

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

8 30 39 42 46

Meganumber: 8

Jackpot: \$9 Million

FANTASY 5

3 11 15 18 23

DAILY 3

Daytime: 5 4 0

Evening: 5 8 8

DAILY DERBY

1st: 12 Lucky Charms

2nd: 10 Solid Gold

3rd: 06 Whirl Win

RACE TIME: 1:46.23

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

Rochester, N.H., physician Terry Bennett has been scheduled for a December disciplinary hearing by the State Board of Medicine, based on a complaint that he much too bluntly warned an obese female patient to lose weight or face health and love-life problems (comments that allegedly caused her emotional distress). Said Bennett, "I tried to get her attention." Also, a 2001 complaint against Bennett, which had been dismissed, was revived by the board for the December hearing; he had allegedly told a patient in poor health following brain surgery that she might as well buy a gun and end her suffering.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 291st day of 2005.

There are 74 days left in the year.

On Oct. 18, 1767, the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania, the Mason-Dixon line, was agreed upon. In 1685, King Louis XIV of France revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had established legal toleration of France's Protestant population, the Huguenots.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I do not prize the word cheap. It is not a badge of honor ... it is a symbol of despair. Cheap prices make for cheap goods; cheap goods make for cheap men; and cheap men make for a cheap country!"

PRESIDENT WILLIAM MCKINLEY
(1843-1901)

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Striking while it's hot



Mark Bridges/Special to the Daily Press

Santa Monica firefighters extinguish a palm tree on the 800 block of 12th Street on Monday, after the tree was struck by lightning shortly after noon. Firefighters said lightning struck the top of the 75-foot-tall tree, then traveled to the bottom. The fire was quickly extinguished. The palm tree was planted about 70 years ago.

LOCAL

Big Blue not taking commuters for a ride

BY JASMIN PERSCH

Special to the Daily Press

DOWNTOWN — Passengers fearing their daily commute is about to get more costly, in light of soaring gas prices, may want to show their local transportation company some tokens of affection.

While the Big Blue Bus is expected to pay nearly \$1 million more in gas this year, Big Blue officials aren't planning to scale back services or increase fares.

Officials at the city-run bus system predict that fuel costs will be 26 percent higher than expected this fiscal year, which ends next August, said Big Blue Bus spokesman Dan Dawson.

According to Dawson, the estimated budget for gas was

See **BIG BLUE**, page 7

Local public workers say 'no' to Prop. 75, other initiatives

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE — Many Santa Monica public workers are joining forces with statewide groups to oppose Proposition 75, saying it's an attack on their ability take part in the state's political process which will have long-term repercussions if approved.

Firefighters, teachers and other public workers are among those who oppose Proposition 75, claiming that if it is approved during the Nov. 8 special election, their ability to take political action will be significantly diminished. Meanwhile, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's campaign office, which supports the measure, said Prop. 75 will empower public workers by forcing unions representing them to request permission to use their funds for political action.

According to the state's legisla-

tive analysis, a 'yes' vote on Proposition 75 means public employee unions would be

See **PROPOSITIONS**, page 7

Manager vacancy has city talking

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE — As the countdown continues for Santa Monica to find a replacement for its top administrator, community members are beginning to discuss the qualities they would like in a new city manager.

City Manager Susan McCarthy, who has held her position since 1999, informed the City Council in July that she will retire in November. She has worked for City Hall for 24 years. Responsible for the "belt-tightening" that enabled City Hall to ride out the post-9-11 economic downturn, she intends to spend more time with her husband and aging parents.

On Tuesday, community members speaking to the Daily Press lamented the loss of McCarthy, often described as a quintessential professional. One quality they said they would like to see in McCarthy's replacement is an ability to effectively understand and communicate with the diverse

See **HELP WANTED**, page 6

That's a wrap



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

A cart operator protects the goods on Monday as rain continued to fall.

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Assemblyman Lloyd Levine, Sponsor of the Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill • **C. Ronald Koons, MD**, Professor, UC Irvine Medical School • **Judith Ford, MD, PhD**, Professor, UCLA Medical School • **Michael Frederick, MD**, Regional Medical Director, Trinity Care Hospice, Visiting Asst. Prof., Dept. of Fam. Med., UCLA

Moderator
Arthur U. Rivin, MD, Emeritus Professor of Medicine, UCLA Chair, The Center for Humane and Ethical Medical Care (CHEC√)

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HOROSCOPE

Slow down tonight, Sag

Santa Monica Daily Press

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★ Stay in control of your temper, though certainly this is a frustrating moment for you. What you feel is clear becomes foggy. Clarify, verify and double-check all communications and meetings. Tonight: Do what you need to do for yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Your powerful personality helps you ease through the many ups and downs that today provides. By now you know that a boss or parent might be quite nebulous or into his or her imagination. Today you get one more reminder. Tonight: If making plans, make sure you are on the same page as someone else.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ You might want to let your imagination run loose, but don't share your many wild and creative thoughts with others right now; your message won't get through. Keep to yourself right now, and don't get into anyone else's issues. Tonight: Get some extra sleep.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ You aim high for what you want; expect others to help you achieve your goals. A key associate or partner might be more of a hindrance at this point than he or she means to be. Relax and focus. You need to support yourself. Tonight: Where your friends are.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★ Confusion could be your middle name, but many other people feel confused too. Part of the issue, as you will see, is that someone or several people with a positive perspective might not understand your expectations. Tonight: A must appearance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ It might be important to verify what you think you heard, be it a conversation or instructions. Take nothing for granted, and you will be a lot happier. Your creativity and imagination could go wild. Don't follow these flights of fancy. Tonight: Take a long-term look at what you have been thinking about.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ What a partner or associate says or does is in direct conflict with what you feel needs to happen. Sometimes you need to let others see the end results of your actions rather than put in your two cents. Everyone learns best from experience. Tonight: Say little.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Confusion can mark the next few days if you aren't careful. Someone — probably not you — has his or her facts mixed up. All you can do is confirm and verify conversations and meetings. Also, maintain a sense of humor. Tonight: Go along with others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Keep to your daily tasks, and try to stay away from confusion. Use care when driving, because others, as well as you, might be disoriented. In fact, if you can, walk instead. Put on music wherever you are. Tonight: Slow down. Stay out of trouble.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Sometimes you might not know which way to turn. Right now, be a cynic, especially concerning a money matter. You might not be wrong, but today carries a high element of risk. Tonight: Fun can be a game of Scrabble.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ You are in another world right now, and getting you to land might be difficult, if not impossible. You might want to cocoon, but your best bet is to stay present and don't plunge into a new project. Tonight: Now, homeward bound.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★ Take your time, even if you feel you have much to do and so little time. You might be more in your head than you realize. Confirm meetings and what others say. The clearer you are the better. Tonight: Swap the day's war stories.

Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday
Phone: (310) 458-PRESS (7737) • Fax: (310) 576-9913
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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Holy discount! Church selling its stuff

By Daily Press staff

Even God needs to simplify.

The Church in Ocean Park will hold its annual parking lot sale on Saturday, Oct. 22, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Furniture, clothing, children's toys, kitchen wares, small appliances, household items and books will be sold in the parking lot, located at 235 Hill Street, between Second and Third streets.

Everywhere around the world, they're dancin' in streets

By Daily Press staff

There's no need to travel far to witness exotic dance numbers.

Santa Monica College presents the international dance company Folklorico, which will perform dances from Spain, Indonesia, Brazil, the Middle East, as well as salsa, Mexican folklorico, Aztec, American jazz and lyrical jazz.

"All of the performed dances are kept in their authentic forms," Folklorico de SMC co-artistic director and dance professor Judith Douglas said. "They preserve particular world cultures as well as educate our students and audiences of their beauty and legitimacy."

The performances are scheduled for Friday, Oct. 21, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 22, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 23, at 7 p.m. at the Morgan-Wixson Theatre, 2627 Pico Blvd.

Folklorico has toured and performed throughout Mexico and California for more than 15 years. Call (310) 434-3000 for tickets, which cost \$15.

Ace in the hole: Battling breast cancer on tennis court

By Daily Press staff

The battle against breast cancer will be taken to the courts this weekend.

The 8th Annual "Westside Challenge to Beat Breast Cancer" will benefit low-cost mammography screenings at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center

Nearly 100 tennis players, including several breast-cancer survivors, will serve aces against the second-leading killer of American women at the tournament to be held on Saturday, Oct. 22. Featuring a 50-game round-robin tennis marathon, the event will raise funds to benefit the low-cost mammography screening program at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, which provides potentially lifesaving mammograms and follow-up diagnostic care, if needed, to uninsured or underinsured women in the community. In 2004, the hospital provided low-cost mammograms to nearly 200 uninsured or underinsured women, and breast health educational materials to more than 10,000 community residents.

The event was founded by breast cancer survivor Nina Nisenholtz.

"I want other women to understand that breast cancer can and will be beaten through education and preventive measures," she said.

In addition to the tennis tournament, the "Westside Challenge" features an awards reception and silent auction. Younger guests will be treated to face painting, entertainment, and a "Wheel of Fortune."

The tennis tournament and silent auction will be held from noon to 3:30 p.m. at the UCLA/Los Angeles Tennis Center on the UCLA campus. A reception will follow from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and will be held in the adjacent Straus Clubhouse.

Dinner is served, drug-free

By Daily Press staff

It will be a drug-free Friday night at the Santa Monica Elks Club.

The Santa Monica Elks, in conjunction with the drug awareness committee, the youth activities committee and the Jack Showers Fund, will hold an awards banquet for the winners and their parents of the Drug Awareness Essay Contest, the Drug Awareness Video Contest, the Drug Awareness Poster Contest and the soccer shoot-out. The event will be held on Friday, Oct. 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Santa Monica Elks Lodge at 1040 Pico Blvd. The public is invited to attend. Call (310) 980-5976.



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SURF REPORT

West-facing breaks are doing best with chest- to head-high sets, bigger at times at standouts. South-facing breaks are running waist to chest.

On Tuesday, we will be seeing some NW that will bring in some waist- to chest-high surf from around 290-300 degrees.

Today the
water is:

64°

Write us at alex@smdp.com
and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
MONDAY	3:15	0.7	4:03	-0.3	9:27	6.4	10:15	4.9
TUESDAY	3:45	1.2	4:48	-0.4	9:58	6.5	11:04	4.4
WEDNESDAY	4:14	1.8	5:34	-0.3	10:28	6.3	N/A	N/A
THURSDAY	4:41	2.3	6:25	-0.1	12:00	3.9	11:00	6.1
FRIDAY	5:15	1.7	7:20	0.0	12:42	3.1	11:25	5.7

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The Q Line

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City Council, by a 4-3 vote, approved an amendment which significantly raises developer "in lieu" fees, the mandated contribution to the city's affordable housing effort. In May, the city was found to have not kept its promises to voters that it would be consistent in the number of affordable housing units it produced.

