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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2009

Volume 8 Issue 263



Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

HEAD OF THE CLASS
SEE PAGE 20

THE HAPPY BIRTHDAY PIER ISSUE

City Hall defends pigeon net

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL A recent controversial move to install a bird-deterring net underneath the Santa Monica Pier came after a series of studies blamed pigeons for fouling the bay.

In a report to the City Council last week, Public Works Director Lee Swain explains how the department reached the decision to net the area beneath the pier, believing it will reduce the roosting sites and keep bacterial levels in the bay below requirements set by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. The water in the area has long been considered one of the worst in the state, annually ranked as being among the dirtiest in Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card.

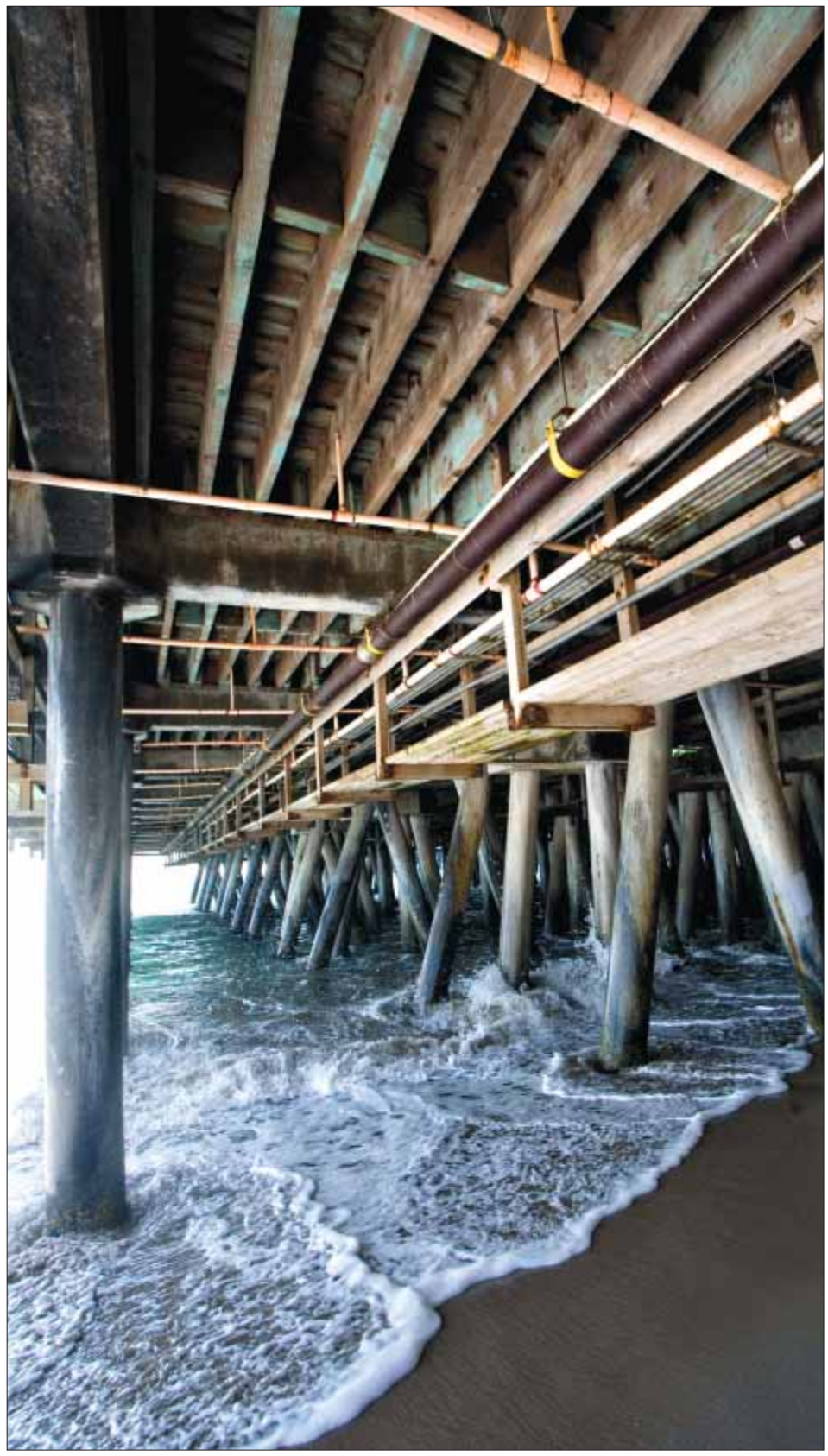
Animal rights activists have blasted City Hall, saying installing the net will amount to torture for the birds, who will either be trapped or will try relentlessly to return to familiar nesting sites.

Swain cited several studies that have named pigeons as one of the sources of bacteria in the bay, including a 2006 report by Heal the Bay that identified the pond in front of the pier storm drain as the predominant source of fecal bacteria in the beach, noting that "pigeons are a definite source of fecal bacteria and the elimination or reduction of roosting sites in the inter-tidal zone area would help reduce fecal bacterial densities in the surf zone."

"Some of the studies indicate that there are several potential sources and we are trying to eliminate or at least minimize all of these potential sources until we are sure we can stay in compliance," Swain said.

The council in July approved a $107,758 contract with Bird Busters to put up the net, which will run the length and width of the pier. Several weeks later, a group of animal rights activist staged a small protest before a council meeting in mid-August, hoping to persuade city officials to abandon the plan, which they said would kill pigeons.

SEE PIGEONS PAGE 13



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

SCENE OF THE CRIME: **City Hall plans to install a net underneath the Santa Monica Pier to prevent pigeons from nesting and pooping in the water, which city officials believe is party responsible for poor water quality.**

School district begins budget planning early

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMMUSD HDQTRS While classes begin today for the new school year, district officials already have their minds on next year.

Facing an $8 to $12 million funding shortfall over the next three years, officials with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) have began focusing on the budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year, starting about four months ahead of schedule.

"Typically we don't start seriously looking at the budget until after the governor proposes the next state budget (in January)," Jan Maez, the chief financial officer for the SMMUSD, said. "In these economic times … (the budget) is more of a continuous process."

The district has slashed about $4.5 million in programs for the current fiscal year, increasing class sizes and eliminating a "house" in Santa Monica High School's celebrated network of small learning communities called the House System.

Expecting more cuts in subsequent years, Superintendent Tim Cuneo last spring formed a budget advisory committee that includes representation from various levels of staff — administrators, teachers and classified employees — and the community, including a member from the Santa Monica-Malibu Council of PTAs and the Financial Oversight Committee.

After a summer hiatus, the committee is expected to resume its meetings soon.

"We know that in the next several years, we can't be on our normal schedule," Maez said about the budget development process.

As officials start identifying potential ways to save money, whether it be cutting salaries or programs, the teachers and classified employees unions are asking that any cuts be made the farthest from the classroom.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association and SEIU Local 99 have recently joined forces to pressure the

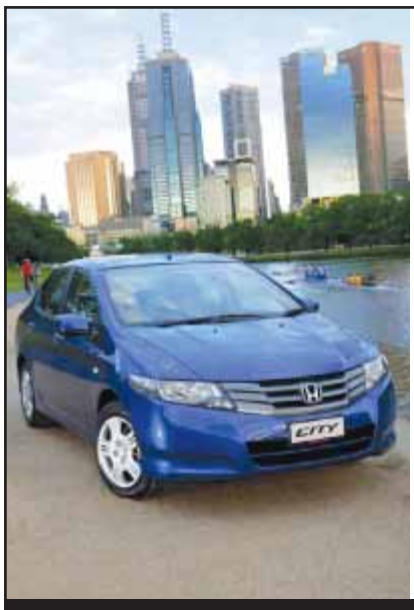
SEE BUDGET PAGE 12


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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



100 years of the pier

Santa Monica Pier, 6 p.m. — 9:15 p.m.
Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Santa Monica Pier on Wednesday, Sep. 9. Enjoy our grand re-opening, complete with live music, ribbon-cutting festivities, and a breathtaking fireworks show. Visit www.santamonicapier.org for more information.

Ballroom by the bay

Santa Monica Bay Women's Club
1210 4th St., 7 p.m. — 11 p.m.
Come out for free dance lessons, followed by dancing on a 3000 square-foot floor. Waltz, fox-trot, swing, hustle and more. No partner necessary. Admission fee: $10. Call (310)487-0911 for more information.

Pier in Pictures

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

Thursday, September 10

Santa Monica Laughter Club

Shakti's Elements
717 Broadway, 11 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.
Come join the laughter club every Thursday and laugh your socks off. This form of body-mind exercise is for all ages and fitness levels. Kim Selbert leads the laugher club and is a certified yoga teacher. Call (310)849-4642 for more information, or visit www.kimselbert.com. Cost is $10.

'Getting High' with Edna Erspamer

Santa Monica Family YMCA
1332 Sixth Street, 12:00 p.m. — 1:00 p.m.
An informal gathering with world traveler and adventurer Edna Erspamer. She will be sharing her traveling experience from her new book "Getting High: Confessions of a Peak-Bagging Junkie." Admission is free. Photo ID is required for non-members. Call (310)393-2721 ext. 129 for more information.

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



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SM PIER

Happy Birthday

The Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corp. will join today with community members, tourists and city officials to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Santa Monica Pier.

The festivities will begin at 7 a.m. when a multi-denominational group of religious leaders will gather at the pier's west end for a blessing and moment of reflection on the landmark's rich history.

An official re-opening ceremony will be held later in the evening. The ceremony will include a ribbon cutting, a key note speech and "A Century of Memories," a presentation featuring historical milestones by community members who have lived through each of the pier's decades.

The celebration will include live musical performances by Dick Dale, acappela group Vybration, the Big Bamboo Steel Band and the Los Angeles Brass Ensemble.

The evening will conclude with "the biggest firework show here in the last 20 years," which can be viewed from the beach or the pier.

Pacific Park and the restaurants on the pier will stay open late in order to accommodate eventgoers.

- 7 a.m. – Multi-denominational blessing
- 6 p.m. – Re-opening ceremony with ribbon cutting, speech and performance by the Los Angeles Brass Ensemble
- 6:45 p.m. – 8:25 p.m. – Musical performances by Dick Dale , Vybration and the Big Bamboo Steel Band
- 8:50 p.m. – 9:15 p.m. – Fireworks show

DAILY PRESS

BROADWAY

Short circuit

The American Red Cross of Santa Monica will be collecting old electronics – stereos, television sets, telephones, computers and more – at their headquarters located at 1450 11th St. (at Broadway) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday through the end of November.

The consumer electronic recyclables will be collected for a three month period in association with Coastal E-Waste, a private electronic waste management company based in Chatsworth. A portion of the proceeds obtained from the electronic recycling drive will benefit Santa Monica Red Cross disaster preparedness and relief programs.

State law prohibits disposing old and used electronics, including batteries, in the trash. Electronic items including electronic office equipment must be disposed of properly and that includes recycling. Items that can be recycled include CRT monitors and television sets, regular and cellular telephones, phone answering machines, cell phones and accessories.

Stereo equipment including loudspeakers, tape and cassette players and recorders, DVD and VCR players, computers and computer peripherals, scanners and fax machines, batteries, printer cartridges, audio and video tapes and floppy discs are all recyclable.

The Santa Monica Red Cross and Coastal E-Waste suggest that personal files and data be erased from hard drives of any computers turned in for recycling as well as phone systems, recorders or answering machines to assure protection of your privacy.

The American Red Cross of Santa Monica is a publicly supported, nonprofit corporation that provides health and safety education, youth services, CPR and first aid training, disaster awareness and disaster relief efforts. For additional information or to inquire about other programs or assistance call (310) 394-3773 or go online at www.redcrossofsantamonica.org.

DP



Photo courtesy Mike Wells

TOP NOTCH: **Santa Monica freediver Jana Strain (center) set a new Pan American Women's freediving record Monday, diving with a no fins to 53 meters (174 feet) in 2 minutes and 3 seconds.**

Local diver sets another record

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

DAHAB, Egypt With strength and determination Santa Monican Jana Strain continues to prove to be one of the top female freediving athletes in the world.

On Labor Day Strain was hard at work, diving with a no-fins swim to 53 meters (174 feet) in two minutes and three seconds, setting a new Pan American Women's Freediving record. She broke the existing record of 52 meters (170 feet) set by Mandy-Rae Cruickshank in April of 2009.

