TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2005 Volume 4, Issue 274

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO
7 13 23 28 33
Meganumber: 2
Jackpot: $7 Million

FANTASY 5
5 13 18 29 35

DAILY 3
Daytime: 3 0 9
Evening: 6 4 4

DAILY DERBY
1st: 06 Whirl Win
2nd: 02 Lucky Star
3rd: 04 Big Ben

RACE TIME: 1:40.45

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



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

In June, the Arab Balad party went to court in Haifa, Israel, challenging ultra-nationalist Jews of the Gush Katif settlement, who are virulently opposing the government's mandatory withdrawal from Gaza. However, the Balads' complaint has little to do with sovereignty or religion. The party has for years used orange as its organizing theme color and filed the lawsuit to make the upstart Gush Katif stop using orange in its own materials.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 270th day of 2005.
There are 95 days left in the year.

On Sept. 27, 1964, the Warren Commission issued a report concluding that Lee Harvey Oswald had acted alone in assassinating President Kennedy.
In 1928, the United States said it was recognizing the Nationalist Chinese government.
In 1954, "Tonight!" hosted by Steve Allen, made its debut on NBC TV.
In 1959, a typhoon battered the main Japanese island of Honshu, killing nearly 5,000 people.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"A man who is afraid will do anything."

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
INDIAN STATESMAN (1889-1964)

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Easel does it



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Beth Judge holds on to her son Matthew, 4, as he puts his final touches on a community mural sponsored by Inside Out, an after-school art program, held on Sunday during the 21st Annual Abbot Kinney Festival in Venice.

'Chuco' made impression on others

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

EXPOSITION BLVD. — The family of a Santa Monica man slain over the weekend contend he was well on his way to a better life when he was shot to death.

Jesse Becerra, 24, was walking westbound on 21st Street toward La Brea Avenue at 12:45 a.m. on Saturday when a man ran up to him and shot him multiple times

See **MURDER**, page 7



JESSE BECERRA

Council desires sex shop mandate

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Just how to balance sex shops' right to operate with the concerns of a community will have elected officials talking tonight.

The City Council on Tuesday evening is scheduled to discuss an ordinance that would update and amend how Santa Monica regulates its adult businesses.

Studies show that adult businesses increase the amount of crime and decrease property values in a neighborhood, according to a staff report. This is especially true when adult businesses become concentrated in a given area.

Aside from illicit "massage" parlors, staff identifies three sexually-oriented businesses in Santa Monica. The most recently established is "Secret Desires," a retail store which spurned controversy when it opened for business this year, due to its clear visibility off Lincoln Boulevard and its close proximity to residential neighborhoods, officials said.

In addition to Secret Desires, a video store called "The Odyssey" has been situated on Wilshire Boulevard for several years, and a

See **SEX SHOPS**, page 6

Legalese and lattes: City Hall to spend over $500K tonight

(Editor's note: This is part of an ongoing series that tracks the city's expenditures which appear on the upcoming Santa Monica City Council consent agenda. Consent agenda items are routinely passed by the City Council with little or no discussion from elected officials or the public. However, many of the items have been part of public discussion in the past)

BY JASMIN PERSCH
Special to the Daily Press

CITY HALL — Elected leaders tonight are expected to spend more than $500,000 on a cafe at the new Main Library, consultants to advise city officials on airport disputes and auditors to retrieve missing money from City Hall coffers.

THE 'BOOKMARK CAFE'

The City Council plans to put $175,000 towards the construction and start-up costs for a new cafe, which will be nestled in the central courtyard in the Main Library.

City officials chose G.W. Inc. to manage the 750-square-foot cafe after a series of reference checks, interviews and food sampling, according to city staff.

G.W. Inc. was picked because of its healthy food options and the best reputation for quality food and customer service, city staff said.

The company owns two local restaurants — Bud's Deli and

See **CONSENT**, page 8



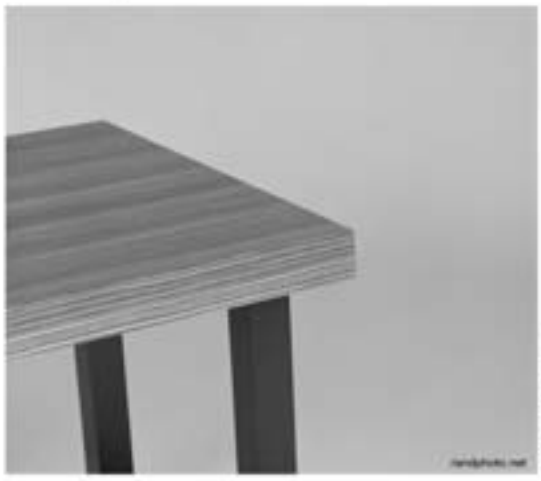
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HOROSCOPE

Rent a movie, Sag

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)
★★★★★ You really don't need any more sparkle and energy, but the planets seem to bathe you in high energy and ultimate creativity. How you focus it is up to you. A child or loved one wants some attention. Tonight: Enjoy the moment.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Knowing when to pull out can make all the difference in what happens right now. You might opt to head home early or to work from home. You have so much energy that you can do more than your fair share. Tonight: At home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You are more verbal than you have been in a long time. You might feel a lot better once you clear the air. You might be amazed by your level of diplomacy. You can express dissatisfaction and be heard. Tonight: Lighten up.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Take a hard look at how much you are spending right now, especially on a personal level. Some might want to spruce up the house. Be aware of your budget. There is a tomorrow — promise. Tonight: Pay bills.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Of all signs, today you can muster up whatever is needed to get where you want to be. The Moon in your sign energizes you. You also have a magnetic effect on those around you — just reach out and see. Tonight: Your wish is another's command.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ If you feel lucky with money, take a moderate risk. Others might not be up for heading in your chosen direction. Be OK with walking alone. The end results will become obvious to everyone else. Actions and results speak. Tonight: Play ostrich.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Don't slough over anything. Keep your goals high, and you are likely to achieve the results you desire. Groups and meetings help you gain needed support. You might feel as if you have a cheerleading squad behind you. Tonight: Be your gregarious self.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Others follow your lead more easily right now. Speak and take the first step, and others will join in. Don't forget a commitment to an older friend or relative. You make a difference in this person's life. Tonight: Don't even think about making it an early night.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Your ability to see beyond the immediate and understand the ramifications separates you from the crowds. Realize that you might need to explain to others in the easiest way possible what you perceive. Tonight: Rent a movie.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ A partner shares some critical information that might impact your approach in your professional or community life. You sense that this person is right-on, and he is. Let him pitch in. Tonight: Dinner and a chat.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Others tap on your shoulder for feedback and information. You might not be comfortable with these sudden requests. You, like Sagittarius, can see beyond the obvious. Law, travel or education remains key. Tonight: The choice is yours.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ You are determined to clear your desk or mind of a project. You might need an associate's assistance, whether you want it or not. This person has a lot of insight and helps shorten the path you are taking. Why not make your life easier? Tonight: Relax in your favorite chair.

CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL AUDIT PENDING

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LOCAL

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Democratic Club has a proposition

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Democratic Club will debate propositions this week that have been placed on the November special election.

Some Democratic Party leaders advocate voting against all propositions and others are only for Propositions 79 and 80 on prescription drug discounts for low-income families and heightened regulation of electricity.

The audience will have a chance to voice their opinions during the "open mic" period at the meeting held at St. Anne's Church community room at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28.

Local acapella group leaves its mark in Russia

By Daily Press staff

A Santa Monica singer and his acapella group just returned from a choral festival in St. Petersburg, Russia, where they sang at the graves of Russian composers Peter Tchaikovsky and Alexander Borodin.

Bruce Schroffel and his group, the Oceanaires Men's Barbershop Chorus, performed with other American groups in the Sixth International Choral Festival of Barbershop Harmony in St. Petersburg.



Photo courtesy

Bruce Schroffel (left) of the Santa Monica Oceanaires greets Alexander Demenchenko, the executive director of the Department of Folk Arts, Russia's Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography. Schroffel presented him with a Santa Monica key ring, provided by the Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The merged chorus' final performance in the week-long festival was before a full house of 2,000 Russians in the Grand Hall of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic.

Schroffel said the group not only brought their unique singing-style to Russians but also taught barbershop harmony to Russian acapella groups.

"It wasn't an ordinary tourist experience," said Bruce. "I was an ambassador of our country, I was an ambassador of barbershop music, and I represented Santa Monica in our beautiful sister city, St. Petersburg. It turned out to be it an experience of a lifetime."

Local pastor pushes for response reform in Louisiana

By Daily Press staff

A local clergyman is pushing for reform in relief efforts in Katrina- and Rita-ravaged Louisiana as part of a Los Angeles delegation.

Rev. Mike Gutierrez of St. Anne Catholic Church and other clergy and civic leaders from across the country converged in Baton Rouge to demand a federal response that protects displaced families, supports communities sheltering evacuees, prevent similar disasters and rebuild New Orleans.

The delegation will meet at the town hall in Baton Rouge on Oct. 5 to present its recommendations for how federal money should be allocated in the relief effort.

"Our churches will return to Louisiana as many times as necessary to make sure

See **BRIEFS**, page 7

SURF REPORT

Most south-facing breaks have been experiencing chest-high sets; shoulder high at standouts on the better set waves. West-facing spots are running waist-high.
But today is looking smaller: knee- to waist-high at south facing breaks, smaller at west-facing breaks. Note that there is a possibility of some rain, thus increasing the risk of bacteria from runoff, and onshores winds picking up early on.

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
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
THURSDAY	2:04	0.2	1:57	2.0	8:33	4.6	7:50	5.4
FRIDAY	2:40	0.0	2:30	1.2	9:02	4.1	8:23	5.2

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The Q Line

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City Hall is moving toward a new program that will change the face of the vending carts on the Third Street Promenade. The City Council earlier this year signed a multi-year contract with a new management company, which will require the cart operators to spend thousands of dollars more on improvements as well as raise their rents. Many operators might not even be renewed.

So, this week Q-Line wants to know: **"Do you think the vending cart program needs to be revamped? And do you think City Hall is handling the situation with the merchants in a fair manner?"**

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your responses in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thinking outside the docks

Editor:

Seeing as how the long-awaited Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. promises a gumbo of goodness when they open on the Santa Monica Pier soon, wouldn't it be great if they hired some Katrina-crushed shrimper folk from down near New Orleans? How about the first week's Bubba booty going to help hurricane victims?

Henry Rosenfeld
Santa Monica

Coalition of forces only the beginning

Editor:

I just returned from what I believe is the single most inspiring event held annually in Santa Monica: The Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition's "Celebrating Success Breakfast," which honors formerly homeless men and women who turn their lives around through the assistance and support of local social service agencies, including St. Joseph's Center, Step Up on Second, Chrysalis, New Directions, Ocean Park Community Center, Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center, the CLARE Foundation, PATH, and the West LA Veterans Homeless Program.

Four things struck me about this extraordinary event:

1. Nearly all of the formerly homeless men and women being honored had been assisted by more than one of the social service agencies, and many had received help from several.

That these non-profit organizations, in a time of increased competition for dwindling dollars, can work so cooperatively is a true model for long-term problem-solving. The Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition is LA County's oldest coalition of social service agencies. We should be proud that this collaborative group exists in our community to facilitate the remarkable recovery of so many disparate souls.

2. Too many of the honorees are veterans. Forty percent of our county's homeless men and women served their country under the most grueling of circumstances, only to be left alone to deal with their demons upon their return.

