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Santa Monica Daily Press

November 13-14, 2004

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Volume 4, Issue 1

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

In October, the school board in Puyallup, Wash., canceled Halloween activities because of complaints from local Wiccans that the pointy-nose, broomstick-riding "witch" icon of the holiday was offensive to their religion, which refers to its priestesses as witches. (In several other cities, in response to complaints from Christians, officials moved trick-or-treating day to Oct. 30 because Oct. 31 fell on a Sunday, which might be inappropriate to celebrate what to some is "The Devil's Night.")

TODAY IN HISTORY

FIVE YEARS AGO: The Navy recovered the cockpit voice recorder from EgyptAir Flight 990, which crashed into the Atlantic Ocean Oct. 31 with the loss of all 217 people aboard. Lennox Lewis became the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world, winning a unanimous decision over Evander Holyfield in Las Vegas. Donald Mills, last surviving member of the singing Mills Brothers, died in Los Angeles at age 84.

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Burning desire



Susan Tam/Special to the Daily Press

(Top, left to right) Ryan Demirdjian, Corey Rodriguez, Johnny Maccini and Julien Zarmeño officially become members of the Santa Monica City Fire Department on Friday. (Below) After the ceremony, Maccini surprised the audience, not to mention girlfriend Chrystal Herron, by proposing marriage.

Flicker of hope: FD takes on four more

BY SUSAN TAM

Special to the Daily Press

CITY YARDS — Friday was a big day for Johnny Maccini, who committed to both a new life and a new career within the same two-hour time span. Maccini is one of four fire academy grads that will begin a new job as a firefighter in Santa Monica next week.

Rookies Corey Rodriguez, Julien Zarmeño, Ryan Demirdjian and Maccini received their new helmets and yellow shields, which signify their first year on the job. After the ceremony, family and friends armed with video cameras and cell phones were asked to back away from the podium. It was then that Maccini proposed to his girl-

friend of seven years, Chrystal Herron, by having two buddies unfurl a giant banner from atop a training tower.

Maccini had been planning the stunt for weeks, and enlisted the help of others at the fire station, including his battalion chief, who knew a signmaker and also helped him work on the banner.

A surprised Herron accepted and was congratulated by friends and family, including her grandfather Dale "Papa" Plueger, who said he had no idea what Maccini had up his sleeve, but that he was supportive of the new firefighter.

"He's one of six or seven other (firefighters) in line (in the

See SPARKS FLY, page 5

Homeowners cool on college bond

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

SMC — Despite a dearth of organized resistance, a \$135 million bond for Santa Monica College narrowly passed at the polls Nov. 2, garnering support from local renters but failing to earn the backing of homeowners.

Residents in the North of Montana and Sunset Park neighborhoods predominately voted against the bond, which will cost the average Santa Monica homeowner nearly \$60 a year, but may only set tenants back a little over \$10. Renters gave the bond overwhelming support, an analysis of election returns shows.

Malibu residents also weighed in on the bond, giving it just 0.1 percent more than the 55 percent it needed in order to pass. The bond was approved with 58 percent of

the overall vote, far less than college officials projected.

It's unclear exactly how all of the bond money will be used. While the City of Malibu has entered into a formal agreement with SMC to use part of the money to purchase open space, discussions between Santa Monica City Hall and the college broke down prior to the election. Most of the money will go towards renovating SMC buildings and to other college projects.

Assuming college and city officials can strike a deal, a portion of what's left over may be used to fund a childhood education lab in partnership with City Hall, and some may go towards developing athletic fields.

That apparently wasn't enough to convince the residents of Sunset Park, who gave the bond the cold-

See SMC, page 4

Daily Press turns 3

Local paper succeeding where others failed

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN — The Daily Press turns 3 years old today.

Launched in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001 by three former colleagues at a newspaper in Aspen, Colo., Santa Monica's only daily newspaper has grown from its first print run of eight pages to today's issue, which is 24 pages. Each edition has been free.

The Daily Press has defied its predecessors by turning a profit in each of the last five months, something critics said was near impossible in this oceanfront city of 84,000.

"The corpses of dead dailies litter this country like the battlefield at Antietam," began a Jan. 9, 2002

Los Angeles Times article about the Daily Press. The LA Times twice failed to sustain an ongoing news product in the local Santa Monica market following the demise of the 123-year-old Evening Outlook in 1998.

Local news has never been in short supply. In the three years since the Daily Press launched, Santa Monica issues frequently have made national and international headlines, while local issues have bitterly divided residents and made for emotionally charged letters to the editor.

The fatal stabbing of a standout Santa Monica High School student. The rape and murder of a Santa Monica College student. Elderly driver Russell Weller's deadly drive through a downtown Farmers' Market. City Hall's failed attempt to ban ATM sur-

See DAILY PRESS, page 5

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

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





ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Putting some distance between you and your world might help you regain your balance and perspective. Invite a close friend for a drive to a favorite spot. Picnic, explore, just enjoy the scenery and this person. Pack some favorite CDs. Tonight: Restored again.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Someone wants only you and your attention. You might have to say "no" to one or two people. Friends are full of surprises. Make plans to finish a project, and take in a movie or concert. Tonight: Soft music and candles.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Others might be demanding, but you love it. Cancel plans that might not suit you, and head out with whom and where you want. Your social personality comes out. Apparently, others are aware of your sparkle and humor. Tonight: Wander and socialize.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ A dream might inspire you to go in a certain direction. You might want to stay home and relax or work on a project. Whatever you do around the home will make you happy. Invite a family member to join in. Tonight: Watch a movie.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Although you might have plans, at the last minute someone decides to do something else. Invite a child or very special friend to go off and do something childlike. You renew your spirit and add to your communication. Tonight: Romp away.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Finally you opt to move ahead and buy a special item for your home. A partner could be as delighted by the end results as you will be. You add beauty, comfort and harmony to your living style. Tonight: Chat away over dinner.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ What you say means more than your actions — for today! You might want to spend quality time with a special friend or loved one. This time means more than you realize to this person. If you're spending time with a new friend, you tighten your bond. Tonight: Let your imagination speak.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ Use your instincts with a purchase when adding to your coffers or when making a purchase that will add to your comfort and ease. Someone discloses a secret, or you might be the one. Are you sure you want to tell? Remember to zip up your lips. Tonight: Your treat.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ You are all smiles. Friends surround you, and you naturally get what you want. Ask and talk about your dreams. Brainstorm. Express your mentally active side. Music proves extremely soothing. Tonight: Leader of the gang.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Don't push too hard. In fact, take the day off with a special friend. You might want to visit someone you really care about. Why not? Wherever you go, people want to chat. Don't put yourself in a position of having to say "no." Tonight: An intimate chat.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Instinctively you dig up your friends. Your ideas lead others in different directions. Refuse to fall into an old pattern and do the same old activity. Opt for something totally different. Split town for the day, if you want. Tonight: Frolic the night away.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ Others call on you to pitch in and help. You might feel overwhelmed by your responsibilities. Listen to your instincts with an authority figure. You're right-on. A partner chips in and makes your day more pleasurable. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Holiday cheer strikes a few chords

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica College Music Department will present a holiday concert, jazz and more in December. All concerts are in the SMC Concert Hall, 1900 Pico Blvd., unless otherwise noted. The lineup is:

■ Friday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m.: Jazz: John Beasley Quintet. Known for its intelligent and passionate music, this quintet will bring its special sound to SMC. Tickets are \$10.

■ Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 4 and 5 at 7:30 p.m.: “Christmas Celebration,” with the Santa Monica Methodist Church Chancel Choir joining SMC Concert Chorale, both under the direction of SMC music professor James Smith, and the Los Angeles Concert Orchestra. The program, narrated by actor Peter Graves, will be held at the First United Methodist Church, 11th Street and Washington Avenue, Santa Monica. Tickets are \$15 general admission and \$10 students and senior citizens.

■ Tuesday, Dec. 7 at 4 p.m.: SMC Symphonic Band, under the baton of Peter Sheridan. Free.

■ Thursday, Dec. 9 at 11:15 a.m.: SMC Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of Matthew Altmire. Free.

■ Friday, Dec. 10 at 8 p.m.: SMC Chamber Choir, with Nike St. Clair, conductor. Tickets are \$5.

■ Sunday, Dec. 12 at 4 p.m.: SMC Concert Band, under the baton of Kevin McKeown. Tickets are \$8.

For tickets and information, call (310) 434-3000 or (310) 434-4323. For tickets to “Christmas Celebration,” call (310) 393-8258.

Cross paths with the ‘Black Cat’

By Daily Press staff

Interested in a provocative night filled with forbidden, revolutionary and risqué music and dancing?

The “Night of the Black Cat” is a musical themed after the opening of the French Cabaret “Le Chat Noir” in Paris 1881. The event will be held at the Edgemar Center for the Arts, 2437 Main St. on Friday, Dec. 3 at 8 p.m., as well as Saturday, Dec. 4 at 8 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 5 at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 and \$15 for students. Call (310) 392-7327, or visit the Web site at www.edgemar.org. Edgemar Center for the Arts is located in Frank Gehry’s architectural landmark building.

Wishing you had an extra bedroom?

By Daily Press staff

While Santa Monica residents look forward to the excitement of the holiday season, many also dread the stress and chaos that often accompanies it — from shopping and juggling special events to hosting out-of-town guests.

Santa Monica’s hospitality community has stepped up to the plate to help locals alleviate some of the holiday discomfort. A number of local hotels are once again offering discounts to Santa Monica residents needing to house out-of-town guests through what’s known as the “Extra Bedroom Program.” Starting mid-November 2004 through January 2005, individuals showing proof of Santa Monica residency can receive major discounts from properties such as the Ambrose Hotel, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, Hotel Oceana and Holiday Inn Santa Monica Beach Hotel, among others. A complete list of participating hotels is posted at www.santamonica.com in the “locals ” section.

While logged on to the Web site, residents also can access the Santa Monica “Calendar” that includes a full listing of holiday events taking place throughout the city. The information can also be picked up at Santa Monica Visitor Center locations, including Santa Monica Place Mall (space 203), the visitor kiosk in Palisades Park, and the visitor services cart on the Third Street Promenade between Santa Monica Boulevard and Arizona Avenue.

For more information contact Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau at www.santamonica.com or (310) 393-7593.



SURF REPORT

On Saturday, look for primary NW wind swell to mix with leftover SW swell. Northern LA spots with good NW exposure see knee-waist high surf, with some bigger chest high sets at top breaks. South Bay spots see more of the wind swell for waist high+ surf at many breaks while top breaks hit shoulder high. Look for larger surf on Sunday as a new WNW swell builds. Winds are mostly light in the morning, and build WNW in the 8-15 knot range for the afternoon.

