THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2005 Volume 4, Issue 276

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO
2 17 28 37 45
Meganumber: 5
Jackpot: $7 Million

FANTASY 5
4 14 20 31 37

DAILY 3
Daytime: 3 0 1
Evening: 1 1 2

DAILY DERBY
1st: 08 Gorgeous George
2nd: 04 Big Ben
3rd: 09 Winning Spirit

RACE TIME: 1:48.67

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

For 25 years, Multnomah County, Ore., has set aside 1 percent of public building construction money for art, meaning almost $600,000 worth for its new $58 million jailhouse. Critics of the program say that art won't do much to battle crime in Multnomah, but on the other hand, so far, neither has the $58 million. The jail has been finished for a year, but as of September, it's still empty because county officials have not found a way to pay the operating expenses. If they ever do, inmates and visitors will be treated to such works as Thomas Sayre's concrete shipwreck sculpture.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 272nd day of 2005. There are 93 days left in the year.

On Sept. 29, 1978, Pope John Paul I was found dead in his Vatican apartment just over a month after becoming head of the Roman Catholic Church.
In 1955, a one-act version of the Arthur Miller play "A View From the Bridge" opened in New York. (Miller later turned it into a two-act play.)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If you want work well done, select a busy man — the other kind has not time."

ELBERT HUBBARD
AMERICAN AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER

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Council debates fate of little guy

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — The uncertain fate of Perry's Beach Cafe this week spurned a larger debate among elected leaders on how they should treat small businesses.

Recent controversy over a city-initiated bid to solicit vendors that could replace Perry's Beach Cafe and Rentals, a long-time food and retail concession along the boardwalk, prompted City Councilman Herb Katz on Tuesday to open the debate regarding City Hall's policy toward small businesses that operate on public property.

Santa Monica has a policy to promote small businesses, according to elected leaders. However, Perry's owner, Richard Chacker, said City Hall's request for bidders is an invitation for large food-service corporations, such as McDonalds, to take over the sites he's been leasing from Santa Monica for 25 years. Meanwhile, City Hall says it's following basic legal procedure and that the

See **SMALL BUSINESS**, page 10

The sun also rises



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

A brilliant sunset over the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday makes beachcombers stop and take notice. The sun is forecasted to set at 6:40 p.m. this evening.

Port-a-call: Day laborers may get toilets

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

11TH STREET — Toilets will make life better here.

So says City Hall, which may soon deliver port-a-potties to 11th Street as a means of helping residents and businesses deal with a day laborer situation many contend is out of control.

Those concerned about crime in their neighborhood — not to mention excrement on their sidewalks — asked City Hall in August to step in and help regulate the illegal immigrants who gather in this part of town while waiting for work.

The issue is not a new one for Council, which already voted to install toilets in the area two years ago upon resident requests, but apparently never followed through.

For decades, day laborers have loitered near 11th Street and Olympic Boulevard on the sidewalks, keeping a watchful eye on traffic coming and going from the Salvation Army outlet, Bourget Brothers supply store, the old Fisher Lumber site and other businesses from which they might be called upon to help with construction, landscaping, home improvement,

See **FLUSHED**, page 11

STATE

Making ends meet a more daunting feat

BY ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — Many California households, particularly those earning minimum wage, are struggling to afford to pay for their housing, trans-

See **STATE INCOME**, page 9



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HOROSCOPE

Get in early, Leo

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 might be pushed more than usual. You could lose your temper easily, as you are high-energy right now. Others pitch in to try to take some of the pressure off of you. Be gracious and say yes. Tonight: Do something you love.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ You might not be as easygoing as usual. In fact, early in the day you could be seeing red, like a true Bull. One way to calm down is to do something physical. Take a walk by yourself and chill out. Tonight: The later it gets, the better.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You might not be aware of the impact your words have on others. You might have a sharp edge, as you have been suppressing frustration or anger. Use your humor to lighten up. Tonight: Try to get in early.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Someone pushes you beyond your limits, and you might let this person know it. Use care with spending, as tempting as a purchase might be. Someone might not have all the facts. Do your own research. Tonight: Run errands first.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Someone chooses to take you on. You might be challenged directly by a boss or superior, or someone you care about. Don't get upset. Simply discuss the issues. You find that often many opinions are helpful. Tonight: Decide to get in early.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ You might not be in the mood to run around. In fact, you might want to do less physically and more mentally, if possible. You have a unique ability to get the facts. Don't assume that you have the whole story. Tonight: The later it gets, the happier you will be.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Use today to straighten out a potential misunderstanding involving another. The issue could involve your finances or a problem with taxes. By grabbing the bull by the horns, you'll succeed. Tonight: Try for an early bedtime.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Others look to you for leadership, but still might be quite critical about what you do. You might find this mixed message irritating. Let it go. Use your sixth sense, which kicks in and points you in the right direction. Tonight: Once you hook up with a friend, the going gets wild.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ You give that extra push to complete a project. Someone might be put off by how assertive you are. Also, don't take information as solid. Exaggeration might be involved. Detach and go on your own fact-finding mission. Tonight: Watch a movie or hop on the computer.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Someone else is running the show, whether you like it or not. You discover how much you dislike being in the back seat. Be positive about what is happening. Others will need your feedback soon enough. Tonight: Accept a very personal invitation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Others have the cards in their hands, no matter where you go. You express upset to someone close, who just might not be in the mood to listen. Stay calm and detached, and remain confident. Everything will work out. Tonight: Socialize all you want.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Your words and actions come off a lot harsher than you realize. You could find an associate reacting quite strongly. It's best to focus on your work and security. Right now, clearing the air doesn't work. Tonight: Nap and then decide.

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LOCAL

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

'Sex shops' law discussion gets postponed

By Daily Press staff

How to balance sex shops' right to operate while balancing community concerns is a discussion elected leaders have put off.

The City Council on Tuesday decided to postpone indefinitely its discussion of an ordinance that would update and amend how Santa Monica regulates its adult businesses. The council put off the discussion because of timing issues related to the evening's agenda.

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.

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 would attempt 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.

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.

Jive talking: Activist, City Hall to be honored

By Daily Press staff

The Virginia Avenue Project will honor project parent and community activist Consuelo Perez, and the cultural affairs division of the city of Santa Monica at "Commotion by the Ocean," which has been described as a jumpin' jivin' jubilee benefit today, Sept. 29 at Hotel Casa Del Mar.

The Virginia Avenue Project is a free, after-school program that uses the performing arts in conjunction with one-on-one mentoring to help underserved children realize their full potential. Through an ongoing sequence of arts and academic programs, project kids work in collaboration with adult mentors to develop life skills and give voice to their creativity.

"Commotion by the Ocean" will celebrate the project's 13-year presence in the Santa Monica community.

Perez is the co-president of Spirit of Love/English Learners' Advisory Committee — a Santa Monica High School parent group that engages Latino families and students in college preparation, school activities, and community politics. Consuelo is a Virginia Avenue Project parent — all four of her children have been involved with the project, and she played a vital role in introducing the project to other families and community members.

City Hall's cultural affairs division plays a vital role in upholding Santa Monica's commitment to the arts and artists, according to the project officials. Their support of the project and other community arts organizations contribute to the vitality and vibrant cultural life of Santa Monica, according to the project officials.

CORRECTION — In the Sept. 27 edition there was an error in the article regarding the new library. The owner of the new cafe "The Bookmark Cafe" is responsible for all start-up costs, which amount to $175,000. Also, in the Sept. 23 edition, the name of the person who works for Chrysalis, which employs former homeless people, was misidentified. Her name is Heidi Olinger Hameed.

SURF REPORT

Most south-facing breaks are seeing knee- to waist-high sets. West-facing spots are running knee high.
A southerly flow of moisture from the tropics brought in some more rain to many areas along the California coast Wednesday. Although most areas saw less than 0.1 inch of rain, bacteria levels could be a concern in the coastal waters from runoff.
Thursday is looking small with only knee- to waist-high energy at south-facing breaks.

Today the water is:

62°

Write us at **alex@smdp.com**
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**
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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

Hope springs eternal

Editor:

Thank you, Santa Monica. A heartfelt thanks to all of you who turned out for the Songs of Strength Benefit Concert for Victims of Hurricane Katrina on Sunday at the First United Methodist Church. You were incredibly patient with an extended sound check, a late start and a packed house. And you have been very generous. Together we have raised nearly $35,000 that will go directly to immediate relief work and long-term recovery work in the Gulf region. Let's continue to "be the hope."

Rev. Patricia Farris
Senior Minister

Fired up over 'traffic calming'

Editor:

A hearty high-five to Bill Bauer for his column (SMDP, Sept. 26, page 4). He hit the nail on the head when he blasted the wankers on the City Council in general, and Kevin McKeown in particular, with regards to the proposal to eliminate one lane of traffic in both directions on Lincoln Boulevard during rush hour. The fact that traffic flow is so miserable in our fair town is partly to blame on the "traffic calming" measures that the Santa Monicans For Renter's Rights-infested city government has rammed down our throats for many years. Over-development can also take some credit for the congestion we are forced to endure but wait, that's a city government responsibility as well. Are you seeing a pattern here?

I'm sick and tired of guys like McKeown setting traffic policy when it's been my experience that whenever he shows up to any city function, he comes in a car. If he's so bent on getting all of us to walk, use a bus or a bike, let him lead the way. The next time you see Kevin McKeown anywhere in this town, ask him how he got there and I'll bet it's not by bike, foot or bus.

Barry Barker
Santa Monica

Bauer headed in wrong direction

Editor:

Bill Bauer has written two inflammatory opinion pieces (SMDP, Sept. 19 and Sept. 26, page 4) on the Lincoln Boulevard peak-hour bus-only lanes which were unanimously adopted by Santa Monica City Council on Sept. 13 with a direction to staff to ensure bicyclists have access to the bus lanes.

