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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

Volume 8 Issue 264



LOVELY LOBSTER
SEE PAGE 7

Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

THE SCHOOL, WORK, SCHOOL, WORK ISSUE

Parking to increase Downtown

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL Visitors to Downtown can expect to pay more for parking after the City Council on Tuesday gave a preliminary nod to a series of rate increases that will bring the area's garages closer to competitors like The Grove and Westfield Century City.

The changes, which will be instituted after city staff returns to council with a recommended plan of action, will increase the daily maximum rate from $7 to $9, raise the flat evening fee from $3 to $5 and the monthly parking permits from $82.50 and $121.

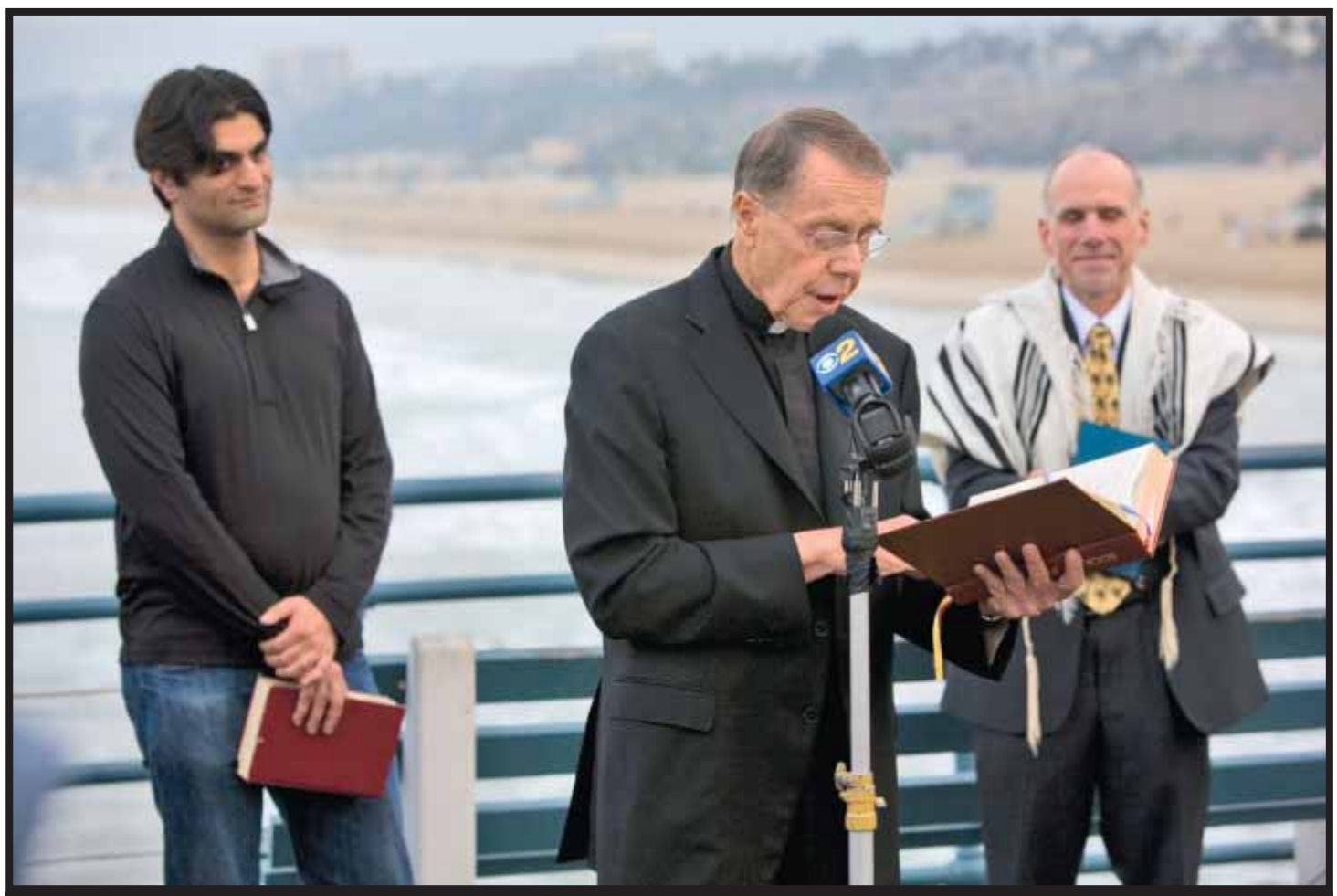
The rate hikes came out of a recent study by Walker Parking Consultants about occupancy at the Downtown garages, finding that there was a significant number of spaces that remained empty even during peak hours because of competition created at the more conveniently-located and cheaper public structures on Second and Fourth streets where the price of parking is substantially under market, leaving visitors to compete for those spots. Meanwhile the more expensive spaces at the private garages and the public structures that are on the outskirts of Downtown, including the Santa Monica Public Library and Civic Center, remain empty.

Even with the new rates, the Downtown shopping district would still fall below prices to park at nearby retail centers on the Westside — $22 maximum for Westfield and $24 at The Grove.

The study was conducted to explore raising rates to fund additional spaces as part of the Downtown Parking Strategy, but concluded that extra revenue is secondary to the money that City Hall and property owners would save if they don't have to acquire land and build new garages. Instead, they need to better manage what exists.

"The areas in high demand are not expensive to park in," Steffen Turoff of Walker Parking Consultants, said. "We

SEE PARKING PAGE 12



A HIGHER POWER

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

Monsignor Lloyd Torgerson (center) of St. Monica stands with Rabbi Neil Comess-Daniels (right) of Beth Shir Sholom and Omar Haroom (left) of the Islamic Center during a multi-denominational blessing Wednesday of the Santa Monica Pier, which celebrated its centennial.

A teacher's first day gets interactive

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SAMOHI It moved clockwise, then counterclockwise and then back right again, a blur of neon 1980s-era oversized shirts, leggings, baggy jeans and tank tops swirling around in circles, laughter and stomping feet filling the muggy room.

At the center of it all is Darryl Hovis, running after students who screech and laugh as they try to avert their new drama teacher, moving clockwise and counterclockwise, depending on the direction in which they're chased.

He tags a student. Now "it," the student proceeds to chase his peers.

Panting and trying to catch his breath, Hovis turns to a group of students who are sitting and observing the game of tag, instructing that they "keep watching their faces."

It's all part of the engaging lesson plan for the newest face at Santa Monica High School who started his first day of classes on Wednesday with little lecturing, some games and a lot of interaction.

"I want to set the tone for the year," the drama and English teacher said on Tuesday. "Usually the first day is a lot of let's do the syllabus and the teacher talking.

"I'm not planning on doing a lot of that tomorrow."

In a year when school districts are tightening their budgets and laying off teachers, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, which is experiencing its share of financial hurdles, welcomed 37 new teachers this year, including 24 at the secondary level, six at the elementary level, and seven support personnel, including counselors, nurses and librarians.

They come from different districts far and near, some with decades of experience, but almost all new to the SMMUSD.

SEE TEACHER PAGE 13

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New guide sheds light on the dangers of diabetic drugs and why doctors prescribe them anyway.

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Thursday, Sept. 10, 2009

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.

Friday, Sept. 11, 2009

Healthy, sexy fun
Isabelle's Dance Academy
1334 Lincoln Blvd.
Getting married? This is the perfect opportunity to learn some sexy moves for your fiancé. Surprise him on wedding night with your most amazing you. Learn all the exotic moves. Pole dancing bachelorette parties are offered on Saturdays at the beautiful dance studio. Have an enjoyable evening you will never forget. Cost depends on the length of the party. Call (310) 613-3869 for more information.

Pet healing
Crescent Bay Park
Intersection of Bichnell and Ocean Avenue, time TBA
Tong Ren is an energy healing modality that is based on acupuncture, but without the needles. Let your pet experience a free healing session. Animals are extremely receptive to energy. Visit www.tongrenla.com for more information and to set up a private session.

Saturday, Sept. 12, 2009

Heal yourself
Sacred Healing Arts Studio
220 Pier Ave., 4:30 p.m. — 6:30 p.m.
Did you know your hands can heal you? Invite your friends and loved ones to experience Pranic Healing. Learn how to use Prana/life force to accelerate your body's ability to heal itself. You will also have the opportunity to experience intense peace, stillness and bliss through the meditation on twin hearts. Cost is free. Call (310) 488-4388 for more information or e-mail intro.pranichealing@yahoo.com.

Yoga in the park
Palisades Park
Ocean Avenue and Palisades Avenue, 10 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.
Come each Saturday and start your weekend off right with an energizing and rejuvenating yoga class in Palisades Park, overlooking the ocean. Beginners and all levels are welcome. All you need to bring is your yoga mat and an open heart. If you've always wanted to try yoga, this class is for you. All classes are run by a suggested donation of $12. Call (310) 560-4317 or e-mail jonathan@alignmentforlife.com 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.





SUMMER IS OVER

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

Santa Monica High School students leave campus after their first day back at school on Wednesday afternoon.

Adjusting isn't easy for empty nesters

MEGAN K. SCOTT
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK Peggy Nardini was so sad when her twins left for college last year that she kept the doors to their rooms closed. When she recently dropped them off for their second year away, she felt the same pull at her heart.

"That initial moment when you give them that hug goodbye, when you walk away from the dorm and back to the car without them — that was awfully hard," said Nardini, 48, a secretary in Madrid, Iowa.

Her son and daughter go to different colleges about two hours away from home. "You want to teach your kids to fly out of the nest, but you don't want them to actually do it."

What can parents do when children leave the nest? The house is suddenly quiet, the vibrancy of children gone. The days seem empty without soccer games, school plays and bake sales. The job you've been doing every day for 18 years is over.

Here's how to cope:

ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS: It's natural to feel a sense of loss, whether you are married, single, a career woman or a stay-at-home mom or dad, said Natalie Caine, founder of Empty Nest Support Services.

"Parents feel a lot of guilt and shame about really crying," she said. "'My child isn't dead, they are not in the service. We're just saying goodbye.' The word to drop is 'just.' Who wouldn't cry when you love someone and have to hug them goodbye at the dorm?"

Besides the closeness and connection with your children, you are also mourning the passing of an era, said Arthur Kovacs, a psychologist in Santa Monica. You are no longer young parents raising kids.

SEE THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY: Set some goals as a couple and as an individual, said Thomas Olkowski, clinical psychologist in Centennial, Colo. Are there things you want to do now that the kids are gone? Places you want to go, things you want to learn? Remember that you are an adult who deserves to have some fun, he said.

Single mom Jackie Silver, 50, of Tampa, Fla., said she is moving to New York. Her son started college this year. "Being an empty nester, the world is my oyster now," said Silver, an anti-aging and beauty expert. "I'm excited to see what's next."

REDISCOVER YOURSELF: You have been defined by the role of parent for so long. Caine suggests asking yourself: Who are you beyond being a mother or a father? Who did you want to be before you got married?

"What naturally had to go dormant to raise a child?" she said. "Let's wake up those dormant parts."

Nardini does scrapbooking and reads a lot more books.

Weather delays backfire plan

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IRWINDALE Unfavorable weather brought further delay Wednesday to plans to set backfires in the battle against the giant 15-day-old wildfire burning in Southern California's Angeles National Forest.

Containment notched upward to 62 percent and there was no increase in size, said Tom De Bellis, a spokesman at the fire command post in Irwindale, about 20 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles.

The fire has burned across 160,357 acres, or 250 square miles, of the San Gabriel Mountains north and east of Los Angeles since it was started by arson along a forest road on Aug. 26.

Nearly 4,500 firefighters and 28 helicopters and airplanes were attacking the blaze.

But since Monday, unpredictable winds have foiled firefighters' plans to use backfires to contain the eastern flank in the San Gabriel Wilderness, an incredibly rugged preserve in the forest where elevations range from 1,600 feet to 8,200 feet and growth ranges from chaparral to pine and fir.

"If there's a window of favorable conditions we'll get it taken care of," De Bellis said.

The weather has included 12 percent to 22 percent relative humidity and winds from the southwest with gusts to 30 mph.

