

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO
4 17 43 44 47
Meganumber: 21
Jackpot: \$18 Million

FANTASY 5
5 11 26 29 31

DAILY 3
Daytime: 6 9 2
Evening: 4 4 1

DAILY DERBY
1st: 04 Big Ben
2nd: 05 California Classic
3rd: 03 Hot Shot

RACE TIME: 1:40.35
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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Animal control officers raided a house in Torrance, Calif., in October on reports that birds were being improperly kept there and ultimately found about 300, of which about 120 were dead. Gerard Enright, 61, was arrested when police caught him in the act of performing a tumorectomy on his No. 1 pigeon, Twister, that he had sedated with vodka. Enright is not a surgeon but said he had watched his veterinarian closely enough to know what he was doing.

■ In September, to preserve "respect and dignity" for newborns, the neonatal unit of Calderdale Royal Hospital in Halifax, England, officially banned visitors "cooing" at infants. Said hospital official Debbie Lawson, "Cooing should be a thing of the past because these are little people with the same rights as you or me." To illustrate the rule, officials displayed a doll holding a sign reading: "What makes you think I want to be looked at?"

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 333rd day of 2005.
There are 32 days left in the year.

On Nov. 29, 1963, President Johnson named a commission headed by Earl Warren to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex.

OSCAR WILDE

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A touch of gray on 'Black Friday'

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN — Just call it "Gray Friday."

Retailers here are reporting mixed results on the heels of "Black Friday" and the big holiday shopping weekend that typically follows Thanksgiving.

While some shopkeepers report sales revenues have increased from the same time last year, others contend it's been a slow start.

Meanwhile, representatives from the Bayside District Corp. — a group which manages downtown commercial activity in conjunction with City Hall — said several events are on tap in December which will be geared for families shopping on the Promenade.

Among some of downtown's winners over the holiday weekend were the Puzzle Zoo at 1413 Third Street Promenade and the Giorgio Vasari men's store, located on the same block.

Jay Demircift, owner of the Puzzle Zoo — which sells specialty games, toys and memorabilia — said sales have been up over the past several days compared to the same time last year. However, since the Puzzle Zoo does not typically run specials and did not do so during the holiday weekend, Demircift was hesitant to say what might have prompted the surge in business.

Representatives at Giorgio Vasari said sales on Black Friday and through the holiday weekend were up 30 percent from 2004, with window signs advertising discounts on the high-quality clothing they offer.

Such success in sales, however, may have been more of the exception than the norm.

See GRAY FRIDAY, page 6



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Santa Monica firefighter John Flores on Monday sprays foam on hot spots from a fire that broke out on the Palisades Bluffs Sunday night.

Bluff fire's scope surprises residents, firefighters

BY JASMIN PERSCH
Special to the Daily Press

PALISADES PARK — More than 100 firefighters from throughout Los Angeles County converged here Sunday night to battle a fire that is believed to have been started by a homeless man cooking his supper.

The only injury reported was second-degree burns sustained by the homeless man, who is being treated at a local hospital, officials said.

About 120 firefighters from Santa Monica, the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County battled the two-acre blaze that erupted on the bluffs near the 300 block of Pacific Palisades, said Santa Monica Fire Chief Jim Hone.

The wind and thick brush along the bluffs hampered firefighters' efforts. Two Los Angeles Fire Department water-dropping helicopters helped extinguish the fire, said SMFD Battalion Chief Carl Bjerke.

"I've been on a lot of bluff fires," Bjerke said. "This is bigger than the biggest I've been on."

Fire crews arrived at the scene

"I've been on a lot of bluff fires. This is bigger than the biggest I've been on."

CARL BJERKE
SMFD Chief Battalion

about 9 p.m. and had the blaze under control by 3 a.m., Bjerke said. Firefighters took turns watching over the fire in shifts of four throughout the night to make sure that deeply seeded areas didn't reignite, Hone said.

On Monday, firefighters continued to extinguish hot spots with foam and water.

Local resident Sharon Ellenbogen said she heard the fire engines around 9:30 p.m.

"I saw it from my balcony," she said. "The smoke was way up in the sky."

The fire threatened homes on Ocean Avenue after flames traveled up the bluff and scorched palm trees across the street.

According to Bjerke, the Santa Monica Police Department began to evacuate nearby residents but soon stopped. Evacuations are

issued only if there's a potential threat, which the ignited palm trees didn't create like thick brush would, Hone said.

Ethel Paulino, assistant administrator of Ocean Villa Assisted Living, located directly across from the burning bluff, saw the fire on the TV news Sunday night but didn't realize how close it was to the home for seniors.

"Thank God nothing happened," Paulino said.

Next door, Diane Makasian, who has lived in her newly refurbished 1930s home for 23 years, could see from her living room the orange glow from the fire.

"The flames were sky high," Makasian said.

Anticipating nearby burning palm trees and the threat they

See BLUFF FIRE, page 7



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HOROSCOPE

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Santa Monica Daily Press



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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★ Pressure builds in an unprecedented manner, though you might just feel weighed down. In this mood, cooking up alternatives and solutions could be more difficult than you expect. Tonight: Togetherness works.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Others want a lot from you. You might have a sickening feeling that inhibits you from making a good decision. Your vision takes you in many new directions. Be sure of what you want from someone you care about. Tonight: Don't dream; be realistic.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Reach out to others. You might feel as if you don't have a choice. Be more in touch with your long-term desires. You might not think you are able to achieve them right now. Think through a decision carefully. Tonight: Talk up a storm.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ A risk could severely backfire if you aren't careful. Think about your long-term security. You might want to venture forth and try some different approaches suggested by an imaginative associate. Tonight: Brainstorm over a yummy meal.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Knowing what you want has a lot to do with what will work. You could be overly serious and take everything in more deeply than it was intended. You might even surprise yourself with how much you could be raining on your own parade. Tonight: At home, being entertained by a loved one.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ You might be drawn to ideas that are slightly more negative than unusual. Be careful, as you could have a harsh impact on others. Words exchanged might be forgiven but perhaps not forgotten. Tonight: Relax; be easygoing.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Expenses could have you awed, if not stepping back and shaking your head. You have far more control than you realize. Open up to possibilities. You still might need to be careful before committing — OK? Tonight: Keep expenses down.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ You might not be pleased with how someone presents an issue. At the same time, you will be confused about what to do or which way to go. Decide to ride with the moment. You also might not be seeing everything clearly. Tonight: All smiles.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Much goes on behind the scenes. You should think twice about what you want. What you are hearing, both negative and positive, isn't as clear as you might like. Tonight: Take your time.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Friends and meetings play major roles in what is going on. However, making a solid decision, even if it positively impacts your finances, could be difficult. One person might be negative, while another is overly optimistic. Tonight: Where the crowds are.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ You can be sure that you're not seeing various situations clearly. In fact, you can be absolutely positive you have a distorted vision. How you view others could change radically. Think through a decision tomorrow. Tonight: Expect a high profile.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Your sixth sense might not be there for you, even if you are positive that you are on target. Your best bet, especially if feeling tired or stressed, is to detach. Answers will come easily then. Tonight: Try a different style.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Cleaning up campaign contributions

By Daily Press staff

Are you sick of buying your politician's vote?