On Sept. 26, Bill states, "Prohibiting cars and trucks from using the curb lanes reduces the road's ability to carry traffic. Even fools know that a three-inch pipe carries more water than a two-inch pipe. Streets are no different."

Actually, streets are different. And the members of the City Council are not fools. They are leaders doing what is best for the community: making it possible for Lincoln Boulevard to carry more people to their destinations, not just move more cars. Providing ever more traffic lanes will only get us ever more lanes of congestion. Buses can carry 40 to 60 or more, passengers each. Dedicating a lane for buses will keep these persons from being stuck in traffic and result in potentially greater numbers of people overall being carried by Lincoln, making the most efficient use of a scarce resource. Buses will become more attractive when they travel faster than cars.

Lincoln is an important, well-used bicycle route because it connects many important destinations and there are no parallel alternative routes. Lincoln also is located in the coastal zone and is used by many recreational cyclists. Bill and the police officers he has been talking to are uninformed when he states: "Bicyclists riding in a posted 'bus-only' zone are in violation and can be cited, according to police officers."

State law says that a cyclist is always supposed to be on the far right, bus lane or not. Vehicle Code Sec. 21202: "Any person operating a bicycle upon a roadway at a speed less than the normal speed of traffic moving in the same direction at such time shall ride as close as practicable to the right-had curb or edge of the roadway except ... (the exceptions are not relevant to this discussion but include making a left turn)."

Bill criticizes Councilman Kevin McKeown for "consistently voting against motorists." McKeown is actually helping to provide us with a wider range of transportation choices: more safety as pedestrians and bicyclists and speedier transit. These choices have increased the quality of my life and helped me live relatively car- and congestion-free, as I depend on my car less and less.

Wake up and smell the exhaust fumes, Bill.

Barbara Filet
Santa Monica

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Santa Monica Daily Press

Extreme Makeover: White House edition

NEWS ON THE EDGE
BY RON SCOTT SMITH



"I can assure you I won't get in the way."

So said the president to NBC's David Gregory as he was about to travel to someplace very proper sounding in all capital letters called NORTHCOM somewhere in Colorado where he would offer new and improved hands-on leadership of the U.S. response to Rita. A reporter for a major news organization has to gently ask the president of the United States if it may not be best for him and the country to, uh, kind of, stay out of the way, sir?

Dylan's back, just in the nick of time. You want to talk about "Desolation Row?" On Sunday the pro-Iraq-war forces, be what they may, held a rally at the National Mall in Washington D.C. to demonstrate their support of the president, the troops, the war, all of it. D.C. police estimated that oh, say 400 people attended throughout the day, but that appeared to be high. Here's how bad it was. When I stumbled onto it on C-Span Sunday evening, I actually felt embarrassed for this bunch, especially for the guy who had to get up and open the show with a rabble-rousing keynote speech to all of what looked to be about 28 people out there on the front end of the thing, hooting, hollering, hanging on every "freedom-on-the-march" and "stay the course" that he laid on them. Of course, there were a few old-school "love-it-or-leave-its" thrown in to get the hate flowing properly. But mostly, oddly, there were words of gratitude to a president for providing the opportunity for so many good sons and daughters to die for a noble cause.

Well hold on just one minute and go back just one day. What noble cause? That's all Cindy Sheehan wanted to have explained to her on behalf of her dead son when she camped out at the end of the Bush vacation driveway in Crawford for three weeks. If he had talked to her then she would not have become the figure-head for a burgeoning anti-war movement that came to a head at the same National Mall, a day before the Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club pro-war thing. An estimated 300,000 protesters came out on Saturday, hoping to issue Bush his wake-up call.

He woke up all right. On Monday he had the 48-year-old Ms. Sheehan arrested and forcefully removed from the public sidewalk outside his freshly-painted white mansion while hundreds of Sheehan supporters chanted "The whole world is watching," and you'd best believe the whole world would be savoring the spectacle of a couple of very large armed, uniformed, helmeted cops picking the frail-looking lady up and rooting her out of the president's sight.

Out of sight, out of mind. Out of his mind is what he must be thinking he is right about now for not taking five minutes to meet with her in August. But so has gone his decision-making. It's as if the smoke machine stopped smoking and the mirrors are all broken, because the emperor has become fully exposed and has nowhere to run, nowhere to hide, not even Crawford.

Staying on vacation there for three extra days while his nation's Gulf Coast disappeared under Katrina was the big one, the blunder he will never overcome. But just to keep it real, when he finally went to what used to be Biloxi, he said to the Arabian horse trainer who he hand-picked to head up FEMA, "Brownie, you're doing a heckuva job." Now every deaf dumb and blind kid knew by then that Brownie was a disaster in charge of a disaster, and he was gone by the end of the first weekend of the recovery effort. Seems one of Brownie's strategic moves when he took over was to outsource the FEMA switchboard jobs to save a few bucks because it's been reported that calls for help are routinely answered in India.

Next, the president signs on Halliburton, of course, to a no-bid contract to take on much of the reconstruction of New Orleans, even though that opportunistic bunch is still under investigation for malfeasance in Iraq, where some 9 billion American dollars are still unaccounted for.

Think that's ripe? He then tells them they can go ahead and hire people at dirt-cheap wages by suspending the Davis-Bacon Act, which compels workers under federal contract to receive the prevailing local wage, which was already an amazingly low $9 per hour. Are these guys going to be working at minimum wage? Yeah, because Bush says money is tight, real tight, and we all have to suck it up and take one for the team. But don't worry, his signature tax cuts will not be messed with, he was quick to assure us. Amen, sir. Leave my tax cut alone. Lose the Davis-Bacon thing, don't make anybody bid on the reconstruction jobs, but leave my tax cut alone. I need a new frying pan. Uh, then again, where's the money going to come from for all the Halliburton contracts? I suggest you put a lock on the medicine cabinets, seniors.

Some lucky family in Biloxi will probably have a brand-spanking-new, locking medicine cabinet in a spiffed up bathroom after Laura Bush gets done with her new task. You see, the White House has asked the producers of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," to allow the first lady to join the cast for an episode in Biloxi. I couldn't make this up if I tried. It'll probably go along the lines of, "Mrs. Bush, could you grab the other end of this mattress?" as executive producer Tom Foreman said. Pick a pile of rubble, any pile of rubble, see it transformed right before your very eyes. I can't take the suspense. Who will be the lucky one? I think I know.

"Out of the rubble of Trent Lott's house there's going to be a fantastic house. And I'm looking forward to sitting on the porch." That's what the president said on that first visit to Biloxi. Mr. Lott, come on down. Meet Ms. Bush.

(Ron Scott Smith is a freelance writer in Santa Monica. To reach him, e-mail him at edgeofthewest@aol.com.)

STATE

Report: Katrina could stymie economic growth

BY ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — The devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast will depress U.S. economic growth this year, but spending on new home construction and other infrastructure projects should boost the economy slightly in 2006 and 2007, a new forecast suggests.

"I don't want to underemphasize the tragedy — it's a horrible tragedy — but it hasn't really taken out a lot of production from the U.S. economy," said Christopher Thornberg, who co-authored the quarterly University of California, Los Angeles, Anderson Forecast to be released Wednesday.

Thornberg noted that Gulf Coast oil production is back on track and spending on rebuilding is expected to ramp up in the coming weeks.

The forecast estimates that Katrina will shave 0.5 percent this year from the nation's gross domestic product — a measure of the economy's output — and spending on construction will add about 0.3 percent to the GDP next year.

The effects of Katrina could be lost amid bigger issues on the horizon — a likely slowdown in the housing market and indications that consumer and business spending have declined this year, the forecast says.

"We're looking at a housing market that looks like it basically peaked," Thornberg said.

The UCLA economists have sounded warnings in previous forecasts that the national housing market is due to slow because prices have become unsustainably high in key regions like the Southwest, Northeast and Southeast.

They also contend the pace of housing construction, now at more than 2 million units annually, is beginning to exceed demand. They point out that vacancy rates are increasing nationwide for rental and owner-occupied housing amid declining adult population growth.

The annual rate of growth for residential construction has slowed from above 20 percent in late 2003 to about 5 percent in the second quarter of this year, according to the forecast. It doesn't project a collapse in the housing market but does warn that even a gradual decline would ripple through the U.S. economy.

"The U.S. is not going to be able to sustain 2 million (new) houses per year, and therefore, that's a big downside potential for the U.S. economy," said Michael Bazdarich, co-author of the report.

"Housing has been the only star of this expansion and it looks like it's out of gas," he said.

The forecast estimates that reconstruction in areas struck by Katrina will result in about 50,000 new homes being built — not enough to keep the housing market from an inevitable slowdown.

"We see nothing on the horizon that will resurrect growth in housing construction from here," Bazdarich said.

A six-month decline in consumer spending is also cause for concern in the forecast.

Consumers — many of them homeowners buoyed by rising real estate values — helped drive the economy out of the 2001 recession by continued spending on big-ticket items. Tax cuts, low interest rates and other incentives helped maintain that pace, even as businesses initially held back on hiring and making capital investments.

But consumer spending peaked in late 2003 then began decelerating amid rising oil prices, interest rates and lingering concerns over the economy, Bazdarich said.

"Consumers are feeling better about the economy now than they were three years ago, but they're not feeling great about it and they're right," he said. "It's a pretty lackluster recovery."

The decline in consumer spending appears to have affected imports, which had been increasing at around 17 percent annually. Oil imports are up, but other areas have shown zero growth during the past six months," Bazdarich said.

"It looks like consumers and businesses are pulling back more on imports than domestic goods," he said.

