FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

Sealed file in Ryder case taken from SM courthouse

One person holds the key to locked file cabinet where Ryder's personal information was

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

Confidential documents detailing actress Winona Ryder's grand theft case and sensitive personal information is missing from the Santa Monica Courthouse.

A 28-page document called a "pre-conviction report" was reported by a courthouse employee on Thursday as stolen from a locked file cabinet in the probation department in Santa Monica.

Santa Monica Police Department Lt. Frank Fabrega confirmed that police responded to a call from the courthouse at 4:13 p.m. regarding a theft of a document. While the incident is currently classified as a burglary, Fabrega said it could be reclassified as a theft.

Los Angeles Superior Court Probation Department spokesman Ken Kondo said the case is under investigation and describes the document as missing.

The file, which has been sealed by Beverly Hills Superior Court Judge Elden Fox along with other court documents, details facts about Ryder's grand theft, vandalism and burglary charges. It provides information about Ryder's family relationships, financial status, prior arrests, medical history and probation recommendations, among other things.

"We are conducting our own investigation to find the cause and review our procedures. We are concerned that a high profile case was tampered with."

— KEN KONDO
Superior court probation dept. spokesman

Ryder, 31, was convicted by a Beverly Hills jury on Wednesday of grand theft and vandalism for stealing more than $5,000 worth of merchandise from Saks Fifth Avenue last year. The jury found Ryder not guilty of burglary.

"When the verdict came down, that's when they noticed that part of the file was missing," Kondo said, adding the file has been in the Santa Monica Courthouse since the beginning of the year when Ryder was first charged. The superior court system and Ryder's attorney, Mark Geragos, have back-up copies of the file, Kondo said.

Because the case is high profile with international and national media taking a strong interest in it, Judge Fox sealed the documents.

"These documents are still sealed and that is per the order of the judge in Beverly Hills," Kondo said. "Sentencing is Dec. 7 and after that, it becomes public after 90 days. But the document is not public record and has been ordered sealed."

Information about celebrities is worth a lot of money to those who can get access to it. Tabloid publications and other media have been known to pay thousands of dollars for confidential court documents regarding celebrities.

If information in the file was published, the entity or organization responsible could be held in contempt of court. Penalties could be severe, including jail time and fines, according to sources.

See FILE, page 5



Associated Press
Actress Winona Ryder outside of the Beverly Hills Courthouse this week.

High school student attacked by transient

By Daily Press staff

Police this week arrested a transient for allegedly attacking a Santa Monica High School sophomore while she was walking near campus during her lunch hour, according to police.

Neal Heistler, 54, was arrested by Santa Monica Police on Tuesday and charged with two counts of felony assault. He allegedly struck a 16-year-old female student in the face in the 700 block of Pico Boulevard, which is near the high school, at 12:40 p.m. He also struck a Samohi security officer twice who attempted to intervene, police said.

According to police, after the student was allegedly attacked, the security officer tried to hold him until police arrived. Heistler allegedly hit the security officer in the shoulder. While waiting for more officers to respond, the high school security officer followed Heistler on foot, when he allegedly hit the officer again in the face. Security officers detained Heistler until SMPD officers arrived, arrested him and booked him into jail.

Heistler is being held in the Santa Monica Jail on $20,855 bail on charges of felony assault and felony assault on a school employee. He had three outstanding traffic warrants in Los Angeles.

The season's first storm plunges California into mid-winter weather

BY JUSTIN PRITCHARD
Associated Press Writer

Waves nearing 30 feet crashed along the California coast, the Sierras braced for up to four more feet of snow and winds from the trio of storms jolted California into mid-winter on Thursday and Friday.

The systems had dumped up to 3 inches of rain in San Francisco Bay area cities and around 1 1/2 inches in Los Angeles. Mountainous areas got more — up to 8 inches in the Santa Cruz Mountains and around 4 inches in the foothills of the Ventura Mountains.

The second storm tapered off Friday morning in the Bay area and though another system was due Saturday the rain was expected to diminish through the weekend, the National Weather Service said.

But that was little consolation to drivers stuck Friday morning across the state as downed power lines and roadway flooding caused a miserable commute, or for the nearly 1.3 million Pacific Gas and Electric customers across Northern California who lost electricity at some point starting Wednesday night.

Power outages Friday morning hit San Francisco General Hospital and canceled some cases at the Contra Costa County courthouse. By Friday afternoon, 196,000 PG&E customers were still without power.

A rock slide closed the main route connecting the far north coast with south central Oregon in the area where fires stripped the hills of brush

See WEATHER, page 6



Andrew H. Fixmer/Daily Press
The wet weather didn't deter shoppers and visitors to the Third Street Promenade on Friday.

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HOROSCOPE

The party goes on and on, Pisces



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)
★★★★ Continue your optimistic appraisal of an special relationship in your life. Deal with those who are important in your life individually. Each person will appreciate your attention. Trust your ability to make others feel comfortable. Tonight: Take a bow. Others applaud.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Take off on a whim with a family member or loved one. You might love home base, but you also gain through a change of vistas! You feel good wherever you are. Enjoy yourself out of your normal setting. Welcome others into your plans. Tonight: Don't think you have to make it an early night.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Your efforts sometimes go unnoticed. Now your focus and energy clear out one problem after another. Help a friend deal with an emotional or financial matter, as you would like someone else to help you. Deal with others individually. Tonight: Enjoy that special person.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Others seek you out because they appreciate your gaiety and funlike nature. Realize that how someone else might see you could be very different from the concept you have of yourself. Let some good vibes in. Scratch plans that might seem like a drag. Tonight: Where the party is.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ Relax with a project on the home front. You don't have to have every moment, all weekend long, packed with action. You seem to have a good time whatever you're doing this afternoon. A family member or roommate needs some time alone with you. Tonight: Make a favorite dinner.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Your efforts come back in multiples right now. A new friend, child or loved one has much to share. Somehow you feel as if certain matters might not be in your hands. Your caring opens up what could be a very important talk. Tonight: Ever playful.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ A friend lets you know what he or she needs from you. You might be able to deliver even more, delighting this person and others. You're an innate cheerleader. Others seek you out. There is little you cannot do! Go for bottom lines. Tonight: Cozy at home.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Today's scenario highlights neighbors, communication and errands. Visit with others and catch up on news. Have coffee with a friend. Have lunch with another pal. Allow yourself to be a social butterfly and catch up with your many friends. Tonight: Out again.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Play Ralph Nader and check out a trip, new computer or car — whatever strikes your fancy. Live it up as if there is no tomorrow. Don't take another's idea personally. See how well you can work with it. Tonight: Your treat.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Use your strong personality to benefit others as well as yourself. A partner or dear friend teams up with you to make what you want and need possible. An opportunity comes through others who might be close to irresistible. Why resist? Tonight: Live life 100 percent.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ Give in to the inclination to have some downtime, if you can. Others certainly will not leave you alone. You might not be able to resist an invitation. Let the gregarious Aquarian out the door. Don't feel like you must entertain others, for a change. Tonight: You could vanish early!

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Friends surround you. As a result, a project that might drag gets an infusion of energy from those around you and their willingness to pitch in. Another's great idea could simplify your work, leaving you time for a get together. Tonight: The party goes on and on.

QUOTE of the DAY

"The worst thing about some men is that when they are not drunk they are sober."

— William Butler Yeats *(1865-1939)*

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Nomads wander into Santa Monica for home restoration

By Daily Press staff

Nomads from all over the country have taken to one of Santa Monica's oldest homes and the results are expected to be uplifting.

The historic Archer House, located in the Third Street Historic District, is getting a fresh look courtesy of retired United Methodists who have come from around the country.

Calling themselves NOMADS (Nice Old Methodists Always Doing Something, or Nomads on a Mission Active in Divine Service), a group of workers have traveled here in their recreational vehicles to help the Church at Ocean Park restore the 104-year-old Archer House.

The NOMADS, who are camping out at Dockweiler State Beach, will be here through Nov. 15 working on the house. They are the second group to work on the home. The first group, "RV'ers in Mission" arrived in mid-October and spent a week scraping and sanding the home so it could be painted. The group is made up mostly of Southern Californians who spend one week a month traveling around the lower half of the state donating their labor to similar projects.

The Church in Ocean Park began its renovation efforts in 1998, when a foundation was poured and supports were added to maintain the structure.

"We've been working on this project for four years — we've got a new roof, a foundation, a new porch and railing and have restored much of the interior as well," said Rev. Sandie Richards, the minister at Church in Ocean Park. "We are so grateful to these hard working folks for donating their labor, helping us to complete this project."

The Archer House was built by Alvin Archer in 1898. He served as the first captain of the Ocean Park firefighters. His wife, Louetta was the postmistress of Ocean Park. The house was one of the first buildings in the neighborhood.

The church bought the house from Archer's daughter, Buelah, in 1961. It was used as a teen drop-in center and later served as a homeless intake center and then a battered women's shelter for the Ocean Park Community Center. When OPCC moved its headquarters in 1997, the church began renovating the house to use it as a minister's residence.

The RV'ers in Mission donate one week each month for eight months a year and the NOMADS go out for three weeks at a time. They volunteer their time to help United Methodist churches maintain their properties.

surf report

Information compiled by Jesse Haley

Surf is in for a boom this weekend, but unfortunately conditions will be less than ideal, as rain causes pollution cnncerns and winds hurt shape.

Surf remains strong today, as building west-northwest swell hits Southern California hard. Northern spots see waist- to shoulder-high waves; some head-high sets on good tides, while spots in the south of L.A. County go off.

Expect head-high to over-head sets at El Porto.

Again, this surge in surf will likely be spoiled by poor weather conditions, wind and rain making surf dirty and choppy for the most part.

Winds are expected to mellow Sunday, but rain will likely persist.

If paddling out, check for updated beach advisories on http://lapublichealth.org/beach/.

Today's Tides:

High-	1:41 a.m.	3.50'
Low-	5:30 a.m.	2.96'
High-	11:42 a.m.	5.27'
Low-	7:48 p.m.	-0.06'

Location	Saturday	Sunday	Water Quality
County Line	4-5'/Fair	3-4'/Fair	B
Zuma	4-5'/Fair	3-4'/Fair	B
Surfrider	2-3'/Poor	2-3'/Poor	B-C
Topanga	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	B
Breakwater	4-5'/Poor	3-4'/Fair	C
El Porto	4-5'/Poor	3-5'/Fair	B-C

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Homework helpers needed

By Daily Press staff

If you've got some free time, you may want to consider volunteering to tutor and help local students with their homework.

