

FREE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2003

Volume 3, Issue 4

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

SUPER LOTTO PLUS

6, 29, 38, 28, 1

Meganumber: 24

Jackpot: \$37 million

FANTASY 5

16, 30, 18, 5, 13

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 3, 8, 8

Evening picks: 8, 9, 5

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 12, Lucky Charms

2nd Place: 10, Solid Gold

3rd Place: 8, Gorgeous George

Race Time: 1:47.11



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

In August, the city of Edmonton, Alberta, ordered the owners of Keep It Simple, a nonalcoholic "bar" catering to recovering alcoholics by creating the ambience of a tavern without the temptations, to enforce the city's no-smoking law for businesses. However, smoking is a popular crutch for recovering alcoholics, and the owners sought an exemption from the law in order to retain their customers, but the city said the only legal exemption on the books is for establishments that serve alcoholic beverages. (In September, Keep It Simple applied for a liquor license but said it would still not serve alcohol.)



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"A team effort is a lot of people doing what I say."

— Michael Winner, British film director



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An urban oasis



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

The Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains offers a 360-degree view of Los Angeles, including the Pacific Ocean, the coastline and the downtown skyline. The Discovery Channel just completed a documentary film for the National Parks Service on the area. See page 3 for details.

City Hall cash comes with strings attached

Neighborhood groups held contractually accountable by City Hall

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

Neighborhood groups in Santa Monica must now sign a contract before accepting any money from City Hall.

Santa Monica City Council members unanimously agreed last week that the nonprofit groups should be held accountable on how they use City Hall funds.

"There was no contract," said City Councilman Bob Holbrook, who brought the issue to the

council. "There was no handing them a document saying, 'If you receive city funding, here's what you can do.'"

Holbrook said he was concerned that some neighborhood groups have in the past used City Hall funds to campaign on political issues. He pointed to an election earlier this year for Proposition A, an initiative that would have allowed homeowners to decide if their homes should be designated as historic landmarks.

See CONTRACT, page 5

Neighborhood group's finances still in question

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

A court-ordered deadline has come and gone for the chairman of a local neighborhood organization to turn over its finances to one of its members.

Rick Laudati, chairman of the Ocean Park Community Organization, was ordered by Superior Court Judge Allan J. Goodman to make public the group's bank statements by Nov. 4.

Tom Fuller, an OPCO member, filed a formal complaint in September of 2002, asking for the organization's financial records dating back to 2001. The complaint and Fuller's previous requests to inspect the records have gone unanswered by Laudati. OPCO never responded in court to Fuller's complaint, which put it in technical default, thus preventing the organization from defending itself.

Meanwhile, Fuller is trying to serve court papers to Laudati for a third time. Because of some legal technicalities, Fuller and his attorney, Gary Clouse, were asked by Judge Goodman to amend the complaint, which required Laudati to be served again. Earlier this year, it took months for Fuller to serve Laudati because he couldn't be located. He was finally spotted in

See OPCO, page 5

LNG ship proposed along coast

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

An energy company plans to build a floating tanker facility to import and process liquid natural gas 10 miles off the Southern California coastline, just north of Malibu.

Oxnard-based Crystal Energy LLC. spokeswoman Lisa Palmer said applications will be submitted in January to federal and state agencies for the three-tanker platform that will be permanently stationed off the Ventura County line.

Liquid natural gas (LNG) is considered a highly flammable, hazardous material, which has some residents worried that the facility would expose them to vapor clouds if the materials were released by accident or by an act of terrorism.

If LNG is exposed to any warmer surface, such as water or air, it vaporizes and forms a cloud. That cloud could then ignite the concentrated natural gas, experts say.

Malibu resident Hans Laetz is concerned that the facility could be the biggest threat to the safety of Malibu residents since a proposal years ago to build a nuclear power plant in Latigo Canyon.

"There is a great deal of danger if it explodes," he said, adding that in 1944, in Cleveland, the worst natural gas incident in history occurred, killing 128 people after a LNG tank failed, spilled the gas into the sewer and storm drain system, and resulted in an explosion.

The facility, called Cabrillo Port, would be the first LNG transfer station on the West Coast. The facility is described as a floating offshore vessel with three spherical storage tanks. The LNG would be pumped into tanks from transport ships that will import the gas purchased on the international market.

"There are no points where LNG is imported in the

western United States," Palmer said. "In the last year, we've realized that we have a viable project here."

LNG, in a process called "regasification," is converted back to its original gas state by being pumped through a heat exchange system. After the regasification at Cabrillo Port, the natural gas would then be transferred onshore via a 22-mile pipeline built along the ocean floor. That pipe would then be connected to an existing Southern California Gas Company pipeline system.

LNG, which can be compressed to 1/600 of its volume, is a form of natural gas that has been refrigerated to minus-259 degrees Fahrenheit. It then becomes an odorless, colorless and clear liquid.

See LNG, page 6

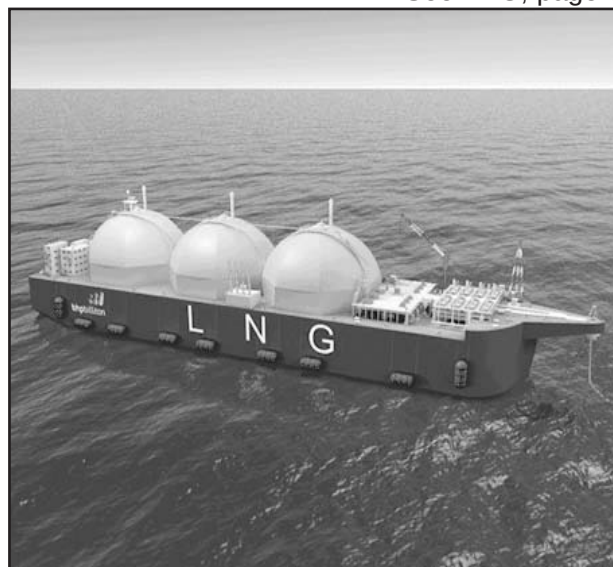
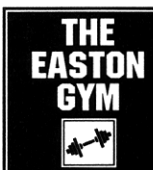


Image courtesy of Crystal Energy, LLC.

A rendering of what the liquid natural gas terminal would look like off of the coast, north of Malibu.



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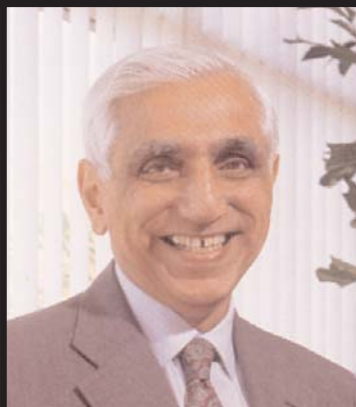
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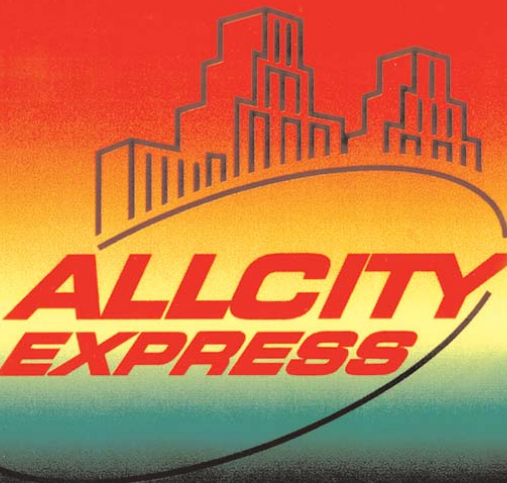
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★★-So-so ★-Difficult

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Monday, November 17, 2003:

Aim for exactly what you want with the full expectation of receiving just that. Friends have positive suggestions to help you get there. You naturally come out a winner, no matter what you do or where you go. You also might opt to revamp your finances. Sometimes when we change internally, what we choose as material items could be different. You also could gain from a special talent, if you put it to work for you. Use good sense with bohemian diets and health suggestions. If you are single, you will meet someone special this year. What you choose to do about that relationship might be very different from in the past. If you are attached, outline your goals together and start realizing them. VIRGO will always be your friend.



ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Changes can happen with ease. You might be taken aback by someone's thought process. Think about his or her perspective, and new doors will open up. You might even revise your thinking about an upcoming trip. Tonight: Work late — sorry.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You might be at work, but your heart tugs away at your focus. If you can, charge some of your imagination into work. You will gain as a result. Do not let others know how much you're in a world of daydreams. A partner presents alternate money ideas. Tonight: Follow that dream.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Stay close to home as you rethink some sudden news. Even if you are at work, keep your thoughts to yourself for now. Another person comes to you with very strong feelings, or this person evokes strong feelings. Tonight: Put your feet up.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Unexpected news takes you in a new direction. Your nerves might be shattered, but then, so might be a partner's. Take a deep breath and open up discussions. You will find a solution that is amenable to both of you. Tonight: Do you need a few extra days off, just to relax?



