax disappointments such as “The Great Raid” and “Underclassman.” But the latter films didn’t have the ingredients for success that “An Unfinished Life” had going in, which makes it all the more surprising that Hallström’s movie isn’t a whole lot more enjoyable than it is.

Redford finds himself on familiar turf — a ranch located out in the wide-open spaces of Wyoming. Einar Gilkyson is a bitter coot, tortured by the death of a 22-year-old son who was killed in car accident over a decade earlier. Speaking of familiar, Morgan Freeman virtually repeats his “Million Dollar Baby” role as the kindly old best friend of the ornery old white guy, only here Freeman’s Mitch is a bit more dinged up — the result of a nasty encounter with the aforementioned grizzly. Still, it wouldn’t have been too big a surprise had Hilary Swank showed up in sweatpants and started training ... or Brad Pitt with a fishing rod for that matter. Instead we get Jennifer Lopez as Jean, widowed wife of Einar’s dead son and mother of the granddaughter (Becca Gardner) he never knew he had. Einar blames Jean for his son’s death (she was driving the night of the accident) and is reluctant to help even though she’s on the run from an abusive boyfriend (Damian Lewis). So he grumbles, then relents, cuz that grandkid of his is awfully dang adorable. What it all comes down to is that there’s healing to be done and forgiveness to be granted. And, of course, that’s just what happens. Hallström can only hope audiences forgive his film’s predictability and general sluggishness.

(Rated PG-13 for some violence including domestic abuse, and language. Running time: 107 minutes)



‘Emily Rose’ drama drops ‘Exorcist’ in the courtroom

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

Despite what the film’s trailer might lead you to believe, “The Exorcism of Emily Rose” is not another dimly lit J-horror flick in the vein of “The Ring” and “The

Grudge.” Sure, the titular character (played by talented newcomer Jennifer Carpenter) ultimately winds up a creepy looking, sun-deprived demon-girl with bad hair who frightens the bejesus outta everyone, but writer-director Scott Derrickson (“Hellraiser: Inferno”) squeezes the scary stuff — via flashback — into a typical courtroom drama. It’s an interesting marriage of genres, and one that pays off pretty well. As a horror flick, “Emily Rose” is downright chilling, especially during the obligatory “casting out the demons” sequence, but more often than not the action inside the halls of justice fails to match the intensity of the supernatural stuff. The movie is, to put it in development meeting pitch parlance, “The Exorcist” meets “A Few Good Men” ... without all the A-listers and buzz cuts.

The always-interesting Laura Linney stars as Erin

Bruner, a hotshot attorney who, having successfully defending a murderer in a high-profile case, has her sights set on a partnership at her firm. Opportunity arrives when she’s hired by the Catholic Archdiocese to represent a priest named Richard Moore (Tom Wilkinson), on trial for the death of a 19-year-old girl who died in hideous fashion during a church-sanctioned exorcism. Erin’s an agnostic, but when things start going boo in the night she reexamines her position. In a packed courthouse presided over by Mary Beth Hurt, Erin squares off against a pious prosecutor played with almost comical earnestness by Campbell Scott. It’s cold hard facts versus faith-based phantasm, and you get the impression early on that reality doesn’t stand a chance. While the prosecution’s argument that Emily went all Linda Blair due to some sort of psychotic epilepsy might make slightly more sense than Linney’s demonic body-snatching defense, Derrickson steers us vigorously toward a conclusion plucked straight from the Bush Doctrine.

(Rated PG-13 for thematic material, including intense/frightening sequences and disturbing images. Running time: 118 minutes)

Rolling Stone to publish Thompson’s final submission

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rolling Stone, the magazine that was home for years to Hunter S. Thompson, will publish a note written by the gonzo journalist days before he committed suicide in February.

Douglas Brinkley, the presidential historian who is also Thompson’s official biographer, writes that a Feb. 16 note may be Thompson’s final written words. It reads:

“No More Games. No More Bombs. No More Walking. No More Fun. No More Swimming. 67. That is 17 years past 50. 17 more than I needed or wanted. Boring. I am always bitchy. No Fun — for anybody. 67. You are getting Greedy. Act your old age. Relax — This won’t hurt.”