When more veterans served in Congress and in our state legislatures, programs supporting vets were more fully funded. Funding for the Veterans Administration's mental health programs has been slashed in recent years, and the situation will get worse, especially for Californians. Our state has sent more soldiers to the Iraq War than any other state. We will have more war widows, more war orphans and more injured soldiers relying more heavily on our state and local social service programs at a time when the Bush/Schwarzenegger Administrations are balancing budget shortfalls with proposed tax cuts for the wealthy. In fact, just a few short weeks before President Bush sent another generation of young Americans to war in Iraq, he cut health benefits for existing veterans.

Programs for veterans must be fully funded. We ask our young men and women to risk their lives for our country; the least we can do is support their lives when they return home.

3. Nearly all of the honorees struggled with alcohol and drug addiction. Addiction touches nearly every American family and is one of our greatest and costliest health threats, yet our health system barely confronts the neurological and biochemical causes of this disease.

4. Many of the formerly homeless women and men now work professionally for the very organizations that helped them. I was struck by how my dollar to one of these effective social service agencies keeps circulating: As my dollar helps one person, she returns to help another generation of people struggling to regain their lives.

These honorees are now returning to school, to competitive employment, to families and to dignity. It struck me that the people whose courage and determination I will applaud at next year's "Celebrating Success Breakfast" may be the very people I see on the street today. I will now look more closely at these people's potential futures rather than at the ravages of their pasts.

Kelly Hayes-Raitt
Santa Monica

Lock 'em up

Editor:

A review of the six crime reports in the Crime Watch section (SMDP, Sept. 23, page 5) reveals that four of the six alleged crimes involved transients. If this crime rate of 67 percent applies to a typical week in Santa Monica, we need to examine the effectiveness of current homeless policies. Apparently, prison is the primary solution.

Dr. Lisette Bauersachs
Santa Monica

Tell Santa Monica what you think!

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Santa Monica Daily Press

GUEST COMMENTARY **BY JOHN W. WHITEHEAD**

How could a good God allow suffering?

I am more afraid that we are really rats in a trap. Or, worse still, rats in a laboratory. Someone said, I believe, 'God always geometrizes.' Supposing the truth were 'God always vivisects?'"
—C.S. Lewis

With disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, people invariably ask, "Why did God let this happen?" All sorts of answers have been offered. For example, a Jewish rabbi said that God was punishing the U.S. for its support of the recent Gaza evacuation. And a Middle Eastern cleric argued that God is judging the U.S. for the Iraqi war and the killing of innocent civilians.

Then there's the theory that since New Orleans was leveled two days before the annual "Southern Decadence" festival was to begin that God was bringing judgment on the city for allowing the supposedly gay festival. As the director of Repent America stated, "Although the loss of lives is deeply saddening, this act of God destroyed a wicked city."

But all this begs the question. First of all, who are these people to be speaking for God? Moreover, why would those who had absolutely nothing to do with the destructive actions in the Middle East, for instance, suffer? After all, government officials who have perpetrated the crimes that God supposedly is persecuting the country for were left untouched. Is God simply a cosmic sadist or a monster who visits mayhem, destruction and death on innocent people?

The more likely answer is that weather catastrophes are merely the work of natural cycles. Weather stations track hurricanes and predict when and where they will land. And we cannot forget that while nature is awesome and beautiful, it acts, at times, as our enemy as well.

That aside, natural disasters have wreaked havoc on the planet since its beginning. But it must not be forgotten that all the pain people have had to endure has not come by way of so-called acts of God. People hurting people accounts for at least four-fifths of all the sufferings of humanity. It was men, not God, who produced the wars, the bombs, the guns, whips, racks, prisons, torture and so on. It was men, not God, who flew planes into the World Trade Center. It is men who pollute and destroy the ecological environment, thus helping to create more adverse weather patterns. And it is because of human avarice and human stupidity, not the workings of nature, that we have poverty and suffering.

Indeed, what led to the pain and suffering in places such as New Orleans was the failure of people in positions of leadership to prepare adequately for something that was naturally going to happen. For whatever reasons, the federal, state and local governments had not prepared New Orleans for a level five hurricane. Since the city of New Orleans sits in a bowl, the lack of a fortified levy that could withstand a level five hurricane spelled disaster.

Nonetheless, there remains much suffering that is not manmade. The question is why there is suffering of any kind. And why would a so-called "good" God allow suffering? Indeed, if there is a good God, according to theologian C.S. Lewis, then he is no less formidable than a cosmic monster. And the more we believe, as traditional Christians do, that God hurts only to heal, the less we can believe that there is little hope in avoiding the pains of life. "A cruel man might be bribed — might grow tired of his vile sport," writes C.S. Lewis in his book "A Grief Observed." "Might have a temporary fit of mercy, as alcoholics have fits of sobriety. But suppose that what you are up against is a surgeon whose intentions are wholly good. The kinder and more conscientious he is, the more inexorably he will go on cutting. If he yielded to your entreaties, if he stopped before the operation was complete, all the pain up to that point would have been useless."

Thus, if there is a good God, then pain and suffering are necessary. Indeed, if they are unnecessary, then there is no God, or a bad one. And how do I — or anyone, for that matter — expect to escape the same? After all, God, according to Christian tradition, had his own son killed.

Likewise, disasters such as Katrina also show us that, in an age of cosmic alienation, we really do not understand God. "What reason have we, except our own desperate wishes, to believe that God is, by any standard we can conceive, 'good?'" Lewis wrote. "Doesn't all the prima facie evidence suggest exactly the opposite?"

Applying the word good to God is meaningless. Obviously, what God considers good — at least by the standards of some theologians — is radically different from our perception. In fact, maybe we are so intellectually and morally depraved that we cannot fathom what a good God is.

Clearly, we live lives that are a house of cards. The only way to make us realize the fact is to knock our illusionary houses down. And it only takes one blow for our house to collapse.

We are not the commanders of our fate. We are not gods. We are frail, vulnerable beings hoping and praying that somehow we can communicate to that one who made us and determines our future. So many questions remain.

But as C.S. Lewis recognized: "When I lay these questions before God I get no answer. But a rather special sort of 'no answer.' It is not the locked door. It is more like a silent, certainly not uncompassionate gaze. As though He shook His head not in refusal but waiving the question. Like, 'Peace, child; you don't understand.'"

(Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. He can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org.)

COMMENTARY

Ranting, raving over the small things in life



ANY DAY IN LA

BY HEIDI MANTEUFFEL

I have to admit, I occasionally enjoy a good rant and rave. Maybe that's why my parents had a shortage of willing baby-sitters for me at the age of six months. They often also clothed me in an "El Destructo" t-shirt when I was 2.

To further my credentials, I won the YMCA yelling contest at the age of 5. "Y-M, Y-M, Y-M-C-A!"

But as I got older, the obtrusive wailing transitioned naturally into its adult counterpart of short, side comments. "Wow. That sounds like a great idea," which translated with accompanied look means, "That sounds retarded — I don't want to go."

Or, "Deodorized clown shoes — sign me up," which equals, "For the love of all, stop asking me to go bowling."

I know what I like and don't like, and I'm not afraid to tell someone in a passive aggressive manner.

And then there are those extraordinary events that put a damper on my whining and push my life quickly into perspective. They're not that extraordinary, though. The cycle seems to occur every other week.

For instance, sometimes I feel robbed of my sleep. I'm completely worn out as I push myself in the wee hours of the morning to speed walk, only to be tapped by a friend who runs more frequent than I do, zipping past after saying hello.

Or another time (last Monday) I was stuck with these tickets to Matisyahu I bought in July, and come September I didn't have the energy to go see him. I dreaded trying to get rid of the tickets, thinking it to be an insurmountable hassle.

In one hour of posting them online, however, I got two e-mails back, which turned to a total of 10 e-mails per day asking me to sell the tickets at twice the price I had paid for them.

All of a sudden I was reminded, hmm, I guess I did want to go to the concert. And come to think of it, Matisyahu's one of my favorite performers. Funny how quickly things change.

And the complaint could be anything really, as rants often are. I worry that maybe I ate just a little too much of the Reuben melt at lunch, only to see Bubbles from BBC America's "Little Britain" strip to her 600- pound naked body suit/figure.

I feel elderly people don't like me. A grandmotherly woman was walking in themiddle of the street, pushing her cart slower than the competitors in the turtle race I witnessed last Thursday.

After parking my car, I came up to her and asked if she needed help with her groceries. I figured this was the least obtrusive approach to help her out of harm's way and onto the sidewalk. She gruffly passed me a look that said she could walk on the street by herself, thank you.

I figure it's personal, but I'm told that some elderly individuals can't control the muscles around the face. I'll just assume that's the case.

I worry about the next So Cal earthquake, only to see a tornado safe zone, AKA bathroom in the Oklahoma City airport.

And I think my life is so busy and difficult sometimes, only to be reminded of my boyfriend, who currently enrolled himself in three schools.

Or, I'm bummed about the day of rain we had last week. Then of course I see pictures of the second catastrophic hurricane to hit Louisiana this fall. Maybe a couple hours of rain isn't so bad after all.

But it shouldn't take a Katrina or Rita to put things into perspective. We don't have enough coastline to facilitate such cantankerous behavior.

That's why I like walking to Ocean Avenue when I've had a tough day. I look out on that never ending ocean, and am reminded just how small I am in comparison. It's nice to know that my life fits into a bigger scheme of more exciting problems, problems I will not whine that I have failed to be a part of.

(Heidi can be reached at anydayinla@gmail.com.)



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LOCAL



City also taking a look at massage parlor rules

SEX SHOPS, from page 1

lingerie boutique, "Nighties & Naughties," which also features an adult video section, is located on Main Street.

Neither The Odyssey nor Nighties & Naughties are located along highway corridors or in the downtown area, as current law requires. However, officials said because these places have become established, it may be legally difficult to require them to move.

Councilman Richard Bloom, who asked staff to investigate its adult business ordinance in light of the controversy over Secret Desires, said he hasn't received as many complaints about the other two sexually-oriented businesses, despite the fact they are located in unpermitted areas.

Representatives from all three stores said they were not aware of the ordinance update. Unsure of its specifics, they declined to comment.

Currently, adult businesses are supposed to be located along parts of Lincoln and Pico boulevards and east of downtown, between Colorado Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard and Fifth and Seventh streets.

The updated ordinance attempts to expand where adult businesses may be located throughout Santa Monica and better define what an "adult entertainment" business is, due to recent changes in the legal climate.

If approved, the ordinance would allow adult businesses to be located in the Bayside commercial district and the downtown overlay areas, a total area that would range between Colorado Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard and Second and Seventh streets.

According to the staff report, allowing other areas to have adult businesses would enable City Hall to better comply with constitutional concerns. Generally speaking, the courts have prohibited cities from zoning out adult businesses in order to protect the business rights of operators. Thus, any restrictions City Hall has on adult businesses must leave adequate sites available for demand. At the same time, staff seeks to make the sites far enough away from each other to prevent the "adverse" effects of adult businesses concentrated in a particular area of the community.

The location restrictions in the proposed ordinance would leave 1 to 1.5 percent of the land within Santa Monica available to adult businesses, placing City Hall in better compliance with current case law, according to the staff report.

Spacing requirements under the updated ordinance would remain the same. Therefore, it would continue to be illegal to locate an adult business within 500 feet of a residential district.

Several new provisions would also be added. For example, City Hall would be allowed to impose conditions on a business license and restrict the sale or transfer of the business. Also, signs visible from off-site that depict sexual activities or certain anatomical parts would be prohibited.