Strain was performing a Constant Weight No Fins (CNF) dive during the Triple Depth freediving competition. Strain is the fifth woman in the world to swim to this depth without the use of fins, while holding her breath.

CNF is one of the most difficult disciplines in freediving. Athletes use a modified breaststroke technique to propel themselves to depth and back.

"I was very happy with my performance, I have been focused on the pool disciplines recently and I had only three training days and two clean competition dives in other disciplines prior to my attempt, an unusual way for me to prepare for the deep," Strain said. "It was lovely competing in the Red Sea, the water was very clear and warm. I was to able to perform in my Nero comp suit by Blue Seventy, made with Yamamoto neoprene, which was fantastic because of the speed that I was able to move through the water and I did not have to wear as much weight."

Strain added two meters to her personal best in this discipline and she was 14 seconds faster.

Triple Depth is an annual competition hosted by Freedive Dahab. During the competition athletes must perform in all depth disciplines that do not require a sled.

The International Association for the Development of Freediving, AIDA, is the international sanctioning body for freediving, individual and team competition, and freediving world record attempts.

news@smdp.com







LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Support homeless, not ACLU

Editor:

I am writing to comment on Peter Davison's Sept. 2 letter to the editor and Charles Fredricks' Sept. 4 letter. The reason we have a societal obligation to help and take care of the less fortunate and/or troubled citizens such as the homeless is because that is what a civilized and wealthy (at least until recently but that's a topic for another editorial) society does. It conducts itself in a humane and morally appropriate manner! As a Santa Monica resident, I am happy that Santa Monica has taken the regional lead in addressing the homelessness issue and my family will gladly continue to contribute our tax dollars to these efforts provided the money is used wisely and effectively, which I believe it has been so far.

What I am not happy about is the completely misguided lawsuit that the ACLU has filed against our city. This lawsuit is costing Santa Monica taxpayers money and distracts from the task at hand – to continue to develop effective programs to help the homeless. Let's not forget that because of its programs, Santa Monica acts as a beacon attracting homeless from all over Southern California. The city has a legal responsibility to its residents to maintain public health and safety and must balance these responsibilities with its efforts to help the homeless. It is not right that the ACLU is picking on Santa Monica. If the ACLU really wanted to contribute to the regional efforts to address homelessness, it would file suit against all the cities that have not been willing to work with Santa Monica and, instead, direct their homeless to Santa Monica knowing we will try our best to help them.

Brad Pollack
Santa Monica

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

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Going Postal

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

Helping only those who truly need it

I HAVE BEEN WATCHING WITH GREAT MIRTH and morbid fascination the growing debate concerning the recent ACLU suit on behalf of the odoriferous "accidental tourists" known as the "homeless" against the erstwhile evil empire of the Peoples' Republic of Soviet Monica. Is it an inconvenient truth that the ACLU also supports the alleged rights of the other "accidental tourists" known as "terrorists" that are currently residing in U.S. custody at Gitmo?

It makes you want to go out and just shoot unicorns, doesn't it?

Folks, who's more important in this socio-econometric equation, the people who work and pay the taxes in this burg while desiring to live in a vagrant-neutral environment or a segment of ingrates in the population that has either a sub-zero interest in being rescued or are too stupid or stoned to take their brains out of "park" and jump into the rat race with the rest of us? And why do we require constant exhortation by the back seat whiners from here deep in the womb of granola-land to pick up every grubby hitchhiker along the way?

Did anybody ever bother to inquire "where are the families" of these ACLU pimped, pumped and primed freeloaders? Are all of these slackers somehow orphans? Are there no mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles or cousins that will claim these people as "family?" Maybe the ACLU should sue the families for letting their more mendicant familiars out of the cellar rather than raping Santa Monica's city coffers through cranial-rectal inverted lawsuits. And please spare me the waltz down "Guilt-Trip Avenue." I'm completely disinterested in helping someone whose own families have found them a royal pain in the ass. If nothing remains of those relationships but smoldering bridges, one should look first for the arsonist.

I mean, if I wanted feeling, I'd have ovaries.

Isn't it succinctly hypocritical on the part of local liberal loser-lovers to purchase emotional serenity for their convenience store-styled, social welfare ethics with other, less inclined, taxpayers' money? I found it the height of comedy recounted in a recent SMDP "letter to the editor" that a resident who lived in a "socio-economically, racially mixed neighborhood" (formerly termed as a "ghetto") sternly intoned that, "… as human beings, we need to care for our fellow human beings." This individual then admitted that there were "homeless people searching through [his] trash cans in [his] alley every day."

OK, spare me the sanctimonious bonhomie, Mr. Mother Teresa, but did it ever occur to you to actually bring in one of your "fellow human beings" into your kitchen and make him a couple of sandwiches with a glass of milk rather than to allow your objet de l'heure to troll for your moldering tidbits from Trade Joe's while you smugly hide behind your mealy-mouthed morality?

Walk your talk otherwise you have a bright future as a White House speechwriter.

Folks, I've walked the streets in this town as a mailman for 14 years (as well as being a resident) and I can identify at least two dozen "professional" bums in this town that, despite their alleged destitution, consider their homelessness a tax-free, long-term occupation and not a pathology of their crappy luck.

If Santa Monica's history is any indication of its alleged "success" in eradicating the obnoxious moocher-ocracy that has plagued this town for the past 25 years, then it should be supremely obvious that the City Council has been using a patrimonial parachute that opens only on impact. There's a popular phrase, "if you build it, they will come." Santa Monica has built and maintained, in its misguided generosity, a derelict-friendly environment. The tramps came to the party and the gratitude shown in return was a snotty lawsuit courtesy of the American Civil Lickspittle Union.

Consider the remedy that "if you remove it, they will leave."

Shut down every last extracurricular service that provides comfort and succor to the beggaring class just short of emergency medical service and a bus ticket to Nancy Pelosi's front door. Take the federal, state and local money from the former homeless-focused programs and give half to the Special Olympics (it's the best thing ever invented by a Democrat next to landing on the moon) and then take the remaining half and invest it in an introductory K-12 school program on "How to not be a Hobo!"

Lesson #1 — "Practice gratitude."
Lesson #2 — "Soap"
Lesson #3 — "Job"

In my perfect world, the only reasonable recipients of any form of social welfare should be our most valuable and vulnerable citizens: the elderly for their wisdom, children for their beauty and combat veterans who make the world safe for us all.

The rest of you better cowboy up and figure it out. As my Dad used to say, "Life's tough. Wear a helmet, Cupcake."

STEVE BREEN will work for food and is still "the best looking mailman at the U.S. Post Office." He can be reached at dulcamarax@yahoo.com.

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Word in Edgewise

Kenny Mack
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Praising the people behind the pier

SEVEN YEARS AGO, I MADE THE DECISION TO leave New York City for Los Angeles. I had never been to Southern California before, but I'd just put the finishing touches on a brilliantly sharp and grabby script complete with compelling characters, smart dialogue and a brand-spanking new approach to traditional themes that will have anyone hooked within the first four pages. I knew I needed to be in L.A. in order to sell it, but I didn't know what part of the "City of Angels" I wanted to call home — until I visited my friend Katie's house on Second Street near Marine. After one trip on a beach cruiser bicycle through the jasmine-scented streets to Bay Cities Deli and eating my first Godmother sandwich, I knew that Santa Monica was the perfect place for me. Three years after moving here, I can't believe how lucky I am — how lucky we all are — to be able to celebrate the 100th birthday of our beloved pier today.

Truth be told, we're lucky we even have a pier in the first place. It took the vision of a Danish wood carver turned amusement entrepreneur named Charles I.D. Looff to put it all together some 90 years ago. His ornate wooden horses took their first rides in the summer of 1916 and though the "Looff Pleasure Pier" wasn't finished, the crowds that gathered that Fourth of July weekend were prescient predictors of the pier's popularity. Thanks to Looff's vision, the Santa Monica Pier has given our city's residents and visitors countless hours of fun, relaxation, and recreation — and has given the world Hot Dog on a Stick, the inspiration for Popeye the Sailor, and the first beach volleyball doubles tournament. It was also the home of the original Muscle Beach, the first American home of Cirque du Soleil (returning this fall with "Kooza"), and features the first-ever solar-powered Ferris wheel.

Our pier also stands as a testament to democracy in the classic Greek sense of the word (people power). In 1973 when the City Council planned to build a 35-acre island offshore with a high-rise hotel, convention center, and restaurants connected by a causeway that would essentially have replaced the pier, so many protesters showed up that the meeting had to be moved to the Santa Monica Civic Center. The residents of this town saved the pier that night and two years later, approved a ballot measure that made it illegal to make any major changes to the pier without first putting it to a vote by the people, not the City Council.

Ten years later, between January and February of 1983, came the most momentous month in the life of the pier during which no fewer than five storms collaborated to do more than $6 million in damage — and dump an enormous construction crane into the bay. That fall the Pier Restoration Corp. (PRC) was founded. It's important to understand that the magic of the pier doesn't just happen — and that it's the current PRC and its incredibly dedicated staff that make everything that happens on and around the pier possible. If you've ever grooved at the Twilight Dance Series, flown at the Trapeze School New York, taken your kids for the rides and games in Pacific Park and the arcade, or even just enjoyed a kissing moment with your sweetheart, the PRC is the reason. Our stoic (but never staid) pleasure pier is their baby and we're all fortunate that they let us baby-sit whenever we want.

I'm happy I took the long way to get here because it makes me appreciate our fair city and our incredible pleasure pier that much more. My hometown of Boston has the family-friendly Central Wharf and the New England Aquarium, but the rest of the city's waterfront seems to be suffering from an identity crisis. New York City has Coney Island (iconic home of Nathan's hot dogs and a wooden roller coaster called "the Cyclone"), which is miserable to visit between October and May. San Francisco has the Embarcadero and the crossroads of the world that is Fisherman's Wharf, but there is nothing to do except spend money.

None of these places can hold the proverbial candle to what we've got here. The pier is open 365 days a year and has activities aplenty for any budget — even zero dollars. Thanks to the dedication of Ben Franz-Knight and the great people at the PRC and the hard work of the people who groom the beaches and clean the bike paths and direct traffic into and out of the parking lots, we can all enjoy the last great pleasure pier on the West Coast. So as you partake of the festivities tonight, make sure to take the time to thank those amazing orange-vested, blue-shirted, and white-shirted people for their work. We don't always see their faces and we don't typically recognize their contributions, but we'd definitely miss them if they weren't there.

KENNY MACK is a multi-platform content provider with four-quadrant crossover appeal whose favorite spot on the pier is the public viewing deck at the West End. His past columns are archived at www.ifyoumissedit.com and he can be reached at kennymack@gmail.com

The Q Line

Rockets red glare

The Santa Monica Pier will celebrate its centennial this week with a fireworks display that some believe may be harmful to the water quality of Santa Monica Bay.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Do you think that the fireworks will hurt the bay or do you believe that it is harmless fun?

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


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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites sealed bids for:

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- A mandatory job walk will be held on Monday, September 14, 2009 at 10:00 AM Pacific Time. Bidders are to meet Darrell Baker *in front of Perry's Beach Café* (2500 Ocean Front Walk, Santa Monica, CA, next to Beach Park I at Barnard Way & Ocean Park Blvd.).
- Parking is available at: Beach Lot 5 South located at 2600 Barnard Way, Santa Monica, CA (refer to the following link for directions http://parking.smgov.net/det_beachsouth.html)
- *Late arrivals may be disqualified from bidding.*
- Please refer to the bid packet for further details.
  The bid packet can be downloaded at:
  http://vendors.planetbids.com/SantaMonica/QuickSearch.cfm
- **Submission Deadline is September 28, 2009 at 3:00 PM Pacific Time.**

Request for bid forms and specifications may be obtained from the City of Santa Monica, 1717 4th St., Suite 250, Santa Monica, California, by calling (310) 458-2211, or by e-mailing your request to kimberlie.nimori@smgov.net. Bids must be submitted on forms furnished by the City of Santa Monica.

Vendors interested in doing business with the City of Santa Monica are encouraged to register online at http://www.smgov.net/finance/purchasing/

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Frugal is the new black

ASHLEY M. HEHER
AP Retail Writer

CHICAGO A year after "shop 'til you drop" stopped, the nation fixates on this question: Will consumer spending ever return to pre-recession levels?