Hunter left the note for his wife, Anita. He shot himself four days later at his home in Aspen, Colo., after weeks of pain from a host of physical problems that included a broken leg and a hip replacement.

Written in black marker, the note was titled, “Football Season Is Over.”

Brinkley writes in the magazine, on newsstands Friday, “February was always the cruelest month for Hunter S. Thompson. An avid NFL fan, Hunter tradi-

tionally embraced the Super Bowl in January as the high-water mark of his year. February, by contrast, was doldrums time.”

Most of Thompson’s early writings appeared in Rolling Stone. In pieces of great length, he often portrayed himself as a wildly intoxicated observer and participant.

The writer’s ashes were blown into the sky in Woody Creek, Colo., amid fireworks on Aug. 20.

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Bill Rancic is going to fire himself.

Rancic, winner of the first season of NBC’s “The Apprentice,” says he’ll stop working for Donald Trump when his contract ends in March.

“That will probably be it for me,” he said at a global leadership forum Wednesday in Malaysia.

He has been overseeing construction of the 90-story Trump International Hotel and Tower in Chicago.

“I’m gonna go out and start another business of my own,” said the former Internet entrepreneur. “That’s in my blood.”

Rancic said he’ll leave before Trump’s project along the Chicago river is completed.

He said there are plans for him to appear in the fourth and fifth seasons of “The Apprentice,” in which contestants use their business savvy to compete for a job with Trump. The fourth season premieres Sept. 22.

Rancic said he’s interested in real estate. “In the years to come, I hope there will be Bill Rancic towers right alongside the Trump towers,” he said.

He urged Asian entrepreneurs to emulate Trump. “He’s a guy who’s gonna die in that chair, putting together some big deal. I don’t think Donald Trump will ever stop. He truly loves what he’s doing.”

ROME — “Die Hard” star Bruce Willis will help pick Italy’s most beautiful woman when he heads the jury of the “Miss Italia” pageant later this month.

“Each year we look for a big name that is attractive to the public and pleasant for the girls,” Marcello Cambi, spokesman for the national beauty contest, said Wednesday.

Sophia Loren, Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale, Catherine Deneuve, Alain Delon and Gerard Depardieu have headed previous juries for the pageant, which takes place each year in the northern spa town of Salsomaggiore Terme.



THE IMBIBER

BY DAN DUNN

A football fan's drinking guide

The NFL's regular season begins this week, and like legions of devoted fans nationwide, The Imbiber is gearing up for what promises to be five scintillating months of liver-thrashing, finance-depleting, relationship-ending revelry. Oh yes, Mr. Hank Williams Jr., I'm damn sure ready for some football! To ensure y'all are too, allow me to present the third annual installment of Tailgating Tips for Tipplers:

- 1) Don't Drink and Drive! I CANNOT emphasize this point enough. If you are out with friends at the game enjoying adult beverages, please don't ever, under any circumstances, get behind the wheel of a car. Let someone else in the group do it, preferably a guy you don't like very much — a (((INSERT HATED RIVAL HERE))) fan, perhaps? Then make sure you're in the back seat buckled in tighter than a cheerleader's wardrobe.
 - 2) Make Love, Not War. A fistfight in the stands or at a sports bar is a surefire way to ruin a perfectly soon-to-be-forgotten day. If picked on by an intoxicated bully, avoid a physical confrontation, wait until she leaves, and call her license plate in to the local drunk-driver hotline. This brings us to ...
 - 3) Know When to Say When. Drinking makes you feel good, there's no doubt about that. But when it comes to consumption, there is some scientific evidence indicating that too much alcohol can actually be a bad thing. I know ... I know. It sounds like a bit of "science fiction" to me too — after all, why would the good folks at Budweiser want to harm us? But still, you gotta wonder if those wicked bedspins and cold sweats at 3 a.m. aren't Nature's little way of saying, "Easy there, Captain Beer Bong."
- With that, let the games begin ... and may the best team win. My Super Bowl prediction: The Philadelphia Eagles will beat the Baltimore Ravens in overtime. Of course, I picked the Birds last season, too, and we all know how that turned out.