The Santa Monica Democratic Club invites the public to a presentation by Susan Lerner, executive director of the "California Clean Money Campaign." The free event will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 30 at 7 p.m. at St. Anne's community room located on 20th Street and Arizona Avenue.

Californians are not the only Americans angry that special interest money has taken over the electoral process. Arizona, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Mexico and North Carolina have passed versions of Clean Money reform.

Clean Money has lowered overall campaign spending, freed candidates from fundraising, increased turnout and encouraged more qualified people to run including women and minorities, according to "Clean Money" officials.

Lerner founded the Committee for Judicial Independence, which is dedicated to an independent federal judiciary. She also was a trial lawyer specializing in complex commercial litigation and intellectual property for 20 years.

Santa Monica City Councilman Kevin McKeown will participate in the discussion with a question and answer session to follow.

Free parking and refreshments will be available.

Taking their cuts: SMC hosts free student film night

By Daily Press staff

Local college film students will be showing off their work this month.

Santa Monica College presents its traditional end-of-semester screening of student films produced by members of the SMC Student Filmmakers Association. The "Evening of SMC Student Films," will be held at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 16 in room 214 of the art complex at SMC, located at 1900 Pico Blvd.

The event is free, as is parking. Seating is limited and is available on a first-arrival basis. The club provides free pizza and refreshments at intermission.

With short films ranging across all genres, the festival of student work also showcases a diversity of filmmaking visions and voices representing SMC's eclectic mix of national origins and ethnicities.

The SMC Student Filmmakers Association is one of the college's most popular student organizations on campus, providing the opportunity to produce short films on a campus where there are no formal filmmaking classes available, school officials said. Films are made on low budgets and are financed completely by students. Most are shot digitally and edited on home computers. Many of the club members plan to transfer to major four-year film schools such as USC and UCLA and work professionally in the industry, according to school officials.

The event is sponsored by the SMC communications department in association with the Student Filmmakers Association.

For more information, call (310) 434-4588.

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SURF REPORT

On Tuesday, the swell will back down as it did on Monday, leaving calm, tranquil water with ripples of waves in the knee-high range.

Today the
water is:

62°

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

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
MONDAY	12:05	1.6	1:29	0.3	6:33	5.7	7:35	3.8
TUESDAY	12:34	1.8	2:05	-0.3	6:59	6.1	8:21	3.8
WEDNESDAY	1:02	1.4	2:31	0.0	7:28	5.4	9:15	3.2
THURSDAY	1:37	1.2	3:04	-0.1	8:07	4.9	9:40	3.0
FRIDAY	2:06	1.1	3:41	0.3	8:41	4.3	10:09	2.9

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The Q Line

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City Hall is currently embroiled in a bitter legal battle with the attorneys who successfully represented Santa Monica in its litigation against 18 oil companies for allowing MTBE to leak into the city's water supply. At issue is how much City Hall owes its lawyers for their services. And although city officials are looking to minimize the percentage of the more than \$120 million settlement that is shared with those attorneys, they are racking up millions in legal fees in the process.

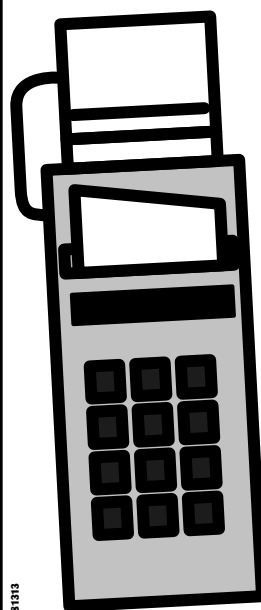
So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Do you approve of the way in which City Hall is handling its legal dispute with its former attorneys? Why or why not?"

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your responses in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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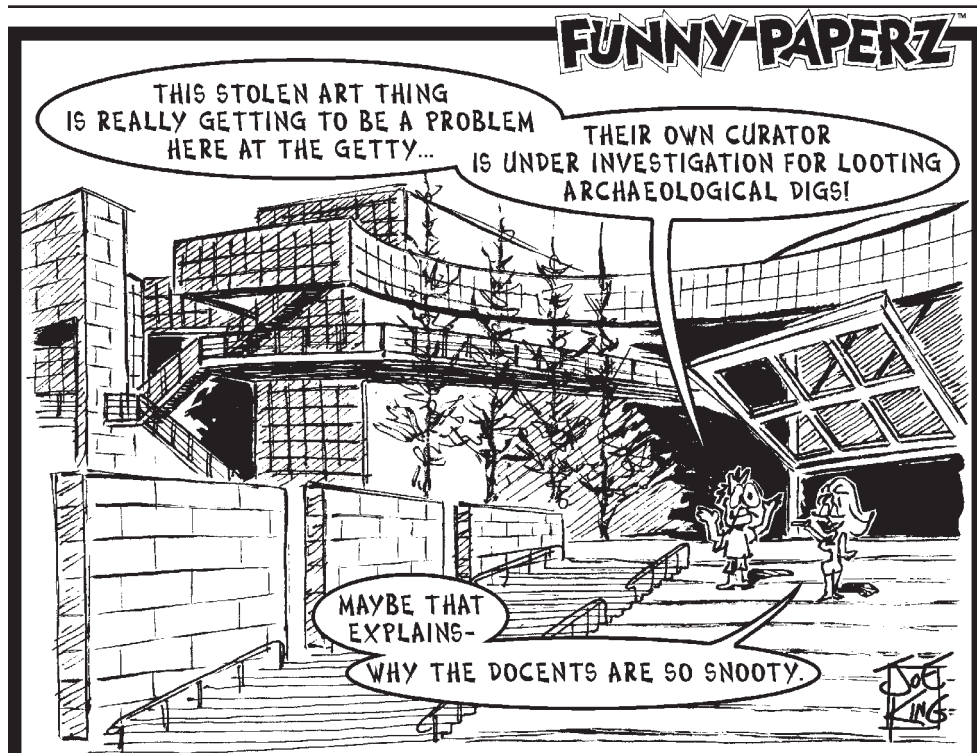
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OPINION



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rent control fraud is just tip of iceberg**Editor:**

Thank you for the article (SMDP, Nov. 22, page 1) about the couple who lives in Woodland Hills but who engaged in what can only charitably be described as fraud in order to keep the beachfront apartment. Stories like this, and you have reported about others, must only be the tip of the iceberg in the scandal in Santa Monica where tenants who own homes and live elsewhere keep rent controlled apartments and defraud the property owner.

Imagine what this couple did — and he's a real estate broker and licensed attorney — to cheat the property owner: The apartment was actually rented to their daughter, but she moved out and they took over the apartment, with the father forging her name on rent checks and on letters to the owner, and pretending to be someone else when calls were made so as not to alert the property owner.

This man is licensed by the state, and should have his real estate and law licenses revoked for his lies and dishonest behavior, for he brings shame on not only the honest members of those professions but on all of the honest, decent, hard-working tenants and residents of Santa Monica.