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ You seem to start the day well, though a financial matter might immediately force you to head in another direction. Refuse to take a risk in any shape or form, for your own sake. What looks too good to be true is. Take your time here. Tonight: Pay bills.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Though you might feel as if you have an unusually slow start today, you are positively a keg of dynamite once you get going. Still, a matter that could involve feelings about your domestic life weighs heavily on your mind. Tonight: Smile, and you'll get what you want.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Stop, and don't move quickly. What another person might share with you could sound very pretty but might ultimately still be meaningless. Ask questions. Think. Do your own research. You'll get the answers you want. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ Others surround you and help you in any way possible. Meetings provide direction. A money matter could need re-evaluating. Often, it is a question of how you look at a situation. Open up and brainstorm away. Tonight: Join a friend after work.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ A change in your looks could revitalize your energy and how you feel about yourself. It might be something as simple as a haircut or as major as a diet. Meanwhile, evaluate your professional life and your image. Don't forget work! Tonight: Burn the midnight oil.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You might be reworking information in your mind. Stay detached, even if you feel intensely about someone or something in your life. A person you begin a relationship with today might be covert on some level. Check this person out. Tonight: Seek out an expert for advice.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ A friendship could develop into a lot more, if you are willing. Your nerves also could be on edge, causing you to look at key issues, especially those involving partners, differently. Brainstorm with a friend or an associate to gain perspective. Tonight: Listen to the other side.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Let others present their issues. You might need to take over a job or manage a key project, whether you want to or not. Recognize what might be happening. A boss or authority figure looks at you with a great deal of admiration. Tonight: Your job is to go along for the ride.

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LOCAL

Santa Monica Mountains featured in new park film

By Daily Press staff

The Discovery Channel has captured the essence of the Santa Monica Mountains in a recently released film, which highlights one of Los Angeles' recreational playgrounds.

The National Park Service, the National Park Foundation and the Discovery Channel, are releasing this week a new "ParkDoc" entitled "Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area: Mountains, Movies and Magic." The movie highlights the resources and history of the park. It has been completed in time to coincide with the park's 25th anniversary.

The Santa Monica Mountains rise above Los Angeles, widen to meet the Santa Monica Bay and reach their highest peaks facing the ocean, forming a multi-faceted landscape. The movie explores the landscape and tells the stories of indige-

nous tribes, wildlife, plant life, controlled wildfire burning, historical structures like the Los Angeles Aqueduct and Paramount Ranch, and the collaborative spirit of federal, state and local park agencies, and landowners that continue to expand the boundaries of the protected land.

The film also features how the natural and cultural treasures are found just a stone's throw from Hollywood and the busy urban setting of downtown Los Angeles.

"We are very thankful to the National Park Foundation and our friends at Discovery for the gift of this beautiful film celebrating the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area," said Woody Smeck, superintendent of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. "The images and stories will serve to entice new and old visitors to explore this natural oasis within the heart of metropolitan Los Angeles."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

TV celebrities to flip switch on SM's holiday season

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica Place and the Bayside District Corp. has given two TV celebrities the honorable task of flipping the switch on downtown Santa Monica's holiday season.

Doris Roberts, a four-time Emmy award winner who portrays "Marie," the mother on "Everybody Loves Raymond," and Mark L. Walberg, the host of "Temptation Island" and "House Rules," will throw the switch on Nov. 28, lighting up downtown Santa Monica's holiday decorations.

The lighting event will be surrounded by a full day of music and entertainment.

Santa and his elves will arrive at 9 a.m. to set up shop and host a breakfast with 150 children who will help get the wish list started. There will be opportunities to take photos with Santa and each \$2 donation will go directly to the Westside Food Bank, a local non-profit organization that feeds needy people.

At 2 p.m., the Santa Monica High School Orchestra will kick off the program from the main stage on the Third Street Promenade at Broadway. Future Hasbeens Comedy Troupe will emcee the first part of the program and then turn the festivities over to Mark and Kim from radio station KOST 103.5. The Santa Monica Playhouse will perform a part of "Alice and the Wonderful Tea Party" and musical group, Gwendolyn and the Goodtime Gang, will entertain the crowd.

At 4 p.m., snow is predicted to fall at Santa Monica Place followed by the arrival of "surfing Santa" — who will be decked out in beach attire, sunglasses and riding in a convertible with his elves.



DORIS ROBERTS

See BRIEFS, page 6



Most of the weekend was a blow-out, but expect waves to hold steady at 2-3 feet, knee- to chest-high. While most spots will see fair conditions, there will be some fun sets.

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

Today the water is:
63°
Sunrise: 6:21 a.m.
Sunset: 5:05 p.m.

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	1:55	1.5	2:58	0.0	8:08	5.9	9:10	4.1
SUNDAY	2:16	1.8	3:30	-0.1	8:29	5.9	9:48	3.9
MONDAY	2:36	2.1	4:04	0.0	8:52	5.9	10:30	3.6
TUESDAY	2:56	2.4	4:43	0.1	9:17	5.8	11:21	3.4
WEDNESDAY	3:15	2.7	5:27	0.3	9:44	5.6	N/A	N/A
THURSDAY	3:28	3.0	6:21	0.5	12:32	3.2	(10:15)	5.3
FRIDAY	N/A	N/A	7:27	0.6	10:54	5.0	N/A	N/A

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The Q Line

In an effort to limit the number of corporate chain stores downtown, the Santa Monica City Council last week considered a new law that would require the companies to go through a public hearing and obtain a special permit before they set up shop here. The goal would be to make corporations prove that their presence here would be a positive contribution to the downtown core.

Many residents and elected officials lament the loss of locally-owned business and complain that the Third Street Promenade has become like any other

suburban shopping mall.

But local landlords, who can get as much as \$10 a square foot on the Promenade, say it's not the job of politicians to regulate the marketplace.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Should the local government regulate what businesses can set up shop here?"

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response before Thursday at 5 p.m. We'll print them in Friday's paper. Please limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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OPINION

LETTERS

SMDP helping to shape national policy?

Editor:

Congratulations on your second anniversary of publishing.

In addition to the void you have filled by reporting our community's news, you have also provided an important forum for community leaders' columns expressing their experiences.

The columns that you have printed about my February and July trips to Iraq, for example, have had wide-reaching impact: Our Congressional Representative, Henry Waxman, has synopsized one of my SMDP columns in a letter to the Office of Management and Budget as part of his effort to shed light on President Bush's unrealized claim that Iraqis are fully participating in rebuilding their country. This letter recounting my experiences as reported in the SMDP have gone so far as to force a response from the White House.

The SMDP is doing more than recording history, it's making it.

Kelly Hayes-Raitt
Santa Monica

Parent appreciative of school system

Editor:

On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to thank Santa Monica voters for their support of Measure S, last spring's public school funding initiative.

As a family, we have had nothing but good experiences in the Santa Monica public school system. Teachers and administrators handle a large and diverse population of students with grace and expertise. Even at busy Santa Monica High School, personal contact with dedicated teachers and administrators is only a phone call or e-mail away.

Drastic budget cuts out of Sacramento could easily have crippled the ability of our educators to continue their work at such a high level. In this "Month of Thanksgiving," I want to take the time to voice my appreciation to the people of Santa Monica for their generosity and foresight in supporting our public schools.

Ellen Smucker
Santa Monica

State responsible for Lincoln repairs

Editor:

In response to the complaint letter from Candy Arnold about sewer construction on Lincoln Boulevard (SMDP, Nov. 13, page 7), the following information should help your readers better understand the project. First, Lincoln Boulevard south of the I-10 freeway is not a city street but is actually State Highway 1. Since the state of California owns this portion of Lincoln Boulevard, it is Caltrans who decides what the permitted hours of construction will be. In our case, Caltrans only allowed the sewer construction to occur during nighttime hours so as to avoid negative daytime traffic impacts on Lincoln Boulevard. Second, the sewer project on Lincoln Boulevard is one of the final segments of an eight-year, \$110 million project to repair and upgrade the city's sewer system following the Northridge earthquake of 1994. Almost \$80 million

of this amount has been paid from federal FEMA money, a tremendous bargain for Santa Monica's rate payers. Although it has been a definite disruption and royal pain at times for our residents and businesses, this sewer repair work is critically important to ensuring the continued health and safety of the community. Lastly, we always appreciate hearing from residents like Ms. Arnold when they are impacted by one of our projects since we always strive to do a better job of mitigating the impacts from these essential projects as best we can. Thank you.