(Thirsty for more Imbiber? Pull up a barstool at www.TheImbiber.com.)

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ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

Ray Bradbury speaks

By Daily Press staff

Award-winning author Ray Bradbury will be in Venice next month to discuss his newest book, "Bradbury Speaks: Too Soon from the Cave, Too Far from the Stars," which expresses his thoughts, ideas, opinions and dreams.

The talk will be held on Oct. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Jon David Waldron Community Room in the Venice-Abbot Kinney Memorial Library, 501 South Venice Blvd. Call (310) 821-1769 for more information.

Afternoon theater on tap

By Daily Press staff

The Ruskin Group Theatre will present a workshop production of G. Bruce Smith's award-winning new comedy, "The Mitchells," for four Sundays beginning Sept. 11.

"The Mitchells" will launch Ruskin's "Something New @ 2" series, which will feature new works.

Performances are at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 11, 18 and 25 and Oct. 9 at Ruskin Group Theatre, 3000 Airport Ave. at Santa Monica Airport.

"This series presents us exciting prospects to discover new theatrical jewels," said Ruskin managing director Mike Myers in a press release.

"The Mitchells" tells the story of a young man who is confronted with having to disclose to his conservative parents that he is gay — before he is "outed" on a national Diane Sawyer television special.

The full-length play is based on Smith's "Christmas with the Mitchells," a one-act that was part of Playwrights 6's "Christmastime is Queer," staged in 2002 at the Celebration Theatre in Hollywood.

"The Mitchells" is directed by Jonathan Levit, who also directed "Christmas with the Mitchells."

In the cast are Larrs Jackson, Morris Nash, Lisa Robert, Peter James Smith, Amy Tofte, Jamie Virostko and Greg Wolf.

Tickets for "The Mitchells" are \$10. Call (310) 397-3244 or go to www.ruskingrouptheatre.com

SMC presents Singher tribute

By Daily Press staff

The Emmy Award winning Santa Monica College Opera Theatre and the SMC Associates will present "An Operatic Tribute to Martial Singher" at 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 17, in the SMC Concert Hall, 1900 Pico Blvd.

The featured performers are soprano Suzie Hanks, tenor and SMC alumnus Gabriel Silva, and collaborative artist Natalie Limonick. On the program will be solos from Schumann's Song Cycles, as well as duets from three French operas, Gounod's Romeo and Juliet, Bizet's Carmen and Berlioz's Le Troyen.

A distinguished French opera star whose career started in the 1930s and who later moved to the United States, Singher, a baritone, was selected for the tribute because he was an influential mentor for Sue Ann Pinner, artistic director of the SMC Opera Theatre. In



Photo courtesy of SMC
Suzie Hanks, Gabriel Silva and Natalie Limonick in an operatic tribute to Martial Singher Sept. 17 at SMC.

addition, he was a mentor to Limonick.

Singher's career as a performer and teacher spanned five decades and included leading role performances throughout France and with the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Later, he taught at the Mannes College of Music in New York, Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and Santa Barbara's Music Academy of the West, where Pinner studied with him for two years. He died in 1990 at the age of 85.

Hanks, a Wisconsin native, began singing professionally in summer stock and musical theater when she was a teenager. An accountant for the SMC Foundation, she returned to her singing seven years ago and has embarked on a recital career specializing in classic German and French songs. Her debut performing Schumann's art songs at SMC received rave reviews, and she returns by popular demand performing with the renowned Limonick, her mentor and teacher.

