

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

22, 14, 5, 9, 29

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 1, 0, 9

Evening picks: 8, 9, 7

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 9, Winning Spirit

2nd Place: 12, Lucky Charms

3rd Place: 7, Eureka

Race Time: 1:44.89



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

TRAILER TRASHED — A trailer full of toilet bowls, which accidentally came unhooked and overturned on Interstate 88 near Colesville, N.Y. (June). A trailer full of compressed paper and sex toys (including whips, plastic breasts and blow-up dolls), which spilled onto the northbound M6 highway near Castle Bromwich, England (June). And two tractor-trailers full of honeybees (80 million on Interstate 95 near Titusville, Fla., in April, and another measured at 500 beehives of "thousands of bees each" on Interstate 435 near Claycomo, Mo., in June). (Most of the bees were recovered by using smoke to put them temporarily to sleep.)



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Half the people in America are faking it."

— Robert Mitchum



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DA's office drops case against Feinstein

Prosecutors claim they can't show councilman embezzled

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

There will be no criminal case against Santa Monica City Councilman Mike Feinstein for his handling of \$10,000 in Green Party funds because prosecutors can't show he spent it for personal use, the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office has announced.

DA spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons said there isn't enough evidence to charge Feinstein with embezzlement. The money was apparently used for Green Party business and it took more than two years to spark a complaint, she said this week. But Green Party officials say the dispute isn't over, and insist that Feinstein still owes them money.

"To prove embezzlement, we would have had to prove that he misappropriated the funds for his own use," Gibbons said. "The evidence seems to indicate that the funds, although spent without authorization, were spent to benefit the

"I'm thankful that this unnecessary diversion of public funds and community attention is over."

— MIKE FEINSTEIN

City Councilman

Green Party, not Feinstein personally."

Feinstein became the center of a dispute in March after a former Green Party treasurer complained to police that Feinstein took \$10,000 intended for the Green Party of LA County and deposited it into a bank account he controlled. Prosecutors obtained bank records and the chance of a criminal case had loomed over Feinstein, a former mayor of Santa Monica, who characterized the dispute himself as a political turf battle within the Green Party.

Gibbons said the report points to a cashier's check drawn against Feinstein's account for

See FEINSTEIN, page 6

Green Party to Feinstein: Give us our money back

Cash-strapped party formally asks councilman for \$10K

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

Despite the absence of criminal action against Santa Monica City Councilman Mike Feinstein, Green Party members say they still want Feinstein to open up his books and give back the \$10,000 donation he took nearly three years ago.

Earlier this month, the Los Angeles County Council of the Green Party sent a letter to Feinstein asking that he return the money, which was originally intended for the council by donor Bill Pietz. Feinstein deposited the check into an account he controlled, which subsequently led to a police investigation.

See REQUEST, page 7



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press
An Olympic High School student attempts to maneuver through the school's parking lot during a course intended to simulate drunk driving on Thursday. Students donned specially-outfitted goggles that blurred their vision and tested their reflexes.

High school students get a sobering dose of reality

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

More than a dozen Olympic High School students drove drunk on Thursday, killing numerous people and destroying everything in their paths.

Fortunately, it wasn't reality, but a simulation exercise conducted by the Santa Monica Police Department to make students aware of the potential tragic consequences of driving drunk.

Students from Olympic's criminal justice class donned "DUI goggles" that impaired their vision to the equivalent of having a .10 blood-alcohol limit. Seeing double and experiencing inhibited reflexes, they then attempted to drive a Big Blue Bus electric vehicle through the

school parking lot. The traffic cones set up by SMPD officers represented bodies, fixed objects and vehicles, all of which were plowed down dozens of times by students.

After the driving course, the students underwent mock field sobriety tests by SMPD traffic enforcement officers.

Students had the choice to be drunk either during the day or at night, based on which goggles they wore. Participants quickly realized that driving drunk is not as easy as they might have thought.

That's exactly the point the SMPD wanted to make. The impaired-driving skills course offers real-life expe-

See TEST, page 7

Man agrees to plead guilty to child porn charges

By Daily Press staff

A Santa Monica man has agreed to plead guilty to possession of child pornography after more than 100 illegal images were found on his work computer.

The case against Marvin Ger-

hard Starr, 40, originated when his employer discovered pictures and video images of child pornography on Starr's computer. A subsequent investigation revealed 121 pictures and 15 videos containing child pornography, and two fictional short stories detailing explicit sex-

ual acts involving minors.

Starr was not arrested. He fashioned a plea agreement through his lawyer and is expected to be sentenced in the next few weeks, according to Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the US Attorney's Office. It remains to be seen

whether or not Starr, who did not immediately return calls seeking comment, will serve jail time.

A task force committed to preventing and fighting crimes against children has developed a

See CHARGES, page 6

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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

★★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★★-Positive ★★★-Average
 ★★-So-so ★-Difficult

You have a special birthday this year, when you can realize your hopes and desires. Expand your circle of friends, and network. What might be key is knowing what you want so that you can create just that. Others find you to be unusual, mysterious and very attractive. You are capable of pulling white rabbits out of black hats. Know just how creative and dynamic you are. If you are single, a relationship can be yours if you want it. You will meet a lot of people, and someone who is capable of appreciating you comes along. If attached, this is a banner year for the two of you, especially if you have similar goals. You will make many new friends. You will also accomplish much more of what you want. AQUARIUS serves as an anchor.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
 ★★★★★ What you thought was a possibility could happen. Mind your p's and q's carefully, because somehow your mind drifts from topic to topic later on, especially with the Halloween giggles that appear left and right during the day. Tonight: Launch into the nearest Halloween party.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
 ★★★★★ Your spirit emerges when you least expect it. You like fun like Halloween, and you get into the mood whether you are a child or adult. Enjoy the fun and games that surround the day. If you can, split from work early. Tonight: Play into the scenario.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
 ★★★★★ Take a firm stand in the morning, when others seem to be going gaga and a little silly. The Halloween atmosphere goes through your day, permitting many happenings. Your work mentality does get challenged to the max. Tonight: A must party.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
 ★★★★★ You might decide today that you would like to stay at home. Someone comes to you with special feelings. How you decide to handle this and what goes on might be a different scenario. Think; know that you don't need to answer right away. Tonight: Greet your favorite witches and devils!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
 ★★★★★ You might want to take off early and get into the Halloween spirit, whether that means dressing up a Halloween urchin or two, or being a Halloween urchin yourself. Go off the beaten track, even in your thinking. Check out gossip. Tonight: Go way out of your way for a loved one.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22- Dec. 21)
 ★★★★★ You find the atmosphere to be most fun. Not everything runs as you think or want it to. Get into the moment and let down your hair. Keep a secret just that. You easily could let the cat out of the bag. Tonight: Play trick or treat, if you want.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
 ★★★★★ Deal with someone directly. News comes directly from partners who might have a slightly different way of handling a personal matter. You might want to verify what you are hearing. Opt for some last-minute changes. Tonight: Play trick or treat with your favorite person.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 ★★★★★ Keep aiming for more rather than less. You will find that you inspire others to a new and higher level. Think carefully about what your options are before making a decision. Tap into a creative source. Tonight: Your treat.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
 ★★★★★ Some of you, if possible, might opt to call in and make the best of the present mini-holiday, as you enjoy all the witches and goblins who head your way. You might be startled what heads down your path! Who wouldn't be? Tonight: The action is at your pad.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 ★★★★★ Deal with others directly. Your caring comes out with someone who needs a lot of feedback. It's not only your words that count, but also how you say them. The Moon drops into your sign, favoring your activities. Tonight: As you like it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
 ★★★★★ The workload drops on you. Don't worry so much about everything, and don't take offense. Understand that you are trusted. On the other hand, you want to have a good time as well. Clear out of the office as early as possible. Tonight: Put your feet up.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
 ★★★★★ Slow down, even if someone close might be encouraging you to hurry up. You find the answers by detaching. Not everything needs to be perfect, nor is it likely to be. Look at your dissatisfaction. Tonight: If you can, vanish like a ghost!

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Ghouls, goblins and heroes to overrun Santa Monica

By Daily Press staff

Downtown Santa Monica — which includes the Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica Place and Pacific Park on the Pier — will provide youngsters with a safe haven and traffic-free trick-or-treating environment from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. today.

Festivities will include a petting zoo and pony rides on the Promenade at Broadway from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., store-to-store trick-or-treating inside Santa Monica Place (4 p.m.—7 p.m.) and coupons for free rides at Pacific Park on Santa Monica Pier all weekend. Some shops will even supply kids with goody bags to help stash away all their collected treats.

Many store employees and owners will be decked out in costumes as well, adding to the jovial atmosphere.

For information, call (310) 393-8355 or (310) 394-1049. There's plenty of free parking at Santa Monica Place (for those in costume) and two-hour free parking inside city structures.

Meanwhile, hundreds of costumed people are expected to attend the Santa Monica Police Activities League today for the PALloween Carnival, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Barker Hangar, 3021 Airport Ave. Activities will include games and a costume contest. For information, call (310) 458-8988.

SMC hosts international Media Literacy Forum

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica College will be a host site for the interactive International Media Literacy Forum that will be broadcast live from five cities on two continents from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7. The free event will be held in Room 145 of the SMC Science Complex, 1900 Pico Blvd.

The forum will feature panel discussions on four topics: "New Media & Digital Culture," "Testing the Limits of Democracy," "Media Education Theory & Practice" and "Media Education Around the World."