The Santa Monica Tutorial Network will host a recruiting event on Wednesday, Nov. 20, to attract more volunteers in the community to help local students. The fair is scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at the Santa Monica YWCA, 2019 14th St.

The network is a group of private and public service providers, and agencies working together to strengthen homework and tutorial programs in the community by recruiting and training volunteers, share resources and make referrals.

The recruitment fair will offer interested persons an opportunity to meet with different community agencies to learn about the rewards of being a volunteer tutor/homework helper in academic areas like reading, writing and math. Volunteers are needed to work with students of all ages during their school day and in after-school programs located at the Boys and Girls Club of Santa Monica, the Police Activities League, Pico Neighborhood Youth Center, Virginia Avenue Park and YWCA.

After the recruitment fair, each organization will contact interested volunteers about further opportunities. Some agencies may require a minimum requirement commitment of time and because volunteers are working with youth, a volunteer must have a criminal background check.

"Being a volunteer has been a rewarding experience," said Harriet Cutler, a tutor for four years through Wise America Reads program at Roosevelt Elementary School, PAL and the school district summer intervention program.

"I am helping children reach their academic potential and providing them with the learning tools necessary to succeed in school and life."

For more information, call (310) 394-9871, ext. 452 or (310) 458-8701.

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OPINION

Being a neighbor to Starbucks has some on edge



AN OPEN LETTER TO HOWARD SCHULTZ, Chairman and Chief Global Strategist, Starbucks

Dear Howard:

I'd ask how you're doing, but I think we both know the answer to that already, don't we? You're happier than J-Lo in a Hall of Mirrors (and while we're at it, is there such a thing as "too much J-Lo" ... I think not!) Damn, dawg, 5,688 Starbucks stores worldwide, and counting. That's a hell of a lot of caramel macchiatos, isn't it? I mean, seriously, we've got, like, 200 or 300 of the damn places here in Santa Monica alone. Oops, sorry ... I cussed. You'll have to forgive me, it's just that ... well, Howie, it's just that I've got a bit of a bone to pick with Starbucks. Actually, that's not entirely accurate. Truth is,

I FREAKING HATE STARBUCKS!!!

There, I said it. I FREAKING HATE STARBUCKS! Again, Howie, I apologize for the naughty language, because I realize you may very well be an upstanding guy with strong family values, ties to all the right charities, and the whole bag of worms. But it feels SO GOOD to finally share my feelings with you. No kidding, man, I hold Starbucks in the same esteem as pop-up Internet ads, telemarketers and aggressive meter maids. Given a choice between a lifetime supply of Starbucks coffee, and a wicked case of West Nile disease, I say "bring on the mosquitos."

Now, you're probably thinking that my lack of Pure Love for Starbucks comes down to some lefty-political leanings or heartfelt concerns about driving mom-and-pop coffeehouses the way of the dinosaur. But you're wrong. I don't give a flying frappucino if your beans come from shade-grown, fair-trade fields where they're picked exclusively by virgins under a full moon. Nor do I give a damn if you drive every washed-up hippie out of the mild-but-legal stimulant game and back into University Studies where they belong. No my friend, I hate Starbucks because of your customers.

Especially those with unmonitored car alarms, who park under my window every morning. That's right, I live next to one of your Starbucks (and, dear readers take note, at the current rate or expansion one of every three buildings in the Developed World will be a Starbucks in about 22.3 years, give or take a week). What the hell do these people need with a keyless entry that blows the horn when they lock the door? Is their Volvo-separation anxiety so great they need that reassurance? Is it because the car can't actually wave goodbye as they head into the damn caffeine den?

And, judging by the lot below my window, it is YOUR CUSTOMERS who are responsible for the continued existence of the Swedish auto industry. How do you live with that on your record? Do you know the damage these people do? I know them in my bones ... they are the ones getting those safe-driver discounts and going the speed limit on the freeway, forcing those of us with more dynamic lives onto the shoulder of the road where cops write us up for "reckless endangerment" and "speeding in excess of sane limits" and "vehicular assault" just because we nick one or two idiots bicycling in rush hour.

Yes, I know them well, those decaf-swilling early risers who apparently don't understand that some morning "quiet time" needs to extend into the early afternoon. It's been years since they have been out until 4:30 a.m. with adult beverages and then suffered through the intensity of superhuman hearing hangovers — those hangovers that amplify the sound of those damn alarms to a point where it's like being inside the amps at a Gwar concert.

And for what? I know my share of carthieves, and you can bet they ain't gonna be seen driving around in some Swedish tank with two car seats in the back. I don't care if those suburb-buggies are bringing in big bank at the chop-shop, my guys aren't gonna risk being seen driving the damn thing, even if they're doing an O.J. with half the cop-shop popping caps on the evening news. When that crowd says they want to take twins for a ride, they mean something totally different.

So there you have it. Get rid of the customers and we've got no problem. Hell, some of my Best Friends are suppliers of stimulants! But my guess is you won't budge on that one, Howie. So I'm gonna sit here and train pigeons to shit on the hoods of those shiny mommy-mobiles, and I'm gonna stick pins into a Voodoo doll crafted from those wrap-around heat shields that keep those tender fingers from touching the cup. My printer is cranking out "free Starbucks coffee" fliers that I'm gonna hand out to homeless people this afternoon, and then I'll stop by a real diner for some non-designer java.

Thanks for your time, and for this column. Which I guess turned out to be good to the very last drop.

(Dan Dunn hates lots of things besides Starbucks. E-mail him at Dunn714@yahoo.com)

Reality is not all homeless are criminals as some suggest

Guest Commentary

By Michael Beattie

I was recently reading a book called "My Ishmael" that I found very enjoyable in that it presented many different and unique views about the problems and situations that, although diverse and varied, we all must face at some time in our individual lives.

The situations may be totally different but the problems are usually very similar. Take, for instance, the extremely difficult and rare ability to tell the truth about a given situation without personal embellishment or opinion. Now take that one step further and let's just call it an outright lie designed to make oneself look good in a situation where they were, in truth lacking. In other words, the ability to believe that something is true simply because we were told it was true by people we foolishly believe can only tell the truth and have no reason to lie. It may have been presented in such a way that we are led to believe that what were being told is the truth, or because we think that it just might be true.

Reality is usually distorted enough so that very few facts remain or are told. It's usually mixed with half-truth and supposition, even outright lies designed, for what ever reason, to purposely steer us away from the facts. Police, government officials, and business leaders are usually the main culprits of this accepted through abhorrent practices. There is one thing that this country does extremely well and with great expertise — propaganda. Material disseminated by the advocates or opponents of a doctrine or cause. Unfortunately there are unwitting victims of this practice and nowhere was this truer than in the letter written by Ms. Jan Tousignant on Oct. 31, 2002 concerning the unfortunate death of Leticia Vasquez. Santa Monica Daily Press also was an unfortunate victim of the half-truths propagated by officials who reported this incident.

At first I was outraged that Ms. Tousignant actually had the nerve to blame the homeless people attending the feeding at City Hall for the murder of Ms. Vasquez. My first thoughts were that this was a woman who was just so full of hate that she was blind to reality. Her statement about none of the homeless lifting a finger to help made me so angry that I called her every name in the book and even made up some new ones just for good measure. After thinking about it for a while, I came to the conclusion that this woman is just responding to what was reported and propagated by the SMPD. Unfortunately what was told and reported was just the usual lies and half-truths designed to make the SMPD look like true heroes and concerned servants of the public, while making the homeless look like non-caring bums who could care less about anything but their own personal apathy.

What I saw with my own eyes was a totally different set of events than was told to the Santa Monica Daily Press writer by the police department. You see Ms. Tousignant, the man who murdered Ms. Vasquez was not only accompanied by a social worker, who did nothing to stop the murder but cry, he was sitting on a bench away from all the homeless while waiting for his victim to arrive.

We all noticed him because the social worker just didn't fit in there. After a brief conversation with his victim away from everyone else, he brandished a knife and proceeded to murder his victim. While this was going on, many homeless people rushed over to help and one homeless person was successful in disarming the murderer and taking him to the ground restraining him. Albeit too late, for the murderer had already stabbed himself and was almost dead. At the same time a few more homeless ran into the police station and interrupted their morning briefing to report this murder in progress at which time the police responded.

The homeless had already had the situation under control. One started to perform CPR on the murderer and then realized that the victim was more important. Then he moved to the victim and performed CPR for approximately 10 minutes with tears streaming down his face the whole time. He refused to stop until the woman who runs the feeding took him by the shoulders and told him over and over, "It's too late, she's gone."

None of these facts were reported by the police and the truth was never told. As a direct result of propaganda, your belief was formed, and no doubt the beliefs of others also were affected. These are not insensitive and uncaring people that attempted to save the life of a victim of murder, Ms. Tousignant.

What we are told is not necessarily the truth, no matter who does the telling and especially when it comes down to issues that deal with homeless people or their impact and contribution to society. We are not animals, we are as human as you are with the same feelings and desires as everyone else and no matter what your personal belief may be. I am of the opinion that we all are important and each have something to contribute to this community.

Michael Beattie is homeless in Santa Monica and currently lives at Samohsel shelter.

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.

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LOCAL

Superior court conducting investigation into Ryder case

FILE, from page 1

"It's really up to the judge who sealed the documents," said Los Angeles Superior Court spokesman Kyle Christoperson "I don't know what possible action the judge would take."

The Santa Monica Courthouse, one of six locations in the Superior Court system on the westside, is routinely used as a place to hold sensitive documents in high profile cases, Kondo said.

While it is unknown how many people have access to the probation department, only one person holds the key to the file cabinet where the document has been for several months, Kondo said. He declined to reveal who that employee is because the incident is under investigation. Kondo couldn't say if the cabinet was opened with a key or if it was broken into.

"We are conducting our own investigation to find the cause and review our procedures," Kondo said. "We are concerned that a high profile case was tampered with.

"It's highly unusual that this kind of thing happens," he added. "It was in an office that doesn't have much traffic."