Staff on Tuesday is also expected to ask the council for direction to proceed updating laws regarding massage parlors — treated separately from other adult businesses within the city code.

Bloom said the ordinance update is a necessary step in light of the controversy over "Secret Desires", and staff is on the right track to balance issues important to all parties involved.

"The updated law tries to draw a balance between the constitutional restrictions that exist for business owners and the desire of members of the community to curtail this type of business as much as possible," Bloom said.

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LOCAL

Youth center changing name to honor Becerra

MURDER, from page 1

in the back of the head with a .22 caliber handgun.

According to police, Becerra was a member of the Santa Monica 13 gang. While investigators will try to determine whether his death may have been gang-related, family members said Becerra was involved with gangs in the past but turning his life around when he was killed.

Becerra, who lives on the city's eastern edge, was a Santa Monica native who attended Edison Elementary and John Adams Junior High schools. He graduated from Santa Monica High School in 2000.

Family members said he had many friends.

"Jesse was a good person, he had a big heart and was always smiling and making other people laugh," said Rebecca Becerra, his sister. "There were a lot of people who really loved him.

"I'm going to miss him."

Family members said Becerra worked at the Santa Monica Civic Center helping to set up for events. For more than a year, Becerra had been involved in a Los Angeles-based group called the Youth Justice Center (YJC), which works to help other gang members find peace in themselves and move away from a criminal lifestyle.

Kim McGill, a YJC organizer, said Becerra volunteered at the center as many as 20 hours per week. A "big bear" who was loved by all, McGill said the six-foot Becerra was a pleasant person. McGill said the YJC, which will soon apply for incorporation, has decided to change its name to the Chuco Youth Center, in honor of Becerra, whose nickname was "Chuco."

"Jesse was the star around here, an incredibly generous and giving person," McGill said. "He was the kind of guy who, when he saw a dirty room, he swept it. If someone was hungry and he was eating, Jesse would split his hamburger with him, even if he only had a few pennies.

"I've never heard him raise his voice in anger, and the kids loved him."

Family members said Becerra was a very "hands-on" person who was knowledgeable about computers. They said he could build a lawnmower from scrap.

"He was always working on something," Rebecca Becerra said.

Becerra's son, also named Jesse, will remain in the custody of his mother, Sofia Lopez. Becerra and Lopez were separated at the time of his death.

Becerra had a long-term girlfriend, Alexies Price. He is survived by his mother, Rebeca Gonzalez, sisters Rebecca Becerra and Michelle Gonzalez, and a brother, Robert Becerra.

Funeral arrangements are still being made.

Becerra was killed after he left a party, police said. Another man, whose identity hasn't been released, was shot in the buttocks. He was treated at a local hospital and in stable condition.

Family members said they want Becerra's killer to be brought to justice. The suspect — described as Hispanic, five feet seven inches tall and 125 pounds — fled the murder scene in a four-door black Lincoln Navigator with tinted windows, police said. The suspect was wearing a pink or orange shirt and baggy pants. He has either a buzz haircut or is bald and clean-shaven.

Detectives had no new information on Monday. Anyone with information is asked to call Los Angeles police Det. Cade or Det. Turriaga at (213) 473-0551.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

Congress and the president do right by those who perished and those who lost everything in the aftermath of Katrina," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez and other members of LA Voice, which is part of a national network of faith-based organizations called PICO National Network, left for Baton Rouge Sept. 24 to meet with congregations from around the country.

Book reveals strife of Indian women

By Daily Press staff

A lecture on a collection of short stories of women's struggles and successes in a state in South India will take place today in Santa Monica.

The translator of "Daughters of Kerala," Achamma C. Chanderskaran, will give the lecture on the stories about Indian women and the various religions — Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism — of the state.

Kerala was considered one of the world's 50 greatest places of a lifetime by the National Geographic Society Traveler and is the most literate state in India, with a literacy rate of 92 percent.

The lecture starts at 11:15 a.m. in room No. 214 at the Santa Monica College Art Complex.

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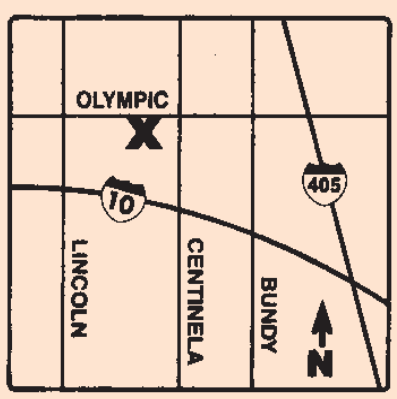
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City is set to shell out for help with revenues

CONSENT, from page 1

Gary's Grill — and had favorable references from its landlord and people in the restaurant industry. G.W. Inc. wants a five-year contract with two five-year options.

Under the proposal, G.W. Inc. will pay a monthly license fee of $2,250 — about $3 a square foot. That fee will be adjusted annually with the Consumer Price Index, or 9 percent of gross revenues that the cafe generates.

The new library on Santa Monica Boulevard will be completed this fall, but won't open until early next year.

AIRPORT CONFLICT

Close to $175,000 will likely go into legal services for city officials dealing with the airport following a two-year-long dispute over landing fees.

After the long conflict with the Federal Aviation Administration, City Hall wants lawyers who can advise it on matters with the administration to help with future negotiations. Palm & Dodge, LLP., based in Washington D.C., has been chosen. The firm charges between $200 and $450 per hour, according to city staff.

The City Council changed the landing fee in June to a standard $2 per 1,000 pounds, exempting airplanes that can prove they are based in Santa Monica. The new landing fee satisfies the demands of the airport, according to FAA and city officials.

City Hall has contracted with the firm in the past when it played a pivotal role in gaining FAA approval of the revised landing fees. City staff argues that the firm's experience with FAA procedures will provide City Hall the expertise it needs, according to a staff report. The contract will include the firm providing communications with the FAA, giving legal advice and consultation, legal opinions and drafting legal documents. A city attorney will be assigned to the law firm to work with legal matters, according to city staff.

SPEND MONEY TO SAVE MONEY

City Hall is expected to pay $55,000 to hire a consulting firm that would audit sales tax revenues and monitor other revenue streams for up to five years.

State records show that the same auditors, over the past four years, have helped recover $500,000 for City Hall through misallocated payments to other jurisdictions. Sales and utility taxes are collected by the state government and then reimbursed to local municipalities. Oftentimes that money gets misallocated, which is why city officials want to hire a firm to track the revenue.

City Hall has contracted with the firm in the past when it played a pivotal role in gaining FAA approval of the revised landing fees.

The firm has provided City Hall with sales tax analysis and forecasting, as well as sales tax-related legislative and regulatory issues for the past four years. It also provides property tax, property transfer sales, and business license services to City Hall.

City Hall has used these types of services since 1987, according to city staff.

The records also are used to predict money coming into City Hall and to keep track of sales tax trends.

REAL ESTATE EXPERTISE

About $200,000 is expected to be approved for a new contract with a law firm that handles issues that involves buying and redeveloping property for City Hall.

The firm, which has worked with City Hall since the 1980s, provides legal advice, legal opinions, drafting documents, approving contracts and attending local hearings and meetings. A city attorney will be assigned to work with the firm on legal services provided, according to a staff report.

The firm charges between $145 and $200 an hour and will give its expertise to not only City Hall but the Santa Monica Redevelopment Agency and the city's parking authority, which oversee major properties and parking structures, and are funded partially by federal money.

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415 PCH



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1 **e-workshop:** 415pch.smgov.net
Explore the vibrant history of this ordinary beachfront property, learn how the partnership with the Annenberg Foundation is bringing the site back to life, and get project updates. After September 30, review the emerging design. Give your comments - We'll pass them on to the Project Team

2 **Two Day Community Workshop:** October 1st & 2nd
Rain or shine at the project site, 415 Pacific Coast Highway

Saturday, October 1
10:00 am Welcome: Registration & Refreshments
10:30 am Project Presentation by 415 PCH Design Team
12:30 pm Break-out Discussion Groups

Sunday, October 2
Noon Welcome
12:30 pm Design Team Response to Community Input
Additional Community Comment
3 pm Special Meeting of the Recreation & Parks Commission

3 **Landmarks Commission:** October 10th , 6 pm
City Council Chambers, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica
This study session of the Landmarks Commission will include presentation, public input and commission discussion.

The revitalization of 415 PCH as a public facility is made possible by a generous gift from the Annenberg Foundation at the recommendation of Wallis Annenberg and in partnership with the City of Santa Monica and California State Parks. Additional funding is provided by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

Facilities are wheelchair accessible. To request a disability-related accommodation (such as sign language interpreting), please call 310-458-8310 at least 5 business days in advance. Para información en español, llame al número 310-458-8540.

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STATE

‘Reds’ heat: Beatty on the offensive

BY BETH FOUHY
AP Political Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. — Warren Beatty has a message for his old Hollywood pal, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger: it’s nothing personal.

“Arnold’s always thinking about him, but I’m not,” Beatty said in an interview Thursday night after he’d skewered Schwarzenegger in a speech to the California Nurses Association. “When I do think about him, I’m amused. I’ve always liked him. But I don’t think he knows what he’s doing.”

His wife, actress Annette Bening, agreed.

“I think the special election is really dangerous,” she said. “It’s not personal, it’s bigger than that. I don’t see it as personal, and I don’t think Warren does.”

But it’s safe to say others might.

Beatty, the actor-director and longtime Democratic activist, has emerged as one of the governor’s most visible antagonists this year, fueling speculation that he might be the latest aging Hollywood superstar considering a run for governor. Beatty has cleverly stoked that speculation, ensuring considerable publicity every time he speaks up.

Beside the nurses’ convention, Beatty tore into Schwarzenegger at an awards banquet in Beverly Hills last March and during a graduation speech at the University of California, Berkeley’s public policy school in May.

Beatty’s harsh words have been a bit puzzling for Schwarzenegger. In an interview with The Associated Press last week, Schwarzenegger, a Republican, said he and Beatty had a “great relationship” despite their divergent political views. He also suggested his fellow actor was out of work and looking for attention.

“Because, you know, he can give a speech somewhere and if he doesn’t mention my name and no one writes about it,” Schwarzenegger said. “So...that’s why he throws my name in because it becomes newsworthy and it becomes big and gets coverage.”

That comment made Beatty smile.

“I think I’ve had enough attention to last 50 lifetimes,” he said. “I’ve been politically active since the early 1960s and it wasn’t for the attention. I’ve always had enough attention.”

Still, listening to Beatty enumerate Schwarzenegger’s alleged failings as governor, one could understand why the governor might take Beatty’s words a bit personally.

Before a boisterous crowd and a huge phalanx of reporters and photographers at the nurses convention Thursday night, Beatty used colorful language to slam Schwarzenegger’s “year of reform” ballot initiatives and the Nov. 8 special election.

"Now we have to respond to this odious tactic, a cosmetic exercise to build up his image...after having accomplished little or nothing in office,” Beatty declared, saying Schwarzenegger’s tenure had been defined by “fake events, fake issues and fake crowds and backdrops.”

Recounting conversations with Schwarzenegger when they both worked in Hollywood, Beatty suggested that civic engagement did not seem to interest the governor during his days as a bodybuilder-turned-action star.

“To be fair, in the times I tried to draw him out on political stuff, he did say a couple of very smart things,” Beatty recalled. “One is that if you’re eating egg whites on a high protein, low cholesterol diet, it’s a mistake to throw the eggs away.”