The panel discussions by media literacy experts will be broadcast live from New York, London, Seattle, Toronto and Madison, Wis. Interactive exchange will be set up between those five sites, while participants at SMC will have the opportunity for viewing and participating in a discussion facilitated by representatives of the Center for Media Literacy, based in Santa Monica.

For information, contact SMC broadcast professor Frank Dawson at (310) 434-4585 or log on to <http://www.nationaltelemediacouncil.org>.

Fairview Library building future brick by brick

By Daily Press staff

The Fairview Branch Library's engraved brick fundraiser is moving ahead toward its goal of \$50,000. The money raised will purchase new furniture, a P.A. system for the community room, cassette holders and magazine racks, a covering for the outdoor patio and ceiling light covers. The campaign will continue through June, 2004, or until the pavers are sold out. Bricks will be installed next summer. A sample 8" x 8" paver is currently on display at the Fairview Branch checkout counter.

Up until Nov. 10, donors can purchase a replica of their brick and give it as a gift for the winter holidays. If you would like to order a brick or make a donation, call (310) 392-1306, or stop by the library at 2101 Ocean Park Blvd. For an order form, visit their Web site at www.smpl.org/construction/fairview for an order form.

SMC's Corsair garners 26 newspaper awards

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica College's Corsair newspaper won 26 awards, including one for general excellence, for its online edition and several first-place awards in the Journalism Association of Community Colleges' Southern California competition.

The awards reflect the achievements of the staff under both spring semester edi-

surf report

A mixture of fading SW swell and W to NW wind swell will hang around Friday. Many spots see 2-3' surf, but conditions are chopped up.

OUTLOOK: New S swell slowly builds through the day and more into Saturday. Sunday backs off again.

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

Today the water is:

66°

Sunrise: 7:15 a.m.
Sunset: 6:12 p.m.

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	3:09	0.7	4:01	-0.6	9:22	6.5	10:14	5.0
SUNDAY	2:43	1.1	3:49	-0.9	8:56	6.7	10:08	4.6
MONDAY	3:17	1.6	4:42	-0.9	9:33	6.8	11:10	4.1
TUESDAY	3:54	2.2	5:42	-0.7	10:15	6.5	N/A	N/A
WEDNESDAY	4:37	2.7	6:53	-0.4	12:28	3.7	(11:04)	6.1
THURSDAY	5:38	3.2	8:14	-0.1	2:13	3.6	12:08	5.6
FRIDAY	7:36	3.4	9:34	0.0	4:01	3.8	1:35	5.1

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tor David Alex Leslie and current editor Nehemiah Slaughter. The faculty advisor is Barbara Baird. The online general excellence award reflected the work of the staff in the spring semester under online editor Jesus "Z" Aguirre.

In the on-the-spot competition (with the current Corsair staff being eligible), first-place awards went to Leopold Geans for sports story; Margaret Molloy for news photo; Nehemiah Slaughter for page design; and Slaughter, Aguirre, Mark Sandstrom and Joshua Hill for team design. Second-, third- and fourth-place awards and honorable mentions went to Hill, Christine del Castillo, Matthew Wilken, Marie Claude Hamel, Deb Holt, Danilo Bukvic and Katie Von Tellrop.

In the mail-in category (spring semester staff), Raul Vasquez won a first-place award for news photo and honorable mention for photo story/essay. Other awards went to Leslie, Hill, del Castillo, Bukvic, Molloy, Ryan Norton, Daniel Harju, Danielle Golfieri, Bruno Marti, Morgan Genser and Maura Lanahan.



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LETTERS

Parking regulations an irregular problem

Editor:

The current parking regulations on the 1800 block of Ninth Street don't work. Whether the factors you consider are within the municipal code or outside of it, the current regulations do not work.

Residents in the 1800 block of Ninth Street — the majority living in preferential parking zone MM — have seen a marked decrease in daytime parking availability near their homes. It is only on the extreme fringes of the zone — places that have permit-only restrictions on both sides of the street — where the situation is better now than it was before zone MM was created.

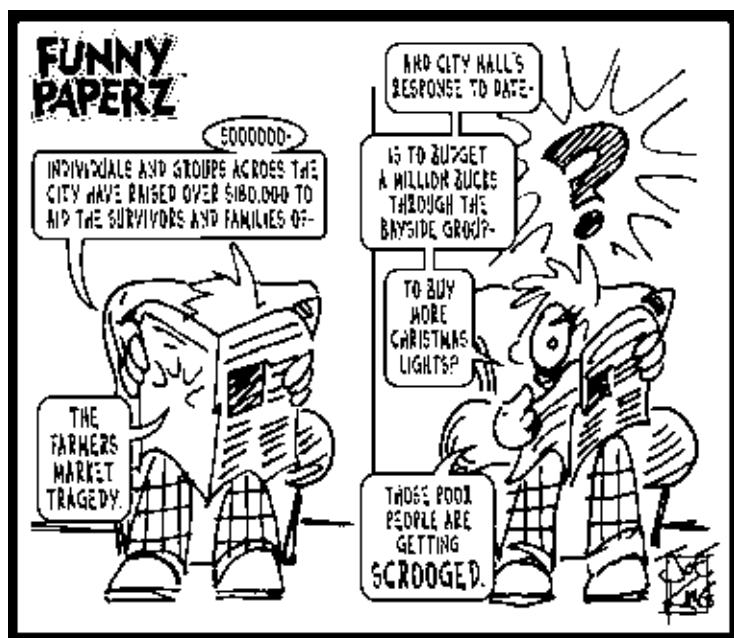
Why inconvenience the largest number of residents? That's what the current regulations do. It would be far more sensible to have nonresidents park on the fringes of the zone, leaving the bulk of the parking convenient to a higher percentage of residents.

The current regulations make things harder for more residents than they were before any regulations were in place. That's not opinion, but a fact, and I will show the numbers to anyone interested. The city staff thought enough of my data to use it in place of the data we paid JR Parking Consultants to gather, throwing out JR's data entirely. My data was used exclusively in the information item of Aug. 29. I know what I'm talking about, and the city staff appears to agree.

I urge you to consider this matter. City action has made things worse for the residents of the 1800 block of Ninth Street. Leaving things as they are is not an acceptable option, no matter what the other considerations might be.

I have analyzed the data in a manner more extensive than what staff presented in the information item of Aug. 29. Much can be learned by studying it in detail, and I will be happy to share what I've learned.

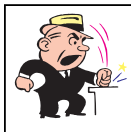
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City pats itself for rolling out red carpet to homeless



**MY
WRITE**
By Bill Bauer

Once again, City Hall has rubber-stamped a plan for the homeless that is riddled with problems for the Santa Monica community.

The homeless issue was the topic-de-jour at Tuesday night's public hearing and the City Council review of this year's annual report on its homeless services.

The review is prepared annually for the City Council by City Hall's Community and Cultural Service Department, which oversees the city's vast array of homeless services. As expected, the report whitewashes the negatives and pats the city and service providers on the back for a job well done.

It says, "770 homeless-related complaints were recorded by the Santa Monica Police Department's Homeless Liaison Program unit, and 100 complaints went to the City Manager and Homeless Services Department last year."

Omitted were thousands of homeless-related complaints received at the Santa Monica Police Department switchboard.

It analyzed how \$1,830,722 in direct

city funding of social services, along with another \$5,547,087 in non-city funding — a total of almost \$7.4 million, went to 22 programs provided by 10 agencies for 2,773 homeless persons who requested help during the fiscal year. But the report neglected to say how many people were on the streets this past year and no longer qualify for services or refuse them.

While the annual review is rife with success stories, it doesn't address the true cost of the city's "everybody's welcome" policy. With a third of all police calls and about 18 percent of paramedic calls related to the homeless, the actual cost is well into the tens of millions of dollars annually.

It glosses over the loss of business because shoppers and visitors won't come here anymore.

How about the cost of cleaning up after an estimated 1,400 vagrants and transients, many of whom use our streets and sidewalks as lavatories and dumps each day? Not there, either. "Transient" crime statistics? Heaven forbid.

The annual review gave high marks to two recent ordinances restricting sleeping in doorways downtown and requiring permits for feeding programs in public parks.

The former ordinance has seen some enforcement and many doorway squatters have resettled in other parts of the city. The much-ballyhooded feeding ordinance

hasn't been enforced.

Silliest of all was the claim that now only six groups hand out food regularly in the parks. How about the dozens or so that still feed irregularly?

Despite all this, City Council members say all is well. Their comments in the Oct. 28 edition of the Santa Monica Daily Press, as well as on the dais, indicate smug satisfaction with their general course of action.

Most comments mirrored statements uttered by 15-year City Councilman Ken Genser, on whose watch this problem has mushroomed out of control. They blame complaints on a few anti-social individuals and the unregulated public food handouts in city parks by outside organizations.

They moan that the city has been "severely limited by the courts" in restricting public feedings. Other communities don't seem to have a problem restricting them in public spaces, but then they don't have a 20-year history of them like we do.

Some council members blame the police. Kevin McKeown, Bob Holbrook and Genser say even more police resources and enforcement are needed, but come budget time, don't expect a clarion call from them for additional funding for it. Mayor Richard Bloom and Councilwoman Pam O'Connor say that it's a regional problem in need of a regional

solution. However, Santa Monica has such a well-established and reputable "continuum of care" other municipalities don't get involved, they just send them here.