Geragos, Ryder's defense attorney, didn't return calls from the Daily Press on Friday. Judge Fox was unavailable for comment.

The two-time Academy Award nominee was arrested Dec. 12, 2001 as she left the Beverly Hills Saks, her arms laden with packages. The jury was showed videotapes of her wandering through boutiques and taking large amounts of clothes into dressing rooms.

At the start of her shopping, Ryder paid more than $3,000 for a jacket and two blouses. The defense claimed Ryder believed the store would keep her account "open" and charge her later. But there was no evidence of an account.

The videotapes did not show Ryder cutting off sensor tags with scissors, but a security guard testified she looked through door slats and witnessed the vandalism. Security staff also testified that after being caught, Ryder claimed a director had told her to shoplift to prepare for a movie role.

Geragos has said he will file a motion for a new trial on Dec. 6. The prosecution has said it won't seek jail time for Ryder, who has been treated for depression and exhaustion in the past.

Guards at two other stores observed Ryder, records show

BY LINDA DEUTSCH
AP Special Correspondent

BEVERLY HILLS — Winona Ryder was observed three times by security at stores in New York and Beverly Hills before her arrest at Saks Fifth Avenue in a case that resulted in her theft conviction, according to secret court transcripts released Friday.

The actress was never charged in the alleged incidents at Barneys in New York and Neiman Marcus in Beverly Hills, according to the documents.

Superior Court Judge Elden Fox released the transcripts of secret hearings in response to an appeals court decision in a case brought by The Associated Press, the Los Angeles Times and Los Angeles Daily Journal. The transcripts are not part of the sealed confidential documents that have been reportedly stolen from the Santa Monica Courthouse.

The transcripts showed that Deputy District Attorney Ann Rundle argued during a closed hearing on Oct. 24 that jurors should hear about Ryder's alleged "prior bad acts" in judging her behavior at Saks.

She said the three incidents, two of them recorded on security videotapes, showed Ryder behaving very similarly to the way she was seen perpetrating her crimes at Saks.

"In one of our prior instances, she was seen by security selecting a hat, wandering around the store with a hat and then walking out the door with the hat on her head without paying for it," Rundle said, "which is an almost identical act to what she is being charged with in this case."

Rundle told the judge: "We have videotapes of two prior instances wherein she is seen doing the identical conduct that they will see on the video in our case ... selecting items, concealing those items underneath heavy garment bags or underneath her own clothing, in and out of dressing rooms and ultimately walking out of the store without paying for the item."

She said the instances occurred at Barneys of New York on May 14, 2000, and on Oct. 10, 2001, and Nov. 29 at the Neiman Marcus store in Beverly Hills.

Ryder was detained by security guards at the Beverly Hills Saks Fifth Avenue on Dec. 12, 2001, after she left the store with more than $5,000 in merchandise she had not paid for. She was convicted this week of felony grand theft and vandalism.

According to the transcripts, Rundle argued that each prior act was close in time to the date of her arrest and "each of these acts is relevant to refute the defense that this was merely a mistake."

Rundle said she wanted to use the prior acts to head off a defense argument that Ryder thought she had paid for the items.

"Given that defense, the people are entitled ... to refute that defense by introducing prior bad acts which show a lack of mistake," she said. "They also show a very common plan or scheme in how Ms. Ryder perpetrates her thefts."

Rundle noted that in the Saks case Ryder would be seen on videotape selecting a hat, wearing it around the store, in and out of dressing rooms, and then placing the hat in her shopping bag as she walks out the door.

Ryder's attorney, Mark Geragos, argued against admission of the incidents.

"She's never been detained. She's never been arrested. I've watched the videotape. There's nothing on the videotape," Geragos said, claiming the prosecution was just trying to "throw in more garbage" because it had a weak case.

Judge Fox ruled that the evidence could not be admitted at the trial because it would be "far more prejudicial than probative."

"Allowing it in ... the court believes would impair the defendant's ability to have a fair trial," Fox said.

How those stores and Ryder resolved the incidents was not stated in the transcripts.

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Local Sports

Execution, defense key for SMC women's Basketball

BY JESSE HALEY
Special to the Daily Press

Santa Monica College's women's basketball team will rely on the experience of its sophomore athletes and the talent of key incoming freshman to create what the athletic program hopes will amount to a game winning combination.

A core of returning forwards and guards — Jacquana Young, Johana Barahona and Afton Thompson — anchor the Corsairs, while 6' 2" tall freshman Rhonda Johnson adds some much needed height at center.

SMC's roster includes four legitimate division one prospects in 5' 9" tall forward Barahona, 6' 0" tall forward Young, 5' 5" tall guard Sheena Manimtim, and 5' 4" tall point guard Thompson.

"It's not about ability," said rookie assistant coach Margo Clark, former player for the WNBA's Sacramento Monarchs. "But (about) execution, and defense."

In preseason practices, head coach Lydia Strong emphasized defensive drills, focusing on a 1-2-1 zone among others, to familiarize freshman with game situations, and prepare her team to begin the upcoming season.

"If we have a strong first couple of games it'll build our confidence," Johnson said.

Barahona, a sophomore, seems to already posses a high level of confidence in this year's roster.

"We have heart, that's going to take us a long way," she said. "We have a lot of individual talent, more height, more speed, and we're stronger than last year."

In addition to the current line up, Emi Heaton, a star of the playoff bound Lady Corsair volleyball team, also will don a blue and white jersey. The 5' 9" tall forward should join the basketball team on a full-time basis in about a month, after the conclusion of volleyball's postseason play.

Whether SMC's young female athletes can achieve their full potential on the court may depend on experience, though assistant coach Clark places more importance on other factors when it comes to the team's success.

"I'm not concerned about age, but (our players) collectively as a team and where we are defensively," Clark said.

First year players seem to be having little trouble adjusting to their sophomore teammates' styles and the Lady Corsair dynamic.

"It's like (the freshmen) have already been here before." Young said.

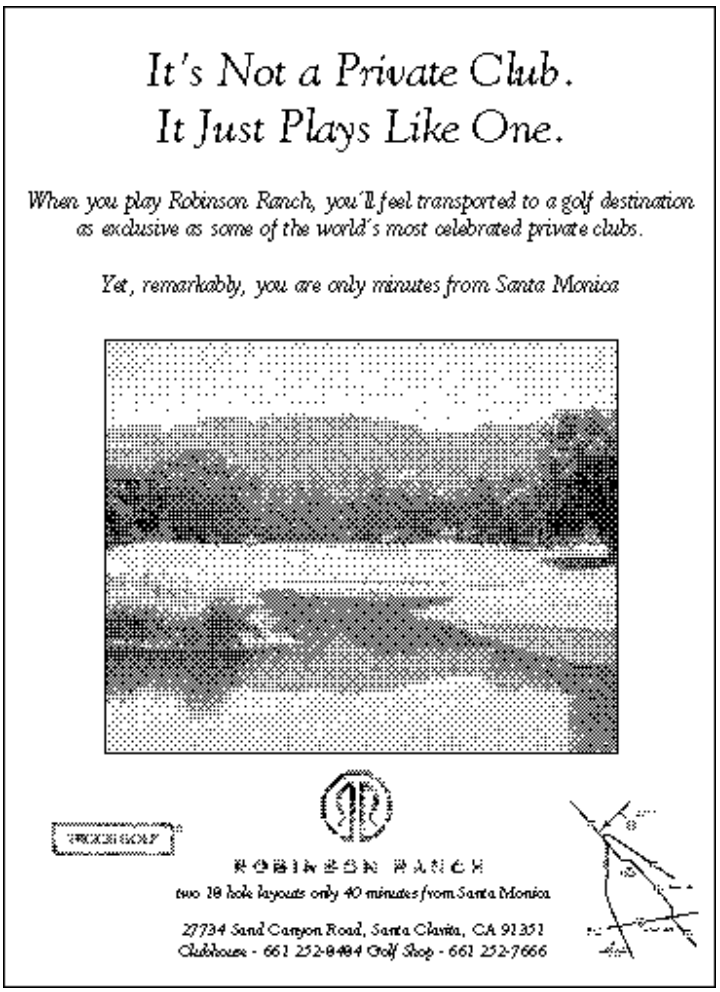
"The test will be Friday," Clark added.

Thursday through Sunday, the Lady Corsairs compete in the San Diego Mesa Tournament.

For a few it represents a first outing in junior college basketball, but for those returning, it's a chance to see how this season's team will match up against opponents.

The Lady Corsairs play a season opener Wednesday at LA City College, and an SMC double header Saturday, Nov. 16 against Compton College at 5:30 p.m., to be followed at 7 p.m. by the men's first home game against LA Harbor College.





Rains will help ease drought

WEATHER, from page 1

over the summer. Only one lane of U.S. Highway 199 was reopened Friday afternoon, with police escorting drivers.

In Nevada, the first major winter storm of the season slowed traffic over the Sierra and soaked the western part of the state with much-needed rain. A flash flood watch was in effect in the lower areas around Lake Tahoe, particularly in areas hit hard by summer fires.

The weather service said between two and four feet of snow would fall around Lake Tahoe Saturday.

Prospects of diminishing wind and rain buoyed the hopes of 36,000 Rolling Stones fans who paid up to $304 per ticket to see rock's elder statesmen play Pacific Bell Park. The concert's promoters said they would play through rain, but must cancel if winds gust above 40 mph.

"We're watching the weather report very closely," said Sherry Wasserman, executive senior vice president of promoter Bill Graham Presents. "We're still going forward with the date. Right now, the show is on."

Ryan Walbrun, a National Weather Service meteorologist, made no guarantees but said he thought things looked good.

"If they go on at 8 or 9 o'clock, I would say I think they're going to be OK," Walbrun said. Even if the wind subsides, he added, "It's going to be kind of a raw night to watch the Stones."

Walbrun said that Friday's storm was the second of three waves expected to sweep across the region from the Gulf of Alaska that were more typical of February storms in the region.

The third storm won't be nearly as impressive, he said, and won't likely drop more than half an inch of rain before it blows out Sunday.

"The worst of the weather is kind of winding down," he said.

That was bad news for surfers and skiers.

Lake Tahoe-area resorts were beaming — Boreal, the only slopes open thus far, planned to expand skiing to its top elevations Saturday. South of Yosemite National Park, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area rejoiced that nearly a foot of new snow coincided with its Thursday opening.