Still, some feel it unfair to pass the costs on to developers, who will be required to pay quadruple, in some cases, what they previously had, and may dissuade them from doing business in the city.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know: "Was City Council correct in their assertion that higher developer fees will equal more affordable housing, or was the hike an unnecessary passing of the buck?"

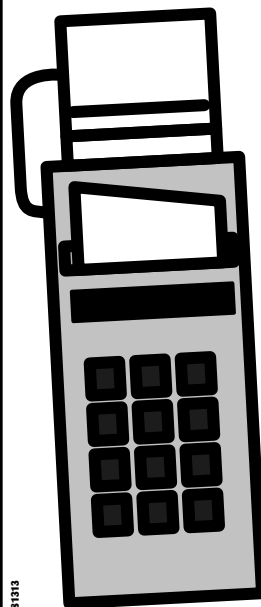
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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Meals On Wheels shouldn't have to hit the road

Editor:

I understand that Meals On Wheels, a local non-profit agency that has been delivering meals and providing necessary care to many elderly Santa Monica residents for many, many years, is being forced out of its current location and must find new headquarters so that it can continue to provide valuable services to our senior citizens.

I find it very disturbing that the city of Santa Monica, which spends millions of dollars funding countless homeless programs and which recently spent about \$8 million of our tax dollars purchasing a large building in Santa Monica for a non-profit agency to feed and house the homeless, refuses to help out a program like Meals On Wheels that helps Santa Monica senior citizens.

The city just spent nearly \$20 million on the Fisher Lumber property and that building sits vacant. Why hasn't the city stepped up and offered Meals On Wheels this site for its headquarters? I guess the city feels that our senior citizens are far less important than the homeless. Shame on our city.

Katherine Marie Anderson
Santa Monica

Propped up: The right to choose is all right

Editor:

Proposition 75 isn't about the on-going power struggle between the governor and the unions — it's bigger than that. It is about allowing union workers to have the political and financial freedom to choose what they support and where they offer their support. It is about granting this right initially to the workers without forcing them to encounter tiresome paperwork with roundabout solutions.

The "Paycheck Protection Act" allows a union worker to have the choice whether or not to contribute to political campaigns when he/she signs his/her contract. Why is it that millions of union dollars go toward political fundraising to support views not necessarily held by the whole union? The opinions of a few don't necessarily speak for the whole. Just because the commercials on TV are overwhelmed by angry teachers, police officers, nurses, and firefighters condemning Governor Schwarzenegger, doesn't mean all union workers hold this view.

The unions hold a powerful voice over California's legislature. The unions are now threatened by Proposition 75 because if this passes, it may turn their powerful voice over the Legislature into a gentle whisper. It's about time that unions realize their place isn't in Sacramento and that the Legislature isn't bound to push the unions' political agenda. If union workers cared about the political freedoms of their workers, not their political influence, they wouldn't be fighting so vehemently in opposition to Proposition 75.

Union workers are at least entitled to choose where their money goes, to choose what they support, and to choose whether or not they want their hard-working money to sustain the unions' political agenda.

Julie Dlugokecki
Malibu

Game over: Governor hypocritical on rights



WHAT'S THE POINT?

BY DAVID PISSARRA

Last week Gov. Schwarzenegger signed a bill designed to prevent children from purchasing violent video games. The bill was drafted by the Speaker Pro Tem, Leland Yee, and it makes it illegal to sell or rent video games that "depict serious injury to human beings in a manner that is especially heinous, atrocious, or cruel," according to speaker Yee's office.

The governor, in his latest bald-faced attempt to shore up his flagging base, signed this bill, amidst the increasing din of gossip that he is in negotiations with James Cameron to star in "Terminator 4." The "Terminator" movie franchise is of course known for its intelligent content, and message of peace and tolerance.

Ignoring the obvious hypocrisy of the governor simultaneously trying to increase his "protect the children" credibility, while getting ready to gear up for yet another kill fest, I have to wonder why the legislature actually believes that if we outlaw something it will change the world.

Our politicians love to engage in these Don Quixote games that really serve to do nothing more than showcase the self-aggrandizement and hypocrisy of the people that we send to Sacramento to run our state. Writing legislation that gets headlines but no traction is useful for the re-election campaign, but frankly a waste of paper and time.

To think that we can prevent our children from getting access to violent games, tobacco, liquor, drugs, guns, or sex, simply by writing a law, is evidence of the degree to which we are willing to ignore the obvious realities of the world in which we live.

I say this only because I am aware of how easy it was for me as a teenager to obtain what was the hot drink at the time, Bartles and Jaymes. All I needed to do was find an upperclassmen who was prematurely hairy, get to a seedy liquor store and for the price of a six pack, we had our evening's beverages.

One need only look at the number of children who are being sent to the various stupidly expensive rehab centers around the country to see that drugs and alcohol are endemic.

The language of the violent video games bill is clearly targeted at those overprotective parents who vote with their religion, but ignore their children. To use phrasing such as "especially heinous, atrocious, or cruel" is to try and parse an exception that will allow the video game manufacturers to continue producing their product, while allowing the politicians to look like they are "tough on violence."

I point this out, only because it strikes me as particularly ironic and hypocritical that a state which uses the celebrity of its

actor governor to market itself, would then turn right around and introduce, pass and sign a bill that should effectively disallow the video game based on the character he portrayed, to be sold to its primary audience — as he prepares to replay that character.

The worldwide video game industry, with revenues of \$24.5 billion last year, overtook movie box-office receipts, and sales are expected to soar to \$55 billion by 2008, according to PriceWaterhouseCoopers. With this huge and growing market, trying to put the genie back in the bottle of content control is nothing but a vain exercise.

Like alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sex and gambling, the more we try to keep "adult content gaming" away from the kids the more they are going to want it.

Frankly, this is yet another attempt by an overly zealous government to take the role of parenting away from the parents, and punish the retailers, all in a bald faced move to shore up flagging poll numbers.

I find it appalling that the Republican governor, a man whose own history of pot smoking and sexual festivities are well known and publicized, would sign such an intrusion into the personal arenas of individual freedoms and parental rights. For a man whose own personal fortune, much of which came from the fascination of young men with violence, to now advocate such a "non-violent" stance, is shocking.

It is equally distasteful to me that the Democrat from the 12th district would write such a piece of legislation. The Democrats, I thought, were about freedom to choose, personal liberties and are supposed to be the "loony left." This bill is patriarchal and has no place on our books.

Parents should be raising their children with the morals and values that they choose to instill. Parents should be active in the ongoing monitoring of their children's activities, whether that be what they read, watch or play. The billboards tells us that being a parent is a lifetime job, and the hardest work you'll ever love.

If that is true, then government should get out of the way. As a society, the more we abdicate to the legislators to decide, the less rights we have. We cannot look to them for moral guidance.

The governor should do what he does best: be in front of a camera, or on a loft development work site. He should not be bothering about what video games a child can buy or not. The fact is that any kid who wants a "banned" video game will get one. And with the new rules in place, come January, the video game builders are likely to see an upsurge in their sales.

Governing should be about how we provide for ourselves as a society. It should be about public assets such as roads, schools, and emergency services. Its mandate should be to provide for us that which we cannot provide for ourselves. Its boundaries should end where we can take care of ourselves.

(David Pissarra can be reached at (310) 664-9969 or dpissarra@pissarra.com.)

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COMMENTARY



Ruff housin' made easy thanks to pug addiction

ANY DAY IN LA

BY HEIDI MANTEUFFEL



Don't tell my next-door neighbor, but I have a severe addiction to pugs.

As most junkies do, I try to keep my bad habit under wraps, admitting only to smaller foils like gum chewing and excessive soda drinking. But as soon as I leave the house, my main downfall waits for me on every corner.

I think it's planned. A woman a complex away has two pugs, one blonde and one mixed with freckles. A second woman has a pug and another dog that is not pug.

That is how an addict classifies other dogs — not a pug.

Nearly every walk I take on Montana, Wilshire, you name it, I see at least one to two puglets — three if I'm lucky. And do I pet them? Yes, yes I do.

Not all the time, for I don't want the frequent run-ins to realize the seriousness of my addiction. For the most part, except for the occasional "yippee" of delight that slips, it appears as if I have everything under control.

If you look around my apartment full of pug birthday cards (one where he's feverishly playing the drums), pug stuffed animals, and two pug calendars, however, you might notice that something is not right.

Normal people don't have "Count Pugula," a little pug in a vampire cape with tongue sticking out as their October picture.

But I'm pretty skilled at pretending I have things under wrap. That is until my

next-door neighbor moved in four months ago with her small pug named Lola.

Lola, a baby pug that scampers up to her gate almost every time I pass with those googly eyes and a fuzzy throw toy. Lola, who runs into my apartment the minute her owner lets go of the leash.

I fear for my life that Lola's mom will find traces of my addiction in the house, like the Pugsy Malone card sitting in the living room. I fear, quite frankly, that I won't want to give her back.

I try to act bored, nonchalant when I see Lola. I solicit a perfunctory pet, and then walk away disinterested. It's buyable, but inside I'm melting feverishly from her quirky, funny glare. I'm desperately hoping her owner won't catch on to my compulsion, fearing I might steal her puggie one starry night.