Today the water is:

64°

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

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	2:23	1.8	3:55	-1.1	8:41	6.8	10:25	4.0
SUNDAY	2:58	2.2	4:48	-1.1	9:20	6.8	11:30	3.7
MONDAY	3:39	2.6	5:47	-0.9	10:05	6.6	N/A	N/A
TUESDAY	4:29	2.9	6:54	-0.6	12:49	3.6	10:59	6.1
WEDNESDAY	5:48	3.2	8:06	-0.3	2:22	3.7	12:06	5.6
THURSDAY	7:50	3.3	9:14	-0.1	3:40	4.0	1:33	5.0
FRIDAY	9:44	2.8	10:13	0.1	4:32	4.4	3:08	4.6

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CHECK OUT THIS WEEK’S Q-LINE RESPONSES ON PAGE 7



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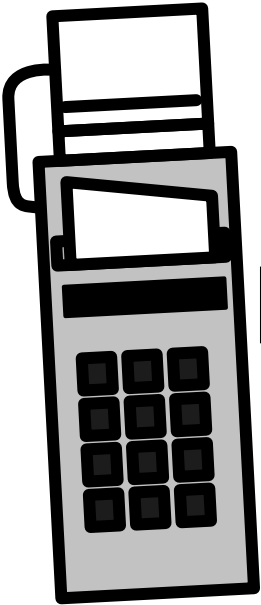
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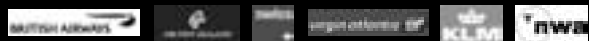
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LOCAL

SMC doesn't have plans in place for all of \$135M bond

SMC, from page 1

est reception citywide, with just 50 percent of voter support. Neighbors of the college have long complained that the campus continues to grow with little consideration for the community.

"A prime example is the parking structure constructed on Pico Boulevard a few years back," said Peter Tigler, who isn't a resident of Sunset Park but lives near the college. "Pico area neighbors asked the college to include their residential streets in the traffic study and the college refused. The \$20,000 addendum that perhaps would have indicated proper mitigation would have been appropriate, but instead the college was obstinate and Pico neighbors sued. Unfortunately, we lost."

Santa Monica's renter-dominated neighborhoods, on the other hand, heavily backed the bond, election returns show. The strongest showing was in the heart of the eastside Pico neighborhood, where residents approved the bond with 63.4 percent of the vote, followed by residents of Ocean Park, Wilshire-Montana, and residents living downtown and in the Mid-City neighborhood.

Rent control officials at City Hall have yet to decide whether or not landlords will be able to pass the tax burden onto tenants.

Nancy Greenstein, a member of the SMC Board of Trustees, said despite resistance from the college's neighbors in Sunset Park, the people she spoke with overwhelmingly supported the bond. General enthusiasm for the college may have been responsible for pushing an early poll gauging approval of the bond above 70 percent, Greenstein added.

"What I learned in being out there, talking about it, is most people have a positive perspective of the college," she said, pointing out that other tax increases on the ballot for public safety and emergency room funding failed. "Either they or their family members have taken classes there. The seniors love the Emeritus Center. People have gone to entertainment there. I think the overall feeling is the community is very supportive of the college ...

"I think, basically, people thought it was a good idea and some of the negativity had to do with the college and not with the bond proposal," she added. "If that's true, we need to work on those problems."

The bond was originally unveiled at \$175 million and included possible part-

In the 'hood

Here's how a voter-approved \$135 million bond from Santa Monica College, which required 55 percent approval, fared in local neighborhoods:

	Yes	No
Downtown	62.9%	37.1%
Mid-City	61.9%	38.1%
North of Montana	54.6%	45.3%
Ocean Park	63.3%	36.7%
Pico neighborhood	63.4%	36.6%
Sunset Park	50.1%	49.9%
Wilshire-Montana	63%	37%
TOTAL	58%	42%

(Source: Percentages were calculated based on an analysis of election returns from the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder. Precincts don't match up with neighborhood boundaries exactly and four of Santa Monica's 66 precincts were not tallied. One precinct that overlapped equally into two neighborhoods was counted twice, once for each neighborhood.)

nerships with the city to renovate the historic Marion Davies Estate at 415 Pacific Coast Highway, revamp the pier aquarium and help build botanical gardens at the Civic Center downtown, among other projects.

However, that proposal failed to garner enough support from the SMC board. So the plan was reduced and narrowly earned the board's backing, sending it on to the polls, where the college spent upwards of \$160,000 promoting it, campaign financing disclosure documents at City Hall show. Santa Monica Citizens Against Unfair Taxes spent less than \$1,000 fighting the bond.

SMC trustee Annette Shamey, who originally voted against the bond proposal but later changed her mind, thereby sending the proposal onto the voters, said she's hopeful the bond money will be spent wisely.

"I really don't know where eventually some of the money will go, but I am told it will be for educational programs, which is my primary concern," said Shamey, who has been a board member for 12 years. "And I think the partnerships they want to develop with the City of Santa Monica still have yet to be seen."



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LOCAL



'Newspaper with issues' considers home delivery

DAILY PRESS, from page 1

charges. City Hall's successful effort to make oil companies pay for MtBE contamination. Its ban on smoking at the beach. The entrance of Kennedy family scion Bobby Shriver into local politics. Homelessness. Traffic.

"We in Santa Monica are a very active political community and I think we're starved for news," said reader Annette Shamey, 65, a former teacher and life-long resident of Santa Monica who this December will step down after serving 12 years on the SMC board of trustees.

Native Santa Monican Judi Bloom agreed.

"Santa Monica is a complicated, politically charged city with many competing interests," said Bloom, 53, a parent and former editor at the Evening Outlook and LA Times. "If any town needs a daily newspaper it's this one ... We really need and deserve information about city government, the schools, policy makers and so much more that happens under the radar."

The Daily Press drops 16,000 copies on the streets of Santa Monica, West LA, Brentwood and Venice each day, and some 5,000 people subscribe to the paper online. Publisher Ross Furukawa pegs the number of daily readers at more than 30,000 because the paper is free and most

copies are read more than once. Furukawa, 34, hopes the paper will eventually expand to 70 or 80 pages, with circulation reaching 60,000. Home delivery was not part of the original model, but hasn't been ruled out.

"I've been thinking about that a lot recently," Furukawa said. "It's something we are seriously considering, now that we know it's what our readers want and it works for our advertisers."

Known by the moniker "A newspaper with issues," the Daily Press operates out of offices on the Third Street Promenade, a location picked in part for its proximity to City Hall and the local courthouse. Papers are printed at a press in Culver City.

Set up as a partnership among Furukawa, Editor Carolyn Sackariason and entrepreneur Dave Danforth, who has started other small dailies across the country, the Daily Press has published close to 1,000 issues. It relies on a handful of editorial and advertising interns, and contributions from about a dozen columnists. Special sections have developed in the paper for entertainment, real estate and business, and Associated Press reporters contribute state, national and international news.

Furukawa said the paper will continue to grow, with special feature supplements and expanded hard news

coverage. Readers expect as much.

"As a life-long resident of Santa Monica, what I miss most is a comprehensive local newspaper," Shamey said. "The Evening Outlook did that for us and I think that our community needs that desperately ... The fact that so many of us rush out, we make a special trip out sometimes, to pick up the paper, means we're hungry for the Daily Press, an expanded Daily Press, a more comprehensive Daily Press."



Susan Tam/Special to the Daily Press

ON BENDED KNEE: Johnny Maccini, who moments earlier became an official member of the city fire department, asks longtime girlfriend Chrystal Herron to marry him on Friday.

Rookies eager to take places in city fire dept.

SPARKS FLY, from page 1

family)," Plueger said.

The grads took advantage of their day in the sun before next week's return to rookie status. The graduation was a triumphant finish to six weeks of academy, stocked with 12- or 13-hour days, Demirdjian said.

"I'm excited ... nervous and excited," said Demirdjian, of his new post with the truck company at Station 1 in downtown Santa Monica, where the other graduates also will be working. As the cameras flashed and the crowd started to wane, the feeling of excitement remained.

Three-year-old Delaney Gordon, cousin to the bride-to-be, sat in a metal folding chair and waited for the commotion to end. Plueger, her grandfather, asked her if she knew what the sign read and what it meant to be married.

"I know," she said. "(It means) she found her prince."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Drawing a line in the neighborhood

Editor:
If the intent of the SMDP Nov. 8 article “SM residents stay true to their roots” (page 1) was to reveal how different neighborhoods throughout the city voted, further amplification is needed. The Wilshire-Montana neighborhood was described as the area “which runs between the two major east-west roadways from Ocean Avenue to the eastern city limit.” This is, in fact, two distinctive neighborhoods. The city recognizes two neighborhood groups for this area. The Wilshire-Montana neighborhood east-west boundaries are from 21st Street to the east and Ocean Avenue to the west. This area is almost exclusively multi-family residences. The Northeast neighborhood is bounded by 22nd Street to the west and Centinela Avenue (the city limit) to the east. This neighborhood is predominantly single-family residences.

Unlike the Wilshire-Montana neighborhood, the Northeast neighborhood rejected Santa Monicans For Renters’ Rights endorsed candidates and opted overwhelmingly for the local chamber of commerce backed candidates. Even SMRR-endorsed candidate Patricia Hoffman could do no better than a sixth-place finish in this neighborhood even though she resides there.

The vote tallies for the Northeast neighborhood of the top 11 City Council candidates to date excluding absentee ballots are:

Shriver	872
Katz	639
Dinalfo	595
Morea	458
Bloom	458
Hoffman	348
Genser	347
Loya	210
Feinstein	200
Cole	145
Bauer	116

Jeff Zangrilli
Santa Monica

Why he voted for Bush

Editor:
Hitler is not the President of the United States.
I read the SMDP just about every day as I walk out for lunch from my office on Fifth and Colorado. I think in the nearly two years that I have been doing this I have

maybe seen a couple of opinion pieces in the letters to the editor section that were not driven by only emotion and feelings in regards to our president.

I am a lifetime Democrat. I registered on a college campus in Florida when I was 18 (20 years ago) and I never looked back. Over the past 12 years, however, I have begun to notice a shift in the two parties. While the Republican party has been doing a slight shift toward the center, the Democrats have been on a bus moving towards the left.

As a Democrat I was appalled that not only did our Commander-in-Chief, Bill Clinton, cheat on his wife and daughter and then lie about it under oath, but that the entire Democratic Party, the Hollywood elite, and anyone else who only voted for names with a D next to them, defended Clinton to the end. The party that had championed women’s rights in the work place, the party who used to claim that truth is what we should strive for, the party that used to be about doing what was right, was now making a hypocrite of itself.

Then, over the last year, I decided that I was going to do something I had never done before, and that was vote for a Republican president. Why, you may ask? Well contrary to what some of my fellow Democrats are saying, Bush is not Hitler, Bush does not hate gays, Bush does care about this country. Now do not get me wrong, I do not agree with our president on issues like abortion, gay marriage, stem cell research, etc. But with him I know I have a man of conviction. I know 100 percent exactly where I stand with him. There is no worry he is going to do something I didn’t think he would.

John Kerry, well the only thing my party would tell me about him was how much we should hate Bush. How he had a plan to fix everything under the sun and how he somehow knew how the little people felt. I knew nothing of this man’s soul and the democratic party wanted me to help put him in the White House? Never. I would vote for Clinton again first.

My main reason for writing this is to try and tell my fellow democrats to wake up. The voting machines were not tampered with. President Bush won more votes than any other president in history. I asked everyone of my friends who were voting for Kerry if in fact they were voting for him or against Bush, it was 100 percent unanimous, they were voting against Bush. Are we as Democrats so lacking in true leaders that we cannot put a candidate on the ticket that will instead tell me why I should vote for him or her instead of telling me why I should not vote for the other guy?

It’s time to look long and hard into the mirror my fellow Dems. You have become what you never wanted to be. While both parties have their fair share of hypocrisy, our Democratic cup runneth over.

