



Santa Monica Daily Press

September 24-25, 2005

A newspaper with issues

Volume 4, Issue 272

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

3 30 34 37 41
Meganumber: 18
Jackpot: \$50 Million

FANTASY 5

4 6 8 14 25

DAILY 3

Daytime: 0 8 0
Evening: 5 3 0

DAILY DERBY

1st: 01 Gold Rush
2nd: 06 Whirl Win
3rd: 12 Lucky Charms

RACE TIME: 1:41.39

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

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

The bodies of Kentucky State Reformatory inmates Avery C. Roland, 26, and Michael Talbot Jr., 24, were found in a nearby landfill the day after they went missing in July; a Department of Corrections official said they had probably hidden inside a garbage truck without realizing that, to prevent escapes, the prison requires that garbage be compacted twice before it leaves the grounds. And four days apart in July, two 19-year-old men (in Sheboygan, Wis., and Louisville, Ky.) fell to their deaths while car-surfing at high speeds. (According to a witness, the Sheboygan man's fatal fall came shortly after he yelled to his driver, "Is that all you got?")

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 267th day of 2005.
There are 98 days left in the year.

On Sept. 24, 1789, Congress passed the First Judiciary Act, which provided for an Attorney General and a Supreme Court.

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Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Santa Monica firefighter Johnny Maccini successfully completes his one-year test earlier this month at the city yards. Maccini and two other recruits are now sworn Santa Monica firefighters, after completing a one-year probation period.

Three prove that they can take the heat

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

SANTA MONICA FIRE DEPT. — Three new recruits have shown they can stand the heat, and can breathe a little easier for it.

The trio have sworn to combat fires in Santa Monica, but only after a brutal year of training, testing and finding a way to fit into the SMFD lifestyle.

Twenty-somethings Julian Zermينو, Johnny Maccini and Ryan Dermidjian are the newest Santa Monica firefighters, after each passed their one-year test earlier this month. The test, which takes about nine hours to complete, is regarded as one of the most anticipated and rigorous experiences a firefighter in Santa



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

The trio of new firefighters were tested on belay lines, laying hose and laddering in front of senior firefighters during the stress-filled one-year test.

Monica must face.

The year leading up to the test is no cake-walk either. After they passed a written exam, a physical agility test and an oral board review at the outset, the new recruits are on probation for a year. Within six months, they had to have proven that they can handle

station life, which is determined by their peers and their captain.

"We can't afford a guy to be so -so," said SMFD Battalion Chief Carl Bjerke. "You have to be the kind of guy that can live with others and go with the flow. You

See **FIREFIGHTERS**, page 15

Public calls for veterans' shelter

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

BRENTWOOD — The push to provide housing for hundreds of down-and-out veterans may have been moot on Thursday, due to developers with more clout than the public regarding the future of the Veteran Administration's West Los Angeles campus.

Hundreds of concerned citizens, HOA leaders, veterans and elected officials from across Southern California showed up at Wadsworth Theatre on Thursday to express their hopes that the V.A.'s sprawling 387-acre campus here be used for veteran services.

In particular, a vast majority of

See **VA CAMPUS**, page 11

LOCAL

Homeless rewarded for rising to occasion

BY JASMIN PERSCH
Special to the Daily Press

BERGAMONT STATION — With a brand-new minivan, a home and her own business, Maria Lukvec never expected to become homeless.

And when she did feel herself slipping into homelessness, she denied it.

Lukvec's party supply store was losing money because of mismanagement, according to a personal profile. Within two years, she and her children

See **BACK ON TRACK**, page 12

GABY SCHKUD

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HOROSCOPE

Act like a kid, Gemini

Santa Monica Daily Press

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ An early call or change in plans could start your day. Instead of pouting or being upset, use this time to get together with someone you haven't seen in a while. Once you let go, there might be no stopping you. Tonight: Yes, even you might want to get in early.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★ Clear out shopping and/or errands. You might be a bit extravagant, but right now you might not care. Remember, there is a tomorrow. You might be overly concerned about your image. Tonight: The later it gets, the wilder you get.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You might not be totally pleased with a loved one or a friend. Subconscious feelings that you have been harboring come out. A talk with some humor and perspective can clear the air. Tonight: Act like a kid once more.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★ Take your time getting moving. If you want to laze around your home and do nothing, make it OK. Get as much sleep as you can. You might want to play it low-key. Forget it. Events force you into the limelight. Tonight: The center of the action.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Others only add to your confusion. Don't try to write anyone else's script. Just accept those around you as they are, though you might find they are a bit silly. Emphasize your long-term goals. Tonight: Friends delight you.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ You need to be available, as a responsibility will demand your attention. You will feel very good about yourself and how you handle a key person in your life. Don't be serious all day; get together with friends. Tonight: Go for what you want.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Spontaneity throws you into some amusing and very different situations. You might even rub your Aladdin's lamp and go out of town on a whim. Don't worry about others' judgments. Do what is right for you. Tonight: Think of what you haven't done, and do it.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ A partner takes the lead, which might relieve you. You discover how deeply you are cared about. Financial matters might need deeper insight. Use care with someone you meet right now. This person might not be what he or she seems. Tonight: Follow another's lead.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Others do their best to lure you into their plans. Enjoy this activity. It isn't every day that everyone wants you to join him or her. Wherever you are, there will be a tendency to go ever so slightly overboard. Tonight: Wind down with an important interchange.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Play it easy, even if you have some important errands or a project to do. A roommate, friend or family member will appreciate the time you take to share a hobby. Money spills out of your pockets. Tonight: Nap and then decide.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You have a delightful manner that helps everyone relax. Your innate playfulness and spirit of friendship emerge no matter what you do or who your companion is. Be aware of a potential new friend, if single. Tonight: Light up the evening sky.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ You might be hard-pressed to do what you want, which is stay close to home. A call or invitation just might lure you out of your neighborhood. You actually will have a better time straying from home. Tonight: Getting friskier by the moment.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Everybody loves kids on Pier this weekend

By Daily Press staff

It's going to be a party at the Santa Monica Pier on Sunday, benefiting UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital.

Actress Patricia Heaton ("Everybody Loves Raymond") is the celebrity honoree at the sixth annual Mattel Party on the Pier, a family event featuring celebrity appearances, carnival booth games, a silent auction, Mattel's very own Barbie® and unlimited rides in Pacific Park. A sell-out crowd of 1,400 is expected. Attendees include pediatric patients, families, hospital staff and other supporters.

The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 25.

Party on the Pier is one of the major annual fundraising events for Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA. Funds raised help care for young patients, advance research on childhood diseases and teach the new generation of pediatricians. Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA is a "hospital-within-a-hospital" located at UCLA Medical Center in Westwood. The hospital offers a full spectrum of primary and specialized medical care for infants, children and adolescents. The mission of Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA is to provide state-of-the-art treatment for children in a compassionate atmosphere, as well as to improve the understanding and treatment of pediatric diseases.

Francis prints are donated to SMC

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica College has announced that Martin Sosin has donated 18 original Sam Francis prints to the college, which are currently hanging in the campus' library.

"The pieces are beautiful and they make the library a more lively place," said Mona Martin, dean of learning resources and head librarian. "We're extremely grateful for the generosity of Mr. Sosin."

Some of the prints will be moved to The Madison Project of Santa Monica College, a 541-seat theater currently under construction, when it opens in 2007.

Sosin, a Santa Monica tax attorney, was the business manager and close friend of Francis, the renowned abstract painter who created much of his work in Santa Monica, from 1962 until Francis' death in 1994.

In 2003, SMC presented the first public showing of a collection of Francis paintings from the private collections of Sosin and members of his family.

"I had always promised Sam Francis I would do everything in my power to expand his legacy as an abstract expressionist," Sosin said. "The library gives his work wide exposure. And I wanted to commemorate that marvelous library, to show that SMC is a premiere place to go to school."

Associated with the abstract expressionist movement and Clement Greenberg's post-painterly abstraction, Francis also was influenced by French painting and Japanese art.

With its sensitivity to sensuous color and light, Francis' early work related to the organic forms of Jackson Pollock and Clyfford Still, and the atmospheric color veils of Mark Rothko. In his use of space on the canvas to allow free circulation of strong

See BRIEFS, page 13

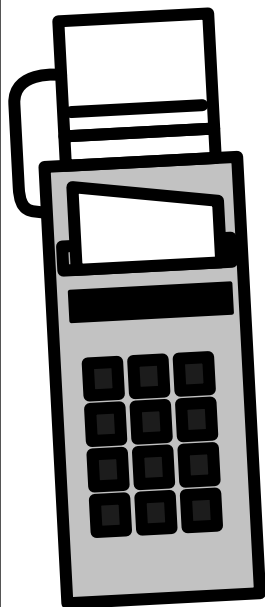


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SURF REPORT

On Saturday, expect the last, lagging periods to arrive from the southern hemi SW with size chest- to shoulder-high. Hurricane swell should fade with possibly still some chest-high sets. The NW wind swell is expected to be quite peaky with only 8-10 second periods at best.

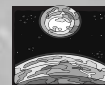
On Sunday, the southern hemi SW will be from a steeper angle of about 170-180, and size should back down to chest-high. Wind swell is expected to fade.

**Today the
water is:**

62°

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and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.



LOW TIDES

HIGH TIDES

	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	N/A	N/A	2:16	4.9	N/A	N/A	10:59	0.8
SUNDAY	10:13	3.7	N/A	N/A	7:22	3.8	4:00	4.7
MONDAY	12:11	0.6	12:02	3.4	7:41	4.1	5:29	4.8
TUESDAY	1:00	0.4	12:52	2.9	8:00	4.3	8:29	5.0
WEDNESDAY	1:35	0.3	1:27	2.5	8:17	4.5	7:12	5.3

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RESPONSES ON PAGE 4.**

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The Q-Line

Is The Blue Bus Calling Us?

This past week, Q-line asked:

"Do you support the creation of a bus-only lane on Lincoln Boulevard as an attempt to ease traffic despite the loss of some street parking?"

Here are your responses:

① "I do not support the creation of a new bus lane as an attempt to ease traffic congestion. I think we will have much more congestion with the bus lane. If some hours during the day one lane is taken away, how does that ease congestion? I have always said that City Council members should have their heads examined, everyone except Shriver because they don't know what the hell they are doing. Why people voted them in I could never understand. It is a horrible mess of traffic in this city anyhow and a bus lane is going to make it worse."

