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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2010
Volume 9 Issue 288



GRADING FOOD TRUCKS
SEE PAGE 3

Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE

Prosecutor says fear a factor in murder trial

BY NICK TABOREK
Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN L.A. Seated between his two lawyers in a Downtown Los Angeles courtroom on Tuesday for the first day of a trial that could result in the death penalty against him, William Vasquez, wearing a blue dress shirt with a tie hanging awkwardly past his waistline, looked nothing like the man in the mug shot that prosecutors repeatedly projected on a screen for the jury.

In the picture, taken five years ago on the day of his arrest, Vasquez was shown shirtless, the word "Eighteen" tattooed across his chest — a testament, prosecutors said, to his loyalty to the 18th Street gang, one of Los Angeles' most notorious.

Vasquez is charged with five murders and three other shootings between 2002 and 2005, including the killing of two Santa Monica men during a party at the Moose Lodge on Ocean Park Boulevard in March of 2005.

The two men who were killed in that incident — Jonathan Hernandez, 19, and Hector Bonilla, 25 — were allegedly Santa Monica gang members, as was a third alleged Vasquez victim, Jesse Becerra, who was shot 20 times outside of house party near 21st Street and La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles, apparently for crossing into the 18th Street gang's territory, prosecutors said.

On Tuesday, Deputy District Attorney Sarika Kim described Vasquez as a killer who sought to win respect and spread fear through the brutality of his crimes. In the Moose Lodge murders, the two victims were shot a total of 25 times, including several times in the back as they lay dying on the floor, she said. Becerra was shot nine times in the head from as close a range as two feet.

"That fear will be pervasive in this trial," Kim told the jury, "and it will manifest itself in different ways."

Some witnesses who earlier cooperated with investigators may not be willing to tes-

SEE TRIAL PAGE 10



WINNING EFFORT

Morgan Genser *news@smdp.com*

Santa Monica College's Mercy Tejada (right) battles College of the Canyons' Emma Wright for a loose ball on Tuesday at Corsair Field. SMC won, 5-1.

Multiple burglaries hit Wilshire

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Editor in Chief

WILSHIRE BLVD Authorities are investigating a rash of commercial burglaries that happened overnight Sunday on the east end of Wilshire Boulevard, the Santa Monica Police Department reported.

SMPD Sgt. Jay Trisler said at least five businesses in the 2900 and 3000 blocks of Wilshire Boulevard were targeted, with the suspect or suspects making off with a laptop and several hundred dollars in cash. Two dry cleaners, a nail salon, karate studio and a garden supply store were hit.

Trisler said objects were used to break storefront windows. The suspect or suspects would then enter the businesses and tear

SEE BURGLARIES PAGE 11

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ROUNDUP

Samohi to be tested by Inglewood prospects

BY DANIEL ARCHULETA
Managing Editor

INGLEWOOD When Santa Monica High School's football team squares off with Inglewood on the road Friday the Vikings will be facing a pair of major recruits.

First-year head coach Stephen Thomas said that safety/wide receiver Patrick Onwuasor is being pursued by Arizona and Nebraska. But, Onwuasor isn't the only Inglewood Sentinel drawing attention. Fellow receiver Derrick Woods is currently being courted by the University of Washington.

Thomas expects the pair of receivers to be the primary targets of first-year quarterback Sean Simmons, a converted receiver himself.

"[Simmons] is a pocket passer," Thomas said. "We hope to give him time back there."

The game is the Ocean League opener for both schools. Each team comes into the game 3-2 through the preseason.

OCEAN LEAGUE PARITY

As Ocean League play opens this weekend, it appears that the league is top heavy.

Santa Monica, Culver City, Beverly Hills and Inglewood all ended the preseason 3-2. Morningside and Hawthorne are 1-4.

Culver City won the league last season with a 5-0 record. Samohi finished third at 3-2.

LIGHTHOUSE FOOTBALL IMPROVES TO 3-1

Lighthouse Christian's football team improved its record to 3-1 with a huge win over Ribet Academy on Friday.

The Lighthouse Saints are now 1-1 in Coastal League play. Next for the Saints is a league matchup with Rolling Hills Prep on Friday. The Saints play eight-man football.

daniela@smdp.com

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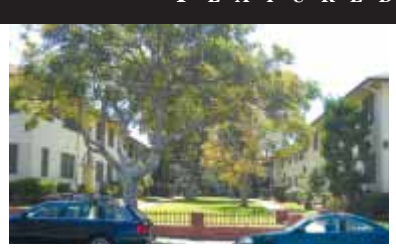
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Your Local Sports Schedule

St. Monica Catholic High School

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
GIRLS VOLLEYBALL				
Oct 16	Var	Marlborough Tour	Marlborough	TBA
BOYS FOOTBALL				
Oct 15	JV/Var	Bye		

Santa Monica High School

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
BOYS WATER POLO				
Oct 13	Var	Beverly Hills	Beverly Hills	3:00pm
Oct 13	Frosh/Soph	Beverly Hills	Beverly Hills	4:00pm
Oct 15	Frosh/Soph	Mira Costa Novice Tournament		TBA
Oct 16	Frosh/Soph	Mira Costa Novice Tournament		TBA
GIRLS VOLLEYBALL				
Oct 14	Var	Beverly Hills	Beverly Hills	3:15pm
Oct 14	JV	Beverly Hills	Beverly Hills	4:30pm
Oct 16	All	Varsity Marlborough Tournament		TBA
BOYS FOOTBALL				
Oct 14	JV	Inglewood	Inglewood	3:00pm
Oct 15	Frosh	Inglewood	Inglewood	3:00pm
Oct 15	Var	Inglewood	Inglewood	7:00pm
COED CROSS COUNTRY				
Oct 14	All	Ocean League Meet #2	Kenneth Hahn Park	2:30pm
Oct 16	All	Cal Poly SLO Invitational	Cuesta College	9:00am

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE
OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2010

Meet the candidates mixer
Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier
5:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.
Come and join Santa Monica's business community for the ever popular Business at Sunset mixer and meet the candidates for election in this year's City Council and Board of Education races. Sponsored by the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce.

Who dunnit?
Montana Avenue Branch Library
1704 Montana Ave.
7 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.
Calling all teens, adults and seniors for a mystery book club meeting. This week the group will be discussing Martin Cruz Smith's "Havana Bay."

Sweet deals
Downtown Santa Monica
Arizona Avenue and Second Street
8:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.
Get the freshest fruit and produce available at the weekly Farmers' Market. A variety of prepared foods will also be available.

Thursday, Oct. 14, 2010

'Loveland'
Santa Monica PLayhouse
1211 Fourth St., 8 p.m.
Actress turns grief into hilarity in "Loveland." What's so funny about death? Plenty, if you're award-winning writer/performer, Ann Randolph, renowned for transforming horror into humor. For information, call (310) 394-9779.

Buddhism for addiction recovery
1001 #A Colorado Ave., 7:30 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.
Learn about Buddhist teachings, meditation techniques, and how to change habitual patterns to overcome addiction at the Against The Stream Buddhist Meditation Society.

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

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GOTTA LOVE IT

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

Tourists take pictures and walk by the giant 'You Know You Love It' Kraft Macaroni & Cheese statue on the Santa Monica Pier on Tuesday afternoon. The giant macaroni is part of a nationwide promotion to remind people of the glory days of the popular side dish.

Supes vote to give food trucks letter grades

JOHN ROGERS
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES Thousands of food trucks that line the streets of Los Angeles County would be rated with the same letter grades health inspectors give restaurants, under an ordinance that received tentative approval Tuesday from the county Board of Supervisors.

The ordinance, passed unanimously by the five-member board, comes up for a final vote next week, said county spokesman Brian Lew. If it is passed it will take effect 30 days from that date, Lew said.

It will require food trucks and also smaller pushcarts operating in Los Angeles County to provide health inspectors with their routes so they can be scheduled for surprise inspections, just as restaurants are. They will be issued A, B and C grades, depending on their cleanliness. Any vendor who scores lower than a 70 — the lowest C grade — can be shut down immediately.

Food truck operators, who are quick to point out they already are inspected twice a year, said before Tuesday's vote that they welcomed the opportunity to be graded. Current regulations call for them to be inspected annually on the road and also at the commissaries where they park their trucks to be cleaned overnight. But they are not issued grades.

"It's like a course in college where you do all the work and don't get the letter grade," said Matt Geller, vice president of the Southern California Mobile Food Vendors Association. "One of the things you see as a result of that is this myth that gets propagated that, 'Oh, those trucks aren't even regulated, they're rogue trucks.' There's a whole lot less opportunity to say that when there's a big A staring you in the face."

For trucks that operate inside one of Los Angeles County's 88 cities, that city must also pass a companion ordinance before health officials can conduct the inspections.

An estimated 10,000 food vehicles traverse the streets of Los Angeles County when both small carts peddling things like churros and hot dogs are counted alongside the full-scale, rolling restaurants like the Kogi Korean BBQ wagon that launched the so-called gourmet food truck phenomenon in Los Angeles County two years ago.

Since then trucks offering such delicacies as crepes, exotic desserts and various forms of fusion food have proliferated in front of office buildings, nightclubs and a handful of lots set aside just for them.

Dr. Jonathan Fielding, head of the Los Angeles County Health Department, said they won't charge the operators additional fees for the first year after the changes, but will study whether the cost of regulating the trucks increases. He said having them post their schedules may make it less costly to find them.

The trucks' explosion in popularity called for health officials to push for the grades, Fielding said.

"We had people say, 'Why can't you also give us a grade for food trucks?'" Fielding told The Associated Press before the vote.

"Like everybody else, I'd like to know the grade," he added, acknowledging he eats at the trucks from time to time himself.

OPCC's Sojourn to receive proceeds from GUESS T-shirt

BY MELISSA LEU
Special to the Daily Press

OPCC In honor of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, fashion brand GUESS is rolling out a special edition T-shirt that will benefit Sojourn Services for Battered Women and their Children, a project spearheaded by OPCC.

The graphic shirt, $24, will debut Oct. 14 at a launch party at GUESS' Hollywood and Highland store, which will be co-hosted by actress Vanessa Marcil and fitness guru Jillian Michaels.

"The primary objective is to get the word out, and so people have more awareness resources in the community through Sojourn," said McKinley Williams, development director for OPCC.

Ella Marciano, 16-year-old daughter of GUESS CEO Paul Marciano, chose the

SEE **SHIRT** PAGE 10

Lions Gate offers to combine with MGM

BARBARA ORTUTAY
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK Lions Gate is offering to combine its business with MGM in a deal supported by billionaire investor Carl Icahn, who owns stakes in both studios.