At the Mavericks surf break near Half Moon Bay, an early afternoon high tide had surfers talking major waves — and had the weather service worried about minor coastal flooding. The storm generated waves large enough to send surfers scrambling for their boards as far north as Seattle.

"We're watching the weather report very closely. We're still going forward with the date. Right now, the (Rolling Stones concert) is on."

— SHERRY WASSERMAN
Promoter, Bill Graham Presents

The storm continued to vex air traffic. The Fresno airport reported rain delays of an hour to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

While Southern Californians received a lighter dousing, the storm took many by surprise.

Flooded freeways created a commuter nightmare Friday with jackknifed trucks, overturned buses, spun-out cars and scores of fender benders. In Temecula, a charter bus ferrying 38 gamblers from an Indian casino overturned.

Along the coast, the 12-foot waves pummeling Southern California shores were a boon to surfers. But in San Luis Obispo, the storm-tossed seas caused a precautionary powering-down of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. Officials feared seaweed propelled by the waves would clog the intake pipes of the plant's cooling system.

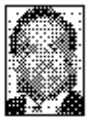
Residents of Glendora in the San Gabriel foothills, where wildfires raged earlier this year, erected sandbag barriers in anticipation of mudflows and runoff waters.

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STATE

Closing arguments begin in super agent Steinberg lawsuit

BY DANNY POLLOCK
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — A trusted friend and business partner conspired to steal dozens of lucrative football clients from sports super agent Leigh Steinberg for their own business and sell it for as much as $80 million in several years, a lawyer argued Friday.

In final arguments of Steinberg's $40 million lawsuit against David Dunn, attorney Brock Gowdy detailed an alleged "game plan" executed by Dunn and partner Brian Murphy to steal clients, employees and documents from Steinberg's firm and blackmail him so he would not try to get them back.

"This is a case about betrayal and it's a case about blackmail," Gowdy said.

The defense closing arguments were to be presented later in the day.

Gowdy contended that Dunn breached his contract with the firm of Steinberg, Moorad & Dunn soon after he signed a new contract worth $7 million that included a $2 million signing bonus and a clause that forbade Dunn to compete with Steinberg's firm, widely acknowledged as the most successful agency representing athletes in several sports.

Gowdy told the eight-member federal court jury that Dunn broke that agreement to found the firm Athletes First and compete against Steinberg.

"Dunn and Murphy deliberately orchestrated the destruction of Steinberg's football practice and took it for themselves," Gowdy said.

Gowdy said they went as far as hiring a public relations firm to see that the information was distributed to the media if Steinberg tried to take legal action. Among that information was the fact that Steinberg had a drinking problem.

Dunn joined Steinberg's firm in 1991 and with the help of Steinberg developed into one of the premier sports agents in the country, and in the process promised his loyalty, Gowdy said.

However, Dunn eventually broke his contractual promises and his personal promises, Gowdy said.

Gowdy said that before Dunn resigned from SMD he had already approached NFL players including quarterback Kordell Stewart, running back Warrick Dunn and tight end Tony Gonzalez in violation of the non-compete clause.

Steinberg, a model for Tom Cruise's flamboyant sports agent in the movie "Jerry Maguire," has represented dozens of star athletes.

But lawyers for Dunn and his co-defendants claim that Steinberg, despite his reputation, has seen his role in dealmaking dwindle in recent years. They say it was Dunn who actually did much of the work.

Thousands of pigs to be fenced in, killed on Santa Cruz Island

By The Associated Press

VENTURA — An effort to eliminate up to 4,000 wild pigs on Santa Cruz Island has begun after four years of planning.

"I am just thrilled to have it underway," said Lynn Lozier, Santa Cruz Island project director for The Nature Conservancy. "This is the first tangible piece of restoring the island to its original condition. The presence of the pigs is central to all the problems we face on the island."

Officials began fencing the island last month. The project, which will cost $2.1 million, is expected to take five to seven years to complete.

Biologists said the pigs are preventing an ecological restoration effort on the island because they dig deep holes, strip bark from rare trees and uproot Indian artifacts. The pigs also attract non-native golden eagles, which dine on piglets and the endangered island fox.

Once the pigs are trapped inside the fences, they will be stalked and shot by contract hunters.

Santa Cruz is the largest of the eight Channel Islands and is owned by The Nature Conservancy and Channel Islands National Park.

The pigs were brought to the island in the 1850s by a farmer. Between 1990 and 1993, the park service killed about 1,100 wild pigs on nearby Santa Rosa Island. A similar anti-swine effort is underway on Santa Catalina Island, which put up 17 miles of pig-proof fencing in 1999.

But the program has drawn the ire of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, an organization that has suggested shooting the pigs with contraceptive darts to eradicate them over time.

"We are not arguing that they don't need to do something about the pigs, we are arguing with their methods," said Stephanie Boyles, a PETA wildlife biologist. "The animals are totally innocent here. There is no reason their numbers can't be brought down in a more humane and progressive way. The park service is rushing this."

Nun directing traffic killed in hit-and-run

By The Associated Press

DESCANSO — A woman trying to drive her car up a steep road lost control of her vehicle and ran over and killed a nun who was directing traffic below, authorities said.

The car Frances Wager was driving was having trouble going forward, California Highway Patrol Sgt. Tim Santillan said.

The car rolled down the hill and struck the nun, whose identity was not released pending notification of her family. No one else was injured in the accident that occurred around 11 a.m. Thursday, Santillan said.

The nun belonged to the Sisters of Social Services order in San Diego, which was hosting a seminar at this town about 40 miles east of San Diego.

Wager, 77, told officers she was trying to shift her automatic transmission into low gear when the car started backing up, Santillan said.

Two passengers in her car, however, told a different story.

They told officers that Wager put the car in reverse, Santillan said.

Authorities interviewed up to 30 people who may have witnessed the accident and were inspecting the car, which continued rolling another 50 feet after running over the nun and crashed into a rock wall.

DID YOU KNOW?: Muslims are banned from looking at the genitals of a corpse. This also applies to undertakers; the sex organs of the deceased must be covered with a brick or piece of wood at all times.

NATIONAL

Pharmaceutical industry benefits from Republican win

BY THERESA AGOVINO
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — There's no doubt that the pharmaceutical industry triumphed along with the Republican party in this week's election.

But it wasn't the kind of victory deserving of the finest champagne— a mellow wine would be more appropriate.

Experts say the pharmaceutical industry's heavy spending in the election paid off in a Republican Congress that will certainly be more sympathetic to its views. But they caution that if pharmaceutical companies try to get severe limits on a Medicare drug benefit or block reforms to help the generic industry, there could be a serious backlash, including the price controls they fear.

"The pharmaceutical companies spent a lot of money, and they are going to be looking for pay back," said Stephen Schondelmeyer, director of the PRIME Institute at the University of Minnesota, which studies the drug industry. "I'm sure they are elated right now."

Investors are also optimistic. Pharmaceutical stocks rose an average of 2.25 percent in the two days following the election compared with a 1.12 percent increase in the overall market, according to Morningstar.com

Schondelmeyer said the euphoria could be short-lived.

Since Republicans control the Congress and the White House, it will be much harder for them to blame Democrats if they fail to deliver relief from high drug prices. Progress could be blocked by the federal deficit and Republicans' narrow majority in Senate, and inaction could reflect badly on an industry so closely aligned with the administration.

The pharmaceutical industry was the ninth largest political contributor during the 2002 election. Seventy-three percent of the $18.1 million it doled out went to Republican candidates, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

It also reportedly funneled $16 million to two senior citizens' groups that ran ads supporting Republican candidates. The industry won't confirm the figure but says it did provide United Seniors and The 60 Plus Association with grants. Neither group returned calls for comment.

Creating a Medicare drug benefit is expected to be the first health care issue addressed by the Congress. Industry, Democrats and Republicans all support a benefit but differ over how it should be administered.

Pharmaceutical companies favor a benefit because it will broaden their market and increase sales. They want the plan to be managed by the private sector instead of the Federal government. Federal control, the companies fear, could result in price controls.

The Republican-controlled House passed a Medicare drug benefit over the summer that would have been controlled by the private sector. But the Democratic-controlled Senate sought a more generous, government-administrated approach.

Ira Loss, executive vice president of Washington Analysis, which provides research for institutional investors, said the industry might be wise to offer significant discounts to the program upfront if they want to avoid calls for price controls later on.

Schondelmeyer adds that there would be a risk in limiting the program to disadvantaged seniors because drug costs are a burden for other age groups, too.

Legislation that would ease generic drugs' entry onto the market isn't expected to be addressed immediately. That's because President Bush last month proposed regulations that would close some of the legal loopholes pharmaceutical companies use to block generic drugs from coming to market.

Some dismissed the action as pre-election posturing because the President failed to support a bill passed by the Senate that was similar to his proposal. Drug companies can tie up the issue in court for years.

Student in check scheme sentenced to 2 years

BY MARYCLAIRE DALE
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Most students hope to avoid college calculus.

But Alexander Odom Jr. eagerly signed up for the summer class at the University of Pennsylvania in August 1998.

By the end of the month, he was good enough with numbers to finagle $2,990 from the student credit union, prosecutors say.

Odom, 27, spent the last five years as an itinerant student, staying at more than a dozen schools just long enough to get a student ID card, open a bank or credit union account — and write bad checks.

The scheme took Odom from Stanford University in California to the University of Wisconsin to New York University, netting him $85,000 — and, after Wednesday's sentencing, two years in federal prison.

"There was a pattern of schools that he would hit and defraud in a serial fashion," said Martin Carlson, First Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

The 14 bank fraud cases, including one at Penn State, were consolidated in Williamsport. Odom deposited $4,535 in worthless checks at the Penn State Federal Credit Union in May 2000, and withdrew $4,225 within three days, according to the indictment.