② "When it comes to public transport the Big Blue Bus is a marvelous, affirmative action welfare program for the well off. It's rumored a driver made \$90,000 last year and keeps an airplane at the Santa Monica Airport he uses to commute. We don't need more bus lanes, we should scrap the whole system and let jitneys operate."

③ "It looks like another ploy of the Santa Monica City Council to push out the small business man. It's really something the way that council acts. Bush is always screaming out about terrorism. My God, we have terrorists on the City Council. They're always trying to sock it to everybody. It's just a shame, I don't know why the citizens of Santa Monica don't wake up and get rid of those people. When election comes up, I for one will do all I can in my power to get that mob out of there."

④ "Public transportation has to be given priority if this region is ever to become functional. Bicycles however, do not belong on the main road. They are a hazard to themselves and everybody else ..."

⑤ "I certainly do not support the new bus lane on Lincoln Boulevard. One only has to read Bill Bauer's column, 'My Write,' to see why this is yet another harebrained idea of the City Council and their equally dim traffic engineers."

⑥ "The city of Santa Monica has the stupidest people in the world running the traffic outside of the people in the Bush administration. These idiots put stop signs at every corner, one-way streets, speed bumps, they put all these roundabouts and curbs that make it impossible to make a right turn when someone is waiting for the red light. This bus lane is just one more attempt to screw up traffic and hurt the small businesses. All the big chains have their own parking lots so obviously Santa Monica doesn't care about the small businesses they want to drive every single one of them out of the city. Next thing you know Santa Monica will be nothing but chain stores and bums and traffic jams caused by the idiots running the traffic."

⑦ "Absolutely not, it's another stupid idea by the traffic managers in Santa Monica to mess up traffic throughout the entire city. The roundabouts, the narrow lanes, the other traffic nuisances. Those speed bumps are idiotic and cause more

accidents. Check the curbs and you can see where all the black marks are. Bill Bauer's article in Monday's paper on page four is a perfect response to this."

⑧ "Well here they go again. Trying to fix something that isn't broken. The buses run very smoothly on our streets. There aren't hundreds of buses running at the same time clogging up the traffic. If people were more patient and drove sensibly, there would be no problems. The council goes to fix things that they think are probably simple to fix and they're not broken. They're not getting the real problems addressed in our city like the homeless situation which has been going on for years and years and years. They go for stuff that doesn't need to be fixed. The traffic is fine. Yes, it's heavy, there's tons of people here today, more and more companies, corporations, businesses. But to make a lane just for the buses? Come on, get off."

⑨ "No, that is just another example of nickel and dimming social engineering by our rulers. Power hungry politicians and bureaucrats jerking us around. It does nothing to solve the root cause of the problem which is increasing over population. If our rulers really wanted to do something about traffic congestion, affordable housing shortages, pollution, etc. they would ..."

⑩ "I am for the bus only lane in Santa Monica. I like it. Here's the difference between this one and the one on Wilshire. This one is only peak hours in each direction. I think a.m. is northbound and p.m. is southbound. So the businesses complaining about that they are losing business, they are not really paying attention to what the officials from the Big Blue Bus and the city transportation department are saying. They are assuming it's like Wilshire, it's not. One side of Lincoln Boulevard will still be open for parking in the opposite direction. I think it's a good idea to have a bus lane because it would speed up the buses."

⑪ "I strongly support the new bus lane because faster public transportation is essential for increased bus ridership. The businesses along Lincoln that are complaining need to do their part to help ease traffic congestion and go along with the bus lane program. Perhaps more people will take the bus to their businesses if they cannot find convenient parking. I am more likely to patronize a business that supports public transportation and stay away from those that don't."

⑫ "When one considers that Lincoln Boulevard starts off in a northbound direction from Sepulveda Boulevard in Westchester near LAX airport and ends up at San Vicente Boulevard in Santa Monica and is the only feasible alternative route to Santa Monica and all destinations northwest, I doubt anything can be done regarding the daily congestion that exists on Lincoln Boulevard, which is known to be an eyesore street for many years. A special bus lane will not attract new riders, especially those of the yuppie-class generation. I say no to a special bus lane."

Of bullets and blankies



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

The New York Times recently ran a story about a movement to encourage younger kids to hunt. This is not just a program to teach young children gun safety or how to participate in target shooting. Some states have a minimum age of 12 for hunting. This movement thinks 12 is too old, and would like to get as many grade-school kids as possible out there hunting animals. It is spearheaded by a hunter named Kevin Hoyt. Since it was presented as a news story in the New York Times, they didn't take a position or judge it. Since this is on our opinion page, I may take a position: This is crazy!

Fourth-grader Samantha Marley won a free "dream hunt" from the generous Hoyt. For three days, she hunted with Hoyt. Other kids go to Disneyland or visit Washington D.C. She got to shoot animals.

There are about 2 million fewer hunters today than 20 years ago. Some people see this as a bad thing. One of Mr. Hoyt's hunting buddies says, "Hunters should be included as an extinct species because we're falling away so fast, we need to be protected." Somehow, I don't have the same sympathy I have for whales or elephants as for the "endangered species" of the camouflaged deer hunter.

You might think that even though Mr. Hoyt sees nothing wrong with 6-year-olds hunting, he would at least believe that if a kid is still in diapers, he's too young to take hunting. Not so. He proudly tells of taking his 2-month-old son deer hunting. He wore the kid in a backpack as he shot a deer. He explained that he was "stuck" home baby-sitting, but felt like hunting. And many of you thought Michael Jackson dangling that baby out of the hotel window was child abuse. I understand that sometimes parents may feel "stuck" and may be bored while they sit with a baby. But is getting out the old shotgun the only alternative? How about playing games? How about reading the kid a story? Or, I guess he could've taught the baby how to juggle knives.

The idea is to recruit hunters at a young age, and then they'll be hunters for life. The tobacco and liquor industries have used the same approach for years. The difference is that tobacco and liquor can take years to kill, but hunting can do it instantly.

Accidents happen in hunting. Accidents happen during most activities, but most activities don't involve guns and camouflage. So, it's reasonable to expect that as more and more elementary school kids pick up guns and hunt, more and more kids will be involved in hunting accidents. Isn't this reason enough to discourage this practice?

This movement to arm young kids and teach them to hunt is not just the goal of a few individuals. The National Shooting Sports Foundation, the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, and the National Wild Turkey Federation have started an organization called, Families Afield, to lobby states to lower the age at which children can hunt and loosen the requirements that say a young hunter must be accompanied by a parent. On one of their Web sites, these folks bemoan the fact that because of these rules, kids are discouraged from hunting and "more and more youngsters are settling into other activities like video games and organized sports." Wow, sure wouldn't want them playing baseball instead of drawing a bead on a moose.

Getting back to 9-year-old Samantha, sounding like the kid she is, she says, "Almost anything you hunt is pretty fun." She and her dad are proud of the fact that she shot her first deer when she was 7, and bagged her first turkey the same year. Both animals are trophies on a wall at home. This is America, so I guess your kid can hang whatever he or she wants to in your house. But personally, I like the idea of a kid's drawings being hung on the refrigerator, rather than a kid's killings being hung on the wall.

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier." He also has read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's opinion page and a weekly column for SportsLine.com. He can be reached at smdp@lloydgarver-moderntimes.com.)



our edition is one click away
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LOCAL



Testing your endurance can make a difference



EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT! BY THADDEUS REICHLEY

Here is a little quiz for all of you endurance athletes out there. Wait. Don't stop reading, this is really easy. Simply answer YES or NO to the following questions:

1. Are you hungry right now?
(If you answered YES, continue with the quiz. If you answered NO, you can go ahead and stop there because you obviously are not an endurance athlete.)
2. Do you start thinking about what you will have for dinner early in the day — like at breakfast?
3. Do you go to bed at night after a huge meal and still dream of fairy tale lands where banana boats sail on oatmeal seas lined with palm trees made of bacon?
4. Do you find yourself stealing food off your friend's plates when they are not looking? What about strangers?
5. Have you had to stop at least once already while reading this article to get up and have a snack? And, are you still hungry?

If you answered yes to these questions I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that your condition is serious and probably incurable. You are most likely an endurance junkie. It's not your fault. Scientists actually believe that this condition might possibly be genetic, or that it may be tied to prolonged exposure to spandex. More studies still need to be conducted. The good news is that you are not alone. Next to obesity, obsessive exercising is the fastest growing health condition in the United States. This epidemic seems to be especially rampant in the greater Los Angeles area where the number of those afflicted with the disease has spiked dramatically in the past decade.

As you have probably gathered from the quiz, endurance junkies often suffer from chronic insatiable hunger. The reason for this is that people training for

endurance events require food intake in the neighborhood of 3,000 to 5,000 plus calories a day to balance out their expenditure. That's roughly 10 Big Macs, a daunting daily menu plan for even the heartiest of eaters. The problem however is further exacerbated by the fact that endurance junkies are often also health freaks. This powerful combination can mean that they are forced to get the bulk of their daily calories from healthy sources such as fruits and vegetables. They are often even forced to resort to eating carbohydrates.

If you or someone you love suffers with this, there is hope. Getting through the days can be tough, but it is not impossible. Here are a few simple things you can do to make living with this disease a little easier:

1. Always carry snacks. Hunger can come on unannounced at any time and is often accompanied with grumpiness. Don't risk hurting the ones you love.
2. Be a member of the "clean plate club." You may not want to finish that last bite, but you know you are going to be hungry in an hour so push through the pain.
3. Desserts are your friends. Nothing puts those extra few hundred calories into a meal like a piece of cake. And who doesn't like cake?
4. The average beer has about 150 calories. Drink up.

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(Thaddeus Reichley is a pro triathlete and middle school teacher living and training in Santa Monica. He has been an endurance junkie for about 11 years, and has learned to cope with his disease and live a happy and fulfilling life. Send questions, comments, and concerns to thad-scolumn@yahoo.com.)