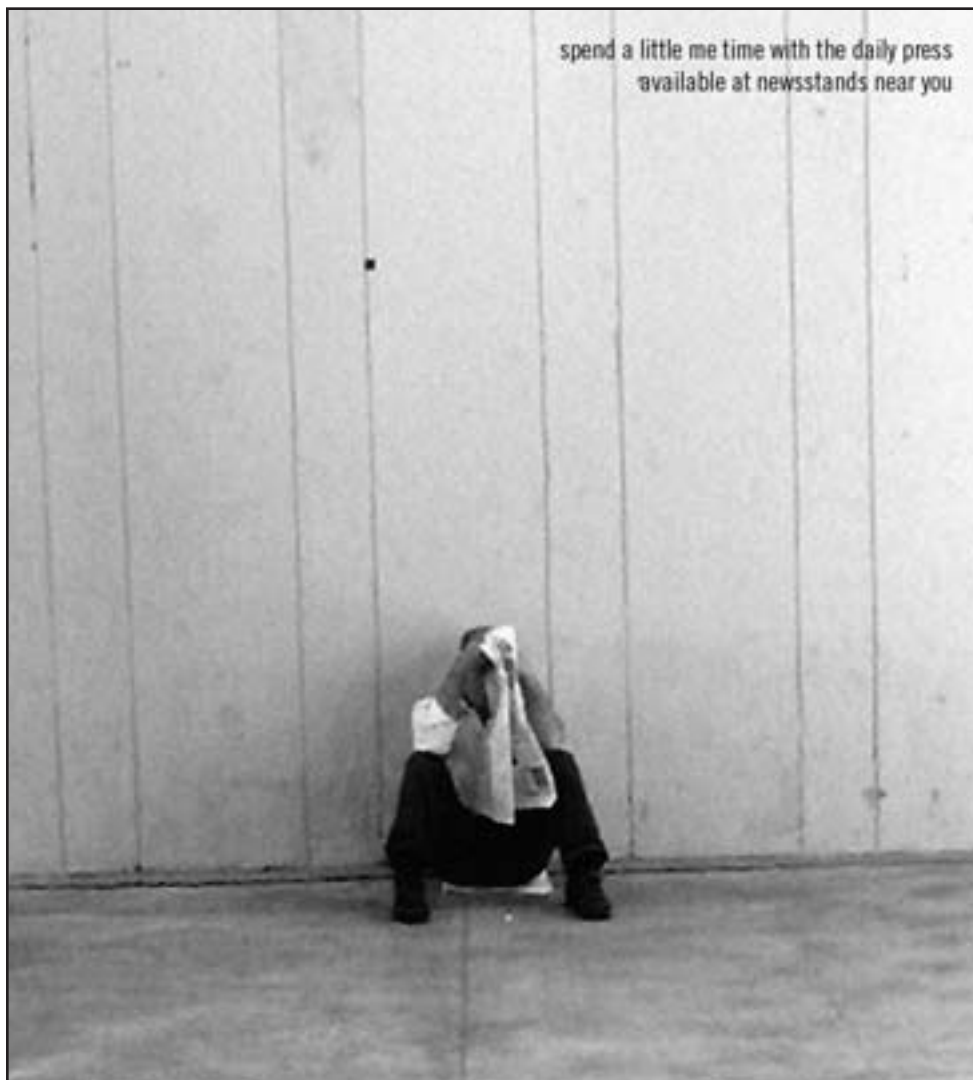
So when Lola approaches me at her gate with fluffy stuff in hand, I throw the toy and walk away quickly. Neither of us should have to deal with those painful good-byes. All I want to do is baby-sit on the weekends. Is that so wrong?

I'm not sure if that would be a safe move on the owner's part either. Most of the friend requests I get on Myspace.com are from animals smaller than two feet tall. I never deny them, though. How can you say no to the scrunchy face bunch?

I don't know when it started, or what the root of the problem is, but with pugs I'm at the point of no return. All I know is that Santa Monica is a terrible place to live if you're a recovering pug addict. Thankfully, I'm not. I'm very happy and complacent with my incapacitating addiction.

Just don't tell my next-door neighbor, please?

(Heidi can be reached at anydayin-la@gmail.com.)



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LOCAL

Help wanted: Officials discuss leadership post

HELP WANTED, from page 1

groups that comprise Santa Monica, as she was able to do, they said.

“We have a benchmark of what high-quality leadership is,” said John Deasy, superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. “More specifically, I am interested in a city manager who can work with all of the variety of constituency groups that actively exist in Santa Monica, all of whom wanting to have their voices heard and concerns understood.”

COMMUNITY GROUPS WEIGH IN

In addition to the need to be able to speak to various groups, Deasy said he would hope the new city manager has the understanding that the public schools are an integral part of the health of the economy and the wealth of local real estate.

“I want to maintain the great working relationship between the city and public schools,” Deasy said.

Denny Zane, who founded Santa Monicans for Renters’ Rights, a powerful group with a long-standing history working for social causes in the city, said a key characteristic of the new city manager should be an understanding of Santa Monica’s past history and appreciation that residents want little done to the complexion of their neighborhoods.

“The objective of the new city manager should be preservation of what we have, not a modification of it,” Zane said. “We need someone who is committed to our high quality of life and environmental stewardship.”

Calls to Santa Monica development community, including business organizations and their legal representatives, were not returned by press time.

Through McCarthy’s efforts, Santa Monica has maintained its triple A bond rating while supporting big-ticket capital improvements that have been in the works since the 1990s. Some of those projects are expected to open this year, including the \$55 million Main Library, the \$13 million Virginia Avenue Park expansion and the new \$722,000 skatepark at 14th Street and Olympic Boulevard. She garnered support for the recently increased hotel room tax in order to strengthen Santa Monica’s present and future financial base.

McCarthy will be leaving her successor to complete a two-year overhaul to the city’s planning and traffic plan, which will set policy for development and transportation in Santa Monica for the next 20 years. The \$120 million Civic Center complex, a \$90 million downtown parking plan and the redevelopment of Santa Monica Place mall are further undertakings she has helped manage, which will be carried on by other leaders.

Carole Currey, chair of Santa Monica College’s board of trustees, said she would like to see an administrator who is

responsible and responsive to the electorate. She said McCarthy has helped facilitate recent issues between SMC and City Hall, and she hopes the next city manager may also be amenable to the college.

Oscar de la Torre — a local school board member and director of the Pico Youth & Family Center, a city-supported organization which helps struggling youth and their households — said the new city manager needs to be skilled in integrating the community voice in every decision or proposal that is made.

Santa Monica’s top administrator will also have to be effective at holding every city group accountable, including the Santa Monica Police Department, he said.

“(The new city manager) should be a fearless champion of non-violence, equity and social justice,” de la Torre said.

THE SEARCH SO FAR

The City Council agreed in September to authorize the service of a headhunter, Lisa Mills, to help fill the city manager vacancy. Mills has a background in recruiting for public service positions and came highly recommended from city staff.

City Councilman Bob Holbrook said the decision to go with Mills, which the City Council decided in closed session, also was a reasonable one from an economic standpoint. Mills is charging City Hall a flat fee of \$17,000. Other fees, such as advertising costs, also are expected to be passed on to City Hall, but Mills intends to keep those close to \$4,000, Holbrook said.

Mills said she has received interest from more than 30 individuals for the position. She has prepared a brochure, which includes the salary and benefits, and mailed it to 150 people in California, primarily to managers of cities with populations of more than 65,000.

Mills also has sent an e-mail to the city managers with the brochure attached as a PDF file, to be certain they are aware the position is available.

The brochure advertises a salary range of \$225,000 to \$250,000 per year, with perks that range from free health care to 12 holidays and one vacation day accrued per month.

Mills also has advertised the position on the Web site and a monthly publication issued by the International City Managers Association, a group that is well-regarded in the area of public service, she said.

Holbrook said Assistant City Manager Gordon Anderson has expressed interest in the position.

The City Council hopes to interview the candidates in coming weeks and have a new city manager signed on by December, when Holbrook is expected to become mayor.

The City Council anticipates a possible one-month lag during which it may appoint an interim city manager.

INTERESTED IN YOUR DAILY FORECAST?

CHECK OUT THE HOROSCOPES ON PAGE 2!

LOCAL



Teachers: 'Paycheck protection' deceptive

PROPOSITIONS, from page 1

required to receive annual, written consent from government employee union members and nonmembers to charge and use any dues or fees for political purposes. On the flip side, a 'no' vote means public employee unions could charge and use dues or fees for political purposes without consent.

Darrell Ng, a spokesman from Navigators — the firm handling the governor's outreach for the special election — said that Gov. Schwarzenegger supports Proposition 75 because he believes public employees should have the right to choose when money is taken out of their paychecks for political campaigns.

Ng said the governor also supports, in concept, similar restrictions on corporations that would require them to also receive pre-approval before using shareholder money for political campaigns. However, Ng acknowledged such a component hasn't been incorporated into the current initiative.

Harry Keiley, president of the Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teacher's Association (SMMCTA), said supporters like to call Prop. 75 "paycheck protection," but in actuality it's a deceptive measure to silence the voice of firefighters, nurses, teachers and police officers.

He also said it's not necessary because current laws protect the rights of public workers. In California, a public employee cannot be forced to join a union and can opt out of making their dues contribute to political activities, Keiley said.

Keiley said another aspect of Proposition 75 voters need to take into account is that American corporations outspend unions by

a margin of 24 to 1 on political action. Therefore, if Proposition 75 passes, it would obligate state unions to take further steps to garner the financial support it receives to promote labor interests.

Santa Monica Fire Capt. Ken Polhill, based at Station No. 5, represents the local Firefighter's Union No. 1109. He is especially concerned with Prop. 75 because he believes there are misconceptions being pushed by some conservative media outlets which have taken a supportive stance on the measure, but are misconstruing how unions within California operate.

Namely, Polhill said union membership isn't obligatory. However, public employees covered under union contracts are billed for the negotiations unions make on their behalf, regardless of membership status.

Polhill said Prop. 75 would require union offices to contact individual members and confirm whether or not they would like to apply their dues toward political action. Such an administrative task would tie up union offices in paperwork and hamper their ability to raise funds and act, Polhill said.

Currently, union members may elect to not have their dues go toward political action, but they must make the request, not the other way around, Polhill said.

Keiley said the SMMCTA and others are fighting the special election measures through joint efforts at their office at 1508 18th Street.

TAKING SIDES ON INITIATIVES

Three of the eight ballot measures — Propositions 74, 76 and 77 — were initiated by Gov. Schwarzenegger and his sup-

See PROPOSITIONS, page 8

Big Green: Bus company building fuel-efficient fleet

BIG BLUE, from page 1

\$2.8 million, but rising fuel prices have bumped it to \$3.5 million. The Big Blue Bus will use capital reserves to make up the difference.

The transportation agency paid \$2.22 per gallon for diesel fuel and 87 cents per gallon for liquefied natural gas this August, Dawson said. Both increased significantly since last August. Diesel fuel rose 50 percent and LNG jumped up 18 percent.

If high fuel costs persist, the transportation agency will consider reducing bus services and postponing improvement projects, he said. As a last resort, the Big Blue Bus will increase fares, but officials aren't planning on it.

"In this time of rising gas prices, when public transportation is even more important, we will do everything possible to maintain and improve service for the community," said Stephanie Negriff, director of transit services.

The Big Blue Bus is expected to add more fuel-efficient buses to its fleet next year.

The new buses — an experimental hydrogen bus and four hybrids — are expected to cost about \$1.7 million, Dawson said.

The transportation agency is paying a portion of the price of the hydrogen bus, which costs about \$345,000. A grant from

the Air Quality Management District will cover the remainder.

The hybrid buses are 20-seaters that will travel short distances, connecting people to local places of interest, like neighborhoods to business centers or schools.

The fleet of around 210 buses is slowly being converted completely to LNG, with half of the buses running on the cleaner, less-toxic fuel.

"LNG is cleaner and better for the environment," Dawson said. "It's also quieter, so the buses aren't as loud."

The transportation agency hasn't bought new diesel buses in five years, but it doesn't retire the old ones until they flunk evaluations, he said.

In addition, the transportation agency is also planning for a series of technological improvements.

Global Positioning Systems will be installed in buses to count the number of riders getting on and off at individual stops. This will help Big Blue better plan how many buses to send out on busy lines, Dawson said, adding that ridership numbers have increased by 1 percent since last August.