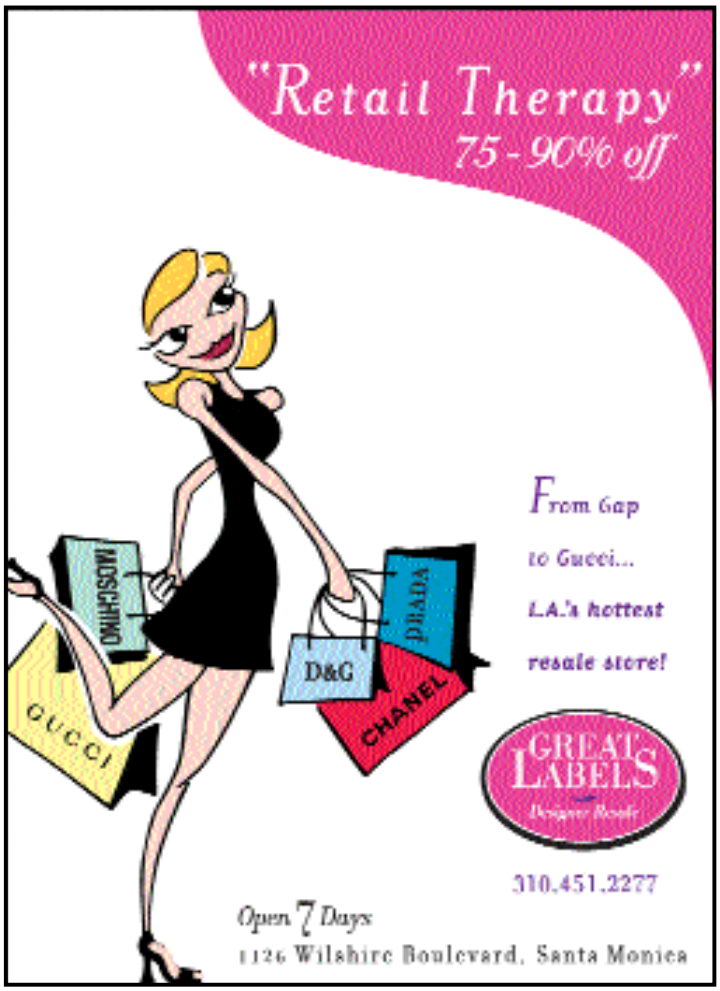
Odom, who grew up in Fairmont, N.C., mostly used his real name, although he used four different Social Security numbers, authorities said.

Neither prosecutors nor Odom's lawyer know if he ever accumulated any credits, or how he gained admission to the schools.

"There were some good schools there," said G. Scott Gardner, the court-appointed defense lawyer, who described his client as bright.

Odom was also ordered to pay $53,000 restitution to the banks and credit unions seeking repayment. So far, authorities have not recouped any of the money.







NATIONAL

The famous don't like prison

BY PAUL SINGER
Associated Press Writer

ELKTON, Ohio — Even at a fancy federal prison like the Elkton Federal Correctional Institution, the night life is lousy. It's lights out at 9:30 p.m.

For future Elkton inmate Vincent "Buddy" Cianci Jr., the flamboyant former mayor of Providence, R.I., and others used to the limelight, the glare of prison floodlights marks not just a loss of freedom, but a complete revolution in lifestyle.

Manhattan publicist Lizzie Grubman, darling of the New York tabloids, backed her luxury SUV into a crowd outside a trendy Long Island nightclub in July 2001. She is now serving a 40-day jail sentence in an isolation cell intended to protect her from prison violence, according to her lawyer Stephen Scaring.

"She's toughing it out. She hasn't complained once," Scaring said.

Cianci is scheduled to arrive at Elkton on Dec. 6 to begin a five-year sentence for racketeering. He is appealing his conviction.

Cianci — who has a radio talk show and his own line of pasta sauce with his face on the jar — currently lives in the Presidential Suite at his city's swank downtown Biltmore Hotel.

He once described to a reporter the advantages of hotel living: "They turn the bed down at night, they leave a chocolate and the weather report in the room for me, and I can walk to work."

If he goes to Elkton, Cianci will give up his private room for a cubicle shared with up to three other men. No TV, no private bath, and they don't turn down the bed.

Philip Berrigan, a peace activist who spent several months at Elkton in 2001 for attacking military aircraft with a hammer, says as prisons go, it's a nice place.

"The food, for institutional food, is very good," he said. "You get at least a piece of fruit every day, sometimes two." It has a top-notch fitness program and a nice view of the nearby wooded hills.

Cianci, 61, would have to surrender the thick salt and pepper toupee that he has admitted to wearing, but in this he would not be alone.

James A. Traficant Jr., 61, who represented Elkton in Congress for 18 years before being convicted on racketeering charges in April and being kicked out of the House, had to give up his trademark hairpiece when he went to prison. In August, he began serving an eight-year sentence at the Allenwood Federal Correctional Institution in White Deer, Pa.

Friend and occasional adviser Don L. Hanni, who has visited Traficant in prison, said a khaki prison uniform and black steel-toed shoes have replaced Traficant's trademark denim suits and worn cowboy boots. He had declined interviews.

At another federal prison 1,200 miles south, the federal Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas, former Louisiana Gov. Edwin Edwards, 75, this month began a 10-year racketeering sentence.

Edwards, who served in the state Senate, the U.S. House of representatives and four terms as governor, had a reputation as a playboy with penchant for gambling and womanizing.

He has said he plans to work on his memoirs and expects to be "a model prisoner." He did not respond to a request for an interview.

Ron Cohen, a former inmate at the Fort Worth prison who now helps prepare white collar criminals for prison time, said for people used to the high life, the hardest part of prison is living by strict rules.

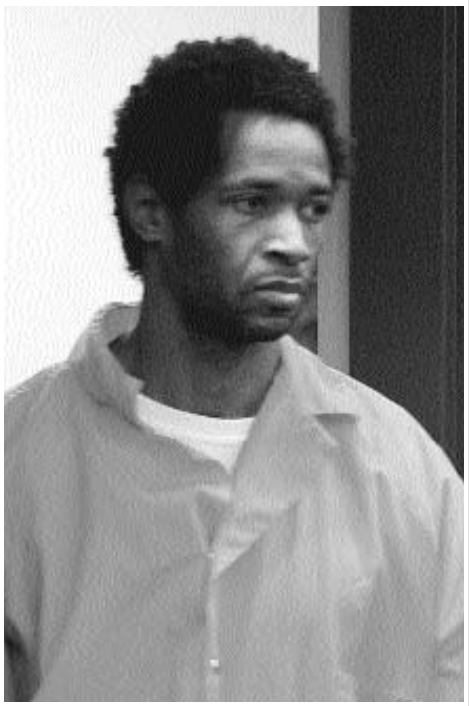
"They are going to find that you can't buck the system in federal prison," Cohen said. "They are going to have the same rules, the same regulations, the same lifestyle as anybody else."

But the politicians share a history that may help them with their fellow prisoners. They all spent years bucking the federal government, and Berrigan said that may be a badge of honor at prison.

"They only have one enemy in the federal joint and that's the federal government," Berrigan said. "Anybody who's stood up to the federal government is OK with them."

Even Grubman, who once boasted she had 87 pairs of designer pants and 67 pairs of designer shoes, has found a way to bond with the prison population. Her lawyer said she is teaching computer classes to the other inmates.

His day in court



Dave Ellis/Associated Press

John Allen Muhammad arrives in the Prince William Circuit Court, before Judge Herman A. Whisenant, Jr., for a hearing where he is charged with the Oct. 9 slaying of Dean Meyers in Manassas, Va., on Friday. U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft announced Thursday that suspects in the sniper shootings Muhammad and John Malvo will be tried in Virginia courts.

War looming



David Karp/Associated Press

U.N. Security Council members unanimously approve a new Iraq resolution, aimed at forcing Saddam Hussein to disarm or face "serious consequences" that would almost certainly mean war, during a Security Council meeting on Friday, at the United Nations.

Venezuelan government and opposition begin talks

BY CHRISTOPHER TOOTHAKER
Associated Press Writer

HATILLO, Venezuela — Venezuela's government began talks Friday with opposition leaders to stem a growing political crisis, but the two sides were sharply divided and a quick agreement appeared unlikely.

President Hugo Chavez has already rejected the opposition's central demand that he submit to a popular referendum on his rule.

The president of the country's main labor federation, Carlos Ortega, said the talks "would be stillborn" if the government blocks the early referendum. Ortega, who is not among the six opposition negotiators, threatened to call a nationwide strike if that happened.

On Monday, the opposition battled through Chavez supporters in downtown Caracas to deliver more than 2 million signatures to the National Elections Council demanding the nonbinding referendum. Dozens were hurt by gunfire, rocks and tear gas during the melee.

The negotiations are considered crucial to averting chaos in Venezuela, the fifth largest oil producer in the world and a major supplier to the United States.

The constitution says a referendum on Chavez's presidency can only be held halfway into his six-year term, or next August. Opponents want to push ahead with the proposal anyway because they believe Chavez will be so embarrassed by the results that he'll step down.

Rising unemployment, a collapse in the national currency, the unsolved slayings of dozens during a brief April coup and a paralyzed judicial system fuel opposition claims that Chavez no longer can govern.

Vice President Jose Vicente Rangel, who is leading the government negotiating team, told The Associated Press that the opposition was misleading Venezuelans with the referendum demand.

"I believe they've deceived a good number of Venezuelans, making them believe that with these signatures, with a referendum, that they will force the president's exit," Rangel said Thursday. "That does not correspond with the constitutional reality of this country."

Foreign Minister Roy Chaderton, among the six government delegates, said the Chavez administration had an "open agenda" at the talks.

Venezuela has been crippled by massive protests and strikes staged by Chavez's opponents. The failed coup last April saw Chavez booted from power and then restored after two days.

Israel's army has Jenin town in a choke hold

BY JAMIE TARABAY
Associated Press Writer

JENIN, West Bank — Israel's renewed occupation of Jenin — now in its third week — has left its mark everywhere: tanks have knocked down electricity poles and palm trees lining streets, and a military curfew confines tens of thousands of residents to their homes.

Israel says it has no choice but to keep what it calls the "capital of terror" in a chokehold. A disproportionately large number of suicide bombers have come from Jenin and its adjacent refugee camp by the same name.

"The minute you open the road, you get two, three, four bombers a day," said Raanan Gissin, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The Palestinians say the Israeli measures are excessive and counterproductive.

"The presence of the army in Jenin will not stop operations inside Israel. If they leave and hand it back to us, the operations (attacks) would cease," said the Jenin governor, Haider Arshaid, pausing while an armored vehicle rumbled by his home.