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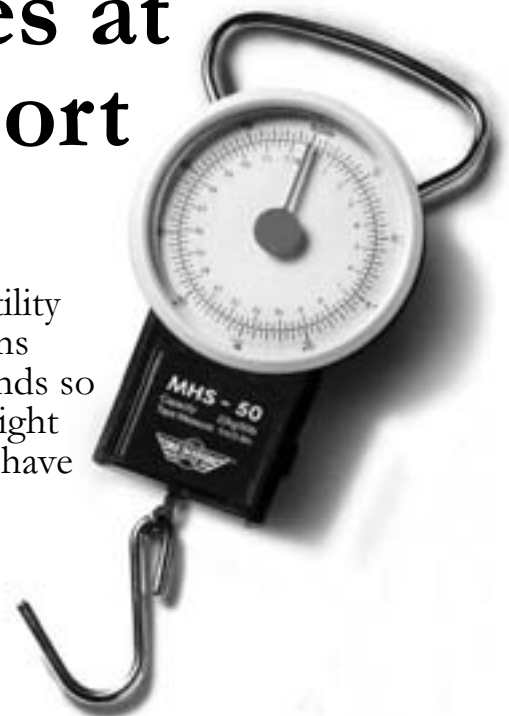
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STATE

Major SF quake could chase the poor

BY BRIAN SKOLOFF

Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Rebuilding San Francisco after a major earthquake would change its human face, hastening gentrification and driving out poor and elderly residents, experts and city officials warn.

Experts say there's a 62 percent chance a quake with a magnitude of 6.7 or higher will hit the San Francisco Bay area within several decades — or tomorrow. Thousands of homes would be rendered uninhabitable, displacing up to 300,000 residents, almost half the city's population, according to some projections.

Since Hurricane Katrina left thousands homeless along the Gulf Coast, there's been renewed interest in how San Francisco would fare in a massive earthquake. A key issue would be creating replacement housing for the poor in one of the nation's most expensive markets. About 16,000 San Francisco residents live in public housing projects, and many more are packed into illegally subdivided properties as a way to afford rent.

"The people with the fewest resources are going to be the ones who will completely lose their homes and once they're rebuilt, they won't be able to afford them," said seismologist Mary Lou Zoback of the U.S. Geological Survey. "There's this looming problem that's not so different from the levees in New Orleans breaching."

One reason San Francisco's housing stock would be so hard-hit is because the

city is a notoriously pricey place to live — especially to own a home. Sixty-five percent of its residents are renters, second only to New York City.

Enduring political support for rent control has enabled the city to maintain some economic diversity, but Zoback said it also adds to the problem, providing little incentive for landlords to bring their buildings up to safety codes.

According to the San Francisco Housing Data Book, the city had 146,000 rent-controlled apartments in 2002, accounting for about 75 percent of rental units.

After the 1989 Loma Prieta quake, which killed 63 people and caused \$6 billion dollars in structural damage, the city created a fund to help property owners make their buildings less vulnerable to quakes and fires. But few took advantage of the program because it was too complicated, said Frank Gallagher, deputy director of the Treasure Island Development Authority.

He predicts a real estate feeding frenzy in the aftermath of a major quake.

"Where would the poor people go? Who knows?" Gallagher said. "In the long run, you'd see developers swoop in to develop some of the most expensive real estate in the country."

But poor and working class residents aren't the only ones who may be homeless after the next Big One. Families that paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to own homes in quaint neighborhoods could also find themselves scrambling for shelter.

An unfinished \$350,000 study on seismic vulnerability commissioned by the

"Where would the poor people go? Who knows? In the long run, you'd see developers swoop in to develop some of the most expensive real estate in the country."

FRANK GALLAGHER

Deputy director of the Treasure Island Development Authority

city predicted a 7.2-magnitude quake along the San Andreas Fault would cause an estimated \$13.7 billion in damage, about half of it in residential areas.

The report noted that the city's west side, which encompasses Golden Gate Park and where two-bedroom homes can cost as much as \$700,000, would be devastated because so many structures are wood-framed and old.

"Any shake or movement would pretty much collapse entire buildings," said San Francisco Supervisor Fiona Ma, who represents a west side district of largely middle-to-upper-income residents.

Units are "all stacked up next to each other and use each other for support," Ma said, "so as soon as one goes down, pretty much the whole block would go down."

Ma said that while most of her constituents own their properties, many don't have earthquake insurance — only 15 percent of Californians do — and would likely be forced out of the area by the high rebuilding costs.

Fire also is a threat.

The 1906 earthquake left thousands of people dead, 225,000 homeless and 28,000 buildings destroyed, about 90 percent from post-quake blazes.

Today, San Francisco has about twice the population and triple the daytime work force, and many of its buildings are pre-World War II wood structures that remain susceptible to fires. In 1987, San Francisco's fire chief proclaimed the metropolis a "city built to burn."

Much of the substandard housing throughout the city would have to be demolished after a major earthquake and subsequent fires, warned Jeanne Perkins, the earthquake program manager for the Association of Bay Area Governments.

Residents of coastal Louisiana are seeing those predictions play out in real life. In St. Bernard Parish, a community of 66,000 just east of New Orleans, officials estimate that as much as 80 percent of the structures will have to be razed.

"There are lots of these buildings in San Francisco," Perkins said.

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STATE



Aftershock quake shakes north of L.A.

By The Associated Press

WHEELER RIDGE — A magnitude-3.6 earthquake shook an area north of Los Angeles on Friday, an aftershock to a magnitude-4.7 quake a day earlier.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage from the latest quake at 3:21 a.m. Friday.

A swarm of temblors Thursday in the San Joaquin Valley about 70 miles northwest of Los Angeles began with a magnitude-3.4 jolt that was quickly followed by the 4.7 at 1:24 p.m., according to the U.S. Geological Survey in Pasadena.

Seismologists recorded at least several

lesser aftershocks.

“We felt it pretty good, like someone picked up the store and shook it,” said Donald Sullivan, an employee at the Mettler Renegade truck stop and gas station.

The area has had quakes before, but this one still made people jump, he said. Other than drinks rattling off the shelves, though, it didn’t do any real harm, he said.

The quakes occurred near the White Wolf fault. The last time that fault caused a major earthquake was in 1952 when an estimated magnitude-7.5 temblor killed 12 people and injured 18. Schwarzenegger starts campaign with effort to woo Hispanics

Governor’s star power among Hispanics is fading

BY TOM CHORNEAU

Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — Arnold Schwarzenegger’s rise from immigrant to Hollywood superstar won him the hearts of California’s big Hispanic population two years ago, and their votes helped elect him governor.

But after stumbling over border issues, rejecting legislation that would benefit immigrants and picking an election fight with public employee unions, Schwarzenegger finds himself very unpopular with this critically important group and looking to improve his image.

Moving to shore up his standing among the state’s 12 million Hispanics — about a third of the population — Schwarzenegger travels Friday for his first official visit to the capital of Baja California for meetings with Mexican leaders.

His political campaign plans to spend more than \$1 million in the coming weeks for ads on Spanish language television to promote his ballot measures on the upcoming Nov. 8 election.

Some are not sure those efforts will be enough.

“He’s lost a big part of the Latino community for good,” said Jamie Regalado, executive director Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs at California State University, Los Angeles. “Some he may be able to bring back but he needs to reverse this sense of indifference many feel he has toward Latinos.”

Indeed, recent polls show that just 17 percent of Hispanic voters approve of Schwarzenegger’s job performance. That stands in sharp contrast to the nearly 30 percent of Hispanics that voted for him in the 2003 recall election — considered a huge win for a Republican in California.

His troubles started when he opposed granting drivers licenses to illegal immigrants. But then he also proposed big health and welfare spending cuts that would have hit Hispanics hard.

In a highly publicized miscue earlier this year, Schwarzenegger said California’s border with Mexico should be closed — a remark he quickly corrected and apologized for. Schwarzenegger said he meant the border should be secured.

He has since consistently called for tighter border controls but has praised a citizen border patrol that President Bush called vigilantes. Some of his border

statements have been made during interviews with right-wing radio talk shows, most of which are considered hostile to immigrants.

Although he has led a trade missions to Japan and Israel and has another planned for China, Schwarzenegger has visited Mexico — the state’s largest trading partner — just once and only for a brief dinner meeting.

The combination of issues has led even some Republicans to worry about Schwarzenegger’s standing with this important political group. Last week’s GOP convention in Anaheim was buzzing about an open letter several Hispanic Republicans circulated criticizing Schwarzenegger on Hispanic issues, such as not appointing enough Hispanics to high ranking posts.

The governor’s aides tell a much different story about his record.

They note that 10 percent of appointments have been Hispanic — out of a tiny pool of applicants. They point to several top posts going to Hispanics including his chief spokeswoman, Margita Thompson, a member of the University of California Regents, Fred Ruiz, as well as one Cabinet secretary and one department head.

They also argue that his pro-business policies have helped many small businesses — including those owned by Hispanics.

And they point out that he has done many things for Hispanics, including a groundbreaking order long sought by farmworkers and rejected by previous governors that mandates breaks and training to avoid heat stroke.

“I don’t think we’ve done a good job of telling our story,” said Mindy Fletcher, Schwarzenegger’s deputy chief of staff for external affairs.

Mike Murphy, Schwarzenegger’s top campaign strategist, said the polls are misleading and there remains a reservoir of support for the governor. “This was an important group in the recall election and there’s still a lot good will there,” he said. “We just have to muscle up our message to them.”

Still, Democratic political consultant Kam Kuwata said in many ways Schwarzenegger does not appear to be sympathetic to Hispanics.

“There is a perception that he has dismissed this group, and appearance in politics is more important than reality,” he said.

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STATE



Greyhound requiring employees to screen for illegal immigrants

BY ELLIOT SPAGAT

Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO — Greyhound Lines Inc., the nation's largest intercity bus company, has threatened to fire employees who sell bus tickets to illegal immigrants under an internal policy that some Hispanic advocacy groups are calling an invitation to racial profiling.

The "Transportation of Illegal Aliens" policy warns Greyhound's customer service employees to beware of people in large groups, moving in single file and traveling with little or no luggage. It says other telltale signs include people "trying to hide or stay out of plain view" or large groups led by a "guide" who holds everyone's tickets.

Greyhound also says immigrant smugglers give themselves away by calling bus stations to ask if immigration authorities are present, and by loitering, repeatedly buying large numbers of tickets for other people and using phrases like, "These guys just crossed the line," "my cargo," and "I've got to move my people."

The policy warns that failure to comply could result in the employee's firing and possibly arrest.

Kimberly Plaskett, a Greyhound spokeswoman, said she didn't know how many customers have been denied tickets under the policy but called it a "pretty rare" occurrence. The Dallas-based company adopted the policy in 2002 in response to the criminal indictment of a now-defunct, California bus company that pleaded guilty to immigrant smuggling, she said.