Lions Gate Entertainment Corp., which operates out of Santa Monica, said Tuesday it has sent a proposal for a combination with financially troubled Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc.

Lions Gate said the combined company would be owned by its shareholders and by MGM's creditors. These include Icahn.

Terms weren't disclosed, though a report in the Los Angeles Times said the deal would give MGM's lenders a 55 percent in the combined company. Lions Gate and MGM declined to comment.

Icahn said the deal is better than a current proposal to combine MGM with privately held production company Spyglass Entertainment.

Icahn has been trying to buy Lions Gate for more than a year but has been rebuffed by the boutique film studio. Icahn's tender offer for Lions Gate worth $7.50 per share expires Oct. 22.

SEE **OFFER** PAGE 11

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Hoping for change

Editor:

Kudos to Bill Bauer ("School board incumbents dropped the ball," My Write, Oct. 11) for his accurate and bold assessment of the current and future state of the Santa Monica-Malibu Board of Education. Everything from the shady [Barry] Snell past accounting practices, to the deliberately indifferent and oftentimes militant demeanor of [Oscar] de la Torre, we are desperately in need of any "hope and change" that can be brought about by fiscally-minded new talent on the board. It's time Santa Monica taxpayers stop funding the education of Los Angeles [permit students], and stop relying on taxpayers to bail out the school board's fiscal irresponsibility. Can the new school board challengers be that courageous?

Jim Jameson
Santa Monica

Crack down not cash down

Editor:

In response to Andrew Goldstein's letter ("Is this necessary? Letters to the Editor, Oct. 8). I agree 100 percent. The problem isn't the stop signs. If you spend any time driving around Santa Monica and many other cities, you see the problem many times. Instead of wasting $4,000 per sign for new stop signs, the city needs to get their crews out and start cutting back trees and bushes that make it impossible to see the signs until you are 5 or 10 feet from the intersections. Sometimes "STOP" is painted on the street but that is also unreadable many times, particularly at night. Instead of raising sales taxes, these idiots at City Hall need to think problems out instead of just throwing our hard-earned dollars at the problem.

Kent Cullom
Santa Monica

New testing needed

Editor:

The inference that Proposition 19 would harm job safety because there is no test for marijuana impairment is not correct.

The aerospace industry uses computer programs that are used like a video game that measure a person's reaction time, attentiveness, coordination and many other things affected by impairment. These measurement are compared to a previous test when the person is known to be sober, rested and alert. Any deviation from this previous baseline measurement is taken as a measure of impairment.

This test actually does tests impairment. Urine tests do not test impairment. They test for non-psychoactive metabolites of marijuana that can be detected for weeks after last use.

Impairment tests have other advantages over urine testing. Many things can cause impairment: lack of sleep, hangover, emotional problems and many other things. These impairments are real and can cause accidents, but urine tests do not test for any of them. Computer impairment testing can detect impairment from all of these problems.

Prop.19 is not perfect, but it is a lot better than what we are doing now. Please join me in voting Yes on Prop. 19.

Randall Morgan
Santa Rosa, Calif.



Your column here

José Escarce and Ben Allen — **Send comments to editor@smdp.com**

Why our public schools need Measures Y and YY

THE NEXT THREE WEEKS MAY BE THE most important weeks for the future of our local public schools for years to come.

On Tuesday, Nov. 2, Santa Monica voters will have the opportunity to protect our schools from the devastating effects of the state of California's massive cuts to education funding, by voting yes on both Measures Y and YY.

Y would provide approximately $12 million in local funding for our city. YY, a companion advisory measure, would assert the voters' desire to see half of those local revenues go to our public schools, with the other half to essential city services.

Why do we need to protect our local public schools? Over the past 10 years, our schools have continuously delivered a high quality education to students, and academic achievement has risen by every measure.

The academic achievement gap is narrowing; all students have the opportunity to participate in our nationally renowned music program; our students win national academic championships; our high school student entrepreneurs routinely place among the top two or three teams in the world; our Advanced Placement (AP) program ranks in the top 2 percent in the nation; a growing share of our students attend the nation's top universities; and we have attracted a cadre of outstanding teachers.

People move to Santa Monica for many reasons. But a major draw — a major gem of Santa Monica — is our excellent public school system, which enhances the quality of life in our community in many ways.

Unfortunately, all of these achievements are now seriously threatened by chronic and unprecedented reductions in education funding from the state, upon which our district depends for 70 percent of its revenues. Sacramento has reduced funding for our schools by more than $20 million over the preceding two years, and this year our schools are receiving about $13 million less than they are owed.

As a result, the school board has been forced to make major budget cuts that exceed $10 million per year. The consequences are obvious to all students, parents, teachers and staff: larger class sizes at all grade levels, reductions in academic and other programs, fewer opportunities for professional development to help our teachers hone their skills, and reduced maintenance of our facilities, among others.

Remarkably, even these reductions do not capture the full impact of the state's reductions to education funding. One-time infusions of money from federal stimulus funds, last summer's Save Our Schools fundraising effort, and the board's decision to all but deplete the emergency reserve we were careful to build have enabled us temporarily to blunt the effect of the state's actions. But now our reserve is nearly exhausted, additional federal funds are unlikely, and private fundraising cannot come close to making up for what Sacramento has done, which means that we will no longer be able to blunt the full force of the state's cuts.

The implications are straightforward: Next year the school board will be forced to cut an additional $4 to $5 million from our district budget, on top of the more than $10 million per year that we have already cut, unless we find a new, stable revenue source. That source is Measures Y and YY.

Without Y and YY, we will be forced to lay off one in six teachers, further increase class sizes, close school libraries, reduce AP classes and music programs, and eliminate school nurses.

NEXT YEAR THE SCHOOL BOARD WILL BE FORCED TO CUT AN ADDITIONAL $4 TO $5 MILLION FROM OUR DISTRICT BUDGET, ON TOP OF THE MORE THAN $10 MILLION PER YEAR THAT WE HAVE ALREADY CUT, UNLESS WE FIND A NEW, STABLE REVENUE SOURCE.

Are there alternatives to Y and YY? Last May, the school board placed a school funding measure, Measure A, on the ballot. True to their conviction that excellent public schools are essential to the community, 64.3 percent of voters in our district supported Measure A, a landslide victory in most circumstances. Unfortunately, in California school funding measures require two-thirds of the vote to pass, which meant that Measure A lost by a small number of votes.

Some might have been hoping that the state would begin to undo the damage it has done to California's schools. However, the new state budget, approved just last week, offers no relief and promises additional future cuts. It is clear that Sacramento will continue to abdicate its responsibility for educating California's children for years to come.

Finally, although our district will continue aggressively to pursue private fundraising, the amounts that even the wealthiest school districts are able to raise through private efforts pale in comparison to the cuts that have come down from the state.

Consequently, Measures Y and YY represent our last chance to provide stable local funding for our schools, funding that Sacramento won't be able to touch.

Our students desperately need everyone in our community to stand by them and support Y and YY to avoid the dramatic decline in educational quality that has affected so many other California school districts.

Please join us in voting yes on Measures Y and YY on Tuesday, Nov. 2.

JOSÉ ESCARCE AND BEN ALLEN are members of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education.

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Hiding in the Open

David Alsabery
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

The third option remains

I WAS RECENTLY AT A PARTY WHERE MRS. Casey from Torrance mentioned that the Torrance Unified School District cut their entire arts program. Mrs. Casey is chairman of the board for the Torrance Adventures in Arts Program. The community and parents in Torrance all came together and built a fund of $20,000 per year to organize community artists to give their time to the schools. It is a wild success and others have told me the amazing results they are getting from this program. It was not until the arts were cut that people were willing to try something else. What if the school district had moved towards more community participation early on? Imagine the Torrance program with $160,000 instead of $20,000?

I asked Mrs. Casey what they are currently offering the children. Mrs. Casey explained that the wide range of arts being taught eclipses the gluing of macaroni on paper plates that we all grew up with. Students learn about art that is in demand and pays the bills. This is an important learning opportunity for children that want to grow up and get a job as an artist. With real world activities taught by some very talented professional instructors, the children are given an understanding of art as a profession versus just a hobby.

Why I mention this art stuff is because it ties into how we spend our money and the kind of thinking we need to champion in order to flourish as a community in the face of hard financial times. We are polarized by two sides that will not give ground. The union that represents Torrance Unified School District would not give an inch on firing teachers in order to build a lower cost art program. On the opposite side was group of people on fixed incomes that would not pay higher taxes that won the election, and the entire arts program was cut due to a lack of funding. In the end the children lost.

Right now at least one third of the voters do not want taxes raised in Santa Monica. Many of them point to some historical facts that relate to the Great Depression. You see when the market crashed in 1929, the world did not fly into the sun over night. It took about three years for the unemployment numbers to break 20 percent and another year to peak at 25.2 percent. That means if we look at the 2008 Great Recession, we have another year until we reach 20 percent unemployment. The bad news is the government changed the way they count the unemployed and do not include people that have been unemployed for more than 18 months. If we look at today's unemployment numbers in the same way they did in 1929, we would have to use about 90 percent of the U6 Federal Unemployment rate. What is scary is 90 percent of the U6 number is about 15.39 percent at the end of 2010. If that happens city, county, state and federal tax collections will drop massively, and we are already seeing the drop of 16 percent in Los Angeles County.

Why it's important to understand this stuff is if the economy keeps following the events of the Great Depression, raising taxes right now would hurt more than cutting services. The Great Depression lasted 13 years and it took unemployment that long to return to 1929 numbers. In that time the city of Santa Monica was forced to cut a great number of expenses and services because they had less people to tax.

On the other side of this tax debate is the group that wants to raise taxes. They are the majority of the voters of Santa Monica. Measure A got 13,000 votes. With that in mind the majority of voters in Santa Monica believe money should be raised for the schools and the City Council that represents its citizens believes we want to raise taxes. They believe that if we don't raise those taxes our children will lose education at a time when they will need it to face a depression.

The problem is that many on both sides believe that we are dealing with an on/off switch. You either want one or the other. But we have other options that must be looked at closely. Can we build a better arts program for half the money? Has anyone seriously looked at an alternative or has the teachers' union told you that is not an option?

Torrance waited until the district had no money and now are scrambling for every dollar to keep the arts going. If we cut six art teachers instead of four, we would have $160,000 or eight times more money than Torrance has to build a system based on the Torrance Adventures in Arts program. Taking advantage of the generosity of world class local artists, we can build a new and improved arts program that costs half as much.

DAVID ALSABERY is a Republican that donates to the arts and all around nice guy. He can be reached at alsabery@gmail.com.

The Q Line

What on Y?