'Don't like Mondays' sniper denied parole for a third time

By The Associated Press

CORONA, Calif. — Brenda Spencer, who killed two people and wounded nine others in the nation's first high-profile school shooting, was turned down Tuesday in her third bid for parole since the 1979 sniper attack on a San Diego elementary school.

Spencer, who is serving 25 years to life, told the three-member parole board at the California Institution for Women she was deeply sorry.

"I didn't have a right to do that to those people," Spencer said, in tears. "I was kind of pretty much a screwed-up kid at the time. I had a lot of problems going on at home."

Spencer, 42, is often remembered for her response to a reporter who phoned her during a 6 1/2 hour standoff with police and asked why she opened fire. "I don't like Mondays. This livens up the day," she said.

The line inspired a song by the Irish rock group the Boomtown Rats.

Spencer was 16 on Jan. 29, 1979, when she fired on San Diego's Grover Cleveland Elementary School with a .22-caliber rifle from her family's house across the street.

Principal Burton Wragg and custodian Mike Suchar were killed. Eight students and a police officer were wounded.

Spencer pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and assault with a deadly weapon.

"I realize that nothing I do and no amount of time will bring Mr. Wragg and Mr. Suchar back, and it won't erase the fear and stuff that I've given to those kids," she said. "I just want them to know that I'm very sorry and I don't know how to make it up to them."

Spencer's lawyers tried to show that she was a model prisoner who had rehabilitated herself.

Spencer was denied parole at hearings in 1993 and 2001 and San Diego County prosecutors once again opposed her latest bid for freedom.

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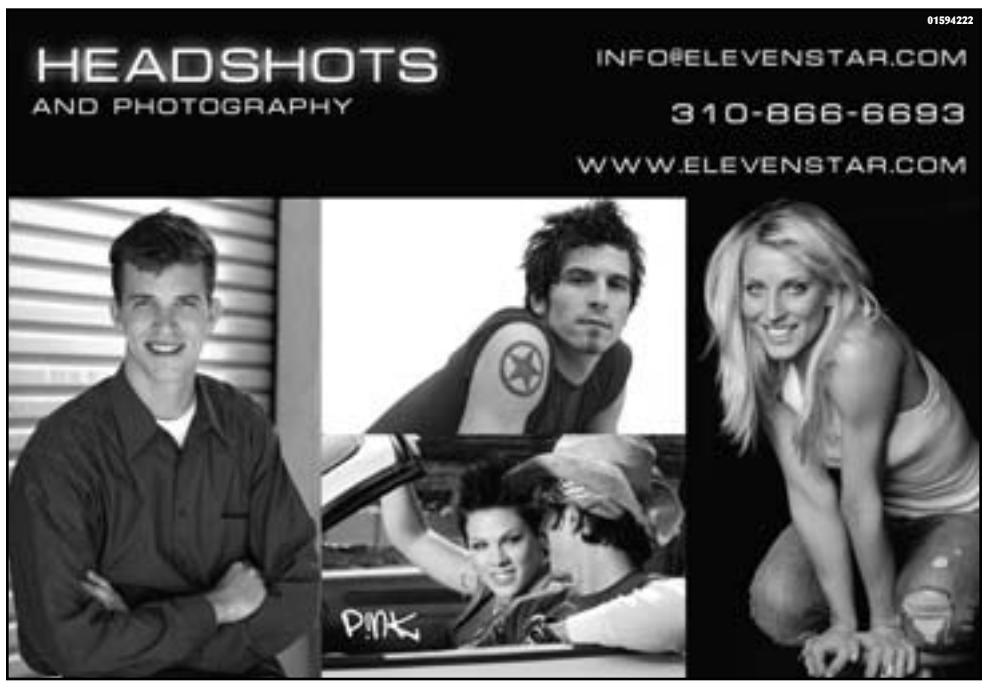
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STATE

Robots with a need for speed square off

BY ALICIA CHANG
AP Science Writer

FONTANA, Calif. — It's the ultimate robot reality show: 43 contestants battling for a spot in a government-sponsored desert race intended to speed development of unmanned military combat vehicles.

The reward? A $2 million cash prize.

The autonomous robotic vehicles began competing Wednesday in the first of a series of qualifying rounds at the California Speedway. Half will advance to the Oct. 8 starting line of the so-called Grand Challenge.

The grueling, weeklong semifinals are designed to test the vehicles' ability to cover a roughly 2-mile stretch of the track without a human driver or remote control.

Participants ranging from souped-up SUVs to military behemoths will be graded on how well they can self-drive on rough road, make sharp turns and avoid obstacles — hay bales, trash cans, wrecked cars — while relying on GPS navigation and sensors, radar, lasers and cameras that feed information to computers.

The robots also have to heed speed limits in certain zones and pass through a 100-foot-long tunnel designed to temporarily knock out their GPS capabilities.

None of that thwarted the first competitor, a converted Nissan Xterra built by the Colorado-based Mojavaton team. The vehicle finished in about 20 minutes to cheers from the grandstands.

"It looks like a piece of cake," Sebastian Thrun, a computer science professor at Stanford University, said of the qualifying course that will challenge his team's entry, a converted Volkswagen Touareg dubbed Stanley.

Vehicles have at least two chances to loop around the speedway during the qualifiers. The 20 finalists will be announced next week.

During last year's semifinals, only seven entrants completed a flat, 1.4-mile obstacle course. But eight others that failed were allowed to advance. Organizers expect most vehicles this year to finish the qualifying course.

The Grand Challenge is sponsored by the research arm of the Pentagon known as the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, which is spending $9 million on this year's event.

The competition is part of the Pentagon's efforts to have a third of the military's ground vehicles unmanned by 2015 to fulfill a congressional mandate.

This year's race will cover about 150 miles of desert and mountainous terrain looping to and from Primm, Nev. While the exact route is kept secret until hours before the race, vehicles can expect to drive over rough desert roads, maneuver mountain trails and pass dry lake beds.

The first vehicle to traverse the entire course in less than 10 hours wins. If no one finishes — a possible outcome — DARPA may sponsor another competition.

Last year's inaugural race in the Mojave Desert ended without a winner when all the entrants broke down before the finish line. The best performer was a converted Humvee built by Carnegie Mellon University, which traveled only 7 1/2 miles before having engine trouble.

DARPA officials and team leaders contend that this year's field is far more competitive. Some vehicles already have driven hundreds of continuous miles in the Southwest desert during practice runs, including several that tested on last year's race course.

The semifinalists, from more than a dozen U.S. states and Canada, were selected from a pool of about 200 entrants, which doubled from last year. They include a mix of computer programmers, mechanical engineers, college students, hot-rodders and off-road enthusiasts. Many teams are backed by corporate sponsors.



STATE

STATE BRIEFS

Edison customers can take a hike

By The Associated Press

ROSEMEAD — Southern California Edison wants to hike electricity rates 8 percent because of soaring natural gas prices.

The utility filed a request last month with the California Public Utilities Commission requesting a 3 percent rate, but Edison said it will amend it to 8 percent because of a 25 percent increase in natural-gas prices since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ravaged Gulf States.

The amended rate filing will be submitted to the PUC in December.

Some 40 percent of the electricity Edison supplies to its customers is generated with natural gas, said Akbar Jazayeri, the utility's director of revenue and tariff.

Schools super cited for driving ambition

By The Associated Press

RIVERSIDE — A misdemeanor drunken driving charge was filed against Riverside Unified School District superintendent Susan J. Rainey, whose car was stopped at a Labor Day weekend sobriety checkpoint.

Rainey, 58, was stopped about 10 p.m. Sept. 2 while driving south on Interstate 215 near Newport Road and she was arrested for investigation of driving under the influence of alcohol, said Officer Ron Thatcher of the California Highway Patrol.

Rainey was on her way to her vacation home in Oceanside after having dinner with her neighbors, school district board president Maxine Frost said Tuesday. The superintendent, who has taken a 30 day leave of absence, couldn't be reached for comment.

"She said it was a bad decision and she shouldn't have done it. She's been alone," Frost said, noting Rainey's husband died recently. "We're looking forward to her return in October."

Rainey's court appearance is scheduled for Nov. 7.

Buses get boost from soaring gas prices

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — There's been a rise in bus and commuter train passengers since gas prices soared into the $3-a-gallon range.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates buses and subways, and commuter-rail operator Metrolink said passenger volume jumped slightly last month compared to August 2004.

Still, few Southern Californians are abandoning their cars and heading for mass transit.

"Left to their own devices, people will choose the mode that's cheapest to them not just in out-of-pocket costs but in time costs," said Jim Moore, an engineering professor at the Center for Transportation Research at the University of Southern California.

"If they have a medium income, and the time cost of transit is high, the cost of gasoline has to go up quite a bit for it to wash out," Moore said.

MTA's overall ridership increased nearly 8 percent from 36.5 million boardings in August 2004 to 39.4 million last month. Last month, Metrolink posted big ridership gains, with 39,057 boardings in August compared with 37,086 in the same month last year.

"We've actually seen in the last two months some unusual gains, and we can't really explain them, but we suspect they may be due to the jump at the pump," Metrolink spokeswoman Denise Tyrell said.

Taking stock will cost Moorpark woman

By The Associated Press

VENTURA — A Moorpark woman who allegedly sold $170,000 in phony stock shares to 10 county residents to fuel a gambling habit was ordered to stand trial on felony fraud charges.

Superior Court Judge Herbert Curtis III ruled Tuesday at the end of a preliminary hearing that there was enough evidence to order trial for Benilda Batoon Olivo, 58, on charges she allegedly swindled residents.

Deputy District Attorney Marc L. Leventhal said Olivo sold $170,000 in bogus stock shares to 10 Ventura County residents, most of them in the Filipino community.