Temperatures in the Los Angeles region have been more moderate this week than in previous days of the fire, when high heat and little air movement clamped a smoky lid on the metropolitan area. Breezes from the ocean have since cleared the air and a deep marine layer has moved well ashore during overnight hours.

Any increase in relative humidity helps, De Bellis said.

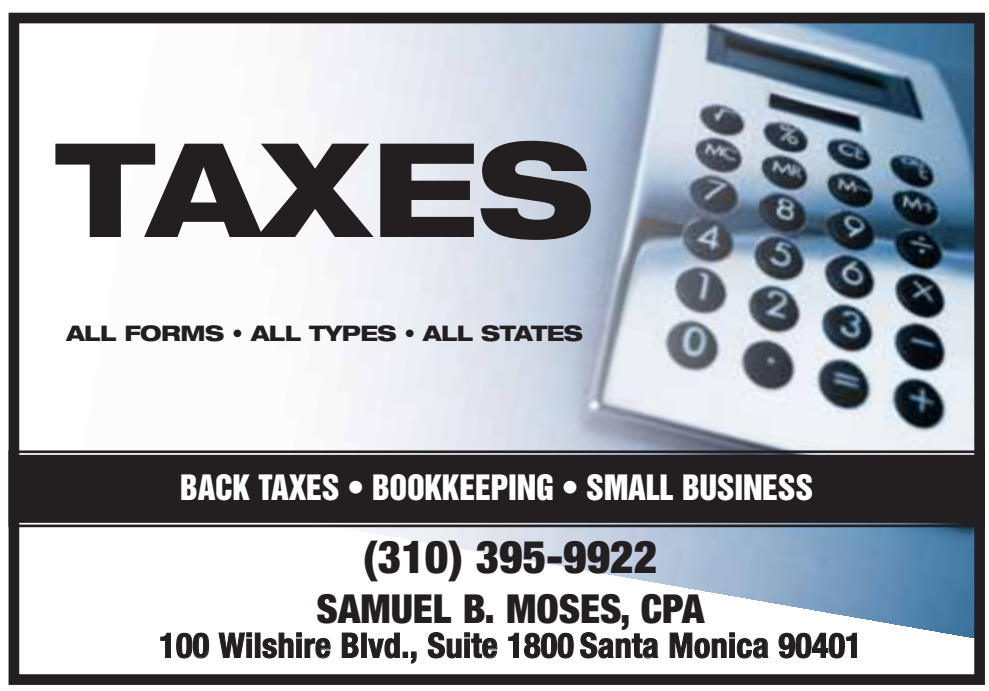
A National Weather Service forecast called for an end to the respite, however.

A high-pressure system was expected to build across Northern California on Thursday and Friday, bringing warmer and drier conditions across Southern California. Inland temperatures will rise into the 90s, with some areas reaching 100. The NWS said some mountain areas will see humidity fall to single digit levels.

The fire command post was moved eastward this week from Los Angeles to Irwindale, a small industrial city closer to the active east end of the blaze.

Neighboring suburbs below the southern face of the San Gabriels were keeping residents aware of the fire's status.





121: one to one ADN: 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 BAK: 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 BWTHDIK: but what the heck do I know C&G: chuckle & grin CID: crying in disgrace CNP: 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 FMTYEWTK: far 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** HHIS: 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 IRC: 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 IYSWIM: 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? L8R: 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 darn thing NIFOC: 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 PMFJIB: pardon me for jumping in but POAHF: 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 SETE: smiling ear to ear SHCOON: shoot hot coffee out of nose SHID: 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 STW: 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 TILII: 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

Every day, children are sexually solicited online.

Ad Council
You don't know what your kids are saying online. Or who they are saying it to. A lot of times neither do they. So get involved. To protect your kid's online life or report an incident, call 1-800-THE LOST or visit cybertipline.com. HDOP: help delete online predators
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN



Life Matters

JoAnne Barge & Katrina Davy Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Easing the pain of separation

DEAR NEW SHRINK,

In just two weeks my second child will be leaving for college. I am excited for this new opportunity and for him but I find myself much more anxious than when my first child went off to college. While he doesn't talk about it often he has said a few times that has mixed emotions about leaving home. He will be on the other side of the country. What can I do to make this an easy transition for him and for me?

Thanks for your help,
Anxious Parent

DEAR ANXIOUS,

Leaving home and starting college is one of the most difficult transitions an adolescent faces, let alone if he is moving across the country to do so. While it is full of exciting new people, opportunities, and experiences, it is also a time of dramatic change for both your son and for your family. I imagine you and your son are both going through a lot of different emotions from anxiety and fear to joy and excitement as you prepare for this next step. Cherish the time you do have together and plan for things to celebrate this new transition in his life and the change your family will go through.

Remember back to when your son first started kindergarten. Although you knew he'd come home at the end of the day there is still a sense of separation that probably created some tension or anxiety. Leaving home for college is a further loosening of those parental ties. It is those same healthy parental ties that allow your child to become an autonomous and self-reliant young adult. Look at your child's first year of college as a transitional period rather than an abrupt ending to living at home. While you will go from seeing your son everyday to seeing him during college breaks, he will still be the strong and resilient child you created.

For most leaving home is a smooth process. Only a very small percentage of adolescents have any major problems adjusting to college and gaining independence. However, it is essential that your child feel as though you understand and accept him for who he is. As a parent, you can do this by remaining available to him when he looks to you for support or comfort. Reinforcing a supportive and healthy relationship during this transition will help your child become more mature, responsible and self-confident.

Studies have found that children who felt closer to their parents actually had an easier adjustment to college. These students demonstrated greater independence and self-reliance. Students with a supportive and secure relationship with their parents are more likely to form healthy friendships, succeed in school, and have greater overall life satisfaction. They are also more likely to express their feelings in an open and honest manner. Likewise, when they are stressed out they look to their parents for support. Know that the process of adjusting to a new place takes time and that there will be days filled with excitement and days filled with apprehension. By providing your son with open space to talk with you about problems or issues you can help him adjust to his new environment.

Although the new schedule and lifestyle of college students may feel like they are distancing themselves from their parents, it is likely that he is just finding new ways to show you how important you are to him. Every phone call, e-mail and letter is just one sign that he is thinking of you. For some families, it is helpful to make a plan for staying in touch before they leave home, but be prepared to revise it once he gains a sense of his daily routine. I have known students who call home on a daily basis just to briefly check in and others that have a longer weekly phone "appointment" with their parents. As a parent it is important for you to acknowledge that you have been spending the last 17 or 18 years to prepare your son for this very time. You may find it helpful to talk with family and friends about your mixed feelings regarding his leaving for college.

Provide the time and space your son needs to prepare for this new stage of his life. There will be times when he needs you to listen and help him through problems and there will be times when he needs you step back and let him grow and learn life's lessons. Allow your son time to adjust to the new requirements of his new environment and college life. While this can be a time of joy and sadness for you as a parent, your child is ready to accept the challenges you have prepared him for.

KATRINA DAVY, M.A., Ed.M, is a professional College and Career Counselor who has worked in university and private settings. She holds degrees from Columbia University and Cornell University. Send your questions to newshrink@gmail.com. All questions are kept anonymous; let us help you with your life matters!

MUSM: miss you so much
BF: boyfriend
OLL: online love
POS: parent over shoulder
WTGP: want to go private?
LMIRL: let's meet in real life
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PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Kevin Herrera
editor@smdp.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Daniel Archuleta
daniela@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER
Melody Hanatani
melodyh@smdp.com

CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER
Brandon Wise
brandonw@smdp.com

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Morgan Genser
news@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Bill Bauer, David Pisarra, Meredith Carroll, Kenny Mack, Jack Neworth, Lloyd Garver, Taylor Van Arsdale, Dane Robert Swanson, Ryan Hyatt, Steve Breen, Elizabeth Brown, Merv Hecht, Ron Scott Smith Mike Heayn, Brian Hepp Mariel Howsepian, Cynthia Citron, Amanda Cushman, Steve Parker and Phyllis Chavez

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Fabian Lewkowicz

NEWS INTERNS
Catherine Cain, Emma Trotter, Carlee Jensen
news@smdp.com

PHOTOGRAPHY INTERNS
Ray Solano
news@smdp.com

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Rob Schwenker
schwenker@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Grace Wang
gracew@smdp.com

Drew Swadling
drews@smdp.com

ADVERTISING TRAFFIC FACILITATOR
Amber Kessee
amberk@smdp.com

OPERATIONS MANAGER
Connie Sommerville
connies@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Darren Ouellette
production@smdp.com

CIRCULATION
Keith Wyatt
Osvaldo Paganini
circulation@smdp.com

Santa Monica Daily Press
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410 Broadway, Suite B
Santa Monica, CA 90401
OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
FAX (310) 576-9913

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Meredith Pro Tem

Meredith C. Carroll
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Trendy today, tired tomorrow

MUCH TO MY DISAPPOINTMENT, IT recently came to my attention that my fourth all-time most expensive purchase (behind my house, car and a little crocodile purse (that was so pricy, I made it promise me all 50 hatchlings from its next litter before I'd seal the deal) has gone out of style.

When I bought the pair of Ferragamo boots at Saks Fifth Avenue seven years ago, I was certain they'd be in vogue forever. At least that's how I justified allowing my credit card to be maxed out by the salesperson, who stubbornly insisted it was necessary if I wanted to actually leave the store with them.

I still have the boots but as far as I can tell, they'll never see daylight again. I didn't realize they were no longer fashionable until the last time I wore them and saw my cousin had on a pair of knee-high boots, too. Hers looked hip. Mine looked like the boot equivalent of a pre-op hip badly in need of replacement.

The thing is, it seems as if very few things are truly classic. Aside from the little black dress, Levi's and Britney Spears' hair extensions, it's a rare commodity that can survive more than a few years in the spotlight.

On the other hand, I'm hardly the foremost expert on anything trendy. I figured when skinny jeans came back in, the people who wore them did so only with the intention of being ironic since nobody has ever looked good in them.

Side ponytails and off the shoulder sweatshirts were the next to re-emerge on the fashion scene, at which time I scoffed, "What's next, the acid washed denim vest?" (Turns out that particular bad 1980s memory is making a comeback this fall.)

A diet rich in carbs was in forever until it was out for good. Now with the rising (re-) popularity of Julia Child and the Food Network, carbs (and butter) are back with a vengeance. It seems as if the only eating trend never to go out of style is starvation.

Last month my husband and I watched the Harrison Ford and Julia Ormond remake of the 1954 Humphrey Bogart and Audrey Hepburn classic, "Sabrina."

"This one is almost as good as the original," I raved to him. "She's the epitome of timeless elegance in it. She just exudes European sophistication."

About 30 minutes into the film he hit the pause button. "Let me get this straight. She leaves New York, goes to France and becomes a lesbian, right?"

Truth be told, I hadn't watched it since it was released in 1995. Sure enough, 14 years later, with the shoulder pads firmly ensconced in the boxy blazer, balloon-like trousers and a nearly full-blown mullet, indeed, Julia Ormond's Sabrina could have been mistaken for Paula Poundstone or Joan Jett.

When "Friends" made its debut in 1994, Jennifer Aniston's "Rachel" haircut was all the rage (it even has its own Wikipedia entry, but then again, so does the basset hound from "The Dukes of Hazzard"). Bouncy, square layered hairstyles sprung up on women everywhere. Looking back, it was an awful cut that flattered no one (including Jennifer Aniston), but at the time, it seemed like the the search for the perfect cut had ended. (That is, until Kate Gosselin came along.)

Another classic that seemed as if it would never fade away is the sex tape. Time was a Z-list celebrity could get it on with some other Z-lister and capture it on a home video camera, which one or both of them would promptly lose "by accident" at the airport or have "stolen" from their house or hotel. The sex tape guaranteed their Q-rating would shoot up to the next level, affording them such lofty career moves as introducing an eponymous cheap clothing or perfume line, a supporting role in a B movie, a Playboy pictorial or a spot on "Dancing With the Stars."