Silva, who received his master's in music from USC in June, has performed principal roles in Die Zauberflöte, La Traviata, Werther, Rigoletto, The Dialogues of the Carmelites, A Hand of Bridge, Madama Butterfly, The Merry Widow and Così fan tutte. He made his European debut in the summer 2003 "From Vienna to Broadway" concerts in Croatia and returned in 2004. Recent concert repertoire includes The Messiah and Mozart's Requiem with the Westchester Lutheran Cathedral, where he is tenor soloist. He also is the tenor soloist at Beth Sholom Temple in Santa Monica.

Limonick is a distinguished vocal coach, conductor, lecturer, pianist and accompanist. Among her many mentors, aside from Singher, are such musical giants as Lotte Lehman, Jan Popper, Walter Ducloux, Hugo Strelitzer, Wolfgang Martin, Maurice Abravanel and Fritz Zweig. A former professor of music and general director of opera at USC, she is one of the first women and first Americans to coach at Bayreuth in Germany and has been associated for several decades with the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.

Tickets for the special performance, a fundraiser for the SMC Opera Theatre, are \$16. Call (310) 434-3000.

The SMC Associates is a private organization that funds lectures and special programs at the college.

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Kidnapped American contractor rescued in Iraq

BY JEREMIAH MARQUEZ

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — When former hostage Roy Hallums called his daughter early Wednesday from Iraq with news of his rescue, he apologized for causing her so much grief and pain.

After gunman abducted Hallums along with two other foreigners from a Baghdad office last November, his family worked tirelessly for his safe release. They lobbied world leaders, held candlelight vigils, established a Web site, even offered a \$40,000 reward.

"He apologized to me for putting me through any hardship," his eldest daughter, Carrie Anne Cooper, 29, said in a telephone interview from her Westminster home. "He got to say he was sorry, and I got to say I loved him. We got to say things we never

thought we would be able to say."

Coalition troops rescued Hallums Wednesday in an isolated farmhouse 15 miles south of Baghdad, according to the U.S. military. He told his family the kidnappers escaped without a gunbattle.

"Considering what he's been through, I understand he's in good condition," his ex-wife, Susan Hallums, 53, said.

The family Web site was topped with a headline: Roy IS FREE!!!!!! 9/7/05.

Hallums, 57, formerly of Newport Beach, was working for the Saudi Arabian Trading and Construction Co., supplying food to the Iraqi army, when he was kidnapped Nov. 1.

He was seized along with two other foreigners after a firefight in the upscale Mansour neighborhood. An Iraqi guard and one attacker were killed. A Filipino, a Nepalese and three Iraqis also were

abducted but later freed.

In a January video released by his kidnappers, Hallums had a shaggy beard and a gun pointed at his head.

The family sent fliers to Iraq that, in English and Arabic, offered a \$40,000 reward. His ex-wife had planned to raise the money by selling a house in Memphis, Tenn., that was left to her by her late mother.

His family also contacted Bill and Hillary Clinton, both of California's U.S. senators and Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, Susan Hallums said. Gadhafi called on insurgents to release the American.

Susan Hallums and her husband of 30 years divorced a few years ago but remained good friends. They have two daughters, Cooper, from Westminster in Orange County, and Amanda Hallums, 26, who lives in Tennessee.

Hallums had been bound and gagged for much of his time in captivity, but doctors gave him a "clean bill of health" after the rescue, Cooper said. He planned to return to the United States within days.

"I've been waiting for this day, hoping

for this day for a long time," Cooper said.

Information from an unidentified Iraqi detainee, captured just a few hours before the rescue operation, led to Hallums' release, said Lt. Col. Steven A. Boylan, a military spokesman.

Hallums provided the following statement through the military after his rescue:

"I want to thank all of those who were involved in my rescue — to those who continuously tracked my captors and location, and to those who physically brought me freedom today. To all of you, I will be forever grateful. Both of us are in good health and look forward to returning to our respective families. Thank you to all who kept me and my family in their thoughts and prayers."

More than 200 foreigners have been taken hostage in Iraq since the war started in March 2003; more than 30 have been killed.

For the past 10 months, Susan Hallums had a small strip of paper taped to the front window of her Corona home that read "free our American hostage in Iraq." On Wednesday, she took it down.