Measure Y, which calls for a half-cent sales tax increase, has been put on the ballot to help City Hall increase revenue to shore up a budget that could be facing serious cuts in coming years. An advisory measure, YY, has also been placed on the ballot to gauge the public's interest in giving up to half of the expected $12M the tax would raise each year to local public schools.

So, this week's Q-Line question asks:
How will you vote on Measures Y and YY, and why?

Contact qline@smdp.com before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press. You can also call (310) 458-7737 ext. 102.


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STATE BRIEFS

RIVERSIDE

Boxer casts ballot early for Nov. 2 election

Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer knows she already has at least one vote in her quest for a fourth term — her own.

The incumbent voted early by casting her ballot Tuesday at the Riverside County Registrar's Office. She and her husband live in Rancho Mirage, near Palm Springs.

She is being challenged by former Hewlett-Packard Co. chief executive Carly Fiorina. Recent polls show Boxer narrowly ahead, but the race is expected to be tight as the two clash over who is best to help lead the state and nation out of the recession.

Boxer's campaign says the senator voted early to promote that there is still time to register to vote. Monday is the deadline to register for the Nov. 2 election.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND

Nurses strike at Children's Hospital

Officials at Children's Hospital Oakland say the facility is running smoothly even as its nurses begin a three-day strike.

The California Nurses Association called the walkout of nearly 800 nurses after negotiations broke down over proposed hikes to their health care benefits in their contract, which expired in July.

The union and hospital have been in negotiations since May.

About 100 nurses picketed outside the hospital Tuesday morning and hundreds more didn't show up to work.

Hospital officials say they brought in 125 temporary nurses to cover the shifts. Chief Nursing Officer Nancy Shibata says the operating rooms are running at about half-capacity and a handful of elective surgeries have been postponed.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Hospital treated babies despite staff shortages

A Los Angeles hospital recently kept critically ill babies in its intensive care unit despite staff shortages that prompted regulators two years ago to downgrade its status and require it to transfer those infants to better equipped facilities, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

State investigators found that the Olive View-University of California, Los Angeles, Medical Center lacked enough neonatologists and staff to properly care for newborns in its neonatal ICU, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Staffing problems caused the neonatal unit's status to be downgraded from "community" to "intermediate" two years ago. The hospital was required to transfer infants to better equipped facilities if they needed surgery or were placed on ventilators for more than four hours, said Norman Williams, a spokesman for the California Department of Health Services.

Panel told fast work might have halted 2009 wildfire

THOMAS WATKINS
Associated Press Writer

PASADENA, Calif. A wildfire that killed two firefighters and burned 89 homes in the Los Angeles foothills might have been doused sooner if officials had not delayed aircraft from dropping fire retardant and water, a congressional panel was told Tuesday.

William Derr, a retired Forest Service firefighter, testified that the crew of an air tanker leaving the scene of another fire offered to make a retardant drop on the Station Fire on the August morning it began to explode.

However, the crew was told it was not needed, Derr said.

The retardant "could have been effective in quenching fire" in an area too steep to reach and that eventually burned out of control, he said.

Will Spyrison, the Forest Service's incident commander at the time, told the panel he wasn't aware of the claim that an aircraft had been offered and waved off.

Many of the issues raised at the hearing have been detailed in previous reports about the August 2009 fire in and around Angeles National Forest that burned 250 square miles.

Rep. Adam Schiff, a Democrat who represents communities in the fire area, organized the panel of Congress members to hear from representatives of the Forest Service and other agencies, outside experts and critics to shed light on firefighting procedures and how they could be revamped.

Rob Driscoll, who lost his home, said a water drop had been scheduled to start at 7 a.m. but didn't arrive until 9 a.m.

"That airdrop would have put the fire out," he contended.

Forest Supervisor Jody Noiron said treacherous terrain and overhead power lines made it hard for aircraft to work.

Beth Halaas, whose home in Big Tujunga Canyon was destroyed, said it appeared Forest Service firefighters didn't know the situation in her foothill community. She recalled hearing fire commanders talk about three homes being destroyed when nearly two dozen had burned.

"Our whole neighborhood was gone and they had no idea," she said.

The Los Angeles Times reported Monday that a review conducted for the Agriculture Department, which runs the Forest Service, found the arrival of critical resources to the Station Fire was delayed by a decision to initially only use federal personnel.

The review cited a Forest Service letter sent to supervisors in early August 2009 urging them to hold down costs and, when appropriate, use Forest Service resources rather than ordering them from contractors or state and local agencies.

Forest Service officials have insisted cost concerns did not impede the response.

The Station Fire was ignited by arson during the afternoon of Aug. 26, 2009, near a ranger station. It remained small overnight as it burned on a rugged slope above suburbs that crowd the foothills.



Judge orders injunction on 'don't ask, don't tell' rule

JULIE WATSON
Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO A federal judge issued a worldwide injunction Tuesday stopping enforcement of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, ending the military's 17-year-old ban on openly gay troops.

U.S. District Judge Virginia Phillips' landmark ruling was widely cheered by gay rights organizations that credited her with getting accomplished what President Obama and Washington politics could not

"This order from Judge Phillips is another historic and courageous step in the right direction, a step that Congress has been noticeably slow in taking," said Alexander Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United, the nation's largest organization of gay and lesbian troops and veterans.

He was the sole named veteran plaintiff in the case along with the Log Cabin Republicans, a gay rights organization that filed the lawsuit in 2004 to stop the ban's enforcement.

U.S. Department of Justice attorneys have 60 days to appeal. Legal experts say the department is under no legal obligation to do so and could let Phillips' ruling stand.

Department spokeswoman Tracy Schmaler said the government was reviewing Phillips' ruling Tuesday and had no immediate comment.

Legal experts say government attorneys are not likely to let the ruling stand since Obama has made it clear he wants Congress to repeal the policy.

"The president has taken a very consistent position here, and that is: 'Look, I will not use my discretion in any way that will step on Congress' ability to be the sole decider about this policy here,' " said Diane H. Mazur, legal co-director of the Palm Center, a think tank at the University of California at Santa Barbara that supports a repeal.

Government attorneys had warned Phillips that such an abrupt change might harm military operations in a time of war. They had asked Phillips to limit her ruling to the 19,000 members of the Log Cabin Republicans, which includes current and former military service members.

The Department of Justice attorneys also said Congress should decide the issue — not her court.

Phillips disagreed, saying the law doesn't help military readiness and instead has a "direct and deleterious effect" on the armed services by hurting recruiting during wartime and requiring the discharge of service members with critical skills and training.

"Furthermore, there is no adequate remedy at law to prevent the continued violation of servicemembers' rights or to compensate them for violation of their rights," Phillips said in her order.

She said Department of Justice attorneys did not address these issues in their objection to her expected injunction.

Phillips declared the law unconstitutional after listening to the testimony of discharged service members during a two-week nonjury trial this summer in federal court in Riverside.

She said the Log Cabin Republicans "established at trial that the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Act irreparably injures servicemembers by infringing their fundamental rights." She said the policy violates due process rights, freedom of speech and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Gay rights advocates have worried they lost a crucial opportunity to change the law when Senate Republicans opposed the defense bill last month because of a "don't ask, don't tell" repeal provision.

If Democrats lose seats in the upcoming elections, repealing the ban could prove even more difficult — if not impossible — next year.

The Log Cabin Republicans asked her for an immediate injunction so the policy can no longer be used against any U.S. military personnel anywhere in the world.

GMAC enlists independent review of foreclosures

ALEX VEIGA
AP Real Estate Writer

LOS ANGELES GMAC Mortgage said Tuesday that it has enlisted several legal and accounting firms to conduct independent reviews of its foreclosure procedures nationwide as questions grow over whether lenders improperly took back properties from thousands of homeowners.

The company, a unit of Ally Financial Inc., also said a review of cases in 23 states has found no evidence to date that the company has conducted any inappropriate foreclosures.

GMAC and other mortgage lenders have come under criticism as evidence has surfaced that they have been using flawed court papers to evict homeowners. That has led state and federal officials to ramp up pressure on the mortgage industry.

The special inspector general overseeing the financial industry bailout is investigating the company after an employee approved thousands of foreclosures without reading the paperwork. And attorneys general of up to 40 U.S. states are expected to announce a joint investigation into banks' use of flawed foreclosure paperwork as early as this week.

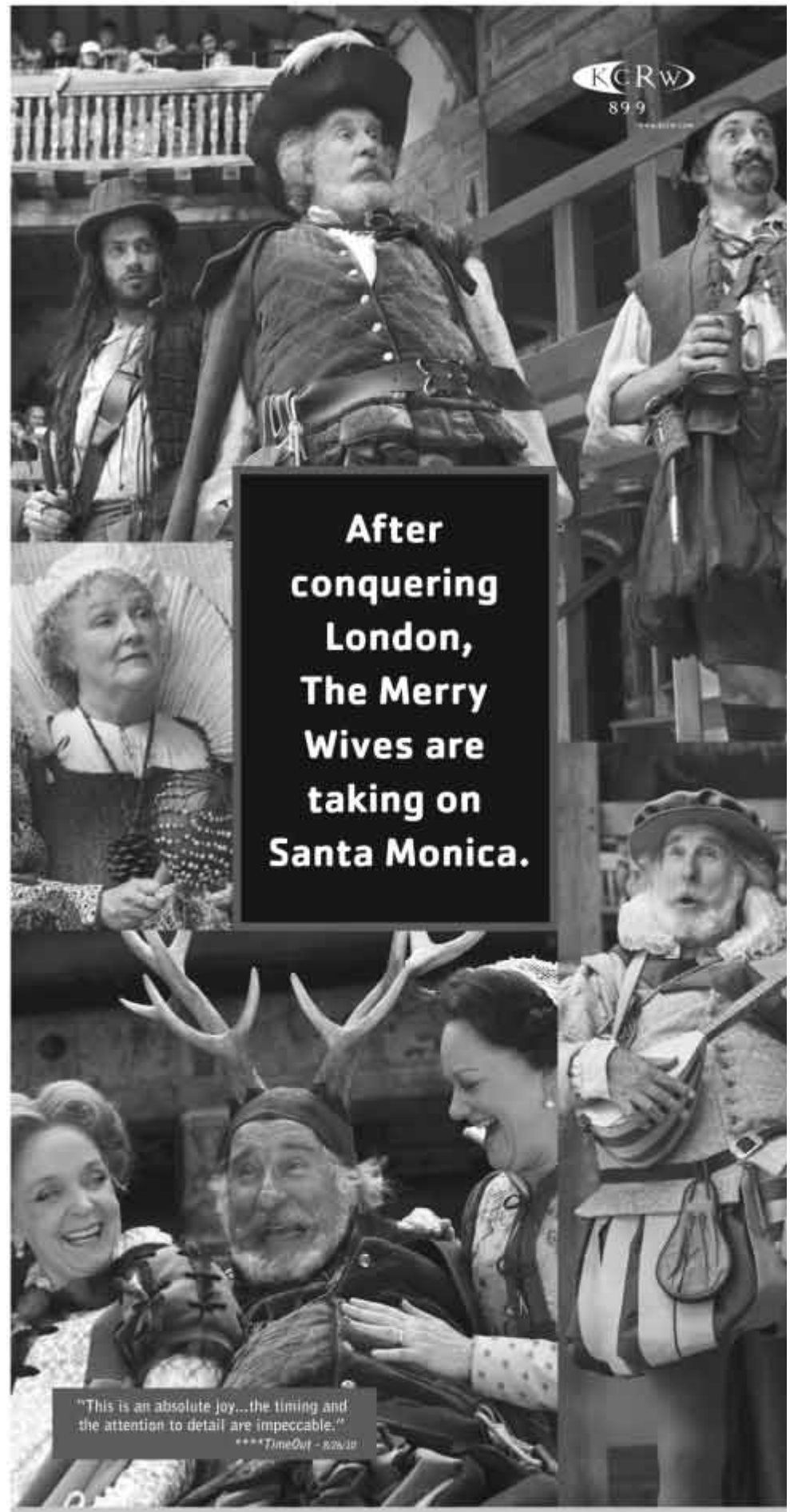
Last month, GMAC halted certain evictions and sales of foreclosed homes to review cases in 23 states where foreclosures require judges' approval. The review has been under way for about two months and is still ongoing, the company said.