When I suggested to the city-funded Ocean Park Community Center's Executive Director John Maceri that he locate OPCC's proposed new shelter and drop-in center in the Washington/Fairfax or Adams area of Los Angeles, where land and buildings are much cheaper than in Santa Monica, his response was, "We serve Santa Monica's homeless."

City Hall has decreed that the vagrants and the transients of the world are ours. The red carpet will continue to be rolled out for them in spite of the high cost and negative effect on our quality of life.

The City Council's solution: More services, more obfuscation, more expense and, inevitably, more vagrants, and even more problems. This nonsensical policy has been going on for so long that it's beginning to fuel speculation about secret deals, payoffs and kickbacks. As one neighbor told me, "If it doesn't make sense, it must make dollars."

(Bill Bauer is a longtime Santa Monica resident and by choice, can't be reached by phone or e-mail).

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to sack@smdp.com. All letters must include the author's name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

Please send letters to:

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OPINION



The QLine

City Hall's efforts waived on freeloaders

This past week, Q-line asked:

"Do you feel City Hall's efforts have made a positive difference here? Why or why not?"

Here are your responses:

■ "City Hall — mainly the City Council — has not done one thing to make a positive difference in Santa Monica. I'm speaking mainly about the downtown area, because that's where the homeless hang out. They're still sleeping on Wilshire Boulevard. I counted five of them on Monday morning. They're still lounging along the Promenade. They're still in the park, still urinating in the alleys, and the SMDP still has this nut — Charles Springer — writing articles about homelessness and blaming everyone else. These people could clean up their acts. Santa Monica spends too much money. If Santa Monica thinks that the other cities (mainly West Hollywood, Culver City and Beverly Hills) are going to help them with the homeless problem, they have marbles for brains. Some of these City Council members have marbles for brains and they take them out when they don't have anything to do."

■ "I don't think the city has made any positive effort at all to make a positive difference here because it does too much to help the homeless. You can't even walk five feet down the Promenade without someone asking you for money. All those people sitting around on the Promenade who do not want to work and who are filthy and dirty should not be taken care of by the city because the efforts have not helped anyone."

■ "I don't feel City Hall has made a positive difference. As a matter of fact, they've had a negative influence, based on the fact that the word gets out among the homeless that Santa Monica is their heaven on earth. There isn't a thing that they can't get here for free, and they roam the streets with impunity. The police won't pick them up, the weather is terrific and nobody bothers them. They bother a lot of people, but no one bothers them. This is a situation that won't improve, and will only get worse, while City Hall spends money needlessly to control vagrancy."

The easiest thing to do would be to pick them up and give them a one-way bus ticket to wherever they came from. Most of these people are out-of-towners. All they do, anyway, is hop on the buses and, for \$1.50, come out to Santa Monica and park themselves. This must cease. City Hall, the city manager and City Council pay no attention to the people. This has been going on for decades. It's time for the city to clean up its act and get it together."

■ "City Hall's efforts in response to the growing vagrant population have done nothing but permit the situation to get worse. I think that the team that recently went to England to drum up

tourism for this city had a lot of nerve. Who in their right mind would want to come and walk around in the dangerous, dirty, slum-like Santa Monica area."

■ "There are people who live in Santa Monica who are homeless and professionals at it. They've been professionals at it for the last 10 or 15 years. If they really wanted to stop being homeless, they would have found a job a long time ago. These people always have their hand out for spare change, they get freebies from local organizations, and a lot of these people are probably also receiving social security or veteran benefits. This, I believe, is a crime. I walked down one block on the Promenade and there were eight (homeless) people sitting on the benches. On one block along Wilshire Boulevard there were three people sleeping. Some of the homeless even have cell phones now. If you can afford a cell phone, you can afford a room or something. Where do they get this money? The City Council needs to come down to earth and realize that many of the homeless do not want to be saved. The other cities are smart — they don't want any part of the mess that Santa Monica has created for itself. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

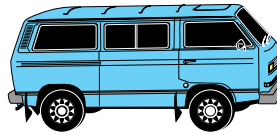
On another note, SMDP keeps printing articles by the homeless Charles Springer, who blames the homeless problem on everyone else. He needs to go get his act together and go get a job. I suspect that he is getting money from somewhere."

■ "I think City Hall has made a positive difference for a few individuals — 100, perhaps, have gotten off the streets and found jobs. At the same time, I believe they have made a negative impact because the residents have to suffer the impact of increased numbers of homeless here because it's a free ride and a nice place to live. Unfortunately, by allowing felons, drug addicts and crazy people to run free on the streets, the people who pay to live here suffer. When I add it up I see a lot of people's lives worse and a few people's lives better. So I say it's a complete failure."

■ "I feel the City Hall doesn't do enough for the homeless. If they could sell some of the very expensive land in Santa Monica and, with that money, buy land out in the desert and build homes and one mental hospital, and have them learn a trade, it would be better for everybody. Many other towns like Culver City and Beverly Hills have no homeless problem. I don't know what they do, but they have no one in their streets. We in Santa Monica need cleaner streets or we will lose our tourists."

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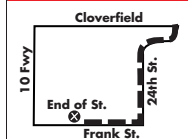
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LOCAL

Lawyer defends Feinstein

FEINSTEIN, from page 1

\$16,687.50 that was allegedly used to pay six months' rent for an office at 2809 Pico Blvd., an office used to conduct Green Party business.

Green Party officials, however, claim they agreed to rent the office for \$500 a month, payable to Feinstein. By their calculation, they owed Feinstein about \$2,500. Bob Morris, the Green Party official who contacted police in March, said he did so immediately after a copy of the returned check was made available by the man who donated it to the party.

After the DA announced it would not pursue charges, Glen Koontz, Feinstein's Washington, D.C.-based attorney, issued a prepared statement defending his client's reputation.

"This entire affair resulted from the impetuous and ill-advised actions of individuals acting out of both ignorance and a malicious desire to harm Mr. Feinstein due to differences in political philosophy," the statement said.

"At no time did Mr. Feinstein act inappropriately, and there was never any basis for the false charges levied against him ..."

Koontz went on to chastise Morris for initiating the investigation and members of the press who, apparently, cited anonymous sources that provided accounts critical of Feinstein.

Feinstein, who is currently out of the country, did not return calls seeking comment. He told surfsantamonica.com, a Web site that reports on news in Santa Monica, that the accusations were nonsense.

"I'm thankful that this unnecessary diversion of public funds and community attention is over," Feinstein said. "We had to take eight months to confirm what almost everyone in the Green Party already knew — that I didn't steal anything."

"In particular, I would like to thank the dozens, if not hundreds, of Santa Monica residents across political lines who went out of their way to let me know that these accusations were nonsense," he added.

Green Party officials said they were holding out little hope the criminal charges would stick because of the strict

standards required to prosecute them. But party officials insist the money is still rightfully theirs, and are asking Feinstein to hand it back over (see related story).

"I thought I made this grand gesture, saying, 'OK, here's something to work with. Let's make an effort. Jesus, nothing but bad stuff's come out of it. Enough, already.'"

— **BILL PIETZ**
Former Green Party member
and \$10,000 donor

"I hope this breaks the logjam and allows for productive negotiations," said City Councilman Kevin McKeown, also a Green Party member.

While the dispute rages on, Bill Pietz, who wrote the \$10,000 check in question back in January of 2001 as a spontaneous gesture of goodwill, said he's sickened by the affair.

Pietz said he decided to donate the money after the 2000 presidential election, when Green Party registration mushroomed and the LA County Green Party sorely needed funding. He said it was intended to be used as the council saw fit, but that Feinstein decided to deposit it into his own account.

"Mike acted wrongly — I think unforgivably," said Pietz, an academic writer who left the party because of the dispute. "But it was just totally wrong to take it to criminal stuff."

"I thought I made this grand gesture, saying, 'OK, here's something to work with. Let's make an effort,'" Pietz added, laughing.

"Jesus, nothing but bad stuff's come out of it. Enough, already."

Task force nabs SM man for possessing child porn

CHARGES, from page 1

total of 19 criminal cases against Southern California residents accused of possessing child pornography or attempting to entice minors into engaging in unlawful sexual conduct.

Eleven of the defendants were arrested Thursday morning, while three others — including Starr — have already agreed to plead guilty.

The cases are the result of investigations by the Southern California Regional Sexual Assault and Exploitation Felony Enforcement Team, a multi-agency task force that investigates crimes involving the sexual exploitation of children.

The SAFE Team consists of investigators from federal, state and local agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the California Department of Justice, the LA County Sheriff's Department, the LA Police Department and the US Postal Inspection Service.

Under the "Amber Alert" law, which was signed by President Bush on April 30, the charge of possession of child pornography carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, and the charge of distribution of child pornography carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years.

Starr's case is being prosecuted by Assistant US Attorney Kevin Lally.

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LOCAL



It ain't easy being Green with Councilman Feinstein

REQUEST, from page 1

It was the first time since Feinstein took the January 2001 check that Green Party officials have formally asked for the money's return. Earlier this year, the Green Party of California urged Feinstein to bow out of party business until the dispute was resolved.

"This is really simply a formality, a written request," said Joe Crompton, a LA County Green Party Councilman from Hollywood, adding that it had become apparent Feinstein didn't intend to return the money on his own.

"We're waiting to see how Councilman Feinstein responds," he said.