But nowadays nobody pays attention to sex tapes because they're become de rigueur. No Hollywood movie or television premiere is complete without word leaking that a sex tape with one of the actors has been discovered just prior to its debut. Not having one (or not going to court to get an injunction against the release of one) is career suicide.

I'm hopeful if I hold onto my Ferragamo boots long enough I'll be able to wear them again someday when the fashion tides change. And I vow to never to cut carbs out of my diet so I can always be with, and/or ahead of at least one trend.

E-mail questions or comments to meredithccarroll@hotmail.com.

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The Q Line

Rockets red glare

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

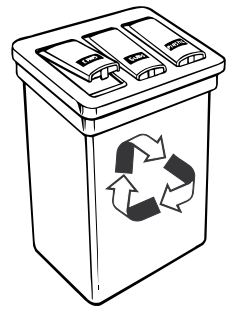
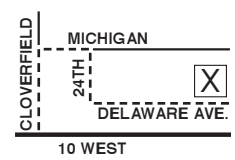
So this week's Q-Line question asks:

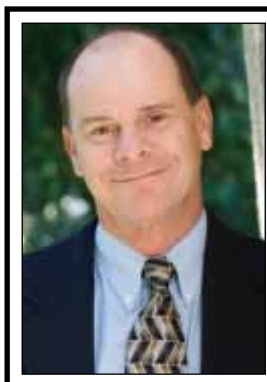
Do you think that the fireworks will hurt the bay or do you believe that it is harmless fun?

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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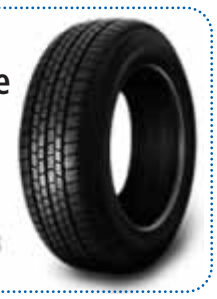
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Grocery aisle relief as food prices fall

EMILY FREDRIX & SARAH SKIDMORE
AP Food Industry Writers

Grocery shoppers are finally seeing some reprieve from last year's steep price increases.

Food prices are dropping on some key items as retailers slash prices to better compete and food makers do more promotions and pass along savings from lower ingredient and gasoline costs.

It's welcome relief for American consumers who are looking to save money as they cope with stagnant incomes, job loss and economic uncertainty.

Prices for dairy, meat, fruits, vegetables and bread have all fallen.

A Labor Department price index of food sold to be eaten at home fell for the seventh time in eight months in July. The index, which is part of the Consumer Price Index, fell 0.5 percent in the most recent month and is down 0.9 percent in the past 12 months.

In fact, overall food prices — what's sold in groceries and in restaurants — haven't risen on a monthly basis since November 2008.

Still, that doesn't make up for the surge in food prices from last year, when costs for ingredients like wheat and corn and fuel costs for transportation soared to record highs. Food makers raised their prices and some even shrank package sizes to protect their profits. CPI's food-at-home index finished last year up 6.7 percent, so the less than 1 percent drop so far this year doesn't erase that.

But ingredient costs for major food makers, including Heinz, Kraft and Hormel, are down about 28 percent on average as of Sept. 1, from the same time last year, according to Jonathan Feeney, food analyst for Janney Montgomery Scott.

That means the food industry now has room to give back some of those price hikes — and feed the frugal consumer who is using more coupons, buying more store brands and switching to discounters to stretch a budget.

Consumers' demand to save money is pressuring retailers and manufacturers to cut everyday prices and boost promotions throughout their stores.

"The consumer really is very much in charge of the effort," said Herb Walter, a partner with PricewaterhouseCoopers. "They're picking the price points they want and when they want it."

Safeway Inc. recently announced lower prices on milk, eggs, cheese and other basic items. Whole Foods Market Inc. says low prices on produce, such as organic berries, has meant significant savings for shoppers.

And Costco Wholesale Corp., which aims to be the first of its peers to lower prices and last to raise them, says prices are down on items from paper towels to prime-cut meat.

Costco's Chief Financial Officer Richard Gallanti said the company made some drastic moves in pricing, including reducing the price of its rotisserie chicken by $1. The company sells just under 1 million of these chickens a week, so it hurt margins.

But Costco determined it would be worth it in the long run, and shoppers gobbled up the deal. The company said it helped solidify its position as a value-focused company, which is so important to consumers.

"I think across the board, people are spending less and spending more consciously," Galanti said.

The factors that drive what consumers actually pay can vary wildly.

Weather, demand, oil prices and market competition all play a role. And each food category has its own economics of supply and demand. Falling prices for gasoline and transportation plus consumer resistance to price increases have helped drive this latest spiral downward.

April Schreiner, a mother of two, said she has noticed a difference in her grocery bill.

During a vist to a Portland, Ore., Fred Meyer store she paid 88 cents for a half-gallon of milk, which she rarely sees for less than $1. Butter and other staples also were unusually low-priced, she said.

"Everything spiked for awhile with gas prices, it hurt to go to the store," she said. "Now there is some relief. I see it. My budget sees it."

New Web site details food safety

HENRY C. JACKSON
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON The Obama administration is rolling out a new Web site designed to streamline food safety information for consumers.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced the new Web site — www.foodsafety.gov — on Wednesday during the Consumer Federation of America's food policy conference. The site will put food-related information from all federal agencies in one place, including recall and contamination alerts and tips on how to safely handle food.

The Web site is a joint effort between HHS, the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration.

Sebelius says the site would help consumers who have been worried about product recalls.

The consumer Web site is the second federal initiative announced in as many days on food safety. On Tuesday, the FDA announced more stringent rules for reporting potential contaminations and the creation of a new electronic database for manufacturers to use to report food safety issues.

Under the new rules, producers are required to report products that could harm consumers within 24 hours.

The law creating the database was passed in 2007, after Congress criticized the FDA for its handling of safety problems involving a variety of food and drugs.

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Restaurant Snapshot

Merv Hecht

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Lobster rolls done right at Tomadachi

GENERAL COMMENT: I'M A BIG FAN of lobster rolls in general. Not only do I like to eat them, but I'm always interested in the surprise of what comes out of the kitchen — sometimes it's like a sushi roll with fried chucks of lobster inside; sometimes it's like a California roll, with avocado and other veggies. One of the very best I've had is this one at Tomadachi. Yes, it's east of the I-10 Freeway, but I voyage for lobster rolls.

WHERE: 10975 Weyburn Ave., L.A. 90024 — the north end of Westwood Village. Telephone (310) 824-8805.

WHEN: approximately 11:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., sometimes later.

BEST DISHES: There's a full Japanese menu. In addition to the baked lobster roll I'm particularly fond of the Citrus Garlic Ponzu Albacore.

BEST FEATURE: Good food at incredibly reasonable prices. The baked lobster roll is $9.95 and plenty for two people. The roll comes with the typical "secret sauce" on top, but this one is unusually rich and flavorful. The Albacore is $13. Dinners are from $8.50 to $15.50. Lunches are about $9. And they have one of the widest selection of rolls in town.

WORST FEATURE: Westwood Village is not known for easy parking.

WHAT TO DRINK: I almost always drink a beer in this kind of a restaurant. But you might want to try the "Sake Bomb Package" — a large beer and small sake, for $9.

BOTTOM LINE: Be sure to order the baked lobster roll — the regular one ($7.95) is more ordinary. And try out a few other dishes — this is one of the more imaginative Japanese menus in town.

MERV HECHT, the food and wine critic for the Santa Monica Daily Press, is a wine buyer and consultant to a number of national and international food and wine companies. He can be reached at mervynhecht@yahoo.com.

A fresh take on a familiar food

MICHELE KAYAL
For The Associated Press

For anyone who's ever bemoaned the state of the chain restaurant chimichanga, behold, salvation.

Marcela Valladolid's "Fresh Mexico" makes a clean break with the bready, cheesey, beany Mexican food to which Americans have become accustomed. It offers instead a modern cuisine bursting with fresh vegetables, gentle queso fresco and a half-dozen different chilies, both fresh and ground. Oysters, mangos, crab and even prunes make an appearance.

But don't be fooled by the range of ingredients. Valladolid is judicious in her demands, and seems to keep her promise of "authentic flavors without the fuss." Individual recipes require relatively few ingredients, shun complicated techniques and promise bold flavors conjured with elements like anchos and chipotles, lemon, lime, tomatillos, cilantro, rosemary and oregano.

Valladolid immediately demotes the burrito to mere appetizer status, offering a duck-stuffed version as delicate finger food. Mascarpone-stuffed Squash Blossoms with Raspberry Vinaigrette provide a complex alternative to cheese-drenched nachos. And that giant taco shell filled with iceberg lettuce? Valladolid's idea of salad includes White Beans and Grilled Octopus spiked with scallions and lime.

Valladolid grew up in Tijuana on the U.S.-Mexico border, so it's not a stretch to think of her as an ambassador between the two cultures — and of her new book as a kind of passport.

BOOK: Marcela Valladolid's "Fresh Mexico," Clarkson Potter, 2009

JALAPENO ROAST CHICKEN WITH BABY BROCCOLI

Start to finish: 2 hours (30 minutes active)
Servings: 4
1/2 cup packed fresh oregano leaves
1 shallot
4 cloves garlic
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 jalapeno chili, stemmed and seeded
Salt and ground black pepper
5 1/2-pound whole chicken
1 1/2 cups chicken broth, or more if needed
3/4 cup dry white wine
2 pounds broccolini

Position a rack in the center of the oven. Heat the oven to 400 F.

In the food processor, combine the oregano, shallot, garlic, butter, 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, the jalapeno, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper. Process to form a coarse paste.

Pat the chicken dry, then place it, breast-side up, on a rack in a large roasting pan. Using your fingers, loosen the skin from the breast, legs and thighs without detaching it. Spread half of the jalapeno paste under the skin.

Tie the chicken legs together with kitchen string. Spread the remaining jalapeno paste over the outside of the chicken. Pour the chicken broth and wine into the roasting pan.

Roast the chicken for 1 hour, basting with the pan juices every 20 minutes and adding more broth if it begins to dry out.

Remove the roasting pan from the oven. Arrange the broccolini snugly around the chicken on the rack. Drizzle the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil over the broccolini, then sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Return the chicken to the oven, basting occasionally with the pan juices, until a meat thermometer inserted at the innermost part of the thigh (but not touching the bone) registers 160 F, or about 30 minutes.

(Recipe from Marcela Valladolid's "Fresh Mexico," Clarkson Potter, 2009)