Standing before the nurse’s group on Thursday, Beatty ducked the question of whether he would challenge Schwarzenegger next year, despite numerous standing ovations and chants of “Run, Warren run!” He said for now, he wants to focus on defeating the governor’s ballot initiatives, which he’s dubbed “union busting” and “reactionary.”

Schwarzenegger is pushing measures that would enact a state spending cap, strip lawmakers of the power to draw their own district lines, and make it harder for teachers to get tenure. He’s also endorsed a separate measure forcing public employee unions to get written permission from members before using their dues for political activity.

It’s not hard to see why political observers have fallen hard for a mythical Beatty vs. Schwarzenegger matchup in next year’s governor’s race.

A Bulworth vs. the Terminator race would pair two outsized celebrities, each with attractive and famous wives and four telegenic children. In comparison, a race pitting Schwarzenegger against either of the Democrats who’ve actually announced plans to run — state Treasurer Phil Angelides and Controller Steve Westly — seems a bit lackluster.

For now, Beatty doesn’t sound much at all like a candidate, insisting that Westly and Angelides are “very capable people.”

So why, then, does he maintain such a relentless focus on Schwarzenegger — especially when so many liberal celebrities prefer to train their ire on President Bush?

“Arnold is the governor of the state I live in,” Beatty said simply. “I’ve lived here for 45 years. It’s my home state, and it’s my responsibility to speak out about these things.”

And as long as there’s a chance he might challenge Schwarzenegger in 2006, Beatty knows that if he speaks out, people will listen.

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Overindulging kids can cost you dearly



How Much Is Enough?

By David j. Bredehoft, Ph.D.

Did you know that overindulging your child can be hazardous to your financial health — both in the short and long-terms? In the best case scenario, overindulging your child ends up being a frustrating experience that nickels-and-dimes you to death. In the worst case scenario, it can literally bankrupt you.

Lessons you hadn't intended to teach

Have you fallen into a pattern of every time you take your child on a shopping trip that he has to have something? It doesn't matter if you are going grocery shopping, shoe shopping, clothes shopping, or a trip to the garden center — he has to have something. Of course retailers don't make it easy for parents. They put all of that fun stuff right at 5-year-old eye level as you check out. But that's their plan.

If you don't buy him something, he turns on a full throttle WWF SmackDown scale tantrum right there in front of God and everyone. So, you buy him off. You give him what he wants and slink out of the store in embarrassment. This reoccurring event is extremely frustrating to you, and it teaches your child a lesson you didn't intend to teach: "The world is my oyster and mom and dad are my ATM." Could a pattern like this, which starts in early childhood, bring on your financial ruin? Possibly — if the pattern is long-term and becomes ingrained.

$$ General Education 101

Fast forward 13 years. Your son is now a freshman in college and you have just dropped him off at school. You co-signed on a credit card with a $5,000 spending limit for "emergencies only." In no time at all he maxes the credit card limit and there was no emergency. Now you are on the hook for his tuition, board and room, and a credit card bill at 21 percent interest. Think this couldn't happen? Look at the facts reported by Sandra Block in the USAToday (Aug. 12, 2003). Note: These figures do not include bills students owe for tuition, board and room.

■ The average credit card debt for college freshmen is $1,533.

■ The average credit card debt for college seniors is $3,262.

■ Four percent of college freshmen have credit card debt more than $7,000.

■ Thirty-one percent of college seniors have credit card balances of between $3,000 and $7000.

Fast forward another 10 years.

Your son graduated from college, is married and is a young professional with an excellent job. Together he and his wife earn six-figures. They spend every nickel they make. They would like to buy a nice home, but don't have the down payment, so you float them a loan with the understanding that they will pay you back with interest, and it never happens. Jeff Opdyke who writes the Love & Money column for the Wall Street Journal wrote a piece titled "Is It Time to Cut the Financial Cord?" and in it he cited numerous cases just like this. These children rationalized their behavior by saying they were collecting their inheritance early.

Old patterns die hard, but they can change. Now is the time to start teaching your child that "The world may be his oyster, but mom and dad are not his ATM."

Tips for avoiding overindulgence

■ Set limits and enforce them.

■ Teach your children to do chores.

■ Talk about money management with your children. I suggest Nathan Dungan's "Share save spend techniques" as a guide: www.sharesavespend.com.

■ Teach the difference between wants and needs.

■ Role model good money management.

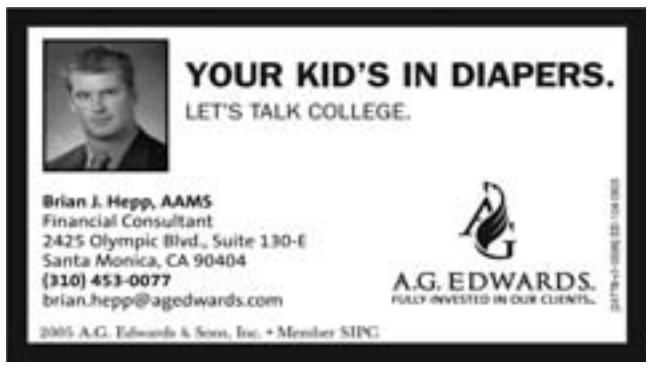
■ Learn to say "no."

To participate in a new study on overindulgence and relationships log onto our Web site at www.overindulgence.info.

(David J. Bredehoft Ph.D., Jean Illsley Clarke Ph.D. and Connie Dawson Ph.D., are co-authors of "How Much Is Enough? Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likeable, Responsible and Respectful Children — From Toddlers to Teens." Bredehoft is chair of the social and behavioral sciences department at Concordia University in St. Paul and can be reached at bredehoft@csp.edu. To read more about overindulgence go to www.overindulgence.info.)

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The fair returns with the usual exhibits and competitions including livestock, food and more, as well as lots more fun for the kids in a time travel exhibit at the Education Expo Building. Various times, adults $10 - $15, kids ages 6 – 12 - $8, free for kids under 5. 1101 McKinley Ave., Pomona., 909-623-3111. More details available online at www.lacountyfair.com

THURS., SEPT. 29 – THE GROVE KIDS CLUB – 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
This ongoing event features free entertainment or arts and crafts. Today's show stars award winning performance artist Lou Stratton who creates an interactive musical extravaganza with her puppets and music. FREE! The Grove Town Square, corner of Fairfax and 3rd, LA, 323-900-8080.

SAT. and SUN. THRU OCT. 2
THE VELVETEEN RABBIT – 11:00 a.m.
Margery William's classic book springs to magical life in this enchanting play about love, loss and self esteem. Presented by Y.E.S. – Youth Education/Entertainment Series – part of the SM Theatre Guild. For all ages. $7 adults, $5 for children under twelve and FREE for children of military, police and fire service personnal. Call for reservations – 828-7519, Morgan-Wixson Theatre, 2627 Pico Blvd.

SAT. and SUN. THRU OCT. 30
ABSOLUTELY HALLOWEEN at the Santa Monica Playhouse
12:30 and 3:30 p.m. A family theatre world premiere this show tells the heartwarming tale of a young girl who learns valuable lessons about life, love and laughter from her cat on Halloween. 1211 4th St., 394-9779, ext. 2 for reservations, $10.50 children under 12, $12.50 adults.

SUN., OCT. 2 – HONORING THE SEA
3:00 p.m. – Sunset (6:30 p.m.) The closing ceremony of the Sacred Music Festival features 300 artists presenting sacred traditions from five lineages of world culture. Artist groups will prepare a ceremonial offering to the sea that will be carried beyond the breakwaters in a traditional canoe by members of the Ti'at Society. The public is invited to witness and participate through ritual, music, dance and chant. At the conclusion of the event the public is invited to participate in a drum circle sponsored by REMO – 200 drums will be provided (bring your own if you have one). On the beach at the end of Ocean Park Blvd., 825-0507 or www.festivalofsacredmusic.org.

TUESDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica Playgroup – 11:00 a.m., for children born 1/04 – 9/04. Call or email Alison at 393-4481/riversalison@hotmail.com for more info. All moms welcome!

Movies for Moms! 11:00 a.m., Loews Cineplex Broadway Theatre, 1441 3rd St. Promenade – for Moms and babies newborn – 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. Visit www.enjoytheshow.com/reelmoms for details. Sept. 27 – Flightplan starring Jodie Foster, Peter Sarsgood and Sean Bean. Suspense/Action, ated "PG-13."

Storytelling

MAIN LIBRARY – HELD AT REED PARK, CORNER OF 7TH AND WILSHIRE.
Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m. For 2 year olds with adult.
Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.
FAIRVIEW BRANCH LIBRARY – 2101 OCEAN PARK BLVD – 310-450-0443.
Cuentos Para Pequenos – 10:00 a.m., six-week series in Spanish for 24 – 36 month olds.
Lap Time – 11:00 a.m, six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Program. Current sessions thru Oct. 11
Twilight Story Time -7pm – an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.
MONTANA AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY – 1704 MONTANA AVE – 310-829-7081.
Family Story Time – 7:00 p.m., all ages.
OCEAN PARK BRANCH LIBRARY – 2601 MAIN ST. – 310-392-3804.
Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30. Music, rhymes and stories for 2 to 3 year olds. Current session Sept. 13 – Oct. 18. Registration required.
Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis
For ages infant to 3. 11:00 a.m. 116 North Robertson, Plaza A, LA. 310-358-2500, www.storyopolis.com
Barnes and Noble at the Grove
Storytime for ages 2 – 6. 10:00 a.m. 189 Grove Drive, LA, 323-525-0270

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – walkers to 3 years, (Mon – Fri); Infant & Me Class – 10:45 – 11:45 a.m. and 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., 0 – 12 months; 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.
YMCA – Attachment Parenting Classes - 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., 1332 Sixth St., 393-2721 (ask for Shelana Philip-Guide or Audrey Meyer). This new class for mothers/dads and babies up to 12 months is presented by Karol Darsa, PsyD, a licensed psychologist with extensive experience working with children and families. Fees: Members – 1 class - $40, 5 class pass - $180; Non-members - $50, 5 class pass - $200.
BREAKTHROUGH PARENTING CLASSES – 7:00 – 9:30 p.m.
An advanced 10-week parent education course. Continuous enrollment. For info call Jayne A. Major, Ph.D., Breakthrough Parenting Services, Inc., 310-823-7846, jm@BPinAction.org.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA
10:00 – 11:00 a.m and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m; Free for members, non-members $90 for 10 classes. (also Thursday nights 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.
Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., $15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.
Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711. Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)
Itsy Bitsy Yoga – Baby IBY (6 weeks to pre-crawling) – 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. With Khefri Riley at Ocean Oasis, 1333 Ocean Ave. Register at www.khefri.net or call 323-549-5383.
Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-998-1981 - drop-in, first class free, $10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica Playgroups – 4:30 p.m., separate groups for children born in 2000 and 2001. Call or email Alison at 393-4481/riversalison@hotmail.com for more info. All moms welcome!

Storytelling

The Talking Stick Coffee Lounge – 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., 450-6052
10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4 at this neighborhood coffee shop.
FAIRVIEW BRANCH LIBRARY – 2101 OCEAN PARK BLVD – 310-450-0443.
Toddler Story Time – 9:30 a.m., for two year olds with adult.
Preschool Story Time – 10:30 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds with adult.
Current session Sept. 7 – Oct. 12.
MONTANA AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY – 1704 MONTANA AVE – 310-829-7081.
Lap Time - 10:15 & 11:15 a.m., ages 0-2. Current session Sept. 7 – Oct. 12
OCEAN PARK BRANCH LIBRARY – 2601 MAIN ST. –392-3804.
Preschool Twilight Story Time – 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Parents/children ages 3-5.
BARNES AND NOBLE, WESTSIDE PAVILION – 2 PM – AGES 2-5 – 310-475-4144
Border's, Westwood – 11a.m. – 310-475-3444.