The County Council agreed to send the letter to Feinstein at its Oct. 12 meeting, according to minutes posted this week on its Web site, that read, in part: "Questions: Why not wait until the police investigation is finished? (Santa Monica City Councilman) Kevin (McKeown) responded that there is no connection between the two. The council has never formally requested the money back and we should do so before any other actions."

Los Angeles County prosecutors announced this week that they were dropping their probe of Feinstein because they couldn't prove he used the money for personal use.

McKeown, a fellow Green Party member, said it's unlikely that a civil lawsuit will be filed against Feinstein, but that a separate investigation by the Fair Political Practices Commission, which polices political contributions, is currently underway.

"The return of the county Green Party's money is still unresolved, and the California Fair Political Practices Commission investigation is still ongoing," said McKeown, adding that with the criminal dispute now over, he hopes Feinstein will be compelled to resolve his dispute with the LA County Greens.

McKeown had shied away from commenting on the matter in the past because he fears doing so may deepen the rift between him and Feinstein. It appears many party officials also are worried about going public with their concerns. According to the minutes, one attendee "noted that the letter can be expected to appear in the media and will be bad for the Green Party and for Mike Feinstein, and that this will not end the controversy."

Feinstein is presently out of the coun-

try, and did not return calls seeking comment. Asked if Feinstein intends to respond to the letter, his Washington, D.C.-based attorney, Glen Koontz, said, "I couldn't comment on it," but insisted that Feinstein has done nothing wrong.

Some of Feinstein's supporters said the request for payback is ridiculous.

"They want the money back?" asked Jerry Rubin, a Santa Monica peace activist. "Not that he's asking for it, but if they were to give Mike the compensation that he deserves, it would be a hundred times (more than the \$10,000) ...

"Mike Feinstein has given his life to the Green Party, and that's the truth."

If Feinstein does give the LA County Green Party back any money, he will be allowed to deduct the amount owed to him by the party before their relationship deteriorated, according to the meeting minutes. Former LA County Green Party treasurer Bob Morris said the party owes Feinstein about \$2,500 in back rent for an office they once used at 2809 Pico Blvd., the same office Feinstein said he leased with the \$10,000.

Though Green Party officials in the past have said Feinstein took a total of \$30,000 in Green Party funds, the letter only focuses on the \$10,000, partly because it is so clearly documented. By contrast, as of the Oct. 12 meeting, the LA County Green Party had a mere \$791.21 in savings, according to the minutes.

While they wait for Feinstein to respond to the letter, some Greens are getting fed up over a dispute that's stretched on for nearly three years and is still seemingly unresolved.

"I'm not really happy with his behavior over the years," said former Green Party treasurer Will Yeager, an accountant in Venice who has been involved with the LA County Green Party since its inception. "There have been numerous actions where Mike has put his interests ahead of the party's interests and basically bent all kinds of rules to benefit himself."

"He has hurt the party immensely," Yeager added. "He's basically driven people away from the Green Party because of his little temper tantrums and insistence upon control and power games. Everybody else, like myself, we've got bills to pay and we have to get up in the morning to go to work, and we can't stay hour after hour to continue with meetings."

Reality bites: Students receive hard lessons in drunk driving

TEST, from page 1

rience without the real-life risks.

"It's the closest we can get to reality for them," said SMPD Sgt. Jay Trisler. "It's hands on and practical."

SMPD vice officers came to the school this past Monday and talked to students in the sober living class about alcohol-related offenses such as possession of alcohol, as well as to explain the ramifications to business owners who sell alcohol to minors. The SMPD's vice unit uses young kids from the Police Explorers program to act as decoys and go into liquor stores and try to purchase alcohol, or ask adults to buy it for them.

More than one-third of all teen traffic fatalities involves alcohol, police said. The SMPD's traffic collision investigator gave students a dose of that reality when he shared gruesome photos of actual scenes from alcohol-related accidents.

The program, which SMPD hopes to take to other Santa Monica schools, is funded by a state grant called "Community Education and Traffic Enforcement." The SMPD received \$100,000 to be used for educational programs, DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols, according to Trisler.



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Entertainment

The thrill is gone: 'In the Cut' fails to muster drama

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

In director Jane Campion's unbearably stylized "In The Cut," Meg Ryan goes looking For Mr. Goodbar and, instead, discovers the wearisome progeny. Much ado has been made of her "courageous" performance, one for which she darkened her fair hair to match her character's disposition and spends a great deal of time brooding in various stages of undress. It's a willful play against type, but as Halle Berry demonstrated in "Monster's Ball," it takes more than tears and ta-tas to convincingly distance oneself from chronic

cuddliness. Throughout the film, Ryan stumbles along in some sort of pseudo-stupor, made all the more conspicuous by the deliberately distorted visuals and pervasive murkiness that Campion employs to ill-effect. Fuzzy as it all is, one thing is crystal clear: This crime thriller fails, at every shadowy turn, to thrill.

Ryan plays Frannie, a preternaturally gloomy English teacher who likes abstract poetry and hanging around with creepy characters. Her half-sister (Jennifer Jason Leigh) is a spaced-out strumpet who lives above a strip club and is a virtual lock to eventually cross paths with the knife-wielding maniac who is terrorizing the neighborhood. After a severed head is discovered in her garden, Frannie meets and soon drifts into bed with an enigmatic homicide detective (Mark Ruffalo) who she comes to suspect may be the murderer. Or it could be her unbalanced ex-boyfriend (Kevin Bacon) or the hot-tempered student who delivers a blood-splattered term paper contending notorious serial killer John Wayne Gacy's innocence. Or maybe it's the guy who sells flowers on the corner, or his dog Fido.

Thing is, it doesn't seem to matter



Meg Ryan and Mark Ruffalo in a scene from 'In the Cut.'

much to Frannie who's killing everyone around her. You get the sense she'd just as soon be seduced as sliced up. And if she doesn't care whodunit, why should we?

(Rated R for strong sexuality including explicit dialogue, nudity, graphic crime scenes and language. Running time: 119 minutes)

'Alien' still scary after all these years

Review

BY DAN DUNN

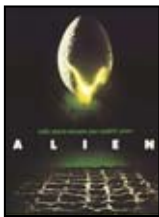
Special to the Daily Press

"I don't usually revisit my films, but after I took a look at 'Alien,' I thought that it really held up well after 24 years." So says director Ridley Scott, explaining why he chose to re-release a gussied-up version of his seminal horror picture. My guess is that profit also had something to do with the decision, but that really doesn't matter. Scott's correct — two decades later, "Alien" is still scarier than all hell, and the digital restoration and new six-track stereo mix make the film look and sound better than it did back in '79.

"Alien," which stars Sigourney Weaver, Tom Skerritt, John Hurt and Harry Dean Stanton, tells the story of a crew of space travelers whose ship is invaded by a most terrifying interstellar monster. The "Director's Cut" features several previously unreleased scenes, including a jarring moment in which Weaver's Ridley discovers the remains of Brett (Stanton) and Dallas (Skerritt). There's also a physical confrontation between Ripley and Lambert (Veronica Cartwright), and a shot of the alien hanging from chains just prior to claiming a victim.

Additionally, Scott trimmed a few scenes, creating what he calls "a slight difference in energy from the 1979 version." The energy may have changed, but the horror remains the same. As a whole new generation of theatergoers is about to discover, "Alien" is perhaps the most frightening film ever made.

(Rated R for sci-fi violence/gore and language. Running time: 116 minutes)



Ryan sheds 'sweetheart' image in new flick

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

Perennial cutie Meg Ryan delivers the most revealing performance of her 20-year film career in Jane Campion's nourish thriller, "In The Cut." Ryan, whose most popular roles have come in decidedly wholesome fare such as "When Harry Met Sally," "Sleepless In Seattle" and "You've Got Mail," launches a full-frontal assault on her squeaky-clean image in a movie that is as lurid as they come. The word out of Hollywood is it was only after some 11th-hour cuts that "In The Cut" avoided an NC-17 rating.

Ryan sat down recently with a group of recorder-toting folks who chronicle such happenings, to shed some light on her eye-popping image makeover.

Question: "In The Cut" presents a different Meg Ryan than we've seen before. Did you have any trepidation about taking on such a salacious role?

Meg Ryan: I was thrilled about working with Jane, and the material, and this style of acting that I hadn't experimented with before.

Q: Is this an attempt to alter the public's perception of you? After all, you've been "America's Sweetheart" for some time now.

MR: No, I don't believe in cultivating



Meg Ryan at the 'In the Cut' premiere.

image. I think audiences see the effort more than the intended result. Also, I don't have a huge awareness of the idea of me, or image, or whatever it is. "America's Sweetheart" doesn't come up in my life, except when I'm here, talking to reporters.

Q: How did the process of making this

film differ from those sunnier films in which we're accustomed to seeing you?

MR: During rehearsal we talked a lot about the erotic scenes in the movie, and about what intimacy is. And about grief and violence — as many ideas as this movie contains.

Q: How would you describe the sexual relationship between your character, Frannie, and the tough homicide detective played by Mark Ruffalo?

MR: Their sex is not coy. It's very frank, and very much about revealing themselves to each other.

Q: Do you share Frannie's fascination with poetry?

MR: I always have. I was definitely encouraged by Jane. When we started the movie, she hooked me up with a poetry professor at NYU. And Jane and I read poems together in the mornings during rehearsal.

Q: You talked earlier about your affinity for making films in New York City. What is it about the place that attracts you?