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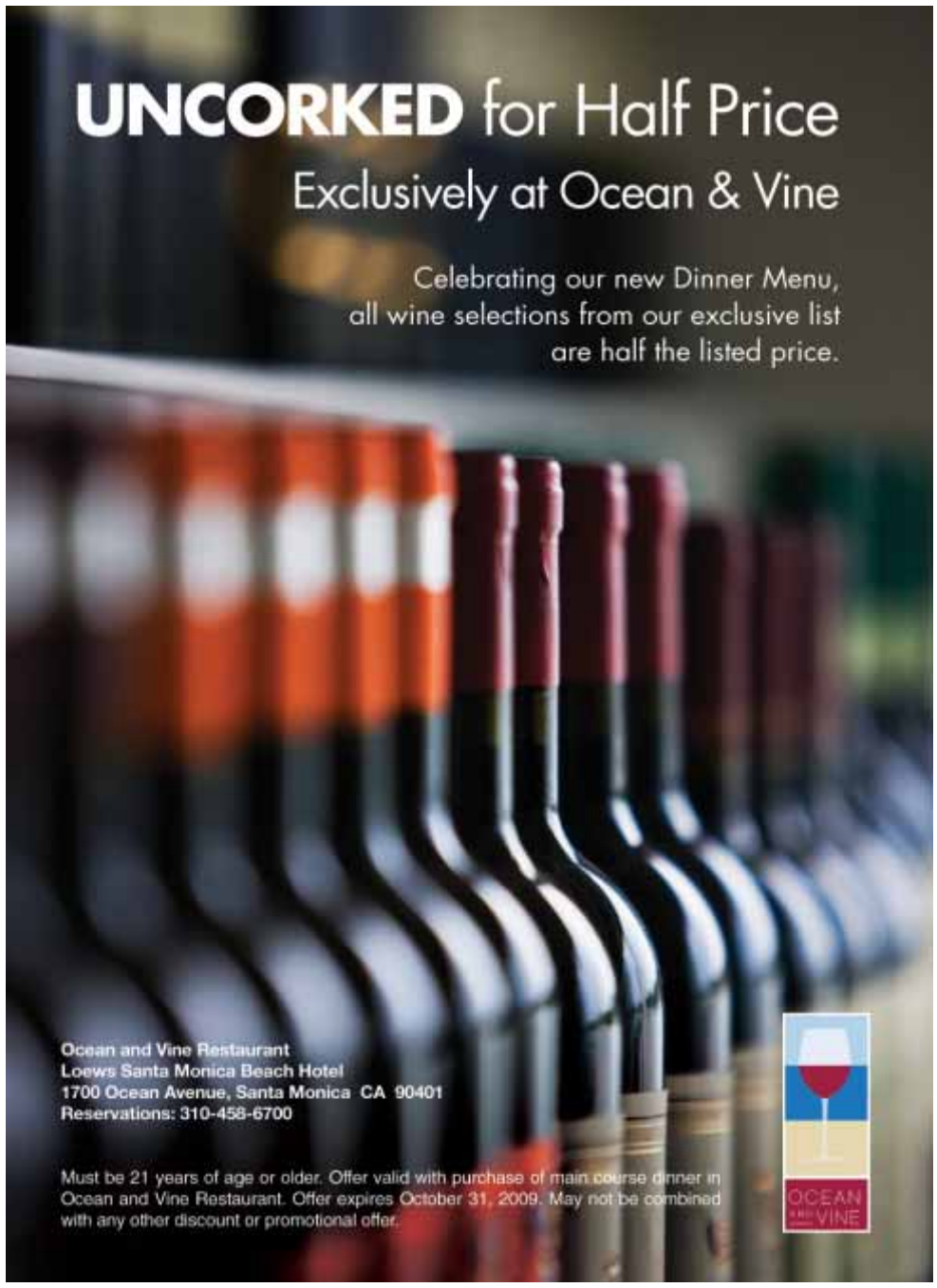
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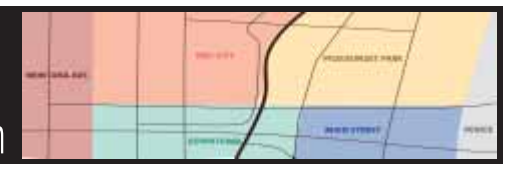
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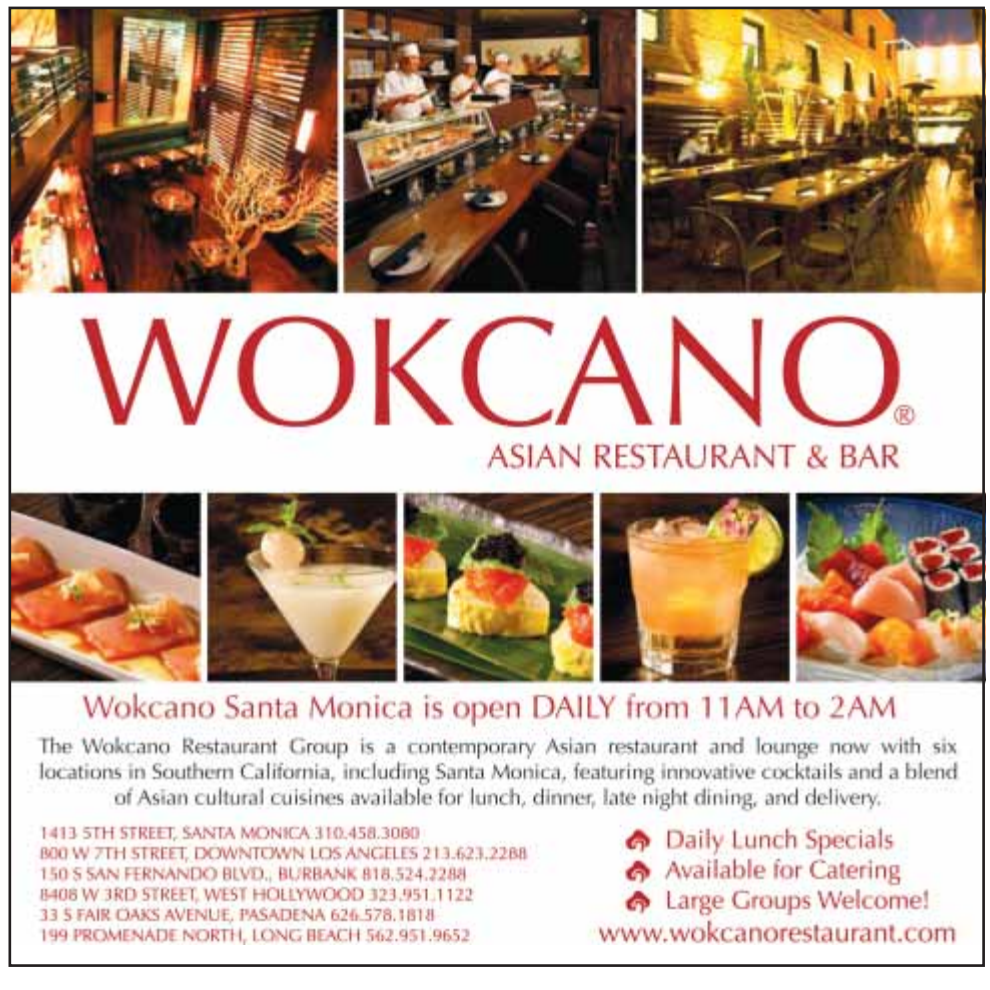
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U.S. agrees to fight pirates in Somalia

JOHN HEILPRIN
Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS The United States and four other nations signed onto an international plan to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia, committing Wednesday to playing a leadership role in protecting one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

The so-called "New York Declaration" signed by U.S. Deputy Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo and her counterparts from Britain, Cyprus, Japan and Singapore is an attempt to pool resources and agree on the best ways of deterring the Somali pirates who prey on vessels passing between Europe and Asia.

"We realize that the fight against piracy in the Horn of Africa region cannot be solved entirely at sea," DiCarlo said. Other needed measures, she said, involve nations adopting legal mechanisms to prosecute suspected pirates and Somalia improving its capacity to police its own territory.

Though it is a nonbinding political document, proponents say it will commit ship registry nations to adopt "best management practices" for ship security such as increased lookouts, raised ladders and emergency fire pumps readied to repel boarders.

It was first proposed in May by Panama, the Bahamas, Liberia and the Marshall Islands, four of the world's biggest ship registries. Those nations signed the declaration previously.

In Washington, Andrew Shapiro, the assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, told the ComDef 2009 defense policy conference on Wednesday that the document represents what Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has called "a 21st century solution to the 17th century problem" of piracy.

Clinton said during a visit in August to Nairobi, Kenya, that the U.S. would provide more aid for Somalia, which is home to terrorists, drug smugglers and Islamist extremists.

By signing, the United States says the Coast Guard and U.S. shipping companies will continue adopting measures to protect themselves against piracy that comply with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code.

A group of almost 40 nations and international organizations including the U.S., China, Britain and France planned to gather Thursday at U.N. headquarters in New York for their fourth major session on deterring Somali piracy.

They are meeting to discuss how best to coordinate international naval patrols and other security measures and how to discourage the secretive payments to pirates who often demand — and receive — multimillion dollar ransoms.

Another item drawing attention is cooperation on interdiction and prosecution of suspected pirates.

Somalia's lawless coastline and 18-year civil war makes it a haven for pirates. Sailors typically are released from their captured vessels only after payment of a ransom. Somali pirates captured more than 100 ships last year, and attacks have increased this year.

DiCarlo said there have been 138 pirate attacks off the Horn of Africa so far this year, of which 33 have succeeded. But the safety practices that the U.S. and other nations are promoting "contributed to preventing many of the other criminal assaults from succeeding," she said.

Mutilated body found in Mexico is Texas man

ALICIA A. CALDWELL
Associated Press Writer

EL PASO, Texas A body found with its severed arms crossed and placed on its chest in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, was identified by authorities Wednesday as a Texas man kidnapped from his home.

Sergio Saucedo, 30, was kidnapped from his Horizon City house outside El Paso last Thursday. His mutilated body was found Tuesday in the Mexican border city across the Rio Grande, said El Paso County Sheriff's spokesman Jesse Tovar.

"It's apparent that the spillover has occurred," Tovar said of the drug violence plaguing Juarez and much of Mexico.

Saucedo, who has a long criminal record including convictions for drug possession and money laundering, was kidnapped by three men, investigators said. His wife told deputies the men broke into the house, bound Saucedo with duct tape and carried him out the back door to the driveway.

Witnesses reported hearing at least one gun shot and said Saucedo struggled with his attackers as he yelled for help.

Saucedo's body was found dumped in the street late Tuesday with his severed arms placed on top of a cardboard sign on his chest, said Arturo Sandoval, spokesman for a regional prosecutor's office in Juarez. He said the killers stuffed plastic bags into Saucedo's mouth and taped his eyes.

The sign was immediately removed and authorities have not revealed what it said. Drug cartels often leave messages with victims they kill.

Ciudad Juarez is Mexico's deadliest city with more than 1,300 drug-related killings this year.

El Paso investigators believe Saucedo was killed in Mexico, but a specific motive for the kidnapping and killing remained unclear Wednesday, Tovar said.

Court records show Saucedo, who has used various aliases, had been convicted of money laundering, possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, trafficking marijuana and other drugs in Texas and Oklahoma. Tovar said investigators were not aware of a specific connection to any particular drug gang in Mexico.

Saucedo's case is among a handful of drug-related kidnappings reported to federal authorities in recent years, said Andrea Simmons, an FBI spokeswoman in El Paso. While none Simmons knew of had previously ended so violently, Saucedo's kidnapping isn't the first sign of cartel violence in El Paso.

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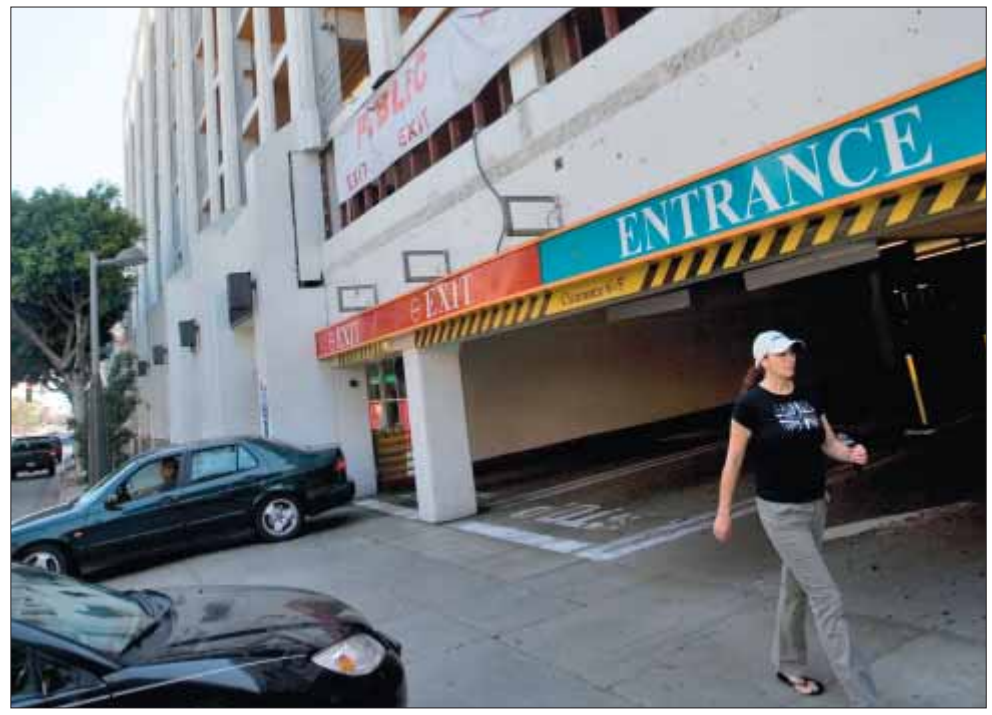
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SANTA MONICA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE









Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

POPULAR SPOT: **Parking structure 5 on Fourth Street will soon cost more to park in.**

Parking will leave bigger dents on visitors' wallets

FROM **PARKING** PAGE 1

thought by tweaking that you could earn some revenue but also really fix a lot of what's ailing the parking in terms of all the impact to parking."