Olivo allegedly offered shares of stock for businesses that didn't exist, including a fish farm in the Philippines, a Hong Kong clothing business and a scrap metal business in Ventura. She also allegedly sold $3,500 shares in Better Choice Catering, which she said sold peanuts and food to the airlines, court testimony showed.

Deputy Public Defender Brian Vogel, who represents Olivo, wouldn't comment.

Councilman sorry for cringing comment

By The Associated Press

GARDEN GROVE — Councilman Harry Krebs apologized for what Asian-Americans called a culturally insensitive remark earlier this month.

"I apologize to our residents for my share of the incident," Krebs told an audience of about 120 gathered Tuesday in council chambers. "I worked long and hard to keep this community united and free of strife."

Asian-American groups demanded the public apology because of his Sept. 13 comment to Councilwoman Janet Nguyen as the two argued about a possible redevelopment project.

"I've already expressed it simply — I can't do it in Vietnamese," Krebs told Nguyen at the time.

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Business



SANTA MONICA BUSINESS BRIEFS

Hair nets: Trims produce $6K for hurricane relief

By Daily Press staff

In their fundraising effort to aid the hurricane relief, owners David Abrams and Jason Lara of luxelab salon have proven that even just a haircut can go a long way.

On Sept. 25, the Santa Monica salon offered $50 haircuts (reduced by more than half) from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. All money and other cash donations was earmarked to the American Red Cross for Katrina hurricane relief along the Gulf Coast for a total of more than $6,000. All employees, including the creative directors and management, donated their time and expert skills to the cause. Kerastase hair care products also donated product that was sold and added into the final tally.

The theme was New Orleans jazz — the salon created a bit of the feeling of Bourbon Street on Montana Avenue and extended its belief that the beleaguered city will come back by giving out Mardi Gras beads, offering festive libations, and showcasing live and recorded jazz and blues music.

Luxelab, a full service salon, is located at 1408 Montana Ave. in Santa Monica.

Their Fair lady: Hotel taps new PR director

By Daily Press staff

Tracy Larrua has been appointed director of public relations at The Fairmont Miramar Hotel, Santa Monica.

In that capacity, she will oversee all public relations and promotion activities for the 302-room hotel, a landmark in Santa Monica for more than 80 years.

"We're excited to have such a seasoned professional as Tracy on our marketing team," said Desmond Acheson, general manager of The Fairmont Miramar Hotel. "She brings with her years of experience in the hospitality industry and a proven track record of success from some of the most prestigious properties in the nation."

Larrua has more than 25 years of experience in public relations, marketing and advertising. Most recently, she worked as a freelance PR and marketing consultant to a variety of small businesses in both Los Angeles and Hawaii.

Prior to that, she served as the marketing communications director at the Century Plaza Hotel & Spa, where she was responsible for the overall public relations, promotions, special events and hotel marketing materials. She did the same as area director of public relations for the Ritz-Carlton, Marina Del Rey, Calif., and the Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua, Maui, and Wyndham Bel Age Hotel in West Hollywood and the Wyndham Checkers Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Larrua also has worked in the same capacity for the Sheraton Hotels Hawaii/Japan division as the public relations and promotions manager, where she managed the day-to-day public relations projects for nine Oahu and neighbor island properties.

Earlier in her career, she worked as an account executive at a number of advertising agencies, including Ogilvy & Mather, where she managed both the Hyatt Regency Waikiki and Hyatt Regency Maui accounts.

Larrua attended Cannons International Business College. She is a member of the LA chapter of The Publicity Club and sits on the advisory board of Gallery 825 in Los Angeles.

CPA firm serves as shelter from the storm

By Daily Press staff

Gumbiner Savett Inc., a certified public accounting and consulting firm located in Santa Monica, welcomed five new members to their tax team in an effort to contribute to the relief efforts for victims of hurricane Katrina.

The CPAs were evacuated from the New Orleans firm, Ericksen, Krentel & LaPorte, L.L.P.

The Ericksen, Krentel & LaPorte offices were significantly damaged during the storm. They have been unable to return to see the full extent of the damage because there is still four inches of contaminated water at their downtown location. Prior to the storm, Ericksen, Krentel & LaPorte consisted of seven partners and approximately 30 staff located in the New Orleans area.

While the hurricane-ravaged firm is presently setting up interim offices in Baton Rouge, there was not enough work to spread among current staff. Introduced to Gumbiner Savett by their outsourced marketing firm, The Growth Partnership Inc., Ericksen, Krentel & LaPorte's partners were pleased to temporarily relocate some staff members to the Santa Monica area in order to avoid lay-offs.

The relocated professionals include tax partner, Richard Mueller; tax manager, Gina Ruttley; tax seniors, Neal Morris and Stephanie Chauff; and tax staff, Dustin Doucet.

Gumbiner Savett worked with Oakwood Apartments to secure housing for the New Orleans staff. Oakwood offered the firm a discounted rate for the short-term leases. In addition, the local branch of Enterprise Rental Car provided significant discounts on vehicles for the team. Spectrum Health Club, located just across the street from Gumbiner Savett's main office location, provided free memberships for each of the evacuees. Finally, accounting software giant, Thomson RIA upgraded Gumbiner's user licenses to accommodate the new staff members at a reduced rate.

Headquartered in Santa Monica, Gumbiner Savett Inc. is one of the largest CPA and financial advisory firms in Southern California. In addition to traditional accounting and tax services, the firm specializes in strategic consulting including transaction support services for both buyers and sellers, general business consulting, valuation services, estate planning and information technology services. The firm employs more than 100 professionals in the Santa Monica area.

GUEST COMMENTARY **BY JASON VANCLEF**

Talk with aging parents about finances … now

Growing up, many of us were taught by our parents to never talk about money. The subject is viewed as being taboo, like discussing your political or religious beliefs. Adult children who grew up with this mindset typically feel uncomfortable broaching this difficult subject with their aging parents. Many adults are in denial about their parents' mortality and avoid asking questions about their estates and wills. Oftentimes they do not want to appear greedy about their inheritance or controlling of their parents' personal matters. However, not discussing this vital issue can lead to significant and irreversible problems in the future.

Today, we live in an age where planning ahead makes all the difference. The older generation who was taught to save every penny is now experiencing considerable wealth due to burgeoning real estate and smart investments. In turn, they need to preserve those assets to plan for future life changes. It is far easier to talk with parents when they are healthy than when they are incapacitated or hospitalized.

Adult children can play an important role in making sure their parents' estate is in order, as well as ensuring they are financially capable to take care of themselves for the remainder of their lives. Statistics show people are living longer and their retirement savings must be stretched to last a lifetime. It is likely that at least one parent will need some sort of assisted care in their elder years.

The American Health Care Association estimates that the cost of a nursing home can exceed $50,000 a year, while assisted-living facilities average $24,000 annually. If elderly parents are not prepared financially for that care, the burden may rest on their children. Many have taken on the responsibility of caregiver, which can become financially draining. According to the 2001 "Retirement Reality Check" survey by Allstate Financial, one in six (16 percent) baby boomers currently assists elderly parents or in-laws financially.

By having open discussions with aging parents now, you can help to improve their financial health, reduce potential problems and ease burdens in the future. The following tips should help to make that conversation easier.

1. Pick the right time to talk. You want to make sure to have the conversation when you won't be interrupted and when everyone is relaxed. Having this discussion during the holidays may not be the best time. You also might want to cover things in more than one conversation.

2. Maintain a sensitive stance. Don't be judgmental of your parents. Remember, this is a difficult subject for them to discuss. You may not agree with their decisions, but keep in mind they are competent adults. A good way to set the right tone is by saying, "It's important for me to understand your finances in case I need to help you in the future." You could even begin by discussing your retirement strategy or plans in the event of your own serious illness or death. This helps to open the door to communication and makes it an interactive conversation where they don't feel they are being questioned.

3. Involve an expert if needed. There are many resources available, such as financial planners and certified public accountants, that can help manage later life decisions and financial issues for families. In some cases, it might be easier for your parents to talk about these matters with an outsider than with a family member.

4. Make a list of assets and liabilities. This is an important place to begin once the conversation starts. You'll want to note the date and cost of assets, as this information will be needed for tax purposes if any assets are sold.

5. Establish arrangements for financial management. Your parents will want to consider establishing a durable power of attorney. This is a legal document that enables someone to designate another person to act on his or her behalf should they become disabled or incapacitated.

6. Know where important documents are kept. Make a list of all important documents, including birth and marriage certificates, wills and trust agreements, Social Security records, burial instructions, insurance policies, bank and investment statements, mortgage and real estate deeds and auto ownership records. Be sure to get bank information, including safe deposit box numbers and key locations. Also make a list of important contacts with phone numbers such as financial advisors, doctors and attorneys.

7. Review estate planning and investments. If they haven't done so already, encourage your parents to develop a plan to maximize their legacy for their heirs. Also be sure to discuss their investment strategy so you have an understanding of their financial well-being. This will help you plan ahead for any assistance you may need down the road.

8. Understand your parents' healthcare wishes. You'll need to know where your parents stand on healthcare issues should they ever become incapacitated. If that should occur, long-term care planning is essential. Depending on their situation, long-term care insurance may be appropriate to help absorb the costs associated with nursing homes or at-home care.

It's difficult thinking of the possibility of needing care in our elder years — not only when thinking of our aging parents, but also when thinking of ourselves. What is most important to think about is how to plan ahead to avoid disagreements over care and finances. The rewards are endless, and the experience will help you prepare for your own future.

(Jason Vanclef is president of Vanclef Financial Group. To reach him call 800-737-8552.)