The GPS systems will also allow dispatch operators to direct bus drivers to faster routes, while customer service staff will be able to give people who call in more accurate information on street conditions.

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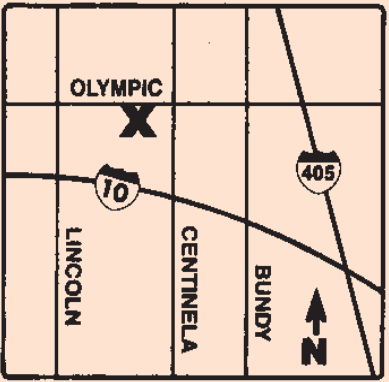
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LOCAL

Westside Democrats fighting propositions

PROPOSITIONS, from page 7

porters. Two of them will affect public education, according to Marc Saltzberg, president of the West L.A. Democratic Club and a chief organizer of the local campaign to fight some of the initiatives.

Proposition 74, which Schwarzenegger has dubbed the "Put Kids First Act," is a measure which its supporters say is intended to improve teacher accountability in the classroom by putting them on probation for five years before they can obtain a permanent position.

Ng said there are only 12 states that have a probationary period of one or two years. The other 38 states have probationary periods of three years or more.

California's teachers also are paid an average of \$58,287 per year, compared to the national average of \$46,726, according to Ng. At the same time, California's cost of living is only 6 percent higher than the national average, yet the state's teachers earn 23 percent more than the national average. Proposition 74 would improve California's education system by being able to better manage some teachers, Ng said.

Saltzberg disagrees with Schwarzenegger's conclusions about what effects Prop. 74 will have on public education. First, he said the ballot measure, if approved, would detract the best educators from working in California, since it's not realistic to expect top talent to endure a five-year probationary period when they could go elsewhere. Second, he said people who are working during a probationary period tend to not speak up. Having a five-year probationary period is too long and may serve as means for administrators to have too much control over their teachers.

Proposition 76, which Schwarzenegger has dubbed the "Live Within Our Means Act," is intended to improve the manner in which the state manages its financial affairs by preparing a "rainy day fund" for future economic downturns. It also would allow Schwarzenegger to make mid-year cuts to some groups that receive funding.

Since 2000, according to Ng, state revenues have increased by \$12.5 billion, while expenditures have increased by \$23.5 billion. Proposition 76 is intended

to stabilize revenue over a period of years. It would also eliminate one of the major ways to reduce education funding, Ng said.

Contrary to some reports, Ng said the measure would give the governor the ability to correct a 1.5-percent discrepancy between revenue and expenditures within the state budget if the legislature fails to correct the problem within 45 days. However, the legislature may also revoke the governor's budget if it is able to agree on one besides that which the governor proposes.

According to Keiley, Proposition 76, if approved, would take money away from schools that was guaranteed in previous legislation.

"It's an unprecedented power grab by the governor," Keiley said. "This kind of unchecked power is dangerous."

"Our public schools need more funding, not less."

WESTSIDE DEMOCRATS ORGANIZE AGAINST MEASURES

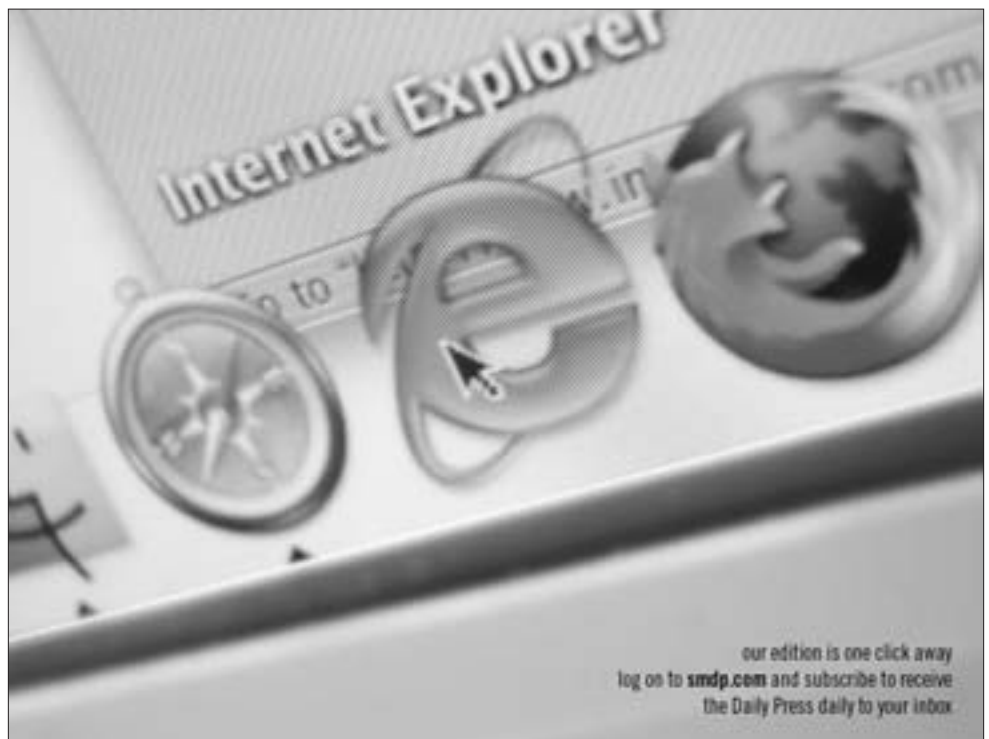
Westside Democrats have opened a Santa Monica headquarters from which they intend to fight the governor's special election and other ballot measures.

Keiley said the SMMCTA has permitted a group called the Democratic Westside Coalition (DWC) to open up an office at its headquarters at 1508 18th St. from where volunteers are hosting ballot-initiative information events, conducting phone-banking, offering voter registration and canvassing area precincts, Keiley said.

Saltzberg said the DWC has had booths set up at local events, such as the Farmer's Market, where they have been offering information to the public about the special election. In addition, they have hosted Westside rallies and will continue to do so.

From 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. during weekends, volunteers have also been calling Westside residents to see if they have any questions about the special election. Saltzberg said phone bank operators try to clarify any issues about the ballot measures they may have.

The DWC has also been hosting workshops where members of the public may come and ask questions about the group's positions on the ballot measures.



STATE



Battery makers trying to keep juice flowing

BY GREG SANDOVAL

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — For most of us, a dead battery in our cell phone or digital camera is an annoyance. For surgical tools salesman Jason Paul, it can cost him big money.

Paul counts on his smartphone — a cell phone that can perform computing chores — to check his stocks and send e-mail. He logs more than 3,000 minutes a month in calls to his clients. He also uses his phone to show doctors video clips of how his products perform in the operating room.

"When I'm using it like this, which is most days, I maybe get two or three hours out of the batteries," says Paul, who works for Fremont, Calif.-based Rita Medical Systems Inc. "If it goes out and some doctor is trying to get a hold of me and can't, then they get angry. You're only one bad case away from losing a customer."

Paul, 29, is among a growing number of consumers becoming ever more dependent on their energy-hungry gadgets. But smartphones, laptops, digital music players and portable videogame consoles tend to gobble up more power with every additional feature.

Battery makers are racing to keep up, finding new ways to pack more power into smaller and smaller spaces.

The technical challenges are daunting. Most people have little understanding of the complex and volatile chemistry that occurs in their batteries each time they videotape the kids at soccer practice or listen to their iPod, says Brian Barnett, managing director of research and development firm Tiax LLC.

"Can you imagine a chemical plant that has to operate in a closed condition and send energy forward and backward 500 times?" Barnett said. "And you can't send anybody in to do maintenance. People who operate chemical plants laugh, but that's what we do with a rechargeable cell."

Much of the research is centered on improving the lithium ion battery, which has revolutionized the electronics industry since it was widely adopted in the mid-1990s. Found in most mobile electronics gear, lithium ion batteries are energy dense, smaller and lighter than nickel-based batteries, but are often more expensive.

They work by mixing lithium cobaltate at the positive terminal and graphite at the negative. The two materials produce a lot of energy when they react with each other.

Some of the scientists involved believe lithium ion has maxed out as a power source. And some companies are already coming up with new materials to replace cobaltate and graphite.

Sony Corp. and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., which makes Panasonic brand products, each announced earlier this year that they had developed longer-lasting lithium ion batteries by tweaking the chemical equation.

Both companies say their batteries can boost the life of a battery by up to 30 percent, claims that some analysts question.

Sony says it replaced graphite with a mixture of tin, cobalt, and carbon for its "hybrid" battery, which is being rolled out exclusively in the company's new DVD Handycam camcorders.

Mike Kahn, a Sony senior product

manager, said the new materials stuff more ions into a cell, extending the life of the battery by 20 percent in normal conditions. The hybrid outperforms standard batteries in cold weather by 30 percent, and recharges faster, he says.

Kahn declined to say when Sony's innovation would be brought to cell phones, laptops or other products.

Panasonic says it's working together with Intel Corp. to develop an "all-day battery," increasing the capacity by swapping cobaltate for another material the company won't disclose.

The new material allows the batteries to be discharged down to a lower voltage, enabling users to get more runtime from their devices. Designed to power laptops, cell phones and other mobile electronics, Panasonic's first generation battery is scheduled to hit store shelves in April, says Kurt Kelty, director of the Panasonic Energy Solutions Lab.

Intel's contribution is developing a mobile platform technology enabling laptops to take advantage of Panasonic's battery.

"It's not a trivial matter to get handheld devices to operate down to 2.5 volts," said Kelty, adding that most laptops are designed to shut down when a battery gets down to 3 volts. "Intel is going to modify their platform so their chips can run off the lower voltage."

Independent studies of the Sony and Panasonic performance claims are hard to come by, and some scientists suspect any improvement has more to do with better power management in the design of mobile products.

Donald Sadoway, a materials scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said the only way to really test the value of Sony's new battery is to see it perform in a wide range of products.

"For all we know they could have developed more efficient displays, improved hard drives in their cameras," he said.

Finding ways of squeezing more performance from available power is a huge area of exploration for electronics makers.

For example, they tinker with a device's clockwork — the term used to describe how fast a machine performs a specific function — to speed up energy-eating chores. They look for ways to prevent extreme temperatures from siphoning off energy.

Sometimes an executive in charge of power management employs a less scientific approach: begging designers to make room for a bigger battery in the device, said Dave Heacock, vice president of the Texas Instruments' portable power division.

"Everyone is involved in the same race to lower power consumption of their products while improving them," Heacock said.

Meantime, people can always buy heavy portable batteries for backup power, extra rechargeable batteries and extra chargers. And lug them around.

Paul, the salesman, is among consumers who wonder what good mobile devices if they need to be recharged so often.