During peak hours, the garages in Downtown as a whole are about 65 percent occupied. Structures 1-6 and 9, which line Second and Fourth streets and are the most conveniently located to the Third Street Promenade, are about 95 percent full during those times.

Turoff pointed out that the garages that are the least conveniently located — the Santa Monica Public Library and Civic Center Garage — are also more expensive.

The plan also includes raising meter rates from $1 to $1.50 an hour.

"We want to turn those spaces," Turoff said.

The plan also includes reducing the two free hours of parking at Structures 1-6 and 9 to only one, charging $1 for the second hour.

The current policy has allowed employees to park in the structure for free, moving their cars every two hours and causing congestion.

"Any busy area where you have two-hour parking on the street you will see the employee shuffle, the two-hour dance where every two hours people move their cars in order to take advantage of that convenience," Turoff said.

The consultant also suggested that City Hall facilitate agreements with private parking structures and businesses to allow Downtown employees to park at a special rate.

The parking rates were last adjusted in 1997.

"Parking is real estate — it's real estate in terms of the building, it's real estate in terms of the land and it's real estate in terms of the area," Turoff said. "Santa Monica is a desirable place.

"That's one reason why you have a parking problem here."

Councilman Bob Holbrook, who was the lone person to vote against the recommendations, said he had some reservations about raising the evening rate, believing that it would deter visitors from coming to Santa Monica.

"I'm just saying that for the vast majority of people I see coming to Santa Monica, parking does make a difference," he said.

Michael Cahn, a local bicycle advocate, asked that city officials also study the impact that the recommendations will have on cyclists, specifically the potentially dangerous effect of increasing the meter parking rates.

> **"THE AREAS IN HIGH DEMAND ARE NOT EXPENSIVE TO PARK IN."**
>
> **Steffen Turoff**
> Walker Parking Consultants

"The result of the proposal is cars moving in and out many more times during the day from these on-street parking spaces," he said. "These are the spaces that the cyclists are cycling along.

"These are the spaces where the doors are opening and the cyclists need to be aware of these doors opening."

The proposal also received some concern from local business, Easton Gym, which is located on the promenade.

Oren Grossi, who works at the gym, said that the parking plan would discourage residents from using the structures.

He added that the increased hikes would also burden retail employees.

"I think people don't realize how little retail employees make," he said. "They usually don't work full shifts and you might get them to park somewhere if you offer free or really cheap parking at the library or Civic Center.

"Those people are struggling and asking them to pay for their $8 or $9 an hour job is asking a lot."

Councilmembers expressed support for the plan but remained concerned about the timeline of when the new rates would be in effect.

"These are some phenomenal ideas," Councilman Richard Bloom said. "The last thing we want to do is move forward on this and take an extraordinarily long time to implement it."

melodyh@smdp.com

New teachers begin first day of school with students

FROM TEACHER PAGE 1

NEW YEAR, NEW BEGINNINGS

The bell rang and in an instant, the hallways that remained silent throughout the past three months swarmed with colorful backpacks and the chatter of summer vacation, students hugging each other, one girl remarking out loud "we're seniors," as she embraces her friends.

> **I WANT TO LEARN ABOUT THEM AS PEOPLE AND AS STUDENTS, BUT ALSO SET THE TONE THAT I AM VERY SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT I DO."**
>
> **Darryl Hovis**
> New Samohi teacher

But all was still quiet inside the English Building's Humanities Center Theater where Hovis, deep in thought, stood at a podium reading over some material, his students filing into the large black box space, taking their seats that were positioned into a U-formation.

The bell rings again and Hovis lifts the podium and brings it closer to the students as he greets them.

"How are you?" one student responds a bit loudly, smirking.

The students come from all grade levels, the majority of which are sophomores and juniors with a few freshmen and seniors sprinkled in. Some sit straight up, appearing eager to begin their introduction to drama, while others sit slouched back, seemingly disinterested with their arms crossed.

But the disinterested become interested once the lesson begins.

Hovis pushes the podium back and begins circling the room, asking how many students are nervous, watching as several hands move up slowly.

He then walks to the first student and begins counting them off in pairs, asking all of the "ones" to stand up in the middle of the room. The last student in the group to say "not it," becomes the first to chase their peers in a game of tag.

Five minutes later, the nervous energy is let off in the room. Students laughing as they chase one another.

"Acting for me can be a very nervous process because you are laying yourself out there," Hovis said. "That's why we do this game, to get rid of that nervousness."

The games and the interaction are all part of Hovis' teaching approach, one that he calls physical in that the goal is for the student to become comfortable with themselves on stage.

"I am very much about truth and honesty on the stage and the work," he said.

The 44-year-old Huntington Beach resident and married father of three children began his career in 1988 at the Calvary Chapel High School in Costa Mesa, teaching theater, economics, government, Algebra II and TV production in the span of one year.

He left the following year to teach at Whittier High School's Music Department for two years, going to Edison High School thereafter to run the theater program. In 1993, Hovis began a 14-year teaching career at Culver City High School where he co-founded the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts in 1998.

In 2007, he became a theater and vocal music teacher at University High School in Irvine but left two years later, wanting to leave the conservative restrictions of the school for what he sees as the creative flexibility and diversity of the Westside.

"I think this community fits in more with my style of teaching of theater and definitely will be more supportive of the work that I do," he said.

After the game of tag is over, Hovis walks to the white board and writes, "acting is living truthfully under imaginary circumstances," asking his students to repeat the statement several times.

It's time to begin game number two.

The previously-designated ones and twos are asked to line up and face each other, asked to carefully observe each other's ensembles. The students are then instructed to turn away from each other and change something physically about themselves before turning back, some tying their hair back, others lowering a sock.

They quiz their partners on what's different.

FIRST DAY JITTERS

While he's taught for two decades, Hovis admits to first day jitters, having just gone through a major change by going to a different school just two years ago.

But there's also excitement in not just starting a new job, but also growing along with his students.

The goal for the school year is to teach students that theater isn't just entertainment, it's provocative.

Entertainment is a byproduct.

"There are so many avenues to teach students how theater can be a political tool, a social tool," he said. "It's not just dancing and singing, but really about conveying a message, raising questions about our society and how we can make it better."

The students giggle as they try to guess what's different with their partners. Hovis instructs the pupils to turn around once again and change four things. They gasp.

But shortly after the bell rings and the students begin filing out for their next class. Smiling, Hovis waves his students good-bye.

"All right, my friends, I'll see you tomorrow."

He prepares for his next class — junior English — where Hovis will face an entirely different set of students. There's more interactive teaching involved as he will pair students again and ask them to interview each other. Another ice breaker.

"I want to learn about them as people and as students, but also set the tone that I am very serious about what I do," he said.

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Recession forcing retailers to be inventive, price savvy

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK The Great Recession and Americans' retreat into thriftiness are teaching retailers a new lesson: How to survive when consumers are focused on "needs" rather than "wants."

For years, shoppers splurged on everything from $5 lattes to $200 jeans, and retailers responded by opening more stores and offering more choices. Now, beset by high unemployment and limited access to credit, shoppers are limiting most of their purchases only to essentials or the best deals.

Retailers' first response to the sudden and sharp pullback in spending last fall was to offer deep discounts and more coupons to keep merchandise moving. But to survive over the long haul, the watchword for stores and product makers is "small."

They're stocking shelves with slimmed-down milk jugs and half-sized pies. They're charging less for stripped-down products such as blouses with less-frilly designs and detergents with less powerful cleaning action. Brands are disappearing, too, including Kraft's Handi-Snacks pudding. Some stores are being reduced in size, if they're not shut down entirely.

The changes are likely to last for years. Even when the economy improves, it will take years before the debts that piled up during the decade-long shopping spree are paid off. Americans are also getting used to their newly adopted frugal habits of saving more and spending less.

"I don't think we are going to go back to business as usual," said Steve Sadove, chairman and CEO of Saks Inc., operator of Saks Fifth Avenue.

As companies woo buyers, shoppers are finding they're in control. And they're driving hard bargains.

Renee Bello, a real estate broker in Sandwich, Mass., is enjoying the bombardment of store coupons, more lower-priced products and better quality in store-label merchandise, particularly at grocery chains.

"I definitely feel I have power," says Bello, 54, who has been able to grab coveted brands and high-quality groceries even though she's cut her spending in half because of economic uncertainty.

For retailers, the changes need not be devastating. In fact, those that survive will be leaner and more efficient.

"There's nothing like a good old-fashioned recession to make you run a better business," J. Crew Group Chairman and CEO Millard Drexler said recently.

LESS IS MORE

To stay in business, stores find they can't take big chances with what they put on the shelves, and how much they stock of each item.

Merchants are now keeping less stock on hand and delivering goods into the store more frequently to keep stores looking fresh, instead of having items sitting on the shelves for months. Retail executives hope that strategy will help cut down on aggressive discounting.

The long-term goal is for merchants to carry 1Ω months' worth of inventory, compared with 3Ω months in the past, says retail consultant Burt P. Flickinger III.

Apparel companies are focusing on the most popular colors instead of oddball hues. For example, Nicole Miller eliminated olive green in its prom dress collection. And plain styles were prevalent at last week's apparel industry trade show in Las Vegas, says David Wolfe, creative director of The Doneger Group, which advises stores on apparel buying.

Shoppers won't buy tops or dresses with seasonal designs because they want to wear the clothes year round, he says.

THE POWER OF LOWER PRICES

Manufacturers and retailers that held firm on pricing a year ago to try to protect their brands have felt the sting.

Consumer products giant Procter & Gamble Co., whose revenue fell 11 percent in the latest quarter as it remained steadfast on pricing for its powerhouse brands, is experimenting with price cuts. In a departure from the company's carefully cultivated premium image, P&G is even testing a lower-cost version of its signature Tide laundry detergent. Tide Basic sells for about 20 percent less than the regular powder form and lacks the latest cleaning ingredients.

Abercrombie & Fitch, long known as the go-to store for pricey teen fashion, was hammered by revenue declines of nearly 30 percent when it refused to budge on prices. It relented this summer.

And Saks has had to shift toward the lowest and mid-tier price points at its stores. More men's dress shirts range from $95 to $200 and fewer are priced at $300 or more.

Gucci and other European designer brands would have bristled a year ago about lowering prices. Now, they are working with Saks and other luxury stores to reduce prices on some goods.

Price cuts are painful, so manufacturers and retailers maneuver to avoid them by identifying goods with strong demand. If they must cut prices, they cut costs, too, to maintain profit margins.

"This is a transition period for the world," says Bud Konheim, president of designer clothing maker Nicole Miller. "We have our antennae up."

Retailers are also throwing out their devotion to premium brands. From Best Buy's private-label televisions to Kroger's pizzas to house-brand men's shirts and sports coats at Saks Fifth Avenue, stores are putting more stock in store-label products, which cost less for consumers and tend to be more profitable.

This year, 37.5 percent of business is expected to be from store brands, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation. Two years ago, that figure was 26 percent. The share could go to 50 percent in the next few years, says C. Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group.

Jimmy Franco, a 46-year-old book publicist from New York, has switched to store-label products like mouthwash and aspirin and praises their quality compared with brand names. "I really don't see any difference."

MARKETING VALUE

Consumers' focus on value and saving money has shaped how products are marketed as well.

Sellers are becoming more sympathetic to consumers' woes in their ad campaigns, a big shift from past recessions in which they focused on price-cutting.

In the past, "retailers had a hard time acknowledging (in ads) when things were bad," says Ellen Davis, a spokesman at NRF. They feared it would make their business worse.