Craig Perkins

Director of Environmental and Public Works Management, City of Santa Monica

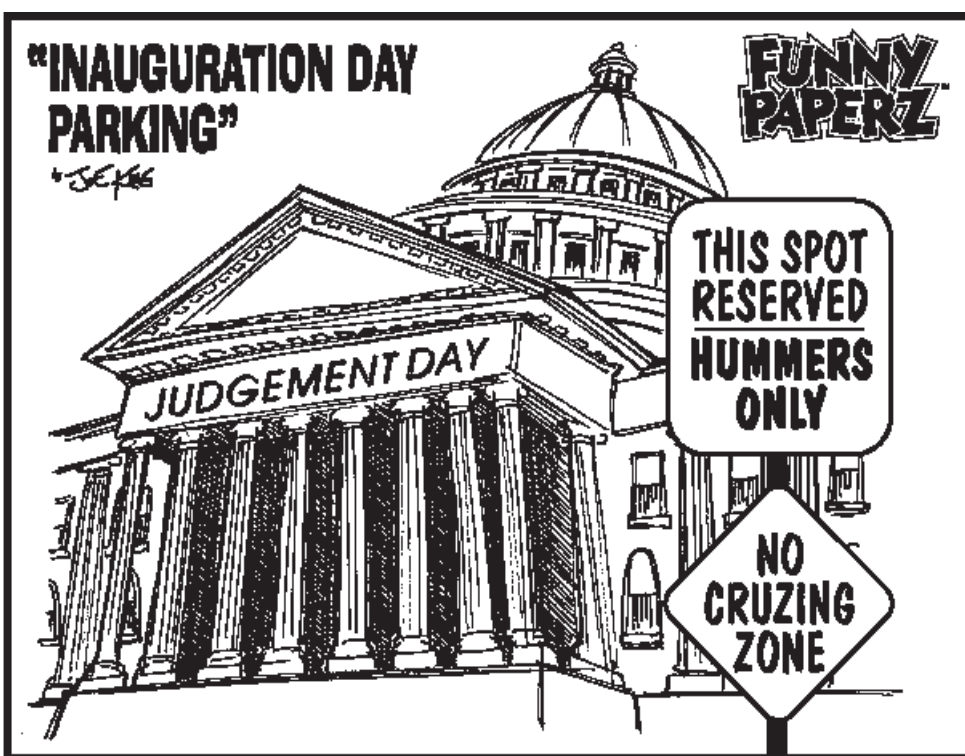
Reader gives thanks for newspaper

Editor:

Congratulations and all best wishes to you and the entire staff at Santa Monica Daily Press on your second anniversary. I first became aware of the paper in May, 2002, and my first opinion letter appeared in the May 22, 2002, issue.

Since then, I have had other letters published, and have been a loyal follower of the paper. Thanks to you all for the good work you have done and all of your accomplishments over the past two years.

Julia Reeves
Santa Monica



Member: AAEC A, NCS #22, SCCS #.

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Life on the streets needs to be understood by the entire community



In June 1996 I had just come back two months after burying my father who died of cancer. I was allowed to go to Chicago from the city-funded shelter Turning Point with the stipulation that when I arrived back I would start the program all over again. I had landed a job, was almost three years clean and sober, going to Alcoholic Anonymous meetings on a daily basis, attending church every week and saving my money.

But I was heavily grieving my father's death. He was always my secret hero. He went from an alcoholic cop to a man who had almost 20 years of sobriety, had a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice and two masters degrees in psychology. He lectured at U.C. Circle Campus and was a substitute teacher in my old grammar

school. He was working on his certificate for family abuse counseling. All this and a sergeant in the Chicago Police Department. Yes he was my secret hero, even though we bumped heads many times.

I was asked to leave the shelter for not reporting my chores four times in the two months since I had been back. I had saved nearly \$1,000, which was spent in a matter of weeks on hotels as I was only given the weekend to find another place to live. This basically sent me into a downward spiral on the streets, which has lasted for almost seven years now.

Imagine, if you will, this happening to you. I ask especially to those who seem to enjoy pointing out the anti-social behavior of some of us who are homeless. Would you be anti-social after this? Would you trust the agencies whose jobs it is to help the homeless? What would you do if this suddenly happened to you?

There are those of us out here who let this negative impact on our lives fuel our positive actions. For me it was part of the reason I started attending college. I had to show these agencies that they had made a mistake and should have worked with me in my time of grieving. They should have seen that anything I was going through

was not from drugs, alcohol or severe mental illness. This happened in the winter semester of 1997-1998 and since then, I have been showing the homeless agencies that putting me on the street was a mistake.

Now in 2003, I am a columnist for this paper and though I have taken the semester off due to burn out, I still go to school. I also work for a program on the Third Street Promenade moving vending carts for daily pay.

This program and programs like it within the farmers markets are a very important part of the homeless community. They provide help for those who want to work, as well as help some of us to re-learn the most basic work skill of all: "To suit up and show up" as the Alcoholic Anonymous community puts it. These programs also help to build self-esteem, self-confidence, self-worth and help the surrounding communities so we are not in your pockets.

In the cart pushing program, we work for specific carts and make \$6 to \$10 per cart a day. But since the influx of homeless on the street, this program, like the others in this city, are bogged down. This is how I know the agencies are bogged down by the increasing numbers of people landing on the streets.

I feel that other programs like this and the farmers market program should be mimicked throughout the city. Representatives from the city, police and fire departments, hospitals, religious and spiritual organizations, the business community, community organizations, homeless agencies and organizations, and leaders within the homeless community must come together in a summit to discuss implementation of programs like this. They also need to bridge the gap between the community and the homeless population. I am hoping since that this is a progressive city, the proposed summit be taken seriously and the aforementioned communities and organizations respond to this request from the homeless population. Only through working together can we solve any of the problems facing the general population of this city and how we as homeless can fit in without causing problems on both ends of the street, so to speak.

(Charles Springer is a freelance writer and artist and a homeless resident of the city of Santa Monica. He can be reached at Chaz_59@yahoo.com).

LOCAL

Local neighborhood groups address quality of life issues

CONTRACT, from page 1

Holbrook said two groups — the North of Montana Association and Friends of Sunset Park — used City Hall dollars to distribute election materials urging a “No” vote on the measure.

“I think that the neighborhood groups need to get out of politicking or stop taking city money,” Holbrook said.

There are eight nonprofit neighborhood groups in Santa Monica that are recognized by City Hall. Since 1999, those groups have applied for and received \$59,540 in matching grants, ranging from \$1,080 to the maximum \$4,000 annual contribution, according to city documents.

In order to receive money, the groups must show they will raise at least half as much through cash or in-kind donations, including volunteer time, professional services and materials.

Before agreeing to the contractual mandate, City Councilman Ken Genser asked that the restriction apply to all groups that ask for money from City Hall, including the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce.

Judy Rambeau, the City Hall official who oversees the matching grants, said that although some groups did send out materials against Proposition A, they used their own money.

Doris Sosin, NOMA’s temporary co-chair, agreed.

“We weren’t campaigning,” she said. “We took a stance against it because our whole reason for having the organization was for protecting quality of life.”

“(Having a contract) makes sense,” she added. “That doesn’t bother me that

there’s contract. If we’re taking city funds, they need to be used responsibly.”

Sosin said City Hall’s matching grants are needed because they help the group cover the \$3,000 cost of mailing out newsletters to all 3,500-plus households north of Montana Avenue.

Rambeau said any nonprofit in the city can apply for the matching grants until March for the next fiscal year.

Typically the money is used for publishing and distributing newsletters, conducting surveys, buying advertisements for upcoming events or public service announcements, increasing membership and administrative costs.

Currently there are six neighborhood groups active in the city — the Friends of Sunset Park, Northeast Neighbors, North of Montana Association, Pico Neighborhood Association, Sunset Park Associated Neighbors, and Wilshire/Montana Neighborhood Coalition. The Ocean Park Community Organization and Mid-City Neighbors are inactive.

In order to qualify for a matching grant, the groups must meet five criteria. They must represent a Santa Monica neighborhood, be a recognized nonprofit, have an active board of directors that meets regularly, hold at least one general membership meeting each year and maintain a membership of at least 50 active members residing at different addresses.

“The idea of this whole program is really that the groups would be independent, autonomous groups,” Rambeau said. “They’re not arms of the city ... the idea is that they use this money to increase their membership and communicate better.”

OPCO finances to be aired out in front of court judge

OPCO, from page 1

the DMV line in Santa Monica.

And the current attempt to find Laudati, who lives in the Ocean Park neighborhood, appears to be just as difficult for Fuller.