The policy was largely unknown outside the company until La Opinion, a Spanish-language newspaper in Los Angeles, reported on it earlier this month.

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, an advocacy group in Oakland, provided a copy of the three-page policy to The Associated Press. Greyhound confirmed its accuracy.

Two migrant advocacy groups held a conference call with Greyhound attorneys on Sept. 9 to urge the company to reconsider its position, saying it invites discrimination against Hispanics.

"When the standard is that you should know who is in the U.S. illegally, it is a recipe for singling out Latinos," said Cecilia Munoz of the National Council of La Raza in Washington, D.C., who participated in the call. "You're not going to go after the Irish-looking guy."

John Trasvina of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund in Los Angeles, who also joined the call, took issue with Greyhound's requirement that employees deny tickets to "any-

one you know or believe to be an illegal alien."

"On what basis does someone know it or believe to know that?" Trasvina said. "There's a great risk that the employee will go overboard."

Large Hispanic groups are more likely to be targeted than a Japanese or German tour group, he said.

Greyhound notes that while the policy prohibits profiling based on "race, national heritage, gender, age, religion, disability, etc.," federal law also makes it a crime to knowingly transport an illegal immigrant.

"We have to comply with federal law or we face pretty severe consequences — criminal indictments, seizure of assets," she said.

The policy was adopted in response to the 2001 indictment of Golden State Transportation Co. of Los Angeles on immigrant smuggling charges. The company later filed for bankruptcy and it pleaded guilty last year to transporting an estimated 42,100 illegal immigrants from Tucson, Ariz., to Los Angeles, using a roundabout route through Las Vegas to avoid Border Patrol checkpoints. The company paid a \$3 million fine and forfeited a downtown Phoenix terminal.

According to the indictment, buses typically left border cities after midnight to escape detection. Passengers appeared dirty, had no luggage, hid in the bushes near terminals and boarded buses at the last minute, prosecutors said.

"It wasn't one criteria, but you put them all together and it was obvious that these people were not in the country legally," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Wallace H. Kleinstedt, who prosecuted the case.

Greyhound, which carried 21.2 million passengers last year to more than 2,200 destinations, with a fleet of 2,700 buses and 9,700 employees, isn't the only company with such a policy.

Sistema Internacional de Transporte de Autobuses Inc., a Greyhound subsidiary, owned a 51 percent stake in Golden State. It currently operates the Crucero and Autobuses Americanos bus lines and has had a policy similar to Greyhound's since 2002, said Al Penedo, chief operating officer.

"It might sound a little overzealous, but we were scared, concerned and confused about what happened to Golden State," said Penedo. "It was a wake-up call. ... (The federal government) can walk in, take the bus, put your driver in jail and throw away the key."

He said no customers have complained and agents haven't denied any tickets under the policy.

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STATE BRIEFS

Snake thief can't slither away from justice

By The Associated Press

FULLERTON — A snake thief snared in a sting by the owner of 14 purloined pythons was sentenced to six months in jail.

Jeffery Quon, 25, of Anaheim Hills had pleaded guilty to stealing \$75,000 worth of exotic ball pythons from a breeder's home.

The snakes were stolen in January 2004 from Jeff Houston's Anaheim Hills home, where he and his wife bbred the reptiles. After the theft, Houston trolled reptile Web sites and found a seller asking \$18,000 for a ball python.

Houston engineered a sting operation with police and nine of the stolen snakes were found. During sentencing Thursday, Quon was ordered to pay Houston \$25,000 in restitution.

"I thought the sentence was a little light," Houston said. "But I know it's hard for people to wrap their heads around the fact that snakes can be worth this much."

Parents at odds over dead son's remains

By The Associated Press

MIRA LOMA — The divorced parents of a 23-year-old motorcyclist killed in a July hit-and-run crash are battling over their son's remains.

The father of Matthew Castoreale wants his son's body cremated and the ashes put in the trophy case with his son's Little League and wrestling trophies. Castoreale's mother wants him buried at Pierce Brothers Crestlawn Memorial Park in Riverside.

Castoreale had lived in Swan Lake Mobile Country Estates with his father, Jeffrey, grandfather and younger brother since he was 12. He was single and died without a will.

"This is his home. This is where he belongs," Jeffrey Castoreale, 50, said as he sat on a couch in his late son's bedroom. Matthew's trophy case contains Mira Loma Valley Little League and Jurupa Valley High School wrestling team mementos.

But in a petition being considered Monday by Riverside Superior Court Judge Dallas Holmes, Matthew's mother, Loretta Pugh of Dana Point, seeks control of her son's remains so he can be buried.

Pugh "feels that the best way of keeping Matthew alive in the hearts and minds of his loved ones is to lay him to rest" in the cemetery "a place that is accessible to all of Matthew's loved ones," the petition said.

Arrested development in Rialto's police plans

By The Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO — A judge halted Rialto's move to disband its Police Department and hire the county Sheriff's Department for protection.

Superior Court Judge Bob Krug issued a temporary restraining order on Thursday and ordered Rialto to return all administrative duties to its police. The Sheriff's Department met earlier Thursday with the city's police officers to explain the transition.

"Whatever they're doing, they stop. I want everything back to status quo," Krug said. "I don't want the sheriff over there touching a piece of paper."

Another court hearing Oct. 4 will consider an injunction preventing the city's transfer of power. Of a temporary injunction is granted a date will be set for arguments on a permanent injunction. Police supporters and the Rialto Police Benefit Association officers' union claim the City Council acted too quickly when it decided to replace the Police Department with the Sheriff's Department.

"Things are going too fast for the city of Rialto and county of San Bernardino," Krug said. "I'm going to put a stop to it."

Last month, the Rialto council approved the sheriff's proposed \$17 million contract, saving the city \$1.2 million a year. The department has been plagued with lawsuits, complaints about poor service and an officers' union vote of no confidence in Chief Michael Meyers and Deputy Chief Arthur Burgess.

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LOCAL



Homeless vets in L.A. estimated at 17,000

VA CAMPUS, from page 1

participants at the meeting urged local V.A. officials to endorse the "Shriver plan," which calls for the V.A.'s abandoned buildings to house in upwards of 300 homeless veterans.

Santa Monica City Councilman Bobby Shriver spoke on behalf of his plan. As the first public speaker, he began by introducing the service providers and political leaders he has been working with in order to begin better addressing the regional homeless problem, through his proposal.

"The cost of war is visible here," Shriver said, alluding to a sign at the entrance to the V.A.'s grounds. "The cost of war is also visible on the streets of Santa Monica, where we have thousands of homeless, and hundreds of them who are vets.

"We demand that people sleep not on beach but at a place where they can receive services, such as the V.A."

Shriver and other speakers took turns reacting to a recent report, issued by PricewaterhouseCoopers, which suggests the V.A.'s West L.A. campus — consisting of several "abandoned" and "underutilized" buildings — may be liquidated to create private medical research facilities, high-rise condos or other commercial uses.

The V.A. is re-evaluating the use of its facilities nationwide in order to modernize its health care system, according to officials.

The V.A. leadership in Washington may be tempted by developers to put the West L.A. campus on the auction block as a way to create revenue for the V.A.'s struggling health care system, according to officials.

However, those who participated in Thursday's meeting felt the development option was no option at all.

They blamed an under-funded, maybe even mismanaged V.A. for its "underutilized" West L.A. campus, citing veteran services at the "abandoned" facilities are needed more than ever. They noted a recent county report which indicates there are 17,000 homeless vets living on the streets in the metropolitan area. They said more may be arriving from Iraq, who will also need help getting on their feet.

"Veterans have put their lives out for this country, and have kept their promise to serve it faithfully," Ed Everett, a veteran, told the panel. "Now it's time the government kept its promise."

The panel will be taking public comment for another week. There will possi-

bly be four more meetings through February, when the V.A. will determine the fate of its West L.A. campus.

THE SHRIVER PLAN

A coalition of service providers have agreed to work together in hopes the V.A. will convert the abandoned buildings into the veteran's shelter. Shriver presented his proposal to local leaders at an August meeting.

Santa Monica staff participated in a May 6 meeting hosted by the V.A., when officials discussed alternative uses for several V.A. sites around the country, including the West LA campus. The proposal intends to take advantage of the existing facility in order to provide "all services on site" for the homeless veterans, including medical, psychological and social assistance.

The project could accommodate as many as 500 chronically homeless veterans, as well as those with other needs, such as those dealing with mental illness or are suffering from substance abuse. It's the coalition's intent that half of the veterans served are chronically homeless — those who have been without shelter for at least three years.

The full proposal is available through the city of Santa Monica Web site.

The hundreds of people who filled Wadsworth Theatre on Thursday began signing up as early as 11 a.m. to speak. Many of them waited all afternoon until the V.A.'s panel began taking public comment at 4 p.m.

Local leaders, including Shriver, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and 11th District Councilman Bill Rosendahl were given priority to speak, followed by other members of the public.

Around 6 p.m., after hearing from dozens of individuals, a panel member asked the audience how many supported Shriver's proposal for a homeless service facility, and nearly the entire crowd raised their hands.

Santa Monica City Councilman Bob Holbrook, who spoke on behalf of Councilman Richard Bloom — stuck in traffic — told the panel that during his decades of public service, one of the most important lessons he's learned was to take heed of what people have to say.

"Your public has clearly indicated what they want," Holbrook said. "This is an opportunity for you to take the message to Washington, and I hope you do."

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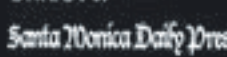
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Focus on homeless who turned it around

BACK ON TRACK, from page 1

went from having a life she calls normal to living in her store, then in her minivan.

"It was scary to have something and then have nothing," said Lukvec, who now lives in Santa Monica. "I felt powerless and like I couldn't take care of my children."

Lukvec, 41, sustained her motivation throughout her entire brush with homelessness. She tried to make life as normal as possible for her children by making them feel important, keeping them in school, and making the experience seem fun.

She moved from the Valley to Santa Monica in 2000 because she felt the streets were safe enough to live on. She found a job as a nanny, but still lived in her minivan.

Lukvec and 24 other former homeless people were honored Friday by a coalition of social service providers who have helped them gain self-sufficiency.

Lukvec was lifted out of homelessness after she turned to Upward Bound House in 2001. The social service provider helped her organize her life and re-build her self-esteem.