GMAC said its foreclosure sales also receive an additional review to ensure that the company followed procedures to prevent foreclosure, that the timing of the foreclosure was appropriate and that the procedure complies with all state laws.

"We are taking these additional steps to restore confidence in the process, which is critical for the stability of the home and mortgage industry," the company said.

In addition to GMAC, JPMorgan Chase and PNC suspended foreclosures amid evidence that bank employees falsely swore they had personal knowledge of a particular case, because documents could not be located or because of other paperwork problems.

On Friday, Bank of America became the first bank to halt foreclosures in all 50 states.



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Do your homework before planting trees in the yard

BY JENNIFER FORKER
For The Associated Press

When Lynne and Kemper Smith moved to Golden, Colo., from Florida six years ago, they bought a new house and planted trees — fruit trees out back and a cache of aspen near the front door.

Very Colorado, those aspen.

Unfortunately, it was the wrong part of Colorado.

"I was a Florida boy and didn't know what I was doing," Kemper Smith says. "I didn't know they'd get this big."

Planting the wrong tree in the wrong place is common, according to arborists around the country. Homebuilders and homeowners often plant trees too close to houses, power lines or roads because they don't consider how the trees will look 20 or 30 years down the road. They choose trees that aren't necessarily suited to the soil and region.

Short-term aesthetics win out over longer-term attractiveness and care.

"I think that a lot of it is lack of education," says Jon Elliott, an arborist for Denver-area Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care.

Fall is a good time for planting trees and shrubs, but homeowners need to do their homework. Learn about your area's climate and annual rainfall, the soil makeup and how well the soil drains.

A tree's form and function counts: Is it intended as an ornamental or do you want it to grow into a shade tree?

How tall is it likely to become, and how will its growing canopy affect overhead wires and traffic lines of sight, among other things?

Lynne Smith says the little trees she and her neighbors planted already have grown too big.

"People are so excited when the trees are new and are babies," she says. "Now the trees are larger than the houses and the yards are too small. The 40-foot-tall trees — we don't have room for that."

Planting guidelines vary depending on the expert, the location and the kind of tree. Linda Eremita, staff arborist at TreePeople, a Los Angeles-area environmental nonprofit, suggests this rule: Plant trees that can grow large — 60 feet or taller — at least 10 to 15 feet from the house. Plant trees not expected to grow as tall at least 10 feet from the house.

Depending on the species, a tree planted within a few feet of a house can pose a fire hazard. Its branches may graze a home or its windows. An older, sick or soft-wood tree can crash into the home during a storm.

Underground, other dangers lurk: The root system may search out cracks in the foundation or in aging sewer pipes.

"Roots are opportunistic," says Eremita. While they won't break into an intact pipe, she said, a broken, seeping pipe is a different story. Tree roots thrive on the extra water and can wind their way into cracks, enlarging them.

"(The roots) get bigger and they get really happy, then they grow into the pipe," Eremita says.

Check with utility companies to find out where electrical, gas, water and sewer lines enter your house, and plant trees at least 6 feet away from them, says Eremita.

Also, check with your city for how near the street trees may be planted. Eremita plants trees at least 5 feet from fences, walkways and driveways. Again, she says, it depends on the type of tree.

Experts also recommend plants native to a region. For example, while the Smiths' aspens do grow well in the Colorado mountains, they become susceptible to fungus, disease and insect infestation at lower altitudes, including Golden. The river birch, which looks similar, is the better suburban yard tree there, says Elliott.

When consulting with arborists and landscapers, learn if they are certified.

"Don't be afraid to ask for references," says Elliott. With a landscape designer, contractor or architect, "Ask for a portfolio."

Cooperative extension services, often housed at state universities, have experts who can help homeowners and direct them to reliable local information. Websites also provide tree shopping and care tips.

Avoid the big-box stores for buying trees, which may not be hardy to the local climate, Elliott says. He recommends shopping at a reputable local nursery — and making sure their stock is grown in your climate zone.

Unfortunately, options become limited once a tree's trunk grows beyond 2 to 3 inches in diameter, says Elliott. Moving a larger tree is possible but often cost-prohibitive, and there are no guarantees it will survive the stress of being moved.

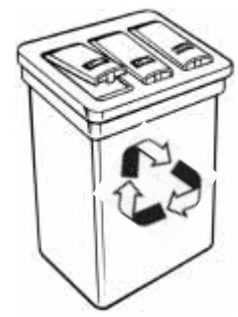
"By the time (a homeowner pays) the cost for me to move it, I can get them a better tree from the nursery, with a guarantee," Elliott says.

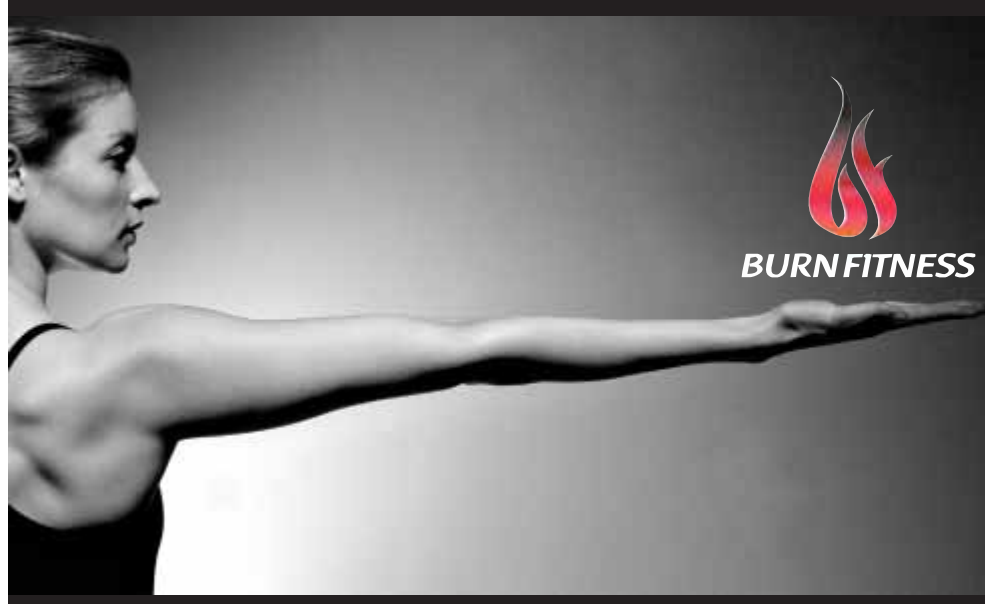
Keep an eye on trees growing close to the home — keep them pruned and watch for diseases. If a tree doesn't have a long life ahead of it — like those aspens in the Smiths' front yard, which Elliott says might survive another 15 years — plant younger, site-appropriate trees now for the future.




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SHIRT
FROM PAGE 3

words “hope,” “love,” “courage,” “strength,” “community” and “empower” that create a heart shape on the front of the shirt in purple, which is the official color of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

“I thought a heart would be perfect because it symbolizes love, which is such a powerful word,” Ella said.

All profits will benefit Sojourn, helping mitigate the effects of severe state funding cuts. Last year, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed $250,000 designated for battered women programs, Williams said.

“Finally after much negotiation, they reinstated about 80 percent …. Now, with the current budget, it looks like we’re facing a similar situation,” Williams said. “We are doing everything we can so that we have other sources of revenue.”

The idea for the shirt was spawned when Marcil, a Sojourn supporter, introduced her friend Kymberly Marciano-Strauss, Ella’s mother, to the organization.

“My main [philanthropic] focus is usually on children, but this summer I said to my daughter, ‘I think we have an opportunity here to make a difference,’” said Marciano-Strauss, who chose Sojourn after a tour of the facilities and a few meetings with OPCC executives.

“Once she told me about it, I wanted to do something to make a difference,” Ella said.

This past summer, Ella, who was interning in the public relations and marketing department at GUESS, worked with designers to choose words that would reflect the issue.

The shirt will be sold at select California and Las Vegas GUESS retail locations.

Sojourn, named after the African-American and women’s rights activist Sojourner Truth, was created by OPCC in 1977 to serve the battered women of Santa Monica. It is the second oldest women’s shelter in Southern California.

“Most of what we strive to do — in addition to providing the direct services to battered women and their children — is to create awareness for the issue,” Williams said. “The more people we are able to reach, the more people we will be able to help.”

The program was originally run completely by volunteers. Currently, 16 full-time staff members manage various social services, including its shelters, case management services, a 24-hour hotline, support groups, and legal aid.

news@smdp.com

TRIAL
FROM PAGE 1

tify in open court. Others may back away from their previous statements about the crimes, she said.

Immediately after his arrest, Vasquez began boasting to police, Los Angeles Police Det. Jeff Hofmeyer, said on Tuesday.

According to Hofmeyer’s testimony, after being handcuffed Vasquez said, “I know you guys have been looking for me for a long time. Sh--, I’m the best … I know someone snitched on me … just remember, it’s your guys’ fault, somebody’s going to die.”

In their opening remarks, Vazquez’s attorneys urged the jury to question the credibility of the prosecution’s witnesses, many of whom gave inconsistent statements and have histories of criminal activity, they said.