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Obama urges Congress to act on heath care reform

DAVID ESPO
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON President Barack Obama summoned Congress to join in a "season for action" on health care Wednesday night, urging lawmakers to set aside partisan gamesmanship in favor of drafting legislation that benefits millions who have insurance and many more without it.

"I am not the first president to take up this cause, but I am determined to be the last," Obama said in excerpts released by the White House in advance of a prime-time speech to Congress and a public grown increasingly skeptical of his plans.

Obama's speech came at the end of a summer of setbacks and as the president and his allies in Congress readied an autumn campaign to enact his top domestic priority.

In a fresh sign of urgency, Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., announced that his Senate Finance Committee would meet in two weeks to begin drafting legislation, whether or not a handful of Democrats and Republicans have come to an agreement. The panel is the last of five to act in Congress, and while the outcome is uncertain, it is the only one where bipartisanship has been given a chance to flourish.

In the excerpts, Obama said there is widespread agreement on about 80 percent of what must be included in legislation. Any yet, he said, "instead of honest debate, we have seen scare tactics" and ideological warfare that offers no hope for compromise.

"Well, the time for bickering is over. The time for games has passed. Now is the season for action," he said.

Obama said the legislation he seeks would guarantee insurance to consumers, regardless of pre-existing medical conditions, as well as other protections. "As soon as I sign this bill, it will be against the law for insurance companies to drop your coverage when you get sick or water it down when you need it most," he added in the excerpts released in advance.

The president also assured those with insurance that "nothing in this plan will require you or your employer to change the coverage or the doctor you have."

Obama also said the legislation he seeks would help those who lack insurance to afford it. "These are not primarily people on welfare," he said in a line in the excerpts that appeared aimed at easing concerns among working-class voters. "These are middle-class Americans."

The president also said he wants legislation that "will slow the growth of health care costs for our families."

Obama said a collective failure" to meet the challenge of overhauling health care for decades has "led us to a breaking point."

While Democrats command strong majorities in both the House and Senate, neither chamber has acted on Obama's top domestic priority, missing numerous deadlines leaders had set for themselves.

In a reflection of the stakes, White House aides mustered all the traditional pomp they could for a president who took office vowing to change Washington. The setting was a joint session of Congress, and the president was assured of the customary packed house and loud applause when he walked down the center aisle of the House chamber to begin his speech.

Additionally, the White House invited as guests men and women who have suffered from high costs and insurance practices, seating them near first lady Michelle Obama.

Obama intends to follow up the speech with an appearance Saturday in Minneapolis, the White House announced.

One senior administration official said the president would make the case for including a provision for the government to sell insurance in competition with private industry, but was not expected to insist it be included in any legislation he signs into law.

The so-called government option has emerged as one of the most contentious issues in the monthslong debate over health care, with liberal Democrats supporting it and many moderates inside the party opposed. An early draft of Baucus' plan calls for an alternative consisting of nonprofit co-ops. Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine, the Republican who seems most inclined to cross party lines on the issue, favors a different approach, consisting of a standby in which the government could sell insurance if competition fails to emerge in individual states.

The speech took place after weeks of halting progress and highly publicized setbacks for Obama and his allies on the issue of health care. After internal divisions prevented House Democrats from passing legislation in July, numerous members of the rank and file were confronted in town-hall style meetings with highly vocal critics.

There were charges — launched by former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin and debunked by nonpartisan organizations — that the legislation included "death panels" whose purpose was to facilitate the end of life for the elderly under Medicare.

At the same time, polling has shown a deterioration in support for the president, and an AP-GfK poll hours before the speech showed public disapproval of Obama's handling of health care has jumped to 52 percent, an increase of 9 percentage points since July.

Democrats had yet another change to factor into their plans. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's death this summer robbed them not only of the experience of one of the Senate's most accomplished legislators, but also of their 60th vote in the Senate. That meant they needed at least one Republican vote to choke off any filibuster. Alternatively, they could try a more partisan approach, drafting a bill that could not be filibustered, but also shorn of some of the provisions they want.

Republicans greeted Obama's appearance politely but coolly.

"When it comes to health care, Americans don't want government to tear down the house we have," said Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

"They want it to repair the one we've got. That means sensible, step-by-step reforms, not more trillion-dollar grand schemes."

Obama has said repeatedly that agreement exists on about 80 percent of the issues involved in drafting legislation, and the White House and Baucus have lined up numerous outside interests to help shepherd a bill to passage.

The nation's drugmakers and hospitals have already made deals to help pay a cost of the legislation. The American Medical Association also is in support, in large measure because the bills would avert planned reductions of 20 percent in their Medicare fees.

AARP, which advocates for those aged 50 and over, is supports the approach Obama and his congressional allies have taken.

Dems cite health care in Kennedy-successor debate

STEVE LEBLANC
Associated Press Writer

BOSTON The governor should be allowed to name an interim replacement to the late Edward Kennedy's vacant Senate seat because it would help ensure health care overhaul legislation gets passed, Democrats told a packed Statehouse public hearing Wednesday.

Before he died last month at age 77 of brain cancer, Kennedy had asked lawmakers to allow Gov. Deval Patrick, a Democrat, to name a temporary senator to fill the seat until voters choose a permanent replacement in a Jan. 19 special election.

Senate Democrats, including U.S. Sen. John Kerry, support the idea, in part to improve the chances of passing President Barack Obama's health care overhaul plan. Naming an interim replacement to Kennedy's seat would give Democrats a critical 60 votes in the Senate.

Kerry, testifying before state lawmakers and hundreds of supporters and critics, invoked the memory of Kennedy, who had said that expanding health care to all Americans was his life's work in the Senate.

"We are closer than ever to providing health care coverage to every man, woman and child in America," Kerry told lawmakers. "None of these big challenges will be decided by huge margins. ... These are times again when every vote will count."

An interim senator could keep Kennedy's staff and respond to requests from citizens, supporters say. Without a replacement, Kennedy's staff must shut down his office within 60 days of his death.

"It is absolutely essential that Massachusetts not go underrepresented," said U.S. Rep. William Delahunt, D-Mass. "All hands on deck."

In written testimony, Patrick, who is recuperating from hip replacement surgery, said he supports both the special election and the interim appointment. He said if he is allowed to make the appointment, he would ensure the appointee wouldn't run in the special election.

Patrick pointed to the anticipated Senate debate on Obama's health care initiative, "framed in large measure around the bipartisan model we developed here in Massachusetts," as a key reason to appoint an interim successor.

The entire, all-Democratic Massachusetts congressional delegation endorsed the change in a letter to the two chairmen of the state Elections Law Committee, which held the hearing.

Republicans, vastly outnumbered in heavily Democratic Massachusetts, called the proposal a power grab.

"This is really a political power play by the Democrats to ensure there is a filibuster-proof majority in the U.S. Senate to go forward with a very unpopular health care plan," said Massachusetts Republican Party Chairwoman Jennifer Nassour.

Republicans sent out e-mails urging "activists, concerned citizens and defenders of democracy" to attend the hearing. They also started an online petition and urged supporters to call radio talk show hosts in the Boston area.

The GOP points out that just five years ago, when Kerry was the Democratic nominee for president, the Democratic-controlled state House and Senate changed the law to block then-Gov. Mitt Romney from naming a fellow Republican to fill Kerry's seat if he became president. The changes also bar temporary appointments.

"It's a bad idea. It's clearly something that's meant for political gain by one party. You live by the sword, you die by the sword," said state Sen. Scott Brown, R-Wrentham, who is considering running for the seat. "You can't tell me that someone who's in that position temporarily isn't going to be actively campaigning for some person."

Kerry said the situation in 2004 was different. If he had been elected president, there would have been time to have a special election before any substantive issues came up before the Senate, unlike the crowded fall calendar.

Lawmakers seek answers about slaying suspect's DNA information

TODD RICHMOND
Associated Press Writer

MADISON, Wis. Legislators demanded to know Wednesday why a DNA sample that allegedly links a man to nine homicides never made it never made it to crime analysts and what state police and prison officials are doing to make sure swabs from other convicts make it to the lab.

Police arrested Walter Ellis on Saturday after they obtained DNA from his toothbrush that they claim ties him to a string of cold-case homicides in Milwaukee from 1986 to 2007. He made his initial court appearance Wednesday and was ordered held on a $1 million bond on two counts of first-degree intentional homicide.

Ellis's attorney, Alejandro Lockwood, could not immediately be reached for comment. Prosecutors said more charges could come Thursday.

Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn has suggested that if investigators had Ellis' DNA profile sooner they might have identified him and prevented at least one death.

The state Department of Corrections said it obtained a sample from Ellis while he was in prison in February 2001. The agency was supposed to send the sample to the Justice Department's crime lab for a DNA profile. Wisconsin law requires all convicted felons to give samples for DNA testing.

But Justice Department officials said Tuesday that they have no records showing they ever received Ellis' sample.

State Sen. Spencer Coggs, D-Milwaukee, said he has asked the state Justice Department to review records from the first quarter of 2001 to see if other convicts' samples were recorded or lost. Rep. Leon Young, D-Milwaukee, said he also planned to ask the Corrections department for more information on what happened.

"It's very unfortunate," said Young, a former Milwaukee police officer. "This person could have been put away a long time ago."

State Rep. Peter Barca, D-Kenosha, co-chair of the legislative Joint Audit Committee, said he and Rep. Joe Parisi, D-Madison, chairman of the Assembly's corrections committee, plan to send a letter to both agencies asking how they will improve communication and ensure DNA gets to the correct agency as quickly as possible.

"Obviously, you've got a very serious coordination and communication issue that needs to be addressed immediately," Barca said.

Gary Hamblin, administrator of the Justice Department's Division of Law Enforcement Services, said that agency has started its own investigation to determine what happened to Ellis' sample and determine if there is a larger problem with getting convicts' samples.

"We have no indication that's happening at the present time," Hamblin said. "(But) sometimes it's difficult to see what isn't taking place. ... Right now it's premature to say where the system was broken down."

Gov. Jim Doyle was the attorney general in 2001. His office referred questions to Corrections spokesman John Dipko. Dipko said in an e-mail the agency would "do what it can to assist the Department of Justice in its review."

Ellis went to prison in August 1998 after pleading no contest to second-degree reckless injury. Prosecutors said he hit his ex-girlfriend with a hammer. He was released in 2001 and got off state supervision in 2003.

Investigators allege Ellis' DNA was found on the bodies of nine women age 16 to 41 who were found slain on Milwaukee's north side. They believe eight of the women were prostitutes and one was a runaway.

Authorities think the prostitutes were strangled.

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Veterans group plans to do yard work at National Mall

SARAH KARUSH
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON Frustrated with poor maintenance by the federal government, the group that built the Vietnam War memorial is aiming to improve its little corner of the National Mall by taking over lawn care for 13.5 acres marred by weeds, moss and brown spots.

Officials with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund said they were moved to act after reading an Associated Press investigative story on the lack of federal money for the mall, despite needed urgent repairs to the area known as "America's front yard."

The AP's story in July analyzed congressional spending since 2005 and found the mall has been at a disadvantage in competing for millions of dollars in extra funds doled out by lawmakers, compared with sites that are represented by powerful members of Congress. The entire mall, covering some 650 acres, is in the District of Columbia, which has no vote in the House or Senate.

Lawmakers frequently direct money to projects back home, but even as the problems became obvious at the National Mall — including the seawall visibly sinking in front of Thomas Jefferson's memorial — Congress killed a bill last year that would have funded repairs. In January, lawmakers nixed $200 million in proposed stimulus funding for the mall.

The private Vietnam veterans group plans to spend $96,000 in the coming months to repair a broken irrigation system and provide weed treatment, fertilization, aeration and other work. The group, which is working with the National Park Service to make sure the improvements adhere to the agency's specifications, intends to continue maintaining the grass in the long term, Fund President Jan C. Scruggs told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Repairs to the irrigation system are scheduled to begin Thursday.

One prominent Vietnam veteran involved with the fund, Texas businessman Peter Holt, who owns the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, remembers noticing problems when he spoke at a Memorial Day event at the monument this year. It had been years since he had visited the wall.