"It's nice these events occur," Lukvec said. "It gives me motivation because I don't think people care. I just think I'm doing this for my family."

The coalition gave Lukvec an award for her pursuit of a higher education. She has an associate's degree in liberal arts from Santa Monica College and is currently on the dean's list at California State University Dominguez Hills, where she is a double major in psychology and Spanish.

Other people were honored with awards for employment, giving back to the organizations, determination and overcoming barriers. Various local organizations and the city of Santa Monica also were awarded for their commitment to the homeless problem.

"The plight of the homeless can no longer be our dirty little secret," said actress Wendie Malick, who emceed the event, before the hundreds of people who attended the celebration staged in the parking lot outside of Bergamont Station, an arts complex on the east side of Santa Monica.

Malick has supported many organizations of the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition, which put on the breakfast and is the umbrella organization of the 30 local social service agencies and faith-based groups, among others, that have programs for the homeless and nominated the people who received awards.

Each organization could nominate up to two people who were most successful and comfortable speaking in public, said Lisa Fisher, the coalition's director.

The 20-year-old coalition serves as a forum for the organizations to exchange progress, give tips and build awareness, Fisher said.

Friday's event recognizing former homeless people has grown since its 1996 beginning. Nearly 500 people attended the breakfast on Friday — up from 150 nine years ago.

A breakfast buffet with three-types of quiche, banana bread and a fruit medley was set up for attendants.

City councilmembers Bobby Shriver, Robert Holbrook and Richard Bloom, and government representatives like Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky came to support the cause.

However, the focus wasn't on government programs, but on former homeless individuals and their success stories. The majority told tales of overcoming drug and alcohol abuse, or getting help for mental illness.

Cornell Stefin, who was honored for giving back, said his drug addiction put him on the streets of L.A. Growing up, he was the "square of the family," but at 41 with a full-time job and three sons he became a cocaine user, according to a personal profile.

Today, Stefin helps others who struggle with the same problems he did. He is a certified drug and alcohol specialist.

"A mentor once said 'If you want some success, I'll loan you some. You don't have to give it back,'" Stefin said. "I use that for my clients, too."

Earnest Armor, who was given an award for overcoming multiple barriers, said he spent a lot of time destroying himself. He lived with an undiagnosed mental illness since he was a child, according to a personal profile. He used drugs to escape his symptoms of anxiety, depression and insomnia.

"But when I got a chance to get off the concrete, I quit standing like this," he said, with his hands held up in a begging motion. "I can look people in the eye, and I don't have to be ashamed."

A determination honoree, Larry Pittman, slept in backalleys and parking lots in Santa Monica and used money he got begging to sustain his alcohol addiction before getting help for his mental disability, according to a personal profile.

"I chose the wrong path. I got into drugs and alcohol, lost my children," Pittman said. "Then, I was invited to a church for a hamburger."

That church changed his life, but he still doesn't get too comfortable because he believes that life can change suddenly.

Lukvec can attest to that. But, she said homelessness is behind her now and her 8-year-old girl doesn't even remember when they slept on the floor of the family business.

Lukvec is still working as a nanny because it pays well and her priority is to care for her children. But, mostly she wants to work as a counselor for distressed teens.

"I have so many dreams and goals," Lukvec said. "I am creating new high expectations for my children."

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Santa Monica Daily Press



LOCAL



Stepping it up to fight illness

By Daily Press staff

Step Up On Second this year is celebrating 21 years of providing assistance to individuals suffering from mental illness. An art show including more than 60 pieces of art created by members through the "Art Heals" program is headed for the Focus Gallery at Santa Monica Place through the month of October, and is open free to the public.

Step Up On Second is a nonprofit corporation that assists individuals with severe and persistent mental illness reintegrate into the community. The agency provides long-term support to people in recovery and their families, offering educational, social and work programs, quality housing, shower and laundry facilities, and a daily meal program.

Over the past year they have worked with more than 1,200 individuals and prepared nearly 40,000 meals for members.



Photo courtesy of John Blanchette

Artist Joey Gaeta (right) was one of 30 members of Step Up On Second who displayed his art during the 'Art Heals' fundraiser for the nonprofit organization on Thursday night at LA Farm restaurant in Santa Monica. Author, mental health advocate and National Public Radio commentator Bebe Moore Campbell (second from left) signed her new book '72 Hour Hold,' her second book dealing with mental illness. Step Up CEO Tod Lipka (left) and board president Gena Vincent (second from right) hosted nearly 300 guests at the reception.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

color and the sensitivity to light, Francis developed his own style that made him a signature American artist.

A California native, Francis was born in San Mateo in 1923 and died in Santa Monica in 1994. He began to paint in 1944 and studied art first under David Park in 1947 and then at the University of California at Berkeley, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees.

Over the years, Francis worked for long periods of time in studios in Paris, New York and Tokyo while traveling back and forth to his primary residences in Santa Monica, Palo Alto and Point Reyes.

His works are in many public and private collections throughout the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and the Idemitsu Museum of Art in Tokyo.

The SMC Library — which recently underwent a \$23.6 million modernization and expansion project — has drawn wide praise for its architectural design and state-of-the-art features.

The Madison Project will feature both student work and professional engagements in music, theater, dance and more. The \$30.78 million center, designed by Zecchetto Architects of Santa Monica, is funded with a combination of public and private funds.



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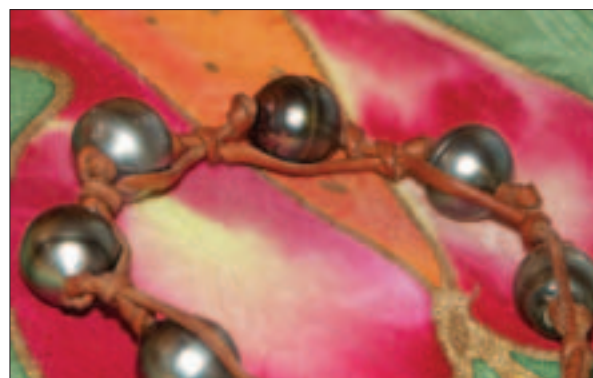
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LOCAL



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Maccini lugs a ladder in the Santa Monica heat at the city yards earlier this month, proving his mettle to become one of the newest city firefighters.

Training for SMFD never stops

FIREFIGHTERS, from page 1

can't have any weird quirks.

"For a year, it's really up to them," Bjerke added. "People call it 'playing the game.'"

Once it's determined that the new recruits are adjusting well to SMFD life and have bonded with their fellow firefighters in the firehouse they've been assigned to, it's time for more studying, testing, training and fitting in.

"It's so stressful, always thinking about how people look at you," said Bjerke, a 19-year veteran of the SMFD. "It's a year of torture. I would never do it again."

For Zermينو, he's glad he's off probation and the one-year test is over.

"I was very nervous," he said. "I was worried about it ... it's your job on the line."

By the time the one-year test comes around, most recruits are ready for it because the SMFD prepares them daily with quizzes, as well as demanding technical speeches on pieces of equipment and studying lesson plans.

"It's pretty much every day that we're quizzed," Zermينو said. "They'll say, 'this morning you will give a speech on the chainsaw.'"

Beyond the physical demands of the job and being competent in rescue, firefighting and a host of other skills, firefighters must memorize every piece of equipment in every compartment of the truck — where it is, how to use it and all of the technical aspects of each part.

"The first year is kind of the last straw, it can make or break you," Bjerke said. "We're testing a guy who had a year to prepare for this."

Conducted at the city yards, the one-year test first requires that recruits start with having to secure their breathing apparatus, which must be done within 60 seconds.

"Some call it an ice-breaker, but it's a pretty stressful way to start," Bjerke said.

Then it's on to engine company operations — the different evolutions of firefighting — like laying hose above and below ground. The recruits are expected to give technical speeches on every piece of equipment on the truck, down to how many cubic inches are on a cylinder and how many feet of hose there is.

"You name it, that guy will spit it out," Bjerke said. "It's really amazing to me. It's incredible to memorize literally hun-

dreds of pieces of equipment. I had to do that and I'm amazed that I did it."

The test also covers laddering, extractions, search-and-rescue operations and belay lines. The recruits also must take a driving test with the fire engine.

The written tests recruits must pass can take between three and eight hours to complete, depending on how prepared the firefighters are. The test is based on close to 50 lesson plans provided by the SMFD over the year.

"Now, we set them up for as much success as much as we can. Before, it was 'how much rope can we give this guy to hang himself?'"

CARL BJERKE
SMFD Battalion Chief

One recruit this year didn't pass his one-year test, but Zermينو, Maccini and Dermidjian apparently came through with flying colors.

"Now the pressure is lifted from being off probation and they're so happy to be under civil service protection," Bjerke said. "It's a very big sacrifice."

LOW MAN ON THE TOTEM POLE

Once they "hit the floor," or are assigned an engine company, rookies are considered "junior men," which means they are Johnny-on-the-spots in their respective firehouses until the next recruits arrive.

"They are kind of banned to do nothing else but study," Bjerke said. "There's no downtime, no watching TV with the guys ... if the paper towels need to be filled in the bathroom, they better be the ones filling them. If the coffee pot is empty, they better be making the coffee. They have to raise the flag on the flagpole."

Zermينو said the pressure of successfully completing probation is much more than the physical and educational demands.

"The first six months are the roughest

See FIREFIGHTERS, page 16

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LOCAL

Camaraderie stressed among SMFD recruits

FIREFIGHTERS, from page 15

because you are on your toes all the time,” the 25-year-old said. “It’s probably the toughest probation I’ve been through because it’s not just knowing the job, but you are expected to do everything ...

“At dinner, you are the last one to sit down and the first person to get up. You never get a good meal as a junior man,” Zermeno added. “I believe, though, that 90 percent of probation is your attitude.”

After the six-month review, the senior firefighters relieve some pressure off of the recruits, but not much.

“They ease off a little bit, but they are still on you,” Zermeno said.

In the end, Bjerke said there is camaraderie within the SMFD that results in all firefighters considering one another brothers and sisters.

Bjerke added that when he was a recruit nearly two decades ago, it was a different culture at the SMFD.

“It was psychological torture, but now, it’s a kinder, gentler department,” Bjerke said. “Now, we set them up for as much success as much as we can. Before, it was ‘how much rope can we give this guy to hang himself?’”