John Daley, one of Vasquez’s lawyers, described a key prosecution witness as a regular informant for police in murder cases who “likes to get paid for what he does.”

Other witnesses, he said, were on drugs at the time of the alleged incidents.

The main physical evidence in the case, prosecutors said, will come in the form of expert testimony tying the bullets recovered from two of the crime scenes to the same gun.

Prosecutors also plan to argue that tattoos on Vasquez’s arms, including the words “Twinks Killa,” and “BK” — which allegedly stands for “Blood Killer” — are references to the defendant’s involvement in the gang motivated crimes he is accused of.

In the Moose Lodge killings, two other men, Jose Mojarro and Erick Nunez, were found guilty in March of last year on two counts of first-degree murder.

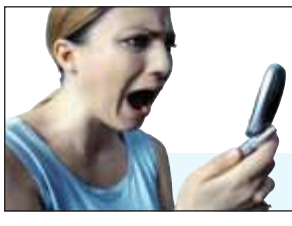
Mojarro is appealing his sentence of life without parole. Nunez is serving multiple life sentences, prosecutors said.

Hernandez, of Ocean Park, and Bonilla, of the Pico Neighborhood. were attending a private party at the Moose Lodge on 16th Street and Ocean Park Boulevard on the night of March 5, 2005, when Mojarro, Nunez and Vasquez allegedly showed up uninvited. An argument broke out between the men and Hernandez while they were at the bar, according to prosecutors.

Bonilla allegedly intervened in the fight before the shooting began.

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STAY POSITIVE

Ariana Masters *news@smdp.com*

Co-owner of Electric Bikes L.A. Andrea Busch (center) displays the simplicity and comfort of an electric, collapsible bicycle during the Good Energy Festival, sponsored by Positive Magazine on the Third Street Promenade Saturday afternoon. The festival brought numerous environmentally friendly businesses to publicize and promote their products to the community.

BURGLARIES

FROM PAGE 1

open cash registers. Thousands of dollars in damages were reported.

"We assume by the locations and style of the burglaries that the same individual or individuals perpetrated these crimes," Trisler said. "If anyone hears glass breaking in the middle of the night or they see a broken window at a business, please contact the police department."

Sam Zerehi, co-owner of Park Avenue Cleaners at 2936 Wilshire Blvd., said his front window was smashed, neon signs were destroyed and at least two cash registers were damaged in the break-in. He estimates the damages at $2,000 to $3,000. He said he lost about $600 in cash.

"We've had broken windows before, usually from homeless who throw rocks, but this time it wasn't that," he said. "Those responsible knew what they were doing and what they were after. I hope the police solve the problem."

Trisler said a description of the suspect or suspects was not available.

Those who believe they have information on the burglaries are urged to contact the SMPD 24 hours a day at (310) 458-8495.

kevinh@smdp.com

OFFER

FROM PAGE 3

It is only valid if the extra shares that the company recently issued to Lions Gate director Mark Rachesky are rescinded or converted into nonvoting stock. In July, Lions Gate issued 16.2 million new common shares to Rachesky, boosting his stake to 28.9 percent, while diluting Icahn's stake to 33.5 percent from 37.9 percent.

In its filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Lions Gate said it believes that Icahn, along with MHR Fund Management and Capital Research Global Investors — its three largest shareholders — all support the transaction. Rachesky, Icahn's former investment adviser, controls MHR. Combined, the top three investors own 71 percent of Lions Gate, according to Capital IQ.

MHR Fund spokesman Ed Trissel and Capital Research spokesman Chuck Freadhoff declined to comment.

Lions Gate is based in Vancouver, Canada Its recent film releases include "The Expendables" and "The Last Exorcism."

MGM, which has more than $4 billion in debt and has asked creditors to vote on its plan to file for bankruptcy, owns rights to the James Bond movie franchise and is planning to make a two-part movie with Time Warner Inc.'s Warner Bros., based on "The Hobbit" by J.R.R. Tolkien.

The offer from Lions Gate comes after MGM rejected a $2 billion cash offer from Indian conglomerate Sahara India Pariwar and a $1.5 billion cash offer from Time Warner.

Shares of Lions Gate fell 14 cents, or 1.9 percent, to $7.34 Tuesday.



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WALL STREET

Stocks end higher after release of Fed minutes

STEPHEN BERNARD
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK Traders pushed shares higher Tuesday after minutes from the latest Federal Reserve meeting kept hope alive that the central bank would take more action to stimulate the economy.

The Fed had said after its Sept. 21 meeting that it was concerned that inflation was too low, and suggested it could step up its purchases of government bonds and take other action to encourage lending.

Minutes from the September meeting, released Tuesday afternoon, indicated that Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues were nearing a consensus on what steps to take. Traders are hoping for more concrete news from the Fed following its next meeting in early November.

The dollar fell against other currencies after the Fed minutes came out as traders anticipated another reduction in U.S. interest rates.

Stocks turned higher in the afternoon, led by financial stocks. Technology stocks edged slightly higher, led by Citrix Systems, Inc. and Apple Inc.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite index rose 15.59, or .6 percent, to 2,417.92, while the Dow Jones industrial average rose 10.06 points, or .09 percent, to 11,020.40.

Google shares rose by $2.55 to $541.39 after the company said it would invest in wind farms off the East coast. Apple hit a new record, approaching $300 for the first time, after Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said its stores will start carrying the popular iPad.

In other corporate news, shares of King Pharmaceuticals Inc. surged after Pfizer Inc. agreed to buy the drugmaker for $3.6 billion in cash. Traders sold shares of CSX Corp. before the company reports results after the market close.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 4.45, or 0.38 percent, to 1,169.77.

Shares of Intel Corp. rose 1.1 percent in after-hours trading after the chipmaker announced that it beat analysts estimates on earnings per share and total revenue in the third quarter.

CSX Corp., one of the largest railroad companies in the United States, also beat analyst estimates on both earnings and sales. Shares rose 2.4 percent in after-hours trading.

Treasury prices traded in a tight range. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which moves opposite to its price, was unchanged at 2.39 percent compared with late Friday. Bond markets were closed Monday for the Columbus Day holiday.

TECHNOLOGY

iPad projections push Apple shares to record peak

JESSICA MINTZ
AP Technology Writer

SEATTLE Apple Inc.'s stock flirted with $300 Tuesday as investors high on the iPad's promise pushed shares to a record peak. Analysts see few reasons to believe shares will stop there.

As was the case with the iPhone, Apple's iPad is setting the standards for this generation of tablet computers as competitors scramble to match the design and functions.

So far, no credible challengers have hit the market. Microsoft Corp. CEO Steve Ballmer has promised Windows-based tablets, but so far there are no solid details. Meanwhile, tablets based on Google Inc.'s Android system are starting to emerge, but they have smaller screens than the iPad's.

In the first quarter it was available, Apple sold 3.3 million iPads. That's about three times the number of iPhones sold in the first full quarter the smart phones were on sale in 2007.

Rajesh Ghai, an analyst for ThinkEquity LLC, said he believes Apple sold 5.7 million iPads in the most recent quarter, which ended in September. He said that adds about $3 billion in revenue — not bad for a product category that didn't exist before April. Analysts' estimates for iPad unit sales in 2011 are in flux, with those on the conservative end putting the number around 20 million while more bullish forecasters say it could be 50 million.

"Clearly the iPad proved to be a hit beyond Apple's wildest dreams," Ghai said in an interview.

A few other factors are bolstering investors' enthusiasm for Apple, which reports its quarterly results on Monday. The Cupertino, Calif.-based company is planning a big push in China, with 25 retail stores expected to open there by the end of next year.

There's also the new slate of iPods, which Apple unveiled in September, in time for the profitable gadgets to make their way onto holiday shopping lists.

And investors may be choosing to believe increasingly loud buzz that Verizon Wireless will get its own version of the iPhone in 2011. In the U.S., the iPhone is only available on AT&T Inc.'s network, which is straining in some cities under the heavy volume of data consumed by iPhone users. Adding carrier partners could lure U.S. smart phone buyers who have been reluctant to switch to already-taxed AT&T.

Shares in Apple traded as high as $299.50 Tuesday before ending the day at $298.54, a gain of $3.18.

Apple's shares have climbed sharply and fairly steadily since the end of the dot-com bust, from about $7 per share in early 2003 to nearly $169 in the summer of 2008. The stock dropped below $100 per share in late 2008 and early 2009 as investors worried about the health of CEO Steve Jobs, but it has been gaining since March 2009. Shares set all-time high records on a split-adjusted basis several times this year.

Compare that with another well-known technology player, IBM Corp., which experienced a much choppier climb before reaching an all-time record Monday of $139.66, breaking the previous high reached in 1999.

Apple and IBM may be breaking new ground at the same time, but they're not signs of a broader tech industry surge, said Nehal Chokshi, an analyst for Technology Insights Research-Southridge Research Group. These events are company-specific.

"IBM didn't explode in the bubble, and Apple has had truly phenomenal growth," the analyst said.

ECONOMY

Benefits to weak dollar abound

BERNARD CONDON
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — The way investors have unloaded the U.S. dollar lately, you'd think it was kryptonite.

It has fallen 10 percent against the euro in just three months, and recently hit a 15-year low against the Japanese yen. You'd have to go back even further to find the American currency in a weaker position versus the Swiss franc or Australian dollar.

The decline has been so dramatic that fear is spreading of a "currency war" akin to the one in the Great Depression, when countries competed to drive their exchange rates lower.

It sounds like a downer: Strong countries are supposed to have strong currencies. But when a country is struggling to grow as the U.S. is now, a weak currency can act like a shot of adrenaline. Here's how.

EXPORTS

A falling dollar is like slapping a "For Sale" sign on U.S. goods and services abroad. Consider the price of an iPhone in Paris before and after the dollar dropped. At exchange rates in July, a $99 iPhone with eight gigabytes of memory would have been worth about 78 euros. Now that price translates to 71 euros.

Cheaper prices bring higher sales, and hopefully more jobs at home for companies selling products overseas. The impact could be huge: Companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 get half their revenue abroad.

"There's a lot at stake," says Aroop Chatterjee, a currency strategist at Barclays Capital. "A lot of countries are dependent on exports, and a lot of the job growth comes from that."

IMPORTS

A falling dollar raises the price of foreign goods sold here. That makes it more likely that Americans will buy cheaper rival products made by U.S. companies.

But unlike exports, the impact on the economy is not all good. First, the boost to U.S. companies is less than you might assume because so many goods made here contain parts made overseas. If those parts cost more, so will the price of U.S. finished goods.