Billy G. Woody
Santa Monica

Home alone, but don’t send out a search party



MODERN TIMES
BY LLOYD GARVER

I love my family. I miss them when I’m not with them. Now that I’ve said those things, there’s absolutely no reason for any of you to e-mail me, chastising me for supposedly being ungrateful at having a wonderful family. I’m grateful. I appreciate them. I know I’m lucky. But I also think it’s time we all admitted that sometimes it’s nice to be alone. It’s time for us to come out of that closet — the closet whose floor we dump our clothes on when nobody else is around.

Both of my kids are off at college, so when my wife went out of town for a week recently, I was all alone. Sure, there were times when I was lonely, but — am

I a bad person for saying this? — there were times when it was bliss.

When many of us find ourselves suddenly having the house to ourselves, we react like kids whose parents are out of town. A friend of mine turns on really loud music and thinks about smoking a cigarette, even though she doesn’t smoke. I enjoyed doing scandalously rebellious things like leaving my dresser drawers just a little bit open, and having two different TVs on at the same time. I ate cereal in bed, and there was nobody there to tell me that I was probably going to spill it all over the covers. If I felt like going to a movie instead of eating dinner, I went to the movie. If I didn’t feel like washing dishes for a couple of days, I didn’t. I discovered, however, that for some strange reason, they’re a bit harder to wash after a couple of days.

There also was a very pleasant silence that permeated the house. I understand why yogis and others derive so much

from meditation. I no longer think those people who take a vow of silence one day a week are wackos. There was definitely something spiritual about not talking and not hearing others talk for hours at a time.

Short-term solitude works when you travel, too. It’s nice to share travel experiences with those you love, but once in a while, traveling alone can be great. First of all, when you walk through the airport, you actually have one hand free. You can go into the airport store and buy two Advil for \$3, and nobody says, “Are you crazy?” When you get to the hotel, you can stay in the first room they give you. You don’t have to move because it’s too close to the elevator or too hot or too cold. And the big bonus is, you don’t have to start talking about where you’re going to go to dinner while you’re finishing breakfast. You’ll find a place to eat when you’re hungry.

Again, I’d hate to be alone for a significant amount of time, but I definitely rec-

ommend it to everyone once in while. When you reach the last day of your “alone time,” you’ll probably become aware of just how much you miss the people you’re alone from. That’s another benefit of this experience — it makes you appreciate the people you’re usually around.

But I didn’t have much time to wallow in those feelings on the last day. I was too busy picking up seven days’ worth of sports sections from various rooms, trying to remember where I put all those phone messages, and wondering what’s the best way to remove dried bran flakes from a 100-year-old quilt.

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from “Sesame Street” to “Family Ties” to “Frasier.” He also has read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the “Modern Times” column for CBSnews.com’s Opinion page and can be reached at smdp@lloydgarver-moderntimes.com).



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The Q Line

No News Is Good News ... VOTERS HOPE

This past week, Q-line asked:

"What do you think the results of the Nov. 2 City Council elections mean?"

Here are your responses:

① "The three incumbents were re-elected on their track records. Bobby Shriver was elected due to the fact that he is Maria Shriver's brother, Arnold Schwarzenegger's brother-in-law, and Ted Kennedy's nephew. Those are high flying credentials in a democratic community that is in love with celebrity. Still, his success will be measured on improving that which still exists, not changing that which exists."

② "I have lived in Santa Monica for 50 years and I have never seen a city council as bad as this one. I'm very unhappy that we've brought in three Santa Monica people to be in the council, but we got rid of the worst one of all — Michael Feinstein. What Shriver will do I don't really know because he's new, so we have to give him a chance. I voted all the incumbents out. I didn't vote for any one of them, but I guess my vote didn't do any good. If they don't get rid of the homeless, I don't know what we're going to do. I can't call the police because they can't do anything about it. The city council doesn't want anybody to bother the homeless. I'm unhappy we got three people from the old council."

③ "The overwhelming issue in Santa Monica is homelessness. Mr. Shriver addressed that issue very succinctly, utilizing full-page ads to indicate that he was the person to help find a resolution to the issue. With Mr. Shriver's track record on the state level and with the inability of the old council to find solutions for the extreme homeless problem in Santa Monica, it is hoped that Mr. Shriver will bring a fresh look at the homeless issue in Santa Monica and be able to lead us into light once again in the community. Many thanks, have a great week."

④ "I think the votes of the Nov. 2 election reflect that big money and big political connections work to the detriment of the popular grassroots voters. Also, cronism, thank yous for past favors, and the promise of future perks also played a very negative effect. What's fair about that?"

⑤ "I'm delighted with the results of the Santa Monica election. Several of the people I voted for did not get in, but I'm delighted that Bobby Shriver did, being that I had high hedges years ago, and the city made a big deal about it and I said, 'I'm Ann's cutting me hedges down until you make one Jane Fonda cut 'em.' So that's what happened. I'm delighted. We'll see what happens. I know that this city is due for some change so let's see if it happens. I certainly hope it does. But I think now we have a better chance for having, shall we say, more interesting and more fair politics of this lovely Samolicious."

⑥ "The election results remind me of third-world countries where they have incompetent dictators that ruin the society and then finally it's opened up to

elections and then the people vote for the same dictator again. It seems that the homeless problem in Santa Monica maybe isn't so much a problem of the elected officials but of the people who elect them. It seems that the people of Santa Monica are either morons or they just don't take the time to study why the problems are created in the first place."

⑦ "Instead of us showing compassion for the homeless in Santa Monica, it's time that the homeless show compassion for the citizens of Santa Monica and the people who try to use the parks but cannot because of the invective hurled at them by the homeless, and to do this when children are around makes this especially onerous and that needs immediate attention and I hope that Bobby Shriver is the man who comes in charging on the white horse."

⑧ "If the people of Santa Monica vote in all these idiots that love the bums more than anything else, they're going to have a lot of bums more than anything else, and maybe they deserve it."

⑨ "Although the Chamber of Commerce didn't do too well in the election, I think the Santa Monica for Renters' Rights probably fared worse for two reasons: One, they didn't get their new candidates in, the two that were elected had been around for a long time, particularly Genser, who I think has been on the city council for almost two decades. And on top of that, they were reported to have spent over \$100,000, that's \$50,000 for two candidates, that's a lot of money to spend in a city the size of Santa Monica."

⑩ "The city council election has just supported the understanding that voters are not thinking what voting rights best serve us as taxpayers and registered (voters). The vote for Shriver was correct and I wish that he will tell us what he won't do instead of what he will attempt to do. An added statement, how could Santa Monica citizens vote for the Measure S? Something is really wrong."

⑪ "I think the results of the recent election in Santa Monica show that Santa Monicans are sick and tired of the same old garbage spewing from city council and hope that Bobby Shriver, who had a very familiar name, might handle all of that and set people straight. I'm sure hoping that that happens."

⑫ "I think the results mean that the election was rigged. The only other explanation for re-electing three members of a group that has been so detrimental to our quality of life, is that the majority of voters, who are of course, renters, have been brainwashed into believing that without SMRR, they would lose their homes. SMRR council members have now taken on the role of certain cult leaders whose followers finally lose their ability to connect with reality."

GUEST COMMENTARY BY ELAN JOURNO

Arafat's undeserved honor: The West's shame

What made Yasser Arafat's final days appalling was not the farcical prevarications about whether he were dead or alive, nor the soap-opera quarrel between his wife and his political cronies. It was that so evil a man commanded so much respect.

Since his airlift to a Paris hospital, as the welcomed guest of the French government and with throngs of journalists on the scene, Arafat's death has been presented as the heartbreaking end of a noble man. Reacting to a premature report of Arafat's death, President Bush wished that "God bless his soul." Upon Arafat's death, Jacques Chirac lauded him as "a man of courage and conviction." The French gave him a military salute as Arafat's coffin was sent to his funeral in Egypt, which many heads of state are expected to attend.

Why do the West's politicians hold in such high esteem a man who unleashed a ferocious campaign of international terrorism that, across a span of 40 years, has claimed the lives of thousands of Israeli, Lebanese, Jordanian, Palestinian and American civilians?

Arafat specialized in high-profile attacks targeting civilians, in order to inflict the severest psychological devastation. The slaughter of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics; the assassination of American diplomats in Sudan; the massacre of school children in Maalot, Israel (a model for the recent mass murder at a high school in Beslan, Russia); the hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro, in which wheelchair-bound American Leon Klinghoffer was tossed overboard — Arafat was responsible for these and hundreds of other kidnappings, car-bombings, hijackings, and brutal murders. Also, during the 1970s he fomented bloody civil wars in Jordan and Lebanon.

But did he not renounce his terrorist ways later in life as though this would be enough to earn forgiveness?

Certainly in the 1990s European and American politicians embraced Arafat as a peacemaker, granting him recognition as a statesman. President Clinton met with him more often than with any other international leader — 24 times in eight years. And in 1994, Arafat co-won the Nobel Peace Prize. But his willingness to make peace with Israel was a transparent lie. Though he publicly renounced terrorism in words addressed to Western audiences, he never did so in action, nor even in words, when speaking to the Arab world.

From the outset Arafat flouted practically every provision of a 1993 peace accord — most notably the provision to quell terrorism against Israel. The vast armed "police force" he created actually conspired with and often actively supported terrorists. And, calling for "martyrs by the millions," Arafat fostered the deployment of suicide bombers. In 2001 he told the family of one bomber: "The heroic martyrdom operation (of the

man) who turned his body into a bomb (is) the model of manhood and sacrifice for the sake of Allah and the homeland."

None of this dissuaded Western leaders, including President Bush, who sought to marginalize Arafat somewhat, from supporting the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state in areas governed by Arafat's provisional Palestinian Authority. And this was so even though the evidence was abundant that such a state would become a sponsor of terrorism. In 2002, for example, Arafat's forces were caught trying to smuggle into the Gaza Strip 50 tons of weapons and ammunitions, including one ton of C-4 explosives, and more than 60 Katyusha rockets, capable of hitting most cities in Israel.

Politicians eager to regard Arafat as a heroic "liberator" of Palestinians were also undaunted by his dictatorial rule over the Palestinian Authority. That governing body systematically violates the rights of its citizens. Arafat's "police" force — eight or so competing gangs of thugs — arbitrarily arrests citizens, confiscates property, and murders his political opponents. The victims were denounced under the catch-all charge of "collaborating" with Israel. The PA's chaotic judiciary made a mockery of the rule of law; its judges served not justice, but Arafat.

But far from condemning Arafat's vicious rule, the European Union and America supported it with hundreds of millions of dollars in aid.

This extravagant tolerance of Arafat, given his blood-soaked record, is not due to ignorance on the part of our politicians. It comes from the precept that moral judgment is an obstacle to action. This is the view that moral principles are an impediment to achieving practical aims, such as peace. One should, on this view, remain morally neutral — even though one side may be clearly in the right — and try to engage both sides in gentlemanly negotiation — even though one side may be a murderous thug.

Because moral neutrality is such an obviously immoral policy, its perpetrators must blacken the good while whitewashing the evil. Hence, world leaders condemn Israel, the innocent victim who refuses to submit, and lionize Arafat, the ruthless killer.

Arafat's elevation to the dignity of a peace-seeking statesman is due to our politicians' moral corruption. Were he judged properly, Arafat would long ago have been dealt the punishment he deserved. By sustaining him and perpetuating the delusion that Arafat was really a well-meaning statesman, politicians committed treason to his innocent victims.