"When you're trying to streamline our lives, the idea of keeping a backup battery, car charger and a standard charger is not the ideal solution."

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DEAR DORIE

Child-proof positive: Safe and sound

Dear Dorie,

My friend, who also has children, recently paid an expert to come and do a safety check on her home. There were some obvious notes like electrical outlet covers, but also some more obscure recommendations. Can you give me a general checklist for safety?

— Nervous Nelly

Dear Nelly,

Most home accidents involve children under the age of 5, so I applaud your focus on home safety. Let me refer you to a great starting place at www.kidshealth.org. This is a user-friendly Web site that has a parenting section on safety. Check this out once your little ones have settled in for the night.

For right now, here are my household safety basics:

1. Remove any peeling or cracked paint.
2. Put the zaniest stickers you can find on that sliding glass door.
3. Put guards on any second-floor window.
4. Bracket the bookshelves so they can't fall over.
5. Put a safety gate at the top of all stairways.
6. Cover the radiators or heating elements.
7. Get rid of electrical space heaters.
8. Cover unused electrical outlets.
9. Place plastic bags out of reach.
10. Place all medications, coins, scissors and any other small/sharp objects out of reach.

Be persistent in your safety "hunches." You're not a nervous nelly, you're a good mom protecting your little one. Good luck.

— Dorie

(Dorie Meek is director of the Infant & Family Support Program. Submit your questions to "Dear Dorie" at meek@smmusd.org, or call (310) 452-6132).

GUEST COMMENTARY BY DENNIS B. WOO, M.D.

Is your child too busy?

Monday — soccer; Tuesday — piano lessons; Wednesday — Spanish tutor ...

Sound familiar? Between school and extracurricular activities, today's children often lead busier lives than high-powered corporate executives. But having too much on their plates can make children stressed and irritable. So, how can parents determine whether their children are overscheduled?

One way, according to Dr. Rachele Tyler, developmental-behavioral pediatrician at Mattel Children's Hospital at UCLA, is to honestly answer two fundamental questions:

■ How is my child managing a daily schedule of school and activities?

■ How much does my child want to participate in any specific activity?

Each child responds differently to a long day of structured activities. Some children thrive in a busy schedule while others feel overwhelmed.

MANAGING TIME

"Children should be encouraged to pursue an activity that interests them," Dr. Tyler suggests. Hobbies allow children to express themselves, and help them grow emotionally and intellectually. Children who participate in sports not only grow as athletes, but also gain valuable lessons in sportsmanship and teamwork.

However, while some children are able to complete homework and handle a heavy schedule of other activities, others may benefit from blocks of time designated to complete and better understand their school assignments. Parents should observe carefully how challenging homework is for their children and how they manage their time after school.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Well-intentioned parents often register their children for too many activities.

"Parents sometimes feel pressure to include their

children in a variety of activities, believing that it will give them a competitive edge against their peers," Dr. Tyler said. "But these parents may be pushing their children into activities just to keep up with other parents enrolling children in particular sports or classes."

Ask your children if they enjoy particular activities and listen carefully to their answers.

"Children may agree to an activity if they feel pressure to please parents who may want it more than they do," Dr. Tyler explains. "You need to honestly assess whether you are separating your own needs from your child's."

Watch for warning signs that your children are overscheduled. Overly busy children will often appear tired, anxious or depressed. They may fall behind in school, miss meals or lose sleep. A healthy family life also suffers when everyone is running in different directions.

HEALTHY BALANCE

Before registering your child for an activity, make sure he or she understands the time commitment involved with this undertaking. For example, soccer may involve practices two or three times a week, plus weekend games. Will your child — and you — have the time for this schedule? And will his or her homework suffer? School should remain the priority, so if grades start suffering, it may be time to drop the activity.

There is definite value in down time.

"Children need unstructured time, which is when they can express themselves creatively and truly discover themselves," Dr. Tyler said. "Children also need to enjoy leisure time with their families, including eating meals together, a basketball game or a simple walk."

I agree completely. Showing your children that you are interested in their well-being is exactly what they need and want the most.

(Dr. Dennis Woo is a pediatrician with the UCLA Medical Group in Santa Monica and chair of the pediatrics department at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center.)

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TODAY! TUES., OCT. 18
PEACEFUL PARENTING and **NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION** – How to Positively Connect with your Kids – 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. This FREE workshop is presented by “The Nest...a place for growing families” in conjunction with the YWCA’s national campaign “A Week Without Violence.” Space is limited, call 398-1938 to reserve your space. YWCA, 2019 14th St.

HALLOWEEN HAHA’S PUPPET SHOW - 3:30 & 4:30 p.m.
Stories and puppets for ages 3 – 7. Free, but tickets required, pick up starting at noon. Ocean Park Library, 2601 Main St., 392-3804.

NATIONAL JR. TENNIS LEAGUE YOUTH PROGRAM
Mon. and Wed., 4:00 – 5:30 p.m., thru Nov. 16. This low-cost program provides tennis instruction for ages 8 – 17. The cost is \$7 for the entire session and scholarships are available. The program is made possible with the support of the So. Cal. Tennis Ass. and the Amateur Athletic Ass. and is held in cooperation with the City of Santa Monica Rec. Dept. For more info contact Richard Goldenson at 358-3393 or visit www.santamonica.tennis.com. At Memorial Park.

SAT., OCT. 22
2ND ANNUAL ANIMALS A-Z – 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Learn about animals, join educational workshops and learn about field research. Enjoy face painting, puppets, music and craft projects. FREE! New Roads High School, 3131 Olympic Blvd., 392-5153, ext. 6 for more info.

SUN., OCT. 23
CREATIVE PLAYGROUND PERFORMANCE: Three Tales by Hans Christian Andersen, 11:00 a.m. Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, \$8, 455-3723 or www.theatricum.com

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

FILLMORE & WESTERN RAILWAY
PUMPKINLINERS - Weekends in October. Take a train ride to a pumpkin patch sprouting more than pumpkins. Check out the Haunted Hay Maze, arts and crafts, Jolly Jumps and an antique carousel, then pick out a pumpkin to take home. Departure times Sat. and Sun. are 10:00 & 11:00 a.m., 12:10, 1:10 & 2:20 p.m. Tickets \$15 adults, \$8 ages 4 -12, \$6 ages 3 and under. Pumpkin included with every ticket. **HEADLESS HORSEMAN FAMILY DINNER TRAIN** – Oct. 21,23, 28 & 30, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Train ride includes a barbeque feast and trip to the pumpkin patch. \$38 adults, \$16 youth reservations required. Visit www.fwry.com or call 800-773-8724 for more info or to make reservations. Trains depart from Central Park in downtown Fillmore.

MON., NOV. 7 & 21 and DEC. 5 & 12
9:30 – 11:30 a.m. & 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
SANTA PIER AQUARIUM – MICRO BIOLOGISTS PROGRAM

This two-hour educational program for children ages 3-5 includes stories, games, aquarium exploration and crafts with a changing ocean theme. Space is available on a first come, first served basis so enroll as soon as possible. Non-refundable, advance payment is required to reserve space. Heal the Bay members - \$20 per class, non-members - \$25. Please plan to leave your children for the class. For more info or to register by phone call 393-6149, ext. 102 or stop by the aquarium at 1600 Ocean Front Walk, directly under the pier.

TUESDAY

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

Movies for Moms! 11:00 a.m., Loews Cineplex Broadway Theatre, 1441 3rd St. Promenade – for Moms and babies newborn – 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. Visit www.enjoytheshow.com/reelmoms for details. Oct. 18 – Two for the Money starring Al Pacino, Matthew McConaughey, and Rene Russo. Drama, Rated “R.”

Storytelling

Main Library – held at Reed Park, corner of 7th and Wilshire.

Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m. For 2 year olds with adult.

Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Cuentos Para Pequenos – 10:00 a.m., six-week series in Spanish for 24 – 36 month olds. **Lap Time** – 11:00 a.m, six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Program. Next session Nov. 1 – Dec. 6.

Twilight Story Time -7pm – an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Family Story Time – 7:00 p.m., all ages.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.

Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30. Music, rhymes and stories for 2 to 3 year olds.

Next session Nov. 8 – Dec. 13. Registration required.

Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis

For ages infant to 3. 11:00 a.m. 116 North Robertson, Plaza A, LA. 310-358-2500, www.storyopolis.com

Barnes and Noble at the Grove

Storytime for ages 2 – 6. 10:00 a.m. 189 Grove Drive, LA, 323-525-0270

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – 12 to 36 months; Infant & Me Class – 10:45 – 11:45 a.m. and 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., 0 – 12 months; 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

YMCA – Attachment Parenting Classes - 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., 1332 Sixth St., 393-2721 (ask for Shelana Philip-Guide or Audrey Meyer). This new class for mothers/dads and babies up to 12 months is presented by Karol Darsa, PsyD, a licensed psychologist with extensive experience working with children and families. Fees: Members – 1 class - \$40, 5 class pass - \$180; Non-members - \$50, 5 class pass - \$200. **BREAKTHROUGH PARENTING CLASSES** – 7:00 – 9:30 p.m.

An advanced 10-week parent education course. Continuous enrollment. For info call Jayne A. Major, Ph.D., Breakthrough Parenting Services, Inc., 310-823-7846, jm@BPinAction.org.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

10:00 – 11:00 a.m and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Thursday nights 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info.

Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711. Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Itsy Bitsy Yoga – Baby IBY (6 weeks to pre-crawling) – 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. With Khefri Riley at Ocean Oasis, 1333 Ocean Ave. Register at www.khefri.net or call 323-549-5383.

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

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

WEDNESDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica Playgroups – 4:30 p.m., separate groups for children born in 2000 and 2001. Call or email Alison at 393-

4481/riversalison@hotmail.com for more info. All moms welcome!

Storytelling

The Talking Stick Coffee Lounge – 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., 450-6052

10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4 at this neighborhood coffee shop.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Toddler Story Time – 9:30 a.m., for two year olds with adult.

Preschool Story Time – 10:30 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds with adult.

Next session Nov. 2 – Dec. 7.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Lap Time - 10:15 & 11:15 a.m., ages 0-2. Next session Oct. 26 – Dec. 14.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. –392-3804.

Preschool Twilight Story Time – 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Parents/children ages 3-5.

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 2 pm – ages 2-5 – 310-475-4144

Border’s, Westwood – 11a.m. – 310-475-3444.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 10:45 – 11:45 a.m., 7 to 36 months; 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Rhythm Child Parent & Me Rhythms, Santa Monica Studios, 3025 Olympic Blvd., 9:30 – 10:15 a.m. Children explore rhythms through drum play. For toddlers. \$100 for 8 weeks. Call 204-5466 or visit www.rhythmchild.net for more info and session dates.