“In spite of our good efforts we weren’t able to get him served,” Fuller said, adding he has hired a private detective to find Laudati.

OPCO board members in August received a packet of financial documents from a fellow board member, however Fuller said he has not received anything.

Fuller, who got involved in OPCO in early 2001, asked to review the accounting books and finances, as well as a list of the organization’s current membership. But his requests were ignored for more than two years, which piqued his curiosity.

OPCO was formed in 1978 as a community organization for the Ocean Park neighborhood as a nonprofit corporation. Under California law, it’s required to provide its membership with financial records, according to Fuller’s complaint.

In his written request to Laudati in June 2001, Fuller said he was concerned about an apparent discrepancy between the number of reported members compared to the small amount of membership fees collected.

It’s unclear how much money OPCO

has collected from its members, how many members there are, and what the dues structure is. Some estimates put the organization’s membership between 150 and 500.

One of OPCO’s functions is to review development projects and then recommend to the Planning Commission and City Council that they be approved or denied.

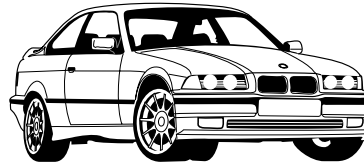
Close to a dozen board members have resigned over OPCO’s inaction in the past year. Board members Audrea Golding Bitler, Ted Winterer and Elan Glasser attempted to work out a resolution with the board to get the finances released last fall. But they resigned last November out of frustration that no progress had been made. In early 2002, Bob Loftus, Joe Pipersky and Bill Sunblad resigned over the financial questions.

The last bank statement that was made public sits in a file in City Hall that details OPCO’s finances from December 1999 to January 2000. At that time, OPCO had \$2,933 in a Wells Fargo Bank account. During that month, deposits totaling \$220 were recorded and \$240 worth of withdrawals were made — all of which were made from ATM machines in cash.

Laudati didn’t return phone calls seeking comment. He has declined to speak to the Daily Press in the past.

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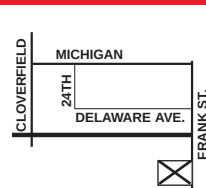
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LOCAL □ STATE

Safety, water quality are core issues in LNG proposal

LNG, from page 1

The facility could deliver more than 200 billion cubic feet of natural gas to California annually, or 25 percent of the state's residential energy needs. California currently imports more than 80 percent of its gas supply from producing basins outside of the state, officials say.

The United States is the leading producer and consumer of natural gas, and it's expected that an estimated 40-percent increase in current consumption will be needed over the next two decades, experts said.

The project, which is estimated to cost hundreds of millions of dollars, requires approval from the U.S. Coast Guard, which is responsible for monitoring LNG terminals and carriers in coastal waters, as well as the State Lands Commission, which has jurisdiction over land underwater within three miles of the coast. Crystal Energy also needs the approval of the California Coastal Commission and a host of other agencies, ranging from the state coastal conservancy to the Public Utilities Commission to the Energy Commission.

Palmer said she expects the approval process to take up to 24 months, adding that the project has been in the planning process for more than two years.

The Oxnard City Council in the 1970s conducted a risk assessment study of a sim-

ilar facility, and under a worst-case scenario, it estimated that there could be up to 70,000 casualties if an accident were to occur.

Sara Wan, a Malibu resident and a member of the Coastal Commission, said the proposal creates a host of concerns, ranging from safety to development along the coast to water quality issues.

"There would be a lot of concerns about safety," she said, adding it's too early to predict what the commission's position will be on the proposal. "I don't know how or where the commission would down on this."

And while there are plenty of issues to be studied regarding the proposal, technology has advanced as LNG has become more popular, said Peter Douglas, executive director of the California Coastal Commission.

"We are looking carefully at the proposal, and if the risks have been minimized, we need to see that and believe it," he said.

Palmer said Crystal Energy has done some initial community outreach to let area residents know about the project and make them aware of its potential impacts, including safety.

"Clearly there is a need for natural gas and we've got to find a way to provide it by minimizing its impacts," she said, adding there are similar facilities in the Gulf of Mexico and in Boston Harbor. "LNG is new

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

At 5 p.m. the lighting ceremony will begin and at 5:15 p.m., the two TV stars will hit the lights and all of downtown Santa Monica and Santa Monica Place will spring to life amid music and a volley of snowy confetti.

Roberts will then sign copies of her autobiography "Are You Hungry Dear?" at Barnes & Noble bookstore on the Promenade, beginning at 6 p.m.

The Bayside District Corp., which manages downtown Santa Monica, and the Macerich Company, owners of Santa Monica Place, are the producers of the lighting project, called, "A Winterlit Celebration."

The "Winterlit" project will light downtown every evening from sundown to 3 a.m. through the first week of January. The lighting project features three 22-foot illuminated trees, icebergs jutting up from the ground around the Promenade's dinosaur courtyards and a new cascade of lights. Indoors, the festive atmosphere continues at Santa Monica Place with a 30-foot tree, ice elements, snowflakes and enchanting fairies. Also included is a multi-colored light show causing a shimmering snow effect visible from the mall's Third Street entrance.

Interior official calls for review of endangered species law

By The Associated Press

SANTA BARBARA — The senior Interior Department official responsible for the Endangered Species Act labeled the law "broken" in calling for a review to look at reforms, including sometimes favoring humans over the endangered species.

Assistant Interior Secretary Craig Manson specifically criticized a part of the law limiting development in areas used by threatened species to recover — the so-called "critical habitat" provision.

"We didn't anticipate the potential conflicts" when the Endangered Species Act was written, he said Thursday. "We have to recognize that, A, we can't protect everything, and, B, we have to carefully examine whether we should try to protect everything, and at what cost?"

Manson also questioned expenses

resulting from the 30-year-old law.

"If we decide we are going to spend \$100 million to save a species we've imperiled, why are we doing that?" he asked in an interview with the Los Angeles Times. "Are we doing that for the exercise of saving something that nature can't take care of regardless of our efforts? If we are saying that the loss of species in and of itself is inherently bad — I don't think we know enough about how the world works to say that."

Congressional investigators in September issued a report pressing Fish and Wildlife to develop guidelines for when to require critical habitats, mainly to reduce the agency's exposure to lawsuits from environmental groups. The General Accounting Office said the critical habitat program "faces a serious crisis" because of lawsuits.

STATE



Schwarzenegger faces many obstacles to fulfilling agenda

BY TOM CHORNEAU
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — As a candidate for governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger promised action, action, action. When his swearing-in ceremony concludes midday Monday, California voters will be expecting him to deliver on those pledges and may not have much sympathy for the political realities of his new job.

"People will be forgiving to a degree," said Barbara O'Connor, director of the Institute for the Study of Politics and the Media at Sacramento State University. "They perceive him as new to Sacramento and they will be willing to give him a little time. But they are not going to be willing to have him raise taxes and they're probably not going to support any massive cuts — especially to education."

Schwarzenegger won the historic recall election last month that bumped Gov. Gray Davis from office three years before his term ended using a campaign built on reform. The Hollywood icon turned Republican superstar promised to rebuild the state's economic engine, protect the needs of children and the elderly and break the hold of special interests over the Capitol.

He said he would repeal the big hike in the car tax on his first day in office; renegotiate union contracts with state workers for cost savings; further reform the state's workers' compensation system; and repeal a law to give driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants.

He's also promised California a balanced budget that does not include any new taxes nor any significant cuts to education and local governments. Not many expect Schwarzenegger's tasks — especially on the budget — to be easily accomplished.

While the Schwarzenegger team has played its strategy close to the vest so far, the new governor likely will be forced to reveal some significant budget plans almost immediately.

His plan to repeal the tripling of the car tax — imposed last summer by Davis and the Legislature as a means of closing a big part of the state deficit — will blow a \$4 billion hole in the already flimsy budget.

The money from the tax car is due cities and counties, who rely on the income to pay for law enforcement and public safety — including the cost of fighting wildfires such as the ones that hit Southern California last month.

If Schwarzenegger repeals the higher fees, state Controller Steve Westly said cities and counties will immediately begin losing collectively about \$11.5 million daily — or \$350 million a month. In some jurisdictions, already bled dry by the wildfires, the loss of such income will require immediate cuts — something that Schwarzenegger has promised to avoid.

Meanwhile, the clock is ticking on a plan to borrow \$10.7 billion to pay off the state's existing deficit.

The cash from the bonds, centerpiece of this year's budget agreement, will be needed by June. The sale has been delayed, however, because of a court challenge from taxpayer groups that say the Legislature cannot borrow that much without voter approval.

Schwarzenegger has said he favors putting the bond issue on the March ballot. But Westly and state Treasurer Phil Angelides — both Democrats — have

warned that waiting to put the issue before voters is fiscally risky because the plan might be rejected and the state would be in a cash crisis by June.