STATE

Two to share $100K after pointing fingers

BY JUSTIN M. NORTON
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — A Las Vegas man who complained he hadn't received a $100,000 reward from Wendy's International Inc. for helping solve the infamous "chili finger" case will split the reward with an anonymous tipster, the company said Tuesday.

Mike Casey, who runs the asphalt plant in Las Vegas that employed both the man who lost the finger and the husband of the woman who claimed she gagged when she bit into the digit, said last week that he provided the tip that helped authorities unravel the scheme.

"I did what they wanted and they offered it, so I think I have it coming," he said at the time.

Wendy's, based in Dublin, Ohio, said it was grateful to the tipsters who called a hot line set up when profits plunged after reports of the hoax hit headlines worldwide and quickly became a fodder for late-night comedians and water cooler chatter.

"We sincerely thank these citizens for stepping forward and calling the special hot line number with information that helped investigators break open this case," Wendy's officials said in a statement.

Casey could not immediately be reached by phone at work Tuesday. A person who answered the phone said he was away at a seminar and would probably not return calls.

Company officials said the second recipient asked to remain anonymous.

Anna Ayala, 39, and Jaime Placencia, 43, face sentencing Nov. 2 after pleading guilty earlier this month in Santa Clara County Superior Court to conspiring to file a false claim and attempted grand theft. Placencia's co-worker lost the finger in an industrial accident.

Ayala said she found the fingertip March 22 while eating chili with her family. Authorities said they believed it was a bogus report, but the story quickly took on a life of its own.

Wendy's set up a hot line and offered a reward for information leading to the finger's owner. The fast food chain said it lost $2.5 million from the bad publicity.

The company said the district attorney's office and police asked that Wendy's not distribute the reward until the case was resolved, since the tipsters could have been asked to testify.

California's cost of living varies widely from wages

STATE INCOME, from page 1

portation, food and other basic needs, according to a new study.

While cost of living and wages vary widely in the state, on average, a two-parent family with one employed adult needs to make $51,177 a year, or $24.60 an hour, to pay for housing, transportation, food, utilities, child care, health coverage and taxes and other basic expenses, according to the study by the California Budget Project.

The state's state minimum wage is $6.75 an hour, which amounts to an annual income of $14,040, the group said.

The 2004 federal poverty level for a family of four is $19,157, the group said.

"Making ends meet is virtually out of reach for millions of families in this state," said Jean Ross, executive director of the Sacramento-based nonprofit policy research group.

Ross said the hardships go beyond just minimum-wage households, however.

"A reasonably large share of the California population is living paycheck to paycheck and, depending on their family circumstances, may have a tough time making ends meet."

The group studied data on fair market rents, food prices, consumer spending habits and mileage rates, among other topics, from a host of government sources.

According to the study, to a family with two working parents needs to earn $71,377 annually to afford the housing, food and the other "basic" expenses cited by the group.

A single-parent family would need to earn $53,987 annually, while a household with a single adult and no children needs to make $25,867 a year, the group said.

The group did not have nationwide figures to compare to the California data.

The CBP analysis focused on 10 geographic regions in the state. Of these, a region encompassing a 10-county area around San Francisco ranked as the most expensive. A two-parent household with one employed adult in that region needs to make $55,740 a year, according to the group.

Another region made up of several counties in the Central Valley around Fresno was ranked as the least expensive. A two-parent household with one employed adult there needs to make $40,544 a year, the group said.

The same household in Los Angeles needs to earn $49,322 a year, the group said.

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LOCAL

Bid adieu? Beach cafe fights policy

SMALL BUSINESS, from page 1

request is as broad as possible in order to allow City Hall to choose the best vendor.

Chacker insists the "devil is in the details" in regards to the 75-page request for proposal. He cites that not only is City Hall opening up his business to competition, but encouraging candidates who can provide concession service at the civic auditorium and the beach cafe at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway.

Based on City Hall's new requirements under the request for proposal, Chacker said the minimal capital investment would be $783,000 for the four concession stands, a contract guaranteed for five years. He argues that it would be difficult to recoup his investment with only a guarantee he would be operational for five years.

In response, Katz questioned whether Santa Monica was heading in the right direction with its request.

"Maybe we're not looking out for small businesses," Katz told the City Council.

Katz's concerns were shared by fellow Councilmen Ken Genser and Kevin McKeown, and members of the public who spoke on the issue.

"The capital required negates the possibilities of small businesses participating in the bid," said former mayor and councilman Mike Feinstein. "This request shouldn't have been made without the council debating it publicly."

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

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

But it's not meant to exclude the incumbent, either, she said.

City Manager Susan McCarthy spoke on staff's behalf and indicated the request had been misportrayed publicly.

"It's entirely inappropriate for the operator to advise us on what should be included in the (request)," McCarthy said. "It's competition — good for the city and existing operators."

McCarthy indicated the request was designed in such a way that a small business operator who failed to win the bid could likely attribute it to a poor business plan.

She said the seemingly high start-up fees would be used, in part, to make structural improvements needed at some of the facilities.

Genser wasn't entirely satisfied with McCarthy's explanation of the request for proposal. He wanted to know if small businesses would be looked unfavorably in the bidding process if they couldn't provide all the services City Hall asked for.

According to McCarthy, some of the services requested had gone under-utilized for several years, and if City Hall chose an operator that couldn't provide those services, it meant they'd likely be under-utilized for several more years.

Genser asked if vendors who provided the city a good service in the past received "bonus points" in the bidding process.

City Attorney Marsha Moutrie said that line of questioning discredited City Hall. Since the bids were due on Wednesday, discussing the process the night before didn't appear objective.

Moutrie suggested the City Council look to a future date to re-address its policy toward small businesses and how that's played out in its contracts.

She also suggested City Hall may need to better address a broader, legal and philosophical question about the private use of city-owned space.

"Can a person continue to use public property simply because they've had it?" Moutrie said. "It's an issue that needs to be discussed."

The City Council asked staff to arrange a time to debate policies toward small businesses operating on Santa Monica property.

COUNCIL COUNTDOWN



The following is a summation of what went on in Santa Monica City Council chambers during the Council's Sept. 27 meeting, including a timeline, notable public comments and excerpts taken.

The Santa Monica City Council met in closed session from 5:45 p.m. until 6:54 p.m.

6:54 p.m.: The council listened to public comment regarding the consent calendar and discussed the minutes from the Sept. 13 meeting and the approval of the airport landing fees.
7:05 p.m.: The public presented concerns to the council regarding the "Opportunity and Challenges" report, the document which will guide city staff through the process of updating the general plan. The council incorporated the public's comments and directed to staff to keep factors in mind as the process unfolds, particularly around policies that will limit development in the future.
10:50 p.m.: The council discussed items to continue to the next meeting, due to time constraints. Councilmembers also heard and approved policy adjustments to the Santa Monica beach parking lots for vendor use.
11:10 p.m.: The council discussed the need to address its policy toward small business owners, particularly as it relates to managing the allocation of public property. The council decided more discussion was needed and put off further discussion until a future date.
11:36 p.m.: The council heard public comment.
11:41 p.m.: The council adjourned the meeting.

BY THE NUMBERS

Time spent on the top three issues facing Santa Monicans based on city surveys:

Homelessness: 0 minutes
Traffic: 3 hours, 45 minutes
Parking: 3 hours, 45 minutes

Public comment: 2 hours, 3 minutes
City Council discussion: 2 hours, 7 minutes

Time spent discussing:
Policy: 4 hours, 27 minutes
Land use: 4 hours, 27 minutes
Resident initiated concerns: 26 minutes



LET'S TALK CHIT

"Chits" (Public addressing City Council)

"It took me 29 minutes to get from 17th Street to Centinela Avenue on a Friday. I averaged it out to be about three and a half miles per hour. You should call the traffic plan, 'Motionless by the Ocean.'"

Phil Harnage, regarding the traffic plan update, "Motion by the Ocean."

"I used to go to the Promenade and shop, but not anymore, because I can't be assured I will be able to get out."

Grace Phillips, regarding the need for a better traffic plan and retail options.

"You must be trying to circumvent criticism because there are so many items on the agenda and you don't get to any of them."

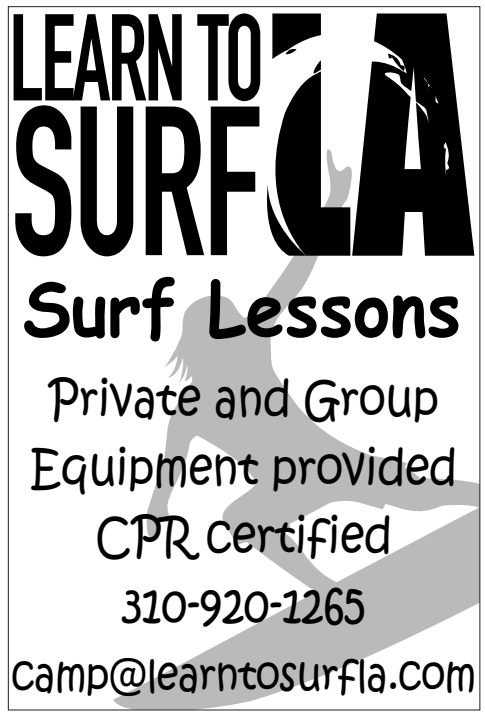
Joy Fullmer

QUOTE OF NOTE

"We're asking that you be fair and equitable."

Mayor Pam O'Connor, in response to applause and cheers regarding Matt Baird's comments that residents want rent control and no more development.









Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Typical daytime gatherings along 11th Street like this have drawn the ire of nearby residents, who have complained repeatedly to City Council that loiterers are wrecking their neighborhood.

Pasadena laborer center a model

FLUSHED, from page 1

moving and other "fix-up" jobs.