‘THE SANTA MONICA WAY’

Most fire departments in the county don’t test and train as rigorously as the SMFD does, Bjerke said. They also don’t recruit the same, which is designed in Santa Monica to weed out the weak and attract only the most qualified firefighters.

“With a department our size, there’s no room for dregs,” Bjerke said. “It’s a very sought-after job, but it’s not for everybody,” Bjerke said.

The last time the SMFD and the city of Santa Monica created its civil service list, hundreds of people lined up for the job, but only a handful were qualified enough to get on the list.

Three people are interviewed at a time, and if they pass the initial phase of testing and meet other requirements, they’re put on the list. Typically between four and six people are hired at a time, Bjerke said.

The newest firefighters to join the SMFD are the last ones off the list. Zermeno applied in 2002, but didn’t get picked up after the first round of initial tests. He was about to throw away his paperwork when he got a call from the SMFD in September of 2004, just before the two-year list was about to expire.

The SMFD and the city of Santa Monica are in the process of establishing a new list, which should be created by early next year.

Bjerke said it wouldn’t surprise him if 5,000 people applied for the six open positions on the SMFD. To whittle down the number of applicants, qualifiers may be instituted that would place higher standards on the test. The SMFD also is considering combining lateral hires — those



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

The newest ‘junior man’ passed muster for his senior counterparts at the city yards.

coming from other fire departments — and the open competitive process, which includes young recruits.

“For the type of job we have, you want a young, fresh guy,” Bjerke said. “But because what we do is so vast, you want a guy that’s good in all kinds of things, construction, engineering ...

“We’re hoping on this next test to open it up to a real large cross section.”

Many of them already have either a college degree or have gone through a private academy or paramedic school.

Applicants must meet minimum requirements — they must have an educational background in a fire-service related field, as well as pass a series of initial tests, said SMFD Battalion Chief Dan Matthies, who added the starting pay for a Santa Monica firefighter is \$47,000. If they make it past that initial round, they will be subject to a hiring oral exam, which is the applicants’ chance to distinguish themselves from the rest of the pack.

Once they’re hired, the recruits go through a six-week academy created by the SMFD, which teaches the basics of firefighting and is the first introduction to the “Santa Monica way.”

“It all began with the fire academy,” Zermeno said. “The first six weeks were tough, physically and mentally.”

Then they’re assigned to an engine or truck company, where they will expand on their training for the next year. They are evaluated every month, until the final day comes for the one-year test.

“You are expected to know so much more now,” Bjerke said. “Every recruit is building on the backs of other recruits and the bar keeps going higher.”

Once they’ve made it into the SMFD, many recruits voluntarily get trained in specialized areas such as search-and-rescue, hazardous materials or homeland security. This week, Maccini was in training for urban search-and-rescue.

“You are always going to school in this profession ... we are a small department and you are expected to know everything, they consider us mini-engineers,” Zermeno said, adding that Santa Monica is known for its rigorous training programs and its high level of preparedness. “If you put any of our rookies against other departments, we’re far superior.”

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STATE



Plastic unfantastic: Fraud scheme in court

BY MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Testing the bounds of consumer protection laws, Visa USA Inc. and MasterCard International Inc. are headed for court to determine whether they are obliged to notify 264,000 customers that a computer hacker stole their account information.

The dispute to be argued Friday in San Francisco County Superior Court revolves around a highly publicized security breakdown at CardSystems Solutions Inc., one of the nation's largest payment processors.

Although a ruling in the class-action consumer lawsuit wouldn't have legal standing outside the state, it would increase the pressure on Visa and MasterCard to notify all affected account-holders in this and any future breaches.

That would compound the headaches that the CardSystems imbroglio already has caused.

The breach, initially disclosed by MasterCard three months ago, exposed up to 40 million credit and debit card accounts to potential abuse between August 2004 and May 2005.

It's the largest of more than 70 consumer information security breaches reported in the past seven months, according to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse.

Although the scope of the CardSystems break-in has been generally outlined, the

credit card associations haven't sent warnings to the most vulnerable customers.

San Francisco-based Visa and Purchase, N.Y.-based MasterCard maintain that responsibility should fall to the myriad banks that administer the accounts because neither credit card association has direct relationships with the affected customers.

Both Visa and MasterCard provide processing and marketing services to thousands of banks nationwide. It's a profitable endeavor. MasterCard's parent company earned \$213.5 million on revenue of \$1.4 billion during the first half of this year, according to documents filed in preparation for an initial public offering of stock. Visa doesn't disclose its profit.

Internal investigations have determined that the still-unknown thief grabbed enough sensitive details from CardSystems to defraud about 264,000 Visa and MasterCard account-holders nationwide, according to evidence gathered in the lawsuit, which was filed by San Rafael, Calif., attorney Ira Rothken.

No home addresses or Social Security numbers were stolen in the CardSystems breach, minimizing the risk for identity theft. But the hacking obtained customer names, account numbers and security codes.

The lawsuit seeks a court order requiring Visa and MasterCard to warn each Californian whose information was compromised.



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Census: Fastest-growing cities are in West

BY STEPHEN OHLEMACHER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — More than 100 years ago, Horace Greeley told his fellow Americans to “Go West.” And they still are. Twelve of the nation’s 20 fastest growing metropolitan areas are in the West, the Census Bureau says. The fastest growing: Greeley, Colo. Greeley and its surrounding communities, about 60 miles north of Denver, grew by 16.8 percent, to 211,000 people, between 2000 and 2003, according to a report being released Thursday. Greeley, whose first settlers included an editor who had worked for the famous 19th century journalist, thus its name, ranked just ahead of two other Western communities — St. George, Utah, and Las Vegas. Greeley City Manager Roy Otto said the area has grown because it’s a reasonable commute to Denver and has relative-

ly inexpensive homes. The annual Census estimates of urban population growth show the New York-northern New Jersey-Long Island area with a population of 18.6 million. The number of people in the region, the nation’s largest metropolitan area, was up 1.7 percent from three years earlier. The Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana population hit 12.8 million and Chicago-Naperville-Joliet was 9.33 million. The Census Bureau defines a metropolitan area as a region containing at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more people. The report released Thursday focused on growth estimates from 2000 to 2003, the most recent information available. Americans have been moving south and west for decades, with a big jump in population in the South, starting in the 1970s. Still, the West continues to outpace all other regions. According to the 2000 Census, population in the western United States grew by

Growing with the flow

By The Associated Press

Estimated population change in the 20 fastest-growing metropolitan areas for 2000 through 2003:

Metropolitan area 2003 population
Percentage change from 2000

Greeley, Colo. 211,000 16.8
St. George, Utah 104,000 15.2
Las Vegas-Paradise, Nev. 1,577,000 14.6
Naples-Marco Island, Fla. 287,000 14.0
Stockton, Calif. 633,000 12.3
Bend, Ore. 129,000 12.2
Gainesville, Ga. 156,000 12.1
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif. 3,642,000 11.9

Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Fla. 492,000 11.6
McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, Texas 636,000 11.6
Raleigh-Cary, N.C. 884,000 11.0
Laredo, Texas 214,000 10.6
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz. 3,593,000 10.5
Austin-Round Rock, Texas 1,378,000 10.2
Modesto, Calif. 492,000 10.1
Prescott, Ariz. 184,000 10.1
Merced, Calif. 232,000 10.0
Boise City-Nampa, Idaho 511,000 9.9
Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, Calif. 1,975,000 9.9
Orlando, Fla. 1,803,000 9.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

19.7 percent in the 1990s, followed by the South with 17.3 percent more people. The Midwest and the Northeast posted single-digit increases in population.

Murderers who kill whites more likely to land on death row

BY DAVID KRAVETS
AP Legal Affairs Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — More condemned men and women are on California’s death row for killing whites than for murdering people of any other race, despite there being more black and Hispanic murder victims, according to a new study. The study, to be published in the Santa

Clara Law Review, for the first time takes a detailed accounting of the races of California homicide victims killed in the 1990s. It concludes that suspects who murder whites are almost four times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who kill Hispanics. Also, perpetrators who kill whites are three times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who kill blacks. “To put it bluntly, there’s apparently

different values being placed on victims from different racial and ethnic groups,” Northeastern University criminal justice professor Glenn Pierce, a co-author of the study, said in an interview. “That’s what the pattern would suggest.” However, the report, “The Impact of Legally Inappropriate Factors on Death Sentencing for California Homicides, 1990-1999,” concludes that the race of the

defendant did not contribute significantly to whether prosecutors sought the death penalty or whether jurors would issue a death judgment. Instead, the study, co-authored by Michael Radelet, a University of Colorado sociology professor, concluded the victim’s race was paramount in determining whether a defendant would get a death sentence.



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NATIONAL



Longer summers may be warming up Alaska

BY DAN JOLING

Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Global warming research in Alaska has centered largely on its warmer winters. But a new paper concludes that summer warming in arctic Alaska also has had a strong effect on high latitude climate change.

Current trends resulting in less tundra and more shrubs and trees will further amplify atmospheric heating, by a factor of two to seven times, the authors conclude.

The study was published Thursday in an advance online publication, Science Express. A print version will appear later in Science magazine.

"Summer warming is more pronounced over land than over sea ice, and atmosphere and sea-ice observations can't explain this," said Terry Chapin, the study's lead author and a professor of ecology at the Institute of Arctic Biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The paper is a synthesis of multiple studies, said Matthew Sturm, a research physical scientist for the Army's Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory Alaska, and another of the study's 21 authors.

The study, underwritten by the National Science Foundation, focused on Alaska's North Slope north of the Brooks Range and parts of western Alaska, Sturm said.

Previous studies and paleoclimate evidence indicate

that the Arctic summer is warmer than at any time in at least 400 years, according to the study.

Arctic climate change often is linked to the retreat of sea ice. Less sea ice reduces the amount of sunlight reflected off a surface. Less reflected light means more heat absorbed by the ocean. That change is most pronounced in winter.

The new study focused on summer and the increase in days of snow-free ground as a factor in high latitude warming. Snowmelt now occurs 7.5 days earlier than it did three decades ago, the study said.

Scientists used surface temperature records, satellite-based estimates of cloud cover and energy exchange, ground-based measurements of reflected light and field observations of changes in snow cover and vegetation to calculate the change.

The localized effect of the longer snow-free season is comparable to regional changes caused by doubling the

effects of atmospheric carbon dioxide, the scientists said.