Although no one from inside the Schwarzenegger team will speak publicly about how the new governor may deal with the budget problems, a number of lawmakers close to the administration have said privately that a massive bond deal is likely to be the preferred solution — as much as \$25 billion to be paid back over 30 years.

Assemblyman John Campbell, R-Irvine, has said the governor will propose a spending cap along with the bonds to be put on the March ballot and ask voters to approve both.

"If we've got to borrow, we want to make sure it is the last time," he said.

Although the idea solves some problems, there will be huge repayment costs that will almost double the debt by the time it is paid back — to \$39.7 billion, according to Angelides.

Some observers say there might also be political ramifications for proposing such a budget solution.

"In trying to balance the budget, does his electoral coalition begin to unravel?" asked Brian Janiskee, a political scientist with the Claremont Institute and California State University, San Bernardino.

"He'll receive significant and sustained criticism if he proposes any tax increase," he said. "He may even face some of the same criticism from party conservatives with such a large bond issue — which could be argued is worse than a tax increase because you are saddling our children with the debt."

Beyond selling the plan to voters, Schwarzenegger must first convince the Democratically controlled Legislature of the plan's merits.

The new governor's relationship with Democratic leaders is likely to be the key to his getting traction during his first months in office. So far, key players such as Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson, D-Culver City, and Senate President Pro Tem John Burton, D-San Francisco, said they are willing to give the new governor a chance.

"I believe that Schwarzenegger is the dominant Republican in the state right now, and the Republican legislators will do pretty much what he wants," said Allan Hoffenblum, a GOP consultant based in Los Angeles. "How the Democrats react will be interesting. These are guys that gave Gray Davis nothing but fits."

Democrats — by virtue of holding big majorities in both houses of the Legislature as well as the governor's office before the recall election — have not had to pay much attention to Republicans over the past two years. That's changed now that Schwarzenegger is governor.

"Republicans are giddy, they've gone from political Siberia to the Promised Land," he said. "The Democrats are in total confusion."

Janiskee said that although Schwarzenegger comes to Sacramento with a lot of political capital to spend, he's got to be careful not to alienate the right wing of his party.

"Schwarzenegger could not have won a Republican primary," he said. "But he did get the conservative vote in the recall."

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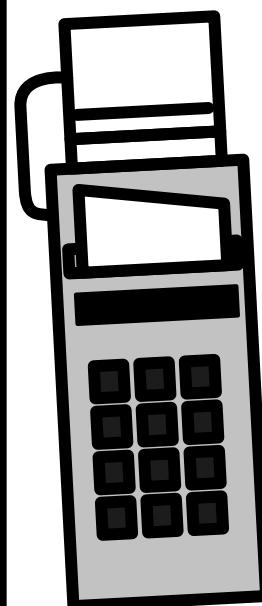
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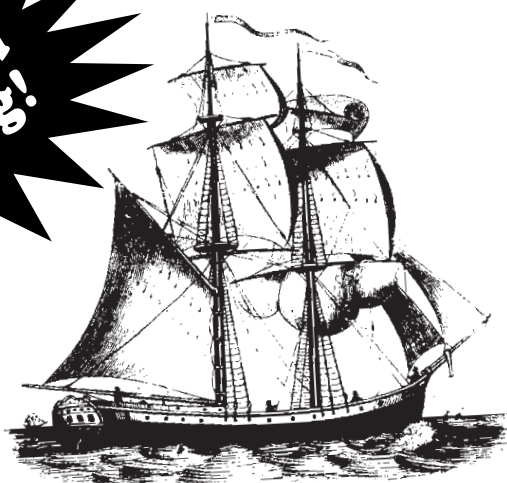
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NATIONAL

Loyalties split between candidates, self-interest

BY RON FOURNIER
AP Political Writer

WASHINGTON — Joe Trippi is not running for president.

Neither is Bob Shrum, Jim Jordan, Chris Lehane, Mark Fabiani nor any of the other high-priced political consultants whose hiring, firings, resignations — and all matter of Machiavelli in between — too often eclipse the actions of their bosses.

But they're getting a lot of attention. The 2004 campaign has been marked by an acceleration of the trend spotlighting political professionals over presidential candidates.

"We had a movie made about our 1992 campaign, so it's hard for me to be critical about this cult of consultants," said James Carville, strategist for Bill Clinton's first presidential bid. "But this is getting out of hand."

The media's obsession with the inner workings of campaigns is partly to blame for the rise of the consultant class. Carville and George Stephanopolous were media darlings in 1992. Republicans Lee Atwater and Karl Rove became household names for helping to elect two Bushes.

The candidates themselves make stars or scapegoats of consultants. Democrat John Kerry's personnel moves have his staff bordering on revolt.

But the consultants' culture is part of the problem too.

More than ever, political professionals are maintaining business ties outside their campaigns, a practice that leads to split loyalties and conflicts of interest, say Democratic and Republican consultants who are beginning to condemn their own lot.

"If you don't drop everything and focus on the campaign, you're not doing the candidate justice," said GOP consultant Rick Davis, who ran Sen. John McCain's 2000 presidential campaign.

Some consultants seem to worry as much about their own reputations as their candidates' fortunes, with an eye toward future business prospects: television punditry, lobbying and private sector clients who pay fortunes for political-style campaigns to sell their products.

Kerry's campaign is a model of dysfunction. The Massachusetts senator fired his campaign manager Sunday at the urging of fund-raisers who demanded he do something to jump-start the ailing effort. Jim Jordan left quietly, but the flap roared.

Two staff members quit within days, apparently more loyal to Jordan than the man they were trying to elect president. A spate of stories quoted anonymous sources who blamed the campaign's woes on Kerry and Shrum, a veteran consultant with a history of high-profile clashes.

Kerry told The Associated Press on Thursday that his campaign "will be better off moving ahead with people who want to be there." He claimed to have barely known one of those who quit, Robert Gibbs, who had been his chief spokesman since January.

"We had a movie made about our 1992 campaign, so it's hard for me to be critical about this cult of consultants. But this is getting out of hand."

— JAMES CARVILLE

Strategist for Bill Clinton's first presidential bid

Kerry later called the former aides to apologize for his remarks, a senior Kerry adviser said.

This was not Kerry's first staff problem.

Lehane worked for commercial clients while advising Kerry for free, an arrangement the consultant said cost him money because he was forced to reject private sector work. He quit two months ago in a dispute with Shrum and others over the campaign's direction. Two days later, Wesley Clark entered the race with Lehane's business partner, Fabiani, serving as top adviser.

Fabiani was criticized for rushing home to business in California after Clark's announcement, leaving an inexperienced candidate and staff behind as the retired Army general fumbled questions about Iraq.

Lehane, who helped craft much of Kerry's strategy, now works for Clark.

Steve Jarding and David "Mudcat" Saunders, experts in courting rural Democrats, have worked for two presidential candidates, Sens. John Edwards of North Carolina and Bob Graham of Florida. With Graham out, they've shopped their services to front-runner Howard Dean.

Dean's campaign manager is Trippi, mastermind of a revolutionary Internet-driven campaign the leads the Democratic pack.

"I'm not the reason Dean is doing so well," said Trippi, whose Washington consulting firm has represented the former Vermont governor for years. "All of our supporters are. They just make me look good."

Good enough that he showed up at a Dean news conference with a lapel microphone. Television producers routinely wire him for sound.

At one recent campaign stop in Phoenix, the candidate delivered his stump speech then turned it over to Trippi who held a news conference with local reporters. An elderly woman pushed herself on stage, brushed passed Dean and asked several people, "Where's Joe? I've got to meet Joe."

"He's the man," she said.

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Santa Monica Daily Press

NATIONAL



Pedicabs crowd Las Vegas Strip — but not for long

BY ADAM GOLDMAN
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — Bill Jones makes an adjustment to his pedicab and pedals onto the Las Vegas Strip, where he is swallowed by a sea of evening traffic.

Big buses dwarf him. Cars slide past him. Taxi drivers glower. But tourists see a sinewy, long-haired savior, who can wheel them through stopped traffic for a thank you and a tip.

"I go up and down, up and down," exclaims Jones, 38. "I love this job. It rules."

Jones might not be rolling for long. These three-wheelers used to ferry passengers have become a source of consternation for authorities who say a pedicab plague has descended on the bustling Strip.

At a recent public safety meeting, state and local law enforcement officials declared the pedicab swarm illegal and a potential danger to tourists. They intend to force the velocipedes into extinction.

"That's what we're working toward," said Byram Tichenor, enforcement chief for the Nevada Transportation Services Authority, which regulates limousines, tow trucks and tour buses.