However, residents have grown weary of the blight created by the masses, which can number up to 175 people on a given day. On Tuesday, a few of the residents returned to City Hall and reminded elected leaders help was needed.

"I haven't seen anything that's been done about it over a month after the fact," said Charlie Bunin, a Santa Monica resident who first spoke about his concerns at the Aug. 9 council meeting.

Miriam Mack, Santa Monica's economic development manager, said City Hall believes port-a-potties may be the solution.

"It would make the day laborer conditions better and perhaps alleviate some of the negative impacts in the streets," Mack said. "It's something we can do immediately to see if that's a help and go from there."

City Hall spokeswoman Judy Rambeau Franz said the suggestion may go before the council as early as Oct. 25.

Meanwhile, employees who work in the area think City Hall is off to a good start, but more may be needed to combat the problem in the long run.

Kirby Fortenberry, who works on the 1600 block of 11th Street, said the illegal immigrants who line up near his office often number in the hundreds and aren't productive in the same manner citizens are.

"Because they're paid in cash, they don't pay income tax — only sales tax," Fortenberry said. "It's not fair to other hard-working people."

Fortenberry also said he was concerned about public safety.

"We have women who work into the night," he said. "When they go to their cars, you think it's a good idea if 40 men are standing around?"

John Stevens, who works at True Value Hardware store, said oftentimes some of the day laborers are drunk by noon if they don't have work.

"It's like anything else," Stevens said. "There's always a percentage of those who want to work, and others who just want to talk to friends and drink a beer."

Stevens said he supported the idea of creating a day laborer center which would allow those willing to find work in an organized manner and minimized associated risks for both employers and employees.

Councilman Richard Bloom said he will urge staff to contact officials in Pasadena, who he said seem to have a successful program for regulating day laborers.

Ann Erdman, a Pasadena spokeswoman, said the city passed an amendment in 2003 called the "No Vehicle Solicitation" ordinance.

"There's always a percentage of those who want to work, and others who just want to talk to friends and drink a beer."

JOHN STEVENS
True Value Hardware employee

It prohibits vehicles from stopping in posted areas along Villa Street, which has had a problem with day laborers congregating there at least since 2001, Erdman said. There also are large signs posted that say "no vehicle solicitations."

Traffic safety problems were the main impetus for creating the ordinance, Erdman said. Other issues related to day laborers such as littering, defecating, public urination, and the rare fistfight are being handled by a combination of the Pasadena Police Department and organized neighborhood associations, and the code compliance office, Erdman said.

In addition, a nonprofit group called the Instituto de Educacion Popular del sur de California has established a day laborer center at 500 N. Lake Avenue, just a few blocks from Villa Street. Erdman said the center serves as an organized way for day laborers to find work, and it's very popular. To participate, day laborers must go through a registration process.

Erdman said the combination of law enforcement and providing the day laborers with employment options seems to be working well for Pasadena.

"It isn't a perfect system, but the situation is a lot better now than it was a few years ago," Erdman said.

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NATIONAL

Rocky Mtn. high: Committee is OK with woman's stay

By The Associated Press

DENVER — A deal allowing an 83-year-old woman to keep her summer home inside Rocky Mountain National Park was approved Tuesday by a U.S. Senate committee.

The Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved a bill that essentially extends Betty Dick's lease on the cabin and eight surrounding acres, allowing her to rent it for $300 a year for the rest of her life.

Under her previous lease, which expired July 16, Dick leased the cabin and 23 surrounding acres for $300. The National Park Service had attempted to evict Dick when the lease expired.

The bill must still be approved by the full Senate. A similar bill, sponsored by Rep. Mark Udall, D-Colo., has passed the House.

Dick's late husband, Fred, negotiated the previous lease on the property after a legal battle. His first wife got the property in their divorce and sold it to the Park Service, but he sued, saying he had the right of first refusal.

Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., who sponsored the Senate version, said he was pleased with the vote.

"A home is not just a building, it is place with memories of family, friends and loved ones. Mrs. Dick will be able to keep those memories alive with this legislation," Salazar said in a statement.

Army reservist England sentenced to three years for Abu Ghraib role

BY T.A. BADGER
Associated Press Writer

FORT HOOD, Texas — Army Pfc. Lynndie England, who posed for some of the most infamous pictures of detainee abuse at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison, was sentenced to three years behind bars.

The jury of five Army officers needed about 90 minutes Tuesday to determine their sentence for England, the most recognizable of the nine low-ranking reservists charged in the scandal that severely damaged America's image in the Muslim world and tarnished the U.S. military at home and abroad.

The charges against the 22-year-old reservist from rural West Virginia carried up to nine years, but prosecutor Capt. Chris Graveline asked the jury to imprison her for four to six years. The defense asked for no time behind bars.

The charges against the 22-year-old reservist from rural West Virginia carried up to nine years, but prosecutor Capt. Chris Graveline asked the jury to imprison her for four to six years.

England, who was convicted Monday on six of seven counts involving prisoner mistreatment, spent some time with her 11-month-old son, Carter, before being escorted out of the Fort Hood courthouse. Her reddened eyes stared straight ahead as she made her way to a waiting van.

Neither prosecutors nor defense lawyers would speak with reporters after the sentence was announced.

England apologized earlier Tuesday for appearing in the photos taken in late 2003, saying she did so at the behest of Pvt. Charles Graner Jr., the boyfriend who she said took advantage of her love and trust while they were deployed in Iraq.

"I was used by Private Graner," said England, who has said that Graner fathered her son. "I didn't realize it at the time."

In some of the pictures, England is shown holding a naked prisoner on a leash, posing with a pyramid of naked detainees and pointing at the genitals of a prisoner while a cigarette hangs from the corner of her mouth.

England, speaking in response to questions from a defense lawyer, said she was embarrassed by the photos. She apologized to the detainees and their families, as well as to American soldiers who may have suffered in Iraq for her misguided actions.

"I heard attacks were made on coalition forces because of the photos," she said. "I apologize to coalition forces and their families that lost their life or were injured because of the photos."

England's defense contended she is a compliant person who took part in the detainee maltreatment to please Graner, who prosecutors said was the ringleader of the abuse by a group of U.S. troops.

In a calm voice, she recounted how her relationship with Graner, 14 years her senior, developed as they prepared for deployment to Iraq with the 372nd Military Police Company in 2003.

"He was very charming, funny and at the time it looked to me like he was interested in the same things I was. ... He made me feel good about myself," she said. "I trusted him and I loved him. ... Now I know it was just an act to lure me in."

Graner and another former guard were also convicted at trial, while six other soldiers struck plea bargains. Graner was sentenced to 10 years.

No officers have gone to trial, though several received administrative punishment.

Graner's testimony Tuesday supported that of a defense expert witness who said officers in charge at Abu Ghraib failed to control the guards, creating stressful conditions that disoriented England and led her to take part in the mistreatment.

Graner said he, England and others who worked the overnight shift in a high-security section of Abu Ghraib had scant supervision.

"It seems like the junior soldiers were on their own," he said. "We had little leadership."

Graner said he told officers about detainee maltreatment, which he claimed was done by order of military intelligence personnel. At times, he said, military intelligence officers actually were present for the abuse.

"I nearly beat an MI detainee to death with MI there," he said before Col. James Pohl, the judge, interrupted his testimony.

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NATIONAL

Sluggish aid is frustrating Rita victims in rural Texas

BY ABE LEVY
Associated Press Writer

PORT ARTHUR, Texas — Hurricane Rita victims along the rural Texas Gulf Coast are waiting to see whether their complaints about sluggish federal and state aid result in speedier action in the coming days.

Mayor Oscar Ortiz expressed cautious optimism after meeting with Gov. Rick Perry on Tuesday, but said he's still relying more on private companies and individuals than the government as the city struggles to recover.

"I'm just hoping (the government) comes through," Ortiz said. "It seems like the larger towns in the news are the ones getting the help."

Nearly four days after Rita hit, many of the storm's sweltering victims were still waiting for electricity, gasoline, water and other relief. The situation prompted one top emergency official to complain that people are "living like cavemen."

In the hard-hit refinery towns of Port Arthur and Beaumont, crews struggled to cross debris-clogged streets to deliver generators and water to people stranded by Rita. They predicted it could be a month before power is restored, and said water and sewer systems could not function until more generators arrived.

Red tape was also blamed for the delays.

Nederland City Manager Andre Wimer said "it's been a terribly frustrating four days" because of problems getting help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"I can appreciate the difficulty in responding to a disaster that was this widespread but at the same time we certainly feel we've not received a level of service that was satisfactory," he said.

Perry and President Bush surveyed parts of the damaged region Tuesday, asking for patience while federal and state relief makes it way there.

"There's always going to be those discombobulations, but the fact is everyone is doing everything possible to restore power back to this area," Perry said.

About 476,000 people remained without electricity in Texas on Tuesday, in addition to around 285,000 in Louisiana. About 15,000 out-of-state utility workers were being brought to the region to help restore power.

Ortiz was blocking residents from returning for three to five days because of a lack of services. The estimated 2,000 people who stayed put during the storm, which made landfall Saturday along the Texas-Louisiana border, face an overnight curfew.

After complaining about a sluggish federal response, Port Arthur received 121 small generators Tuesday afternoon. Ortiz planned to give them to emergency personnel first and then to merchants who provide high-demand products such as gasoline, water and food.

"We have been living like cavemen, sleeping in cars, doing bodily functions outside," said John Owens, emergency management coordinator for Port Arthur. "And meanwhile we're the victims, and we have families here."

In a Port Arthur neighborhood not far from a grocery store that reeked of rotten food, three FEMA trailers delivered ice, ready-to-eat meals and water.

"Without these trucks here, I don't think we would have made it," said Lee Smith, 50. "I've never left before. I thought it wouldn't be too bad. The good Lord spared us."