(Elan Jurno is a junior fellow at the Ayn Rand Institute (www.aynrand.org), in Irvine. The Institute promotes the philosophy of Ayn Rand, author of Atlas Shrugged and The Fountainhead. Send reactions to reaction@aynrand.org.)

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STATE

LA suburb faces a fall following a big blunder

BY MICHAEL R. BLOOD

Associated Press Writer

GARDENA — A disastrous gamble in the insurance business has pushed this Los Angeles suburb to the brink of financial collapse and raised fears that Gardena’s bankers might try to seize city parks, gymnasiums, even the swimming pool.

With options scarce to meet a December payment deadline, a city with the slogan “Rich Heritage, Bright Future” could join the short list of municipal bankruptcies. In an ominous sign, Gardena just hired a team of lawyers who specialize in defaults.

“I don’t want to go bankrupt. I probably shouldn’t say that, but it’s certainly one of the things that’s an option,” said City Manager Mitchell Lansdell. “I had an employee come to me the other day and ask me if they should be looking for a job — if we are even going to be in business at the end of the year.”

The creeping crisis in this working-class city of 60,000 — a commuter crossroads of strip malls and tightly packed homes once known for its annual strawberry festival — is a cautionary tale of how misplaced confidence, bad luck and risky decisions can conspire to create a municipal nightmare.

A dozen years ago the City Council took a step that, by alternating accounts, was either boldly innovative or as dicey as a trip to the local Hustler Casino: it used \$10 million in borrowed money to start the Municipal Mutual Insurance Co.

The idea, unprecedented in California, was to do two things at once — cover the city against costly lawsuits while churning out a profit.

In the end, Municipal Mutual did neither.

On Dec. 15, Gardena must pay a \$26 million bill, an amount nearly as much as it raises each year from local taxpayers. Much of that was sunk into the insurance company, which is effectively dead, but more than \$6 million also went toward a soured homebuyers program.

With no cash to pay its obligations Gardena could default, as neighboring Orange County did in the 1990s. A default doesn’t mean police will stop patrolling Gardena’s streets or the garbage collector won’t come, but it could ripple into layoffs and service cuts while making it more difficult and costly for Gardena to borrow money.

What’s more, the financing that was used to create the insurance company and a soured homebuyers program was secured with city property. Lansdell and other city officials said that if the city defaults, the banks could be legally entitled to seize gymnasiums, tennis courts, parks, the pool, the community center, a bus-repair yard — even the police station and firehouses. A lawyer with a firm the city recently hired, however, said that the banks cannot seize public assets.

Lansdell said the city is negotiating with the banks, which he identified as Japanese-owned Sumitomo Trust & Banking Co. and Union Bank of California. Sumitomo, which is owed more than \$20 million of the total, had no comment. Union Bank officials said they were researching the issue.

City Hall was dealt a setback this month when voters rejected a redevelopment

ment authority which Gardena officials hoped would show the city was recovering.

“We are pulling out the linings of our pockets and showing it to the bank and saying, ‘We don’t have any money,’” said Mayor Terrence Terauchi.

The implications of a default are so serious that officials have privately discussed begging homeowners for more than \$1,000 each.

While there has been talk of financial trouble at City Hall before, there appeared to be little recognition of how dire the situation has become until the City Council voted 4-0 on Tuesday to hire a team of lawyers who specialize in bankruptcy.

Some Gardena officials remain optimistic.

“I don’t think that’s going to happen,” Police Chief Rod Lyons said recently when asked about a possible default.

What went so terribly wrong?

Like a lot of cities nationwide, Gardena was struggling in the 1980s to keep up with ballooning liability insurance rates. As lawsuits became more common and damage awards ever bigger, a grandmother’s sidewalk slip or a car crash blamed on a misplaced street sign could leave a small city reeling.

With a burst of entrepreneurial brio, the city used \$10 million of a \$14.9 million bond issue to create Municipal Mutual.

“We got a lot of reports back from insurance advisers that it was a good thing and we could make money on it,” said former City Councilman James Cragin, who served on the company’s board of directors.

Though independent on paper, the company had close ties to the city. As a policyholder, Gardena had a seat on the board. Jim Gregg, a city official who helped establish the company, later became its president.

The state licensed the company for business in 1993 and Gardena became its inaugural customer.

But the company sputtered and — in what now looks like good money after bad — Gardena issued more than \$20 million in new bonds in 1995 to pay off the initial round of debt.

“We took one credit card and went, ‘Give us another credit card,’” Lansdell said. “Did we make the right decision ...? No, we didn’t.”

Now the company is under state oversight, all but shut down.

“It’s like being CEO of the Titanic,” said Dennis Evans, the sole employee.

Several insurance industry officials called the venture unprecedented.

“It appears that no other municipality has tried to do what Gardena did,” said Jim Hamilton, an insurance expert at the National League of Cities.

There’s good reason for that, according to Gregory Trout, chief operating officer at Bickmore Risk Services, a Sacramento-based self-insurance services company.

“Selling insurance is high risk with low profit margins,” Trout said.

Under its plan, Municipal Mutual was to turn a profit by enrolling other cities as policyholders. But by the time the company got rolling, the market had changed. While big insurers were again writing new business, many municipalities were

STATE BRIEFS

Arafat's Anaheim connection

By The Associated Press

ANAHEIM — Last summer, Motaz Herzallah needed \$65,000 for an operation on a cancerous brain tumor. He sent an appeal to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat through contacts in the West Bank and received a check within three days.

"He saved my life," Herzallah, a 43-year-old father of three who lives in Corona, said Thursday.

Few Palestinian Americans have such a personal link to Arafat, but his death still resonates powerfully among those who left the Middle East and started new lives in the United States. He was a symbol of the struggle for an independent state, even though many disagreed with him about how to achieve that goal.

"It's a very, very sad day for Palestinians," says Zahi Damuni, a biotech researcher in San Diego who, like others interviewed around the state, hoped the loss of Arafat would inspire renewed efforts to resolve their conflict with Israel.

Arafat, who died early Thursday at a Paris hospital, was considered an elder statesman in some parts of the world and a terrorist in others. A champion of the stateless or a corrupt obstacle to peace.

Schwarzenegger sizzling in Japan

By The Associated Press

TOKYO — Arnold Schwarzenegger is an old pro at promoting stuff in Japan. He's pitched beer, instant noodles, even "energy drinks." Well, he's back. And the Japanese are still eating him up.

Opening a four-day California trade and tourism blitz with a food fair at a glitzy hotel, California's Gov. Schwarzenegger was — as always — the toast of Tokyo on Thursday.

"I feel like Japan is my second home," he told a packed ballroom, with two dozen TV cameras rolling. The actor-turned-politician noted that he's been here in the past to promote everything from the Special Olympics to bodybuilding — not to mention his more lucrative product endorsements.

"But today I'm here for the most important reason of all," he said, to "promote, market and sell California."

Schwarzenegger was speaking at the "Taste of California" food fair, which featured a cooking performance by three U.S. chefs using California products. Among them: cocoa-dusted almonds, merlot wine and sushi made from California rice. The governor is accompanied by a 57-member delegation of farmers and business executives.

The House doesn't always win

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A consumer group filed a complaint Thursday accusing House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo, R-Calif., of breaking House rules by mailing fliers touting President Bush's actions on behalf of snowmobilers.

More than 175,000 fliers sent before the election to people in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Montana and Wyoming promoted a Bush administration decision to keep the Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks open to snowmobilers. The fliers cost \$68,081 in taxpayer money.

Consumer group Public Citizen said in a complaint filed with the House Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards that Pombo was violating rules for taxpayer-funded mail, including one that prohibits excessively political or partisan content.

"This is clearly a violation of the franking laws against using tax dollars to pay for campaign literature," Frank Clemente, director of Public Citizen's Congress Watch, said in a statement.

Two environmental lawyers from Minnesota also have filed a complaint about the mailers. Pombo was informed by the mailing standards commission Tuesday of their complaint and has 10 days to respond.

Gardena is unlikely to recoup investment

SUBURB, from page 8

entering not-for-profit insurance pools.

Municipal Mutual never landed enough policyholders. Even after branching into workers' compensation coverage, the company continued to chew through its cash reserves, officials said.

The company "was competing against the largest carriers in the world," said Gregg, the city employee who later ran Municipal Mutual. "In nine years am I going to say I never made any mistakes? I'm not going to go there."

Gardena now buys its coverage elsewhere, and it's unlikely the city will recover any of its investment, company and government officials agreed.

If Gardena does go bankrupt, it would join at least two other California governments — Orange County and Desert Hot

Springs — that have sought court protection from creditors in recent years. Orange County declared bankruptcy in 1994 after issuing \$1 billion in bonds to fund a county investment pool that subsequently collapsed — a scandal that led to civil and criminal charges.

A study last year by Fitch Ratings found a municipal default rate of less than 1 percent on bonds issued from 1979 through 1997 — 2,339 in all totaling \$32.8 billion. Virtually all involved bonds issued by government-run development, power or health care authorities, not cities or towns.

In a recent interview in his tidy office, Lansdell thumbed through manila folders stuffed with financial documents but no answers.

"Got any ideas for me?" he asked darkly. "A lot of car washes?"



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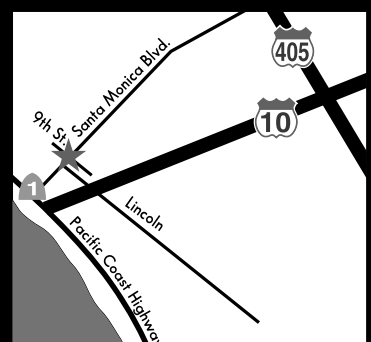
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Census says elderly population booming in West

BY ANGIE WAGNER
 Associated Press Writer

PAHRUMP, Nev. — When Steve Marsh first drove into this dusty town in the shadow of glitzy Las Vegas, he took one look at the gravel roads and sagebrush flats and grunted: “This is in the middle of nowhere.”

Pahrump may not look like much. But it boasts miles of clean, open space and is surrounded by desert mountains. The weather is mild, the housing cheap and national parks are nearby.

It was enough for Marsh and his wife, Donna, to move here to retire.

“We love it,” Marsh said, relaxing after a

round of golf at his Desert Greens retirement community. “We’re happy as pigs in slop.”

Retirees eager to escape cold winters or congested freeways have been flocking to Western cities like Pahrump. The future will bring more of the same: The Census Bureau says the population of those 65 and older will increase more rapidly in the West than in any other area of the country.

While retirees settle in, states are figuring out how to keep up with an aging population. Will there be enough doctors and nurses? Hospitals and nursing homes? Will housing be affordable?

“This affects all of us,” said Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne. “It’s life, and it’s time that we step up, recognize it, identify the

challenges and find solutions.”

NYE GUYS

You don’t have to tell retirees in Pahrump that the West is THE place to retire. They live in the third-fastest growing county in the nation for those 65 and older. Only about 5,000 seniors call Nye County home, but that is more than three times the number that lived here in 1990, according to Census Bureau figures.

Nevada leads the country in the senior population boom. From 1990 to 2003, the state’s 65 and older population almost doubled — from 129,107 to 250,787, according to census numbers. Alaska, Arizona,

New Mexico, Hawaii, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho were among the top 10 states for growth in the senior population.