Classes

Rhythm Child Parent & Me Rhythms, Santa Monica Studios, 3025 Olympic Blvd., 9:30 – 10:15 a.m. Children explore rhythms through drum play. For toddlers. $100 for 8 weeks. Call 204-5466 or visit www.rhythmchild.net for more info and session dates.
YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – walkers to 3 years; (Mon – Fri); 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.
Enchanted Lunchtime Theatre at Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th St., 394-9779
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. For ages 3 – 5 with parents. This theatrical adventure includes story time, theatre games, crafts, play building and lunch. Reservations required 24 hours in advance, $19.50 includes lunch for child and lunch.

Yoga & Exercise

Kids' Yoga Circle, 1814 14th St., 260-2736 – Yoga and more for ages 4 – 7, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. 8 week session $125/Drop-in $18
Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, $15
Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Step Aerobics, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay $90 for 10 classes.
Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-998-1981, drop-in, first class free, $10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Other

Puppetolio – 1:00 p.m., 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

THURSDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica Playgroup – 3:30 p.m., for children born 3/03 – 12/03, Call or email Alison at 393-4481/riversalison@hotmail.com for more info. All moms welcome!

Storytelling

Babystyle, 1324 Montana Avenue, 434-9590
10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4.
MAIN LIBRARY – HELD AT REED PARK, CORNER OF 7TH AND WILSHIRE.
Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m.; for 2 year olds with adult.
Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.
FAIRVIEW BRANCH LIBRARY – 2101 OCEAN PARK BLVD – 310-450-0443.
La Hora Del Cuento – 7:00 p.m. Spanish stories, songs and rhymes for all ages.
MONTANA AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY – 1704 MONTANA AVE – 310-829-7081.
Toddler Story Time – 10:15 a.m., for 2 year olds, current session Sept. 8 – Oct. 13.
Preschool Story Time – 11:15 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds.
OCEAN PARK BRANCH LIBRARY – 2601 MAIN ST. – 310-392-3804.
Lap Time – 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., for babies up to age 2. Current session Sept. 1 – Oct. 6.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – walkers to 3 years; (Mon – Fri); 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.
BREAKTHROUGH PARENTING CLASSES – 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.
An advanced 10-week parent education course. Continuous enrollment. For info call Jayne A. Major, Ph.D., Breakthrough Parenting Services, Inc., 310-823-7846, jm@BPinAction.org.

Yoga & Exercise

Kids' Yoga Circle, 1814 14th St., 260-2736 – Yoga and more for ages 8 – 11, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.; ages 12 – 15, 5:15 – 6:30 p.m. 8 week session $125/Drop-in $18
Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA
7:30 – 8:30 p.m; Free for members, non-members $90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.
Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., $15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.
Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-998-1981 - drop-in, first class free, $10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 4-8 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica – New Mother Group – for new moms with babies born from 10/04 to present. Meet for conversation, support and playtime. All new Moms welcome! Call or e-mail Alison at 393-4481, riversalison@hotmail.com for more info.
Parent's Night Out at Child's Play, 2299 Westwood Blvd., 6:00 – 11:00 p.m.
Kids get a night of supervised fun with pizza, games and more while parents go out. Ages 3-10, $9 per hour, $7 siblings, 3 hour minimum. Reservations required, 470-4997. ww.childsplayonline.net
La Leche League of LA/Mar Vista – meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Call 310-390-2529 for info.
Planetarium Show at SMC's John Drescher Planetarium, 7:00 p.m. - Night Sky Show, 8:00 p.m. – featured program. $5 adults, $4 children. Pico and 17th St., 434-3000.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – walkers to 3 years; (Mon – Fri); 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Indoor Cycling, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay $90 for 10 classes.
Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45 p.m., $15.
Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

Baby Attuned - Fridays, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., A new program promoting sensitive parenting and developmental awareness. Eileen Escarce, PhD, MSN. (PSY 18819). Introductory fee: $15 per screening with feedback. 1137 2nd Ave, Suite 213. By appointment only 310-367-1155.

SATURDAY

Storytelling

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade – Kid's Story Time – 10am, 310-260-9110
Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 10:30am – ages 2-5, 310-475-4144.
Children's Book World, 10580 1/2 Pico Blvd, LA - 10:30 a.m., 310-559-BOOK.
Village Books, 1049 SwarthmoreAve, Pacific Palisades – 10:30 a.m., 454-4063.
826LA, 685 Venice Blvd, 2nd Floor, Venice – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., ages 3-6, RSVP to info @825LA.com or 310-314-8418. (826LA is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting students with their creative and expository writing skills, and to helping teachers inspire their students to write).

Classes

YWCA – Toddler & Me every other Sat., 9:45 – 10:45 a.m., $15 per class; Parent Enrichment once per month , 11:00 a.m. – noon, $15 per couple.

Yoga & Exercise

Santa Monica Yoga – Pre- & Post-Natal Yoga, Saturdays – 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
1640 Ocean Park Blvd, 396-4040, www.santamonicayoga.com
Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711. Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.(babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)
Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:00 a.m., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

Absolutely Halloween at the Santa Monica Playhouse
Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m, thru Oct. 30; $12.50 adults, $10.50 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com, 1211 4th St.
Puppetolio – 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested
Magicopolis – 2 and 8 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is $20 for evening, $15 for matinee. Call 310-451-2241 for info.
Precious Prints – Ceramic Heirlooms for a Lifetime
Second Saturday every month at The Pump Station, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Contact Kristan Ritchie at 310-802-8013 or visit www.preciousprintsstudios.com for more info.
Lakeshore Learning Stores "Free Crafts for Kids" – Saturdays, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., 8888 Venice Blvd., 559-9630.
"A Faery Hunt" – 10:30 a.m., every Saturday at Franklin Canyon Park. An interactive children's show, searching for fairies and other enchanted creatures in the magical canyon and finding them! $10, call for reservations – 818-324-6802. www.faeryhunt.com. Meet in the parking lot of the Sooky Goldman Nature Center, 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills.

SUNDAY

Main Street Farmer's Market – 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., corner of Main St. and Ocean Park Blvd. Pony rides, live music, lots of vendors and great family socializing.
Puppetolio – 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested
Magicopolis – 2 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is $15. Call 310-451-2241 for info.
Absolutely Halloween at the Santa Monica Playhouse
Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m, thru Sept. 25; $12.50 adults, $10.50 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com, 1211 4th St.
Family Funday at the Will Geer Theatricum Botonicum – 11:00 a.m Live music and theatre for all ages. $8, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, 455-3723, www.theatricum.com.

Breastfeeding

Working Mother's Support Group
The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd. - Call 998-1981 for more info.

MONDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica Playgroup – 9:30 a.m., for children born 1/02 – 2/03, Call or email Alison at 393-4481/riversalison@hotmail.com for more info. All moms welcome!

Storytelling

MAIN LIBRARY – LAP TIME AT JOSLYN PARK – 9:30 A.M. CURRENT SESSION THRU DEC. 12.
"Family Connections" – 10:00 a.m., immediately following Lap Time - a series of discussions related to early childhood development and growth. Children welcome, free.
OCEAN PARK BRANCH LIBRARY – 2601 MAIN STREET, 310-392-3804.
"Spanish for Little Ones" - 11:15 a.m., for ages 2 – 5.
Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade – Toddler Story Time – 10am – 310-260-9110

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – walkers to 3 years; (Mon – Fri); 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-998-1981 - drop-in, first class free, $10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, $15
Itsy Bitsy Yoga – TOT IBY (crawling – 2/3 years) – 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. With Khefri Riley at TURNOUT Performing Arts Center, 12113 Santa Monica Bl., St. 201. Register at www.khefri.net or call 323-549-5383.
Yoga Garden, - Restorative yoga for pre/post-natal – 6:30 p.m., 310-450-0133. www.yoga-gardenstudios.com
Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Do you have community news?



... Submit news releases Email to: editor@smdp.com or fax 310.576.9913

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NATIONAL

Praise and anger on the National Mall

BY ELISABETH GOODRIDGE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Support for U.S. troops fighting abroad mixed with anger toward anti-war demonstrators at home as hundreds of people, far fewer than organizers had expected, rallied Sunday on the National Mall just a day after tens of thousands protested against the war in Iraq.

"No matter what your ideals are, our sons and daughters are fighting for our freedom," said Marilyn Faatz, who drove from New Jersey to attend the rally. "We are making a mockery out of this. And we need to stand united, but we are not."

About 400 people gathered near a stage on an eastern segment of the mall, a large patchwork American flag serving as a backdrop. Amid banners and signs proclaiming support for U.S. troops, several speakers hailed the effort to bring democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan and denounced those who protest it.

Many demonstrators focused their ire at Cindy Sheehan, the California woman whose protest near President Bush's Texas home last summer galvanized the anti-war movement. Sheehan was among the speakers at Saturday's rally near the Washington Monument on the western part of the mall, an event that attracted an estimated 100,000 people.

"The group who spoke here the other day did not represent the American ideals of freedom, liberty and spreading that around the world," Sen. Jeff Sessions, an Alabama Republican, told the crowd. "I frankly don't know what they represent, other than to blame America first."

One sign on the mall read "Cindy Sheehan doesn't speak for me" and another "Arrest the traitors"; it listed Sheehan's name first among several people who have spoken against the war.

Melody Vigna, 44, of Linden, Calif., said she wants nothing to do with Sheehan and others at nearby Camp Casey, an anti-war site set up to honor her son, Casey, who was killed in Iraq.

"Our troops are over there fighting for our rights, and if she was in one of those countries she would not be able to do that," Vigna said.

The husband of Sherri Francescon, 24, of Camp Lejeune, N.C., serves in the Marine Corps in Iraq. One of the many military wives who spoke during the rally, Francescon said that the anti-war demonstration had left her frustrated.

"I know how much my husband does and how hard he works, and I feel like they don't even recognize that and give him the respect he deserves," Francescon said. "I want him to know and I want his unit to know that America is behind them, Cindy doesn't speak for us, and that we believe in what they are doing."

Organizers of Sunday's demonstration acknowledged that their rally would be much smaller than the anti-war protest but had hoped that as many as 20,000 people would turn out.

On Saturday, demonstrators opposed to the war in Iraq surged past the White House in the largest anti-war protest in the nation's capital since the U.S. invasion. The rally stretched through the night, a marathon of music, speechmaking and dissent on the mall.

National polls have found steadily declining support for the war in Iraq, with a majority of Americans now believing the war was a mistake.

In an AP-Ipsos poll this month, only 37 percent approved or leaned toward approval of how Bush has handled the situation in Iraq; strong disapproval outweighed strong approval by 2-1, 46 percent to 22 percent.

The biodiesel boom — fry fish, run car, save money

BY ALEXANDRE DA SILVA
Associated Press Writer

HONOLULU — Tom Jones got a few odd stares from fellow motorists the other day while test-driving a Volkswagen beetle with the slogan "100 Percent Recycled Vegetable Oil" stamped all over it.

By the time the 50-year-old restaurant owner from Honolulu ended his spin in the avocado-green bug, he had made up his mind.

"I want to sell my car and buy a biodiesel vehicle," said Jones, who can't wait to replace his gas-guzzling Highlander SUV with a car powered by the same oil he uses to deep fry fish.