David E. Gonzales
Santa Monica

Eastside gets lost in the shuffle**Editor:**

There's always more attention to the ocean side of the city, particularly the "business district," but the Eastside has grown the most in recent years. Although several large office buildings were added in the last decade or two, there has been little attempt to deal with the traffic. Lately, they've actually restricted traffic on major streets like Pico and Wilshire boulevards. This leads to traffic jams on streets like Colorado Avenue that run through residential neighborhoods. The city is supposed to do something on Colorado Avenue but they haven't. All Colorado Avenue really needs is a few stop signs. Santa Monica Boulevard actually has more stops. What would help most to handle the problem would be to take another lane out of the wide median on Olympic Boulevard, at least back to 20th Street. The number of lanes does increase at Centinela (the border), which is exactly why traffic flows down Colorado Avenue, then Centinela Avenue to Olympic Boulevard. I don't understand why this wasn't planned when all these offices were built. After the earthquake, Olympic Boulevard served as the main route, but even then no one at City Hall responded. Maybe they're not aware this is even in the city.

Frank Palardy
Santa Monica

Giving thanks to nice people**Editor:**

It's a wonderful world with wonderful people in it. My granddaughter Angela lost her wallet in the garage of Days Inn. The nice (understatement) person who found it gave it to the hotel desk. The hotel called Santa Monica Police and the police called Angela's husband in Seattle for a wonderful happy ending.

Edna Stein
Santa Monica

Decorations leave a bad taste**Editor:**

Last year, and the few years before that, the (holiday) decorations were a disgrace, but this year it's gross. Doesn't anyone have any taste in the deciding offices?

Ingrid M. Coolen
Santa Monica

Good tidings to all; halt holiday madness

**WHAT'S THE POINT?**

BY DAVID PISARRA

Now that we are in the middle of the holidays, let the shopping begin, the anger at the stupidity of other drivers, the parking lot brain death, and the joy of the season ring out across the land.

Traffic officers are sprouting all across our fair city. Fourth Street is awash in traffic cones, meter maids writing tickets as quickly as their little printers can print, all the while accompanied by the symphony of frustrated drivers honking at someone who is desperate to get that "good" parking spot on the first level, while causing traffic to back up onto the street for a block, while some mother and her two exhausted toddlers try to maneuver themselves, and their baby SUV, into mommy's Excursion which has blocked easy passage in the parking structure for hours.

But beware the political correctness police are out again, and on top of all the other stresses, we must tip-toe through the mine field of not offending anyone and being sure to include everyone.

This is supposed to be the time of year when as a society we step back and embrace each other, in a collegial and friendly way, mind you. We must avoid any behavior which might be construed as sexual harassment, so be sure to ask permission before hugging someone of the opposite or same sex.

As we approach the big holidays of Christmas and Chanukah, we must also remember that there are others too. There is of course Kwanzaa, that week following Christmas for our African-American citizens.

But in this age of all-inclusiveness, let us not forget that there also is the International Day of the Disabled (Dec. 3); and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12); Ice Cream and Violins Day (Dec. 13); Forefathers Day (Dec. 21); Eggnog Day (Dec. 24), and of course, New Year's Eve.

This month also is Anaplastic Anemia month, certainly a heart warmer for those in the know.

Again, we have the Winterlit holiday display of a tree with ornaments on the Promenade. There is the annual display of the Christmas story in Palisades Park. And there is the annual argument over whether or not these are appropriate displays in this city of multi-ethnic, multi-religious, pan-theistic, atheistic, pool of citizens.

There are those who want to abolish all symbols of the holidays, or rename them into linguistic nonsense. Making a Christmas tree a "holiday tree" is as pointless doublespeak as calling a tax cut a "revenue reduction."

The question is: "Does the celebration of 'Christmas,' a religious event celebrated by the various adherents of Catholicism, Protestant, Lutheran, Episcopal and Methodists, (an event by the way that was originally a pagan ritual) equate to the establishment of one religion — Christianity, or is it an acknowledgment the holiday exists?"

Since the lighting of a plastic tree with fake snow on the Promenade is not the forced attendance at religious events, and

the individual state, or federal government has not mandated that only one church is the "official" religion of the United States of America, or the individual state involved, I do not see an establishment clause violation.

Nor do I see a free exercise clause violation, in that the display of the Christmas story does not prevent Jews from celebrating Chanukah, Muslims from Ramadan, or Druids from their Moonfest, or whatever they have.

The government of course avoids the direct support of religious holiday displays by having private enterprises or public/private enterprises do the deed for them.

Acknowledging a holiday is a precarious position for a government to take because it opens the door for greater involvement by the state in spiritual/religious matters, but of itself, I do not see that it would do any harm. The government acknowledges all sorts of questionable events throughout the year. There are enough proclamations, declarations and national days of celebration and remembrance to fill a phonebook.

Clearly, however I would state that equal time should be given to the other established religions who wish to publicly acknowledge their holidays, which, certainly does in fact happen.

The fact is that we live in a society in which there are three major religions — I'm unsure of where the buddhists/hindus fall on this topic, but they should be also be included if they have holidays — which celebrate holidays, and one racial group that has a week of ethnic celebration, called Kwanzaa.

We acknowledge all sorts of other events, accomplishments, traditions, ethnicities and points of view, from National Hurricane Preparedness Week (May 10, 2005, obviously effective this year) to Leif Erickson Day (honoring the great Greenland explorer of 1,000 years ago.)

So why can't we honestly acknowledge that religious holidays happen?

After all, we are inundated from late September on, with Christmas shopping adverts, and Chanukah displays of food and menorahs. Is it really unreasonable to say, "Yes, there is a holiday called Christmas, people celebrate it by killing a tree, dressing it up, and spending money they don't have to buy junk they don't need, for people they don't like. Oh, and yes, other people do this too, with Chanukah, and Kwanzaa."

Government should be in the business of governing. But if that means that we avoid all religious events then we should follow that to its logical extension, and we should preclude the senates and assemblies, the city councils, the governors and the president from declaring "Cheese Manufacturers Day" and "National Septic Tank Pumpers Day." But that's not going to happen because they celebrate a slice of America, and all they are doing is raising awareness. They do no harm; they might do a little good, and in the end, they celebrate a part of what as a country we are.

If recognizing that Christmas happens, along with Chanukah, Ramadan, and an occasional Moonfest, creates goodwill across our society, what's the harm? Plus we get the added income from all those extra parking tickets. And every city likes a good revenue enhancement.

(Contact David Pizarra at dpisarra@pizarra.com or (310) 664-9969.)

COMMENTARY



Give me some space

ANY DAY IN LA

BY HEIDI MANTEUFFEL



Most modern USA dwelling suburbanians have a thing about personal space.

You don't get in it. If there, you don't stay in it, and you certainly don't discuss the topic about taking any more of someone's away.

And yet when we travel for turkey dinner, there is nothing more compromised than personal space.

Sitting next to strangers with questionable hygiene in the airport shuttle, being repeatedly poked from behind by a rolling carry-on in the baggage check line, and unwillingly being included on cell phone calls to every relative possible in the waiting area is only the beginning of it (Aunt Darcy! Glad the hemorrhoids have healed). The worst invasion of space by far is the two- to four-hour cross-country jaunt in a standard commuter airplane.

The thing we fight for so hard in the grocery check-out line with our plastic dividers has been thrust outside the freezing plane's window. If you're flying in economy or business class as most of us are, the seating arrangement is much like sardines in a can, only for the hefty rate of \$400 a squat.