And it’s not just the Sunbelt. Lured by the nostalgia of rural towns and outdoor recreation, retirees have turned Western towns into retirement hot spots. Florida and California have long been Meccas. But today, Bend, Ore., St. George, Utah, Sheridan, Wyo., and Silver City, N.M., are hip places to be.

Laura Ridley and her husband, a retired real estate developer, traded Georgia for Cody, Wyo., four years ago. She speaks about the West in postcard-perfect words.

“We can be in the park (Yellowstone) in

See **BOOM**, page 16

Population growth in the West may bridge rural vs. urban vote

BY ANGIE WAGNER
 Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — Linda Deymonaz lives in a quiet world with no traffic jams, no shopping malls and no movie theaters. She drives on dirt roads in her small town and measures change by the new Philly cheese steak sandwich on her market’s menu.

The 345 people in Dyer, Nev., are four hours and a world away from Las Vegas, where casino marquees change by the minute and neighborhoods seem to sprout up overnight.

It’s more than just a way of life that divides these two places, however. Last week, it was red and blue, the colors that mark the rural and urban boundaries across the West.

Esmeralda County, home to Dyer and the least populated county in Nevada, voted for President Bush in the presidential election. Las Vegas’ Clark County went for Sen. John Kerry, and it was the only Nevada county to go Democratic.

In the red states of Nevada, Colorado and New Mexico, there were urban islands of blue in Las Vegas, Denver and

Albuquerque.

They symbolize the great change sweeping the West — rapid growth and increasing urbanization. The question is: Do the booming cities offer hope for Democrats, or will newcomers help Republicans expand their reach across the region?

To John Sperling, founder of the University of Phoenix, the red-blue divide is really retro America or “old America” versus metro America or “new America.”

In his book “The Great Divide: Retro vs. Metro America,” Sperling defines retro states as home to conservative, religious residents who depend on agriculture or mining for their economy. Metro states have a more high-tech economy and residents are religious moderates and more accepting of differences in class, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

In Dyer, there may only be 345 residents, but on Sundays they can choose between four different churches. Deymonaz, 55, owner of the Esmeralda Market, voted like most residents there — for Bush, who received 134 votes to Kerry’s 34. She likes the president’s down-to-earth style, conservative values

and that he is religious.

“I think you can listen to him and know when he speaks to you that there’s God inside him,” she said.

In liberal Portland, Ore., Haven coffee shop worker Melissa Jenks, 22, said living in a city gives her a different view.

“I think you’re just exposed to more. In the rural community, it’s more about family and religion and taking care of your house,” she said.

Every Western state except New Mexico voted as expected. The so-called left coast — Washington, Oregon and California — went for Kerry with strong support from the cities while the intermountain West went for Bush. New Mexico, which has a Democratic governor, narrowly went for Al Gore in the 2000 presidential election and then switched to Bush this year.

But Democrats made inroads in Republican-dominated Colorado.

While the state voted for Bush, residents elected a Democratic U.S. senator — Ken Salazar — and put Democrats in control of both the state House and Senate for the first time since 1960.

Some political scientists believe

Colorado voters sought more moderates. Voters may have wanted off the “God, guns and gays agenda,” said Colorado State University political science professor John Straayer.

Sperling thinks it’s something else — Colorado voters may be changing as the state’s economy does.

“When you develop a high-tech economy, you begin to think in terms of science and technology. You begin to think maybe creation doesn’t really make sense,” he said. “Slowly, but surely you begin to decide maybe the Bible isn’t absolutely accurate. Suddenly you begin to think the world operates in different ways.”

From 2000 to 2003, the population in the West grew by 5.2 percent, more than any other area of the country, according to U.S. Census Bureau numbers. The West will continue being the fastest-growing area of the country at least through 2025, figures show.

Hispanics have helped fuel growth in the West, and Democrats had hoped they might tip the balance for Kerry. He still won the bulk of the Hispanic vote — 70

See **VOTE**, page 18

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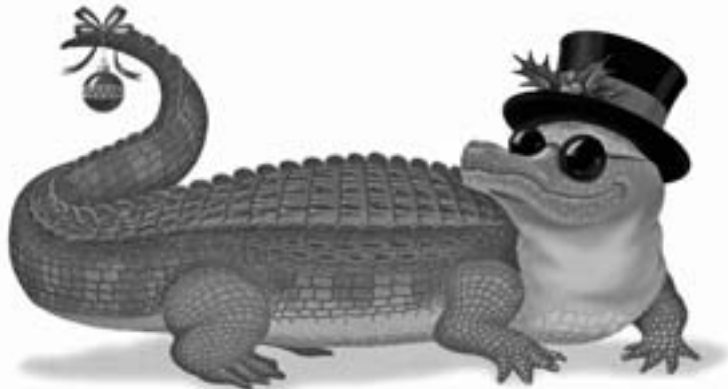
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NATIONAL

Senate welcomes more of Newt's foot soldiers

BY DONNA CASSATA

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Call them Newt's disciples.

These hard-charging conservatives learned their political tactics in the House from former Speaker Newt Gingrich, the one-time backbencher-turned-Pied Piper who led the 1994 Republican revolution that swept Congress.

During the past decade, a handful of these conservatives moved to the Senate, determined to push it rightward and break hidebound rules that would inhibit their bare-knuckles House style. Come January, there will be more than a hardy few of them.

Elections from South Dakota to the Carolinas increased their numbers in the Senate and set the stage for a political and legislative tug of war. On one side are conservatives who interpreted the victories of Nov. 2 as validation of their views; on the other, the Senate, a sanctum of compromise and pragmatism.

The question is which one — the institution or its members — prevails.

"A couple of characteristics of the Senate will curb their House habits," said John J. Pitney, a political science professor at Claremont McKenna College in California. He mentioned the 60 votes necessary to break a filibuster, bipartisan coalitions that often produce legislation, and the demand on senators from a larger, more diverse population than a single House district.

"A broader range of political pressures will temper their impulses," said Pitney, who still expects the House veterans to see legislating "through the prism of partisan warfare."

After a bitter presidential election and harsh charges in congressional races, the numbers and changes in the Senate indicate plenty of dissent. Republicans will hold 55 seats and Democrats 44, with one Democratic-leaning independent.

Gone are many of the lawmakers with reputations for reaching across the aisle, some of the Southern Democratic moderates and Republican moderates from the West. In their place are GOP conservatives, such as Oklahoma's Tom Coburn, and more liberal Democrats, such as Illinois' Barack Obama.

Some 52 senators will be products of the House, including 30 Republicans. Of those GOP members, close to a dozen were in the House when Gingrich was working to reverse 40 years of Democratic rule or were elected shortly

after the Republican tidal wave.

"We're now seeing the fruits of the polarization of the House," said Burdett Loomis, a political scientist at the University of Kansas. "It predated the Senate. The natural progression is into the Senate."

One of those House veterans is Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, who was elected to the Senate in 1994. Two months into his term, Santorum and some GOP senators tried to strip Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., of his chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee because of his opposition to a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution.

The effort failed but set in motion Republican term limits on committee chairmanships.

Flash ahead to 2004. Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, is set to step down as Senate Judiciary Committee chairman due to term limits. Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., is in line to take his place. But the day after the Nov. 2 election, Specter angered conservatives when he said it would be tough for the Senate to confirm anti-abortion judges. The right has demanded that Specter be passed over for the post.

Santorum, a member of the leadership as the Republican Conference chairman, put out a general statement of support for Specter. Republicans will decide next week whether Specter gets the post.

"Santorum has been more co-opted by the system than have the others," said Paul Weyrich, a leading conservative. "I think when they get into leadership they drink a different kind of water."

But Weyrich argued that senators do not like being pressured by outside groups, and bypassing Specter would be seen as a dangerous precedent. "By golly, if these Christians can overthrow a chairmanship," said Weyrich, who expects Specter to become the committee chairman.

Conservatives emboldened by the election results, particularly in the Senate, will press for stricter restrictions on abortion and a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.

At the center will be Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn. A potential presidential candidate in 2008, he faces the demands of making the Senate run and keeping the Republican base content.

"You see someone like Frist or (former Majority Leader Trent) Lott bending to realities from a place farther right than their predecessor," Loomis said. "They've got to make it work. They drag it along in its strange way."



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NATIONAL



Administration moving ahead on forest and fish

BY JEFF BARNARD
Associated Press Writer

GRANTS PASS, Ore. — The Northwest can expect more of the same effort to overhaul national forest management and salmon recovery from President Bush following his re-election.

Battles continue over the administration's plan to lift Clinton-era prohibitions on logging and road building in 58 million acres of remote national forests unless governors petition to protect them, rebuilding threatened and endangered runs of salmon, and the Northwest Forest Plan, which balances logging against fish and wildlife habitat.

The environmental groups that have opposed the president every step of the way say they will continue fighting those overhauls in courtrooms and the halls of Congress.

"In his acceptance speech, (President Bush) said he wanted to be president of all Americans and reach across the aisle to do bipartisan legislation," said Jay Ward, conservation director of the Oregon Natural Resources Council in Portland.

"The current roadless policy his administration is attempting to ram through is not bipartisan. It goes against nearly every interest group from conservationists to hunters, anglers and Columbia Sportswear. They're going to turn it over to the governors of some of those red states."

Mark Rey, the agriculture undersecretary who oversees the U.S. Forest Service, said he did not want to speculate how the roadless rule would turn out.

Chris West, vice president of the American Forest Resource Council, a timber industry group in Portland, said he is more interested in seeing full implementation of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, enacted this year to boost prescribed fires and thinning projects that reduce the danger of wildfire.

"We're not seeing that much of it in the West," West said. "We lucked out with a light fire year this last year. Hopefully we'll get more of this work done before we have another bad fire season."

One of Rey's top priorities is boosting the total acreage treated under Healthy Forests from 4 million acres this year to 8 million acres, which would be on track to treat the 80 million acres most in need every 10 years.

With the war in Iraq and tax cuts, funding will be tight, but Brian Kennedy, spokesman for the House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo, R-Calif., said members of Congress will be "fighting very hard" to boost support.

Rey said only 270,000 acres of the 4 million treated produced any kind of logs or fuel for biomass generators, which should satisfy environmentalists who feared Healthy Forests would be a license for logging of old growth forests.

"Over 50 percent of it was in the wildland-urban interface," said Rey. "That will increase as we get community-based

fire plans on line as called for in the legislation."

Mike Anderson, an analyst for The Wilderness Society, said he expects the administration to make new efforts to boost logging under the Northwest Forest Plan, which has lagged behind its goal of 1 billion board feet a year since it was adopted in 1994.

First term changes easing fish and wildlife protections are still working their way through court challenges from environmentalists. Re-evaluations of threatened species listings for the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet will be done soon.

Anderson added the Forest Service will have a hard time doing anything if the administration continues cutting the agency's budget and personnel.

"The Northwest took a big hit this year," Anderson said. "We're going to hear a lot of talk but not a whole lot more action when it comes to Healthy Forests."

On salmon, NOAA Fisheries Northwest Regional Director Bob Lohn said "job one" will be reaching out to Indian tribes and others as the first recovery plans come out next year for some of the 26 groups of salmon listed as threatened or endangered.

Two key issues continue to develop: a new federal policy that counts hatchery fish with wild fish in assessing Endangered Species Act protection, and the latest attempt to satisfy a federal judge with a way to protect salmon from being killed by hydroelectric dams in the Columbia Basin.