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

Enchanted Lunchtime Theatre at Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th St., 394-9779
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. For ages 3 – 5 with parents. This theatrical adventure includes story time, theatre games, crafts, play building and lunch. Reservations required 24 hours in advance, \$19.50 includes lunch for child and lunch.

Yoga & Exercise

Kids’ Yoga Circle, 1814 14th St., 260-2736 – Yoga and more for ages 4 – 7, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. 8 week session \$125/Drop-in \$18

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15 **Fitness for Moms** – Babies Welcome! Step Aerobics, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay \$90 for 10 classes.

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

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

Other

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

THURSDAY

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

Storytelling

Babystyle, 1324 Montana Avenue, 434-9590 10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4.

Main Library – held at Reed Park, corner of 7th and Wilshire.

Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m.; for 2 year olds with adult.

Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

La Hora Del Cuento – 7:00 p.m. Spanish stories, songs and rhymes for all ages.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Toddler Story Time – 10:15 a.m., for 2 year olds, next session Oct. 27 – Dec. 15.

Preschool Story Time – 11:15 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.

Lap Time – 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., for babies up to age 2. Next session Oct. 20 – Nov. 17.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m and 10:45 – 11:45 a.m., 12 to 36 months; Parent Support Group – 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., age 3 – 5 years; 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices. **BREAKTHROUGH PARENTING CLASSES** – 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

An advanced 10-week parent education course. Continuous enrollment. For info call Jayne A. Major, Ph.D., Breakthrough Parenting Services, Inc., 310-823-7846, jm@BPinAction.org.

Yoga & Exercise

Kids’ Yoga Circle, 1814 14th St., 260-2736 – Yoga and more for ages 8 – 11, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.; ages 12 – 15, 5:15 – 6:30 p.m. 8 week session \$125/Drop-in \$18

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

7:30 – 8:30 p.m; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info.

Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

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

FRIDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica

New Mother Group – 10:30 a.m. - for new moms with babies born 6/05 to present. Meet for conversation, support and playtime. All new Moms welcome!

11:00 a.m. - playgroup for children born 10/04 – 5/05. Call or e-mail Alison at 393-4481, riversalison@hotmail.com for more info.

Parent’s Night Out at Child’s Play, 2299 Westwood Blvd., 6:00 – 11:00 p.m.

Kids get a night of supervised fun with pizza, games and more while parents go out. Ages 3-10, \$9 per hour, \$7 siblings, 3 hour minimum. Reservations required, 470-4997. www.child-splayonline.net

La Leche League of LA/Mar Vista – meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Call 310-390-2529 for info.

Planetarium Show at SMC’s John Drescher Planetarium, 7:00 p.m. - Night Sky Show, 8:00 p.m. – featured program. \$5 adults, \$4 children. Pico and 17th St., 434-3000.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – 12 – 36 mos.; 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Indoor Cycling, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-

members pay \$90 for 10 classes.

Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45 p.m., \$15.

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

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

SATURDAY

Storytelling

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade – Kid’s Story Time – 10am, 310-260-9110

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 10:30am – ages 2-5, 310-475-4144.

Children’s Book World, 10580 1/2 Pico Blvd, LA - 10:30 a.m., 310-559-BOOK.

Village Books, 1049 SwarthmoreAve, Pacific Palisades – 10:30 a.m., 454-4063.

826LA, 685 Venice Blvd, 2nd Floor, Venice – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., ages 3-6, RSVP to info @825LA.com or 310-314-8418. (826LA is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting students with their creative and expository writing skills, and to helping teachers inspire their students to write).

Classes

YWCA – Toddler & Me every other Sat., 9:45 – 10:45 a.m., \$15 per class; Parent Enrichment once per month, 11:00 a.m. – noon, \$15 per class, \$25 per couple.

Yoga & Exercise

Santa Monica Yoga – Pre- & Post-Natal Yoga, Saturdays – 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

1640 Ocean Park Blvd, 396-4040, www.santamonica.yoga.com

Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711.

Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.(babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:00 a.m., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

Absolutely Halloween at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m, thru Oct. 30; \$12.50 adults, \$10.50 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com, 1211 4th St.

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

Magicipolis – 2 and 8 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$20 for evening, \$15 for matinee. Call 310-451-2241 for info.

Precious Prints – Ceramic Heirlooms for a Lifetime

Second Saturday every month at The Pump Station, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Contact Kristan Ritchie at 310-802-8013 or visit www.preciousprintsstudios.com for more info.

Lakeshore Learning Stores “Free Crafts for Kids” – Saturdays, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., 8888 Venice Blvd., 559-9630.

“A Faery Hunt” – 10:30 a.m., every Saturday at Franklin Canyon Park. An interactive children’s show, searching for fairies and other enchanted creatures in the magical canyon and finding them! \$10, call for reservations – 818-

324-6802. www.faeryhunt.com. Meet in the parking lot of the Sooky Goldman Nature Center, 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills.

SUNDAY

Main Street Farmer’s Market – 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., corner of Main St. and Ocean Park Blvd. Pony rides, live music, lots of vendors and great family socializing.

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

Magicipolis – 2 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$15. Call 310-451-2241 for info.

Absolutely Halloween at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m, thru Sept. 25; \$12.50 adults, \$10.50 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com, 1211 4th St.

Family Funday at the Will Geer Theatrical Botanicum – 11:00 a.m. Live music and theatre for all ages. \$8, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, 455-3723, www.theatricum.com.

Breastfeeding

Working Mother’s Support Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd. - Call 998-1981 for more info.

MONDAY

MOMS Club of Santa Monica Playgroups

Noon – 2:00 p.m., for children born 1/02 – 2/03; 9:30 a.m. – for children born 1/04 – 9/04; call or email Alison at 393-4481/riversalison@hotmail.com for more info. All moms



NATIONAL

Capitol Hill mulls possible sanctions against Japan

BY BETSY BLANEY

Associated Press Writer

GRAPEVINE, Texas — Capitol Hill discussions on possible sanctions against Japan, which has yet to lift its ban on American beef, could bring higher prices for luxury cars and high-end televisions made there, a national cattle industry leader said Monday.

Jim McAdams, president of the National Cattlemen's

Beef Association, told Texas cattle feeders at their annual convention that Japan's refusal to reopen its markets to U.S. beef could bring such sanctions or taxes.

No sanctions are in place now but congressmen are looking at the issue, which McAdams said would not include tariffs or taxes "on goods for those who can't afford them."

Late last month, Japan's Food Safety Commission said it needed more time to weigh U.S. safeguards. Last

fall, Japan agreed to lift the ban, which started shortly after a Canadian-born cow was confirmed infected with mad cow disease in December 2003.

After Japan said it needed more time, Sen. Saxby Chambliss, the Georgia Republican who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, said the stalling "will sorely tempt economic trade action against Japan."

"The objective is not to start a trade war," McAdams said after his comments to the Texas Cattle Feeders Association. "This is something none of us wants to do."

In the year it implemented the ban, Japan imported more than \$1.5 billion worth of U.S. beef and was the country's biggest customer.

A second U.S. case of mad cow disease was confirmed in June in a Texas-born cow. Japan, in contrast, has found 20 cases of mad cow disease. U.S. regulators proposed last month to partially lift the ban on Japanese beef.

After the Texas finding, Japanese officials said the second case would not directly affect deliberations on reopening Japan's market to U.S. beef. A final decision was instead dependent upon resolving remaining safety issues.

If the ban is lifted, the two countries have agreed to allow the importation of U.S. beef from animals younger than 21 months.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, in a video hookup with the convention, said he's been warning Japanese officials for months that "there was a point here where folks on the Hill would lose patience," and might consider sanctions.

But, he said, "I'm not sure that is the most expeditious way to go about this," Johanns said. "In fact, I would argue that it is not."

McAdams and Johanns spoke to about 500 members of the association, which numbers about 5,800 cattle feeders in Mexico, Australia, Canada and Argentina and the United States. Texas is the nation's largest cattle producing state.

Charlie Sellers, chairman of the Amarillo-based association, said his group would rather Congress not have to resort to economic sanctions on luxury products.

"But we've got to start somewhere," he said.

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Chief says agency can't see forest through trees

BY BECKY BOHRER

Associated Press Writer

BILLINGS, Mont. — The chief of the U.S. Forest Service said he worries “less-er issues,” such as logging and road-building on public lands, are drawing too much attention and too many agency resources away from more serious threats to America’s forests and grasslands.

“I think we need to change the national dialogue to focus on the things that really count the most,” Dale Bosworth said in

written remarks he was scheduled to deliver Monday night at a scientific conference at Yellowstone National Park.

He said he sees the four greatest threats as fire, loss of open spaces, invasive weeds and unmanaged recreation.

“Yet our national focus is on other issues, like whether too much timber is coming off national forest land or whether we’re building too many roads,” he said. “My biggest fear is that these other, lesser issues are absorbing all our energy, while more important things are falling by the

way.”

Bosworth said the Forest Service faces longer-term challenges, as well. These include addressing a backlog of maintenance and restoration projects; dealing with the demands of a growing population on resources; better understanding climate changes; and encouraging a sound “consumption ethic.”

“Taken together, the threats and the challenges we face today are as great as any we’ve ever seen,” he said. “But we can’t address them by acting alone; we

need to work together across the landscape.”

Chris Mehl, a spokesman for The Wilderness Society, agreed the Forest Service’s focus should be on the four areas identified by Bosworth. By comparison, he said, logging’s importance has decreased dramatically, and the agency already has so many roads that it cannot keep track of all them.

The use of the lands is changing, he said, with recreation becoming a bigger issue.

Like it or not, Ironman race keeps town of Kona buzzing

BY KARIN STANTON

Associated Press Writer

KAILUA-KONA, Hawaii — Those who love it plan holidays in Kona. Those who don’t plan trips out of town.

Since the early 1980s, this coastal village has been the epicenter of the Ironman world triathlon championship race that attracts some 1,800 triathletes, families, support crews and race staff from around the world.

Too often for some, all the activity overwhelms the town.

This year, the event closed off Kailua Pier and some surrounding streets to traffic from Thursday afternoon through Sunday morning. Stores shut down while thousands of spectators lined the race course for at least a mile. Companies offering boat, snorkeling, scuba diving, and parasailing tours had to suspend operations without compensation from the organizers.

“We lose money every year because of it,” said Donnia Bondallian, who operates a tennis academy in Kona. “As a business owner, we don’t profit from it at all. You can’t work. You have to close your business.”

But she says there is still a lot to be enjoyed. And with so much else in town paralyzed, she says residents might as well volunteer to help the triathlon go smoothly. Since the first Kona race in 1981, Bondallian has joined an army of unpaid volunteers — 5,000 this year — who help with race preparations, aid stations, medical and massage tents.

“If you don’t like it, you either leave town or just stay home and clean house,” she said. “You can hate it and still enjoy the day. You get to meet all these amazing people.”