Consumers suffer from higher prices on imports, too. Not every foreign good can be replaced with a U.S. one. Someone who simply can't go without Parma ham or Bordeaux wine or New Zealand lamb chops may have to shell out more if the dollar keeps falling.

OIL

The dollar's dive jacks up the price of oil, though the cause and effect takes a bit of explaining.

When the dollar is weak against the euro and yen, as it is now, the French and the Japanese can buy oil on the cheap even if prices hold steady.

If that sounds odd, consider that oil is unlike many other imports: It's bought around the world in dollars, not in each country's currency. That means the French and the Japanese can buy the same number of barrels with less of their own currency because they first have to buy dollars, and they need fewer euros and yen to do that than before.

By itself, this drop in the cost of oil in other countries neither hurts nor helps the U.S. But countries faced with cheap oil tend to buy more of it, driving the dollar price of a barrel up.

This is one reason oil spiked to nearly $150 a barrel in 2008. Every country gets hurt when the dollar price rises, but the U.S. gets hurt more than others because it has no exchange rate advantage to compensate.

"If the dollar goes down, energy prices will go up regardless of anything else," says Walter Zimmerman, chief technical analyst at brokerage United ICAP. "It costs the average American every time they fill up their tanks."

A barrel closed Monday at $82.21, up from 8 percent from July.

FOREIGN STOCKS

You might think a stronger dollar would help goose the returns of foreign stocks and foreign mutual funds. But that's wrong. The moment after you buy them, you should be rooting for the U.S. currency to fall. That way, when you convert your winnings back to dollars, each unit of the foreign currency in which the shares are valued will fetch more dollars.

To see how that works, consider U.S. investors in big European stocks. The Euro Stoxx 50 index is up 6 percent in three months. But if U.S. investors cashed out of the index now and converted their winnings into dollars, they'd be up 17 percent because a single euro buys more dollars than it did when they invested.

The same math helps exporters, too. Even if sales in France or Germany don't budge, revenue for U.S. exporters rises. That's because when U.S. companies convert their euros into dollars, they get more dollars.

TOURISM

Foreign tourists in the U.S. generated $120 billion in revenue last year, and if the dollar keeps falling that could rise fast as more foreigners decide to vacation here. A cheap dollar lowers their hotel and restaurant and shopping bills, at least as expressed in their home currency.

The trade-off: It's more expensive for Americans traveling abroad.

So how much longer will this (mostly) good fortune of a weak dollar last?

That depends in part on whether fears that drove the dollar higher this spring return. Back then, investors worried that Greece and Spain might default on their sovereign debt, and they rushed into the perceived safety of U.S. Treasurys — in effect buying dollars and pushing their value up. If that "safe haven" trade returns, the dollar will rally.

Another threat to the weak dollar is all the heated talk from countries that want their exporters to enjoy a boost from a weak currency, too. Most experts seem to think tempers will cool soon. But if talk turns to action, the dollar could lose its advantage fast.

Two ominous signs: Brazil and South Korea are discouraging foreign investment in their fixed income securities through higher taxes or added surveillance. Less money flowing into those countries, all else being equal, means less pressure pushing their currencies up against the dollar.

"International finance isn't pretty," says Barclay's Chatterjee. "If everyone focuses on exports, it's a race to the bottom in exchange rates."

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RAND CORPORATION

Heating costs cool, giving homeowners some relief

JONATHAN FAHEY
AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK Most U.S. homeowners should get some relief on their heating bills this winter.

The price of natural gas, the fuel that supplies 70 percent of the nation's heat, is relatively low for the second year in a row, and falling. Also, forecasters predict a warmer winter across much of the country — especially in the Southeast, which suffered through a historically cold winter last year.

But those who rely on heating oil, and residents of the Pacific Northwest, may need to bundle up. Unlike natural gas, crude oil prices have risen sharply from their recession lows, pushing up the price of heating oil 16 percent over last year. And forecasters are predicting a cold and snowy winter in the Northwest.

Energy prices of all types rose sharply in the years leading up to the financial crisis, then all collapsed with the economy. Even as the economy has started to recover, natural gas prices have stayed low because supplies are ample and growing, says Jen Snyder, head of North American gas research at the consulting and analysis firm Wood Mackenzie.

Last winter the nationwide average cost to heat a home from November to March was $978, down 6 percent from the previous winter, according to Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association.

Analysts predict that won't change much this year. They say natural gas and electricity prices will stay relatively steady even if the weather turns colder than expected.

"We are so well supplied that it's less likely there will be a spike," says Ed Morse, head of commodities research at Credit Suisse.

Heating oil, which is derived from crude and accounts for 17 percent of home heating, mostly in the Northeast, is another matter. Crude oil prices have risen because traders expect increasing demand from China and Asia and because the U.S. dollar has been weakening. A weaker dollar makes oil, which is priced in dollars, look cheaper to all overseas buyers. As they drive up the price of oil, derivative fuels like heating oil become more expensive for Americans.

Also, because heating oil is made along with diesel and jet fuel, increases in demand for those fuels as the economy picks up can make for shortages of heating oil, and therefore higher prices.

The Energy Information Administration, a branch of the U.S. Energy Department, releases its outlook for heating fuel costs on Wednesday.

Forecasters think the most likely place for a colder than normal snap is the Pacific Northwest. Cool ocean temperatures in the Pacific near the equator are creating what meteorologists call a La Nina effect, which generally leads to colder and snowier weather in the Pacific Northwest and the Northern Plains.

Last year the opposite conditions were in place, called El Nino.

La Nina conditions are correlated with warmer weather in the South and East because they allow the jet stream, which brings warmer temperatures, to wander north.

Weather over the arctic can gum up those works, however, and push colder weather south, so forecasters aren't as confident in their predictions for the east as they are for the Northwest.

Still, La Nina makes a repeat of last year's prolonged eastern cold snap only a remote possibility. "It will be difficult to have anything like what happened in the Southeast again this year," said Judah Cohen, director of seasonal forecasting for AER, Inc.

Despite mild weather and energy prices, heating assistance officials say requests for help remain high at a time of stubbornly high unemployment.

"Even though the forecasters might be calling for a not-so-chilly winter, our volume hasn't slowed down," said Janet Joseph, executive director of Heating Energy Assistance Team, a non-profit organization that directs private contributions to needy families in Georgia. "In fact, it's increased. We're seeing people who may not have asked for help before."

Wolfe said winter is particularly tough for those who rely on heating oil because their bill comes in one or two big lumps when it comes time to fill the family oil tank. While $1,000 over a year is not normally a huge burden, a $500 monthly bill can be.

Because heating oil is often distributed by small local delivery companies, there are not as many flexible payment programs like the ones offered by large gas utilities. And the area of the country that relies most heavily on oil heat, the Northeast, is one of the nation's coldest. Average prices in Maine, for example, can be closer to $2,500 a year than to the national average of about $1,000, says Wolfe.

John Huber, president of the National Oilheat Research Alliance, an industry group, said high prices for heating oil are hurting both consumers and delivery companies. While in the past high prices have led customers to install new, more efficient boilers, now customers don't have the extra money to upgrade.

The average retail price for heating oil is about $2.93 per gallon, according to the Energy Information Administration, 41 cents above prices last year at this time. Early October is typically when oil prices are highest during the year, so analysts expect them to gradually fall as winter wanes.

Natural gas prices are $3.52 per thousand cubic feet and are expected to creep just above $4, on average, as the weather turns colder.

While home heating costs are low compared with recent history, they are still 23 percent higher than they were five years ago. "It's not enough to sink a middle class family but it's more alarming to them," said Wolfe.

Last year a $5.1 billion federal heating assistance program helped 8.8 million families. There are proposals for similar programs in congress now, a $5.1 billion proposal in the House and a $3.3 billion plan in the Senate.

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Afghan peace council wants gesture from U.S.

DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan Releasing Taliban figures detained at Guantanamo Bay and scratching scores of others off the U.N. sanctions list would jump-start peace talks aimed at ending the 9-year-old war, members of Afghanistan's new peace council said Tuesday.

The council members, who hold their first business meeting on Wednesday, said goodwill gestures from the U.S. and international community could spur reconciliation talks — perhaps at a neutral location in Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Egypt or Turkey.

The momentum for a political solution has been slowly building in Afghanistan as public support for the war has waned in the West. The renewed push for peace comes as the last of 30,000 U.S. reinforcements have arrived in Afghanistan, pushing deeper into areas long held by insurgents.

Many top military and diplomatic leaders have publicly supported peace efforts, though they remain skeptical that insurgents are ready to lay down their arms, embrace the Afghan constitution and sever ties with al-Qaida and other terrorist networks.

Ethnic minorities and women, who were repressed under the Taliban, have expressed concerns about what any deal with the militants would bring. Most members of the Taliban are Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. The minority Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras are not likely to sit quietly on the sidelines if Karzai, a Pashtun, makes a deal with insurgents.

But Staffan de Mistura, the top U.N. envoy in Afghanistan, said all parties including the Taliban know there is no military solution to the conflict. He predicted the next several months will be particularly violent because both the Taliban and international forces will be applying maximum pressure on each other to position themselves for possible negotiation.

In hopes of finding a peaceful resolution, Afghan President Hamid Karzai recently set up the 68-member council to guide formal talks with the armed opposition.

Karzai said this week that his government has been talking with the Taliban "countryman to countryman" for "quite some time." He characterized the talks as unofficial personal contacts — not official contact with the Taliban leadership.

"That hasn't happened yet and we hope we can begin that as soon as possible," Karzai said.

Arsala Rahmani, a member of the peace council who served as deputy education minister in the former Taliban regime, said Tuesday that discussions were under way for the United States or United Nations to guarantee safe passage for representatives of militant groups to meet somewhere outside of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran to discuss ways to reconcile with the Afghan government. Rahmani, who insisted he was not speaking on behalf of the entire council, said neutral meeting sites under discussion were in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Egypt.

Rahmani said trust must be established between the Taliban and the U.S. and other Western players. Release of four or five top Taliban prisoners from the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay and the de-listing of about 150 individuals linked to the Taliban from the U.N. sanctions list are the key stumbling blocks to negotiating peace, he said.

A second member of the peace council, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said the Taliban will show more flexibility if such measures are taken.

"When that trust can be established, the political process can move forward," Rahmani said.

Publicly, the Taliban have rejected the peace council, calling it an "American initiative to delay the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan."

In Washington, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the U.S. was considering modifications to the U.N. sanctions list, but that the matter of releasing prisoners from Guantanamo Bay was unrelated to the Afghan peace process.

"On an ongoing basis we are evaluating modifications to the individuals on the sanctions list at the U.N.," Crowley said Tuesday. "We've made some adjustments during the course of this year. And as we work through issues and, you know, in collaboration with the U.N. and other members of the U.N. Security Council, that is certainly possible."