"I made just a passing comment: 'Gee, it doesn't look too good around here,'" said Holt, who chairs the fund's campaign to raise money for a planned education center to be built on the mall. "I thought maybe it was because of a drought."

Scruggs said he and Holt realized they needed to act if they wanted the grass to be improved any time soon.

"He said, 'Look, why don't we fix our corner? That way we can set the standard for the mall,'" Scruggs said. "Americans — we don't wait for the government to take care of things."

Hot Springs to be featured first on 'America the Beautiful' quarters

CHUCK BARTELS
AP Business Writer

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. Quarters dropped into fountains at Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas next year could feature the park itself.

The U.S. Mint announced Wednesday that the first in its "America the Beautiful" series of quarters will feature Hot Springs, which was set aside for preservation by the federal government in 1832. Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming will be featured second.

Other sites to be honored in the 56-coin series include Washington's Olympic Mountains, the tallgrass prairie of Kansas and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Each state and territory will be featured in the series, which will end with Alabama's Tuskegee Airmen memorial in early 2021.

Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry in April had recommended the Oklahoma City National Memorial for his state but Mint officials instead selected the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. The Mint said the site of the 1995 federal building bombing is owned by a private foundation and not a federal agency.

South Dakota's coin will feature Mount Rushmore, which also is depicted on the back of quarters created as part of the 50-state series from 1999-2008 that made, well, a mint.

New coins will be issued in the order Congress approved the national sites. While Yellowstone is considered the first national park, the federal government set aside Hot Springs four decades earlier so it will be featured first.

New coins will be released about every 10 weeks beginning in early 2010. A specific release date hasn't been determined, nor have designs been unveiled, U.S. Mint spokeswoman Carolyn Fields said Wednesday.

Hot Springs promoter Steve Arrison, the head of the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau, sees the coins as another marketing tool for the city of 40,000.

"The only thing that would make it better would be if we could put our Web site on the quarter," Arrison said.

Congress designated what is now Hot Springs National Park as a federal reservation in 1832 to preserve its thermal waters for public benefit. The National Park Service was established in 1916, and Hot Springs Reservation became Hot Springs National Park in 1921. In places, the city and park are one. Nature trails snake through mountains rising next to the city, and bathhouses line one side of Central Avenue.

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Weddings abound in Vegas on quirky date

OSKAR GARCIA
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS Two years after Las Vegas chapels hit the wedding date jackpot with lucky sevens, it's all eyes on the nines for 9-9-09.

Wedding officials in Sin City and elsewhere staged a marathon set of nuptials and vow renewals on Wednesday during what was anticipated to be of the busiest days of the year — the quirky date of Sept. 9, 2009, or 9-9-09.

The New York City Clerk's office said 200 couples had wed by midday at its refurbished marriage bureau — about four times the Wednesday average. Nine couples in Hollywood spent 99 cents each to get married at a 99 Cents Only store on Sunset Boulevard.

Jessica Skrutvold of Las Vegas said she and her husband-to-be Chad Lyons were expecting nine guests for their 9 p.m. wedding, which coincidentally celebrates her favorite number.

"The easiest day for my poor memory to remember was 9-9-09, and we've been doing everything last-minute ever since," said the 31-year-old who works for a local insurance agency. "It was easy, and both of us can remember it and never forget."

Skrutvold called to book a chapel in March and found the only open slots were for 8:30 or 9 that night.

"We took the most obvious choice," she said.

Gambling on nines wasn't limited to casino baccarat tables in Las Vegas, where players try to beat the house by getting as close as possible to a sum of nine using cards.

The Virginia Lottery reported that the combinations 9-9-9, 9-9-9-9 and 9-9-0-9 all sold out for the midday Pick 3 and Pick 4 drawings. Pick 3 combinations are capped at 8 million, Pick 4 at 6 million. The lottery would have lost money on those games had those numbers been drawn, but they weren't. Pick 3 was closest at 9-0-0; Pick 4 contained no nines.

The consecutive nines turned out to be really lucky for Corey Aldridge and Gwendolyn Whitmore, one of the couples who won a 99 Cents Only Stores contest for their five-minute ceremony.

The couple, who originally wanted to wed last Valentine's Day, were returning from a trip to Texas last year when their car collided with an 18-wheel tractor-trailer rig.

"We just got done with our medical issues and our insurance hasn't picked up because I was self-employed, so our finances have been dwindling," Aldridge said as he waited for Whitmore above the store's loading dock.

There, behind a partition, his future wife and eight other brides ranging in age from their 20s to their 60s were putting finishing touches on their hair and makeup.

On the Las Vegas Strip, Tony Thompson and his new wife Lisa of New York exchanged vows before life-sized figurines of Justin Timberlake and Jennifer Lopez during a short ceremony at 9:09 a.m. at the Madame Tussauds wax museum on the Las Vegas Strip. They were joined near a small stage by four couples renewing vows and an officiant — nine people total.

"It seems like the whole town is celebrating, like we walked into this big celebration," Tony Thompson, 53, said. "It's like totally out of the ordinary, everybody's getting married."

Chapels were steadily booked throughout the day from the Strip to downtown. Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman planned to renew vows with his wife Carolyn in an evening ceremony conducted by an Elvis Presley impersonator at the Fremont Street Experience.

"I'm hoping that my wife will show up," said Goodman, who married his wife on June 6, 1962 — 6-6-62.

"9-9-09 is so easy that even the biggest of dummies will be able to remember it," he said. "This is Las Vegas' way of saying that we are the wedding capital of the world."

Another 99 couples were waiting until 9:09 p.m. for a shared ceremony in the observation deck at the Stratosphere Tower. Each paid $99 for their wedding package.

Spokeswoman Whitney Lloyd said Chapel of the Flowers booked 70 ceremonies for Wednesday, compared with 12 on Sept. 9 last year. She said three 9 a.m. slots were booked at least a year ago — an eternity by Las Vegas standards.

"Grooms love it, because they'll definitely remember their wedding day," Lloyd said.

Employees normally off on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the marriage services division of the Clark County clerk's office were called in to help quickly distribute licenses.

Marriage Services Supervisor Mariah Consiglieri said 637 licenses were issued on Tuesday, a boost from the average of 262 per day but far from the 1,623 issued on Aug. 6, 2007, in anticipation of 7-7-07. Another 975 licenses were issued on Aug. 7 that year — a Saturday.

Weddings have declined steadily in Las Vegas since 2004, when roughly 128,000 couples were married. About 96,000 couples were married in Las Vegas last year, and officials expect fewer than that for 2009.

New York City Clerk Mike McSweeney said Wednesday was the busiest day since the city opened a refurbished marriage bureau with fewer lines, more room to take photographs and new wedding chapels with gauzy curtains and walls painted in muted tones.

"People are very excited to have a ceremony today," McSweeney said. "A lot of people who are here believe it's good luck to have their ceremony today, for longevity."

In Burlington, Vt., Magic Hat Brewery — makers of an ale called No. 9 — seized on the date for an open-air party on the city's Church Street Marketplace pedestrian mall.

The planned "No.9tacular" was to include drink specials, dance show, laser light show, karaoke and a Guitar Hero Challenge — all leading up to a 9 p.m. toast, according to "Nine-ologist" Krissy Leonard, a spokeswoman for the brewer.

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SURF REPORT

Surf Conditions **Water Temp:** 70°

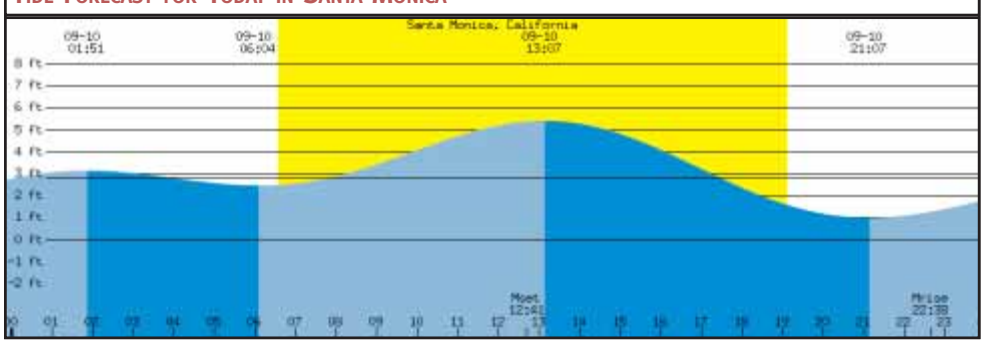
Swell Forecast

Looks smaller, perhaps knee high most everywhere, with maybe some waist high pluses at south facing breaks.

Long Range Synopsis

May see a slight increase in NW ground swell, but it is a bit too early to call that today.

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
Los Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Seguit 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 zone)	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.

NFL

Roethlisberger's attorney rejects settlement offer

SANDRA CHEREB
Associated Press Writer

CARSON CITY, Nev. The attorney for Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger on Wednesday rejected a settlement offer by a Nevada woman who claims the Super Bowl champion sexually assaulted her at a Lake Tahoe hotel-casino.

The rejection was in response to a letter, filed last week as part of a motion from Cal Dunlap, the woman's Reno attorney, that said she would be willing to settle the civil matter against Roethlisberger if he admits to raping her, apologizes and gives $100,000 to the Committee to Aid Abused Women, a non-profit agency in Reno that helps victims of domestic violence.

In a written statement, Roethlisberger attorney David Cornwell called the woman's offer "bizarre" and an "insult to women who have legitimately suffered from sexual misconduct."

Last month, they demanded she drop the lawsuit and write a letter of apology to the NFL star. In return, Roethlisberger would release both the woman and Dunlap from any legal liability stemming from the "conspiracy to extort and defame" him.

Those demands have been rejected by the woman, Dunlap said in his letter. It added that her settlement offer was made to negate claims by the quarterback's attorneys that she filed her suit to get money from him.

Dunlap said the woman is a sexual assault victim who "was violated in every sense of the term."

Dunlap refused further comment when contacted Wednesday.

Cornwell countered that the woman was given the option for a "graceful exit."

"We will continue to press our defenses and claims and pursue our application for sanctions," he said.

In other developments, the case in Washoe District Court has been reassigned to another judge, the third since the case was filed. District Judge Brent Adams will consider pending motions on whether the case should be moved to Douglas County. Depending on that ruling, he also would decide various other motions, including whether the case should proceed or be dismissed, attorneys said.

No hearings have been scheduled.

The woman, a VIP casino hostess, filed the civil suit against Roethlisberger in July, claiming the Super Bowl-winning quarterback raped her in 2008 in a hotel penthouse across the street from a golf course where he was playing in a celebrity tournament.

In other documents filed late Tuesday, Dunlap said the woman was stationed as a concierge on the 17th floor on July 11, 2008, when Roethlisberger returned to his room with a young woman. About 20 minutes later, he walked that woman to the elevator, then stopped by the concierge desk and chatted with staff, including his accuser.

A few minutes later, the documents said, Roethlisberger reportedly called the woman and asked her if she could fix his television. The woman said the television was working properly and that Roethlisberger then blocked her from leaving and assaulted her.

In the same filing, Dunlap also said the woman told her roommate and others of the encounter soon after the alleged attack and in the months that followed.

She did not report the incident to police, something advocates for rape victims say is not unusual.

Roethlisberger has denied the allegations.

Dunlap late Tuesday also countered suggestions by Roethlisberger's lawyers that the woman is mentally ill.

"It is in fact their slanderous allegations and total trashing of every aspect of her life, relevant or not, that adds to her distress," he wrote. "But, despite this horrible barrage of unwarranted defamation, this woman has held her head high, has gone into the den of the defendants and has continued to do her job without fail under the most egregious circumstances possible.

"This is something that a mentally ill person would certainly not be able to carry off."

The civil suit also names eight Harrah's officials as defendants, alleging they orchestrated a cover-up of the incident. The suit says she suffered depression, was hospitalized and forced to take leave from her job in the year after the incident.

In previous court documents, the attorney for hotel security chief Guy Hyder and other Harrah's defendants said the woman kept him "informed with running e-mail commentary about her plan to have sex with Roethlisberger."

"Hyder did not report it to management, since having consensual sex with a hotel patron, while on the job, would get her fired," the motion said.