MR: I'm from (the area). I always feel that my soul is lined up in all the right ways in New York. I love the people, and the availability of experience. It's endlessly interesting to me. I could just talk for another 20 minutes about that.

DID YOU KNOW?: When they were babies, both Brooke Shields and musician Dr. John posed for Ivory Soap.

ENTERTAINMENT



'Stain' fails to leave its mark

Review

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

You see the names Hopkins, Kidman, Sinise and Harris on the marquee for a film adaptation of a Pulitzer Prize-winner's best-selling novel and you figure, boy, is this ever going to be good. But, for a host of reasons, "The Human Stain" fails to live up to anything but the most modest expectations. Let's start with Reason No. 1: The source material. Philip Roth's drawn-out, scattershot musings on race and sex set during the height of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, is/was practically unfilmable. Robert Benton, a skilled director, but an even better writer, gives it his best shot. But in the end, the film proves as difficult to make heads or tails of as it must have been to produce. Which brings us to a second reason the film falters: Benton left the writing to someone else — Nicholas Meyer, who is best known for scripting the adaptation of his own best-selling Sherlock Holmes novel, "The Seven Percent Solution." Ah, if only Sherlock were around to tie up all the loose ends in "The Human Stain."

Anthony Hopkins stars as Coleman Silk, an esteemed college dean and professor at an idyllic east coast liberal arts college who is living with a big secret. In one truly bad day, he's unjustly fired from his job for making a dubious racial slur, goes home to deliver the news to his wife, only to have it kill her — literally. He's understandably peeved, and hopes to exact revenge by convincing a reclusive writer (Gary Sinise as Roth's doppelganger) to pen a scathing



Anthony Hopkins and Nicole Kidman.

expose. The pair strike up a friendship, and it is then that we learn — through flashbacks — that Silk is not Jewish, as he has long claimed to be, but rather a light-skinned black man from New Jersey who abandoned his heritage in order to get ahead in culturally biased America. Now, if you'll buy Hopkins — British accent and all — as a black man from Jersey, well, perhaps I can interest you in some red-hot mountainside property in Southern California. Better yet, how about Nicole Kidman as an illiterate janitor who falls for A-Hop? Really. Like most everyone else in the film, she's dreadfully miscast, but that doesn't stop the Academy Award-winner from chewing up the role for all its worth. Which isn't much, unfortunately. Just like the movie.

(Rated R for language and sexual-ity/nudity.
Running time: 106 minutes)

CULINARY BRIEF



Local chefs cook for the cure

By Daily Press staff

Several of Santa Monica's top chefs recently fired up their ovens to cook for a cure.

Sur La Table, KitchenAid, Republic Of Tea and Bon Appétit hosted and underwrote a series of "Cook For The Cure" fundraisers this month at locations around the country to benefit the Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Foundation, one of the leading organizations promoting and funding breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment.

The gastronomic events feature culinary legends donating and preparing their signature dishes.

More than 150 participants sampled fare from Josiah Citron, owner of Melisse, who prepared his sublime Egg Caviar; a poached egg in its shell, layered with a cauliflower velouté, lemon chive crème fraîche and topped with caviar. Raphael Lunetta, from

JiRaffe, offered a tasty dish of seared Pancetta Wrapped Maine Scallops, served on a polenta gallette with lentil depuy in a lobster sauce. Mary Sue Milliken, Susan Feniger and Jamie Corvarrubias, from Border Grill, served up their delicious Albacore Cerviche Tostadas with Amarillo chili sauce, overlaid with guacamole and cracked pepper oil. For dessert, Sherry Yard, of Spago Beverly Hills, baked up sumptuous marmalade filled cupcakes. Wente Vineyards complemented the feast with selections of their fine wines and Republic Of Tea offered a marmalade and tea-tasting bar.

The Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Foundation receives 100 percent of the gross ticket proceeds, as well as additional donations from sponsor sales.

For information on future events or to purchase tickets, call 1-888-478-7900 or visit www.cookfortheure.com.

Play: What's wrong is right

By Daily Press staff



What would happen if a country were to lean so dangerously to the right that it simply collapsed?

The Will Geer Theatrum Botanicum in Topanga presents a workshop performance of Tilting by Theatrum playwright-in-residence Jennie Webb on Sunday, Nov. 16 at noon, which is part of its ongoing development series for playwrights, "Botanicum Seedlings."

Commissioned by The Will Geer Theatrum Botanicum in 2001 as a work to be created specifically for the scenic, outdoor amphitheater and repertory company members by its first playwright-in-residence, Tilting draws from the history of the "Living Newspaper Plays," as well as the unique legacy of the Theatrum itself as a long-standing Los Angeles arts institution with its roots in the McCarthy-era blacklisting.

Tilting is an absurd comedy that provides a shamelessly agit-prop look at America's changing political and social landscape. The new play examines the media's role in manufacturing leaders, tests our religious tolerance for blind faith and challenges the power of the almighty dollar. Tilting was given a staged reading in October 2002, one of three play readings inaugurating the Botanicum Seedlings series. For this workshop presentation, the play will be rehearsed for two full weeks.

"Jennie has a cryptic and sharp

sense of humor that gives physical reality to the confusion many of us in this country are feeling as our government veers to the right," said Theatrum artistic director Ellen Geer, who directs the workshop. "When people speak out, they tend to get pigeon-holed. Tilting defies pigeon-holing."

Webb is an independent playwright whose works include "Remodeling Plans," "The Complete Story of the War," "Men & Boxes, Buying a House," "Unclaimed Assets" and "GreenHouse and Killing Miss America." Her plays have been presented on stages and in alternative venues throughout the U.S. and internationally, including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Initiated in the fall of 2002, the Botanicum Seedlings series acts as an adjunct to the Theatrum Botanicum's Summer Repertory Season, commencing yearly before the summer activities are underway with its winter readings, continuing with spring readings as the season opens, and culminating after the season winds down with a fall workshop production of a play selected from the works presented in readings. The series is produced by Yael Berkovich. Literary Manager Israel Baran heads the play selection committee.

The Will Geer Theatrum Botanicum is located at 1419 North Topanga Canyon Blvd. in Topanga, midway between Malibu and the San Fernando Valley. For further information, call (310) 455-2322. The theater is outdoors. In case of inclement weather, call for alternate performance times.

Admission is free to the public.

Surreal images of nudes on display at SMC

Art Brief

By Daily Press staff

An exhibit of award-winning photographer Ed Freeman's large-format, digitally altered nudes in surreal landscapes will be shown Nov. 8 through Dec. 12 at the Santa Monica College Photography Gallery.

The exhibit, "Ed Freeman: Natural Formations," is a unique collection of 29 mostly black-and-white images, all 30 inches tall, that the photographer describes as "edgy pictures that no gallery, at least so far, has been willing to touch."

An opening reception is scheduled for 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8 at the SMC Photography Gallery, located on the second floor of Drescher Hall, 1900 Pico Blvd.

"These are the pictures that are nearest and dearest to me," Freeman said. "I've been working on this series for close to 10 years, and now, finally, they're going to see the light of day."

Freeman has exhibited widely in the U.S. and Europe, and has hundreds of publications to his credit. His book "Desert Realty," featuring computer-enhanced images of buildings in the Southern California desert, was released this year, and a book of erotic nudes, "Work," was published in Germany in 2000.



Freeman comes from a music background, as a performer, studio guitarist, arranger and composer. In 1971, he produced Don McLean's "American Pie" and went on to arrange and produce more than two dozen pop and jazz albums in the early 1970s.

Moving to California in 1977, he gravitated towards film scoring, computer music, consulting and teaching, but in 1989 turned to photography — commercially and artistically.

Currently, he does commercial work, shoots stock for Getty Images, has a career as a fine art photographer and teaches Photoshop at SMC.

Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to noon; 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.; and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. The gallery will be closed Nov. 11 for the Veterans Day holiday and from Nov. 27-30 for Thanksgiving.

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STATE

Davis, FEMA head deny forestry dragged its feet on use of military planes

BY TIM MOLLOY

Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO — Gov. Gray Davis and a top official in the Bush Administration rejected allegations from Republican lawmakers Thursday that state forestry officials dragged their feet on seeking approval to use military planes to help fight the region's deadly wildfires.

Lawmakers including U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter, an El Cajon Republican, have said C-130 cargo planes that Hunter lined up sat idle for days because the California Department of Forestry didn't act quickly enough to seek federal approval for their use.

But Davis and state forestry officials said strong winds and other weather conditions prevented the planes from flying immediately. Hunter lost his own home in one of the largest fires.

Mike Brown, appointed by President Bush to head the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said at a news conference with Davis that state forestry officials had done "absolutely" everything possible to get the planes up in the air this week.

"Anyone else who wants to play armchair quarterback is doing a disservice to this task, which is to put the fires out and out the victims back on their feet," Davis said.

Added Brown: "I don't think there is ever a time when career civil servants, political appointees or anybody else in a disaster are going to play turf games or turf battles. We're going to follow the law, we're going to follow the regulations, and we're going to bend over backwards to make sure things work."

At issue was a 1932 law that bars the state from asking for military help until

civilian contractors are no longer available.

Davis agreed with Hunter that the law was largely to blame for creating a bureaucratic mess that would have made it hard to get the planes airborne even if weather had not interfered.