After Bush said he was committed to keeping dams on the Snake River in Washington that tribes and environmentalist had wanted removed, NOAA Fisheries came up with an approach that accepts the dams as part of the landscape.

"We have no latitude about whether we will protect (salmon)," Lohn said. "We still have a great deal of latitude how we work with others to protect them."

"Despite the spats we have about biological opinions the Northwest really has a long history of states, tribes and other agencies generally working together."

Charles Hudson, spokesman for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, noted that Lohn attended a recent tribal conference on lamprey, an eel-like fish that could soon be added to Endangered Species Act protection, adding another layer of restrictions on dam operations.

"In the last four years, we've seen a number of rollbacks in protections," for salmon habitat, said Hudson. "Given the current trend, we would anticipate the next four years a lot of time will be spent in the courtroom."

Bill Bakke of the Native Fish Society is not encouraged by the hatchery policy and expects it to be challenged in court once it is finished.

"This is the administrative attempt to reframe the Endangered Species Act without actually changing the law," Bakke said.

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NATIONAL

New governor wants to loosen up on liquor laws

BY PAUL FOY

Associated Press Writer

SALT LAKE CITY — Gov.-elect Jon Huntsman Jr. said this week he is open to changing the state's restrictive liquor laws, often derided nationally as absurdly complicated and annoying, as part of an aggressive campaign to boost Utah's image and its economy.

In an hour-long interview with The Associated Press, the Republican frequently cast Utah as an economic underachiever that sorely needs a boost to pay the bills for everything from highways to a burgeoning public school system.

He said Utah exists in "splendid isolation" to economic realities, lagging behind every surrounding state "in the most competitive neighborhood of any region in the United States." He cited the turnaround of Colorado, a "failed state 20 years ago" after an energy bust, as a diversified model for Utah to follow with aggressive

marketing and business recruitment.

Huntsman said his first priority will be to reform the state's moribund tax code, simplifying taxes, giving breaks to small business, cutting capital gains taxes and matching other states' economic incentives.

But he also aims to overcome Utah's age-old image as a state dominated by the Mormon faith, a solidly conservative Legislature and liquor laws that regulate everything from the manner of drinking at commercial establishments to the disposition of private wine collections.

Huntsman said he wants to play up Utah's more positive aspects, including its work ethic, entrepreneurial spirit and an educated, tech-savvy work force. He said the state was turning more diverse and "in 15 to 20 years we'll be seen as something except a homogenous state."

Huntsman, a Mormon who abstains from alcohol, said he's "heard a lot of carping about the liquor laws. I want to look at it. I want to address it." He appointed Gastronomy restaurant-chain owner Tom Guinney and

former radio host Tom Barberi — whose mantra was "legalize adulthood in Utah" — to recommend more "transparent" and "user-friendly" regulations.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are forbidden to drink, and the laws reflect that. Utah has no open-door saloons; patrons of the state's only full-service liquor clubs must sign up and pay a membership fee before imbibing, a rule that discourages drop-ins.

The myriad regulations require drinkers to completely drain a glass or bottle before they can get a waiter to pour another round. For home, Utah retailers offer only weakened beer with 3.2 percent alcohol content. The stronger stuff can be bought only at out-of-the-way state-run liquor stores at exorbitant prices.

Huntsman acknowledged the Mormon church, which opposed any loosening of the laws for the 2002 Winter Olympics, would weigh in on any changes.

"There are, like with any issue, several constituencies," he said. "I consider the church a very important constituent."

But he also said he has political capital to burn and no interest in being a career politician, giving him the freedom to pursue goals.

"I'm not in this to make a career in government," said Huntsman.

Assembly impeaches controller Augustine for campaigning from office

BY BRENDAN RILEY

Associated Press Writer

CARSON CITY, Nev. — The state Assembly impeached Nevada Controller Kathy Augustine on Thursday for using her office workers and equipment to help with her 2002 re-election — on state time.

In a series of 42-0 voice votes, the Assembly sent three articles of impeachment to the state Senate where a trial will be held to determine whether Augustine will be removed from office. The impeachment was the first of any public official in the state's 140-year history.

The Senate was expected to convene Friday to accept the Assembly's report. At that point, the two-term Republican controller must temporarily step down from the statewide elective post she has held since 1998.

The Senate could hold a trial starting later this month or in early December.

Augustine's attorneys questioned whether she's getting fair treatment. Given the Assembly's decision to limit defense efforts during its proceedings, "We were pretty much reduced to the role of a potted plant," lawyer Dominic Gentile said.

On Wednesday, the first day of the Assembly impeachment proceedings, Gentile said no defense witnesses would be called because of legal "pollution" caused by a deputy attorney general's testimony.

Deputy Attorney General Gerald Gardner testified Augustine's offenses amounted to malfeasance and weren't mere omissions. He said there's extensive evidence — including computer records — of Augustine's activity that make it clear the controller "lost sight of her duty to the public trust."

In a one-year period leading up to her 2002 re-election, Augustine "literally ran her campaign headquarters out of the Nevada State Capitol," Gardner said, adding that employees who didn't help her "were berated, belittled and ultimately shunned from Kathy Augustine's inner circle."

Former executive assistant Jennifer Normington said Augustine knew the work was done on state time — something the controller has denied — because she often was told in the morning at Augustine's office to have speeches and other campaign material ready later in the day.

When another worker refused to do campaign work, Normington said Augustine "started yelling and throwing things around the office" and said she wanted to fire the worker. Based on that event, Normington said she knew "I would be fired in a heartbeat if I did not comply with Kathy's demands."

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NATIONAL

Phoenix rising: Rail project gets green light with tax vote

BY BETH DEFALCO

Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Hoping to transform the city's reputation as business park by day and ghost town by night, voters have jumped aboard a sweeping, sales tax-funded transportation plan that includes a light rail system, beefed-up bus service and miles of new freeways.

Residents of this sprawling metropolitan area last week approved Proposition 400, which continues a half-cent sales tax for 20 years, generating an estimated \$15 billion for a plan that seeks to reduce congestion and centralize development.

While downtown Phoenix houses the majority of the business sector, workers scatter to the suburbs to live, spending money there on bigger homes and nearby entertainment venues.

"The one lifestyle Phoenix does not have is that high-density urban core," said Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon, a light rail backer. "But that's now coming with light rail."

The project includes adding 78 miles of freeways, more buses and funding for the light rail line. No tracks have been laid for the twice-delayed light rail project; the starter segment — initially set to open at the end 2006 and then in 2007 — is now scheduled to open in December 2008.

In 2000, Phoenix passed a four-tenths of a percent sales tax for a transit plan that included bus service improvements and light rail. The initial 20-mile arterial route cost \$1.3 billion, about half of which comes from federal funds.

The route starts in north Phoenix, goes south into downtown, then heads east past the airport and through downtown Tempe, ending about a mile into suburban Mesa to the east.

Construction of the train's maintenance and storage facility is underway. Street construction is to begin in February.

About a third of the money from Proposition 400, along with federal and city funds, will pay for extensions connecting the core route to the suburbs.

An additional 30.7 miles preliminarily planned would branch east into downtown Mesa, northwest near Glendale and northeast to Paradise Valley. A rail line that goes west is also being considered.

But detractors still argue that light rail is a waste of money in an area where development is so far flung.

"Light rail basically takes people that ride the bus and funnels them into the light rail system," said Camilla Strongin, a spokeswoman for No on 400, a group that fought the measure. "Our money is better spent expanding the freeways for the 98 percent of the population that they serve."

Primarily bankrolled by Gilbert businessman Dave Thompson, the anti-light rail group took aim at the expensive portion planned to connect Mesa with downtown Phoenix.

Despite an estimated \$1.6 million campaign to fight the proposition, 57 percent of voters in Maricopa County — the state's most populous — chose to extend it.

"The main benefit is capacity," said Daina Mann, a spokeswoman for the Valley Metro Regional Public Transportation Authority. "We can put the equivalent amount of people on a light rail train as can fit on a six-lane freeway."

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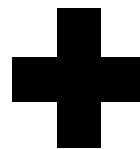
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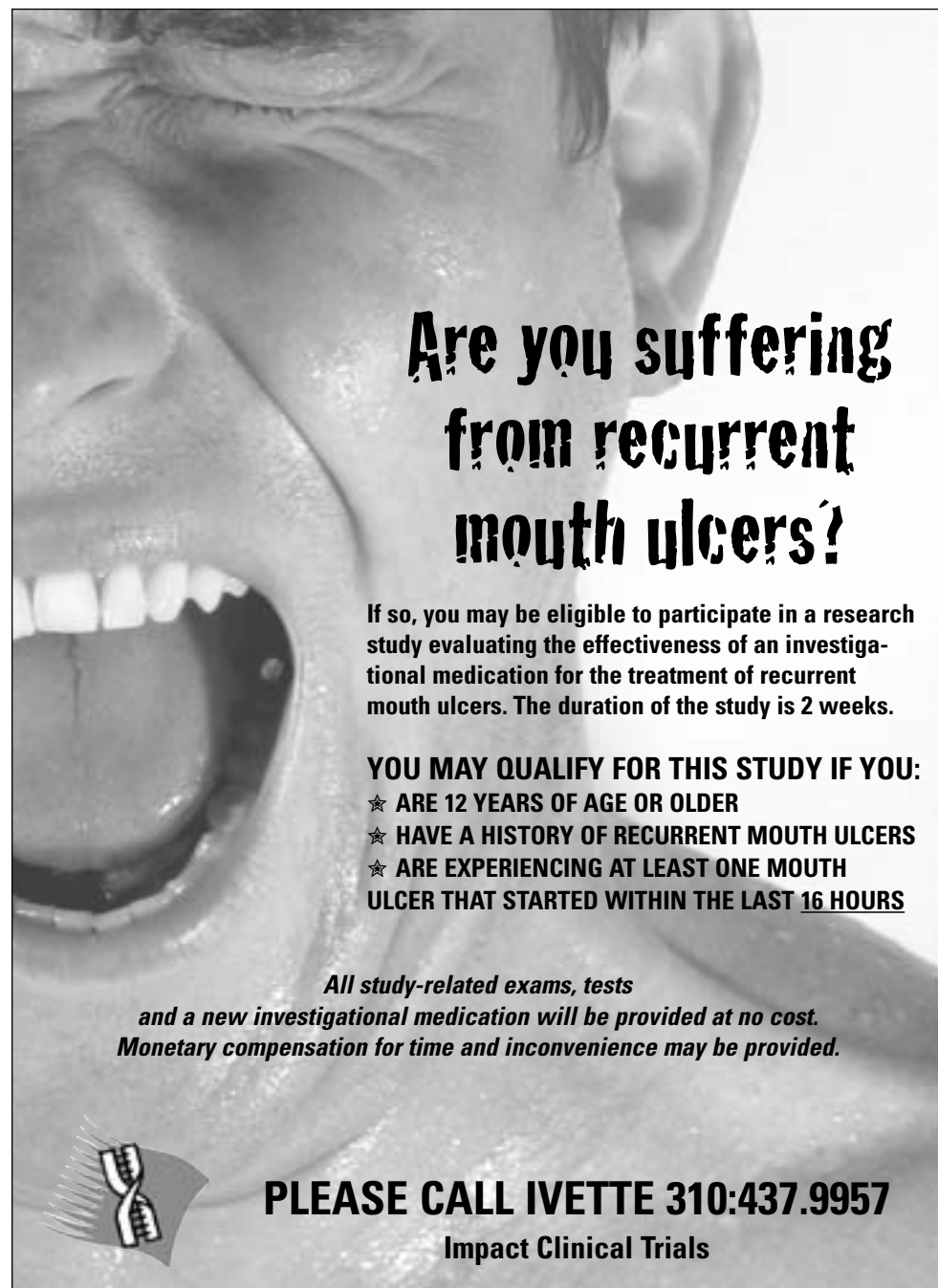


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NATIONAL

Retirees on the run are healthy, wealthy & wise

BOOM, from page 10

an hour," she said. "The animals, oh my goodness, to see them just like it's supposed to be. The climate is just fantastic. When it snows, it's like confectioner's sugar."