Jones would be using an often-ridiculed thick yellow fuel that has suddenly become so popular that there isn't enough to go around. With only one biodiesel pump on the island, all city ambulances and fire trucks in Honolulu now run on 20 percent biodiesel, and fleets of airport shuttles on Maui and the Big Island use the fuel.

Pacific Biodiesel, which has been collecting used cooking oil from restaurants for a decade to produce the fuel, has joined with partners to expand operations to Virginia, Oregon and Japan.

Country singer Willie Nelson, who owns a house on Maui and drives a 2005 Mercedes using biodiesel, is in a partnership with Pacific Biodiesel that will open a plant in Carl's Corner, Texas, in February. Plants also are planned in Nevada and Pennsylvania.

To produce the environmentally friendly fuel, private haulers pick up the oil from restaurants and dump their loads into Pacific Biodiesel's containers. The oil is heated and filtered through a process that separates vegetable fuel from the waste product, glycerin.

In 1996, Bob King, a former diesel mechanic on Maui, and his wife Kelly gambled their combined life savings on the then-risky venture.

At first, Pacific Biodiesel was stuck in low gear, with a fuel rejected by people who second-guessed the idea of running their cars on cooking waste and a pump price too expensive for most motorists.

Now, as Hawaii gas prices top $4 a gallon in some areas, the Kings haven't increased their price more than 10 cents a gallon in five years. The price on their Oahu pump is stuck at $2.64 and they don't see it going up much at all because biodiesel is not tied to oil markets.

"We've kept prices tied to our costs of production and doing business," said Mrs. King, the company's marketing and communications director. "We started this business because we wanted to prove that we could make a viable alternative ... that eventually could be cheaper."

For years, the unpopular vegetable-based fuel trickled slowly into rusty tanks of a handful of Earth-loving motorists, who made infrequent visits to the pump.

"We were struggling, trying to decide if we should stick with this business or not," Mrs. King remembers thinking in 1996.

This month, the Kings started registering regular customers so it could control sales.

"It's been nuts the last few weeks," said Mrs. King, who restricted sales on Maui on Sept. 1 to drivers registered with the company and expected a similar restriction on Oahu soon. "We were overselling. We are not taking any new ones."

Production capacity at the two Hawaii plants is 1.2 million gallons of biodiesel a year.

The City and County of Honolulu injects some 12,000 gallons of biodiesel into its fleet every month, making it the company's largest consumer. Another good chunk of the production powers the 11 new Mercedes Sprinters bought by SpeediShuttle's airport fleet on Maui and the Big Island.

The shuttle company already has replaced 75 percent of its fleet with the biodiesel vans, said Everett Peacock, the company's vice president of operations and development.

Peacock had been tracking the renewable fuel market since November and opted for biodiesel when its prices became cheaper.

"Diesel has an added advantage of better fuel mileage right off the top. ... We have a huge economic advantage now," Peacock said. "It's working out great on both the being green and being smart with our money."

As its sales continue to boom, Pacific Biodiesel is keeping an eye on research being done by other companies to prevent the fuel from gelling in more extreme temperatures — one of its key shortcomings.

But in yearlong sunny Hawaii, it's business as usual for Bob King.

"We get real busy in here," said King, 47, as he leaned against a fuel tank at the Oahu plant after business hours, the sun dipping behind him. "There's so many ways to make energy, this is just one. It's great to see it taking off."



NATIONAL

Hurricane death toll climbs; five discovered in apartment

BY APRIL CASTRO
Associated Press Writer

BEAUMONT, Texas — Rescuers pushed their way into once-inaccessible neighborhoods as Hurricane Rita's floodwaters receded along the Texas-Louisiana coast Monday. The death toll climbed to seven when the bodies of five people were discovered in a Beaumont apartment.

The five — a man, a woman and three children — apparently were overcome by carbon monoxide from a generator they were using after the hurricane knocked out the electricity over the weekend, authorities said. The children's aunt discovered the bodies after going to check on the group.

Rita roared ashore Saturday morning, slamming the refinery towns of Beaumont and Port Arthur, Texas, as well as Lake Charles, La., after an epic evacuation that emptied out a large swath of coastline and saved countless lives. Some 3 million people fled from Rita's path after seeing what Katrina did to New Orleans a month ago.

As of Sunday night, only two deaths had been blamed directly on Rita.

"As bad as it could have been, we came out of this in pretty good shape," said Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who called the absence of widespread fatalities "miraculous."

Hard-hit towns along the Texas-Louisiana coast began to pick up the pieces.

Crews worked to clear roads of fallen trees and other debris so that utility workers could begin restoring power.

The more than 110,000 people living in Beaumont were urged not to return home, though, since water, electricity and sewer services will not be restored for weeks. Police blocked exits off interstate highways leading to the city.

In Lake Charles, National Guardsmen patrolled the town and handed out bottled water and food to hundreds of people left without power. Scores of cars wrapped around the parking lot of the city civic center, picking up food and ice. The storm knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of customers in Louisiana and Texas.

Dorothy Anderson said she had not had time to get groceries before the storm because she was at a funeral out of town. "We got back and everything was closed," she said.

Mike Deroche, director of the Terrebonne Parish, La., Office of Emergency Preparedness, said Monday that the floodwaters were going down in most areas and that the parish had nearly 9,900 homes that were severely damaged.

"We're just starting to get back into some areas that we haven't been able to get to," Deroche said.

In Chauvin, a steady stream of people were brought by small boats from the flooded sections of Terrebonne Parish. Some cried as they hauled plastic bags filled with their possessions out of the skiffs that carried them to dry land.

Others cursed.

"This is the worst thing I've ever been through," said Danny Hunter, 56. "I called FEMA this morning, and they said they couldn't help us because this hasn't been declared a disaster area."

"Texas is a disaster area!" Jenny Reading shouted. "I guess the president made sure of that, and everyone just forgot about us."

Robert LeBlanc, director of the Vermilion Parish, La., Office of Emergency Preparedness, said just about everyone who needed to be rescued had been taken care of, and the focus instead turned to clearing the roads to Pecan Island and rescuing roughly 5,000 cattle there.

"These people's livelihood depends on this," he said.

LeBlanc said the parish has about 500 livestock farmers. He said that the storm also wiped out hunting camps that bring in tourists, and that shrimp boats in Delcambre had been thrown up onto the land.

LeBlanc said the water had fallen, and hundreds of people have gone home to save what they can and begin rebuilding.

"Knowing these people, most of them are hunters, trappers, farmers, they're not going to wait on FEMA or anyone else," he said. "They're going to do what they need to do. They're used to primitive conditions."

Authorities had trouble keeping people from southern Louisiana from traveling through floodwaters in their own boats to discover whether Rita wrecked their homes and livelihoods.

People checking their hurricane-hit homes and towns returned with stories of flooding to the rooftops, coffins and refrigerators bobbing in the water, and stilts where their houses once stood.

"I've been through quite a few of them, and we've never had water like this," said L.E. Nix, whose home on the edge of a bayou in Louisiana's Calcasieu Parish was swamped with 3 feet of water. "I had a little piece of paradise, and now I guess it's gone."

It was clear that the misery wrought by Rita was not as bad as what Katrina inflicted.

Randy Roach, mayor of Lake Charles, told CBS's "The Early Show" his hard-hit seaport city of oil refineries and casinos would bounce back.

"The good news is that the water is going down, it's kind of back in the banks of the lake and our recovery process is well under way," he said. "The response has been tremendous. I really appreciate everything that the federal government has done to help us."

In Houston, which was spared the brunt of Rita, officials set up a voluntary, staggered plan for an "orderly migration," with different areas going home Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to avoid the monumental gridlock that accompanied the exodus last week.

By Sunday night, a seemingly endless stream of charter buses, cars and sport utility vehicles clogged the southbound lanes of Interstate 45 into Houston.

On Monday, more and more traffic lights in Houston were working properly. A long line of customers waited outside a downtown Starbucks as it reopened for the first time. Customers sat outdoors with their drinks despite hot, humid weather.

Authorities said at least 16 Texas oil refineries remained shut down. Overall the Gulf Coast petrochemical plants that supply a quarter of the nation's gasoline suffered only a glancing blow, with just one major plant facing weeks of repairs.

The new round of flooding in New Orleans from levee breaks was isolated mostly to areas already destroyed and deserted. And contrary to dire forecasts, Rita and its heavy rains moved quickly north instead of parking over the South for days and wringing itself out with disastrous consequences.

Among the deaths attributed to Rita was a person killed in Mississippi when a tornado spawned by the hurricane overturned a mobile home, and an east Texas man struck by a falling tree. Two dozen evacuees were killed before the storm hit in a bus fire near Dallas.

In New Orleans, Mayor Ray Nagin immediately resumed his plan to allow some residents to return to drier parts of the city, throwing open Algiers, a largely unscathed neighborhood across the Mississippi River from the French Quarter.

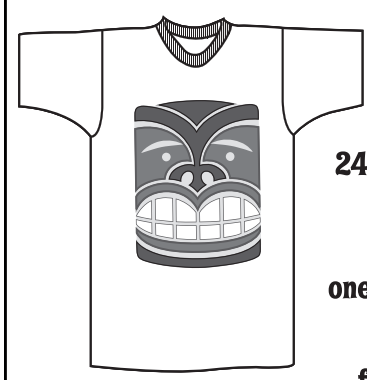
The Army Corps of Engineers used rocks and sandbags to try to plug the levee that failed during Rita and swamped the already-devastated Ninth Ward. Workers believe that once the breaches are closed, the Ninth Ward can be pumped dry in a week.

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NATIONAL

For happening hotspot, think thistle

BY RUKMINI CALLIMACHI
Associated Press Writer

HERMISTON, Ore. — Here in an area spanning 700 square miles, the site of a vast wireless Internet cloud, farmer Bob Hale can prop open a laptop among the scrub brush and check his e-mail.

He can also check the moisture level of his onion field while sitting inside his air-conditioned truck.

And as the jack rabbits run by, he can watch CNN online or play a video game among the tumbleweeds. Or he can turn on the irrigation sprinklers with a keystroke, or turn them off.

While some of the country's largest cities struggle to offer cheap Wi-Fi access, one of the least populated counties in the nation has created what is billed as the world's largest hotspot, a wireless cloud that stretches over a landscape so dry and desolate it could have been lifted from a cowboy tune.

Similar wireless projects have been stymied in major metropolitan hubs such as Philadelphia by opposition from telephone giants, who have poured money into legislative bills aimed at curbing low-cost municipal Wi-Fi.

But here among the thistle, wireless entrepreneur Fred Ziari faced no resistance from the large providers — who see little gain in such a sparsely populated market — allowing him to quickly build the $5 million cloud at his own expense.

While his service is free to the general public, Ziari is financing the setup cost through contracts with more than 30 city and county agencies and with big farms, such as Hale's, whose onion empire supplies over two-thirds of the red onions used by the Subway franchise. Morrow County, for instance, pays Ziari around $180,000 per year.

"Outside the cloud, I can't even get DSL," said Hale. "When I'm inside it, I can take a picture of one of my onions, plug it into my laptop and send it to the Subway guys in San Diego and say, 'Here's a picture of my crop,"' he said.

Even as hotspots are mushrooming, with 72,140 now registered globally, only a handful of cities have managed to blanket their entire urban core. Cities from San Francisco to Chaska, Minn., to St. Cloud, Fla., have announced plans to put their communities under a wireless tarp — but only Ziari appears to have pinned down such a large area.