Rahmani and the other member of the peace council also said Pakistan should release or give Afghanistan custody of its Afghan prisoners, including the Afghan Taliban's No. 2 leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. Baradar was arrested in February in a joint raid with the CIA — a move some analysts believe was driven by Pakistan's desire to guarantee itself a seat at the negotiating table. Rahmani said Baradar was one of 31 Afghan Taliban figures being held in Pakistan because they were willing to talk peace.

"We don't know where they are, whether in prison in Pakistan, or maybe living comfortable in guest houses," he said.

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani tried to dispel concerns about his country's role when asked about Taliban peace talks Tuesday, but also reminded observers of the leverage Pakistan has in the process.

"Look, nothing can happen without us because we are part of the solution. We are not part of the problem," Gilani said.

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SURF REPORT

Surf Conditions **Water Temp:** 64°

Swell Forecast

Should see the NW fade to waist high for west facing breaks, but the SW should keep south facing breaks in at least chest high sets, with some occasional head high sets at the standouts.

Long Range Synopsis

South facing breaks are looking at chest high sets; west facing breaks are looking at waist high surf.

Tide Forecast for Today in Santa Monica



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QUICK STATS (for the last 30 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 1
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 4
- Number of wet days -- 0
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 14 / ns
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 8 / ns

The Beach Report Card is made possible by: The Diller – von Furstenberg Family Foundation, Grousbeck Family Foundation, simplehuman, SIMA, Carlson Family Foundation, Inc.

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

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

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

LEGEND

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

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

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

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

Heal the Bay

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LEGAL NEWS

USADA cases add more layers to cycling's troubles

EDDIE PELLS
AP National Writer

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. Though there are no Tour de France winners on the list, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency has sanctioned five cyclists for doping in the past two months — an unusually high number for a single sport, and one that is expected to keep growing over the next several weeks.

The recent surge has resulted from a combination of factors, including information provided by Joe Papp, a former midlevel rider who has been a key USADA informant since admitting in 2006 he cheated. Papp, who says systematic doping goes on in cycling, was a USADA witness in the 2007 arbitration case that resulted in Floyd Landis having his Tour de France title stripped for drug use.

Landis has since admitted he doped and has accused Lance Armstrong and others of cheating, as well. The Landis allegations helped set in motion a federal investigation into cycling, with Armstrong clearly a person of interest to prosecutors. Though not directly linked, the USADA cases have been popping up regularly since the federal investigation began in earnest this summer.

The cases create yet more problems for a sport that has been in turmoil, with Tour de France winner Alberto Contador among the latest to be accused of doping. Contador has been provisionally suspended after a small amount of the banned drug clenbuterol was discovered in one of his urine samples. Also in the past month, four Spanish riders have been suspended for doping offenses.

USADA CEO Travis Tygart said he could not comment on specific cases, but that his agency is always looking to catch dopers, regardless of the sport.

"The win-at-all-cost culture is driving athletes and support personnel to do everything possible, including using these dangerous drugs to win," Tygart said. "We're going to aggressively pursue the truth to do the best we can to dismantle that culture where it exists."

Pat McQuaid, head of the International Cycling Union, declined comment for this story.

Steve Johnson, the CEO of USA Cycling, gave an emphatic "no," when asked if he felt his sport was under siege by doping authorities, saying cycling has taken the most aggressive approach to anti-doping in sports by using biological passports, among other methods, to catch cheaters.

"We are light years ahead of every other sport in the fight against doping," Johnson said. "We know some people are going to cheat, so when you are as aggressive as cycling has been, people are going to get caught and that's what we are seeing. We have to be willing to endure the process of cleaning up the sport. Cycling has shown that no one is immune, as big name riders have been suspended in the past."

Not everyone believes cycling is doing everything it can, however.

Earlier this month, Italy's anti-doping prosecutor Ettore Torri said cheating is so widespread that one possible solution might be to legalize doping.

"I'm not the only one saying it. Lately, all of the cyclists I've interrogated have said that everyone dopes," Torri said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The most recent USADA case involved former U.S. national pro cycling champion Kirk O'Bee, who last week received a lifetime suspension for a second doping offense.

DEVELOPMENT

Rose Bowl to get $152M facelift

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PASADENA The Rose Bowl — a grand old lady of football — is getting a facelift.

The Pasadena City Council on Monday approved a $152-million renovation plan for the 88-year-old stadium.

The number of luxury seats will be increased to 2,500 from 550. The site of the annual Rose Bowl game also will get a new scoreboard, safety improvements, more restrooms and more concession stands.

Construction will run in three phases beginning in January and ending in 2013 to avoid disrupting games.

The city plans to pay for the upgrade with federal stimulus funds, a bond issue, money from the Tournament of Roses and profits from previous games.

The council also approved 30-year lease extensions with UCLA and the Tournament of Roses to continue playing at the bowl.

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20th Anniversary

MOVIE TIMES

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

Sex, Lies and Videotape (NR) 1hr 40min
7:30pm

Call theater for information.

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade

Legend of the Guardians 3D: The Owls of Ga'Hoole (PG) 1hr 30min
1:00pm, 3:20pm

Inception (PG-13) 2hrs 28min
6:00pm, 9:15pm

Secretariat (PG) 1hr 56min
12:45pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm

It's Kind of a Funny Story (PG-13)
2:00pm, 4:30pm, 7:05pm, 9:35pm

Catfish (PG-13) 1hr 34min
2:30pm, 4:55pm, 7:20pm, 9:45pm

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

Legend of the Guardians 3D: The Owls of Ga'Hoole (PG) 1hr 30min
12:05pm, 2:35pm, 5:10pm, 7:40pm, 10:05pm

Let Me In (R) 1hr 55min
11:05am, 1:45pm, 4:25pm, 7:05pm, 9:45pm

Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps (PG-13) 2hrs 7min
1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm

Life As We Know It (PG-13) 1hr 52min
11:10am, 1:55pm, 4:40pm, 7:25pm, 10:10pm

You Again (PG)1hr 45min
11:20am, 1:50pm, 4:30pm, 7:15pm, 9:50pm

Social Network (PG-13) 2hr 1min
11:00am, 12:00pm, 2:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 6:00pm, 8:00pm, 9:00pm

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

Never Let Me Go (R) 1hr 43min
4:30pm, 7:20pm, 9:55pm

Mao's Last Dancer (PG) 1hr 57min
1:20pm, 4:10pm, 7:00pm, 9:45pm

Howl (NR) 2hr 16min
1:00pm, 3:10pm, 5:30pm, 7:50pm, 10:10pm

Waiting for Superman (PG) 1hr 42min
1:30pm, 4:20pm, 7:10pm, 10:00pm

AMC Criterion 6
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

Case 39 (R) 1hr 49min
11:05am, 1:40pm, 4:25pm, 7:15pm, 10:05pm

Town (R) 2hr 5min
12:00pm, 3:20pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm

Secretariat (PG) 1hr 56min
11:00am, 1:50pm, 4:40pm, 7:30pm, 10:20pm

Social Network (PG-13) 2hr 1min
1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm

Easy A (PG-13) 1hr 33min
12:15pm, 2:35pm, 5:00pm, 7:20pm, 9:45pm

My Soul to Take 3D (R) 1hr 46min
11:15am, 2:00pm, 4:30pm, 7:05pm, 9:40pm

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



MYSTERY PHOTO

Maya Sugarman *news@smdp.com*

The first person who can correctly identify where this image was captured wins a prize from the Santa Monica Daily Press. Send answers to *editor@smdp.com*. Send your mystery photos to *editor@smdp.com* to be used in future issues.

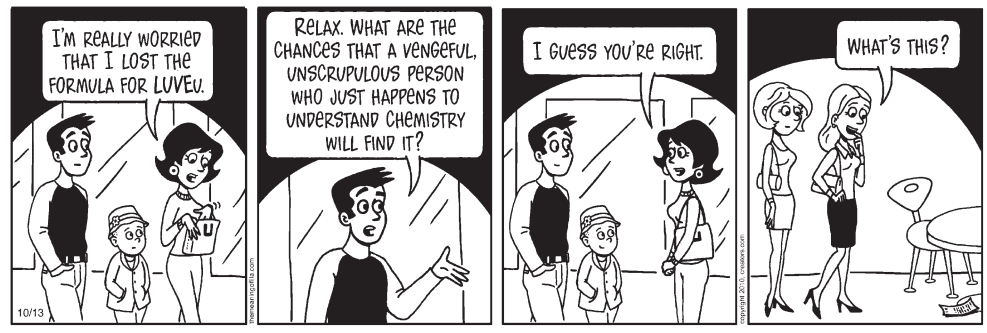
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



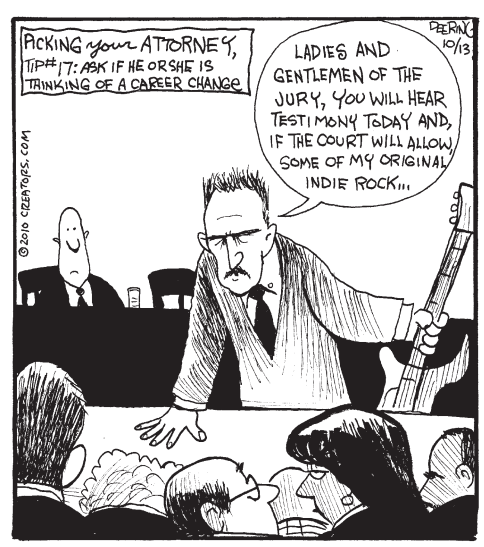
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



Up late, Aries

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★ You settle into a very hard work pace and might not be ready to leave work at the conventional time of day. Review some structural ideas and concepts before proceeding in a set, chosen direction. Tonight: Burning the midnight oil.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ You challenge yourself to get to the root of a problem before you make a decision. Though someone might think you are playing games or stalling, you are really seeking out more information. Tonight: Where there is music.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ A partner might be slightly more challenging than you anticipated, causing a lot of problems and affecting your perspective and willingness to grasp his or her issue. Diplomatically explain the ramifications of this type of behavior. Tonight: Dinner with a favorite person.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Defer to others and be willing to open up to new beginnings. Intense gatherings mark your decisions. Be careful as to how much you take on. You could suddenly feel overwhelmed. Tonight: Head home.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ Maintain a steady pace, and remain sure of your choices. You have discussed an issue until you are blue in the face. Have you not made a choice? Express your caring in a way that is meaningful. Tonight: Keep at what you are doing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Where others struggle, you express an innate creativity and an unusually dynamic style. You could be pushed beyond your limits financially. If so, don't play ostrich -- stick your head out and let others know. Tonight: Let your wildness emerge.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ You could be very tired and drawn. In your ability to see beyond the obvious lies a steady basis in your thinking and choices. Update your office or a special room in your home to reflect the changing you. Tonight: Happily head home.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Sometimes you ask a lot of questions; other times others will simply start talking. Listen well, because much could be revealed in the present moment. You could be a bit hurt if you take a situation personally. Tonight: Exchange ideas.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Be aware of self-imposed limitations, especially financially. Drop the word "no" from your vocabulary, and replace it with "how can I make 'x' happen?" The results could be substantially different. Tonight: Make it your treat.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ You are all smiles, even if you are working through a difficult matter. You don't need to worry, as you have the power and strength to make the mark you want. Don't allow a boss or older person to ride you too hard. Tonight: Moving along ...