The increase in snow-free ground permits changes in vegetation, such as more shrubs and advances of tree-lines. Conversion of tundra to forest in the last 50 years accounted for only about 3 percent of the total warming caused by land-surface change.

But more shrubs and trees and less tundra will amplify warming in the future, the scientists concluded.

In winter, shrubs and trees project above snow and absorb more heat than low-stature tundra that's likely to be completely covered by snow, Sturm said. The canopy trees and shrubs provide in summer also absorb more heat, he said.

"Continuation of current trends in shrub and tree expansion could further amplify this atmospheric heating two to seven times," Chapin said.

He said the findings should be incorporated into climate models.

Feds says illegal flow of immigrants slowing with Arizona crackdown

BY ARTHUR H. ROTSTEIN

Associated Press Writer

TUCSON, Ariz. — The Border Patrol has cut down on illegal immigration through Arizona with an ongoing crackdown that specifically targets what has been the U.S.-Mexico border's busiest illegal entry point, a top federal official said Thursday.

"We are making progress, moving in the right direction in decreasing numbers and the flow of aliens across Arizona," said Robert Bonner, commissioner for U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Six months ago, Bonner described Arizona as "the weakest part of our border with Mexico."

In a telephone interview Thursday from Washington, Bonner noted that total apprehensions of illegal immigrants crossing into Arizona dropped about 13 percent over the past six months compared to the same period a year earlier.

The number of helicopters and airplanes used by agents in Arizona doubled and 530 more agents were added to the Tucson and Yuma sectors of the Border Patrol than were available during fiscal 2004, when the first phase of the Arizona Border Control Initiative started, Bonner said.

In recent years, Arizona has been the most active point along the Mexican border for illegal immigrants entering the country, spurred on by crackdowns in San Diego and El Paso. Arizona accounted for 54 percent of the 1.1 million illegal immigrant apprehensions nationwide during fiscal 2004, which ended last Sept. 30.

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NATIONAL

Country-of-origin labeling on meat gets Senate support

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Senators from the High Plains say they will fight a provision in this year's House agriculture spending bill that would prevent meats from being labeled with their country of origin.

The House bill would block funding for implementation of the labeling law, scheduled to begin in September 2006. The Senate's agriculture spending bill, which passed Thursday, would leave the law alone.

The bills now head to a House-Senate conference where those differences will have to be resolved.

The labeling law, authorized in 2002 as part of six-year farm legislation, was written by Midwestern ranchers who fear competition from Canadian beef producers and contend that labeling the food would help consumers make educated choices about the meat they buy.

That argument was fueled by two confirmed cases of mad cow disease in the United States. A Texas cow tested positive in June, and a Canadian-born cow in Washington state tested positive in December 2003.

Meatpackers and retailers, along with ranchers in the Southwest where Mexican and U.S. meat is often mixed in packing houses, say the massive paperwork associated with the labels will drive up costs and consumer prices. Rep. Henry Bonilla, a Texas Republican who is chairman of the House Appropriations agriculture subcommittee, has led the fight to kill the law.

Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., who sits on the subcommittee, authored the labeling law in 2002. He said members from the region will do "everything we can" to prevent the delay.

"It is remarkable that a small handful of House members hoping to protect the meatpackers have been able to gum up the works," he said Thursday.

The 2005 Montana Legislature passed a law putting food labeling into effect in Montana on Oct. 1, 2006, if the federal government again delayed it.

This would not be the first time Congress pushed back the law, which also applies to fruits, vegetables and peanuts. In 2003, Congress pushed the start of the program from 2004 to 2006. House appropriators included language in last year's spending bill that would have made the program voluntary, but it was dropped after senators objected.

The Senate agriculture spending bill also included a measure to keep Japanese beef off U.S. menus if Japan won't buy American beef. Senators want to retaliate against Japan, once a \$1.5 billion-a-year buyer of U.S. beef, for refusing to lift a mad cow-related ban.

The bill also contains a provision delaying an Agriculture Department proposal to consolidate local Farm Service Agency offices. A plan outlined in a "working document" obtained by The Associated Press would close 665 of 2,353 offices nationwide.

Department officials say the numbers are inaccurate and that their goal is better service, not closing offices.

Next Supreme battle taking center stage

BY DEB RIECHMANN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Republicans and Democrats alike are looking beyond John Roberts' virtually certain confirmation as the nation's 17th chief justice to President Bush's next nominee to the Supreme Court, expecting a quick announcement from the White House and a much tougher confirmation fight.

Three Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee sided with the panel's 10 Republicans on Thursday in a 13-5 vote to endorse Roberts, sending his nomination to the floor of the Senate for a confirmation vote no later than next Thursday.

With little suspense left in Roberts' climb to the Supreme Court, speculation focused on whether the support from three Democrats gives Bush any more or less leeway to nominate someone more conservative than Roberts to replace retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

"I think there were people in the White House who hoped the Democrats would all vote for him and show that Roberts was a high-quality nominee," said Stephen Wermiel, an American University law professor. "There were other people in the White House who hoped the Democrats would all vote against him, thinking that would help the president feel liberated to do whatever he wanted to do next."

Regardless of their motives, it was clear the Judiciary Committee members were eyeing Bush's next pick for the court.

"I think that some of the voting today was calculated to impact on the next nomination," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., chairman of the committee. Some senators believed that backing Roberts puts them in a better position to oppose the next Bush nominee, while others thought that opposing him puts the president on notice that he had better put someone up who was acceptable to a broad spectrum of senators.

Norm Ornstein, a political analyst with the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington, said anyone familiar with the Bush White House knows that a strong Democratic vote against Roberts would convince Bush that Democrats would reject anyone he'd nominate "so why bother nominating

anyone but a fire-breathing conservative."

The White House, which has been keeping details of Bush's selection process secret, said only that the president planned to nominate a highly qualified candidate whom Americans can be proud to have on the court.

"The historic standard, particularly with recent nominees, has been based on qualifications," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said. "Judge Roberts clearly has far exceeded that standard, and earned broad-based support. The Senate has traditionally joined together in support of those nominees who were well-qualified to sit on the court, and avoided becoming beholden to partisan interest groups."

Some lawmakers and legal analysts claimed the three Democrats — Sens. Patrick Leahy, Russ Feingold and Herbert Kohl — likely supported Roberts so they would not be cast as obstructionists.

"If the Roberts' confirmation is a foregone conclusion, why look like a knee-jerk obstructionist?" asked Brad Berenson, formerly a lawyer in the Bush White House. "It's far better to preserve the appearance of being fair-minded and try to convince the president he has a chance to get your vote if he nominates someone to your liking. It also gives you the ability to oppose the next nominee with greater credibility."

The idea of using the Roberts vote to position oneself for the next confirmation hearing was rejected by David Carle, a spokesman for Leahy, the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

"For Democratic senators this is a vote of conscience, not a chess game," Carle said. "That's why Democratic senators are not voting in lockstep, unlike some partisans who cheerlead for anyone the White House picks, even before hearings are held."

Lynn Becker, a spokesman for Kohl, D-Wis., said the senator considers every nominee based on his or her merits and casts his vote accordingly. And Feingold, also a Democrat from Wisconsin, hinted that while he voted for Roberts, he might not be willing to embrace a conservative federal appellate judge like Janice Rogers Brown, who has been mentioned as a possible replacement for O'Connor, the swing vote on issues including affirmative action, abortion, discrimination and death penalty cases.

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NATIONAL



North Slope region recoiling as oilfield properties take hit

BY RACHEL D'ORO

Associated Press Writer

BARROW, Alaska — Buses sit idle inside a garage here, gathering dust, their only purpose these days to serve as makeshift storage bins for Alaska's largest regional government.

The seven buses once ferried residents around Barrow, the most populated community in the sprawling North Slope Borough with 4,500 people. In their heyday, the buses ran 16 hours a day, seven days a week. They were equipped with monitors that allowed riders to check their TVs at home for the precise locations, thus avoiding a wait outside in subzero temperatures.

But the borough, once flush with oil wealth, is feeling broke. Its industrial property tax base includes the North Slope oil fields and northern segments of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. But depreciating oil property values have chipped away at borough coffers at a rate of \$6 million a year — and officials say those losses must be countered with budget reductions.

"There's this perception that the roads are paved in gold here and that we have plenty of money," said Dennis Packer, the borough's chief of staff. "A lot of people don't believe there's no money and that's unfortunate. But it's pretty straightforward."

The borough's financial problems won't be solved by crude selling at record levels since it doesn't benefit from the oil itself. Instead, the borough only is allowed to tap the aging industry properties — wells, production buildings, a network of pipelines in Prudhoe Bay and other fields — to bring in tax revenue.

Oil and gas properties account for 97 percent of the borough's property tax base, and brought in \$161 million last year. The tax base is currently assessed at \$10.2 billion, a \$1.9 billion decline from its peak eight years ago, said John Ames, the borough's chief financial officer.

And much of the shrinking revenue is quickly absorbed in running eight communities not linked by roads in an 88,800-square-mile jurisdiction, an area almost the size of Oregon.

Borough villages were mired in Third World conditions when oil industry taxes started coming in three decades ago. Much of that bounty was spent on basic infrastructure, such as power and plumbing, according to Packer.

Even when the money flowed freely, luxury wasn't the word normally used to describe conditions in Barrow, where utilitarian commercial buildings and ramshackle houses line up along trash-strewn streets. Many residents of this Arctic Ocean community hunt and fish for much of their food, including whale, seal and caribou, so it's

not unusual to see fresh kills stacked alongside four-wheelers in front of homes.

But subsistence hunting won't solve the financial problems, and borough officials were left with tough choices.

In the most dramatic cut this summer, officials shut down Barrow's public transit system, stranding many poor and elderly residents in the 18.4-square-mile community, which is divided by a large lagoon.

Packer said the borough is working with Barrow officials to find an alternative system, such as a private shuttle service.

Whenever that happens won't be soon enough for Joe and Mary Jane Ahkivgak, who relied on the buses to get them and their four sons around town. The family can't afford common Alaska transportation such as an all-terrain vehicle or a snowmobile, let alone a car, Joe Ahkivgak said.

"There's been a lot of walking so far," he said.

When bone-chilling winter arrives in coming weeks, the couple may have no choice but to use taxicabs.

Borough officials say bus ridership was low and brought in only \$30,000 annually, far short of the \$700,000 cost to maintain and operate the 20-year-old public transit system. It no longer makes sense to supplement such a cash drain, particularly when necessities such as municipal insurance and the diesel fueling village power plants are skyrocketing, officials said.