In the past two years of fighting, Israeli troops have repeatedly entered Jenin, a stronghold of militias linked to Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement. In a major military offensive in April, the deadliest battle raged in the adjacent Jenin camp, with 52 Palestinians and 23 Israeli soldiers killed.

The London-based human rights group Amnesty International alleged this week that Israeli forces committed war crimes in Jenin and the city of Nablus during the April offensive. Israel says it acted in self-defense against Palestinian militants.

Israeli troops returned to Jenin in the summer, as part of another West Bank offensive, and again on Oct. 25, several days after two teenage suicide bombers from Jenin blew themselves up next to an Israeli bus, killing 14 Israelis.

During the latest raid, troops took over dozens of buildings and demolished several homes of terror suspects, including those of the two recent suicide bombers. Dozens of alleged militants have been arrested in house-to-house searches.

About 50,000 people live in Jenin and another 13,000 in the nearby camp.

For Jenin Mayor Walid Abu Mowais, the Israeli presence is an administrative nightmare. "If they destroyed 70 percent of Jenin's infrastructure in April, they finished the rest this time," said Abu Mowais.

One day this week, he was in touch with municipality workers by walkie-talkie to get updates on repairs to electricity poles knocked down by tanks or damaged in sporadic fighting between troops and local gunmen. The army says the damage to the poles is inadvertent because some streets are too narrow for tanks.

Outside Mowais' home, a young boy jumped puddles while others booted around a deflated soccer ball despite the curfew. At the sound of roaring engines, they scurried into doorways, thinking it was the sound of an army patrol. The curfew in Jenin has been lifted only three times in the past two weeks, for several hours each.

Most of Jenin has been without running water since mid-October because of a technical problem with the pump in the main well. The Jenin governor said Israel has kept a repair team from coming from the town of Ramallah.

However, USAID, an American aid organization, said repairs were proceeding and would be completed in two weeks. Peter Lerner, an Israeli army official, said municipality workers are able to move around despite the curfew to make repairs.

In the meantime, most Jenin residents rely on water tankers winding through the narrow alleyways. Some are still waiting their turn.

"We've had no water for 10 days," said Hassan al Qassam, dragging on a cigarette in his living room. He and his family of seven children get by on water supplied from neighbors and the odd bucket catching rain water, he said.

Tahani Abu Roub, 25, a mother of two, said tanks are deployed just 100 yards from her home, making it difficult to sneak out during curfew. She said prices have risen sharply in the local markets because of shortages, noting that she paid $4 for a chicken, double the normal price.

Gissin, the Sharon adviser, said Israel had no intention of staying in Jenin indefinitely. "When the security forces are satisfied that we have brought the terrorist activity down to a reasonable, manageable level and we can leave the city and control it from outside, we will do it," he said.

Palestinians say the current siege is far worse than the one in April, particularly with the start of Ramadan, Islam's holy month, earlier this week.

Normally a time for prayer, fasting and family, Palestinians will miss out on many holiday observances — presents, sweets and extravagant dinners to break daily fasts.

Billionaire denies insider knowledge in Societe Generale case

BY VERENA VON DERSCHAU
Associated Press Writer

PARIS — American billionaire investor George Soros, on trial in a 14-year-old insider trading case, told a court Friday that he did not have privileged information when he bought shares in French bank Societe Generale.

Soros and two other businessmen are on trial at the Paris Criminal Court, accused of benefiting from insider knowledge when they bought the bank stock in 1988 before a failed takeover that pushed up the price.

"I have been in business all my life, and I think I know what is insider trading and what isn't," said the president of Soros Fund Management, in court with six defense lawyers.

Asked whether he had ever been accused of insider trading in another case, Soros replied, "No, never."

Hungarian-born Soros has been on trial since Thursday along with two others: Jean-Charles Naouri, former head of the office of France's then-Finance Minister Pierre Beregovoy; and Lebanese businessman Samir Traboulsi. Both contest the charges.

Societe Generale was privatized in 1987. A year later, its stock price went up during an unsuccessful takeover bid. The defendants are accused of having obtained insider information before the abortive corporate raid pushed up the stock price.

Soros, 72, took the stand for 20 minutes Friday, speaking through a French interpreter. He has been under investigation for 12 years in the case. A prosecutor said the case has dragged on because Swiss authorities took years to respond to requests for information.

Soros said he was interested in Societe Generale based on information he said was widely known at the time: France's new leftist government favored takeovers to change leadership at major French companies that had recently been privatized.

At the time, Soros said he was buying up stock in many companies and had no reason not to include Societe Generale. Afterward, he sold the stock because he felt the takeover attempt was motivated by the wrong reasons.

Soros is accused of making $2.2 million on the transaction.

Soros was reportedly the first American to earn a billion dollars in a single year. Born in Hungary in 1930, he emigrated to the United States in 1956 and became a citizen five years later. In 1973, he established the Soros Fund Management with Quantam its principal fund. He has spent recent years engaged in philanthropy.

SPORTS

Clijsters sends Henin packing in WTA Championships

BY BETH HARRIS
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — Bride-to-be Justine Henin headed home early to prepare for her upcoming wedding after a 6-2, 6-1 loss to Kim Clijsters in an all-Belgian quarterfinal at the WTA Championships on Friday.

No. 2 Venus Williams met sixth-seeded Monica Seles in an all-American matchup Friday night. The winner will play the fifth-seeded Clijsters on Sunday in the semifinals of the season-ending tournament.

Henin offered little resistance against her childhood friend. Clijsters owns a 5-2 record in their rivalry with three of her wins coming this year.

"Maybe that's the worst I've ever played against her," said Henin, a friend of Clijsters' since they were youngsters who traveled and roomed together at junior tournaments.

"Those matches are never easy," Clijsters said. "There's always a bit of tension because I know her so well. But that's tennis. We can't choose how the draw was made."

Henin committed 33 unforced errors in front of a sparse afternoon crowd at Staples Center, where a leak in the 20,000-seat arena's roof caused rain to drop on a third-row seat that wasn't occupied.

"I was really tired. I was sweating a lot and that's not normal for me," Henin said. "It's the end of the season. Everybody is tired. When you're in the top 16, it means you've played a lot of matches."

Henin, 20, plans to wed Pierre-Yves Hardenne next Saturday in Belgium. But she said she was focused on the tennis ball and not wedding bells.

"I completely forgot that I'm getting married next week," she said. "That's not the reason."

"There's always a bit of tension because I know (Justine Henin) so well. But that's tennis. We can't choose how the draw was made."

— KIM CLIJSTERS
Pro tennis player

Clijsters is on the guest list, although she'll be attending alone since boyfriend and men's No. 1 Lleyton Hewitt will be in Shanghai for the ATP Tour's season-ending championships.

What would it mean if Clijsters and Hewitt each won their tour's respective championship?

"It would be nicer if it was in the same facility," she said. "You would notice it a little more but now he's so far away."

After a season stuffed with 67 tournaments in 33 countries, many of the 16 players at the championships have complained of being tired and are eager for the tennis year to end.

Not the 19-year-old Clijsters.



Kevork Djansezian/Associated Press

Serena Williams returns a shot against Anna Smashnova of Israel in the first round of WTA Championships at the Staples Center on Thursday in Los Angeles. Williams won, 6-2, 6-2.

"It's your last few matches so I'm really motivated to try to finish the year on a positive note," she said. "I feel fine. Maybe some of the other players are really looking forward to going home. I know next week I'll have a few days off."

Clijsters hit deep groundstrokes and played angles that forced Henin off the court. She won 71 percent of her trips to the net and held a 15-5 edge in winners.

USC Trojans hope to come out strong after bye week

BY JANIE MCCAULEY
AP Sports Writer

STANFORD — Stanford might be one of Southern California's easier opponents this season. That certainly doesn't mean the Trojans are taking this one lightly — especially since USC has lost three straight games to the Cardinal.

"It's a big game, to this point the biggest game of the year, because every one counts," Trojans tailback Justin Fargas said. "We have to be able to pick up where we left off. We really have to be sharp and execute and come back with intensity. We can't be laid back because we had some time off."

Stanford (2-6, 1-4 Pac-10) has won the past three meetings against USC (6-2, 4-1) by a total of 11 points.

The 10th-ranked Trojans are determined to come out strong after a week off. In October, they beat California and Washington at home, then won at Oregon. Their only loss was by three points in overtime to fifth-ranked Washington State in Pullman.

"We know that if we lose one game, we have no shot at the Rose Bowl," said USC quarterback Carson Palmer, who has beaten the Cardinal only once in his career.

It could be another big day for Palmer against Stanford's defense, which hasn't been able to slow down teams with any consistency in coach Buddy Teevens' first year. Palmer, a senior, set three school records two weeks ago in his team's 44-33 win at Oregon as the Trojans racked up 608 yards of offense with 31 first downs. Freshman receiver Mike Williams made 13 receptions for 226 yards, both career bests.

"Everyone's practicing hard," Williams said. "A lot of teams get a bye week and come out kind of slow. It kind of takes them a quarter or two. Sometimes they never recover. We're trying to make sure we get game speed."

Stanford, which has been outscored 69-32 in losing its last two games, hopes to have starting quarterback Chris Lewis back taking snaps Saturday. He has missed the last two games with a bruised shoulder, and backup Kyle Matter has started.

Preparing for both players is a challenge, USC coach Pete Carroll said, noting Stanford has shown many different looks on offense and defense this fall.

"Coming out of the bye, we have to get back on track and keep our edge," Carroll said. "I feel good about what's going on. I like the response from the people who follow our program."

Teevens' team has been eliminated from bowl contention after the Cardinal reached the Seattle Bowl last season.

He is still stressing improvement and finding ways to correct the small mistakes to give the Cardinal a better chance to win games.

"We talked on Monday that some of the goals we set are no longer attainable," Teevens said. "But winning and improving are still important. The seniors can ignite something that will carry over into the future. I've been in tough situations before where players packed their tents and went home. That's not the case here."

Stanford's offense will be looking for more big plays. Yet Teevens acknowledges that will be difficult against USC's talented secondary. The Cardinal are averaging just 330.8 yards of offense per game, second to last in the conference.

"We have to keep on playing together as a team," said senior nose tackle Trey Freeman. "We feel we're on the verge a lot of times. One defensive stop here, one catch here, one block here."