**"Anyone else who
wants to play armchair
quarterback is doing a
disservice to this task..."**

— **GRAY DAVIS**
California governor

There are eight military C-130s in the country that are outfitted to dump retardant on fires. Two are stationed at Point Mugu Naval Air Weapons Station in Ventura County, and there are two each in Colorado, North Carolina and Wyoming.

The California planes were ready to fly by Sunday morning, but were grounded by bad weather, said CDF Chief Deputy Director Ray Snodgrass.

Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, contacted Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on Sunday to have the C-130s in other states flown to California to help fight the fires. The two from Colorado arrived Sunday, and the other four came Monday, Hunter spokesman Harald Stavenas said Thursday.

Hunter has said Snodgrass told him Sunday that he wouldn't seek to use the planes immediately. But Snodgrass said Thursday that he sought and received federal approval over Sunday and Monday.

Halloween festivities planned for youngsters hit by wildfires

BY KEN RITTER

Associated Press Writer

HESPERIA — Even the real-life horror of Southern California's wildfires didn't cancel Halloween.

Parties were planned Friday at shelters where hundreds of children were sleeping on cots and wondering whether their homes survived the deadly swath of flame.

"We want the kids to have as normal and positive an experience as they can in a traumatic time," said Carol Lachey, a Hesperia schoolteacher serving as activities coordinator for 35 displaced children at Sultana High School. "We have a lot of donations of toys and candy. And their parents need a break."

Michael Goold, 15, and his family had to flee from Running Springs in the San Bernardino Mountains. That cut short his job as a knife-wielding clown at a Boys & Girls Club haunted house in nearby Crestline.

Instead, he and his brother, second-grader James Goold, would await the arrival of The Great Pumpkin at the evacuation center party.

On Thursday, Walt Disney characters such as Goofy, Minnie Mouse and Snow

White handed out costumes, candy and hugs at an evacuation center in San Bernardino.

Youngster Harley Morrison was pleased.

"I think it's cool that, like, they got to come here and stuff and, like, make the little kids, like, get their minds off, like, the fire and stuff and their house because it could be burning down," she told KCAL-TV.

In San Diego County, a Halloween party was planned at a park in the Scripps Ranch area, where entire blocks of homes were lost in the Cedar Fire.

"Through this crisis we need to think of the effect these fires have had on children throughout the county, and the effect it will continue to have on them," San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy said. "We hope to bring them some joy during this traumatic time."

The party was being organized by the San Diego Padres and Wal-Mart, which was donating Halloween costumes, candy, toys and refreshments.

The store chain wanted "to give the children an evening of fun and some time to just be a kid," a spokeswoman said.

STATE



CALIFORNIA BRIEFS

'Old Glory' standing tall amid raging wildfires

By The Associated Press

SANTA CLARITA — Flames from the Simi Valley fire spared the ancient oak tree that gained renown last year when an environmentalist perched in its branches for 72 days to protest its removal by a housing developer.

Firefighters doubted the tree dubbed Old Glory would be saved as the fire moved into the western Santa Clarita Valley on Tuesday. But over the course of the evening, the blaze retreated and by Wednesday morning, Los Angeles County Fire Capt. Joe Lindaman said the tree was out of harm's way.

"It would have been a shame at this point to have the tree succumb to fire, given the amount of energy and effort put into (saving) it," said Bill Rattazi, regional president of developer John Laing Homes. The company is spending more than \$1 million to move the tree as a compromise with activists.

Activist John Quigley, who climbed into the tree's branches last Nov. 1, said a planned anniversary celebration near the tree has been delayed due to the wildfires. He said event organizers decided to push the event back to Nov. 15 to give the neighborhood some time to return to normal.

'Neither rain, nor snow...' but wildfires halt mail

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Wildfires in the San Bernardino and San Diego mountains continued to hamper mail delivery in those areas Thursday, forcing the U.S. Postal Service to set up temporary postal stations elsewhere.

The wildfires have not damaged any postal offices, but letter carriers stopped making their rounds in the mountain areas since Monday due to blocked roads and fire danger, said U.S. Postal Service spokesman David Mazer.

In northern Los Angeles county and the high desert region, unhealthy air prevented letter carriers from doing their jobs Wednesday, Mazer said.

"The air quality was so smoky they couldn't deliver," he said. "We pulled them off the streets because the safety of our carriers is number one."

As the wildfires subsided and air quality improved, however, Mazer said letter carriers were starting to go back to work.

Schwarzenegger turned on by electricity deregulation

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — No stranger to sequels, California Gov.-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger hopes to sell the state on the virtues of electricity deregulation for a second time, despite the expensive legacy of the first attempt.

Schwarzenegger's energy advisers say they will bring a fresh approach to deregulation this time, avoiding past mistakes that led to rolling blackouts, insolvent utilities, market manipulation and a \$20 billion debt customers must spend the next decade repaying.

"We have a system that is broken, with pieces laying on the ground that need to be picked up and put back together again," said James Sweeney, a Stanford University professor who helped write Schwarzenegger's energy plan.

Deregulation critics are unnerved by Schwarzenegger's proposal, arguing it would expose California to major risks at a time the financially strapped state can't afford to gamble.

"It looks like he wants to put us back on the rollercoaster of a very dangerous experiment," said Public Utilities Commissioner Loretta Lynch, who dealt with California's energy turmoil in 2001.

DNA evidence could link Peterson to wife's murder

By The Associated Press

MODESTO — A hair found in a pair of pliers on the boat Scott Peterson took fishing the day his wife disappeared matched a genetic sample from Laci Peterson's mother, an FBI expert testified Wednesday, as prosecutors sought to have him tried in the slaying of his wife and unborn son.

For much of the day inside a packed courtroom, FBI lab supervisor Constance Fisher testified about the disputed method of DNA analysis she specializes in that can show a genetic match between a mother and child.

She testified that a one-inch strand of hair found on pliers in the boat did not match Scott Peterson, but did match a swab of DNA taken from the mouth of his mother-in-law, Sharon Rocha.

Defense lawyer Mark Geragos is challenging the admissibility of the testimony, saying the analysis was the subject of a "raging debate" in the scientific community and suggesting that the hair sample may have been contaminated or tampered with by law enforcement.

The technique has not been widely accepted in courts, and it was only ruled admissible once in a California state court, in the case of an accused murderer in San Diego.

With the exception of a brief mention of Laci Peterson's family at the start of the hearing, the 27-year-old substitute teacher's name was never uttered again during the daylong hearing in Stanislaus County Superior Court.



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STATE

Schwarzenegger's Capitol visit evolves into hot topic

BY BETH FOUHY

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Congressional Republicans welcomed Arnold Schwarzenegger to Capitol Hill Wednesday with words of praise and plenty of stargazing for the governor-elect who delivered California from the Democrats.

The celluloid hero-turned-politician also had lunch with his Uncle Ted, better known in Washington as Democratic Sen. Edward M. Kennedy.

Schwarzenegger's first official visit to the nation's capital — and the Republican-controlled Congress — was supposed to be a victory lap, but the wildfires devastating Southern California turned the trip into one part emergency mission, one part spectacle that electrified the Capitol's businesslike atmosphere.

As he moved along the marbled hallways, Schwarzenegger was trailed by an entourage that seemed more suited to a visiting head of state than to a political neophyte who hasn't been sworn into office. He was flanked by staff, a security detail, lawmakers and any number of curious onlookers. Several dozen reporters and as many as 20 television crews were there to greet him at each of his news conferences.

"He's much more impressive in person than in pictures," Rep. Bill Thomas, R-Calif.,

"I came basically to Washington to establish relationships and to make sure we are getting more federal money for California as I promised in my campaign."

— ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
California governor-elect

chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said of the Hollywood actor.

Reviewing the often chaotic scene in the Capitol, spokesman Rob Stutzman said Schwarzenegger was fully aware of the effect of his star power and he planned to put it to good use.

"The governor-elect understands what his political capital is," Stutzman said. "And one of the reasons I believe he will succeed is that he will appropriate it effectively."

Schwarzenegger began his day meeting with Michael Brown, the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and help for fire-scorched California was on the agenda. He also met with the House and Senate leadership; the California congressional delegation, including Democratic Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein; and Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta.

"I came basically to Washington to establish relationships and to make sure

we are getting more federal money for California as I promised in my campaign," Schwarzenegger told reporters following a meeting with House Republicans. "But of course the recent events, the huge disastrous fires have changed my mission a little bit. I'm now looking for federal money for the people, the victims of the fire."

After the morning session at the Capitol, Schwarzenegger and his wife, Maria Shriver, joined Kennedy, a 41-year veteran of Congress and Massachusetts' senior senator, at the Willard Hotel for lunch.

"Arnold and I have been friends for many, many years, we've enjoyed a lot of good times, and members of our family look forward to that in the future," Kennedy said in a brief appearance following the luncheon.

Schwarzenegger called Kennedy his "favorite uncle-in-law."

"He is terrific, he is a good balance between my more conservative way of

thinking and his more liberal way of thinking," Schwarzenegger said. "I feel really good and proud to have such a good and strong and smart person working next to me."

Other Democrats appeared intrigued by Schwarzenegger, even after many campaigned hard against him in the weeks before the Oct. 7 recall election. Still, Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif., warned that despite Democrats' willingness to work with Schwarzenegger, differences remain.

"Our values were formed long before Mr. Schwarzenegger was elected to office. Those values will remain unchanged, and we are looking to see where we will be able to cooperate and where we will have to take diametrically opposed positions," Lantos said.