Landmark status could slow hotel development

HOTEL, from page 1

approval from the city's landmarks commission, as well as with the planning commission, the architectural review board and the City Council.

The bureaucratic hurdles, though, are a long way away as the hotel's architects have just started planning the new structure and haven't even addressed the renovation process yet, said architect Howard Laks.

Real estate investor Alex Gorby owns the 10,000-square-foot landmark site, along with the nearby 37,500-square-foot parking lot, where he said he plans to develop a great majority of the rooms.

"I've owned the building since 1970," Gorby said. "(The new hotel) would be good for the community. In a sense, it's an entrance to Santa Monica, to the business district."

Though some have said a new hotel in Santa Monica is superfluous — the city already has nearly a dozen luxury hotels — others have welcomed the renovation with open arms.

"Additional hotel rooms and affordable accommodations, specifically those with historic and unique appeal, are always a welcome addition," said Misty Kerns, president of the Santa Monica Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The hotel will likely boost local tourism revenue and taxes, she added.

Officials expect the new hotel's traffic

impact to be minimal compared to that of a new office building.

"(Hotel traffic is) more dispersed throughout the day," City Councilman Ken Genser said. "It could be a good move, give a little bit more energy to that part of town."

Though the new development will likely face some stiff competition from the city's gaggle of luxury hotels — including the Fairmont Miramar, the Viceroy and Le Merigot — some say there's still room in the market.

"Santa Monica has one of the best occupancy rates in the Southern California region," said Rob York, retail consultant at the Bayside District Corp., which helps manage downtown Santa Monica in conjunction with City Hall. "Its average room revenue is high by typical standards."

But before the hotel reaps the revenue of Santa Monica tourism, they'll likely face an expensive and restrictive renovation process since the site has landmark status.

"Getting into an older building is always tricky even if it's not a landmark, and when you have a landmark building, you have more restrictions on what you can do," York said.

Laks said he expects a three-year wait before even getting a building permit.

York expects the tough renovation process to pay off, as the site's landmark status and striking architecture will make it more appealing to guests.



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Congress takes up \$51.8B relief bill

BY LARA JAKES JORDAN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Congress hurried toward approval Thursday of an emergency aid package that would spend well over \$1 billion a day for recovery needs of victims of Hurricane Katrina. Democrats and Republicans agreed that much had gone wrong in the government response but squabbled about what to do about it.

"There was a systemwide failure," said Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist of Tennessee after Republicans met with President Bush at the White House. He said there were problems at the local, state and federal levels and "we will get to the bottom of that" in a bipartisan congressional investigation.

Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada said on the Senate floor that such a probe, led by Republican lawmakers, would be as unbiased as having a baseball pitcher "call his own balls and strikes."

He said Democrats would support the \$51.8 billion spending bill, but he complained that most of the money would go to the Federal Emergency Management Agency — "Is there anyone, anyone, who believes that we should continue to let the money go to FEMA?" — and said further measures were needed to deal with health care, housing and education.

The House as early as Thursday was expected to approve the emergency spending bill that the Bush administration, under attack for its response to the devastating Gulf Coast storm, described as the latest installment in the costly relief effort.

"We will in fact need substantially more" money, said White House budget director Josh Bolten, estimating the funds would cover expenses for "a few weeks."

Prospects were more uncertain in the Senate, where Democratic Sen. Mary Landrieu of hurricane-ravaged Louisiana threatened to hold out for more funding.

Republicans said that any attempt to amend the bill could lead to delays in getting the measure to President Bush for his signature before current funds are used up.

The \$10.5 billion aid hurricane relief that Bush signed into law Friday was expected to run out Thursday evening, budget aides said.

Vice President Dick Cheney and his wife, Lynne Cheney, arrived on the Gulf Coast to talk to local officials, meet with emergency workers and tour disaster sites in Gulfport, Miss., New Orleans and Baton Rouge, La.

With the death toll mounting across the Gulf Coast, the White House would not estimate how many people had died.