Wilson signs, Widger files

BY RONALD BLUM
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK — Dan Wilson agreed Friday to a $7 million, two-year contract to stay with the Seattle Mariners rather than test the free-agent market.

Wilson, Seattle's top catcher, hit a career-high .295 with six homers and 44 RBIs last season.

The New York Yankees' Chris Widger, another catcher, was the only player to file for free agency Friday, raising the total to 153. Free agents can start talking money with all teams starting Tuesday.

Up to 16 more players can file by Monday's deadline, including several players whose 2003 options are pending.

Among those awaiting option decisions from teams are New York Yankees left-hander Andy Pettitte ($11.5 million), Boston right-hander Tim Wakefield ($3.8 million), Arizona right-hander Mike Fetters ($2.75 million) and Los Angeles catcher Chad Kreuter ($1.2 million)

San Francisco closer Robb Nen must decide whether to exercise his $8.6 million option.

Several players also have clauses in their contracts that give them the right to terminate their deals and become free agents. That group includes Yankees closer Mariano Rivera, Texas right-hander Chan Ho Park, Colorado left-hander Mike Hampton, Florida catcher Charles Johnson, Kansas City outfielder Michael Tucker and Los Angeles right-hander Paul Quantrill.

Monday also is the deadline for veteran players dealt during multiyear contracts to file trade demands. Dodgers outfielder Brian Jordan filed one last week.

If a player who files a demand isn't traded by March 15, he can terminate his contract and become a free agent.

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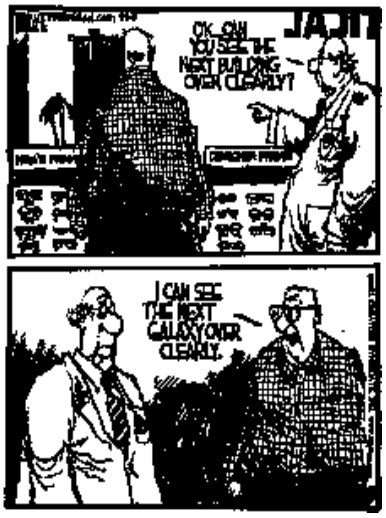
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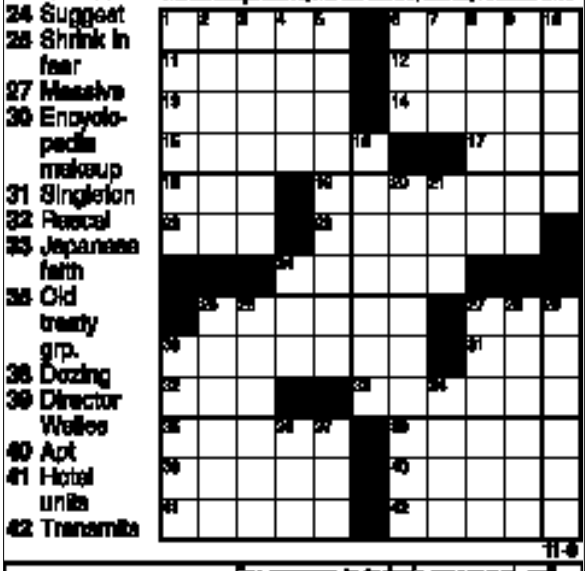
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14 Sugar source
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17 Cargo unit
18 Suffer
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22 — Vegas
23 Not suitable for kids
24 Suggest
26 Shrink in fear
27 Massive
30 Encyclopedia makeup
31 Singleton
32 Peacock
33 Japanese faith
35 Old treaty grp.
38 Dozing
39 Director Welles
40 Apt
41 Hotel units
42 Transmits

DOWN

1 Wolf's cousin
2 "Twelfth Night" heroine
3 Belly features
4 Give off
5 Suburban figure
6 Sleep state
7 Period
8 Be stealthy
9 Under — (cursed)
10 1814 treaty site
16 Mythical monsters
20 Frigates, e.g.
21 Pig's digs
24 Hosp. ward
25 Director George
26 Border town
27 Sweet treat
28 Mean
29 Crystal-filled stone
30 Cap part
34 Memo words
36 Male turkey
37 Switch settings

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Teen sues clinic for performing her abortion

Cherise Mosley, 19, filed a lawsuit against the Aaron Family Planning Clinic in Houston in August, seeking damages for the abortion it performed on her two years earlier when she was a minor. Mosley admits that she produced a false ID card at that time, showing that she was over 18, for the express purpose of receiving the abortion without having her parents notified. Now, Mosley apparently regrets the abortion and claims the clinic should have detected that her ID was false and thus notified her parents, who, Mosley believes, would have talked her out of the abortion.



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OUR LADY of Malibu Church Fall Yard Sale! 3625 Winter Canyon Road, Malibu. Holiday decorations, gifts, quality clothing, shoes, furniture, and object d'art. Saturday 10/9 9am-6pm. Sunday 11/10 8am-6pm (310)456-2361.

SANTA MONICA $1095.00 House, very cozy & quiet, r/s, laundry, garden, pkng. Westside Rentals 395-RENT

SANTA MONICA $750.00 guest House, loft style, r/s, laundry, prkng, utils incld. Westside Rentals 395-RENT

Roommates

FANTASTIC!
S.M. SHARE 2bdrm furnished apt., all utilities paid including cable. 9th & Wilshire. Male only. $750.00 (310)394-1050.
MUST SEE!

SANTA MONICA $425.00 Townhouse, prvt rm, r/s, laundry, very clean, prkng. Westside Rentals 395-RENT

SANTA MONICA $495.00 Duplex, prvt rm, petok, r/s, crpt. laundry, yard, prkng. Westside Rentals 395-RENT

Commercial Lease

OFFICE SPACE sublease. Excellent-view-window, offices & support area. Below market. Plug&Play. 2730 Wilshire Blvd., SM (310)586-1000.

PRIME STORE front property for medical and/or retail, in downtown Santa Monica for sublease below market value. 2400 sq. ft. Call Linda (310)393-2598.

VENICE BEACH $595.00 Small office space with bathroom on ground floor. High ceiling, large window. Fresh paint. Just off Abbot Kinney. 1 year lease. (310) 396-4443 x102

Elly Nesis Company, Inc.
www.ellynesis.com

Vehicles for sale

1996 BMW 318TI, excellent condition, pre-certified. 54,000 miles. $8500.00 (310)291-0337

Massage

BLISSFUL RELAXATION! Heal your body, mind, spirit. Therapeutic, Swedish, Deep-tissue. energy balancing, non-sexual. Introductory specials from $45.00/1hr. In/out. Lynda, L.M.T. (310)749-0621

MASSAGE CARING, soothing, relaxing full body therapeutic, Swedish / back walking. You will melt in my magic hands! Home/hotel/office/outdoors ok. 1-4 hours. Non sexual out call. Anytime or day. Page Doris (310)551-2121.

MASSAGE ENJOY a really great, amazing and wonderful full body massage. Swedish, deep-tissue and Tantra. (Platonic only!) No time limit. Will come to you. 24/7 Cute, slim, fit, petite mature chocolate. 14 years experience. Dolly's pager (310)236-9627.

REVITALIZE & Rejuvenate. Body, Mind & Spirit with a therapeutic Swedish/Deep-tissue massage. Laura (310)394-2923 (310)569-0883.

SOOTHING DEEP-TISSUE bodywork. Intro: $35/80min. Woman only. Non-sexual. Call Paul for appointment:310.741.1901 .

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE, Swedish, Accupressure, Deep-tissue, Sports Massage, Reflexology. For apt call Tracy at (310)435-0657.

Services

CALIFORNIA ENGLISH Teacher Specialist -Tutoring all aspects of English. Call (310)393-7557.

FRENCH TUTOR: All levels, basic skills, conversation, trip preparation. Call (310)434-0113 E-mail: chantal@france.com

HANDS-ON HOME Repair, 25 Years Experience. No job too small. Bargain Prices. Cal (818)231-3447 or (323)708-2220

Classified Advertising Conditions : **DOLLAR-A-DAY NON COMMERCIAL**: Ad must run a minimum of 12 consecutive days. Ads over 15 words add 20¢ per word per day. **REGULAR RATE**: $2.50 a day. Ads over 15 words add 20¢ per word per day. Ad must run a minimum of twelve consecutive days. **PREMIUMS**: First two words caps no charge. Bold words, italics, centered lines, etc. cost extra. Please call for rates. **TYPOS**: Check your ad the first day of publication. Sorry, we do not issue credit after an ad has run more than once. **DEADLINES**: 4:00 p.m. prior the day of publication except for Monday's paper when the deadline is Friday at 4:00 p.m. **PAYMENT**: All private party ads must be pre-paid. We accept checks, credit cards, and of course cash. **CORRESPONDENCE**: To place your ad call our offices 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, (310)458-7737; send a check or money order with ad copy to The Santa Monica Daily Press, P.O. Box 1380, Santa Monica, CA 90406 or stop in at our office located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Ste. 202. **OTHER RATES:** For information about the professional services directory or classified display ads, please call our office at (310)458-7737.

CLASSIFIEDS

Services

HOUSE CLEANING - Available 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Windows, laundry, general house cleaning. References available. Responsible. Reasonable prices. Call Lalo (310) 313-0848.

Computer Services

COMPUTER HELP: Your home or office. Tutoring Microsoft Word, Excel, Internet navigation. Please call (310)207-3366.

Yard Sales

CULVER CITY 9am-3pm 4108 Huron Ave. Multi-family sale. Quality furniture, collectibles, sporting equipment, clothes.

Yard Sales

ESTATE SALE in Santa Monica. Sat, Nov. 9th 9am-3pm. If raining, please come Sunday. 1213 Oak Street. Furniture, appliances and more!

Yard Sales

MOVING SALE, Santa Monica 9am to 3pm. 2202 20th Street. Bed/TV/bookcase and office supplies.

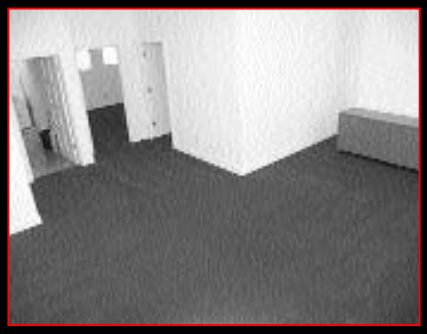
Health/Beauty

DIABETIC WEIGHT-LOSS Bath Shampoo. Free sample. Ralph Sahara, P.O. Box 62174, Honolulu, HI.