Feinstein said she was willing put aside old scores and work with Schwarzenegger.

"What's past is past. One of the ways that I think we have to go is to turn the page and move on," she said.

Added Schwarzenegger: "You have to understand the way it works in politics — she's not going to come out and cut a commercial for me. We will be working together like a jewel."

The governor-elect promised to support Feinstein's effort to extend a federal ban on assault weapons, which has been a signature issue for her for many years.

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NATIONAL

House expected to approve \$87 billion rebuilding plan

BY KEN GUGGENHEIM
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Despite rising criticism about President Bush's handling of Iraq, Congress is on the verge of approving an \$87 billion package for military and reconstruction costs in Iraq and Afghanistan that largely follows the White House's request.

House-Senate negotiators worked out final details this week, meeting Bush's demand that none of the Iraqi reconstruction money be provided as loans. The House is expected to vote on the bill soon, with the Senate likely to follow shortly afterward. It then would go to Bush for his signature.

Lawmakers have been increasingly uneasy about the rising human toll and financial costs of U.S. involvement in Iraq. They have questioned whether the Bush administration has done enough to win international assistance and how long U.S. troops will have to remain there.

But there was little debate about the bulk of Bush's proposal, \$65.1 billion for U.S. military expenses. The House-Senate conferees ended up supporting almost all of it, \$64.7 billion.

Bush's \$20.3 billion request for Iraqi reconstruction and its security forces received greater scrutiny. That total had been cut by both the House and the Senate, and the conferees ended up approving \$18.4 billion. They also approved \$1.2 billion for Afghanistan reconstruction, compared with the \$800 million sought by Bush.

The loan issue was the most divisive item. A Senate amendment, passed with bipartisan support, would have required Iraq to pay back about half of the \$18.4 billion.

But with Bush threatening a veto, Senate conferees voted 16-13 not to insist on their loan amendment with their House counterparts.

Bush and congressional Republican leaders argued that Iraq already was too deeply in debt to borrow more money and that there was no Iraqi government with the authority to take on new loans.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said the grants were needed to quickly improve conditions in Iraq and get U.S. troops home.

"America will be recompensed 50 times over if this thing gets ended and they have a strong country," he said.

Loan supporters said U.S. taxpayers already were spending plenty on Iraq and that the country's vast oil reserves should enable it to pay back some of the money eventually. Under the Senate bill, Iraq would not have had to repay the loan if other countries forgave 90 percent of the debt Iraq ran up under toppled leader Saddam Hussein.

Rep. David Obey of Wisconsin, the House Appropriations Committee's top Democrat, noted that much of the new aid pledged by other nations at an international donor's conference last week was made as loans.

"It seems to me that we're asking the U.S. taxpayers to be Uncle Sucker instead of Uncle Sam," he said.

"America will be recompensed 50 times over if this thing gets ended and they have a strong country."

— PETE DOMENICI
Senator, New Mexico

The administration had one key setback when the conferees agreed to a pilot program to expand the military health insurance system known as Tricare to include members of the National Guard and Reserves who are unemployed or lack health insurance coverage.

Activated reservists and Guard members also would be eligible for coverage for a longer period. This change would be in effect only until the end of budget year, Sept. 30, 2004.

The Pentagon had opposed the change. "We think that's probably not the best way to compensate the reserves," its chief financial officer, Dov Zakheim, told reporters.

On other issues, the conferees agreed to provide:

■ \$500 million to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help it deal with recent disasters, including the California wildfires and Hurricane Isabel.

■ \$60 million for programs to strengthen women's rights in Afghanistan.

■ \$200 million for Liberia, \$100 million for Jordan and \$20 million for Sudan.

Republicans defeated a Democratic proposal that would have required Senate confirmation for Bush's civilian administrator in Iraq, the position held by L. Paul Bremer. Democrats complained about what they said was the administration's disdainful treatment of Congress on Iraq and said this could make it more accountable.

Republicans said they didn't believe Senate confirmation was necessary, but some agreed with Democratic criticism of the administration's attitude.

"You bump up to a degree of arrogance over and over," said Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va.

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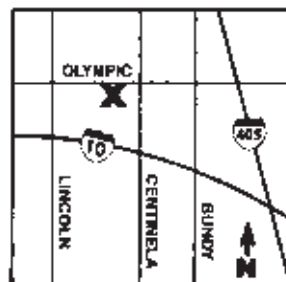


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Santa Monica Daily Press



WORLD BRIEFLY

U.N. withdrawing from Iraq

By The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — International organizations continued their exodus from Iraq, with the United Nations announcing it was withdrawing staff from Baghdad following this week's string of car bombings in the capital and attacks against coalition troops.

The withdrawal orders came despite assurances by top U.S. administration officials, including President Bush, that the security situation in Iraq was steadily improving. It also followed a personal appeal by Secretary of State Colin Powell to the international Red Cross to remain in Baghdad because "if they are driven out, then the terrorists win."

The U.N. decision to pull its remaining international staff out of Baghdad was announced on Wednesday, two days after a deadly suicide car bombing at the Baghdad headquarters of the Red Cross.

"We have asked our staff in Baghdad to come out temporarily for consultations with a team from headquarters on the future of our operations, in particular security arrangements that we would need to take to operate in Iraq," U.N. spokeswoman Marie Okabe said.

Deputy may have foreseen Columbine

By The Associated Press

GOLDEN, Colo. — Jefferson County's new sheriff wants investigators to interview a former deputy who apparently was told years before the Columbine High School massacre that the gunmen bragged about making pipe bombs and were looking for a "ground zero."

A report discovered last week indicates then-deputy John Hicks was given information in 1997 about a Web site that included the boast and the "ground zero" reference by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

Sheriff Ted Mink, who took office in July, said this week that the investigation of the Web site apparently went no further.

Mink asked Attorney General Ken Salazar to investigate why the 1997 report was never reviewed as part of the probe into the massacre.

Mink said he wants investigators to talk to Hicks, who left the department in 2000 and whose whereabouts were unknown. Salazar's spokesman Ken Lane would

not comment on the investigation.

Harris and Klebold killed 12 students and a teacher before taking their own lives on April 20, 1999.

IRS warning all income-tax cheats

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service has been waging a high-profile attack on corporate tax evaders, but the agency's new chief warns that midlevel and low-income tax cheaters had better watch out too.

"I think that we have to address this vigorously," IRS Commissioner Mark Everson said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Everson, who is six months into a five-year term, said he wants to make enforcement just as important as customer service, the agency's main focus for the past five years.

The changed emphasis comes as a survey conducted for the IRS Oversight Board shows the number of Americans who believe it's OK to cheat "a little here and there" on their taxes increased from 8 percent in 1999 to 12 percent in 2003.

The same survey showed Americans generally agree with Everson. About 95 percent those surveyed in July by RoperASW said it's "very important" or somewhat important for the IRS to make sure corporations and high-income taxpayers pay what they owe.

High hopes for private air control towers

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans say they have the votes to pass an aviation spending bill that could increase the number of privately run air traffic control towers, but the White House-backed measure still faces an uncertain future.

The House was expected to vote Thursday on a four-year, \$60 billion aviation spending bill that has been stalled because of the dispute over privatizing air traffic control jobs.

Democrats oppose turning government towers over to private contractors, saying they save money through understaffing and are not as closely monitored by the Federal Aviation Administration. The Bush administration says it should have the flexibility to cut costs by expanding a system that has worked well so far.

In 1982, the FAA began contracting for air traffic control at about 60 small airports. Now, 219 of the 484 public airports in the United States with towers have contract air controllers.

The union, representing 15,600 controllers, says it is concerned that the administration's ultimate goal is to privatize all controllers.

Bush re-election push in high gear

By The Associated Press

WACO, Texas — President Bush is trying to cajole lawmakers into passing his energy plan as he and his wife pad the Bush-Cheney re-election bank account, already worth more than \$84 million.

Bush on Thursday was resuming an aggressive hunt for campaign cash he put on hold for a trip to Asia and Australia earlier this month.

The trip was carrying him from his ranch in central Texas to Columbus, Ohio, and back to Texas for a second fund-raiser in San Antonio.

Bush dispatched Laura Bush to Tyler, Texas, for another campaign fund-raiser; Vice President Dick Cheney headlined a fund-raiser in Washington on Wednesday night. These money events opened a new phase of heavy fund raising for Bush's re-election. Bush was starring at still another fund-raiser in Birmingham, Ala., on Monday.

The White House wedged a policy event in between Bush's two fund-raisers Thursday.

Peace in Liberia greatly exaggerated

By The Associated Press

TOTOTA, Liberia — Liberia's civil war is officially over, but outside the capital, it doesn't look much like peace: Rebels are looting, pro-government militias are raping, and civilians are being forced to till fields to feed hungry fighters, residents say.

Despite an August peace deal and an expanding peacekeeping mission slated to become the United Nations' largest, hundreds of thousands of civilians are still holed up in displaced camps afraid to return home.

"If you venture into places that are not under United Nations peacekeepers, you do so at your own risk," said 37-year-old Pastor Aaron Sao, who fled the central village of Gbarnga in August during battles between rebels and pro-government forces.

The U.N. peacekeeping mission, now numbering 4,500 troops, is expected to grow to 15,000 over the next few months. So far only a few hundred soldiers have been deployed to key trouble-spots outside the capital, Monrovia.