You sit closer than you do in everyday life to your own mom to some talkative Jack trying to offer you homemade beef jerky, or arm spasm Jane whose elbows are lined with Bic's women's razorblades.

You're tired, weary and the last thing you want to do is talk about the cold front moving into Chicago. You desperately hope Jack pays more attention to his look alike across the aisle with the "I ate the worm" T-shirt. Then again Jane seems fidgety, and you're cheering for her to watch "Must Love Dogs" instead of reading the newest Steven King novel (where elbows are sure to go all a flutter).

But there was no such Jack or Jane on my last trip this Thanksgiving. Instead, there were rows and rows of crying babies enveloping me like a Little Debbie cream pie.

In my own row sat a younger mom and her 8-year-old daughter. For the first hour of the flight, this woman's blanket kept getting pushed into my seat. Not slightly intruding mind you, but she sent four-

six-inch sections at a time flopping my way. So, I'd quietly place the blanket back on her side, like a grown-up version of the infamous sibling game, "Don't Cross the Imaginary Line."

You'd think that be it. Oh so sorry, blah blah blah and all those perfunctory, insincere formalities. But then she'd do it again, more intrusively, not paying attention to anything but entertaining her young daughter. Then I'd place it back. When it basically got into my lap, I asked her if she could maybe put the blanket in her own seat. Possibly?

Sure she moved it, but I don't think she felt bad about it. At the end of the flight, she told her daughter a story about the mean people on the airplane that were ruining all their fun.

She told the story after switching seats with her daughter in frustration for not being able to recline her seat backwards due to the car seat behind her.

One could say there was a conflict in her definition of personal space. One could even make it into a story, spoken to a buckled-in bystander with no choice but to listen.

Yes, people get feisty about their personal space. On the way back into the "ring of fire," also known as O'Hare Airport, passengers were forced to share the single elevator as the escalator to check-in was broken. When my boyfriend, mother and I approached it, a volatile woman quickly blurted out "No space! There's not enough space. I can't back up anymore, there's not enough ..."

"Shhh ... I audibly told the woman as the doors closed between her and I, as she was acting more whiney than her two young children. Mind you, there were three people in the economy size elevator she was in, and nine people now waiting for the next one to come.

Maybe she had come to last straw of people violating her personal space, poking and prodding, and tapping until there was no more space to give.

I've come to realize that traveling is basically like a free-for-all land rush. So it's no wonder people get disgruntled when their space turns out to be a measly one-foot plot, shared by the likes of Jerky Jeff, Elbow Jane, and a woman who's already acquired the rights to the entire production.

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

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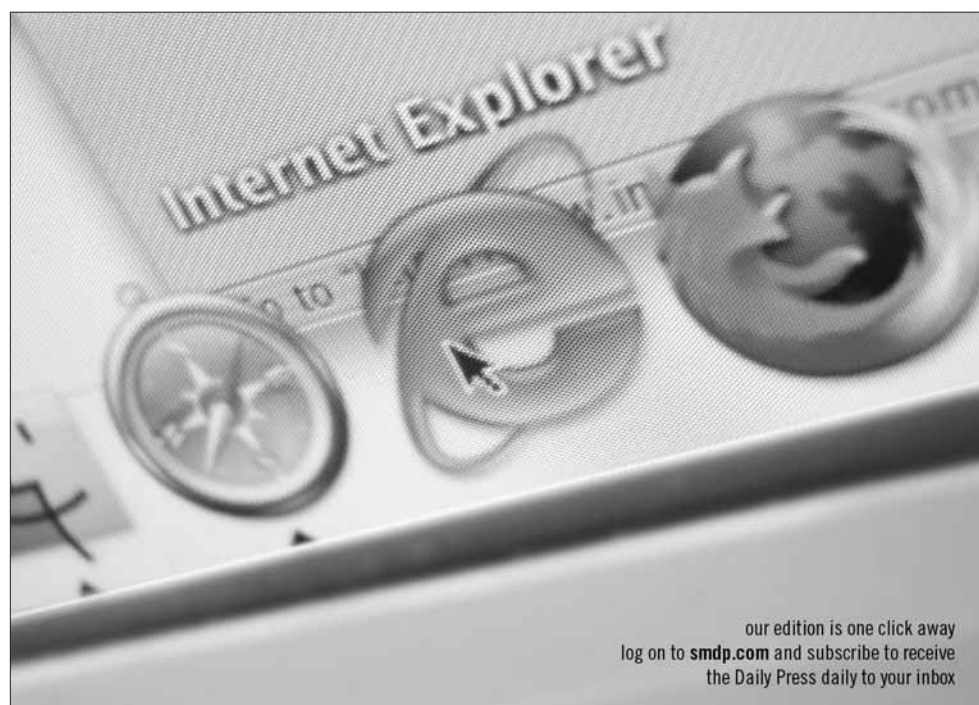
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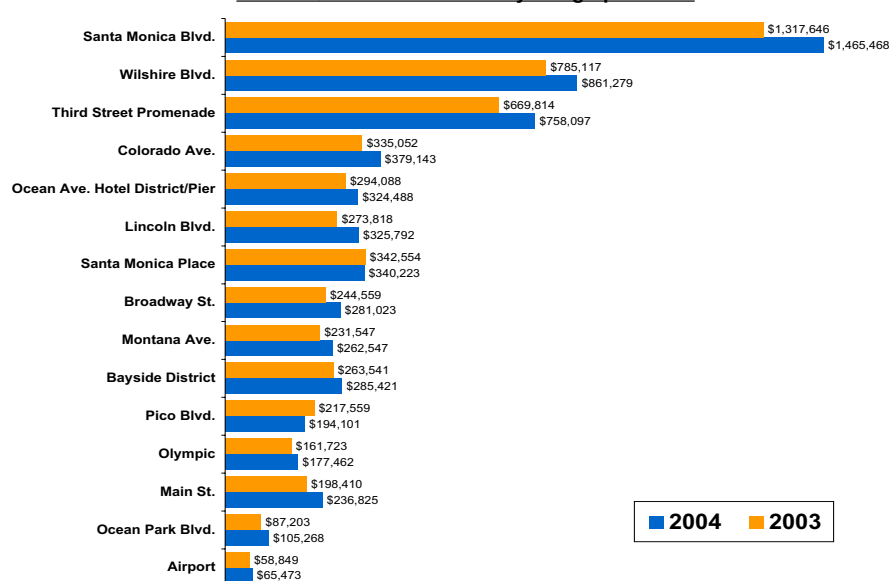
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Fourth Quarter Sales Taxes by Geographic Area



Source: City of Santa Monica

Sales tax revenue for the fourth quarter of 2004 showed an increase over the prior year. The city collects 1 percent of sales citywide.

What's in store for merchants is unclear

GRAY FRIDAY, from page 1

Chris Masculino, who works full time at Quicksilver — a clothing store located across from the Puzzle Zoo — said sales were slower than what they had seen this time last year, despite the steps he says his company and other retailers on the Promenade have taken to drum up business.

"We offered a sale in which clothes were 40 percent off," Masculino said. "I worked here this time last year, and although we had a lot of foot traffic coming to the store, we didn't do as well."