One business that did open race day was Beaches Swimwear Hawaii, across the street from the finish line.

Owner Terri Ribordy said as the event has grown, it seems to have left the local

population adrift.

“It’s different every year,” she said. “The only negative I feel is that it seems Ironman is getting a little more separated from the locals and the vendors. It used to be really pleasant, but now it almost feels like it’s happening around you, rather than with you.”

Ribordy said she has stayed open each of the eight years she has owned the shop, but might close for race day next year.

“More and more businesses are closing, but partly because you almost feel more shut off,” she said. “And the athletes don’t shop.”

But it’s not all bad news for Kona.

“We get so much positive exposure from all the visitors and the television coverage,” Ribordy said.

About 300 journalists from around the world dropped in for this year’s race. NBC plans to broadcast an Ironman special on Nov. 12.

A Hungarian crew trailed compatriot Petr Kropko as he raced to a 23rd place finish. The crew also planned to shoot features on Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, kite surfing on Maui and big-wave surfing on Oahu’s North Shore.

While the coverage reaches millions around the world, it’s the race and the place that keeps people coming back.

Jeanne O’Brien, a nurse from Seattle, has helped staff the medical tent for five years. She uses her vacation time from Harborview Hospital to come to Hawaii.

“I like it so much I bought a condo here last year. The first time I stepped off the airplane here, I wished I could just pack everything up and move here right away,” she said.

O’Brien was joined by fellow nurse KristiLee Bolar, who was experiencing Ironman for the first time.

“You get really caught up with the enthusiasm and the excitement,” O’Brien said. “It’s just a great reason to take a vacation.”

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Boise bids adieu to its beloved police horses

BY ANNE WALLACE ALLEN

Associated Press Writer

BOISE, Idaho — When Boise police officials went looking for ways to save money, they found an easy target — the department's small mounted unit. Last month the department sold off its horses and equipment, to the dismay of some locals.

Similar decisions in other cities have silenced police hoofbeats around the country. But fans of mounted police argue that cities are giving up valuable tools to control crowds and win over the community. And some departments have revived their horse units.

"That was the biggest public relations tool they had," said Rene Ducroux, who sold the Boise police a horse two years ago and bought it back at the auction. "Families will go up to a police officer on a horse and actually have that interaction. On a horse, it breaks that wall down."

Mounted police units come and go, said Patrick Muscat, who led the Detroit mounted police unit for 21 years and wrote a book about their history. He estimates there are still 300 mounted police units, some of them very small, in the United States.

"I think it's on a decline these last few years," Muscat said.

Dian Cecil, who raises and sells police horses from her farm in Lexington, Ky., agrees.

"Sadly, it happens often," Cecil said. "They may have bicycles, motorcycles, dog teams, SWAT teams, scuba, and when the city goes through hard times, then a lot of the specialty units will be disbanded."

The Boise mounted patrol unit was formed in 1987

with three horses and three riders, and stayed that size for the next 18 years. They were the only full-time mounted patrol unit in the state, police spokeswoman Lynn Hightower said.

When Ducroux went to the police auction, he was dismayed to see no signs the mounted unit would ever return.

"They sold even the bolts to the floor that held the barn, the vacuum cleaner, rags, halters, tack. Everything that wasn't nailed down they sold. It was like they wanted to be done with it," Ducroux said.

Detroit disbanded its 112-year-old mounted police unit this month. A businessman there, Bob Raisch, is raising private donations to try to bring them back.

"They're the best crowd control device ever invented," said Raisch. "More than that, it's just the feeling of security and well-being and sophistication that a mounted policeman conveys to both citizens and visitors."

Sprawling Boise rarely has crowd-control problems, Hightower said.

"Horses are part of our western heritage that we love to celebrate; from that point of view it really is kind of a sad day," Hightower said. "But it's also a day where the department needs to be accountable to taxpayers."

Ducroux and Todd Johnson, who owns Flynn's Saddle Shop in Boise, both said they would have contributed their own money to keep the unit together if they had known earlier it was being dissolved.

"I was a little disappointed they didn't see if there were people in the public who wanted to carry the program forward," Johnson said.

Hightower thinks it unlikely the Boise unit will return

any time soon. But the people who love police horses tell many stories of units that came and went with the rise and fall of new leadership. Toledo, Ohio's seven-horse mounted police unit was established in 1989, disbanded because of financial problems in 1991, and re-established in 1995.

"It is somewhat of an expensive unit to maintain," said Capt. Diana Ruiz-Krause, a spokeswoman for the Toledo police. "But when we have the big events downtown, there's really nothing that works like a police officer on top of a horse."

The Atlanta Police Department's mounted patrol unit was re-established this year after having been disbanded in 2002 because of budgetary problems.

Horses cost a lot to keep with food, veterinarian bills, boarding, and horseshoes adding up to a lot more than the upkeep on a bicycle or a Segway. But with gas prices so high, Sgt. Jay Postlewaite, the head of the Lexington, Ky., mounted police unit, thinks horses are a bargain.

"With the price of gasoline, over a 10-year period you're still going to pay less to maintain a horse than a car," he said. "Where the car tends to depreciate with time and wear, the horses actually get a little better with time and experience."

And horses aren't just good for community relations; officers sitting high on a horse can see things other officers can't, and they can go places — parks, for example — that other vehicles can't, said Cecil. They even do routine police work.

"Some of the (mounted) officers will actually sit out with a radar gun to check traffic," said Cecil. "People are just amazed when they're pulled over by a horse."

Pakistan's quake relief flights resume after the rain clears

BY ZARAR KHAN

Associated Press Writer

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan — A halt in heavy rains Monday allowed helicopter relief flights to resume across Pakistan's quake zone, but fresh landslides hampered efforts to move supplies by road. Officials estimated the death toll could now be more than 54,000.

Pakistan said it was willing to accept an offer from rival India to send helicopters for earthquake relief operations, but without Indian pilots. The nations have fought three wars since 1947, but India has sent quake relief aid to its neighbor.

"Pakistan was ... willing to accept helicopters from India if these were offered without pilots," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "Given the obvious sensitivities, we could not accept involvement of Indian military on our side for relief operations."

India has sent three relief shipments to Pakistan, including 100 tons of high-protein bars, 10 tons each of medicine and plastic sheeting, as well as tents and blankets, the Indian Foreign Ministry said. The latest shipment was sent in five railroad cars to the border town of Amritsar.

Eight international medical teams took off from Muzaffarabad to outlying villages, as fears grew for millions of survivors without health care and shelter in the isolated mountains of Kashmir, particularly the thousands of injured who need medical treatment to ward off infections.

U.S. diplomat Geoffrey Krassy estimated that about one-fifth of populated areas had yet to be reached.

"There are serious patients with infected wounds and gangrene," said Sebastian Nowak of the International Committee of the Red Cross, after a team of its doctors landed in Chekar, about 40 miles east of Muzaffarabad,

the capital of Pakistan's part of the divided Himalayan region.

He said about 200 people in the town had not received any medical help since the magnitude-7.6 quake struck Oct. 8, and landing choppers there was dangerous because desperate villagers rushed into the landing area.

In the isolated Pakistani village of Kot Gallah, survivors like Malang Khan could only sit in the rubble of his home, and wait.

"No army soldier has come here to help us," said Khan, 45, whose teenage daughter was killed. "First we lost people in quake, and now we will die because of cold and hunger."

Landslides have blocked the road to the village, and Abdul Ghafoor, 50, said it urgently needed tents, food and medicine. About 750 of its residents are homeless, and many are sick, some with broken bones.

He said the earthquake killed about 40 people in the village, including his wife and four children, but bad weather could kill them all.

In the town of Bagh, the bodies of six soldiers killed when their Mi-17 transport helicopter crashed in bad weather Saturday were placed into simple wooden coffins for transport back to Islamabad.

On the Indian side of Kashmir, conditions were grim Monday. Torrential rain and snow turned roads into rivers of mud, stranding trucks loaded with relief supplies for the worst-affected Uri and Tangdhar areas, officials said.

Officials on Sunday sharply raised estimates of the dead. Abdul Khaliq Wasi, a spokesman for the local government of Pakistani Kashmir, said at least 40,000 people died there, and the toll could go much higher. Not all the bodies had been counted and the figure represented the "closest estimate," he said.

That pushed estimates of the total death toll to more than 54,000, including more than 13,000 in Pakistan's

North West Frontier Province and about 1,350 in the part of divided Kashmir that India controls.

Confirmation of a final toll will be difficult because many bodies are buried beneath rubble. U.N. officials said that, so far, they were adhering to the Pakistani government's confirmed casualty toll, which was 39,422.

The United Nations has estimated that 2 million are homeless.

Helicopter missions in Pakistan resumed Monday after being grounded most of Sunday because of heavy rain and thunderstorms, which piled on the distress for the homeless across the quake zone.

Nowak of the Red Cross said one of its relief flights to Chekar had to turn back over the weekend because villagers were fighting each other for supplies.

"They had sticks and they were fighting for relief goods. There was no perimeter security and we felt threatened," he said.

Dozens of trucks have rolled into Muzaffarabad over the past day or so, but road access further afield remains difficult. The Pakistani military said it could take several weeks to clear landslides blocking routes to several valleys.

Maj. Gen. Farooq Ahmed Khan, the country's relief commissioner, said 29,000 tents and 118,000 blankets had been distributed in the quake zone. Khan had said earlier that 100,000 tents were needed.

Indian authorities were struggling to deliver supplies in its side of Kashmir, where there were at least 140,000 homeless and people were huddling in rain-sodden tents as temperatures plummeted.

B.B. Vyas, divisional commissioner of Jammu-Kashmir, said air dropping of supplies to outlying areas was halted because of the bad weather. The road to Tangdhar, buried under 10 inches of snow, was closed, cutting off the town.



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INTERNATIONAL



Landmark referendum vote raises eyebrows

BY THOMAS WAGNER

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraq's electoral commission said Monday it intended to audit "unusually high" numbers in results coming from most provinces in the country's landmark referendum on the draft constitution.

The U.S. military said that its warplanes and helicopters bombed two western villages Sunday, killing an estimated 70 militants near a site where five American soldiers died in a roadside blast. Residents said at least 39 of the dead were civilians. The electoral commission's statement came as Sunni Arab lawmaker Meshaan al-Jubouri claimed fraud had occurred in Saturday's election repeating earlier comments made by other Sunni officials over the weekend.

"Statements coming from most provinces indicating such high numbers ... require us to recheck, compare and audit them, as they are unusually high according to the international standards," the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq said in a statement.

The commission said it would take random samples from some ballot boxes to check the results.

An official with knowledge of the election process said that in some areas the proportion of "yes" or "no" votes seemed unusual. The official cautioned that it was too early to say whether the unusual figures were actually incorrect or what caused the high or low numbers.