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MOVIE TIMES

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(323) 466-FILM

Legend of Pancho Barnes and the Happy Bottom Riding Club (NR)
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

Just hang with pals, Sagittarius

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ If you find a situation confusing or difficult to resolve in the a.m., try again in the afternoon. You could find that at that point people can hear you more clearly. Ideas are exchanged without "I am right" type of thinking. Tonight: At a favorite haunt.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Use the morning for any matter that is close to your heart. You could be surprised by what you hear, but you now know your direction. Tonight: Your treat.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You could be sluggish this morning. Use this time to get your ducks in a row. You'll want to act when you sense the timing is right. Don't allow anyone to distract you from a prime commitment. Others clearly enjoy your company. Tonight: Forget being alone.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Get as much done as possible in the morning, when success seems to follow you. In the afternoon, you could learn a lot more through the power of observation than through asking. Tonight: Vanish ...

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ If you are overwhelmed, how about letting go of one project or delegating it? Is this one project worth the feelings you have? Your immediate circle has suggestions as well. They don't like seeing you when you feel this way. Accept your limitations. Tonight: Around people.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Keep reaching past your immediate thinking. Everyone restricts his or her thinking; why would you be any different? In order to start seeing more options, detach first. When one is vested, it is more difficult. Be ready for unexpected demands from a boss or older friend. Tonight: Could be late.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Someone keeps interfering with your morning, if not in reality, then in your thoughts. You could be surprised by the impact this person has on your life. Take off in the afternoon, or escape into your mind or on the computer. Tonight: Anything becomes possible.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Invest more in several people who you enjoy working with. They might have very different ideas, but together you each become stronger. You also make sense to each other. Don't underestimate the importance of a personal issue. Tonight: Go with a suggestion.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Plug into work, and you might be surprised by what happens if you just relax and do what you must. Others come to you wanting feedback. On some level a person might be trying to engage you in a power play. Walk away. Tonight: Just hang with friends.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Focus your creativity, and you'll get much more out of any interaction or issue. Others don't understand why you succeed so far beyond their level of expectation. You have an unusual mix of creativity, pragmatism and efficiency. Tonight: Squeeze in some exercise.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Though you are slow to start, you probably will be the first to the finish line. You have many good ideas, which others receive with openness. Tonight: Start acting like it is the weekend.

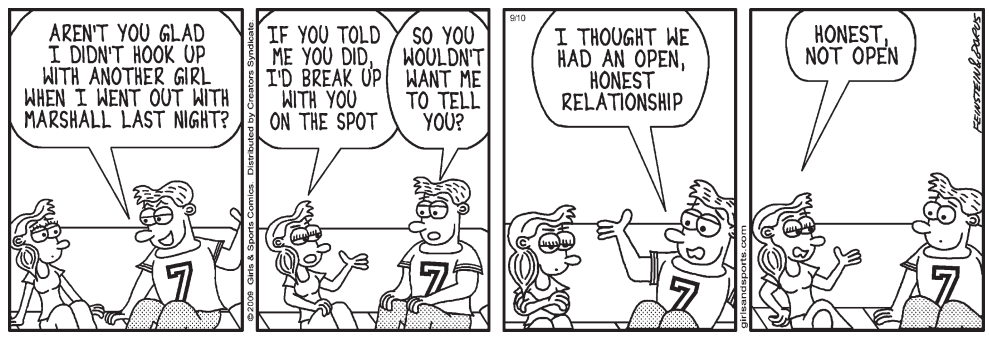
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Use the morning to the max. Others appear to be more favorably disposed in the a.m. You could wonder where a project ends and begins. It really does seem endless. Ask someone to give you feedback. Call it an early day if possible. Tonight: Mosey on home.

Happy birthday

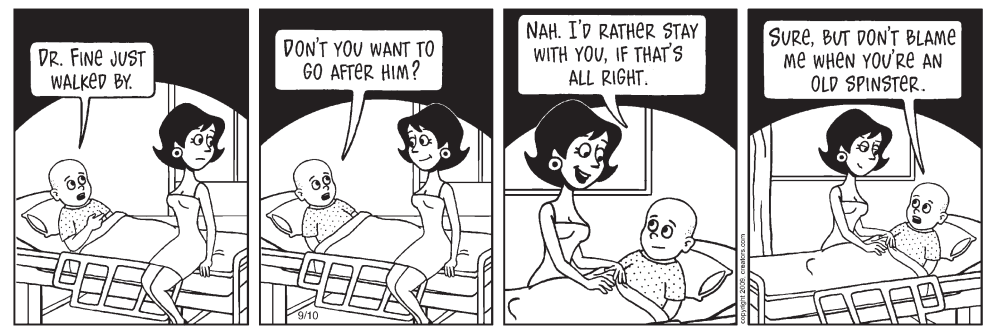
This year, you make a difference in your immediate world, especially professionally. You command a lot of respect because of your ideas teamed with your efficiency, making you a sure-bet winner. You will notice a real loosening up of feelings and attitudes on your part after October. You often take the lead in groups. If you are single, meeting people isn't the issue, but meeting the right person could be. Opportunities come forward in 2010. If you are attached, you'll discover the power of working on the bond and not allowing life to interfere. GEMINI respects you.

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

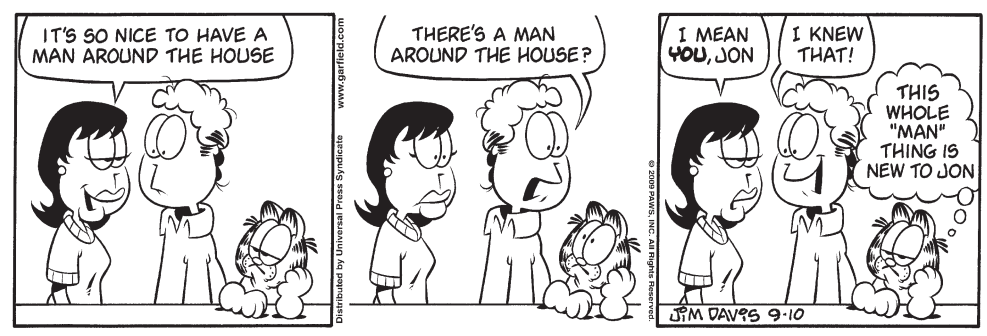
Girls and Sports
By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



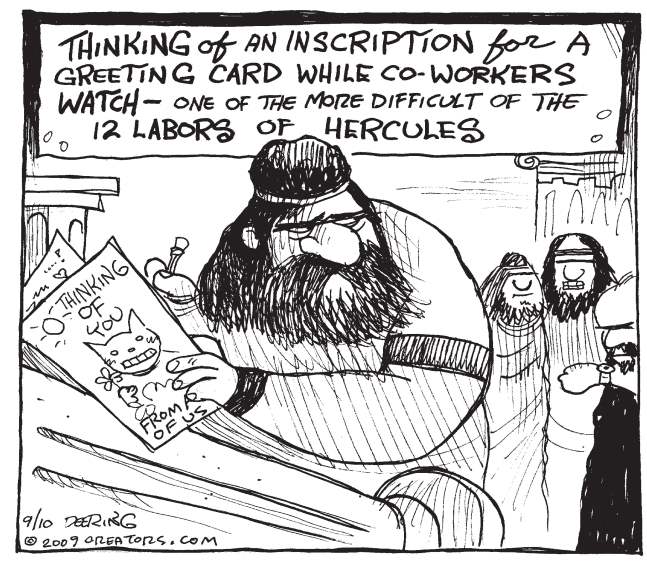
The Meaning of Lila
By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



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 ★★★

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

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

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

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Maya Sugarman *news@smdp.com*

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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Head-quarters
5 Singer Nellie
10 Pipe bends
11 Be frugal
12 Resting on
13 Promise
14 "How can I be so unlucky?"
16 "Don't mention it"
20 Wall makers
23 Old card game
24 Tibia's end
25 Plains grazers
27 — nutshell
28 TV accessory
29 "Silence!"
32 "I don't find that amusing"
36 Maine city
39 Honolulu do
40 How some drugs are taken
41 Go under
42 High points
43 Cockpit guesses

DOWN

1 Noggin
2 Sax sort
3 Coin's place
4 Talk of Toledo
5 Sasha's sister
6 News item
7 Went ahead
8 Pro-gramming problem
9 Zoo favorite
11 Petty quarrels
15 Vanished
17 To boot
18 Pirate's take
19 Single
20 Big pipe
21 — Domini
22 Card game for three
25 Com-plaint
26 Sudden urge
28 Hear again
30 Polygon corner
31 Places for laps
33 When la lune is out
34 "Peter Pan" pooch
35 Laughs, slangily
36 Frilly wrap
37 Bow's shape
38 Saigon setting

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

Yesterday's answer

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

9-10

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

Fantasy 5: 3 15 19 23 24

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 8 9 6 EVENING: 7 3 2

DAILY DERBY: 1st: 10 Solid Gold 2nd: 02 Lucky Star 3rd: 09 Winning Spirit RACE TIME: 1.48.07

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ (1) Cussing Is Good for You: A study by psychology researchers at Britain's Keele University in July showed that people who swear in response to a danger are better able to endure pain than those who use milder language. (2) Urinate in the Shower to Save the Forests: The Brazilian environmental group SOS Mata Atlantica this summer began encouraging people to urinate in the shower to save the Atlantic Rainforest (one avoided flush per day saving 1,100 gallons of water a year).

■ Theresa Winters, 36, who lives in Luton, England, with her unemployed boyfriend, Toney Housden, is pregnant (and chain-smoking) with her 14th child (his 12th) and remains totally dependent on public assistance, which officials estimate has totaled "millions" of pounds. Social workers recently removed the kids still living with her (five were born with disabilities), and Winters defiantly told The Sun in July that, if they also take away her 14th in November, she and Housden will just keep making more until she gets one to keep. Housden said he would "love" to go to work, but only for "the right reasons" (specifically, not, he said, to earn money for family counseling because that is the government's responsibility).

TODAY IN HISTORY

1419 John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy is assassinated by adherents of the Dauphin, the future Charles VII of France.

1608 John Smith is elected council president of Jamestown, Virginia.

1776 American Revolutionary War: Nathan Hale volunteers to spy for the Continental Army.

1798 At the Battle of St. George's Caye, British Honduras defeats Spain.

1813 The United States defeats the British Fleet at the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

1823 Simón Bolívar is named President of Peru.

WORD UP!

malapropism \mal-uh-PROP-iz-uhm\ , noun: 1. An act or habit of misusing words ridiculously, esp. by the confusion of words that are similar in sound.
2.An example of such misuse.

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Beautiful N. of Wilshire Townhome
Open Sunday, Setember 13th 2-5



Open Sunday, Sept. 13th 2-5 pm

1209 Arizona Avenue #2
2 Bed, 2 Bath
$979,000
Dramatic, Remodeled Penthouse
Open Sunday, Setember 13th 2-5



201 Ocean Avenue #1009P
2 Bed, 2.5 Bath
$1,499,000
Condo w/ Ocean/Mountain Views
Call for Appointment



123 Georgina Avenue #2
2 Bed, 2.5 Bath
$1,349,000
North of Montana Updated Townhouse
Call for Appointment



275 Monte Grigio Drive
4 Bed, 2.5 Bath
$1,488,000
SFH w/ Ocean/Canyon Views
Call for Appointment



3247 Mountain View Avenue
3 Bed, 1 Bath
$818,000
Wonderful Mar Vista Location!
Call for Appointment

Featuring Your Home First

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- For a Virtual Tour & multiple photos of these Properties

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www.SantaMonicaListings.com

Median Price of ALL Santa Monica Properties Listed for Sale As of Mid September 2009

	Single Family Homes	Condos & Townhomes
Santa Monica Canyon	$2,374,000	$4,810,000
North of Montana	$3,095,000	$1,524,000
Between Wilshire & Montana	$2,246,500	$989,000
South of Wilshire	$874,500	$762,000
Sunset Park	$1,300,000	$689,500
Ocean Park	$1,488,000	$835,000

Statistics Updated Every Monday

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