Asked why other municipalities have had a harder time succeeding, the engineer replies: "Politics."

"If we get a go-ahead we can do a fairly good-sized city in a month or two," said Ziari, who immigrated to the United States from the tiny Iranian town of Shahi on the Caspian Sea. "The problem is getting the go-ahead."

"The 'Who's-going-to-get-a-piece-of-the action?' has been a big part of the obstacles," said Karen Hanley, senior marketing director of the Austin, Texas-based Wi-Fi Alliance, a nonprofit that acts as an umbrella organization for wireless efforts across the country.

No major players were vying for the action here, making the area's remoteness — which in the past has slowed progress — the key to its advance.

To date Morrow County, which borders Hermiston and spans 2,000 square miles, still doesn't have a single traffic light. It only has 11,000 people, a number that does not justify a large telecom player making a big investment, said Casey Beard, the director of emergency management for the county, who was looking for a wireless provider two years ago, when Ziari came knocking.

The county first considered his proposal at the end of 2002 and by mid-2003 part of the cloud was already up.

Although remote, the high-desert around Hermiston also happens to be the home of one of the nation's largest stockpiles of Cold War-era chemical weapons. Under federal guidelines, local government officials were required to devise an emergency evacuation plan in case the nerve and mustard agents were accidentally released into the community.

Now, emergency responder in the three counties surrounding the Umatilla Chemical Depot are equipped with laptop computers that are Wi-Fi ready. In the case of a leak, their PC's would detail the size of the fume and its direction, enabling responders to direct evacuees from the field. Traffic lights and billboards posting evacuation messages can also be controlled remotely, using Wi-Fi.

"We had to find a way to transmit huge amounts of data — pictures, plume charts. ... All that data is very complex and it's hard over radio to relay to someone wearing chemical protective gear," said Beard.

For the Columbia River Port of Umatilla, one of the largest grain ports in the nation, the wireless network is being used to set up a high-tech security perimeter that will scan bar codes on incoming cargo.

"It has opened our eyes and minds to possibilities. Now that we're not tied to offices and wires and poles, now what can we do?" said Kim Puzey, port director.

And for the Hermiston Police Department, having squad cars equipped with a wireless laptop means officers can work less overtime by being able to file their reports from the field.

While the Wi-Fi was initially set up for the benefit of city and county officials, it's the area's businesses that stand to gain the most, say industry experts.

"Look at the analogy of water and air conditioning. Thirty years ago, you would go somewhere and say, 'Boy, I'm so glad it's air-conditioned. Now you go, and of course it is," said Hanley of the Wi-Fi Alliance. "There is absolutely an expectation today that there will be Wi-Fi. Between 70 to 90 percent of all new laptops are Wi-Fi ready," she said.

Chris Monkman, 30, is not particularly concerned with checking his e-mail or watching CNN. On most days, he's too busy checking on his boss' onion fields to play video games in the scrub brush. What he is hoping for is some peace of mind and the chance to sleep in on the weekend.

"Without this, I have to call someone and they turn it on," said Monkman pointing to the sprinklers spewing water on Bob Hale's onion fields. "And then I have to go out and check. Versus turning it on from the seat of my pickup. ... And it's real nice if you don't want to come out on a Sunday morning," he said.

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INTERNATIONAL

Roadside bombs kill three U.S. soldiers

BY THOMAS WAGNER
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Roadside bombs killed three U.S. soldiers Monday in two separate attacks and 16 Iraqis were killed elsewhere, including five teachers and their driver who were shot to death in a classroom by suspected insurgents disguised as policemen.

U.S. and Iraqi authorities freed 500 detainees from the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in a goodwill gesture to Sunnis ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and less than three weeks before a referendum on Iraq's draft constitution.

Two of the American soldiers were killed early Monday in western Baghdad, while the third, who was working with the 42nd Brigade, died about 50 miles southeast of the capital, the military said.

The deaths raised to 1,917 the number of U.S. service members who have died since the Iraq war started in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

The teachers were killed as people were leaving the elementary school in Muelha, a village near the town of Iskandariyah, police Capt. Muthana Khaled said. Muelha, about 30 miles south of Baghdad, is in a predominantly Sunni area of Iraq.

The five men and their driver were snatched off a minibus as they were leaving the school, Khaled said. All six were then taken back into a classroom, lined up against a wall and shot to death, he said.

A suicide car bomber also attacked a police checkpoint guarding several government buildings as a private bus carrying 24 oil ministry employees to work in Baghdad, said police Capt. Nabil Abdel Qadir.

The blast killed at least seven policemen and three people on the bus, Qadir said. Fourteen policemen and 22 bus passengers also were wounded, he said.

"The insurgents are targeting Iraqi government employees and worshippers in mosques," Oil Minister Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum said after rushing to the site. "These savage acts won't undermine the forthcoming people's referendum on the new Iraqi constitution."

The attacks raised this week's death toll to 49 Iraqis and three Americans amid stepped-up violence ahead of the referendum on Iraq's draft constitution, considered an important step in the country's moves toward democracy.

Hours earlier, about 500 detainees left the Abu Ghraib prison on the outskirts of Baghdad on public buses after a brief ceremony. They were the first of 1,000 due to be freed before Ramadan begins next week, the U.S. military said. Another 1,000 were released from the prison last month. The military said they were not guilty of serious, violent crimes.

Arab governments often pardon nonviolent offenders during Ramadan, which this year is expected to begin on Oct. 4 or 5.

It was the first time U.S. and Iraqi officials made such Ramadan releases at Abu Ghraib, which was the center of an international scandal after a number of U.S. military personnel were charged with humiliating and assaulting detainees at the facility. The move appeared to be part of a government effort to persuade citizens to vote in the Oct. 15 constitutional referendum, particularly the Sunni minority.

Many Sunni leaders and insurgents are calling for a boycott or a "no" vote in the referendum. They say the document would leave Sunnis with far less power than the country's Kurds and majority Shiites.

If two-thirds of voters in any three of Iraq's 18 provinces reject the charter, a new government must be formed and the process of writing a constitution starts over.

The attacks came a day after at least 33 Iraqis were killed in a series of attacks.

On Sunday, gunmen loyal to radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr ambushed an Iraqi patrol in an eastern Baghdad slum, and U.S. forces joined a 90-minute gunbattle, killing as many as eight of the attackers in the first significant violence in the neighborhood in nearly a year.

Al-Sadr's militia, the al-Mahdi Army, was a stubborn problem for American forces until a truce was negotiated about a year ago that let some U.S. troops pull out of Sadr City to join the November assault on the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah, west of the capital.

Before the truce, al-Sadr's forces had led unsuccessful but bloody uprisings against coalition forces in Kut and the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, south of Baghdad.

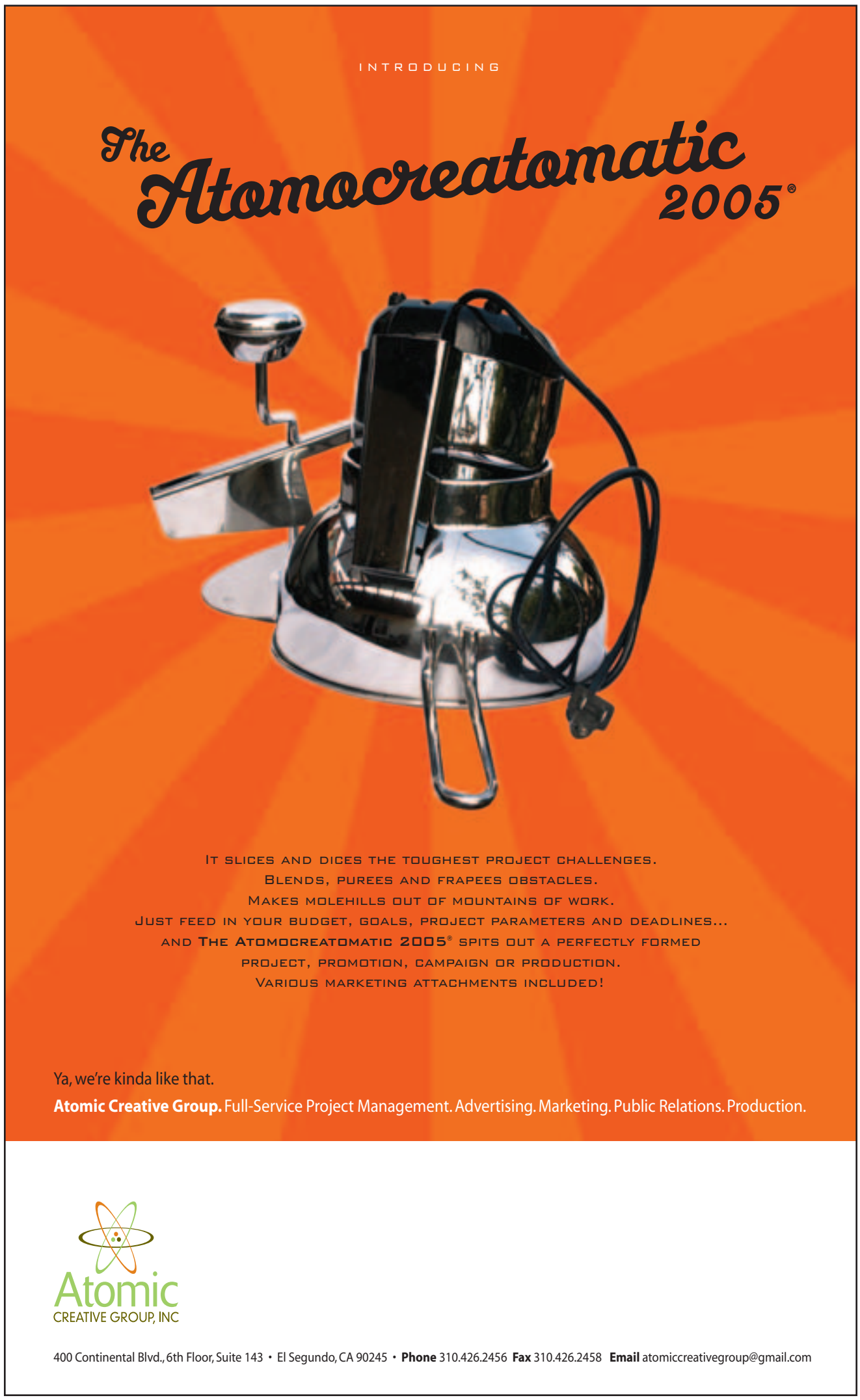
Violence in the poor Shiite district could deepen opposition to the constitution among al-Sadr's supporters, who are bucking mainstream Shiite support for the charter. Shiite unity has been seen as critical for passage of the basic law.

A statement from al-Sadr's office accused U.S. forces of trying to draw them into a battle "aimed at destroying Iraqi towns, particularly those in pro-Sadr areas and .... to prevent al-Sadr followers from voting" in the referendum.

Elsewhere in Baghdad on Sunday, armed men pulled off a daring armored car robbery, killing two guards and escaping with $850,000, and a suicide car bomber slammed into a convoy carrying Interior Ministry commandos, killing seven of them and two civilians.

South of the capital, two separate bicycle bombings in town markets killed at least seven people and wounded dozens Sunday.

In Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, three mortar shells landed in a residential district. One shell hit a house, killing seven members of one family, including children, according to police Capt. Laith Muhammed.