Shaun Lagadi, who manages the Puma store at 1350 Third Street, said his shop hasn't been fairing as well as it has in previous years. Generally, however, he said sales have been good and attributed the weekend decline simply to bad weather.

"It was cold and a little rainy, so I think that had a lot to do with it," Lagadi said.

Some retailers located within Santa Monica Place mall reported a slower sales weekend than they expected.

Representatives from Forever 21, a women's clothing store located on the second floor of the mall, said sales revenues on Black Friday and the rest of the weekend were worse than the same time last year.

Representatives from Bath & Body Works, a store which sells body care products and is located across from Forever 21, said they anticipated a better business weekend, especially considering ongoing promotions the store has been running.

One employee at Bath & Body Works, who wished to not be identified, said sales at some stores may not have reached expectations simply because people, anticipating huge crowds at the malls over the holiday weekend, might be shopping at other times when they expect traffic won't be as bad.

While walk-in business may have been slower for some retailers, reports indicate online shopping may continue to grasp a larger share of shoppers. A recent news story published in CNN Money, a business news service, indicates Internet traffic among online retailers was up 35 percent on Cyber Monday, the online retail version of Black Friday, according to economists. The sharp spike in traffic was recorded by the Akami Net Usage Index for retail, which monitors aggregate web traffic to more than 100 web-based online sellers, including etoys.com and jcpenny.com.

City records show that the Bayside District, including the Promenade and Santa Monica Place, generated more than \$137 million in sales in the fourth quarter of 2004 — the last three months of the year. The district includes the area between Wilshire and Pico boulevards, from Ocean Avenue to Lincoln Boulevard. (See chart.)

BAYSIDE GEARS UP FOR THE SEASON

The Winterlit tree-lighting ceremony, which Bayside has held for the past few years, will not take place during this holiday season, said Maria Fotopoulos, a Bayside spokeswoman.

Fotopoulos said it will bypass the tree-lighting ceremony this year and instead host more events spread over the holiday shopping season.

"This year, we wanted to focus on creating more events for downtown Santa Monica and Third Street to drive traffic throughout the holiday season, with something for everyone," Fotopoulos said.

This year's activities include a "Friends & Family Shopping" day at Santa Monica Place mall that will benefit education causes; a "Winterlit Beauty Lounge," where visitors can take a break from shopping; a fund-raising event for Katrina relief at the Fairmont Miramar; a modeling contest that will focus on winter fashions; a children's festival that will feature snow, live entertainment, interactive booths, pony rides and a petting zoo on Dec. 10; and two Winterlit concerts, scheduled for Dec. 14 and 15.

Free gift-wrapping will be provided by Bayside at a cart courtesy of Provenzano Resources, Inc. the new vending cart service provider which is set to begin operating its new program today. The gift-wrapping cart will be located on the weekends throughout December at Third Street near Broadway and will be hosted by area nonprofit groups, according to Fotopoulos. Gift-wrapping services are free, but the nonprofit groups will be accepting contributions, she said.

Fotopoulos said shoppers can donate a new, unwrapped toy at the Toys for Tots drop off at Barney's Beanery. Visitors also can pick a wishing star for a senior citizen, and then place a holiday package under the tree at Santa Monica Place for gift delivery to local homebound seniors.

Log on to www.downtownsm.com for a list of downtown holiday activities.



Police sweep bluffs to keep coast clear

BLUFF FIRE, from page 1

posed to her house, Makasian hosed down her roof and lawn, as did several of her neighbors, she said.

"There was a spark on the lawn (lining the sidewalk)" Makasian said. "My neighbor stomped it out."

In all her time residing in Santa Monica, Makasian said she has never seen a bluff fire as widespread as Sunday's.

"It's a freak thing," she said.

One of her neighbors, Nick Battaglino, said city officials shouldn't allow homeless people to cook food on the bluffs.

"You almost can't blame this guy," he said.

The City Council in 2003 passed a law banning any person from being on the bluffs. The Santa Monica Police Department conducts bi-monthly sweeps intended to keep the bluffs clean and unpopulated. The steep, brushy hillside, owned by the city of Santa Monica, is often illegally occupied by the homeless.

SMPD Lt. Frank Fabrega said officers patrolled the area as recently as two weeks ago.

Bluff fires typically are sparked by a warming or cooking fire igniting surrounding brush, Bjerke said.

"The type of terrain — eucalyptus,

palms — is a ripe situation for this type of fire," he said.

Passersby stopped to stare Monday at the blackened palm trees — some still smoking — and peered down the bluff, now, with skeleton remains of brush interspersed by burnt trees, where a homeless encampment once was.

The bluff is a steep, deeply eroded and unstable area that expands about one and half miles above the Pacific Coast Highway and below Palisades Park. The bluffs' height varies in height from 50 feet to 180 feet and is accessible from the PCH or the park.

Several tunnels, caves and shelves along the bluffs are used by transients to store belongings and for sleeping. Not only is one's safety compromised due to the rocks being unstable and subject to slides, but the area is frequently littered with trash.

Over the years, the city has made efforts to keep people off of the bluffs with a fence that extends the length of the park, between the Santa Monica Pier and northern city border, where it becomes Pacific Palisades Bluff.

There also are signs posted saying to keep out of the area, as well as stairways and pedestrian overpasses leading to the beach that allow beach access. But people still use



Walt Shirk/Special to the Daily Press

A palm tree located near Sunday night's bluff fire is cooled down on Monday as a safety measure.

the area, endangering themselves and motorists below, city staff said. The steep terrain also makes it difficult for emergency workers to reach people on the bluff.

The man who is believed to be responsible for the blaze hasn't been arrested, but is a subject of interest by the SMPD, Fabrega said.

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DEAR DORIE

Tired of feeling left out in the cold
Dear Dorie,
 I'm a little tired of going to activities with my toddler where we're surrounded by runny noses and coughs. Can you remind your readers about keeping their sick children home?

— Flu Fearful

Dear Fearful,
 Cold and flu season is indeed upon us. This means lots of runny noses, coughs and watery eyes in our little ones and, when it's a virus, not much for mommy and daddy to do but wait it out. There is nothing worse than taking your healthy angel to a Baby & Me class and watching a little one sneeze on her. Blaming the parent is a natural instinct: "How could they bring him here when he's sick."
 Here's an update: You are never going to control other parents, some will stay home with a sick child, some will not. You can, however, take some preventative steps yourself:
 ■ Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids, preferably water.
 ■ Make sleep a priority — well rested children get sick less.
 ■ Wash your hands and the hands of your little one more times than you can imagine — this is the No. 1 way to prevent picking up a cold or flu virus.
 ■ Press the pause button when you see a sick child — remember that nobody takes a sick child out with the intent to get everyone sick, it could just be "one of those days."
 Keep your eye on spring and stay healthy. Good luck.

— Dorie

(Dorie Meek is director of the Infant & Family Support Program, provided by Saint John's Health Center in partnership with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Meek answers questions concerning children ages birth to 5 years old. Submit your questions to "Dear Dorie" at meek@smmusd.org, or call (310) 452-6132; fax (310) 452-6392).