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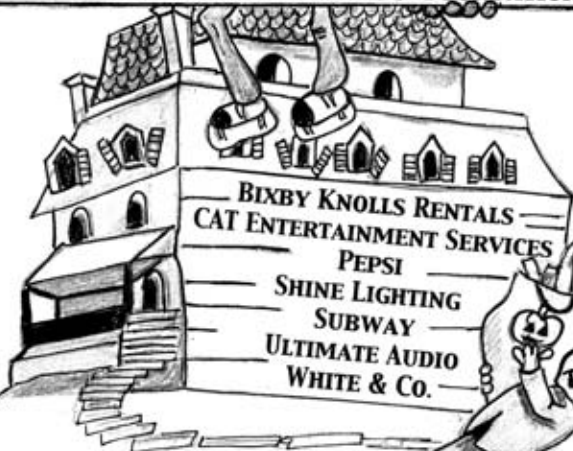
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- 1 Prickly plants
 - 6 Eccentric
 - 11 Pale
 - 12 Detest
 - 13 Highland groups
 - 14 Get smart
 - 15 Farm layer
 - 16 Secreted
 - 18 Maiden name label
 - 19 Brain scan, for short
 - 20 Ear: (Pref.)
 - 21 Needle-fish
 - 22 Lances
 - 24 Refuse
 - 25 New York neighbor
 - 27 Living room fixture
 - 29 Try to buy
 - 32 "What'd you say?"
 - 33 Peruvian coin
 - 34 Compete
 - 35 French season
 - 36 Look over
 - 37 "Lucky Man" group, initially
 - 38 Steamed
 - 40 Poor student

- 42 Melodramatic**
- 43 Normal**
- 44 Nervous**
- 45 Hammer parts**

DOWN

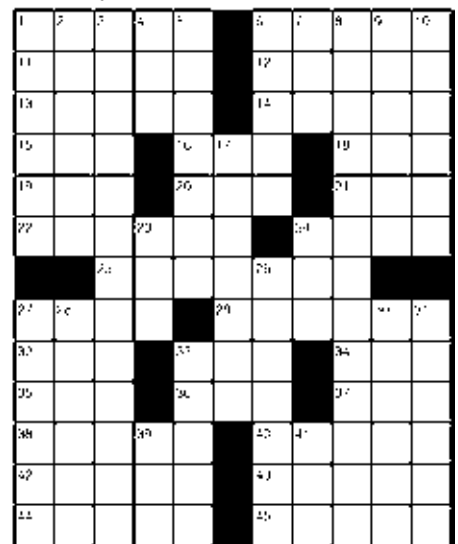
- 1 Hides
- 2 Dozing
- 3 Attitude reversal
- 4 Decimal base
- 5 Briefly
- 6 Findable fellow in kids' books
- 7 Honest
- 8 Case relocation
- 9 From Seoul, e.g.
- 23 Literary collection
- 24 Performed
- 26 Irritated
- 27 Speed skater
- 28 Young

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A	R	O	S	E	A	N	K	U	L
B	E	E	P	S	R	A	S	P	S

Yesterday's answer

- 10 Cantankerous
- 17 Maternity ward
- 23 Literary collection
- 24 Performed
- 26 Irritated
- 27 Speed skater
- 28 Young
- 28 Beat at the track
- 30 Tin Man's prop
- 31 Pushes away
- 33 Run-down
- 39 Frank McCourt book
- 41 Exploit

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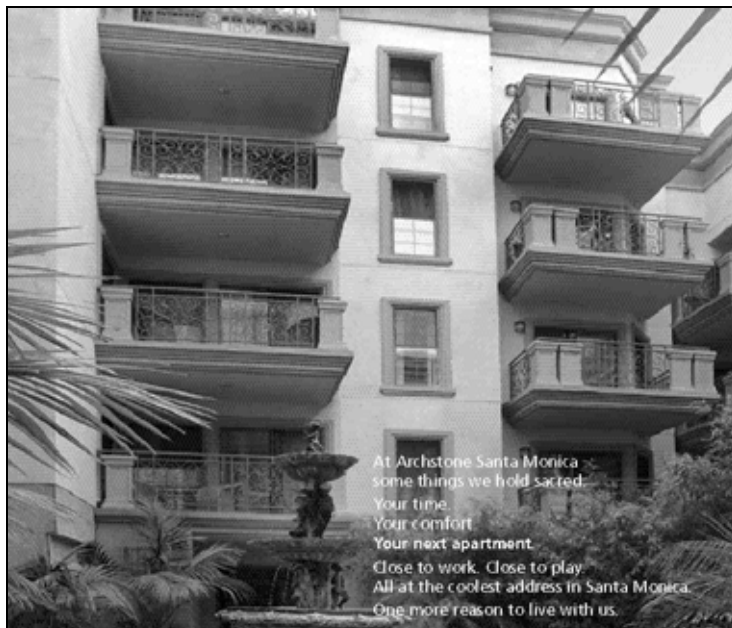
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Douglas asks his wife to lend hand at Nobel concert

By The Associated Press

■ **OSLO, Norway** — When the organizers of the annual Nobel Peace Prize concert asked Michael Douglas to host the event, the actor asked if his wife, Catherine Zeta-Jones, could lend a hand.

"That was our first choice, but we didn't dare to ask for both at the same time," concert organizer Odd Arvid Stroemstad said Thursday. "It didn't take us long to say 'yes.'"

Douglas and Zeta-Jones will act as co-masters of ceremony at the Dec. 11 concert in Oslo, the day after Iranian lawyer, writer and human rights activist Shirin Ebadi accepts her 2003 Nobel Peace Prize.

Tim McGraw, the Chieftains accompanied by Rosanne Cash, the Cardigans, opera stars Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu, Senegal's Orchestra Baobab and Broadway performer Martin Yates are among those scheduled to perform.

The traditional Nobel concert will be carried live in more than 100 countries.

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Sean Connery has ended his fight over "End Game."

The former James Bond star sued the production company Mandalay Entertainment and producer Peter Guber in October 2002, seeking \$17 million after production of the film was canceled.

Guber and Mandalay later launched a counter lawsuit.

On Wednesday, both sides announced they had reached an "amicable settlement" and all the lawsuits had been withdrawn. The result: Mandalay is no longer involved in making the movie, and Connery and his producing partner, Rhonda Tollefson, are free to pursue the project.

"End Game" would star Connery as a CIA agent, said his spokeswoman, Nancy Seltzer.

So far, the film is only in script form. Connery, 73, and Tollefson are considering possible directors and seeking new financing and distribution.

In his Superior Court lawsuit, the actor said the role was first offered to him in 1999. Connery claimed he'd spent considerable time, effort and money in developing the movie before it was dropped by Mandalay and Guber.

■ **NEW YORK** — Soprano Deborah Voigt signed her first contract for solo recordings Thursday, an exclusive deal with Angel Records/EMI.

Her first release for the label under the contract is a collection of Wagner and Strauss arias. The recording was made in September with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and conductor Richard Armstrong, and is set for release March 9.

"Deborah's command of the Wagner and Strauss repertoire is second to none amongst singers today," said Tom Evered, general manager of EMI Jazz and Classics. "Of all of the American opera singers, she has the strongest grasp and appreciation of American popular and theater music. The combination of her rock-solid classical chops and her love of American song are an unbeatable and rare combination."

Voigt is scheduled to host the New York Philharmonic's Christmas concert on Dec. 7, and her Carnegie Hall recital debut is scheduled for April 7. Future plans include a recording of Broadway show tunes.

■ **SANTA ANA** — A judge dismissed domestic violence charges against Tawny Kitaen after the actress apologized in writing for talking about the case on Howard Stern's radio show.

Superior Court Judge Pamela Iles, who handled the proceedings Wednesday privately in her office, said Kitaen "completed all her requirements and did a real good job."

Kitaen, 42, is estranged from St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Chuck Finley.

Kitaen, who appeared in the 1984 film "Bachelor Party" and briefly hosted "America's Funniest People,"

was accused of attacking her husband on April 1, 2002, as they were returning home from dinner. Police said they saw abrasions and scrapes on Finley's body.

Kitaen pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor count of spousal abuse and was ordered to undergo a year of counseling, avoid contact with Finley and make a \$500 donation to a battered-women's shelter.

The charges would have been dropped after her counseling, but Iles asked for the written apology after Kitaen told Stern on the radio that she had been forced to enter her plea.

■ **RALEIGH, N.C.** — John Travolta will be the master of ceremonies for the final day of the First Flight Centennial celebration Dec. 17.

The actor, who has logged 5,000 hours as a pilot, will speak to the sold-out crowd of 35,000, announced guests and fly his Boeing 707 in a 100-plane squadron that will soar over the Outer Banks during the celebration. The final plane in the squadron will be a replica of the Wright brothers flyer.

Travolta's visit will be on the last day of a six-day celebration Dec. 12-17 at the Wright Brothers National Memorial to mark the 100th anniversary of Orville and Wilbur Wright's first successful powered flight on Dec. 17, 1903.

Tickets for Dec. 17 have sold out. Weeklong passes are no longer available, though tickets for Dec. 13-16 are still available. Tickets cost \$10 a day for adults and aren't needed for Dec. 12.

Kim Sawyer, a program coordinator for the First Flight Centennial Commission, said Travolta's representatives contacted event organizers to voice his interest in the program.

"He is very interested in aviation and was excited about the event," Sawyer said. "My sense is that he is as excited to be here as we are to have him be part of the program. ... His heroes are the people honored here."

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