Increasingly, the answer appears to be no. Belt-tightening in bad times is normal. And after every other recession since World War II, penny-pinching quickly fell out of fashion and Americans resumed their demand for houses, cars and everything else.

This time it's different. Like the Great Depression in the 1930s, the Great Recession seems destined to turn many Americans into lasting coupon-cutters, scrimpers and savers. Consumers dug a debt hole over the past decade from which there's no easy climb out. The population segment that drives spending the most — baby boomers — faces special pressure: Boomers are running out of time.

A study by research firm AlixPartners concluded that once a new normal sets in after this recession ends, Americans will spend at about 86 percent of their pre-downturn level.

In an economy driven by consumption, the implications are far-reaching if that forecast proves correct:

— For every kitchen not remodeled, there will be lost sales of appliances and supplies, and fewer jobs for designers and contractors. As homeowners do work around the house themselves, there will be less work for gardeners, plumbers and handymen.

— For every shopper who trades down from luxury stores to discount stores, it will mean less profit for retailers and manufacturers. Retailers will continue to offer few product choices and leaner inventories, and they'll reassess store locations and advertising.

— If sales of cars and trucks average closer to the recession level of 10 million a year than the 16 million in boom times, more suppliers will fail and further consolidation among automakers could occur. Taxes not paid on lost vehicle sales will continue to stress budgets of state and local governments.

Frugality may be good for family budgets, but it's bad for the national economy. And that has the potential to reinforce and continue the miserly mood. A Gallup survey last month found seven in 10 Americans are cutting weekly expenses — a number that has been consistent through the summer.

A year after last fall's financial meltdown turned a garden-variety recession into the worst downturn since the Depression, thriftiness is still driven by the twin engines of necessity and fear. Unemployment, now at 9.7 percent, is still rising and expected to reach double digits before year's end for the first time since 1982. Many who still have jobs are getting paid less, and investments have a long way to go before they return to pre-meltdown levels.

Kathy Haney, 46, of Orland Park, Ill., has a job but is scaling back her shopping and packing her lunch.

"You put your priorities in different places because you never know if you're going to have a job tomorrow," the legal secretary says. "You think twice now. I have six TVs in the house. Do I really need a new flat screen?"

For her and many other Americans, the answer is no. The underlying causes of the meltdown and where it left millions financially suggests a fundamental change is under way. Personal spending has fallen in four of the last six quarters — the only time that's happened since quarterly records were first compiled in 1947.

In a normal recession, a vicious downward cycle of reduced spending by consumers and layoffs by employers finally eases and a virtuous cycle begins. Consumers start spending again. Factories ramp back up to meet the demand and hire workers. Incomes rise, fueling greater spending, more production and more jobs.

Until the Great Recession, the worst recession since World War II was in 1981-82. Unemployment peaked at 10.8 percent in December 1982, a month after the recession had ended.

The recovery that followed was powered by baby boomers, they were mostly in their 20s and early 30s then. Their careers were taking off, they were starting families, and they were spending freely. On homes, furniture, cars — and everything else. Saving for retirement was the last thing on their minds.

Fueled by boomers, when the recession ended, growth was explosive. Consumer spending rose 5.7 percent in 1983. GDP rose 4.5 percent in '83 and 7.2 percent in 1984.

"If someone gets more comfortable, they spend a little more," says Erik Hurst, an economist at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business. "As they spend a little more, someone else spends more."

Jump to today. For most of this decade, Americans enjoyed a credit-fueled binge that allowed them to spend more than they made. They snatched up everything from gadgets to houses.

Those houses soared in value and became as valuable a source of cash as a bank ATM. Home equity was tapped to pay for vacations, new cars and kitchen renovations. The rising stock market gave people an inflated sense of wealth as they watched their retirement accounts grow.

Not unlike the Roaring '20s, which preceded the Great Depression three generations ago, people believed the good times would never end. Per capita personal spending ballooned 25 percent from 2003 to 2005, according to data from Euromonitor International.

When the party ended, the nation was left with more than just a hangover. Personal debt had doubled in a decade. As of July, it stood at $13.8 trillion, or about $124,000 per household. Despite months of frugality, that was only slightly below its 2008 peak.

It will take years to work down the debt, which will prolong people's thriftiness. Paying it down will be harder because of the layoffs, pay cuts, freezes and furloughs. Personal income has fallen or been flat eight of the past 10 months.

On the asset side of their balance sheets, plunging stock prices and home values have made Americans feel poorer. Their net worth — the difference between the value of what they own and what they owe — has taken a staggering $12.2 trillion hit in the Great Recession. Net worth fell from $62.6 trillion at the end of 2007 to $50.4 trillion at the end of this year's first quarter, figures from the Federal Reserve show.

The result: Consumer spending adjusted for inflation fell 0.2 percent in 2008 — the first annual drop since 1980. Hardest hit from the first half of last year to the first half of this year: Motor vehicles and parts (down 17.2 percent); furnishings and durable household equipment (down 8.8 percent); clothing and footwear (down 5.8 percent).

"There will be a fundamental shift in the kind of cars we buy, a fundamental shift in the homes we buy, and a fundamental shift in consumption generally," says Matt Murray, an economist at the University of Tennessee. "And that is not something that took place in the 1980s."

Charter schools attracting private investor dollars

DAVID TWIDDY
Associated Press Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. Charter schools, already seeing a surge in students, are getting attention from another group — private investors.

Entertainment Properties Inc., known mostly for sinking its money into movie theaters and wineries, recently bought 22 locations from charter school operator Imagine Schools for about $170 million. The real estate investment trust acts as landlord, while Imagine operates the schools and is using the investment to expand its chain of 74 locations.

"They really are an effective source of long-term financing that we can rely on and enables us to do what we're best at, which is running schools, and do what they're best at, which is long-term real estate ownership," said Barry Sharp, chief financial officer for Arlington, Va.-based Imagine. "It's a good fit."

Charter school supporters hope the move by Kansas City-based Entertainment Properties is the first of many such partnerships as they deal with increased interest from parents but not more money to build or expand their facilities.

In the past decade, the number of U.S. charter schools has tripled to 4,618, while the number of students enrolled has almost quadrupled to more than 1.4 million, according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

While charter schools are publicly funded, they often don't have the same access to bonds and other financing available to mainstream public schools. That forces many to operate in places like storefronts or church basements, said Todd Ziebarth, vice president of policy for the alliance.

"I think it's probably the biggest challenge facing charters, not only finding space but once you find it how do you pay for it, particularly if you're going to buy it," Ziebarth said. "I think it's limiting their growth and it's limiting the expansion of existing schools."

Charter school supporters say the need for construction funding is high, and the entry of a for-profit player like Entertainment Properties signals that they've gone from being an educational curiosity to being seen as a future significant part of the educational landscape.

David Brain, chief executive of Entertainment Properties, said he initially was skeptical of investing in charter schools. But he said he looked deeper and determined that most of the charter school operations that had failed either never opened or were independent operations with little experience.

Focusing on large players who know how to operate schools, hire teachers and develop a curriculum, he said, provides the company a more dependable return.

"We're not speculators, we're investors, so I have to invest in property making money for me and my customers today," said Brain, whose trust oversees a $2.6 billion portfolio. "The charter public schools offer lenders/leaseholders a dependable revenue stream backed by a government payer. It's a very desirable equation."

Enrollment at Imagine Renaissance Academy of Environmental Science and Math, Kensington Campus — among the schools sold — was near capacity by its second year, with 515 students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

While the renovated 19th-century school in Kansas City looks like any other public school, there are subtle differences: the color-coded polo shirts the students wear to signify their grade, smaller class sizes and an added emphasis on science.

Sharp said Imagine could have used a combination of mortgage financing and other funding to fuel its growth. But he said that would have forced the company to keep relying on rental properties it had little control over.

"We would have had to go out and use some of the money to maintain our investment in our existing buildings and therefore it wouldn't have made it into the new ones the same way," he said.

While charter advocates welcome the interest of private investors, they wish the focus was less on the larger networks and more on the vast majority of independent schools that could use help.

Fed: consumers cut debt by record $21.6B in July

JEANNINE AVERSA
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON Consumers slashed their borrowing in July by the largest amount on record as job losses and uncertainty about the economic recovery prompted Americans to rein in their debt.

The magnitude of the drop surprised analysts. Some thought the Cash for Clunkers program — which began in July and aided auto sales and car loans — would have blunted cutbacks in other lending areas.

The Federal Reserve reported Tuesday that consumers ratcheted back their credit by a larger-than-anticipated $21.6 billion from June, the most on records dating to 1943. Economists expected credit to drop by $4 billion.

Demand for non-revolving credit used to finance cars, vacations, education and other things fell by $15.4 billion, also a record decline. That 11.7 percent pace was on top of an 8 percent annualized decline in June.

Consumers' appetite for revolving credit, primarily credit cards, declined by $6.1 billion in July, an annualized rate of 8 percent that followed a 6.4 percent drop in June.

Economists predict that consumers will be spending less, saving more and trimming debt to get their household finances — which have been decimated by the recession — into better shape.

July's retreat translated into an annualized decline of 10.4 percent. That followed a cut of $15.5 billion in June, or a 7.4 percent annualized drop, and the most since a 16.3 percent decline in June 1975.

The latest cut left total consumer credit at $2.47 trillion.







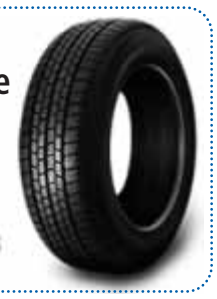
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Auto industry gains boost some areas

CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press Writers

Signs of life in the auto industry and an easing of the housing crisis helped reduce unemployment and kept foreclosures flat in some of the nation's hardest-hit areas in July, according to The Associated Press' monthly analysis of economic stress in more than 3,100 U.S. counties.

The latest results of the AP's Economic Stress Index showed joblessness dipped in counties where temporarily closed auto-related plants resumed production in July. Foreclosure rates, meanwhile, slowed in the Sun Belt epicenters of the housing bust. Bankruptcy rates, which respond more slowly to economic shifts, rose slightly.

The average county's Stress score dipped to 10.54 in July, from 10.6 in June. In July 2008, it was 6.94.

The AP calculates a score from 1 to 100 based on a county's unemployment, foreclosure and bankruptcy rates. The higher the score, the higher the economic stress.

Under a rough rule of thumb, a county is considered stressed when its score exceeds 11. In July, 41 percent of counties had stress scores of 11 or higher, the same as in June. A year earlier, only 7.3 percent of counties had scores of 11 or higher.

The five counties with 25,000 or more residents that showed the most improvement from June to July had a heavy presence of auto-related manufacturers: Howard and Miami counties in Indiana, Giles and Warren counties in Tennessee and Tuscaloosa County, Ala.

Auto companies boosted production mainly to replenish depleted inventories. General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC restored shifts and reopened factories as the companies restructured and emerged from bankruptcy protection.

The industry also benefited from the government's now-ended Cash for Clunkers program. It provided rebates of up to $4,500 for consumers who traded in gas-guzzling older cars for newer, more fuel-efficient models. The program contributed to a 2.4 percent jump in July auto sales and a 30 percent increase in August.

All three U.S. automakers, along with Toyota and other overseas companies, ramped up production in response to the clunkers program. GM is rehiring more than 1,300 laid-off workers. Ford Motor Co. said it will expand production by 33 percent in the fourth quarter over last year's levels.

Chrysler reopened plants in Howard County, Ind., that employ about 4,000. Howard benefited from the most improved Stress score from June to July, dropping from 23.17 to 18.18. Its jobless rate fell to 14.7 percent from 19.7 percent in June.

"It's nice to see those parking lots refilled," said Jeb Conrad, president of a local economic development group.

The county is also home to a Delphi Corp. auto parts plant that GM has agreed to take over while Delphi struggles to emerge from bankruptcy protection.

Conrad also said Delphi recently received $89 million in federal stimulus money to research electric vehicle technologies.

In Warren County, Tenn., between Nashville and Chattanooga, tire-maker Bridgestone returned to full production in July after furloughing workers for part of June. Auto parts supplier Yorozu Automotive, the county's second-largest manufacturer after Bridgestone, began producing a new line of products. That helped drop the county's jobless rate to 13.5 percent from 16 percent in June.