Retirees who migrate are the "healthiest, wealthiest and best-educated of all retirees," said Mark Fagan, a sociologist at Jacksonville State University in Alabama. They take college classes and travel. Few pass time in rocking chairs on the front porch.

"Before, when you thought of a retirement home, you'd think of bingo and all that," said Wynne Angell, a retirement housing consultant. "Now ... you don't even want to advertise that. Bingo — that just creates the impression of people that are real frail."

But as retirees age and join the baby boomers already in the West, their housing and medical needs will change. They may need help with everyday activities or move into an assisted living home.

Through 2025, the Census Bureau projects the West will continue to dominate the country in the growth of the senior population. Utah will lead, followed by Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon, Alaska and Colorado. The senior population in those states is expected to at least double. Arizona, New Mexico, Montana and Nevada also rank among the 15 fastest-growing states.

All those extra people will strain state resources; even small states like Wyoming could easily be overwhelmed.

States are taking stock of their resources for older residents, examining health care and housing options, forming committees to study needs of an aging population and trying to plan for an unprecedented population increase.

"We've known this was coming for a long, long time," said Bev Morrow, administrator of the Wyoming Aging Division. "Very little has actually been done. We all have to just face it. We have to take a good hard look, let go of some things and move in a new direction."

THE LONG HAUL

Kemphorne felt so strongly about preparing for older residents that he made long-term care his initiative as chairman of the National Governors Association this past year. His father cares for his mother, a stroke victim, in the couple's home.

That's a trend states are looking at. While not abandoning institutional care, states are increasing aid and resources for home care, hoping to move away from nursing homes and use relatives or friends as caregivers. Home care is usually cheaper and it's what people prefer, said Donna Folkemer, health program director for the National Conference of State Legislatures.

But home care creates a whole new set of issues. How will it work? How many caregivers will there be? And what about giving caregivers a break? The availability and affordability of so-called respite care is something else states are examining, especially rural states like Montana and Wyoming.

The Wyoming Legislature this year created a long-term care subcommittee that is studying whether to put Alzheimer's units in assisted living facilities, the availability of nursing assistants

and the shortage of doctors.

"It's difficult to attract providers into all of the places we need them," Morrow said.

More doctors are limiting Medicare patients because reimbursement rates are lower than private insurance. That makes finding a physician even harder in parts of the West where it can be 100 miles or more between towns.

Nurses are also scarce. In 2000, 10 of 13 Western states already had nursing shortages, according to a 2002 Department of Health and Human Services report. By 2020, the shortage is projected to spread to all Western states and beyond.

"There's a tug and pull here," said Dr. Joanne Schwartzberg, director of aging and community health for the American Medical Association. "You have the age wave coming, and we just don't have work force."

When Robert Pioso, 69, retired as president of a Wisconsin first-aid supply company two years ago, he and his wife were looking for a town with affordable housing, a symphony orchestra and a favorable climate.

They found that in Eugene, Ore., but that search was easy compared to finding a doctor that accepted Medicare. That took a month.

It's not uncommon for older residents to be more interested in making sure recreation areas are nearby than a hospital.

Pahrump, where Steve Marsh, who has Parkinson's disease, moved to from Indiana, won't have a hospital until 2006. Marsh, 67, goes to a Veterans Administration clinic in Pahrump or drives 60 miles to Las Vegas for medical care.

"That's not what they think about," Schwartzberg said. "They think, finally I'm ready to retire. I want to enjoy myself. I don't want to think about problems that won't arise for 10, maybe 15 years."

"It's hard enough to get people to plan for retirement. How do you get people to start thinking about health care?"

States, experts say, don't have a choice. They must prepare.

AGED ATTRACTORS

When retirees began discovering Sheridan, Wyo., population 16,000, Mayor Jim Wilson asked them to help make Sheridan, with its main street parades and small-town charm, more attractive to an older population.

The new residents now serve on volunteer boards and have helped the town develop hiking and bicycle trails.

Sheridan is expanding its hospital, making sure its older buildings are handicapped accessible and is working to keep housing affordable in a town where new residents have driven up home prices.

That's a big problem in retirement spots. New, wealthier residents can afford to pay more for homes, but that raises property taxes for longtime residents.

The West accounted for 19 of the top 25 counties in the country for the most expensive homes owned by people ages 55 to 74, according to estimates from the National Association of Home Builders based on census numbers.

Pitkin County, Colo., home to Aspen, led the country with an average home

NATIONAL



Entertaining elderly takes jobs and housing

BOOM, from page 16

price of \$946,036. Teton County, Wyo., home to Jackson and a gateway to Yellowstone National Park, was third with an average price of \$650,526.

Nevada is helping launch a pilot project to build an affordable, assisted living home in Las Vegas. The 90-unit facility is scheduled to open next year. Homebuilder Del Webb, a leader in housing for 55 and older, now offers a variety of price ranges for its Sun City communities in Nevada, Arizona and California.

But preparing for an older population is more than just making sure health care is adequate and housing is affordable. It's also about quality of life and making sure jobs are available for the many retirees who plan to continue working.

States will need to attract companies that want to hire older workers and businesses will have to accommodate job-sharing and employees who want to work from home, said Clare Hushbeck, an economist with AARP.

"It does require big vision," she said. "It's not an easy thing to wrap your mind around, but it's coming."

In Arizona, the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust recently awarded grants to four communities to create "life

options" centers, where older adults can learn about new careers, take classes, volunteer and socialize.

Telemedicine — doctors practicing from afar by voice, data and video hookup — may see greater use in remote communities in the West. Kempthorne said a new hospital in Salmon, Idaho, will use telemedicine extensively.

States will also need more transportation options. Using school buses to transport seniors while students are in school is one idea, Kempthorne said.

"While we are getting used to the current generation of retirees and near-retirees, there will be a gap," said Daniel Perry, executive director of the Alliance for Aging Research. "They will be moving to more far-flung areas. There'll be a gap between now and when health care and transportation services and entertainment catches up with them."

The Idaho governor hopes his yearlong work on long-term care paid off and that his fellow governors will include the issue in their state-of-the-state addresses next year.

"You don't have to look very far down the road with regard to your budgets," Kempthorne said. "You're going to be impacted one way or another. You better get ahead of the curve."



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NATIONAL

States wonder if newcomers will alter elections

VOTE, from page 10

percent in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada — but Bush saw increased Hispanic support.

The West is becoming more urban, with cities like Las Vegas and Phoenix experiencing the greatest growth, said Bill Frey, demographer with the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank.

Clark County, home to Las Vegas and nearly 1.7 million people, already dominates Nevada with 71 percent of the state's population. And demographers expect it to almost double over the next decade and boost its dominance to 74 percent of the state's population.

But will newcomers change the way cities and states vote?

In Arizona, the answer this year was "no." Fast-growing Maricopa County,

home to Phoenix, remained solidly in the Bush column.

In Elko, Nev., Jon Farrow brought his city views to the country. Farrow, 23, was raised in Las Vegas and after living in New York, moved to rural Elko. He was among 3,047 people in the county who voted for Kerry. The majority — 11,935 — went for Bush.

"If you get people moving from the cities moving into rural areas it certainly will mix things up a bit," said Farrow, a desk clerk at the Thunderbird Motel.

Most people who move to another place like Farrow tend to keep the political views they already had, said Mark Fagan, a sociologist and retiree migration expert at Jacksonville State University in Alabama.

Both political parties say migration to the West gives them hope. Republicans

were encouraged by New Mexico's support for Bush.

"Certainly population switches do change the dynamic of the political map," said Jano Cabrera, spokesman for the Democratic National Committee.

"But each election is different and the true focus from either the Democrat or the Republican perspective isn't so much to keep track of migration shifts but to offer a compelling message."

Chris Tucker, 29, an employee at a Barnes and Noble bookstore in Denver who voted for Kerry, wasn't surprised at the rural-urban divide.

"People who live in cities are more used to things changing on a daily basis. You live farther out in the country and things remain the same from day to day," he said. "That kind of security is more important to you. You don't like to make

major changes. In the city, things change drastically. A building down the street is not there next week."

Fagan predicts rural areas will see a population surge as baby boomers retire and seek a lower cost of living and more open space.

For now, Frey said cities will enjoy the most growth, but urban sprawl will mean more Hispanics and low-income residents moving into suburbs and rural areas.

That will further change the political landscape in the West, but how much and how soon remains to be seen.

"The gray area between rural and urban is what's going to continue to be gobbled up," Frey said. "The red part of it will grow a little bit faster, but it'll get bluer over time. I think the bluer will occur not in four years, but in eight."



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INTERNATIONAL



Studies suggest global warming is clear, present danger

BY MATT CRENSON

AP National Writer

Global warming has had little noticeable impact in Washington, D.C. Politicians in the nation's capital have been reluctant to set limits on the carbon dioxide pollution that is expected to warm the planet by 4 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit during the next century, citing uncertainty about the severity of the threat.

But that uncertainty may have shrunk somewhat with the release last week of two scientific reports suggesting that global warming is not just a hypothetical possibility, but a real phenomenon that has already started transforming especially sensitive parts of the globe.

Overall, the reports say, Earth's climate has warmed by about 1 degree Fahrenheit since 1900. In the Arctic, where a number of processes amplify the warming effects of carbon dioxide, most regions have experienced a temperature rise of 4 to 7 degrees in the last 50 years.

That warmth has reduced the amount of snow that falls every winter, melted away mountain glaciers and shrunk the Arctic Ocean's summer sea ice cover to its smallest extent in millennia, according to satellite measurements. Swaths of Alaskan permafrost are thawing into soggy bogs, and trees are moving northward at the expense of the tundra that rings the Arctic Ocean.

These changes seriously threaten animals such as polar bears, which live and hunt on the sea ice. The bears have already suffered a 15 percent decrease in their number of offspring and a similar decline in weight over the past 25 years. If the Arctic sea ice disappears altogether during the summer months, as some researchers expect it will by the end of the century, polar bears have little chance of survival.

Things are less serious in the lower 48, where the effects of climate change have been more subtle. In much of the United

States, spring arrives about two weeks earlier than it did 50 years ago. Tropical bird species have appeared in Florida and along the Gulf Coast. Species such as Edith's checkerspot, a butterfly native to western North America, have started dying out at the southern reaches of their ranges.

"Responses to climate change are being seen across the U.S.A.," said Camille Parmesan, a biologist at the University of Texas in Austin. She is the co-author, with Hector Galbraith of the University of Colorado in Boulder, of "Observed Impacts of Global Climate Change in the U.S." The report was released Tuesday by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, a nonpartisan but not disinterested research organization dedicated to providing sound scientific information about global warming.