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ Much that you see or observe is best not shared. Keep certain insights to yourself, and you might find that people remain more open with you. Read between the lines with someone at a distance. Tonight: Behind the scenes.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ You are on top of your game. You see life from a more resplendent perspective. Let a friend open up to new impressions and get to know you better. Someone could be unusually cold. Tonight: Where the action is.

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

Happy birthday

This year, you have the opportunity to redesign certain elements of your life. This period could be connected to 28 years ago, if you are over 28. You might often feel tired, but that isn't all that is going on with you. You do make a difference, but perhaps you are accepting too many responsibilities. New beginnings become possible if you relax and let go of what isn't functioning in your life. Eliminate what you no longer enjoy. If you are single, you could be more demanding than in the past, tripping up any potential bond. Spring 2011 heralds new beginnings. If you are attached, the two of you will be more at odds than usual. Be willing to detach and accept your side of the problem. Control could be at the base of the issue. CAPRICORN can be provocative.

Sudoku

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

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

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Bother
7 Con
11 James Cameron film
12 Forum wear
13 Deli meat
14 Hymn ender
15 Cook's aid
17 Deep voice
20 Elegance
23 Ump's cry
24 School subject
26 Fuss
27 Frying need
28 Buck's partner
29 Restaurant patron's act
31 Tooth surrounder
32 Onset
33 Skin opening
34 Brother's daughters
37 Green stone
39 Turkish peak
43 Quiche base
44 Sand, basically
45 Italy's shape
46 Disposition

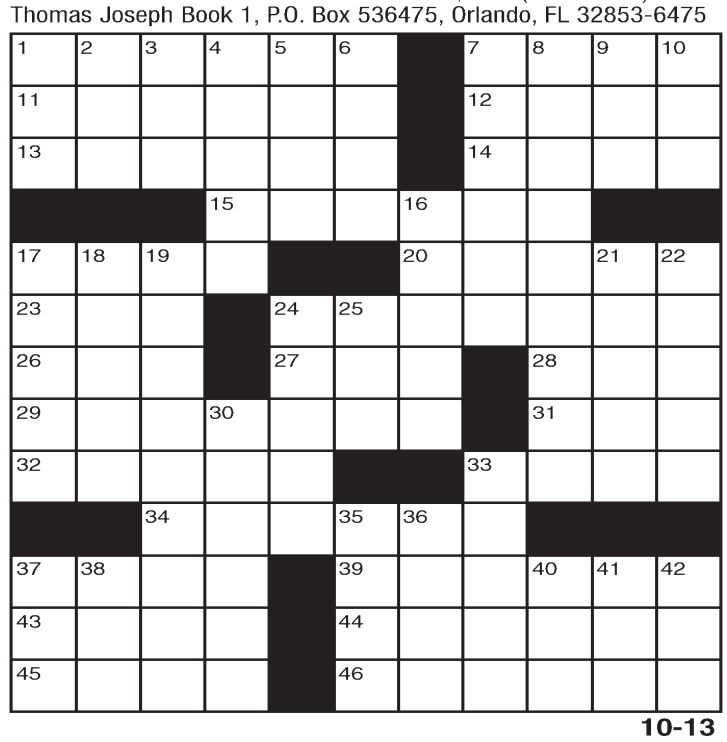
DOWN

1 Holds
2 Gardner of movies
3 Gal of song
4 Flag features
5 Ineffectual
6 Rocker Clapton
7 Paper fastener
8 Appear for brief times
9 Candle count
10 Supply with crew
16 Cake cover
17 Fleet members
18 Filer's worry
19 Like rush-hour traffic
21 Scrub
22 Message from the boss
24 Malice
25 Fire
30 Mass leader
33 Sacred song
35 Play group
36 Huron neighbor
37 Bull Run general Stuart
38 In the past
40 Tear
41 King beater
42 Paver's goo

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

Yesterday's answer

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10-13

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• Fill the grid with the set of given numbers (1 to 12) to satisfy the Equa demands (7 to 24) in the shaded boxes. The Equa demands represent the sum of the digits that you will insert into the empty squares.

• Each horizontal row has one Equa demand to satisfy; each vertical column also has one demand to satisfy. Each empty square in the grid dictates the math operation (addition +, subtraction -, multiplication X, and division ÷) that must be performed to meet the demands.

• You must follow the given math operations for each square and you must make sure all the numbers satisfy the demands in the shaded boxes when connected in adjacent threes and calculated together from left to right, and top to bottom.

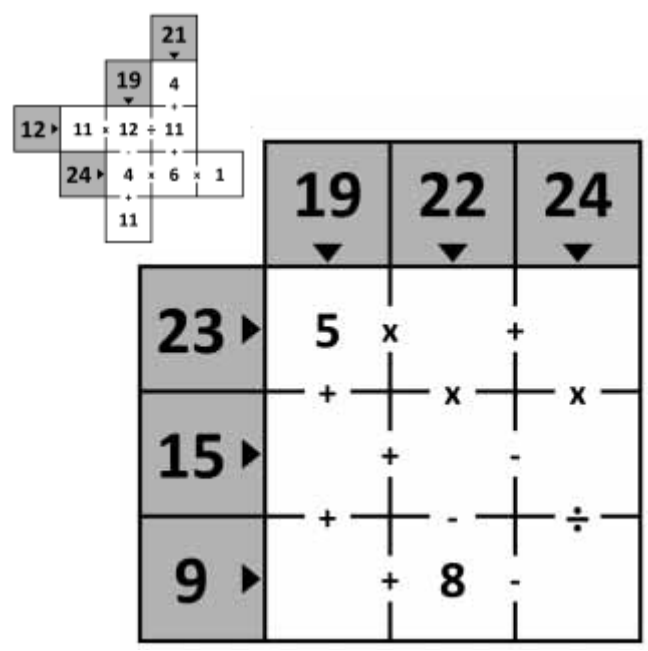
• The numbers you insert into the grid must satisfy the Equa demands both horizontally and vertically.

For more games, go to www.arithmo.com

Fill in the empty fields with the given numbers so when calculated together they satisfy all Equas in the gray boxes:

2, 3, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11

Solution for Task 512



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Fantasy 5: 27 29 31 37 39

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 1 1 6 EVENING: 6 2 1

DAILY DERBY: 1st: 10 Solid Gold 2nd: 09 Winning Spirit 3rd: 07 Eureka RACE TIME: 1:47.63

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Notorious killer Jon Venables, convicted in 1993 at age 11 of the torture-murder of a 2-year-old Merseyside boy, was held until age 18 and then released on conditions and with a new identity to protect him from harassment. In July 2010, after violating the conditions, Venables was sentenced to two years in jail for possessing and exchanging "violent" child pornography. According to a Daily Telegraph report, the Ministry of Justice has accepted that it will have to supply Venables yet another new identity upon his eventual release (with set-up likely to cost the equivalent of almost $400,000 and security to run the equivalent of an additional $1.6 million a year).

■ Police in New Albany, Ind., arrested two alleged counterfeiters in August but believed that a much bigger operation was in play. Subsequently, the Indiana State Police made a public plea for informants, focusing on the people most likely to be cheated by counterfeit money: local drug dealers. "What we are asking today," said ISP Sgt. Jerry Goodin, "is we want all the drug dealers to call us. We want to get all of your information and exactly what happened in (any of your dealings)." Goodin added, "Trust us."

TODAY IN HISTORY

1967 The first game in the history of the American Basketball Association is played as the Anaheim Amigos lose to the Oakland Oaks 134-129 in Oakland, California.

1970 Fiji joins the United Nations.

1972 An Aeroflot Ilyushin Il-62 crashed outside Moscow killing 176.

1972 Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571 crashes in the Andes mountains, near the border between Argentina and Chile. By December 23, 1972, only 16 out of 45 people lived long enough to be rescued.

1976 A Bolivian Boeing 707 cargo jet crashes in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, killing 100 (97, mostly children, killed on the ground).

WORD UP!

retrograde
\ RE-truh-greyd \ , adjective;
1. Having a backward motion or direction; retiring or retreating.
2. Inverse or reversed, as order.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Notices

NOTICE
THE annual report of the Rose Leo Memorial Foundation is available for inspection at 56 Village Park Way, Santa Monica, California 90405.
/s/Luellen Lucid, Trustee
October 8, 2010

DBAS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: 20101252759 ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 09/07/2010 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as THE ODD COUPLE . The full name of registrant(s) is/are: PATRICIA LATHAN 2005 21ST #2 SANTA MONICA, CA 90404. This Business is being conducted by: an Individual. The registrant has not yet commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above. /s/:PATRICIA LATHAN. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 09/07/2010. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the

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rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 10/06/2010, 10/13/2010, 10/20/2010, 10/27/2010.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: 20101250985 ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 09/07/2010 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as SOTERIA HOME HEALTH AGENCY, INC. AI#ON 3315076. The full name of registrant(s) is/are: SOTERIA HOME HEALTH AGENCY, INC. 959 N. LA BREA AVENUE INGLEWOOD, CA 90302. This Business is being conducted by: a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed on (Date)06/16/2010. /s/: LOUIS NWOKE; C.E.O. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 09/07/2010. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 09/29/2010, 10/06/2010, 10/13/2010, 10/20/2010.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: 20101186243 ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 08/25/2010 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as REVOLUTION DOMAIN. The full name of registrant(s) is/are: SAMANTHA FISHER 4718 SAINT CLAIR AVE. VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91607. This Business is being conducted by: an Individual. The registrant has not yet commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above. /s/:SAMANTHA FISHER; OWNER. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 08/25/2010. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 09/22/2010, 09/29/2010, 10/06/2010, 10/13/2010.



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Open Sunday, October 17th
2:00pm - 5:00 pm



11687 Montana Avenue #208
2 Bed, 1.75 Bath
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Open Sunday, Ocotber 17th
2:00pm - 5:00pm



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