Money from the Obama administration's $787 billion stimulus package also helped fund road and bridge projects that are employing previously jobless contractors, said Jeff McCormick, the county's director of economic development.

"Nobody is busting the doors down, but it seems like there is a little bit more optimism," McCormick said.

Tuscaloosa, Ala., saw its stress index drop to 12.47 from 14.83 in June, the second-best improvement of all U.S. counties. Mercedes-Benz builds SUVs at a plant in Tuscaloosa that employs about 3,000. The plant had shut down after Memorial Day, then reopened in late June, company spokeswoman Felyicia Jerald said.

"If you drive through, it doesn't feel like we're in a recession," he said. "But the numbers still tell me we've got a way to go to recovery in the automotive sector."

The most stressed counties in July with populations over 25,000 were Imperial County, Calif. (33.37); Yuma County, Ariz. (27.69); Merced County, Calif. (25.24); Lyon County, Nev. (23.92); and Yuba County, Calif. (23.7). Imperial and Yuma also had the nation's highest jobless rates (30.2 percent and 26.2 percent, respectively).

Lyon and Merced counties were in the top five for highest foreclosure rates (8.6 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively).

For a second straight month, Nevada, Michigan and California suffered the most economic distress, with Stress scores of 20.86, 18.3 and 16.3, respectively. North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska showed the least distress, with scores of 4.54, 5.27 and 6.17, respectively.

Meanwhile, the foreclosure rate nationwide dipped to 1.49 percent in July, down from 1.51 percent in June, compared with 1.29 percent in July 2008. Growth in foreclosures slowed from June to July in the worst-hit states of Arizona, California and Florida. It fell slightly in Nevada, from 7.4 percent to 7.1 percent.

But Robert Edelstein, a real estate professor at the University of California, Berkeley, warned that foreclosures could rise again, especially after the effect of stimulus spending fades. He especially worries about commercial real estate foreclosures.

"There is some positive (economic) news, but all of (it) has a very lackluster underbelly," Edelstein said. "Any shocks to the system could lead us back down a dark avenue.

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Stocks gain on takeover news, rising commodities

TIM PARADIS
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK News about corporate takeovers is making investors more optimistic about the economy and giving them new reasons to buy stocks.

Stocks rose Tuesday as investors were encouraged by takeover news from overseas. Rising prices for oil, gold and other commodities pushed energy and materials stocks higher.

Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom said they plan to combine their British mobile phone units, T-Mobile UK and Orange UK, to form that country's biggest mobile operator. And while Cadbury rejected a takeover bid from Kraft Foods Inc., reviving interest in making acquisitions is being seen as a welcome sign for the economy.

The increase in corporate takeover activity suggests an improvement in businesses' confidence and reinforces views that the worst of the global economic downturn could be over. However, many investors still fear that any recovery would be held back by rising unemployment and the pressure that would put on household spending.

A weekend pledge by the world's 20 biggest economies to support the global recovery with stimulus efforts is helping to keep the market's tone positive.

George F. Shipp, chief investment officer at Scott & Stringfellow in Virginia Beach, Va., said U.S. markets are advancing in part to catch up with overseas trading after the Labor Day holiday in the U.S. He also said that the takeover talk about Cadbury underscores that there are some companies faring better than others in the recession.

"Some companies are doing reasonably well," he said. "Chocolate is less susceptible to whatever is going to happen in mortgages and banking and unemployment."

In late afternoon trading, the Dow Jones industrial average rose 39.67, or 0.4 percent, to 9,480.94. The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 7.07, or 0.7 percent, to 1,023.47, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 12.00, or 0.6 percent, to 2,030.78.

Bond prices rose, pushing yields lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell to 3.44 percent from 3.45 percent late Friday.

Among stocks moving on takeover talk, Cadbury jumped $14.15, or 37.8 percent, to $51.61. Kraft fell $1.62, or 5.8 percent, to $26.48.

The dollar fell against other major currencies and gold — which is typically bought as a safe haven asset — at times topped $1,000 an ounce before settling just short of that mark.

Crude oil rose $3.34 to $71.36 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Tom Phillips, president of TS Phillips Investments in Oklahoma City, said investors are buying gold because they are nervous about the economy and rising deficits but don't want to miss more gains in the stock market. The S&P 500 index has jumped 50 percent from a 12-year low in early March.

"It is a flight to safety. It's kind of like everyone is hedging their bets. They want to be in the market because they don't want to miss out, but they're spooked," he said.

Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. rose $2.04, or 3.1 percent, to $68.04, while oilfield services company Schlumberger Ltd. rose $2.15, or 3.9 percent, to $58.02.

Meanwhile, General Electric Co. led the 30 stocks that make up the Dow industrials, rising 64 cents, or 4.6 percent, $14.51, after J.P. Morgan upgraded the company's shares saying that the market had already priced in most problems with the conglomerate's lending arm.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies rose 3.73, or 0.7 percent, to 574.23.

Three stocks rose for every one that fell on the New York Stock Exchange, where volume came to 841.8 million shares compared with 668.8 million shares traded at the same point Friday.

Britain's FTSE 100 and Germany's DAX index rose 0.3 percent, while France's CAC-40 advanced 0.2 percent. Japan's Nikkei stock average rose 0.7 percent.

Gold price rises over $1,000

CARLO PIOVANO
AP Business Writer

LONDON The price of gold rose above $1,000 per ounce on Tuesday to its highest since March 2008 — suggesting investors are wary of the U.S. dollar's weakness and expect international interest rates to remain low for some time.

The gold contract for December delivery traded up $6.50, or 0.7 percent, at $1,003.20 per troy ounce on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It had gone as high as $1,009.70; that is the highest since it hit a record of $1,033.90 on March 17 last year.

Gold is typically bought as an alternative to the dollar among safe-haven assets favored by investors seeking to preserve capital. So its rise often correlates to a drop in the value of the American currency.

That is what happened in spring of 2008, when worries about the financial crisis brewing in the U.S. helped drive gold to a record. Gold last went over $1,000 in February.

"It is mainly the reflection of the weakness of the dollar," said Julian Jessop, economist at Capital Economics.

The dollar fell to 92.32 yen on Tuesday from 93.05 yen the night before, while the euro strengthened to $1.4467 from $1.4332 as stock markets rose and investor sentiment improved.

Jessop noted, however, that gold was also being boosted by market expectations that global central banks would keep their interest rates low for some time to come. One disadvantage to holding gold is that no interest is earned — but rates on dollar-denominated assets such as government bonds have fallen sharply, lessening that disadvantage.

"Near-zero interest rates in many of the world's largest economies reduces the opportunity cost of holding gold," Jessop said.

The fact that 20 of the world's rich and developing nations promised over the weekend to keep in place their stimulus measures — which include both spending as well as low interest rates — reinforced the appeal of gold.

Jessop was not convinced gold could sustain such high prices for very long or push much higher, since consumers quickly start selling gold items to take advantage of stronger prices.

"This rally is sowing the seeds of its own destruction," he said.

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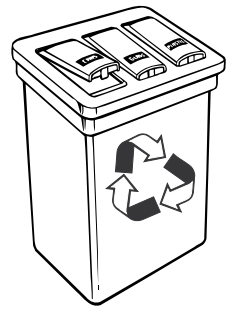
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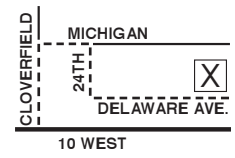
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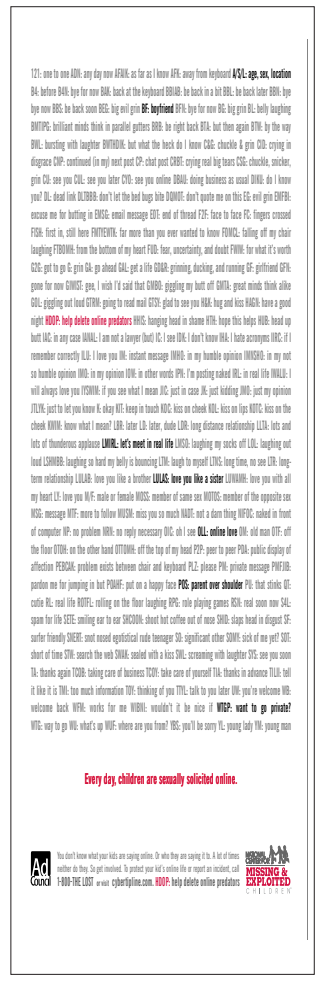


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121: one to one ADR: any day now AFAIK: as far as I know AFK: away from keyboard **A/S/L: age, sex, location** B4: before B4N: bye for now B&F: back at the keyboard BBIAB: be back in a bit BBL: be back later BBN: bye bye now BBS: be back soon BEG: big evil grin **BF: boyfriend** BFN: bye for now BG: big grin BL: belly laughing BMTIPG: brilliant minds think in parallel gutters BRB: be right back BTA: but then again BTW: by the way BWL: bursting with laughter BYFKOH: but what the heck do I know C&G: chuckle & grin CD: crying in disgrace CHP: continued (in my) next post CP: chat post CRBT: crying real big tears CSG: chuckle, snicker, grin CU: see you CUL: see you later CYO: see you online DBAU: doing business as usual DIKU: do I know you? DL: dead link DLTBBB: don't let the bed bugs bite DQMOT: don't quote me on this EG: evil grin EMFBI: excuse me for butting in EMSG: email message EOT: end of thread F2F: face to face FC: fingers crossed FISH: first in, still here FITMFWTA: for more than you ever wanted to know FOMCL: falling off my chair laughing FTBOMH: from the bottom of my heart FUD: fear, uncertainty, and doubt FWIW: for what it's worth G2G: got to go G: grin GA: go ahead GAL: get a life GD&R: grinning, ducking, and running GF: girlfriend GFN: gone for now GIWIST: gee, I wish I'd said that GMBO: giggling my butt off GMTA: great minds think alike GOL: giggling out loud GTRM: going to read mail GTSY: glad to see you H&K: hug and kiss HAGN: have a good night **HDOP: help delete online predators** HHO: hanging head in shame HTH: hope this helps HUB: head up butt IAC: in any case IANAL: I am not a lawyer (but) IC: I see IDK: I don't know IHA: I hate acronyms IIRC: if I remember correctly ILU: I love you IM: instant message IMHO: in my humble opinion IMNSHO: in my not so humble opinion IMO: in my opinion IOW: in other words IPN: I'm posting naked IRL: in real life IWALU: I will always love you ITSWIM: if you see what I mean JIC: just in case JK: just kidding JMO: just my opinion JTLYK: just to let you know K: okay KIT: keep in touch KOC: kiss on cheek KOL: kiss on lips KOTC: kiss on the cheek KWIM: know what I mean? LDR: later LD: later, dude LDR: long distance relationship LLTA: lots and lots of thunderous applause **LMIRL: let's meet in real life** LMSO: laughing my socks off LOL: laughing out loud LSHMBB: laughing so hard my belly is bouncing LTM: laugh to myself LTNS: long time, no see LTR: long-term relationship LULAB: love you like a brother **LULAS: love you like a sister** LUWAMH: love you with all my heart LY: love you M/F: male or female MOSS: member of same sex MOTOS: member of the opposite sex MSG: message MTF: more to follow MUSM: miss you so much NADT: not a dam thing NFSQ: naked in front of computer NP: no problem NRN: no reply necessary OIC: oh I see **OLL: online love** OM: old man OTF: off the floor OTOH: on the other hand OTTOMH: off the top of my head P2P: peer to peer PDA: public display of affection PEBCAK: problem exists between chair and keyboard PLZ: please PM: private message PMFJBI: pardon me for jumping in but PMIAFF: put on a happy face **POS: parent over shoulder** PU: that stinks QT: cutie RL: real life ROTFL: rolling on the floor laughing RPG: role playing games RSN: real soon now S4L: spam for life SEYE: smiling eye to eye SMCOond: shoot hot coffee out of nose SMD: slaps head in disgust SF: surfer friendly SNERT: snot nosed egotistical rude teenager SO: significant other SOMY: sick of me yet? SOT: short of time STR: search the web SWAK: sealed with a kiss SWL: screaming with laughter SYS: see you soon TA: thanks again TCOB: taking care of business TCOY: take care of yourself TIA: thanks in advance TLLK: tell it like it is TMI: too much information TOY: thinking of you TTYL: talk to you later UW: you're welcome WB: welcome back WFM: works for me WIBNI: wouldn't it be nice if **WTGP: want to go private?** WTG: way to go WU: what's up WUF: where are you from? YBS: you'll be sorry YL: young lady YM: young man

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Teen in Obama speech says experience 'cool'

SUDHIN THANAWALA
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO A Northern California teenager who was mentioned in President Barack Obama's education speech said Tuesday the experience has been "pretty cool."