The White House said complete federal funding for debris removal, emergency protective measures and direct federal assistance was extended through Oct. 27.

Texas Republican Rep. Kevin Brady, whose district includes some of the counties hit by Rita, said he will be developing legislation to provide relief, especially for towns that took in evacuees from Hurricane Katrina.

Grand investment: Land acquisition that borders North Rim finalized for $4.5 million

BY BETH DEFALCO
Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Conservation groups have finalized the purchase of two private northern Arizona ranches, allowing them to protect almost 900,000 acres of wilderness including land stretching along 125 miles of the Grand Canyon's North Rim.

The $4.5 million purchase totals about 1,000 acres but will help protect more than 850,000 acres that are attached to the land through grazing permits from the North Rim to the Utah line.

The acquisition connects three national monuments, two national recreation areas and eight wilderness areas, shielding them from further development.

The purchase was long desired by conservationists but was becoming increasingly crucial, they say, as development moved closer from St. George, Utah, and the Arizona Strip — the northernmost part of the state cut off by the Grand Canyon.

Mike Ford, the Nevada and Southwest director of The Conservation Fund, which led the fundraising effort for the purchase, said it "demonstrates one of the most important and innovative public-private conservation efforts of our time."

The fundraising effort was bolstered by a $1 million grant from Wal-Mart Stores Inc. Wal-Mart has pledged $35 million to buy land equal to all the land its stores, parking lots and distribution centers use over the next 10 years.

The Arizona land purchase comprises the Kane and Two Mile ranches. They include desert areas in Marble Canyon; pinon-juniper forests surrounding the Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, where dozens of endangered California condors have been released into the wild; and spruce-fir in the higher reaches of Kaibab National Forest.

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NATIONAL

Plover's plight takes a hit with cutbacks

BY JEFF BARNARD
Associated Press Writer

GRANTS PASS, Ore. — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced this week that West Coast beach-front critical habitat for the threatened western snowy plover will be cut back by nearly 40 percent, continuing a Bush administration policy of reducing habitat protections for threatened and endangered species to reduce economic losses.

The bulk of the cutbacks came from beaches in California on Monterey Bay, Morro Bay and the San Diego Bay island city of Coronado, where a report had estimated that protecting nesting areas from development and human contact would cost nearly $200 million over the next 20 years due primarily to limiting recreation.

"The economic analyses are playing an increasingly significant role in determinations of critical habitat," said Fish and Wildlife spokesman Al Donner in Sacramento, Calif. "That's triggered by court decisions that have directed us to do more rigorous economic reviews of proposed critical habitat and their impacts."

However, the court battle appears likely to continue. Kieran Suckling, policy director of the Center for Biological Diversity, said they were likely to challenge the designation based on an internal Fish and Wildlife document questioning the validity of the economic analysis. Coos County Commissioner John Griffith, who initiated the lawsuit that triggered the new designation, said he was looking into reopening the case because too little habitat was withdrawn.

In recent weeks, the Bush administration has sharply reduced critical habitat designations for bull trout and Pacific salmon, and the issue is at the core of a rewrite of the Endangered Species Act being considered by Congress.

Since 1999, critical habitat designations have closed the dry sand portions of many miles of beaches to recreation during the nesting season, which runs from March through September. The tiny shore birds lay their eggs in a depression in open sand, where they are vulnerable to predators and people.

Only 28 major nesting areas remain for the estimated 2,600 snowy plovers that remain. Dunes have been overgrown by nonnative plants, making them unsuitable for nesting. Biologists have turned to killing predators, such as ravens and foxes, to improve nesting success.

Based on a lawsuit filed by Coos County in Oregon, which charged that the original economic analysis was inadequate, Fish and Wildlife agreed to reconsider its 1999 decision to protect 19,474 acres of federal, state and privately owned beach in 28 units in California, Oregon and Washington.

The new critical habitat designation, which takes effect Oct. 30, designates 12,145 acres in 32 units. California has 24 units covering 7,472 acres, Oregon five units covering 2,147 acres, and Washington three units covering 2,526 acres. That is down 38 percent from the 1999 designation and 30 percent from the 17,299 acres proposed for protection last December.

The final decision was made in the office of Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, Donner said.

All 2,859 acres removed for economic considerations were in California: two units on Monterey Bay, two on Morro Bay, and one at Silver Strand, Coronado, said Donner. Another 1,621 acres were removed from military bases in California, primarily Vandenberg Air Force Base near Ventura. And 615 acres were removed because other protections are in place.

Donner said additional acreage was removed because it was not occupied or unsuitable.

Griffith said he was glad the Bush administration had withdrawn some areas for economic considerations, but the designation had not gone far enough, because it did not withdraw the North Spit of Coos Bay.

"That's what the law says they are supposed to do. It's just that they didn't go far enough," Griffith said.

Griffith and Gary Page, co-director of wetlands for PRBO Conservation Science in Stinson Beach, Calif., both questioned whether the Bush administration had fully analyzed the public comments on the economic analysis before making the decision, because the comment period had closed less than two weeks ago.

PRBO Conservation Science, which works to build bird populations, had submitted comments saying the economic analysis failed to take into account economic benefits of protecting habitat, Page said.

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Man from Washington becomes third to die in Las Vegas Strip crash

BY KEN RITTER
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — A 60-year-old man died Wednesday from injuries he received a week ago when a stolen car plowed into pedestrians on the crowded Las Vegas Strip, killing two other people.

Richard Bradford of Renton, Wash., died at University Medical Center, where a spokeswoman said he developed sudden complications.

A prosecutor said a third charge of murder would be filed against the driver in the Sept. 21 crash. Stephen M. Ressa, 27, is accused of intentionally steering over the curb and accelerating along the sidewalk in front of the Paris Las Vegas and Bally's hotel-casinos.

Ressa, of Rialto, Calif., already faces two murder counts in the deaths of two California men, as well as 12 attempted murder charges, 12 counts of battery with a deadly weapon and a charge of possession of a stolen car.

Ressa currently faces life in prison without the possibility of parole if convicted. Clark County District Attorney David Roger has said he may seek the death penalty.

Ressa is due in court Oct. 26. He is being held without bail pending a psychological evaluation sought by his defense lawyer.

Ressa told police he became angry at people he believed were "staring at him like they were 'demons"' and concealing guns in their pockets, according to a police report.

Prosecutors allege Ressa stole his mother's car after she was beaten and choked into unconsciousness Sept. 19 at her Rialto home.

INTERNATIONAL

Female suicide bomber kills six in Iraq

BY THOMAS WAGNER
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A woman strapped with explosives and disguised as a man blew herself up outside an Iraqi army recruiting center in a northern town Wednesday, killing at least six people and wounding 30 in the first known attack by a female suicide bomber in the country's bloody insurgency.

Al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility for the blast, saying in an Internet posting that it was carried out by "a blessed sister."

The attack in Tal Afar, where U.S. and Iraqi forces routed militants in a major offensive two weeks ago, demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining security in the towns in the large northwestern region stretching to the Syrian border, where insurgents are most active.

In Washington, President Bush predicted a surge in violence in Iraq before the Oct. 15 referendum on the new constitution, but said the militants would fail. "Our troops are ready for them," he said.

The woman was disguised as a man in a white dishdasha — a traditional male robe — and a kaffiyeh head scarf to blend in with the other applicants lined up to join the Iraqi army, which takes only men, said Maj. Jamil Mohammed Saleh in Tal Afar.

She was standing at the first of three checkpoints outside the center when she detonated explosives hidden under her clothes and packed with metal balls, Saleh said.

It was the first known instance that a woman has carried out a suicide bombing in Iraq. In October 2003, a female bomber was caught trying to enter a government building in Baghdad before she could detonate her explosives.

Saddam Hussein's regime used female bombers at least once during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, when two women blew up a car at a checkpoint near the city of Haditha, killing three American soldiers days before the April 2003 fall of Baghdad.

"Today's attack seems to represent a new tactic by the insurgents to use women who are rarely searched at Tal Afar's checkpoints because of religious and social traditions that grant women special treatment," Gen. Ahmed Mohammed Khalaf, the regional police chief, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

For that reason, he said, women and children will now be searched there the same way that men are.

The al-Qaida in Iraq claim came in a Web posting signed by the spokesman for the organization, Abu Maysara al-Iraqi.

"A blessed sister from the Al-Baraa bin Malek martyrdom brigade carried out a heroic attack defending her faith and honor on a gathering of volunteers for the apostate forces at a center for recruiting apostates in Tal Afar," the statement said.

"May God accept our sister among the martyrs," it said, without identifying her.

The town of Baqouba suffered its second suicide car bomb in two days.

An attacker slammed his vehicle into a police patrol in central Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, killing one person and wounding 14, included 10 policemen, said Dr. Ahmed Mohammed at Baqouba General Hospital.

On Tuesday, a bomber strapped with explosives blew himself up at a police recruitment center in Baqouba, killing nine Iraqis.

In Wednesday's attack in Tal Afar, 95 miles east of the Syrian border, all the dead and wounded were army recruits, Saleh said.

The blast highlighted the difficulty of maintaining security in the large northwestern region stretching to the border, where insurgents are most active.

Iraqi authorities claimed nearly 200 suspected militants were killed and 315 were captured in the Sept. 8-12 offensive in Tal Afar. But U.S. and Iraqi troops discovered later that many had slipped away, some through a network of tunnels.

Most of the forces that participated in the offensive have withdrawn, although U.S. troops maintain a base and outposts in Tal Afar, 260 miles northwest of Baghdad.

"Due to the security vacuum after the withdrawal of (Iraqi) police commandos from Tal Afar, the terrorists came back again," said Abbas al-Bayati, a parliament member and an ethnic Turkman — a community with a large presence there.