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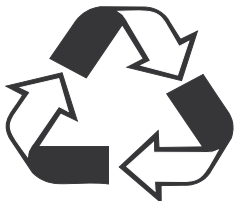
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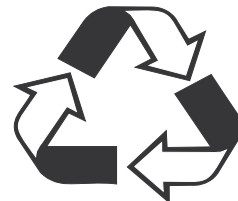


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Also Dec. 20 & 22 at 2:00 p.m.

DOWNTOWN ON ICE – NOV. 17 – JAN. 16

Don't miss your chance to glide at this outdoor skating rink located at Pershing Square. \$6 per session, \$2 skate rental, 532 Olive St., 213-847-4970, www.laparks.org.
Mon. – Thurs., noon to 9:00 p.m.; Fri. – Sun., 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

HOLIDAY LIGHT FESTIVAL – NOV. 23 – DEC. 30

5:00 – 10:00 p.m. This annual tradition features 500,000 lights in festive displays showcasing LA locales. Shuttle service available on select weekends from LA Zoo. Crystal Springs Dr., Griffith Park, 888-LA-PARKS, FREE!

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms! 11:00 a.m., Loews Cineplex Broadway Theatre, 1441 3rd St. Promenade – for Moms and babies newborn – 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. Visit www.enjoytheshow.com/reelmoms for details.

Storytelling

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30. Music, rhymes and stories for 2 to 3 year olds. Current session Nov. 8 – Dec. 13. Registration required.

Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis

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

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

Classes

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

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

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

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

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

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

Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711. Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)
Itsy Bitsy Yoga – Baby IBY (6 weeks to pre-crawling) – 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. With Khefri Riley at Ocean Oasis, 1333 Ocean Ave. Register at www.khefri.net or call 323-549-5383.

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

Breastfeeding Group

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

WEDNESDAY

MOMS Club of SM South Playgroups – 4:30 p.m., separate groups for children born in 2000 and 2001. Call or email Alison at 393-4481/riversalison@hotmail.com for more info. All moms welcome!

Storytelling

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Classes

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

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

YWCA – A Place for Parents –Toddler & Me Class - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. – walkers to 3 years; (Mon – Fri); 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.
Enchanted Lunchtime Theatre at Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th St., 394-9779 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. For ages 3 – 5 with parents. This theatrical adventure includes story time, theatre games, crafts, play building and lunch. Reservations required 24 hours in advance, \$19.50 includes lunch for child and lunch.

Yoga & Exercise

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

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15
Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Step Aerobics, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721,

ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay \$90 for 10 classes.

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

Breastfeeding Group

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

Other

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

THURSDAY

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

Storytelling

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Toddler Story Time – 10:15 a.m., for 2 year olds, current session thru Dec. 15.

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

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

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

Classes

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

BREAKTHROUGH PARENTING CLASSES – 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

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

Yoga & Exercise

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

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

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

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

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

Breastfeeding Group

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

FRIDAY

MOMS Club of SM South Playgroups

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

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

Kids get a night of supervised fun with pizza, games and more while parents go out. Ages 3-10, \$9 per hour, \$7 siblings, 3 hour minimum.

Reservations required, 470-4997. www.child-playonline.net

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

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

Other

All About Santa at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m. thru Dec. 18th , \$12.50 adults, \$10.50 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaaplayhouse.com

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

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

Precious Prints – Ceramic Heirlooms for a Lifetime

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

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

"A Faery Hunt" – 10:30 a.m., every Saturday at Franklin Canyon Park. An interactive children's show, searching for fairies and other enchanted creatures in the magical canyon and finding them! \$10, call for reservations – 818-324-6802. www.faeryhunt.com. Meet in the parking lot of the Sooky Goldman Nature Center, 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills.

Other

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

SATURDAY

Storytelling

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

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion –

10:30am – ages 2-5, 310-475-4144.

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

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

826LA, 685 Venice Blvd, 2nd Floor, Venice – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., ages 3-6, RSVP to info

@825LA.com or 310-314-8418. (826LA is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting students with their creative and expository writing skills, and to helping teachers inspire their students to write).

Classes

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

Yoga & Exercise

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

1640 Ocean Park Blvd, 396-4040, www.santamonicaayoga.com

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

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

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

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

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

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Other

All About Santa at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m. thru Dec. 18th , \$12.50 adults, \$10.50 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaaplayhouse.com

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

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Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m. thru

Dec. 18th , \$12.50 adults, \$10.50 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaaplayhouse.com

Also Dec. 20 & 22 at 2:00 p.m.

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

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

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

Breastfeeding

Working Mother's Support Group

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

MONDAY

MOMS Club of SM South Playgroups

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

Storytelling

Main Library – Lap Time at Joslyn Park – 9:30 a.m. Current session thru Dec. 12.

"Family Connections" – 10:00 a.m., immediately following Lap Time - a series of discussions related to early childhood development and growth. Children welcome, free.

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

"Spanish for Little Ones" - 11:15 a.m., for ages 2 – 5.

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

Classes



Cash doesn't exactly flow while shoppers crowd stores for bargains

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — The nation's retailers had a modest start to the holiday shopping season as consumers jammed stores for bargains in the early morning hours Friday but seemed to lose interest as the weekend wore on.

"There was a lot of hype, a lot of promotions and lot of people, but the results were on the lukewarm side," said Michael P. Niemira, chief economist at the International Council of Shopping Centers.

According to ShopperTrak RCT Corp., which monitors sales at more than 45,000 retail outlets, sales for the combined Friday and Saturday period slipped 0.5 percent to \$13.4 billion, from the year-ago period.

Analysts said there was heavy shopper traffic for the day after Thanksgiving, but consumers apparently lost their enthusiasm once those early bird specials were over.

"If you give Americans a bargain, they will get up whatever time to take advantage of it. But I don't think this weekend turned out to be as big as retailers hoped," said C. Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group, based in Charleston, S.C.

Discounters and electronics stores appeared to be the big winners. Analysts said business at apparel stores seemed more mixed.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. attracted shoppers in the pre-dawn

hours Friday with discounted TVs and digital cameras. Its efforts appeared to have paid off; it reported better-than-expected sales Friday and estimated that November sales at stores open at least a year would be up 4.3 percent.

J.C. Penney Co. Inc. said traffic and sales over the weekend were better than expected, but didn't give details. Toys R Us Inc. spokeswoman Kathleen Waugh said the company was pleased with results for the weekend, and cited such best-selling bargains as Mattel Inc.'s Barbie Fashion Mall and MGA's Bratz doll styling head.

While the Thanksgiving weekend marked the official start of the holiday shopping season for stores on land, Monday kicks off the season for online retailers. So far, early signs bode well for the rest of the season.

Non-travel online retail sales rose 22 percent to \$1.89 billion for the week ending Friday, compared to year-ago period, according to comScore Networks, an Internet research firm.

Nielsen/NetRatings said traffic to online shopping sites grew 29 percent year-over-year on Friday.

Yahoo! Shopping reported that the number of visits to its site rose 52 percent on Friday, better than the 30 percent jump expected.

Forecasts for holiday shopping have improved in recent weeks amid declining gasoline prices. But gas is still more expensive than this time last year, and shoppers face higher heating bills this winter. Given such challenges, stores tried to lure shoppers with more enticing bargains, expanded hours on Friday and other gimmicks.

According to a Goldman Sachs & Co. report, released Monday, 31 mall-based apparel retailers discounted more heavily on Friday than a year ago. In 2004, only 23 merchants did more price cutting than the previous year.