Andoni Schultz, 18, of Los Altos, has been battling brain cancer for 15 years but still graduated with his high school class in June and is attending college.

Obama used his experience as an example of how students can overcome challenges.

"He's had to endure all sorts of treatments and surgeries ...," Obama said about Schultz in a national address Tuesday to students at a high school in Arlington, Va. "But he never fell behind."

Schultz said surgery to remove tumors from his brain have affected his memory, taking him longer to complete homework assignments and tests. He's also had to miss school for treatment and follow-up visits.

"I've always tried my best and keep up with my work," he said. "Even in the hospital ..., I would always check the school Web site to make sure I could stay up with all the homework."

Since a transcript of Obama's speech was released Monday, Schultz said he has been sought by the media and visited by proud friends.

"It's an absolute honor," said Angie Inchauspe, Schultz's mother. "As his mom, I for years have thought he's just an amazing kid ... To have him recognized by the U.S. president and for the whole nation to see that is just amazing."

Because her son has trouble remembering, Inchauspe said he needs to repeat exercises. So he does more problems than the teacher assigns.

"It gets stressful, it gets overwhelming," she said. "It would be pretty easy for him to give up. Through the support of people around him, he's able to overcome it and keep pushing forward."

Schultz is enrolled at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, where he wants to pursue a business degree en route to becoming an accountant.

Obama's speech was not without controversy, as conservative organizations and some concerned parents warned the president was trying to sell his political agenda. That concern stemmed in part from an accompanying administration lesson plan encouraging students to "help the president." The White House later revised that plan.

Inchauspe said she and her son, who support the president, found the controversy funny, as did her husband, who is a Republican.

"The political part got caught up in it all," she said. "He's trying to inspire kids and encourage them."

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Democratic lawmakers push California water plan

SAMANTHA YOUNG
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California's legislative leaders say they want to reach a deal on a wide-ranging solution to the state's water problems even though they don't yet know how to pay for it.

A bipartisan committee formed specifically to address water issues was scheduled to vote Tuesday on a plan intended to change how California manages and uses water. It was unclear whether the package had Republican support.

The set of five bills was written mostly by Democrats and omits funding to build reservoirs.

Republicans have said they will not support any legislation without guaranteed money for dams and expanded underground storage. Democrats say they are preparing a financing plan, but the details are still be worked out.

Boxer urges focus on post-fire erosion, slide risks

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES Sen. Barbara Boxer is urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to focus on prevention of erosion and mudslides in areas denuded by California's summer wildfires.

The largest blaze is still burning two weeks after being ignited by arson and has blackened 250 square miles in mountains above Los Angeles' northeastern foothill suburbs.

Boxer says in a letter Tuesday to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack that there's a need to reduce the potential for winter rains to erode hillsides, harm water quality and trigger damaging mudslides.

The California Democrat says the department should use such resources as the federal Emergency Watershed Protection program.



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Calif. utility proposes novel wildfire tactic

ELLIOT SPAGAT
Associated Press Writer

RAMONA, Calif. A San Diego utility has come up with an unusual tactic to prevent wildfires this fall: Turn off the electricity to a vast swath of homes before the flames arrive. It says such a measure could have prevented three major fires that devastated the region two years ago.

But critics call it a bad idea that will cause a number of crucial systems to fail immediately or within hours, such as life-critical medical devices, water pumps, phones, garage door openers, traffic lights. Without generators, people may be forced to flee or, even worse, start fires by using candles, lanterns and barbecues.

The California Public Utilities Commission is scheduled to vote as early as Thursday on San Diego Gas & Electric's plan to cut off power to 60,000 homes and businesses in dry, windy weather. The showdown comes as the state braces for another season of dry, fierce winds that can topple power lines and set off wildfires.

The plan, if approved, may be introduced elsewhere. Edison International's Southern California Edison had one in 2003 that targeted about 30,000 homes and it cut power once, in the tiny community of Idylwild. A spokesman, Steve Conroy, says the Los Angeles-area utility has no cutoff plan now but is watching the San Diego decision closely.

The debate is playing out as an arsonist-sparked wildfire in Los Angeles continues to rage after killing two firefighters, destroying 78 homes and burning 251 square miles over the last two week.

Power lines cause a tiny percentage of wildfires, but have wrought enormous damage.

A sycamore limb fell on a San Diego Gas & Electric line to spark one of Southern California's biggest fires in 2007, according to the utility. Others were started when two SDG&E lines lashed and a Cox Communications cable line struck one of the utility's wires.

SDG&E, a unit of San Diego-based Sempra Energy, has paid dearly — $740 million in legal settlements with affected homeowners, with more claims pending. This month, it asked regulators for a rate increase, saying its insurance premiums soared after the fires.

The utility wants to stop only the biggest fires, said Mike Niggli, chief operating officer of Sempra's utilities. It estimates there will be one or two outages a year that affect between 8,000 and 10,000 customers.

"When you're in potential for a catastrophic situation, we feel we're going to do our part to make San Diego safe," he said.

SDG&E would cut power if five weather conditions are met, including gauges like humidity in the air and moisture in sticks and twigs. Critics say one of the conditions — wind speeds as low as 30 mph — is far too low to trigger a shutdown.

Supporters include the San Diego City Council — no surprise considering the nation's eighth-largest city is outside the shutoff-zone and fires roared from chaparral-covered mountains into the heart of the city twice since 2003.

Opposition is fierce in the quaint communities that would lose electricity, an area that rings San Diego through avocado groves, apple orchards and horse ranches near the Mexican border.

Ramona, an unincorporated city of about 35,000 people north of San Diego that was among the hardest hit by fires in 2003 and 2007, falls entirely within the shutoff zone.

The town barely sits outside San Diego's sprawl of modern office parks and new tract homes. The wide Main Street with chains including 7-Eleven and Denny's feels dated. Dairies, chicken farms and large lots are signs of its agricultural heritage.

Several residents say the utility is shirking responsibility to protect its infrastructure from fire and object to its plea that it be indemnified for any power shutdown. The utility notes that it is improving its system — replacing some wood poles with steel, planting some wires underground — but critics insist the shutoff plan goes too far.

"It's a very cheap way of not having to upgrade the system," said community activist Joseph Mitchell. "It shifts the cost and the risk from them to the public."

Mary Wilder says she may get an asthma attack if her electronic breathing device fails. She who walks with a cane and lives alone on an $800 monthly disability check, not enough to make her even think of buying a generator.

Wilder, who lost her home in 2003, shrugs off the utility's offer to shuttle disabled customers to an evacuation center if the power is shut and provide debit cards up to $250.

"Having to leave your home because your electricity is turned off is just ridiculous," said Wilder, 62.

Ramona Senior Care Inc., whose past residents have relied on oxygen tanks, priced generators at $4,000, said Haley Palmbach, an administrator. If it buys one, it may have to raise prices for its 12 residents or reduce staff.

Cary Coleman, chief of a volunteer fire department that serves about 4,000 people outside Ramona, worries that he won't be able to find pumps to replenish his four fire engines and truck with water, even though the utility offered to create a pool of portable generators for water districts if the power is shut off.

Some residents are more sympathetic to the utility.

"It could work," said Scott Mattson, 47, who is horrified by memories of the five-hour traffic jam to leave Ramona during the 2007 fires. Still, he said the plan is far too cautious for setting wind speeds as low as 30 mph to trigger a shutdown.

Wayne Chamon, owner of City Barber Shop, was nonchalant.

"It's no big deal, I'll just take another day off," he said. "If it's two or three days, then I'll take two or three days off."





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A WET ONE

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

The Santa Monica Fire Department works to shut off water gushing from a fire hydrant on the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and 22nd Street Tuesday morning. Fire fighters said a delivery truck hit the hydrant, causing it to split in half.

Unions ask district to keep cuts away from classroom

FROM **BUDGET** PAGE 1

Board of Education to ensure that the quality of education not be compromised in the next round of cuts.

Their concern is that teachers and student services staff could be next.

"The union will use everything within our power to protect our modest income and any wages or benefits that have to be negotiated and cannot be unilaterally imposed without negotiating such changes with members," Harry Keiley, the teachers union president, said.

Both groups are calling on the district to use its reserves, offer early retirement incentives and ease on entering contracts.

The district has used $8.5 million in reserves, Maez said in August. The district is expected to have $12.8 million in reserves left at the end of fiscal year.

"This is what (reserves) were created for," Terry Carter of the SEIU said. "It's raining now, it's time to use the rainy day funds."

But dipping into the reserves might not be feasible over time.

Maez said that multi-year projections for the budget shows that the district's reserves are being depleted at a very rapid rate. District officials have said that reserves could be wiped out in just two years if drastic steps are not taken to reduce expenditures or increase revenues.

> **"IN THESE ECONOMIC TIMES ... (THE BUDGET) IS MORE OF A CONTINUOUS PROCESS."**
>
> **Jan Maez**
> chief financial officer
> Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District

"That is not something that is sustainable over time," Maez said.

melodyh@smdp.com





Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

HOME SWEET HOME: **A pigeon hangs out underneath the Santa Monica Pier Tuesday.**

Animal activists remain skeptical of City Hall's plans to net pier

FROM **PIGEONS** PAGE 1

Once the net is installed, the pigeons that remain will starve to death, while those on the outside will kill themselves from the exhaustion of trying to return to their nests, according to the activists, which includes Santa Monica-based Voice for the Animals Foundation.

The organization said that there has not been a single documented case of a human disease being traced to a pigeon or its droppings.

Melya Kaplan, the founder of Voice for the Animals Foundation, said that some of the studies cited in the city report about the general health hazard posed to humans by pigeon droppings are based on assumptions and not fact.

Dr. Red Enright, a lawyer and pigeon expert, has refuted claims made by Bird Busters on its Web site that the bacterial agents found in pigeon droppings are responsible for diseases including histoplasmosis, arguing that the histoplasmoid organism cannot survive in the body of any bird because of its high body temperature. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, histoplasmosis is a disease that affects the lungs and can be fatal if left untreated.

To back the plan, city staff has pointed to other studies that have identified pigeon droppings as the source of poor water quality, including one by the Water Resources Research Center at the University of Hawaii, which linked poor water quality in the Hanauma Bay to soil sand and bird fecal matter, and a report by RBF Consulting earlier this year that identified the pier storm drain, sanitary sewer overflows and birds as potential contributors.

City Hall and the University of California Los Angeles this summer conducted a study analyzing bacteria concentrations in the sand and water underneath the pier. An initial DNA analysis indicated that animals were the source of bacteria.

Swain said the impact of the net to pigeons will be minimized as the nesting sites will be examined in the weeks before the installation. Existing nests will be monitored daily for fledgling time and any new nests will be removed.

> **"SOME OF THE STUDIES INDICATE THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL POTENTIAL SOURCES AND WE ARE TRYING TO ELIMINATE OR AT LEAST MINIMIZE ALL OF THESE POTENTIAL SOURCES UNTIL WE ARE SURE WE CAN STAY WITHIN COMPLIANCE."**
>
> **Lee Swain**
> public works director

The nets will also come with maintenance zippers that will remain open until all nests are abandoned, after which they will be removed.

"We're trying to take care of this issue in the most humane way possible," Swain said.

Animal rights activists remain skeptical.

"Bird Busters is an exterminating company, they are not rescuers," Kaplan said. "Exterminating companies are not going to be careful about baby birds."

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Gates brings education message to MTV, Nickelodeon

SHAYA TAYEFE MOHAJER
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES Students who might be too glued to their televisions to keep up with homework are going to find channels like MTV, Comedy Central and Nickelodeon prodding them to get on task and graduate.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is partnering with Viacom Inc.'s television networks, education leaders and celebrities to launch an awareness campaign to reduce the number of dropouts.

"All too often, the value and benefit of education are not real enough to kids," said Tony Miller, deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

The "Get Schooled" initiative focuses on low graduation rates in college and high school. A student drops out of an American high school every 26 seconds, according to the Seattle-based Gates Foundation.