The commission and the official did not specify what regions had the unusual numbers. Voting was believed to have been highly polarized between Sunni Arabs, who largely oppose the charter, and Shiites and Kurds, who supported it. The main electoral battlegrounds were provinces with mixed populations, two of which went strongly "yes."

The province of Diyala, for example, is believed to have a slight Sunni Arab majority. But reports from electoral officials there on Sunday reported a 70 percent "yes" vote and a 20 percent "no."

Saying whether that is unusual is also complicated by the fact that Iraq has not had a census for more than 15 years, so judgments of the exact sectarian balance are difficult. Further delaying the count and the posting of final results, a sandstorm swept over Baghdad on Monday, grounding air travel. Vote tallies still have to be flown in from the provinces, and workers at the central counting center were still examining results only from the capital and its outskirts.

Figures reported by elections officials in the provinces to The Associated Press indicated the constitution appeared to have passed, with the Sunni Arab attempt to veto it falling short.

The acceptance of the constitution would be a major step in setting up a democratic government that could lead to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice warned Sunday that violence will continue, even if the constitution is adopted. She said support for the insurgency would eventually wane as the country moves toward democracy.

On Saturday, a roadside bomb killed five U.S. soldiers in a vehicle in the Al-Bu Ubaid village on the eastern outskirts of the insurgent stronghold of Ramadi. On Sunday, a group of about two dozen Iraqis gathered around the wreckage; they were hit by U.S. airstrikes, the military and wit-

nesses said.

The military said the crowd was setting another roadside bomb when F-15 warplanes hit them, killing about 20 people it described as "terrorists."

Several residents and one local leader said they were civilians gathering to gawk at and take pieces of the wreckage, as often occurs after an American vehicle is hit. U.S. troops had closed off the area Saturday, so Sunday morning was the first chance for people to go near it.

Tribal leader Chiad Saad said the airstrike killed 25 civilians. Several others said the same, although they refused to give their names for fear for their safety.

The other deaths occurred in the nearby village of Al-Bu Faraj.

The military said gunmen opened fire on a Cobra attack helicopter that spotted their position. The Cobra returned fire, killing about 10. The men ran into a nearby house, where gunmen were seen unloading weapons before an F/A-18 warplane bombed the building, killing 40 insurgents, the military said.

Witnesses said at least 14 of the dead were civilians. After a man was wounded in an airstrike, he was brought into a nearby building that was struck by warplanes, said the witnesses, who refused to give their names out of fear for their safety.

An Iraqi journalist reporting for AP said he later saw the 14 bodies and the damaged building.

Associated Press Television News video showed the dead included two children and one woman. Witnesses said seven other children were among the dead. APTN also showed two children among the wounded. Few voted in Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, on Saturday.

A U.S. Marine was also killed by a bomb Saturday in Saqlawiyah, 40 miles west of Baghdad, the military said. Since the war began in 2003, at least 1,976 U.S. service members have died, according to an AP count.

On Monday, a drive-by shooting killed two policemen in Kirkuk, 180 miles north of Baghdad, and a suicide bomber attacked a funeral for a sheik in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, killing two civilians and wounding one, police said.

The violence raised to 535 the number of people who have died in insurgent attacks across Iraq in the last three weeks.

Many Sunnis fear the new decentralized government will deprive them of their fair share of the country's vast oil wealth by creating virtually independent mini-states of Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south, while leaving Sunnis isolated in central and western Iraq.

Opponents failed to secure the necessary two-thirds "no" vote in any three of Iraq's 18 provinces, according to counts that local officials provided to the AP. In the crucial central provinces with mixed ethnic and religious populations, enough Shiites and Kurds voted to stymie the Sunni bid to reject the constitution.

The Sunni "no" campaign appeared to have made the two-thirds threshold in Anbar province, the vast western Sunni heartland where Ramadi is the capital, and in Salahuddin, where Sunnis hold a large majority and as many as 90 percent of voters cast ballots. In two other provinces where Sunni Arabs have only slim majorities — Ninevah and Diyala — the "yes" vote apparently won out.

Sunni leaders responded angrily, some saying they suspected fraud and accusing American officials and the Shiite parties

that dominate the government. While a strong Sunni turnout suggested a desire among many to participate in Iraq's new political system, there were fears that anger at being ruled under a constitution they oppose could push some into supporting the Sunni-led insurgency.

If the constitution indeed passed, the first full-term parliament since Saddam Hussein's fall in 2003 will install a new government by Dec. 31 following Dec. 15 elections. If the charter failed, the parliament will be temporary, tasked with drawing up a new draft constitution.

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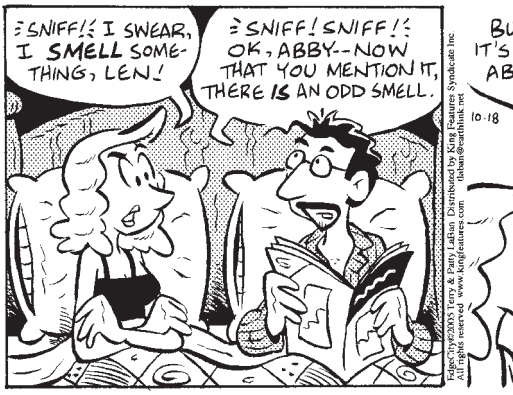


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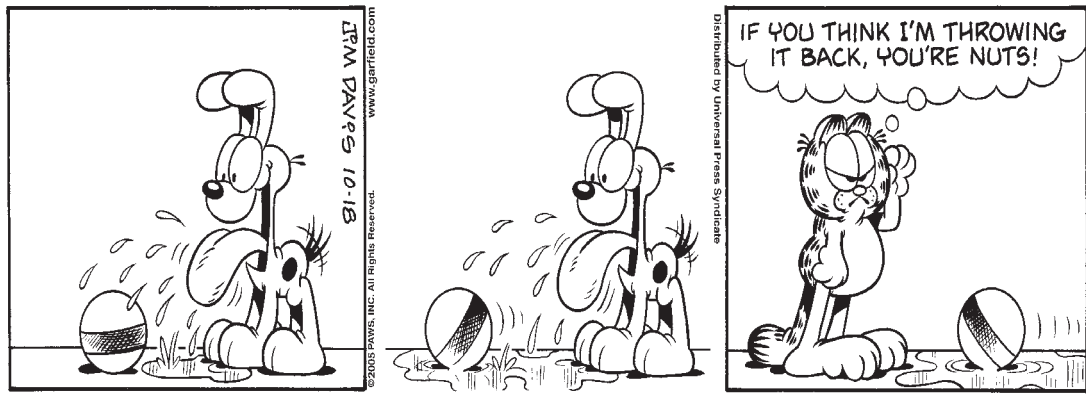
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

‘Simple’ solution: Networks will always have Paris

By The Associated Press

CULVER CITY, Calif. — Paris Hilton says she isn't giving up "The Simple Life" just yet.

"We're shooting Nov. 1," said the 24-year-old hotel heiress, who had a front-row seat at the Louis Verdad fashion show Sunday. "All the networks are fighting over it."

Fox said last week it had canceled the reality show starring Hilton and Nicole Richie. The network said its midseason schedule didn't have a time slot for a fourth season, prompting speculation the feuding ex-friends no longer proved compatible.

Hilton said she and Richie will continue working on "The Simple Life" because other networks want it.

Last week, 20th Century Fox Television, the studio that produces the show, said it hopes "The Simple Life" will move to another network — with Hilton and Richie.

"We believe this series ... is still a dynamic and valuable franchise," the studio said. "We hope to be able to announce a new network partner in the coming days."

Bunim-Murray Productions, which produces the show with 20th Century Fox, also released a hopeful statement: "We're very excited about the creative plans for the next group of episodes, and are confident this situation will be remedied quickly."

Hilton's friend Kimberly Stewart, Rod Stewart's 26-year-old daughter, dismissed as "rumor" reports that she had been touted as a replacement for Richie.

Stewart was coy about doing a future project with Hilton, telling reporters Sunday, "You never know."

In April, Hilton issued a terse statement saying it was "no big secret that Nicole and I are no longer friends. Nicole knows what she did, and that's all I'm ever going

to say about it."

Hilton has given no reason for the split.

NEW YORK — City officials have ordered Ann Curry to shorten the penthouse she had built atop her Upper West Side home or face a public hearing.

The "Today" show news anchor and "Dateline NBC" co-host has been clashing with neighbors over the structure and other renovations since she bought the four-story brownstone in November 2003, neighbor Lynne Lummel told the New York Post for Monday's editions.

The city's Landmarks Preservation Commission told Curry last week that she has to shorten the 18-foot penthouse or appeal in a public hearing for an exception to city rules, agency spokeswoman Diane Jackier said.

A message left with a "Today" show spokeswoman wasn't immediately returned early Monday.

ROME — Roberto Benigni's delivered four minutes of slapstick comedy antics during a live appearance on state television to promote his latest comic film, set against the backdrop of the Iraq war.

Sitting down Saturday night next to the TV anchorman, Benigni took off a red sweater and draped it on the embarrassed-looking man's shoulders. He then ranted in favor of poetry and against war, which he said "makes no sense and is vulgar."

He even delivered some false news for shock value, joking that Premier Silvio Berlusconi had resigned.

Benigni is promoting his new film, "La Tigre e la Neve" (The Tiger and The Snow), a comedy set in today's war-torn Iraq that stars him and his real-life wife, Nicoletta Braschi.

He and Braschi also starred in his film "Life is

Beautiful," about a father's attempt to shield his young son from evil in a Nazi death camp. That film won the Oscar for best foreign film in 1998.

But it was the TV comedy antics — now legendary in Italy — that had papers commenting Sunday.

"With his ability as an extraordinary improviser, he took over four minutes of the TV news, giving himself a gift of a long, maxi-commercial" for the film, the Turin daily La Stampa said.

Benigni also told viewers during the live broadcast that he would reimburse the cost of their tickets if they did not like his new movie.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Diane Sawyer has joined boxer Muhammad Ali, jockey Pat Day and KFC founder Col. Harlan Sanders as a fixture in downtown Louisville.

Sawyer, the host of ABC's "Good Morning America," is the latest person featured in the "home-town heroes" mural series installed by the Greater Louisville Pride Foundation. The mural was installed Saturday.

The mural of the Glasgow, Ky., native, is 55 feet wide and 65 feet high. It faces Third Street but can be seen by cars traveling on Interstate 65.

Chad Carlton, a spokesman for Metro Mayor Jerry Abramson, said he thinks the murals bring a welcome spotlight to many of those who got their starts or made their names in Louisville.

"We get a lot of feedback," Carlton said. "We're glad to see Diane Sawyer join the ranks of Louisville greats."

Sawyer's mural cost about \$35,000 to create and erect. It was sponsored by WHAS-TV and ABC, which produces "Good Morning America," said Mike Sheehy, president of the foundation.

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