Parmesan and Galbraith acknowledge that nothing in the report would strike the average person as particularly alarming. They also allow that some of the past century's warming might have happened even if humans hadn't been pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. But they argue that the changes they describe should be taken as a "very clear signal" that climate change will have significant effects in coming decades.

"The canaries in the coalmine are squawking, and we should absolutely take that seriously," Galbraith said.

The Bush administration has argued that not enough is known about climate change to justify major efforts at forestalling or preventing future warming.

The Arctic report, released Monday, was commissioned by the Arctic Council, an international commission of eight countries, including the United States, and six indigenous groups. It was written by a team of 300 scientists.

"The report will be a valuable contribution to the literature on potential regional impacts of climate change, and the United States government will take its

findings into account as it continues to review the science," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a statement released Tuesday.

The United States faces a potential showdown with other members of the Arctic Council on Nov. 24, when representatives of the organization's members are scheduled to meet in Iceland to consider climate change policy recommendations.

The atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide has risen from 280 parts per million in 1800 to 380 parts per million today due to the combustion of fossil fuels. Carbon dioxide causes warming because it heats up more when exposed to sunlight compared to other atmospheric gases.

Scientists have always expected the Arctic to respond earlier and more intensely than other regions to the buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thanks to several phenomena that make the Far North especially sensitive to climate perturbations. When warmer temperatures melt snow, for example, the bare ground that is exposed absorbs more heat than the white surface did, causing yet more warming. A similar thing happens when sea ice melts, exposing open water.

In the past three Septembers the Arctic sea ice has melted back 12 percent to 15 percent beyond its normal minimum extent.

"It almost suggests that maybe we're about to reach a threshold beyond which the sea ice may not be able to recover," said Mark Serreze of the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colo.

Ice in the interior of the Arctic pack normally remains frozen from year to year, growing thicker with each season. But the recent increase in melting has eaten into much of that multiyear ice. So while the Arctic Ocean still freezes over each winter, more of the solid cover now consists of thin single-year ice that melts

every spring.

The Arctic is also particularly sensitive to warming because its plants and soil hold less water than more temperate environments. That means more energy reaching the ground is dedicated to heating the surface instead of evaporating water.

The atmosphere is thinner in the Arctic than it is farther south, which also intensifies warming. And while temperate zones shed some of their extra heat by shipping it north in ocean currents and meteorological fronts, the Arctic is the end of the line in that respect.

A small minority of scientists remains unconvinced that increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide can be held responsible for the recent warming, arguing that natural variability explains most if not all of the trend.

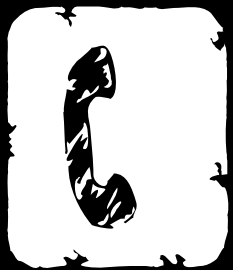
"It's very complicated and I believe people who claim they understand ... are just overestimating drastically their ability to do science," Chylek said.

Scientists aren't the only ones who have noticed the Arctic warming trend. Inuit hunters in Canada and Saami reindeer herders in Finland have detected shifts in the migratory behavior of animals. In some cases, people whose elders taught them decades ago how to forecast storms from wind patterns and cloud formations have lost their predictive abilities to new weather patterns.

"One of the unique things about Arctic communities is how much they're tied to the land, and that's why this is such a big deal for them," said Harvard University geographer Shari Fox Gearheard.

Farther south, where the changes have been far less extreme and most people live far removed from the subtleties of their climate, a warmer world remains a hypothetical realm of scientists and environmentalists. But the latest reports suggest that in some of the world's more populated places, astute observers may soon begin to noticing that the climate is changing.

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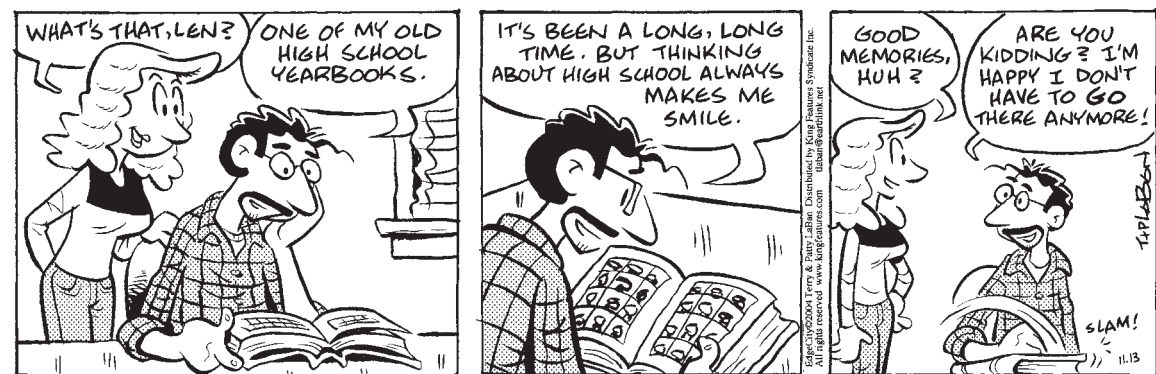


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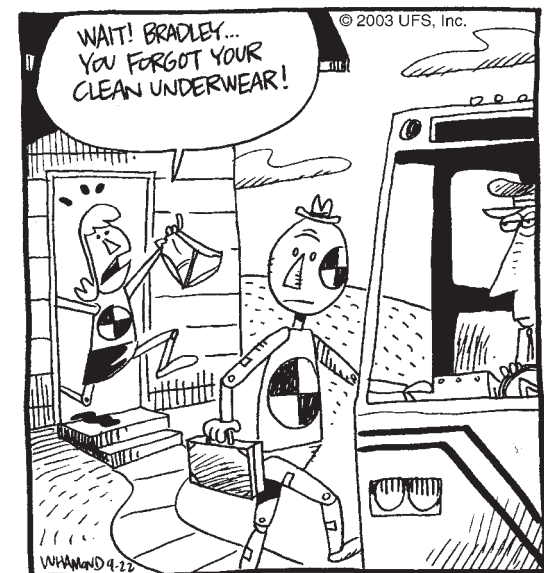
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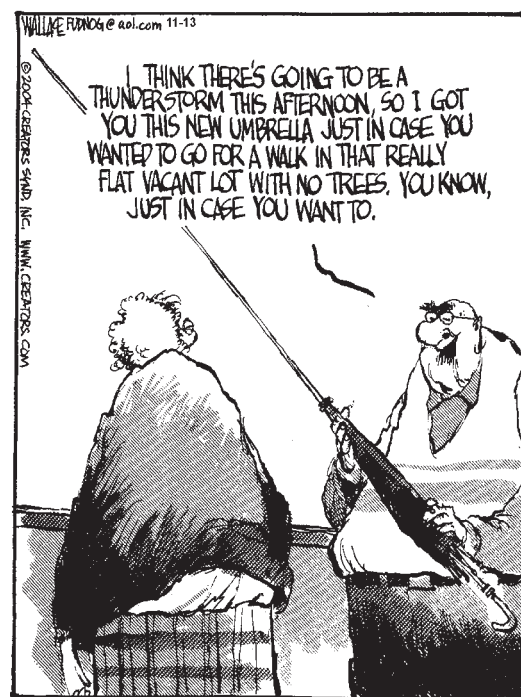
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Former fling wants real money from 'Real' host

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Bill Maher is being sued by a woman who claims he shook her at a party and welched on promises to marry her and buy her a home in Beverly Hills.

Nancy "Coco" Johnsen, a former model and flight attendant, is seeking \$9 million and other unspecified damages, according to a lawsuit filed Wednesday in Los Angeles Superior Court. It accuses the political comic of fraud, battery and assault.

An e-mail seeking comment from Maher wasn't immediately returned Thursday. He couldn't be located by telephone for comment.

Johnsen claims she fell in love with the HBO "Real Time" host during a 17-month relationship that began in January 2003.

According to the lawsuit, Maher convinced Johnsen to quit her career and in return promised the two would marry and have children, that he would reimburse her for clothing and other expenses necessary for her to accompany him as a "power couple," and that he would support her for the rest of her life.

He also promised to buy her the house in Beverly Hills where Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez once lived or give her money to buy a similar house, the lawsuit contends.

But after she quit her job, Johnsen said, Maher "verbally abused" her, and at a party last May he became angry and shook her, causing back and neck injuries.

She left his home and ended the relationship in May, Johnsen said.

LONDON — Prince Harry will receive no royal treatment when he joins the British army next year, the commander of his military college said.

The 20-year-old prince will begin studies at the prestigious academy in January.

Students face a grueling schedule in their first weeks. They are expected to rise at the crack of dawn, polish their own shoes and do their own ironing.

Major Gen. Andrew Ritchie, the academy commandant, said Thursday the young royal should expect to be treated the same as all other soldiers.

"You will meet some fierce sergeants who will maintain that philosophy. Everyone will have to prove themselves here," he said.

The prince will be known as Mr. Wales or Officer Cadet Wales.

His bedroom will have a single bed, sink and wardrobe and he will initially be allowed only one family photo — although there are numerous pictures of his grandmother Queen Elizabeth II at the college.

Harry, who recently had an early morning scuffle with photographers outside a London nightclub, will be expected to be in bed by midnight. In the first five weeks he will not be allowed to wear civilian clothes or drink alcohol.

The prince, who is third in line to the throne behind his father, Prince Charles, and elder brother, Prince William, gained a place at Sandhurst academy after passing his Regular Commissions Board assessment.

LONDON — Prince Charles took a swipe at the fast-food culture as he launched a campaign to get more Britons eating mutton.

Charles, who was joined by chefs and farmers for the Mutton Renaissance Luncheon at London's Ritz Hotel, said the ease of fast food may be to blame for the fall from favor of mutton, which requires slow cooking for best results.

"In a world where fast food seems to be the order of the day this may be a message that takes time to percolate beyond the restaurant," he told guests who were fed mutton dishes, including some made from sheep reared on his own Highgrove Estate.

Mutton, traditionally from a sheep aged over two years, was one of the most commonly consumed meats in Britain for centuries before World War II.

Changes in farming practices and a decline in wool prices contributed to its demise, with lamb replacing it on British dinner tables.

LITTLE ROCK — From the queen of soul to a king of comedy, celebrities are set to fete the opening of the Clinton Library.

The week's excitement will come to a peak Thursday when former President Bill Clinton's library is dedicated.

Aretha Franklin will perform with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra on Tuesday night.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for celebration for the community and for us to work with the queen of soul," said William Vickery, executive director of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra.

From Monday through Thursday, political satirist and former "Saturday Night Live" cast member Al Franken and radio co-host Katherine Lanpher will broadcast "The Al Franken Show," a liberal talk radio program, live from Little Rock.

"The point of his political satire is relevant for the Clinton opening," said Laura Hupp, co-chair of the benefit committee that invited Franken.

John Glenn, the former astronaut and former U.S. senator, will help open the exhibit "Space and the Presidency" at the Museum of Discovery in downtown Little Rock on Wednesday.

Later that evening, a free concert with rock bands Better Than Ezra, The North Mississippi All-Stars and B-Side will perform at the Riverfest Amphitheater. The concert will be followed by a fireworks display billed as the largest Arkansas has ever had.

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