EXPERIENCED MAKE-UP ARTIST! Weddings & Special Events. Local references available. (310)702-8778 / (323)559-9033. Nina & Alex.

Be in the middle of it all!

Professional office space available on the Third Street Promenade.


950 square feet of office space conveniently located downtown, a walk away from shops, restaurants and the beach. Bright office space with high ceilings, natural light, two large private offices and a spacious reception area. Quiet location with a shared kitchen. New paint and carpet. Parking. Available now.

Call (310) 458-7737 ext. 104

Calendar

Saturday, November 9, 2002

movies

Loews Broadway Cinema
1441 Third St. at Broadway
Comedian (R) 12:45, 3:05, 5:25, 7:45, 10:25. Femme Fatale (R) 11:15, 1:55, 4:35, 7:15, 10:10. Jackass: The Movie (R) 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:55. The Truth About Charlie (PG-13) 1:10, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40.

Mann Criterion
1313 Third St.
The Ring (PG-13) 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00, 12:40. Sweet Home Alabama (PG-13) 11:30, 2:10, 5:05, 7:55, 10:35. Ghost Ship(R) 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:10. My Big Fat Greek Wedding (PG) 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:05. Punch-Drunk Love (R) 11:15, 1:45, 4:20, 7:10, 9:45. The Transporter (PG-13) 11:45, 2:15, 4:45, 7:40, 10:15.

AMC Theatre SM 7
1310 3rd Street

Red Dragon (R) 1:15, 4:25, 7:35, 10:30. 8 Mile (R) 12:15, 1:00, 3:15, 4:00, 6:15, 7:00, 9:15, 10:00, 12:00, 12:45. Santa Clause 2 (G) 1:35, 2:30, 4:10, 5:10, 7:45, 10:25. White Oleander (PG-13) 7:25, 10:15. I Spy (PG-13) 12:30, 2:20, 3:00, 4:45, 5:30, 7:15, 8:00, 9:45, 10:35.

Landmark Nu-Wilshire
1314 Wilshire Blvd.
Bowling for Columbine (R) 1:30, 4:15, 7:15, 10:00. Far From Heaven (PG-13) 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30.

Laemmle Monica
1332 2nd St.
Auto Focus (R) 12:00, 2:30, 5:05, 7:45, 10:20. Real Women Have Curves (PG-13) 12:15, 2:30, 4:50, 7:25, 9:45. Secretary (R) 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 9:50. Spirited Away (PG) 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00.

Aero Theatre
1328 Montana Ave.
Rules of Attraction 5:00, 7:30, 10:00.

Today

Community

Farmer's Market every Wednesday and Saturday. 9am to 2pm, Arizona between Second and Fourth Streets. Come and enjoy one of the largest and best farmer's markets in California!
20th Annual Fall Health Festival presented by the SM Chamber of Commerce. Free health screenings and services, entertainment & more! 10am to 2pm, Third Street Promenade, between Wilshire and Arizona. Admission is FREE. For more information call (310)393-9825.

Y Canned Fitness Week! November 4 thru 19. Just bring in ten cans of food per visit and you can participate in any one of our fitness classes, fitness center & lap swim for FREE! SM Family YMCA is located at 1332 Sixth Street. For more information please call (310)393-2721 ext. 118.

Weekly Storytime,11:00 a.m. Come to Barnes & Noble for Saturday readings with the kids! Call 310-260-9110 for more information.

Music/ Entertainment

Comedy Underground presents Stand Up Nite! Howard Berger, 8pm, admission is $5.00. Comedy Hideout's Rotating Talk Show, 10pm, admission is $5.00. 320 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica. For more information please call (310)451-1800.

The Empty State Theater at 2372 Veteran Ave. in W. Los Angeles proudly presents: "The Fortune Room Lounge Show" A musical improv show featuring the "Stella Ray Trio" and "The Lucky Players". Every Saturday night at 10:00 p.m. Admission is $10.00, drinks included w/admission. Lots of parking! For information or reservations please call (310)470-3560.

Puppetolio! presented by the Santa Monica Puppet & Magic Center. All ages, 3 and up. This musical revue features marionettes, ventriloquism, magic and more. Shows are always followed by a demonstration, Q & A, and a tour of the Puppet workshop and Museum. Saturdays and Sundays at 1pm and 3pm. Wednesdays and Holidays at 1pm. Seats are $6.50. 1255 2nd Street in Santa Monica. Reservations/Information (310)656-0483. www.puppetmagic.com

Sunday

Community

Puppetolio! presented by the Santa Monica Puppet & Magic Center. All ages, 3 and up. This musical revue features marionettes, ventriloquism, magic and more. Shows are always followed by a demonstration, Q & A, and a tour of the Puppet workshop and Museum. Saturdays and Sundays at 1pm and 3pm. Wednesdays and Holidays at 1pm. Seats are $6.50. 1255 2nd Street in Santa Monica. Reservations/Information (310)656-0483. www.puppetmagic.com

MAGICOPOLIS presents HOCUS POCUS! (Fish Bones Choke Us). The stage explodes with a colorful mix of Magic, Special Effects, Sleight of Hand, Comedy and Music that's sure to delight audiences of all ages. At MAGICOPOLIS, 1418 Fourth Street, Santa Monica. Fridays & Saturdays at 8pm, $20. Saturday & Sundays at 2pm, $15. For tickets call 310-451-2241.

Almost Vaudville. 2 pm and 5 pm. UnUrban Coffeehouse. 3301 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, (310)315-0056.

Meet author Daniel Ellsberg! Midnight Special Bookstore and Cultural Center located on the 3rd St. Promenade, 5pm. Daniel Ellsberg reads and discusses "SECRETS: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers."

Calendar items are printed free of charge as a service to our readers. Please submit your items to todayspaper@smdp.com for consideration. Calendar events are limited by space, and will be run at the discretion of the Calendar Editor.

KEEP YOUR DATE STRAIGHT

Promote your event in the Santa Monica Daily Press Calendar section. Fax all information to our Calendar Editor: Attention Angela @ 310.576.9913

NY's billionaire mayor, flexes his wallet when he sees fit

BY TIMOTHY WILLIAMS
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — While other politicians might retire to a back room of a restaurant to work out a budget deal, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has done them one better: He flew two key legislative leaders to his palatial Bermuda estate last week aboard his corporate jet, at his own expense.

A year after spending a record $73.9 million to win City Hall, Bloomberg has dipped with gusto into his $4.8 billion fortune to govern New York.

Facing the city's worst budget dilemma in a decade, he has opened his own wallet to support museums and arts organizations, and pushed his political agenda by escorting politicians on trips aboard his jet and hosting dinners at his Upper East Side townhouse.

Analysts say Bloomberg — No. 29 on the Forbes list of the nation's richest people — has used his personal wealth to an extent unmatched by contemporary politicians.

While many regard the practice warily, most say he has not run afoul of ethics laws.

"Considering the tough times we are in, I think New Yorkers appreciate the fact that Mayor Bloomberg does not hesitate one second to spend his own money to help the city," Bloomberg spokesman Ed Skyler said. "If he didn't, I imagine some people would criticize him for being stingy."

The city is facing a $1 billion budget deficit this fiscal year, a gap of as much as $6 billion next year, and looming tax increases and layoffs.

Last week, Bloomberg was named the nation's wealthiest politician by Forbes magazine, far ahead of Arkansas Lt. Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller, who was second at $1.2 billion.

The mayor rarely speaks about his wealth and his donations are generally made anonymously. But public documents and people familiar with Bloomberg's spending provide a glimpse:

■ Gracie Mansion, the official mayoral residence, got about $5 million for refurbishment.

■ More than a dozen small and medium-sized cultural organizations around the city split a $10 million Bloomberg donation to the Carnegie Corp.

■ The state Republican Party got nearly $1 million after Bloomberg switched from a Democrat to a Republican to run for mayor last year.

Bloomberg, founder of the financial information company Bloomberg L.P., has also ferried politicians of both parties on his jet on official trips to Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Greece and Turkey.

And he has hosted GOP fund-raisers at his townhouse — where he continues to live — and intimate dinners for everyone from City Council members to actors and artists.

Last week, he flew the state's legislative leaders, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, to his Bermuda estate where the three spent a day and a half golfing and discussing the city's budget problems.

"It was about as pleasant a way to discuss a troublesome thing as you can imagine," Bruno said later.

Some government watchdog groups were critical of the Bermuda jaunt, suggesting the mayor exceeded limits on how much may be spent on legislative lobbying. The administration responded that those limits do not apply because the mayor is not a lobbyist.

"I don't think there's an ethical problem in it," said Steve Cohen, a Columbia University professor who studies city politics. "I think there are two parts to it: a continuation of the philanthropical activities he performed before he became mayor, and then also, an effort to be gracious to friends and colleagues."

He added: "The difference is that where I might have to have people over for dinner in the dining room, he can invite them for dinner at his home in Bermuda."

The mayor, who declined to be interviewed for this story, was unapologetic in response to earlier questions. During his mayoral campaign, he invoked the Rockefellers and Kennedys to justify his expenditures.

"If somebody wants to go out and take their own money to try to make the world a better place, I can only tell you my hat is off to them," he said.

So far, the mayor has yet to deliver on a particularly extravagant — though facetious — promise, made on David Letterman's "Late Show": "I'll personally pay every New Yorker's rent for the next four years."

Stupidity book author caught soliciting sex over internet

By The Associated Press

LANTANA, Fla. — A man who has written two books on stupidity was arrested for allegedly trying to arrange sex with a 15-year-old girl over the Internet. The girl turned out to be an undercover male detective.

James F. Welles, the 61-year-old author of "The Story of Stupidity" and "Understanding Stupidity," was taken into custody last week after arranging to meet the girl at a restaurant, investigators said.

He was charged with soliciting a minor over the Internet and was released on bail. He did not immediately return a call to his Pompano Beach home Friday.

According to police, Welles was aware of the possibility of a sting, saying in one message that he worried about "the state of Florida looming in the background."