A clearer picture will emerge Thursday, when retailers report sales results for all of November.

Many shoppers were budgeting in the early going.

At a Target store in Warwick, R.I., Dwight Garrett was pleased with a DVD player, marked down to \$29.97 from \$44.99.

"You can't beat the price," said Garrett, who had traveled with his wife from Plainfield, Conn., to shop at Target, Penney and other stores along a road of big-box outlets in Warwick.

"There's nothing special about the deals. They're the same as any other weekend sale," said Nikhilesh Agarwal of York, Pa., who was shopping at Towson Town Center in Towson, Md.

STATE BRIEFS

Sea assault: Salton may get smellier

By The Associated Press

LA QUINTA — Plans for a smaller Salton Sea, which coughs up smelly hydrogen sulfide burps that kill fish and overwhelm desert resort areas, could make the troubled lake even stinkier.

The Salton Sea produces 23 times more hydrogen sulfide gas than all the industry in California, and a plan to split the lake could increase problems unless a mechanism is created to relieve the lake's gas buildup.

"Everybody is thinking that, but nobody wants to say it out loud," said Chris Amrhein, a University of California, Riverside, professor who's studying how much gas escapes from the sea.

New computer models indicate a reconfigured, shrunken lake would slosh less during high winds and allow gaseous buildups that would last three times longer than current buildups. The gas produces a rotten egg smell.

The La Quinta-based Salton Sea Authority, which features the split sea as the centerpiece of a billion-dollar economic and environmental revival proposed for the lake, has already changed its plans to reduce buildups of the deadly gas.

Authority executive director Ron Enzweiler said treating water flowing into the sea and using pipes to drain the gassiest water from the bottom of the lake will eliminate the threat.

"These are like little design changes we are continually working on," Enzweiler said of undersea pipes in the latest plans. "You don't have a problem then."

Smelly "burps" of hydrogen sulfide gas from the 345-square-mile Salton Sea have long plagued the Coachella Valley. When high-winds churn the shallow sea, it kicks up hydrogen sulfide gas that's trapped in the water.

The gas, formed when algae decays on the sea floor, has a rotten egg smell that can reach as far as Riverside, Amrhein said. As recently as 1999, the state's entire hydrogen sulfide industry produced less than 3,000 tons of the gas annually, Amrhein said.

The sea in its current state is thought to be capable of producing 70,000 tons, although the vast majority never escapes to the atmosphere, he said.

The Salton Sea Authority plan would put a dam across the middle of the sea to create a smaller, cleaner, recreational lake in the north. An even smaller lake and wetlands in the south would support habitat, and a brine pool would store incoming salts.

But computer models indicate the reduced surface area of the smaller lake in the north could make it harder for the wind to make the lake slosh, trapping gas in the sea for up to a year or longer.

"If all that hydrogen sulfide is released at one time, we could potentially have a catastrophic killing of everything in the water column," said Doug Barnum, a U.S. Geological Survey scientist who studies the lake from the Salton Sea Science office in La Quinta.

Feel the burn: City fears aftermath

By The Associated Press

VENTURA — Rains could unleash a river of mud and debris in areas where a nearly 4,000 acre wildfire denuded hillsides above the city.

A team of city, watershed and erosion officials plan to survey the burn site and establish an action plan before arrival of winter and spring rains.

Fire Department and Natural Resources Conservation Service officials, among others, discussed property protection with homeowners during a meeting Thursday at City Hall.

"The fire burned so clean and so hot, it looks like the moon up there. It's not going to take much rain to cause a big problem," said Richard Atmore, a rancher who has been managing cattle for decades in the burn area.

It took days to extinguish the School Canyon fire, which began Nov. 18.

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Washington, B.C. object to passport requirement

By The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Washington state and British Columbia are objecting to a U.S. proposal to require passport checks at border crossings.

Tourism officials fear visits between the two countries will drop, knocking a big hole in the regional economy, if the U.S. Department of Homeland Security begins enforcement on Jan. 1, 2007.

Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire and British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell are drafting a joint letter to the agency expressing their concerns.

"We have to have security, there is no question about that," Gregoire told the Everett Herald. "On the other hand, can we have security to the point where we can really harm the economies?"

Jarrold Agen, a Homeland Security spokesman, said the intent is not to crimp trade in the name of protecting citizens.

"Even the president himself has said he doesn't want it to stifle flow at the border and affect the economy and trade," he said.

There are indications, however, that the passport

requirement would do just that.

A July report by the Canadian Tourism Commission predicts 7.7 million fewer Americans would visit Canada in the following three years as a result of the change. Of those, 1.3 million would be travelers to British Columbia. The agency also estimated a drop of 3.5 million trips from Canada to the United States.

The report even noted a decline this year as travelers without passports dropped their travel plans, thinking the law already had taken effect.

Only a quarter of Americans are estimated to have passports. Currently, photo identification and a birth certificate will get a traveler across the border.

Darrell Bryan, executive vice president and general manager of the Victoria Clipper tourism boats, said ridership into Canadian ports is down compared with last year, even as numbers have increased on routes wholly within Washington.

He said 17 percent of the summer passengers who were surveyed said they wouldn't make the trip if they were required to get a passport.

"Seventeen percent would put us out of business," Bryan said. "We want to find ways to enhance security at

the border, but we don't believe security should trump trade. There has to be a balance."

The passport requirement was recommended by the Sept. 11 commission. It requires citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Caribbean, and Central and South America to have passports when entering this country.

Enforcement would begin in 2007 for those traveling by air or sea, and one year later at land border crossings.

The proposal arrived with little debate or a showing that it would boost safety, said Ken Oplinger, head of the Bellingham-Whatcom Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"I don't know that requiring soccer moms to have passports will make us safer," he said, noting that all of the 19 terrorists involved in the Sept. 11 attacks had passports. "It may only give us the illusion we're safer."

Water flows again to Chinese city; residents told it's not safe to drink

BY JOE MCDONALD

Associated Press Writer

HARBIN, China — Five days after an embarrassing chemical spill, China's government celebrated the return of running water to this city of 3.8 million as a victory for the communist system while warning the water was still not safe to drink.

The spill was a political disaster for President Hu Jintao's government and cast a harsh light on the environmental costs of China's breakneck development.

Hu's government issued apologies to China's public and to Russia, where a border city downstream is bracing for the arrival of the 50-mile-long benzene slick.

State media have accused officials of lying about and trying to conceal the spill — the result of a Nov. 13 chemical plant blast in Jilin, a city upstream from Harbin, that killed five people and forced 10,000 more to flee their homes.

On Monday, media coverage was effusively upbeat, with newspaper photos showing smiling children in Harbin running their taps and water surging through treatment plants.

"We won!" said a headline in the newspaper Life News below a photo of the provincial governor drinking a glass of boiled tap water on Sunday.

Officials warned that the water wasn't immediately

safe to drink, or bathe in, after lying in underground pipes for five days. They said they would let the public know when the water was potable again but gave no indication with that would be.

"It's back, but I don't know what I can use it for yet," said Guan Hongya, a manager for a textile company. "We can use it to flush the toilet, but otherwise it might be no good."