Las Vegas pedicab entrepreneurs say they provide an important service to tired tourists and are being unfairly targeted. Jim Huff, 29, president of Silver State Pedicabs, said a proposed county ordinance that would exile the pedicabs is wrongheaded.

"Clark County needs to take the time to regulate us rather than simply ban us," said Huff, whose motto is: "We Save Siles in Sin City."

Pedicabs aren't unique to Las Vegas. Some cities, such as Denver, San Francisco and Santa Barbara, Calif., have embraced the modern-day rickshaws.

Santa Barbara requires pedicab operators to obtain a permit to carry passengers. Police do background checks to weed out unsavory types — pedicab pedophiles for instance — from getting behind the handlebars.

"We're not trying to hinder business," Santa Barbara police Sgt. Ed Olsen said. "We just want to make sure that we have people we can trust transporting people from one place to another."

In Las Vegas, pedicabs operated for years without much notice. But they have proliferated in recent months. A random survey of drivers revealed at least seven companies with an armada of more than 70 pedicabs. And Steve Osness, 24, who owns and runs Hawaiian Bike Cab, said more are on the way.

"It's getting diluted. It's terrible," Osness said. "They hire anyone and send them out there. Everyone thinks they can start their own pedicab company."

Four companies obtained business licenses in an attempt at legitimacy. They rent their vehicles to people like Bill Jones.

Fares — illegal in Clark County —

"We're not trying to hinder business. We just want to make sure that we have people we can trust transporting people from one place to another."

— ED OLSEN
Santa Barbara Police Sgt.

aren't charged. But drivers say they earn \$100, \$200, even \$300 in tips during a busy shift trucking people along the five-mile stretch of neon lights.

Most pedicabs display a "not for hire" sign to skirt the law. AmeriCab's business card says, "Free rides to Fine Hotels, Restaurants, & Gentleman Clubs."

But authorities say that's a sham, and the pedicabs are for hire and thus illegal. They say police documented instances of driver intimidation of passengers over payment.

Those in the highly regulated and profitable taxi industry also oppose the pedicabs.

"They are a big nuisance," said Ron McGee, a supervisor with Nellis Cab Co. "They're taking our fares. They're a big-time safety hazard."

Huff, who has been in business for about two years, says his \$4,000 pedicabs have single welded-frames and come equipped with rear hydraulic brakes and Porsche-like turning ability. He says his pedicabs won't jackknife, and they have nothing in common with some others, which are trailers hitched to bikes.

Near the Boardwalk hotel-casino, one of Huff's independent contractors, Benny Mailman, 33, picks up three tourists. The men cram into the back of the pedicab and hold on.

Mailman heads north on the Strip, past the towering Aladdin, Paris Las Vegas and Bally's hotel-casinos. Along the way, a cab driver calls him an unseemly name and the smut peddlers stare in amusement.

Mailman navigates the busiest and brightest intersection and delivers his cargo unharmed at the Imperial Palace, directly under the "2 for 1 Drinks" sign.

The three men pile out and dispense an \$8 tip.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it," said Jim Price, 56, after his pedicab ride.

"If you really want to see the Strip without walking your butt off, this is the way to go," said Price, who lives near Pittsburgh, Pa. "Give them a lane."

Huff can only hope.

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NATIONAL

Fossils found in states dating to 350 million years ago

BY DAN LEWERENZ

Associated Press Writer

SELINGROVE, Pa. — The Wyalusing Rocks were supposed to be just a scenic stop on Jennifer Elick's drive to Tuckhannock, where she and other Pennsylvania geologists planned to meet.

But then a spot of white caught Elick's eye in the red sandstone of those Bradford County cliffs.

"I thought to myself, 'Well, that's either a fossil, a fish fossil, or it's bird doo,'" said Elick, an assistant professor of geological and environmental sciences at Susquehanna University. "I reached up, grabbed it and looked at it, and it had teeth. It was a jaw, and it filled the palm of my hand, and was crumbling all over. That was pretty exciting."

What Elick found was a remnant of Pennsylvania's deep past, a period when what is now Bradford County was a tropical river delta, sitting at the border of land and sea.

Since finding that first fossil, the jaw of a Sarcopterygian, or lobe-finned fish, in the spring of 2002, Elick has removed four plant and animal fossils from Wyalusing Rocks in northeastern Pennsylvania. All are denizens of the late Devonian period dating to some 350 million to 360 million years ago:

■ The lower jaw of a Sarcopterygian, a prehistoric carnivore that moved along river bottoms.

■ A nearly intact Bothriolepis, an armored bottom-feeder with a tail like a shark.

■ The sand-filled stump of an Eospermatopteris, a tree that grew in the marginal areas where salt and fresh water met.

■ And Archaeopteris, thought to be the first tree to form actual forests.

"I thought to myself, 'Well, that's either a fossil, a fish fossil, or it's bird doo,'"

— JENNIFER ELICK

Assistant professor of geological and environmental sciences at Susquehanna University

Jon Inners, geologist manager for the Pennsylvania Geological Survey, said it's not surprising that Elick would find these fossils at Wyalusing Rocks, a 400-foot cliff over the Susquehanna River, about 130 miles north-northwest of Philadelphia.

Another fossil bed in the region, Red Hill, is renowned for Devonian fossils, and the Great Catskill Delta in New York and Pennsylvania is yielding more and more finds.

"But it's always neat because it's so rare," said Inners, who had examined the same cliffs before without finding anything.

"These rocks were red rocks, stuff that formed on river flood plains and river channels. And in these oxidized sediments fossils are mostly destroyed, they rot away. It takes rather peculiar conditions to preserve them," Inners said. "Somehow, the oxidizing waters did not get through to the fish that were buried there enough to decompose them. There were some hard parts that would have been

preserved, but it's just rare to find fossils as complete as she found them."

The Sarcopterygian jaw is so detailed that even the teeth, some almost an inch long, are clearly visible. The fish itself was probably at least 3 feet long, Elick said.

But the most interesting fossil might be the one Elick left behind — a trace fossil, or the remnant not just of a creature, but of that creature's movement.

About 9 feet long and 6 inches wide, the trace appears to be left by a Sarcopterygian, a fish whose fins had the same bone structure as arms on other vertebrates. The Sarcopterygian is also thought to have been a precursor to amphibian development (although Elick points out that amphibians probably would have been around during the late Devonian, when her fossils were made).

The trace appears as a shallow trough, as if left by something skimming just above the silty soil of a river bottom. Traces along the side of the trough could have been made by the fish's fins.

"There's no other organism besides amphibians at this time that would have been large enough and is known to have made or left tracks," Elick said. "There are organisms that would have been big enough, but they would have left a different trace."

In prehistoric circles, dinosaurs get all the glory. But Elick said she hopes her discoveries on Wyalusing Rocks might get people interested in the creatures that ruled the world millions of years before dinosaurs came along.

"It's kind of neat to find out that there were large fish — fish with teeth that were 2 centimeters long — swimming in your back yard 350, 360 million years ago," Elick said. "It's kind of like having a dinosaur in your back yard."

Officials surmise industrial whaling causing sea otter decline

BY JEFF BARNARD

Associated Press Writer

GRANTS PASS, Ore.

— A cascading decline in seal, sea lion and sea otter populations in the North Pacific may have been triggered by industrial whaling after World War II that forced killer whales to look for new sources of food, a group of scientists suggests.

The industrial hunting

depleted the populations of humpback, gray, sperm and other great whales that made up the killer whales' usual prey, leading them to feed on the smaller marine mammals instead.

"If our hypothesis is correct, either wholly or in significant part, commercial whaling in the North Pacific Ocean set off one of the largest and most complex ecological chain

reactions ever described," the scientists wrote in a recent article in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The hypothesis goes against past theories that declines in Steller sea lions and other marine mammals off Alaska dating to the 1970s were caused by a lack of food due to overfishing by humans. That research led to limits on commercial pollock fishing that remain in effect.

The "abrupt and huge loss" of the population of great whales "was important to some portion of the killer whale population," said Alan Springer, a research associate professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks who was one of the authors.

"Without that food available to them, they didn't entirely switch their diet. They just increased the proportions of other species of marine mammals," said Springer.

"These smaller species just weren't able to sustain this increased level of predation."

"Likely they are now preying on something else, because sea otters were the last to go."

Based on International Whaling Commission records, the authors figure that between 1949 and 1969, Japanese and Russian whalers took at least 62,858 whales, amounting to 1.8 million tons of killer whale food, within 200 miles of the Aleutian Islands and Northern Gulf of Alaska.

Although gray whale and humpback whale populations have recovered, the overall population of great whales — including sperm, fin and sei whales — in the area remains about 14 percent of what it was before the whaling started, the scientists wrote.