"It's going to be a very ugly situation when those flood waters recede and we start to go in and recover bodies and we look at the additional public health issues that need to be addressed," presidential spokesman Scott McClellan said.

"This is a massive catastrophe, one that this nation has never seen the likes of," McClellan said.

The spending bill was being debated against the backdrop of partisan sparring over an unusual joint House-Senate congressional committee to investigate the government's readiness and response to Katrina's devastation that covers what Republican Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska described as twice the size as Europe.

The panel, which will be chaired by Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and a Republican House lawmaker yet to be named, must issue a report by Feb. 15.

Democrats pushed for an independent panel to investigate the disaster, similar to the 9/11 Commission that examined government missteps leading to the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas, R-Calif., said the House could act as soon as Thursday to help get money and other assistance to hur-

ricane evacuees by cutting through federal red tape, including relaxing rules for welfare funds. In recent days, the government has spent more than \$2 billion a day as it has paid out several big-ticket items such as contracts to provide housing.

A sliver of the new funding — \$1.4 billion — would help the Pentagon pay for the deployment of military personnel to the storm-damaged region. More than 63,000 military active duty and National Guard troops so far have been sent to the Gulf Coast.

The bulk of the money would go into a Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster relief fund that is offering debit cards of \$2,000 per household to families evacuated from homes in Louisiana and Mississippi. FEMA anticipates handing out 320,000 cards, at a cost of \$640 million, to help displaced residents buy clothing, pay for transportation and other "emergency supplies they need," Director Michael Brown said.

"The concept is to get them some cash on hand which allows them, empowers them to make their own decisions about what do they need to have to repair their own lives," said Brown, whose handling of the response has prompted several Democratic lawmakers to demand his resignation.

Congressional budget aides briefed by the White House said state and local governments would receive almost \$8 billion in reimbursements from the federal government for debris removal, school aid and infrastructure repair and replacement. An estimated \$500 million would pay for helicopter costs, repairs to sewer and drainage systems, and other storm-related expenses, said an aide to Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., a member of the House Budget Committee.

Expecting a surge in people seeking health benefits, state officials have asked Congress to pick up 100 percent of the costs for any Medicaid recipients added to their rolls as a result of Katrina.

Iraqis report arrest of 200 insurgents in Tal Afar, mostly foreign fighters

BY JACOB SILBERBERG

Associated Press Writer

TAL AFAR, Iraq — U.S. and Iraqi forces have encircled the insurgent stronghold of Tal Afar, and the Iraqi military on Thursday announced the arrest of 200 suspected insurgents.

The Iraqi military said 150 of those arrested Wednesday in this town near the Syrian border were Arabs from Syria, Sudan, Yemen and Jordan.

The joint forces have reported heavy battles on the outskirts of the city and several bombings that have mainly killed civilians. Iraqi authorities reported most of the civilian population had fled the city, which is 260 miles north of Baghdad and about 35 miles from the Syrian border.

"Our forces arrested 150 non-Iraqi Arabs yesterday in addition to 50 Iraqi terrorists with fake documents as they were trying to flee the city with the (civilian) families," Iraqi army Capt. Mohammed Ahmed said.

"We ordered the families to evacuate the Sunni neighborhood of Sarai, which is believed to be the main stronghold of the insurgents," Ahmed said.

Eight civilians were killed in the city Wednesday by a suicide car bomber at an Iraqi checkpoint, he said. On Thursday, the U.S. military said the combined American-Iraqi force had killed seven insurgents in the past two days.

Tal Afar is 90 percent Turkmen, and 70 percent of them are Sunnis. After the ouster of Saddam Hussein, the United States installed a largely Shiite leadership in the city, including the mayor and much of the police force.

The Sunnis have complained of oppression by the government and have turned to the insurgents for protection.

Early Thursday, a militant Web site carried a videotape showing the destruction of a U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicle in Tal Afar. The video, emblazoned with the logo of al-Qaida in Iraq, claimed the armored vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb. A U.S. military official said two Bradleys had been hit by roadside bombs in recent days and a soldier was killed.