"We had to take a really hard look at transit — something that's not mandated, but optional," Ames said.

Proposed oil developments and the possibility of building a natural gas pipeline could help in future years, borough officials said. But that doesn't pay today's bills.

Downsizing throughout the region began in earnest three years ago, including laying off municipal employees, merging departments, unloading residential rental properties, phasing out borough assisted care facilities, and scrapping small buses operating in villages.

One of the few museums in an Alaska Native village also faces uncertain future funding. Annual borough contributions to the Simon Paneak Memorial Museum in the Brooks Range village of Anaktuvuk Pass, about 250 miles southeast of Barrow, have shrunk by a third, from \$160,000 in 2002 to the current \$105,000.

Closing the museum is not an option for the community of 320 people, the last remaining settlement of inland Inupiat Eskimos with a rich culture and history to share, said curator Grant Spearman, who has managed the small museum since it opened in 1986. He's trying to set up an endowment fund that would fund the museum in perpetuity.

"We know we can't be funded by the borough indefinitely," Spearman said.

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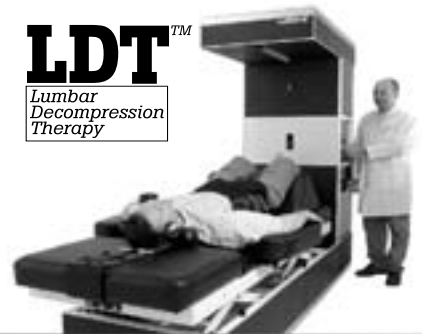


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INTERNATIONAL

Constitution campaign gets Shiite boost

BY TAREK EL-TABLAUWY

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The Iraqi government's campaign to win support for the country's new constitution has won the critical backing of the most influential Shiite religious leader, less than a month before a national referendum on the draft charter.

The U.S. military on Friday reported the deaths of two American soldiers west of Baghdad overnight. One was killed by a roadside bomb between the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi, the other by small arms fire in Ramadi.

In the capital, a suicide bomber on a small public bus set off hidden explosives in a bustling open-air bus terminal Friday, the Muslim day of worship, killing at least five people and wounding eight, police said.

Also in Baghdad, gunmen killed two members of the commission charged with ensuring former members of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime were banned from the Iraqi hierarchy, police said. Their deaths raised to 14 the number of commission members who have been killed since the 323-member Supreme National Commission for de-Baathification was created two years ago.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, meeting with aides

Thursday in the holy city of Najaf, urged his followers to vote "yes" on the new basic law, according to two top officials in al-Sistani's organization. The officials refused to be identified because they are not authorized to speak for the reclusive cleric.

In January, millions of Shiites followed al-Sistani's call to vote in Iraq's first democratic elections in nearly half a century, and the ballot gave the Muslim sect a majority in the new parliament and government.

If two-thirds of the voters in any three of Iraq's 18 provinces reject the constitution during the Oct. 15 national referendum, a new government must be formed and the process of writing the document would start again.

Days after the draft constitution was approved by Iraq's National Assembly and sent to the United Nations for printing and distribution, the government issued fliers and posters, with the banner headline stating: "Read the Constitution, it was written for your freedom." But copies of the proposed constitution haven't been distributed to the Iraqi public yet.

Most Sunni Muslim clerics and politicians have urged their followers to vote against the document, complain-

ing that they did not have adequate representation in drafting it. Sunnis, the favored group under Saddam, account for an estimated 20 percent of the population and form the majority in four provinces.

Two other popular leaders in Iraq's majority Shiite sect, Muqtada al-Sadr and Ayatollah Mohammed al-Yaqoubi, also have rejected the constitution, and their stand — representing a potentially serious rift in the Shiite monolith — has been reflected recent violence in the southern city of Basra.

Rioting broke out in Basra on Monday after British armored vehicles and troops encircled a jail where two British soldiers were taken after their arrest by Iraqi police. Five Iraqis reportedly died in the violence.

British armored vehicles later broke into the jail and freed the two soldiers, allegedly from Shiite militiamen. Basra authorities accused the British of violating Iraqi sovereignty, and the provincial governor demanded Iraqis stop cooperating with the British.

Anthony Cordesman of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Affairs said the escalation in Basra underscored the growing rift among Shiite factions ahead of the referendum and elections.

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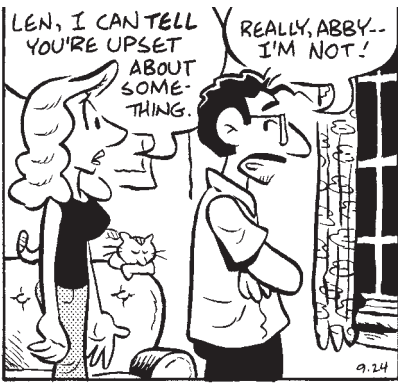
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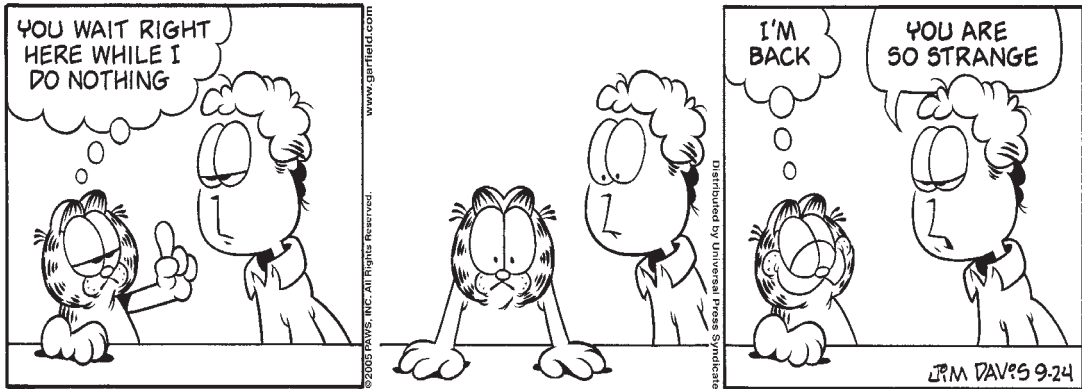
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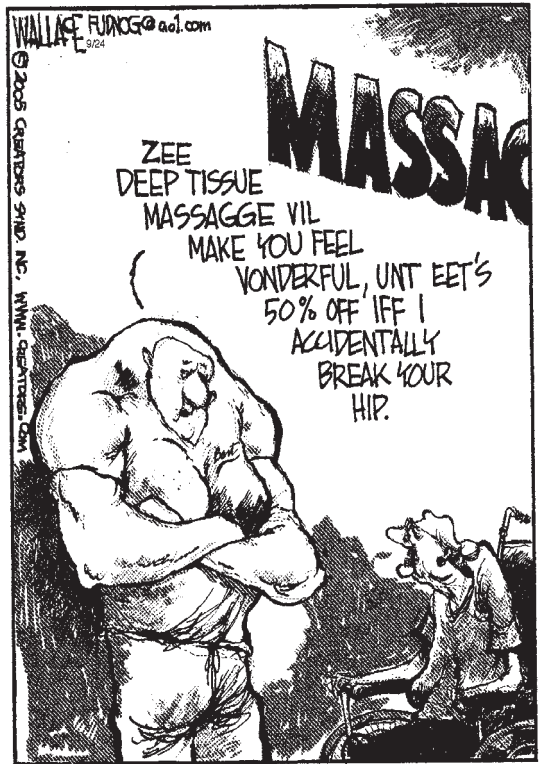


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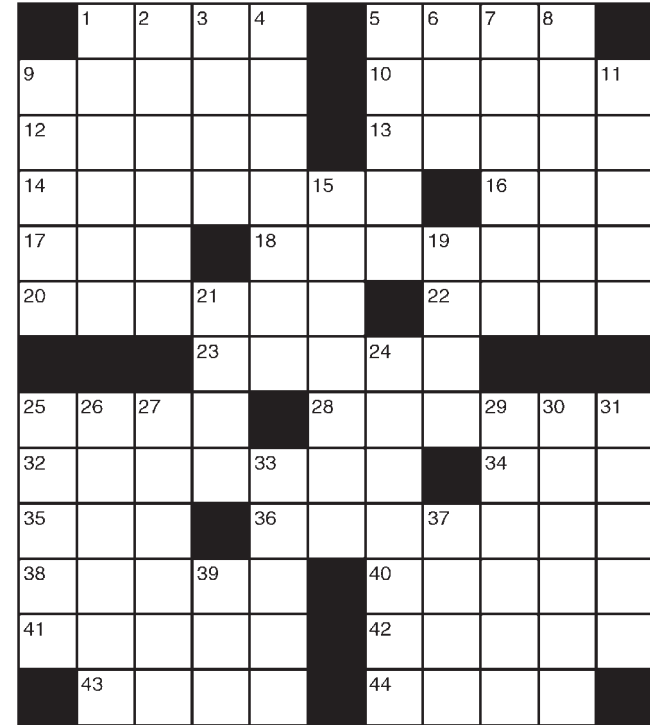
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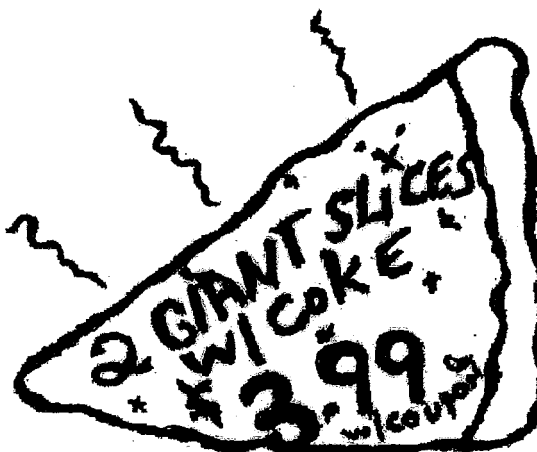
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Obituaries

MICHAEL GERALD LYONS



MICHAEL GERALD LYONS, 58, reached the finish line at his home in Santa Monica. He was a long time resident and Vietnam Veteran. He will be terribly missed by his brother and sisters, Mary Catherine, Patrick, Geraldine, and their children, his nieces and nephews. Cherished and loved by his Santa Monica family, Roxanne, Danielle, and Tani. Be at Peace my Love

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