At that rate, not enough American children are graduating high school and college to stay competitive in the global marketplace, said Viacom President and CEO Philippe Dauman.

"We don't know much about substance, we're about fluff at Viacom," Dauman said with a laugh. The Viacom chief, whose networks also include VH1, CMT, Spike TV, TV Land and Logo, said he told Gates a year ago, "We know kids, we know how to reach them; if you provide the substance we can be the megaphone."

To launch the five-year campaign, the documentary "Get Schooled" was set to premiere on all of Viacom's networks simultaneously at 8 p.m. EDT Tuesday night.

The documentary features pop singer Kelly Clarkson, basketball star LeBron James and President Barack Obama, but the program's real focus is on people behind the scenes, like a presidential speechwriter, and how education brought them success.

Dauman said the "Get Schooled" initiative would find its way into plot lines and programs, like BET's documentary "Bring Your 'A' Game," which featured prominent black men who have achieved success.

But "we're not going to go to all PBS-type programming," Dauman said. "In order to reach kids you have to entertain them."

Activism is not new for Viacom and its networks. MTV has raised AIDS awareness, promoted participation in elections and led other education initiatives.

The Gates Foundation, started by Microsoft Corp. founder Bill Gates and his wife, has invested more than $2 billion in educational programs since 2000.

At a Los Angeles event to launch the "Get Schooled" campaign, New York City schools chief Joel Klein said he was hopeful the approach would succeed because "trying to get traction with the millions and millions of kids in school is something that's been a challenge."

"When you bring the resources and the vision that the Gates family and foundation has, coupled with the distribution assets that Viacom has — the role models, the glitz they can produce — it feels like a good mix of stuff that will capture kids," Klein said.

The event coincided with a speech Obama made in Arlington, Va., on Tuesday that was broadcast to schools across the nation. In the address, Obama urged students to hit the books, saying that success is hard-won and every student has something they are good at.

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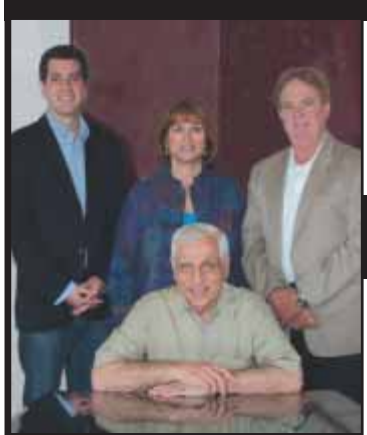
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Fines proposed for going without health insurance

RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON Americans who fail to sign up for a medical plan after health care overhaul takes effect could be hit with fines of up to $3,800, according to a new proposal circulated Tuesday by a senior Democrat.

Meanwhile, on the eve of a major health care speech by President Barack Obama, a government health insurance option overwhelmingly favored by progressive Democrats appeared to be losing critically needed support.

Lawmakers returned to Capitol Hill with little sign that many of the difficult issues surrounding a health care overhaul can be easily resolved.

The proposed fines are part of a proposal from Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., a moderate who heads the influential Finance Committee. Baucus was meeting Tuesday with a small group of senators trying to engineer a bipartisan compromise to break the stalemate. His plan would guarantee coverage for nearly all Americans at a cost to taxpayers of under $900 billion over 10 years. Some experts consider that a bargain, since the country now spends around $2.5 trillion a year on health care.

The fines would be the stick to enforce a proposed requirement that all Americans get health insurance, much as auto coverage is now mandatory. The penalties would start at $750 a year for individuals, and $1,500 for families. Households making more than three times the federal poverty level — about $66,000 for a family of four — would face the maximum fines. For families, it would be $3,800, and for individuals, $950.

Baucus would offer carrots as well: tax credits to help pay premiums for households making up to three times the poverty level, and for small employers paying about average middle-class wages. People working for companies that offer coverage could avoid the fines by signing up.

But the fines pose a dilemma for Obama. As a candidate, the president campaigned hard against making health insurance a requirement, saying it's too expensive to mandate. White House officials have since backed away somewhat from that stance, but there's no indication that Obama would support fines.

Meanwhile, an idea that Obama supported during the campaign and has since championed appeared to be in deeper trouble. Prospects for a government insurance option appeared to be sinking fast.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., told reporters a Medicare-like plan for middle-class Americans and their families isn't essential for him to back legislation. Hoyer's comments came shortly after a key Democratic moderate said he could no longer back a bill that includes a new government plan.

Obama advises caution in what kids put on Facebook

JULIE PACE
Associated Press Writer

ARLINGTON, Va. In a pep talk that kept clear of politics, President Barack Obama on Tuesday challenged the nation's students to take pride in their education — and stick with it even if they don't like every class or must overcome tough circumstances at home.

"Every single one of you has something that you're good at. Every single one of you has something to offer," Obama told students at Wakefield High School in suburban Arlington, Va., and children watching his speech on television in schools across the country. "And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is."

Presidents often visit schools, and Obama was not the first one to offer a back-to-school address aimed at millions of students in every grade.

Yet this one was doused with controversy from the beginning, as several conservative organizations and many concerned parents warned Obama was trying to sell his political agenda. That concern was caused in part by an accompanying administration lesson plan encouraging students to "help the president," which the White House later revised and Education Secretary Arne Duncan acknowledged Tuesday was wrongheaded.

School districts in some areas decided not to provide their students access to his midday speech.

Upon arrival at the school, Obama's motorcade was greeted by a small band of protesters. One carried a sign exclaiming: "Mr. President, stay away from our kids."

Obama didn't mention the uproar.

He preceded his broad-scale talk by meeting with about 40 Wakefield students in a school library, where at one point he advised them to "be careful what you post on Facebook. Whatever you do, it will be pulled up again later somewhere in your life."

"When I was your age," Obama said, "I was a little bit of a goof-off. My main goal was to get on the varsity basketball team and have fun."

One young person asked why the country doesn't have universal health insurance. "I think we need it. I think we can do it," Obama replied. The president said the country can afford to insure all Americans and that doing so will save money in the long run.

He also told the group that not having a father at home "forced me to grow up faster."

Asked to name one person — dead or alive — he would choose to dine with, Obama said inspirational leader Mohandas K. Gandhi.

"He's somebody I find a lot of inspiration in. He inspired Dr. (Martin Luther) King with his message of nonviolence," Obama said. "He ended up doing so much and changed the world just by the power of his ethics."

The White House released the text of his speech a day early so school officials and parents could evaluate it before it was delivered. Obama gave it virtually unchanged, and it was carried live on ESPN and the White House Web site.

"There is no excuse for not trying" he said. "The truth is, being successful is hard. You won't love every subject that you study. You won't click with every teacher that you have."

Chinese solar plant expected to be the biggest

CHRIS KAHN
AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK First Solar Inc. said Tuesday it has received initial approval from the Chinese government to build what may become the largest solar field in the world.

First Solar, which makes more solar cells than any other company, said it struck a tentative 10-year deal to build in China's vast desert north of the Great Wall. The project would eventually blanket 25 square miles of Inner Mongolia — slightly larger than the size of Manhattan — with a sea of black, light-absorbing glass.

The solar field would dwarf anything in operation in the U.S. or Europe. At 2 gigawatts, or 2 billion watts, the solar plant could pump as much energy onto China's grid as two coal-fired plants, enough to light up three million homes. Like most solar plants, however, it wouldn't produce electricity at night.

"The potential is enormous" for projects like this in China, CEO Mike Ahearn told The Associated Press before the announcement. "The Chinese government is further along in its thinking about solar than we've imagined."

Ahearn said it would be nearly impossible to install a solar field of this size in the United States. There's plenty of land, but there's not enough near transmission lines, Ahearn said.

And efforts to build new power lines are regularly stymied by competing interests from government agencies, environmental groups and disgruntled residents.

"In the U.S., energy policy is made on the state level," Ahearn said. "Every state has a different approach."

In contrast, Ahearn said China has designated a region within the country for renewable energy production and transmission. It also has promised to guide First Solar through the approval process and make it profitable.

Tempe, Ariz.-based First Solar announced the deal Tuesday after signing a "memorandum of understanding" with Wu Bangguo, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress.

The agreement outlines broad aspects of the project, including deadlines for a feasibility study and the government's role in helping with construction permits. But Ahearn said much of the deal hasn't been worked out yet, including how much First Solar would get paid.

Ahearn said a system like this would cost $5 billion to $6 billion if it were built in the U.S., though it likely would be cheaper using lower-cost Chinese labor.

First Solar plans to make money by selling the plant to a local operator, but it won't be able to estimate its profit until China determines the size of its subsidy for solar energy. The country is expected to offer a "feed-in tariff," which would require utilities to buy solar energy at a fixed price for a set number of years.

Industry experts say they're not sure when that will happen.

"We've been kind of in a holding pattern for six months or so," Mark Bachman, an analyst with PacificCrest, said.

Bachman said announcements of smaller solar farms have been popping up "all over the place" in China. But investors so far have been unimpressed because of the uncertainty surrounding its subsidy program.

First Solar stock jumped more than 10 percent after the announcement. It added $12.94, or 10.7 percent, to close at $134.41 a share in Tuesday trading.

First Solar will see added expenses as it builds in China, but Piper Jaffray analyst Jesse Pichel said those costs likely will be offset by government subsidies.

The company also will gain access to China's cheap labor and what may become the biggest solar market in the world. By building in China, First Solar should push the cost of its solar panels even lower.

"This is a huge benefit for them, absolutely," Pichel said.

For several years, solar panels have been rapidly spreading around the world as an alternative power source, appearing on rooftops of homes and businesses in most major countries. The solar industry has focused on a handful of European countries that offer the best incentives, but companies are starting to look elsewhere for longer-term projects that can keep their factories occupied for several years.

Ahearn said First Solar spent the past few months searching for partners in China, culminating with its 2-gigawatt deal in Inner Mongolia. Like the U.S., China has taken aggressive steps to move away from fossil fuels. It located the First Solar plant in Ordos, a gritty industrial city of 1.4 million people that is the main production base for China's largest coal company.

The project hasn't been given an exact location yet, but the agreement said it will be located within a massive development zone that is expected to eventually offer nearly 12 gigawatts of renewable energy from wind, solar, biomass and hydroelectric power. First Solar will provide most of the solar, with the first 30 megawatts installed by June 1, 2010. The company will expand the plant over the next decade, installing about 27 million thin-film panels by 2019.

Li Rong, director of the new energy department of the Ordos city government, said First Solar's project still faces a number of hurdles, including acceptance by the government's National Development and Reform Commission.

"It's hard to guarantee when exactly it will start or finish as the project hasn't been approved," Rong told the AP.

First Solar said the Ordos project will be the largest solar farm ever. But there are other projects that may provide stiff competition for that distinction.

The Clinton Climate Initiative said it is working with the Energy Resources Institute in India on a possible solar development that would be even larger. The project could install two solar farms — one in Gujarat and one in Rajasthan — that are larger than First Solar's. But CCI officials said the project is in an extremely early stage and most details haven't been worked out yet.

BrightSource Energy is developing one of the largest U.S.-based solar projects. The Oakland, Calif. company has power-purchase agreements with two California utilities to build 14 solar plants with a combined capacity of 2.6 gigawatts. BrightSource may spread the plants across California, Nevada and Arizona.

First Solar also is building solar farms in California and New Mexico, but Ahearn said he expects Asia to be home to the biggest solar plants for some time.

"There's an advantage to planning this from the top," Ahearn said. "The speed and execution advantage is in China."

AP Business Writer **ELAINE KURTENBACH** contributed to this story from Shanghai.

Senate considers taxing international tourists

KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON A bid to boost the number of international tourists in the United States could mean that many of those same visitors will soon pay extra to finance travel promotion campaigns abroad.

Under terms of a bill the Senate was to begin debating Tuesday, millions of international visitors would pay a $10 fee to help pay for the work of a new nonprofit corporation. Critics have stuck the corporation with the moniker — "Fannie Travel" — in reference to the troubled government-sponsored enterprises established to provide a stable and affordable housing market.

The travel industry is highly supportive of the bill, as are lawmakers from some of the states hardest hit by the recession, such as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.