The blast was similar to an attack a day earlier in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, where a man strapped with explosives blew himself up in a police recruiting center, killing nine.

A U.S. soldier was killed and another wounded by a roadside bomb at the town of Safwan on Iraq's border with Kuwait on Wednesday, the military said. It also announced that a Marine near the western city of Fallujah was killed by non-hostile gunfire Monday.

The deaths brought to 1,920 the number of U.S. troops who have died since the Iraq war began in 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

Following a meeting with Gen. George Casey, the top commander in Iraq, and Gen. John Abizaid, the commander of U.S. Central Command, Bush said the insurgents would "do everything in their power to try to stop the march of freedom. And our troops are ready for it."

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw also warned of more "dark moments" ahead in Iraq and said it would take time to rebuild a nation that suffered a dictatorial, violent past.

"None of us should underestimate the challenges that still lie ahead in Iraq," Straw told an annual conference of Britain's governing Labour Party. "Nation building from a violent past has never been easy."

Soon after the Tal Afar offensive, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian-born, Sunni Arab leader of the al-Qaida in Iraq insurgent group, declared all-out war on Iraq's majority Shiites.

On Tuesday, Iraqi and U.S. forces announced they had killed al-Zarqawi's deputy, Abdullah Abu Azzam, in a weekend raid on a high-rise apartment building in Baghdad. The coalition called Abu Azzam the mastermind of an escalation in suicide bombings that have killed nearly 700 people in Baghdad since April and said he was the financial controller for foreign fighters who entered Iraq to join the insurgency.

"This guy's a brutal killer," Bush said.

Al-Qaida in Iraq issued an Internet statement denying Abu Azzam was its deputy leader, calling him "one of al-Qaida's many soldiers" and "the leader of one its battalions operating in Baghdad." The statement confirmed the Baghdad raid but said it was not certain whether he was killed.

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COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



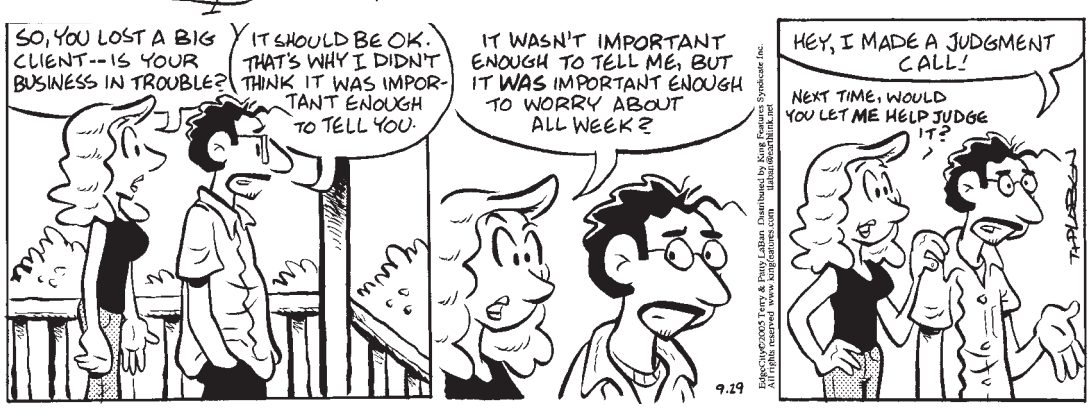
Natural Selection®

By Russ Wallace

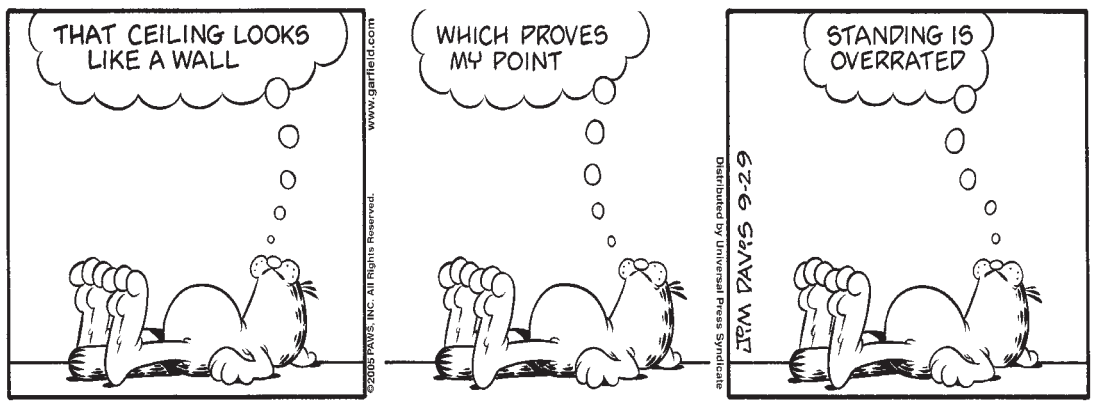


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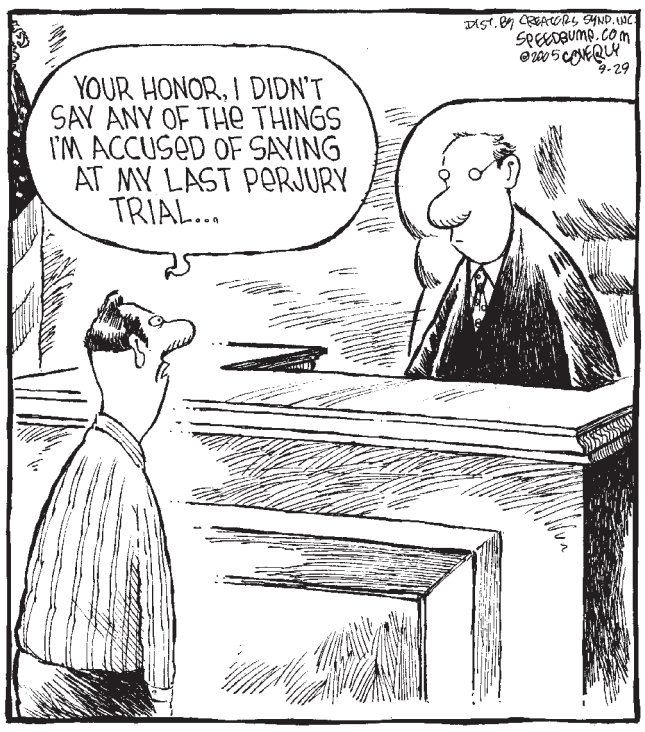
by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



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ACROSS

1 Irritates
6 Muskrat's home
11 Concerning
12 First odd prime
13 Composer's creation
14 Coliseum guide
15 Darius' kingdom
17 "Well, that's obvious!"
19 Little brat
20 Derby, e.g.
23 "Becket" actor
25 Lamarr of "Samson and Delilah"
26 Rifle-range target features
28 Ticked off
29 Danny of "Moonstruck"
30 Print measures
31 Termite's kin
32 Farm layer
33 Complete failure
35 Salary
38 Stops
41 Perfect
42 Cager Shaquille
43 "Affliction" star
44 Like cirrus clouds

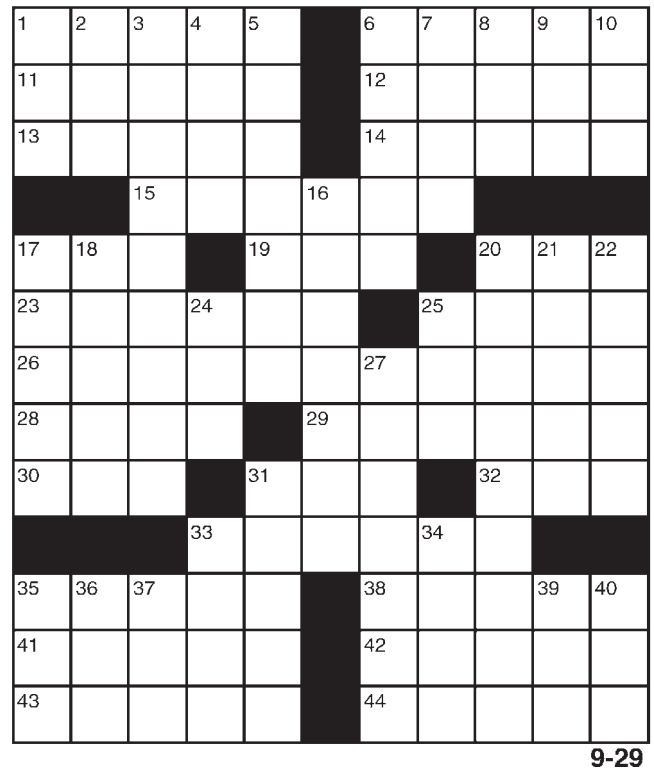
DOWN

1 Empty talk
2 Jackson 5 hit
3 Ways out of contracts
4 Entice
5 Like a scalpel
6 Disrobe
7 Horse halter
8 Pitcher's pride
9 — culpa
10 Signing need
16 Czech composer
17 TV's Gillis
18 Road reversal
20 Unpleasant places
21 Designer Simpson
22 Boxer Mike
24 Prehistoric
25 Tend the garden
27 Producer's dream
31 Usher's place
33 Accomplishment
34 "What — say?"
35 Triumph
36 Brouhaha
37 Hair goop
39 Bar fixture
40 Crafty

S	A	D	L	Y	■	■	R	A	N	G
K	N	E	A	D	■	R	O	G	E	R
A	D	A	M	S	■	O	L	I	V	E
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E	L	L	E	R	Y	■	L	I	M	A
A	L	I	B	I	■	M	A	N	I	C
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S	E	E	S	■	■	C	A	S	E	Y

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