They suggested that killer whales chose their new prey based on the

biggest bang of nutrition for the smallest buck of energy expenditure.

Harbor seals, slow-swimming and loaded with blubber, were first on the shopping list, beginning to decline in the early 1970s. A few years later came fur seals. Sea lions, big but harder to catch, were next, declining in the late 1970s. Last came sea otters, which were easy to catch, but amounted to just a snack. They declined in the late 1980s.

Bruce Mate, a professor at Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport who specializes in whales, said the conclusions in the Oct. 2 article made ecological sense.

"I like this approach. I think it's very logical," said Mate. "But it may not be the full explanation. I always tell people that animals are like parts of a watch to an ecosystem. Every one has a specific function. But they interact

with each other a lot."

Jim Estes, a research scientist for the U.S. Geological Survey and adjunct professor at University of California Santa Cruz, acknowledged that the conclusions were speculative and there is room for more work.

He suggested that studies using modern techniques for analyzing chemical isotopes in the bones of killer whales or samples from their blubber could show whether they switched from eating primarily whales to seals and sea lions.

Because killer whales are such big eaters, consuming up to 243,000 calories a day, it would take only a small change in their eating habits to account for the decline, the scientists said. This could have happened two ways.

One would be for virtually all the estimated 3,900 killer whales living near the Aleutians to make a small shift in their diet. The other would be for only a few killer whales in the most affected areas to totally shift their prey species.

As few as 27 killer whales preying just on sea lions could account for their decline, the scientists estimated. Six killer whales feeding exclusively on sea otters would account for their decline.

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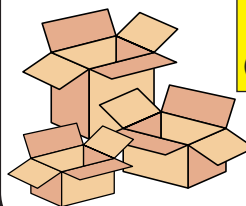
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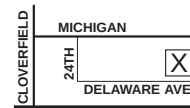
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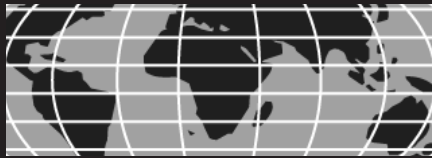


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NATIONAL □ INTERNATIONAL



WORLD BRIEFLY

American policy in Iraq raises questions

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a remarkably short time, the United States has radically shifted its policy in Iraq, opting to hand power quickly to an interim government that it hopes can mend sharp ethnic divides, calm a growing insurgency and serve as a democratic model for a volatile region.

But the new policy still leaves unanswered key questions that have bedeviled American efforts in Iraq, including how to create a new elected body without worsening tensions simmering between the majority Shiite population and the Sunni minority, which includes Saddam Hussein — wherever he is. Not to mention how to end the U.S. occupation and eventually bring American soldiers home.

At first the Bush administration insisted on keeping a tight grip on power in Iraq, insisting that the Iraqi Governing Council write a constitution as a way to make sure that Iraqis put a truly democratic system in place. But the rising tide of violence — the U.S. death toll topped 400 on Saturday — and the fractured council's failure to get a constitution in the works, apparently forced the administration's hand.

Congress considers energy bill

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Responding to the summer's massive power blackout, Congress is considering in its broad energy bill the first federal rules, with penalties, to protect electricity transmission systems from rapidly cascading outages.

The Republican blueprint for an overhaul of U.S. energy priorities also would direct the government to order construction of critical power lines if states do not

act. In addition, companies could charge more for moving power to spur investment in new lines.

Some experts have questioned whether the electricity proposals in the energy legislation are enough to protect against a repeat of the rapidly moving blackout that blackened parts of eight states, from New York City to Michigan, in a matter of minutes in August.

On Tuesday, a U.S.-Canadian task force is scheduled to make public an interim report on the blackout's causes. Documents already released suggests that communications failures, equipment problems and shortcomings in electricity grid management probably played a role.

A final version of the energy legislation is expected to be taken up by the House and Senate as early as Tuesday.

Canadian leader pledges unity with U.S.

By The Associated Press

TORONTO — Canada's next prime minister on Saturday promised a greater role in North American security and pledged to work closely with President Bush on the mutual interests of Canada and the United States.

Paul Martin, in his first news conference after becoming leader of the governing Liberal Party the night before, blamed policy differences and a lack of communication for strained relations between outgoing Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Bush.

"I think what's important, really, is that the prime minister and the president establish a strong understanding reflecting the fact that they will have different interests at stake," Martin said.

When he succeeds Chretien, who is expected to step down in upcoming weeks, Martin will promote stronger relations with Bush and strengthened ties between Canada's Parliament and Congress.

CBS leader dies

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Laurence A. Tisch, who took control of CBS news in the face of a hostile takeover but whose tenure was marked by accusations that he had tarnished the network's reputation, died Saturday. He was 80.

Tisch, a self-made billionaire who also helped found the Loews Corp., was suffering from cancer, said Candace Leeds, a Loews spokeswoman.

From 1986-95, Tisch served as chief executive officer and chairman of the board of CBS Inc., a period when the "Tiffany Network" saw its nightly newscast fall to third place and lost NFL football to the upstart Fox Network.

CBS Inc. was the target of several hostile takeover attempts in 1986, and Tisch was then praised for stepping in to seize control by spending \$800 million for a 24.9 percent stake of the company.

Prescription drug deal in final stages

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican congressional leaders said they sealed a tentative agreement Saturday on a new prescription drug benefit for the nation's seniors, the largest expansion in Medicare's history.

"We have come to an agreement on principle," Senate Majority Bill Frist said.

Talks that lasted most of the day smoothed over the last remaining wrinkles in the bill, including a proposal to have traditional Medicare compete directly with new private insurance plans and a plan to encourage employers to maintain drug coverage for retirees, officials said.

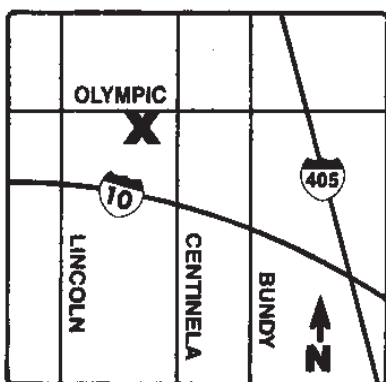
The agreement ends months of negotiations over the drug benefit and a broad reworking of the Medicare program to give private insurers a new large role in health care for 40 million older and disabled Americans.

It must win approval of House and Senate negotiators, many of whom have been meeting for months in search of a compromise. The legislation would then go to the full House and Senate, where tough questions await.

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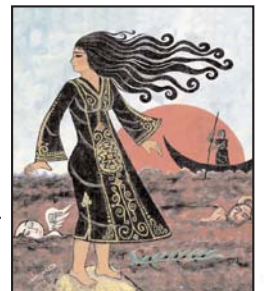
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Amal Al-Khedaairy is the founder and director of Al-Beit Al-Iraqi ("Iraqi House"), an arts and cultural center in Baghdad that was destroyed by American bombs. Nermin Al-Mufti is an internationally recognized Iraqi journalist.

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COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



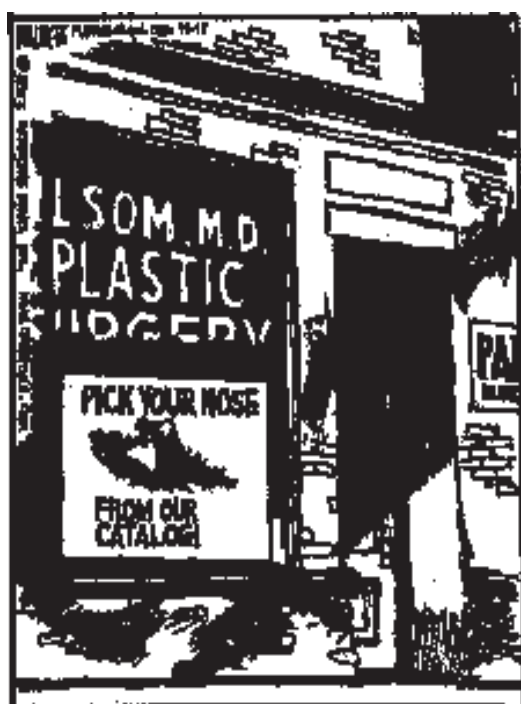
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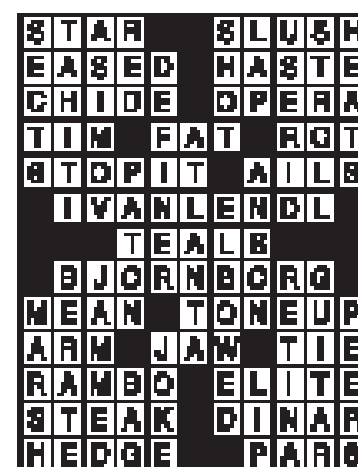