The U.S. Travel Association has ramped up its lobbying efforts to try and generate support for the measure, spending nearly $600,000 this year — double what it spent during the prior two years combined, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Geoff Freeman, a senior vice president at the U.S. Travel Association, said every developed country in the world has promotional campaigns designed to attract foreign visitors, and it was time for the U.S. to join the game.

"The United States is the world's anomaly," Freeman said. "And the results speak for themselves."

About 58 million international travelers visited the U.S. last year. Industry officials say millions of potential visitors are looking elsewhere because of enhanced border security after the Sept. 11 terrorism attacks and negative foreign press articles. Many potential visitors just don't feel they're welcome in the U.S., and that's a mindset the private sector can't change by itself, said Freeman.

More than 51 million international visitors came to the U.S. in 2000. That number dropped to 41 million in 2003, and has gradually improved since then, according to the Commerce Department.

The private sector spends billons of dollars promoting destinations within the United States. Freeman said hotels and resorts would continue to do so and that the travel industry was not relying on the government to subsidize those costs. Indeed, much of the money for the promotional efforts will come from fees paid by the travel industry. The rest comes from the $10 fee on international visitors.

"What the private sector is saying is that the government put in place the barriers for entry. At the very least, the government should be a partner in limiting the negative impact of those barriers," Freeman said.

The United States began requiring people who don't need visas to enter the country to register online at least 72 hours before travel and renew their registration every two years. If the new proposal becomes law, it would require people to pay the fee when they register.

The European Union has said that some U.S. travelers to Europe could face retaliatory fees.

The Congressional Budget Office has projected that the legislation would reduce the federal deficit by $425 million over the next decade.

2nd congressman draws papers to succeed Kennedy

GLEN JOHNSON
AP Political Writer

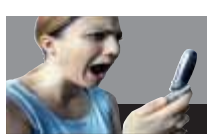
BOSTON Rep. Michael Capuano of Massachusetts says he's taken out nomination papers and will announce next week whether he'll join the race to succeed Edward Kennedy in the U.S. Senate.

The six-term Democratic congressman said Tuesday that of any candidates mentioned so far, he most closely mirrors Kennedy's positions on issues of war and peace.

Capuano is the second member of Congress to draw nomination papers. Rep. Stephen Lynch did so last week.

Democratic Reps. Edward J. Markey and John Tierney are also considering the race. Former Congressman Martin Meehan said Tuesday he will not run.

Attorney General Martha Coakley was the first declared Democratic candidate to replace Kennedy, who died Aug. 25 of brain cancer.


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With new AG, Mexico tries to revamp drug war

JULIE WATSON
Associated Press Writer

MEXICO CITY With a new attorney general, Mexican President Felipe Calderon is trying to get even tougher on drug cartels and those who protect them.

But critics say he tapped the wrong man for the job: Arturo Chavez was mired in controversy as attorney general of a border state where corruption ran rampant and hundreds of women were raped and murdered with impunity.

In nominating Chavez, Calderon clearly sided with Mexico's top cop, Public Safety Secretary Genaro Garcia Luna, in an increasingly bitter rivalry with outgoing Attorney General Eduardo Medina-Mora. Chavez and Garcia Luna are allies from the same faction of the ruling party.

While Medina-Mora focused on restructuring Mexico's justice system, Garcia Luna won praise for carrying out the bulk of the 80,000 drug arrests since Calderon took office in 2006. He oversees thousands of federal police working alongside soldiers in the country's drug hotspots.

"This backs the muscular approach as they try to ramp up their capabilities to fight the cartels," said George Grayson, a Mexico expert at the College of William & Mary in Virginia. Unlike Medina-Mora, he said, Garcia Luna "doesn't spend a lot of time contemplating policy. He wants to put policy into action."

Calderon's all-out war on the cartels has drawn criticism as the death toll topped 13,500, and his party lost ground in midterm congressional elections in July. There has also been growing discontent among the armed forces, which want more action against politicians who protect the cartels.

"It's one thing to go after capos, but behind the capos are those who are benefiting from the drug dealing — the governors, senators, deputies, mayors and thousands of civilian public officials," Grayson said.

"The military is furious that there are governors who live high on the hog while they are putting troops in harm's way. That is the buzz among the brass."

Chavez, who still faces a tough battle for confirmation in Mexico's senate, is relatively little known on the national stage. But in Chihuahua — across the border from Texas and home to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico's deadliest city — women's groups lined up to criticize his record.

During his 1996-98 term as state attorney general, state police botched investigations into the murders of hundreds of women whose bodies turned up dead in the desert outside Ciudad Juarez so badly that former President Vicente Fox later had to send in federal prosecutors to take over the cases.

Activists accused Chihuahua state officials of torturing suspects, contaminating and falsifying evidence and harassing victims' relatives.

4 US soldiers in Iraq killed in roadside bomb attacks

KIM GAMEL
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD Four U.S. soldiers were killed by roadside bombs Tuesday, the deadliest day for American forces in Iraq since combat troops pulled back from urban areas more than two months ago.

The separate attacks in Baghdad and in northern Iraq showed the dangers still facing U.S. troops as they drastically scale back their presence and prepare for a full withdrawal by the end of 2011.

The monthly U.S. death toll has declined sharply this year, falling into single digits for the first time, with American troops shifting to a mainly support and training role in line with a security pact that took effect on Jan. 1. August saw the lowest monthly toll since the war began in 2003, with seven U.S. deaths.

But attacks have persisted since American troops withdrew from population centers on June 30 — as required under the security deal — and Iraqi forces have borne the brunt. Bombings and shootings killed at least 10 Iraqis on Tuesday. The attacks have heightened concerns about Iraqi forces' ability to protect the people and raised fears of resurgent violence ahead of January's parliamentary elections.

One roadside bomb struck a patrol in southern Baghdad, killing one American soldier. A short time later, another bomb targeting a patrol in northern Iraq killed three U.S. soldiers, the military said.

With the deaths, six U.S. troops have been killed this month. It was the deadliest day for U.S. forces since June 29, when four soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. In all, at least 4,343 U.S. service members have died since the war started in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

An Iraqi military spokesman in Baghdad acknowledged the need to improve Iraq's U.S.-trained security forces at a news conference on Tuesday as political fallout continued following devastating Aug. 19 suicide truck bombings that targeted government ministry buildings.

Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi said 29 police and army officers responsible for security in the areas of the hardest-hit foreign and finance ministries had been arrested and charged with negligence.

"Absolutely, what has been achieved so far in the intelligence and security efforts is below expectations. There is a review to all security plans with the supervision of the prime minister," he said.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has blamed loyalists of ousted leader Saddam Hussein based in Syria for organizing and financing the attacks, which killed as many as 101 people.

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Surf Conditions **Water Temp:** 70°

Swell Forecast

Should see a swath of southerly energy from the French Poly system. Waist to maybe chest high waves from 195 degrees are expected for south facing breaks.

Long Range Synopsis

Looks small at this point as well: perhaps knee high most everywhere.

Tide Forecast for Today in Santa Monica



BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous four weeks up to the ending date of **September 2, 2009**

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

QUICK STATS (for the last 28 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 0
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 8
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 44 / ns
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 2 / ns

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

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

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Las Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth	A+	ns
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
El Pescador State Beach, between Lechuse and Las Alisa creeks	A+	ns
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach	A+	ns
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth	A+	ns
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth	A+	ns
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private)	A	ns
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach	A+	ns
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
Solstice Canyon at Don Blocker County Beach	A+	ns
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth	A+	ns
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	A	ns
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence	A	ns
Surfrider Beach (breach location) - daily	A	ns
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	A	ns
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon	A+	ns
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (paint zero)	A+	ns
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs	A+	ns
Pena Creek at Las Tunas County Beach	A+	ns
Tuna Canyon	A+	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	ns
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain)	A+	ns

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua)	A+	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain	A+	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	A+	ns
Santa Monica Municipal Pier	B	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain	A+	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms)	A+	ns
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A+	ns
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	A+	ns
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St.	A+	ns
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower	A	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth	B	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain	A+	ns
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty)	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	ns
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain	A+	ns

LEGEND

DRY -- each location is graded on an A – F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone
WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days
ns -- no sample taken

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

Heal the Bay

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Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card℠ is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A–F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

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

Jordan still 'The most competitive man in the world'

JIM LITKE
AP Sports Columnist

He imagined himself entering the Hall of Fame leaning on a cane.

Or else posthumously.

"That's the way I look at it," Michael Jordan said. "I was hoping this day was coming in 20 more years, or that I'd actually go in when I'm dead and done."

His eyes were red-rimmed. He wasn't laughing. That was five months ago, at the announcement of Jordan's election to the Class of 2009, inside a downtown Detroit hotel on a grim, snowy Monday afternoon that fit his mood. Even so, come Friday, he will stroll into the Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremony on 46-year-old legs that he believes have at least one more transcendent performance left in them, even if everyone else has doubts. He is — still — The Most Competitive Man in the World.

Jordan was the first superstar of the 24/7 era. Then its first supersalesman. Try and name another athlete who could play himself in a corny movie like "Space Jam" — battling animated giant aliens who looked suspiciously like Charles Barkley, Patrick Ewing, et. al. — and still have it gross $230 million worldwide.

Four decades ago, writer Wilfrid Sheed said you could walk into a hut in the remotest corner of Africa and find a picture of Muhammad Ali hanging on the wall. Next to it might have been another of Pele. But TV had little immediacy back then and only a fraction of the audience to come. Four decades before that, Babe Ruth became the larger-than-life embodiment of a burgeoning Yankee empire. But that was when newspapers still roamed every corner of the earth.

When Jordan showed up in Chicago as a rookie, cable TV was just taking off and the satellite networks in Europe and Asia, set up to share soccer, were struggling to expand their modest reach. Everybody wanted sports programming, and Jordan produced a highlight reel's worth every night. Better still, viewers in even the most faraway markets didn't need subtitles to be thrilled by the sight of a man flying through the air.

In time, Nike turned that image into the best-selling silhouette of all time. Then Coke, McDonald's, General Mills and a half-dozen other A-listers enlisted him to push product around the globe. But if his appeal was unparalleled — Jordan could sell to the suits, suburbs and Middle America, yet remain a hero to the Hip Hop Nation — so, too, were his demands.

Before Jordan, athletes rarely got more than a one-time licensing fee for an endorsement deal. After him came the deluge. By insisting on a piece of the action, Jordan amassed a personal fortune in the hundreds of millions. But that was only a fraction of what he made for others.

In June of 1998, some six months before he retired for the second time, Fortune magazine totaled up what it called "The Jordan Effect." Counting merchandise moved, tickets sold, jacked-up TV ratings and fattened contracts for ballplayers, it concluded his impact on the economy since joining the NBA in 1984 was $10 billion.

He was never really about the money. Not after his first contract, anyway. He felt flush. The dollars were one way to measure his accomplishments, but like the scoring titles, regular season and finals MVP awards and even championships, they were byproducts. The only goal Jordan ever set for himself was winning.

Every time out, against anyone — whether as a kid going hammer-and-tong with older brother Larry on a caked-dirt court in the backyard, or doubling down at the blackjack table as the sun came up outside one of the dozens of casinos Jordan has frequented since.

His trump card was always the same. You didn't have to spend much time around Jordan to know that the outcome was always going to matter more to him. That's why people always got out of his way.

What fans remember about Game 6 of the 1998 Finals against the Jazz was the jumper Jordan drained to lock up the Bulls' sixth title, and the way he stood frozen for a heartbeat afterward, his shooting hand tracing the arc of the basketball as it rippled through the net. What I'll never forget is the moment that preceded the shot.

Jordan had suckered Utah's Bryon Russell into reaching for the ball with a crossover dribble. There was no way Russell could recover in time to get back in Jordan's way. Still, the moment he sensed the defender was off-balance, Jordan reached down and gave him a shove, just to be sure. Then he rose up and launched the shot.

That push, more than the swished shot that followed it, or the pose Jordan struck in the moment after that, remains the perfect tableau for the most competitive athlete we will ever see.

The less said about his last comeback with the Washington Wizards the better.

By then Jordan realized he'd already passed on the perfect ending while he had the chance. Maybe that's why he didn't mind when Kobe coolly sank two free throws to erase the one Jordan cobbled together in the closing seconds of the first overtime in the 2003 All-Star game. It was midway through what was, mercifully, his final season.

"As much as I wanted to play well," Jordan said after his East side lost 155-145 in double overtime, "it felt good just being out there."