Also Thursday, police reported finding 17 unidentified bodies.

The 15 bodies found by soldiers and police near

Mahmoudiya, 20 miles south of Baghdad, were in civilian clothes, with no identification documents, and had been shot to death, police Lt. Adnan Abdulla said.

The two bodies found near a sewage plant on the outskirts of Baghdad were blindfolded and handcuffed, police said.

In central Baghdad, a suicide car bomber Thursday targeted a passing convoy of private U.S. security agents, wounding three passers-by. The blast near the heavily fortified Sadir Hotel sent a huge plume of smoke into the sky in Baghdad's busy Karradah neighborhood, a main shopping and commercial district.

A Sept. 2 car bombing near the hotel killed an Iraqi security guard and wounded two. The Sadir is used by foreign security agents and other Westerners involved in rebuilding Iraq.

On Wednesday, the U.S. military, acting on a tip, raid-

ed an isolated farmhouse outside Baghdad and rescued an American businessman held hostage for 10 months. The kidnappers had kept their captive bound and gagged.

Roy Hallums, 57, was "in good condition and is receiving medical care," a military statement said after U.S. forces freed him and an unidentified Iraqi from the farmhouse 15 miles south of Baghdad.

Lt. Col. Steven A. Boylan, a U.S. military spokesman, said the tipster whose information led to Hallums' release was captured just a few hours before the operation.

Hallums, formerly of Newport Beach, Calif., was kidnapped at gunpoint from his office in the Mansour district of Baghdad on Nov. 1, 2004. At the time, he was working for the Saudi Arabian Trading and Construction Co., supplying food to the Iraqi army. The kidnappers also seized a Filipino, a Nepalese and three Iraqis, but later freed them.

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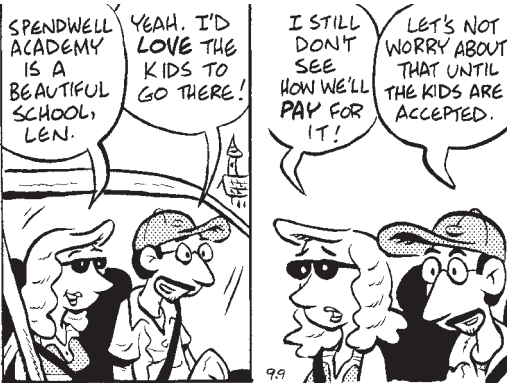


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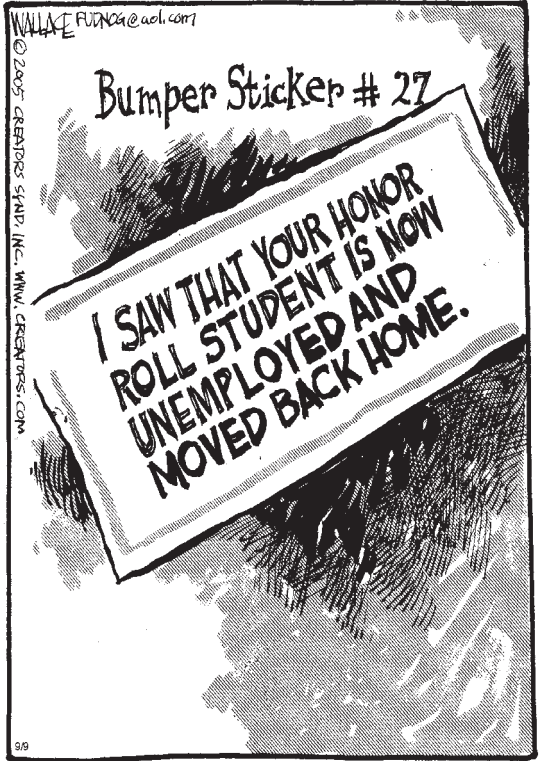
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IMMEDIATE POSITIONS available in the housekeeping department of St. John's Health Center. All shifts available, PT/ FT. Hospital housekeeping preferred. Call (310) 829-8431 for interview.

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