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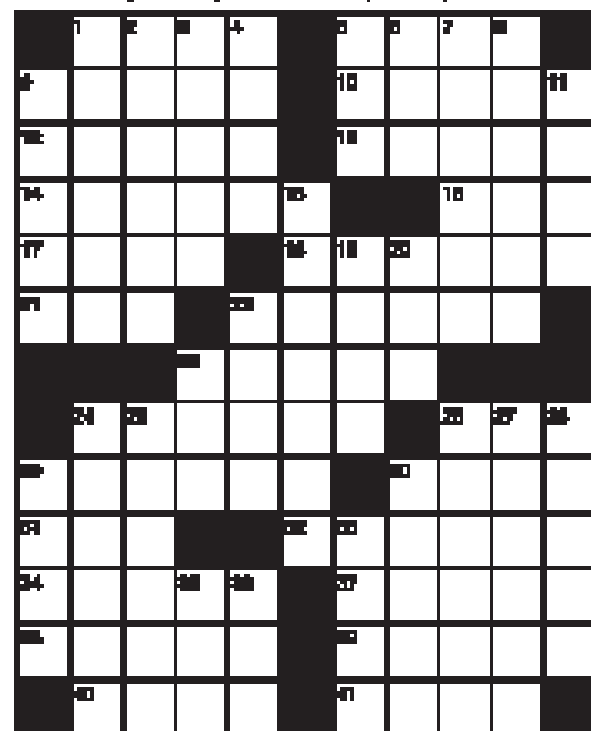
- ACROSS**
- Atlantic catches
 - Not quite shut
 - "Be quiet"
 - Adored
 - Last letter
 - Play place
 - Medium for debts
 - Brown shade
 - "Dog-gone!"
 - Prayer aid
 - Utter
 - "Golly!"
 - Man, for one
 - Frequent
 - Un-processed
 - Consult
 - Big truck
 - "Nightline" network
 - "Impres-sive"
 - Cone
 - Eat from the pasture
 - Gold unit
 - Not now
 - Place entrant
- 41 Pupil places**
- DOWN**
- Shot taker
 - Eventually
 - Number component
 - Baseball's Muehl
 - Capp and Capone
 - Make notes
 - Incarnation
 - Look over
 - Filmed parts
 - Refuse



Saturday's answer

- Superman's planet
- Has debts
- Turf
- Toothpaste flavor
- Burger holder
- Wheel accessory
- Jockey Eddie
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- Shuns
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Halle Berry over the broken arm, but not her broken heart

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Halle Berry says she's over the broken arm she suffered while filming "Gothika" and is recovering from the pain of recently separating from husband Eric Benet.

"I'm getting used to it," the Oscar-winner said of her split from her second husband.

Berry, 37, said she remains positive about the possibility of future romance.

"I've made some bad choices in that area," she said with a laugh. "I used to say that if there was a loser in town, I'd find him. But I don't say that anymore. ... I'm going to find the right man."

Berry broke her arm in May while filming "Gothika," in which she plays a psychiatrist who winds up in her own asylum, accused of a murder she can't remember. She was working on a scene in which she fights a man trying to sedate her.

"No stunt coordinator was there," she said. "It wasn't anything that we thought would be that strenuous." The accident shut down filming for six weeks.

DES MOINES, Iowa — As the McCaughey septuplets turn 6 on Wednesday, they're meeting new friends in kindergarten, developing their own likes and dislikes and following their own minds, the Ladies' Home Journal reports in its December issue.

"The kids do challenge us more now," Kenny McCaughey, 33, of Carlisle, father of the world's first surviving septuplets, told the magazine.

"Sometimes, they're downright defiant," added their mother, Bobbi.

Independent thinking is something the McCaugheys sought to encourage when they enrolled the seven children this fall at the local elementary school, which offers six kindergarten classes.

Next year, the seven will be home-schooled along with their older sister, Mikayla, 7.

"We want to pass on our religious and ethical values

as part of their studies," Kenny McCaughey said.

The septuplets — Kenny, Alexis, Natalie, Kelsey, Brandon, Nathan and Joel — were born on Nov. 19, 1997. The family lives in Carlisle, about 10 miles south-east of Des Moines.

Alexis and Nathan have weakened muscles because of cerebral palsy. Alexis uses a walker, while Nathan can walk a dozen steps without one. Kenny, nicknamed Bert for his middle name, Robert, helps Nathan dress and gets him things he can't reach. Nathan dotes on Alexis, the magazine reports.

LONDON — Soccer star David Beckham and his wife, former Spice Girl Victoria, are denying a fresh tabloid claim that their marriage is strained.

A spokeswoman for the couple said the report in the Sunday Mirror was "rubbish" and that a lawyer is looking into possible legal action against the newspaper.

The Sunday Mirror reported that Victoria Beckham threatened to walk out on the marriage unless her husband moves back to Britain from Spain, where he plays for Real Madrid. For years, Beckham played in Britain for Manchester United. The newspaper said a trial separation had been discussed. The couple have two young sons.

It's not the first newspaper report of trouble in the four-year-old marriage. In September the pair issued a statement following a story in the News of the World tabloid.

"Since we first met, our careers have always meant we have spent time apart," they said. "This is not a reflection on the strength of our marriage and we are very much enjoying our new life in Spain."

TIMISOARA, Romania — Tarzan of Transylvania? The late Olympic swimmer-turned-actor Johnny Weissmuller was born in Romania, and local officials plan to reclaim him.

A commemorative plaque will be placed on the house in Timisoara where he was born, a government representative told the daily Pro Sport.

Weissmuller, who died in 1984, played Tarzan in the movies during the 1930s and 1940s, after winning five gold medals at the 1924 and 1928 Olympics.

His family emigrated to the United States when he was a child, but he claimed to have been born in Windber, Pa., an assertion his son has said may have been made to ensure a place on the U.S. Olympic swimming team.

Romanian officials said in comments published Saturday that a ceremony will be held next year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Weissmuller's birth.

His films included "Tarzan the Ape Man," "Tarzan Finds A Son!" and "Tarzan and the Amazons."

Earlier this year, his character in "Tarzan the Ape Man" made the American Film Institute's list of all-time movie heroes at No. 34. That was one spot ahead of Gary Cooper's portrayal of Alvin York in "Sergeant York" and two ahead of John Wayne's Rooster Cogburn in "True Grit."

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Actor Danny Glover said he was honored "beyond any expression of words" by a humanitarian award from the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

The Fred L. Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award is named for the 81-year-old Baptist minister and civil rights activist who was the award's first recipient last year.

Glover left a West Coast movie set at 4 a.m. Saturday to make the evening event in Birmingham.

"My being here, my presence is a reflection ... a testimony to what I think is important," he said.

Glover, 56, was chosen for his work with the United Nations on poverty, disease and economic underdevelopment in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

He dismissed a reporter's reference that he was a "great humanitarian," however, calling himself a "citizen of the world."

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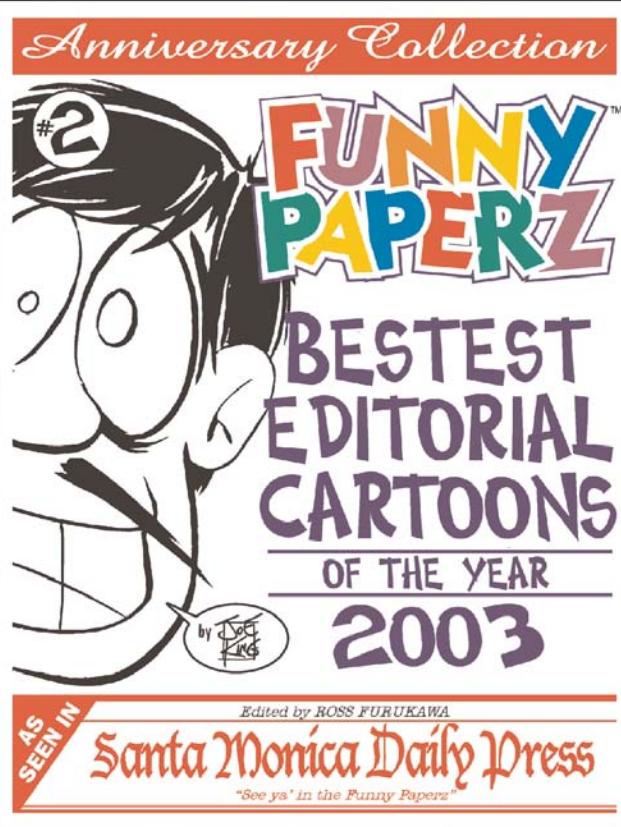
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