For most of his competitive life, you couldn't have pried a sentence like that out of Jordan with the jaws of life. He never worried about perfect endings, or playing well, and he never set foot on a court just to feel good "being out there." He watched the final five minutes of this one sitting on the bench though, looking lost.

He will feel that way again Friday. Jordan planned to enter the Hall on his way out of one arena and on his way to the next, preferably sandwiching his appearance between game-winning shots. He wanted the honor to be just another milepost on his way to still others, not a set-in-stone reminder that nobody wins forever, not even Michael Jordan.

MOVIE TIMES

Aero Theatre
1328 Montana Ave.
(323) 466-FILM

Los Angeles Plays itself (NR) 2hr 49min
7:30

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade

Funny People (R) 2hr 16min
11:35 a.m., 2:45, 6:45, 9:50

The Hangover (R) 1hr 36min
11:15 a.m., 1:55, 4:40, 7:15, 10:05

Taking Woodstock (R) 1hr 50min
11:00 a.m., 1:45, 4:30, 7:25, 10:15

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (PG) 2hrs 33min
11:30 a.m., 3:00, 6:30, 9:55

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

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

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

The Time Traveler's Wife (PG-13) 1hr 48min
10:50am, 1:25, 4:10, 7:15, 10:00

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

Halloween II (2009) (R) 1hr 41min
12:00, 2:30, 5:20, 7:55, 9:30, 10:45

My One and Only (PG-13) 1hr 25min
11:00am, 1:45, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45

Gamer (R) 1hr 35min
11:50am, 2:40, 5:05, 7:45, 10:15

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

Extract (R) 1hr 30min
1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:15

(500) Days of Summer (PG-13) 1hr 35min
1:50, 4:30, 7:20, 9:45

The Hurt Locker (R) 2hr 10min
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:55

In the Loop (NR) 1hr 46min
1:40, 4:20, 7:10, 9:50

Valentino: The Last Emperor (NR) 1hr 36min
11:00 a.m.

Play the Game (PG-13) 1 hr 45min
11:00 a.m.

Irene in Time (PG-13) 1hr 34min
11:00 a.m.

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

The Final Destination 3D (R) 1hr 22min
12:30, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

Inglourious Basterds (R) 2hrs 32min
12:00, 1:30, 3:30, 5:00, 7:00, 8:30, 10:20

G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra (PG-13) 1hr 58min
12:40, 3:40, 6:40, 9:50

District 9 (R) 1hr 53min
11:30am, 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10

All About Steve (PG-13) 1hr 39min
11:40am, 2:00, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40

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

Spice up your love life, Libra

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ You know how to indulge a loved one. When you express your feelings, approach a co-worker or potential partner with openness. Keep the display of emotions in check. This person prefers coolness. Tonight: Time to treat.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ You are on top of your game. Stop worrying. You cannot orchestrate everything that happens. Trust in Lady Luck, who will play a significant role in your public image and work. Tonight: As you wish, especially as you are carrying a lucky rabbit's foot.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ You might want to go within or close your door rather than deal with distraction. Others clearly act out in an attempt to get your attention. The question lies in what happens if you don't give these people what they want. Tonight: Finally -- a little downtime.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ You know what is viable. Listen to someone who demonstrates unusual caring, though this person can be difficult if he or she doesn't get what he or she wants. Emphasize friendship. Others respond by being more adaptable. Tonight: Where the action is.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ Continue to take the lead. You have a naturally gracious manner that draws in others. You make headway where others cannot. Opportunities head your way. Tonight: A force to be reckoned with.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Keep reaching past the obvious. The end results could be delightful if you simply relax with associates and others in general. Good news comes in through someone at a distance or through a foreigner. You know what to do. What is stopping you? Tonight: Go to a baseball game or find some other easy adventure.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Deal with others on a one-on-one level, even if the intensity could be a little time-consuming. Your efforts will be paid back in multiples. By being so receptive, you could learn an important piece of information. Be subtle when this morsel drops. Tonight: Add more romance to your life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Others are challenging, whether they intend to be or not. Don't challenge people right now. Be receptive to their ideas, but be clear as to where the responsibility for a flub-up lies, should one occur -- certainly not with you! Tonight: Happily heading home.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Decide to get as much done as possible. You could be on overload. Simply focus on one task at a time. A meeting finds many supporters for a key cause. Tonight: The theme is togetherness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Your imagination kicks in and delights many. You see a personal matter far differently than the other person involved. Accept the fact that you don't have the same opinions, and respect your differences. Tonight: Indulge a little. Let go of self-discipline for several hours.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Work from home if possible. You will get a lot done without distractions -- and far more quickly at that. A partner could become unusually fastidious and irritating with this inclination. Simply accept it, as you cannot change it. Tonight: Order in.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Keep communication flowing at the same high level. Return calls and schedule meetings. A talk reveals another's true feelings. Consider the implications of what he or she is saying. Your sixth sense steps forward, pointing the way. Tonight: Join a friend for dinner.

Happy birthday

This year, dive in and get the job done. Your efficiency is tested. Sometimes there is a backfire, perhaps with more frequency than in the past. You will have a lot on your plate, but you'll also have the energy to deal with all your projects, work, etc. If you are single, you easily could meet someone through work. Get to know this person completely before deciding you are in a relationship. He or she might be unavailable emotionally. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from more private time together. TAURUS helps you understand others.

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

Girls and Sports
By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila
By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



Garfield
By Jim Davis



Strange Brew
By John Deering



Speed Bump
By Dave Coverly



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Sudoku

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

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

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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MYSTERY PHOTO

Maya Sugarman *news@smdp.com*

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

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Bar mixer
5 Like some statues
9 Brother of Groucho
11 Sub system
12 Black bird
13 Magazine unit
14 Before, to bards
15 Ship sound
17 Deva-stated by fighting
19 Went ahead
20 Got up
21 Kingsley or Stiller
22 Note taker
24 "— Kapital"
26 Perch
29 Soak up
30 Baby
32 Cinema snack
34 "For shame!"
35 Dome-shaped home
36 Martini garnish
38 Attach, in a way
39 Dwindled
40 Gusto
41 Wagers

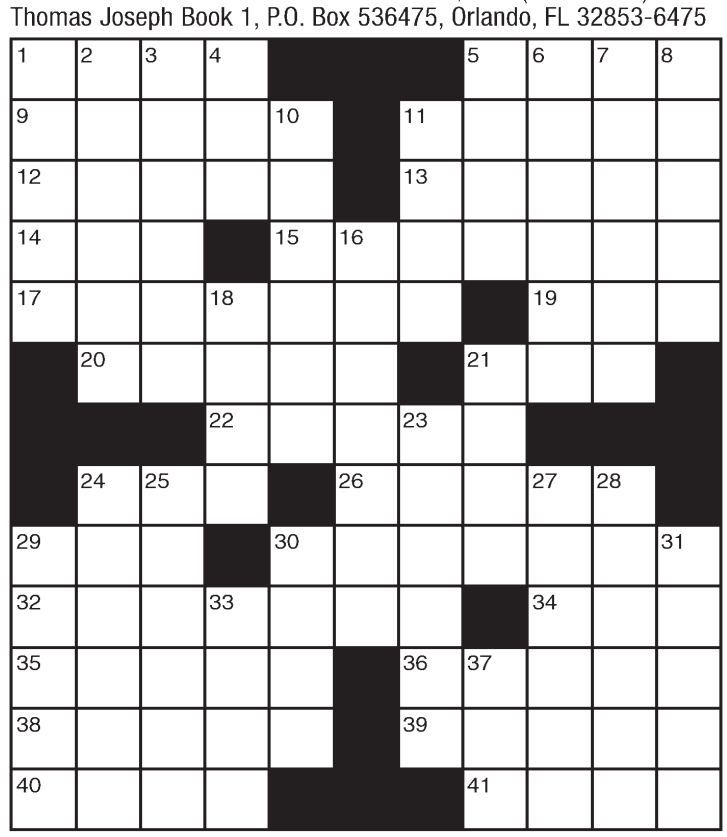
DOWN

1 Hardware item
2 Tara family
3 Entertain
4 Blackjack card
5 "Jeepers!"
6 Sneaker part
7 Designer Ralph
8 Market direction
10 One way to travel
11 Autograph
16 Catalog patron
18 Fling
21 Block-head
23 Gentle reproach
24 TV's Dr. Howser
25 Bobbing goals
27 1981 Ryan O'Neal movie
28 Hot dish holder
29 Swimmer Mark
30 Lunch hour
31 Must have
33 Eccentric one
37 Chemist's place

A	R	O	U	S	E	■	D	U	P	E
B	E	A	N	E	D	■	O	M	A	N
S	P	R	I	N	G	B	O	A	R	D
■	■	■	T	O	Y	E	D	■	■	■
■	S	P	A	R	■	V	A	S	T	■
P	E	A	S	■	F	E	D	O	R	A
I	A	N	■	A	L	L	■	P	O	P
G	L	I	T	Z	Y	■	C	U	T	E
■	S	C	O	T	■	R	A	P	S	■
■	■	■	P	E	C	A	N	■	■	■
S	W	I	T	C	H	B	O	A	R	D
R	A	C	E	■	I	B	E	R	I	A
O	X	E	N	■	P	I	S	T	O	N

Yesterday's answer

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9-9

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SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 2 5 17 25 33 Meganumber: 18 Jackpot: $23M

Fantasy 5: 2 7 10 12 16

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 0 4 0 EVENING: 7 1 5

DAILY DERBY:
1st: 06 Whirl Win
2nd: 11 Money Bags
3rd: 05 California Classic
RACE TIME: 1.45.93

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 at http://www.calottery.com

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ In April 2008, Jeanette Jamieson of Toccoa, Ga., finally paid off her state income tax lien (covering 1998 through 2005) of $45,000, but a year later was indicted for failing to file state tax returns for 2006 and 2007, when her income was at least $188,000. In Jamieson's day job, she runs a tax preparation service. Also, for the past 24 years, until defeated in 2008, she was a member of the Georgia House of Representatives.

■ According to the Detroit Free Press, City Councilwoman JoAnn Watson is a fierce advocate for getting more money to the impoverished city from state and federal grants, but was herself shorting the city treasury. Municipal records revealed that somehow she managed to be billed only $68 a year in property tax for a well-kept home in a neighborhood where her neighbors' property tax ranges from $2,000 to $6,500 annually. She told the newspaper she never realized she was paying too little and assumed the low amount was because of "tornado damage," even though Detroit's last tornado was in 1997.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1948 The Republic Day of Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

1956 Elvis Presley appears on The Ed Sullivan Show for the first time.

1965 The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is established.

1965 Hurricane Betsy makes its second landfall near New Orleans, Louisiana, leaving 76 dead and $1.42 billion ($10–12 billion in 2005 dollars) in damages, becoming the first hurricane to top $1 billion in unadjusted damages.

1966 The National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act is signed into law by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1969 Allegheny Airlines Flight 853 DC-9 collides in flight with a Piper PA-28 and crashes near Fairland, Indiana.

1970 A British airliner is hijacked by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and flown to Dawson's Field in Jordan.

WORD UP!

refulgent \rih-FUL-juhnt\ , adjective: 1. Shining brightly; radiant; brilliant; resplendent.

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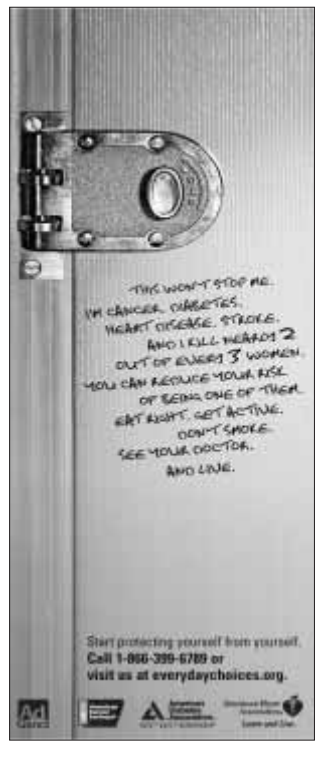
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North of Montana	$2,800,000	$1,549,000
Between Wilshire & Montana	$1,973,500	$922,000
South of Wilshire	$874,500	$749,000
Sunset Park	$1,297,000	$644,250
Ocean Park	$1,598,500	$835,000

Statistics Updated Every Monday

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