COMICS

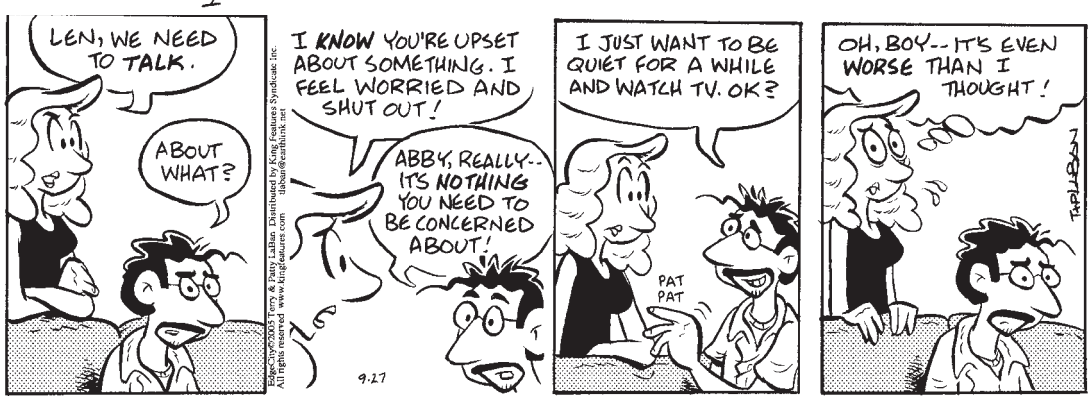
The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



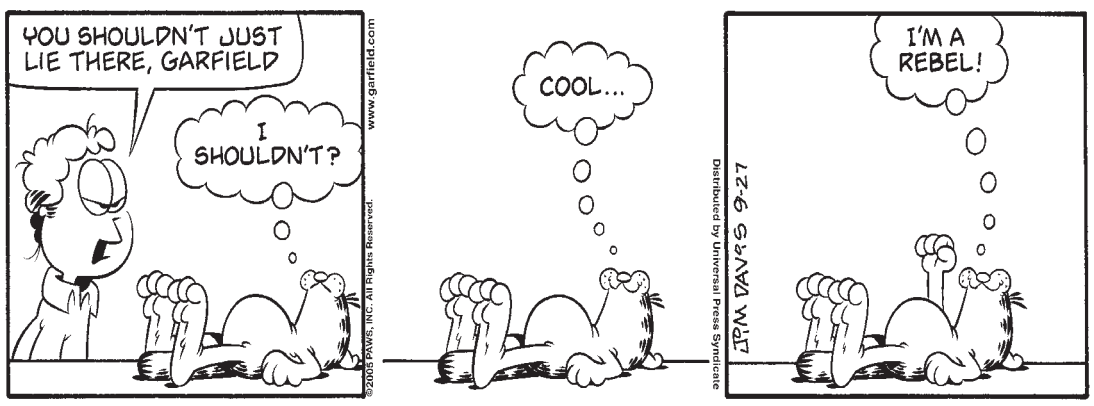
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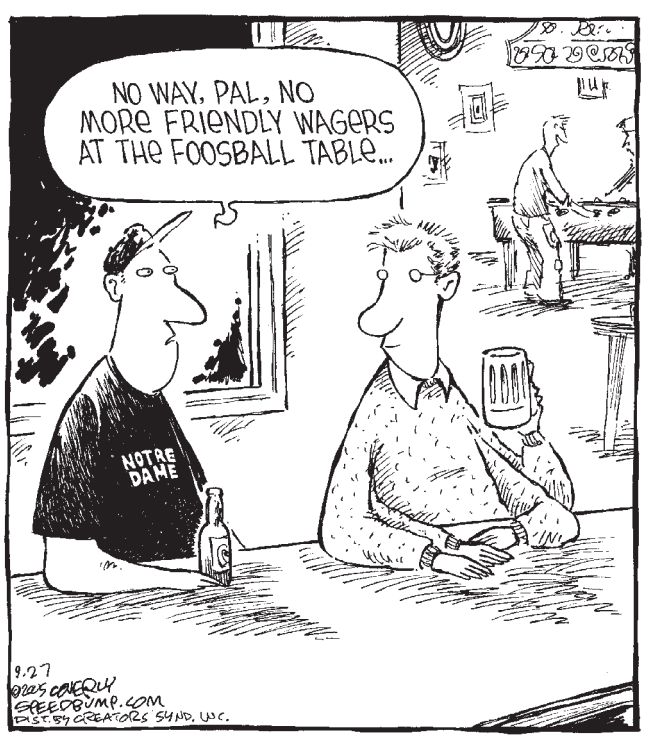
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ACROSS

1 Macaroni or manicotti
6 Closet pairs
11 Moving
12 Bald boy of comics
13 Winter wind-shield clearers
15 Election Day mo.
16 Oxygen: Prefix
17 Flying mammal
18 Mom's new husband
20 Had lunch
21 "— the ramparts ..."
22 Dejected
23 Cathedral parts
26 Soothes
27 "Gun-smoke" bartender
28 Horror star Chaney
29 Mouse chaser
30 Extremely advanced
34 Fall mo.
35 Ventilate
36 Arts-funding org.
37 Metropolis sites
40 Conical home
41 Depart
42 Place
43 Company division

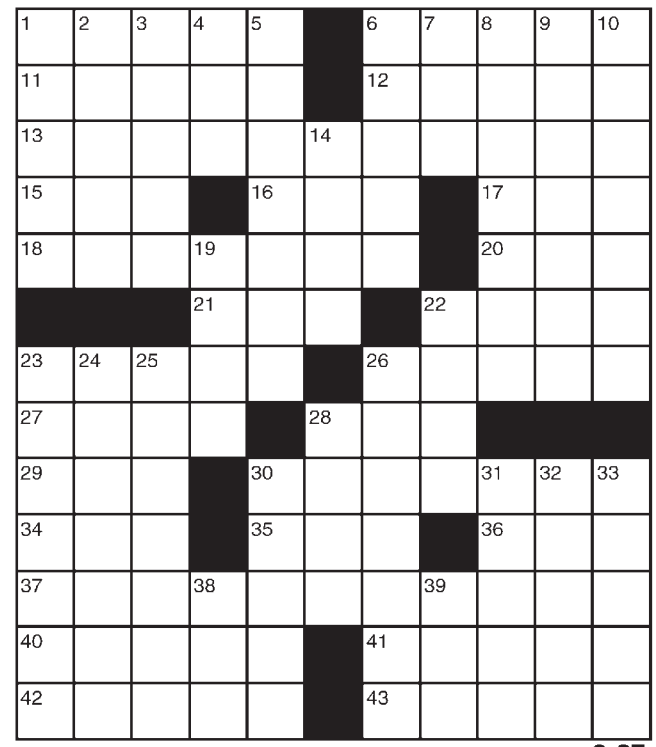
DOWN

1 Great care
2 Neckwear choice
3 Newsman Kroft
4 Frank McCourt book
5 Pinball palaces
6 Pottery piece
7 Like jazz musicians
8 Solid yellow item on a pool table
9 Printer's goof
10 Computer networks
14 Back
19 Frost work
22 Hood's group
23 Approaches hostilely
24 Skirt slit
25 Do a newspaper job
26 Pens
28 Den
30 Confronted
31 Ryan of "Paper Moon"
32 Audacity
33 Alleviates
38 Green shade
39 Green shade

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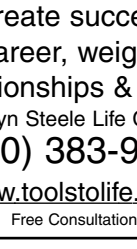
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‘Big Pussy’ gets busted for attempted assault

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Vincent Pastore, who played gangster Salvatore “Big Pussy” Bonpensiero on HBO’s “The Sopranos,” has agreed to plead guilty to a charge that he attempted to assault a former girlfriend last spring.

The plea bargain, which has yet to receive final approval from a judge, calls for Pastore to perform 10 days of community service and attend a counseling program for batterers, lawyers involved in the case told a judge Monday.

Leaving a Manhattan courthouse after the brief hearing, the actor said he was satisfied with the deal.

“I want this to go away. What do you think, I want to die of a heart attack?” he said. The meaty actor, who has slimmed down some from his barrel-bellied “Sopranos” days, added that he is recovering from emergency triple bypass heart surgery performed about two months ago.

“I can’t do nude scenes now because of the scar,” he said.

Pastore was originally charged with two counts of assault, attempted assault and harassment for allegedly attacking Lisa Regina, 44, in April.

Prosecutors alleged that he punched her in the back of the head, grabbed her hair and forced her head down on a car’s gear shift during an argument.

The 59-year-old actor has remained free on bail while the case is pending on the condition that he refrain from contacting Regina.

If convicted, he could have been sentenced to as much as a year in jail. The plea bargain will likely be finalized in November, when the case is scheduled to be back in court, said Pastore’s lawyer, Dominic Barbara.

Pastore’s “Sopranos” character was killed early in the series as payback for snitching on the mob.

RICHMOND, Va. — R&B crooner D’Angelo, who won over America with his ‘90s soul ballads only to fade after bouts with the law and drugs, was critically injured in a car wreck outside his hometown of Richmond.

D’Angelo, 31, born Michael Eugene Archer, was in a 2003 Hummer sport utility vehicle on Sept. 19 when it crossed the roadway and struck a fence, ejecting the singer, State Police Sgt. Kevin Barrick said Monday. Archer wasn’t wearing a seat restraint, Barrick said.

Barrick said Archer was initially listed in critical condition, but that no further information is available.

Officials at Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center, where the Grammy-winning artist was flown after the wreck, said the family had asked that his condition not be released.

Another person, Lynne Sellers, also was injured in the wreck. Police couldn’t say which of the two had been driving.

The accident occurred in Powhatan County, a bedroom community west of the city. Archer lives in Midlothian, just outside Richmond.

The cause of the crash is under investigation, Barrick said.

Known for hits such as “Brown Sugar” and a cover of Smokey Robinson’s “Cruisin’,” Archer rode a wave of popularity that culminated with a Grammy in 2001 for best male R&B vocal performance for “Untitled (How Does It Feel)” from the album “Voodoo,” which won a Grammy for best R&B album.

In April, the singer was fined $250 and given a 90-day suspended jail term on a driving under the influence of alcohol conviction. His driver’s license was suspended for one year.

On a marijuana charge, Archer was fined $50 and given a 10-day suspended jail term. His driver’s license was suspended for an additional six months.

Earlier this month, he received a suspended prison sentence after being convicted of cocaine possession. Archer had faced three years in prison.

BOGOTA, Colombia — Naomi Campbell has spoken out in support of Kate Moss, who has lost three modeling contracts and is being investigated by London police on allegations that she used cocaine.

“Kate Moss is my friend ... I think it’s like everybody is being bad to her,” the 35-year-old supermodel told a news conference Sunday in the Colombian capital where she was judging a modeling competition.

“It’s not the first time it has happened in the world ... it’s really like a vendetta,” said Campbell, who has said that she nearly self-destructed from her use of cocaine.

Pictures published in a British tabloid appeared to show Moss using cocaine. Moss, 31, issued a statement last week apologizing to “all the people I have let down.”

“I take full responsibility for my actions,” she said. Her statement stopped short of specifying whether she had used cocaine.

The modeling agency in London that represents Moss said it would support her in the face of the allegations.

“I feel compelled to speak out in defense of Kate Moss following recent days of speculation and, in many cases, ill-informed and inaccurate stories,” Sarah Doukas, director of the Storm agency, said in a statement Sunday.

“I know Kate, and I have represented her for the last 18 years. Over this time she has consistently demonstrated herself to be a professional and exceptional model and a loyal, special and dear friend to me and countless others,” Doukas said.

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