Premier Wen Jiabao has promised to investigate the disaster and punish those responsible. But state media also have been portraying efforts to keep this major industrial city supplied with drinking water as a triumph for the communist system.

On Monday, some residents were still lining up in sunny but subfreezing weather to get drinking water from fire trucks and tankers sent by state companies.

State television in Heilongjiang province broadcast a variety show featuring young women in jade-green costumes dancing with empty 10-gallon water bottles on their shoulders. A comedian played with a giant squirt gun. Harbin is the capital of the province in China's frigid northeast.

The audience included provincial Gov. Zhang Zuoji, local officials and paramilitary police who had helped to distribute water. Banners behind the stage showed the names of nearby cities that sent fleets of water trucks to Harbin.

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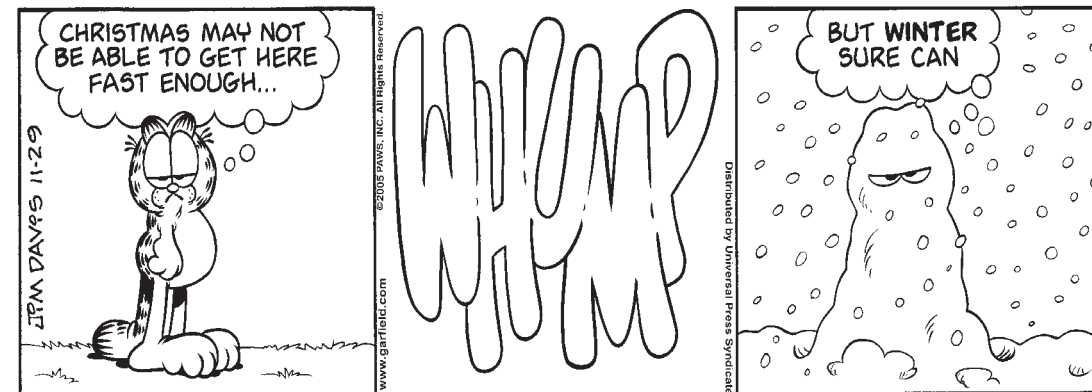
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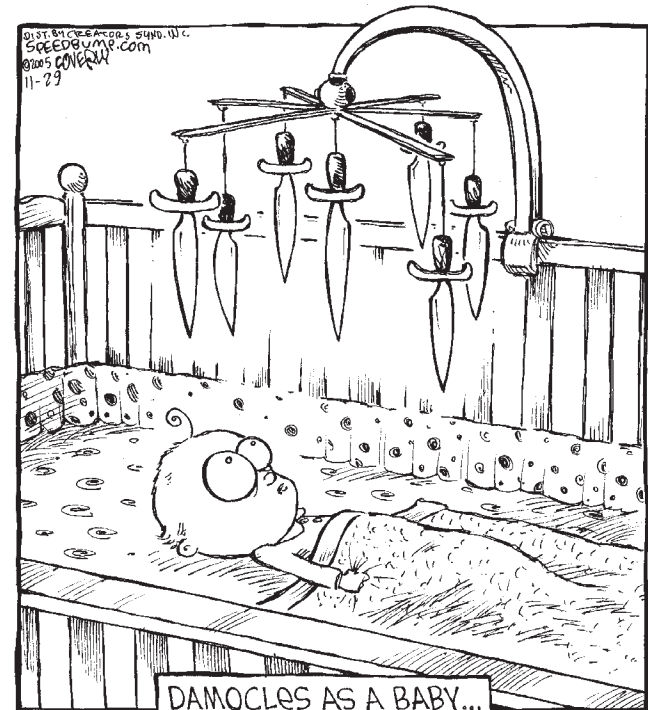
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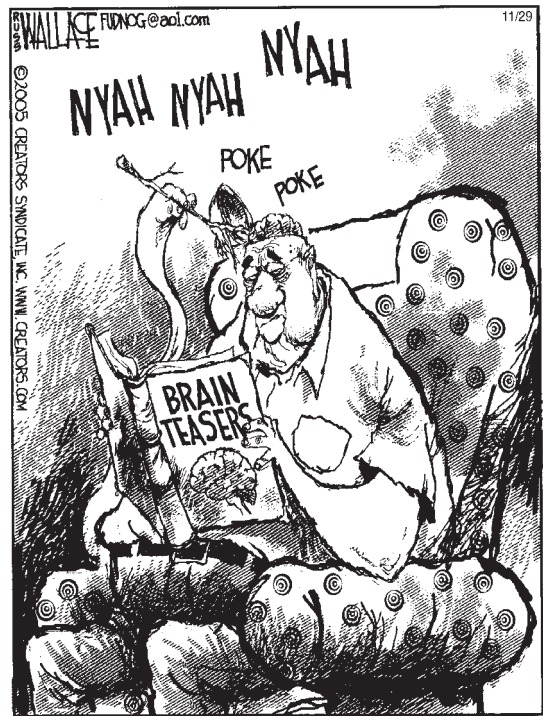


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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 05 2830959 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Flying Tiger Promotions, Al #/ON 2420820, 3021 Airport Ave, 103A, Santa Monica, CA 90405. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : Spitfire Ventures, Inc., Nevada, 3021 Airport Ave, 103A, Santa Monica, CA 90405 This Business is being conducted by, a corporation. Signed: Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious name or names listed herein.. /s/: Spitfire Ventures, Inc., President, Russ Colby

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/21/05. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 11/22/2005, 11/29/2005, 12/6/2005, 12/13/2005

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 05 2830960 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as foxc productions, clintonfox.com, 1015 3rd Street, #2. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : Clinton Fox, 1015 3rd Street, #2 This Business is being conducted by, an individual. Signed: The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed on (Date)5/1/2005. /s/: Clinton Fox This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/21/2005. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 11/22/2005, 11/29/2005, 12/6/2005, 12/13/2005

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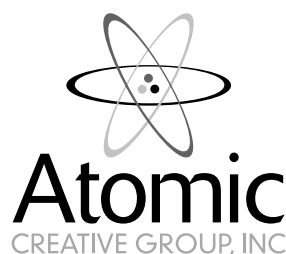
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Young Turk: Rocker Stewart has a baby at 60

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — At age 60, Rod Stewart is a father again.

His fiancée, Penny Lancaster, gave birth to a baby boy early Sunday morning at a London hospital, the couple announced Monday. The baby, who is their first child, weighed 7 pounds, 7 ounces.

“Both Penny and our baby son are gorgeous, healthy and doing well,” Stewart said in a statement. “I am so very proud of my girl Pen for the commitment, courage and strength she showed throughout.”

Lancaster, a 34-year-old model/photographer, said the birth “was the most empowering and spiritual experience of my life.”

“It means so much to Rod and I that we were able to keep to our birthing plan and have our baby naturally,” she said.

The family is back at their home in Epping, England. “We are celebrating every moment with our beautiful boy, we just can’t take our eyes off him,” Stewart said.

Stewart and Lancaster have been together for nearly six years. He proposed to her in March at the top of the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Lancaster’s agent, Nicholas Young, has said the couple would make wedding plans once Stewart’s divorce from model Rachel Hunter is finalized.

Stewart’s children include Kimberly, 26, and Sean, 25, by first wife Alana Stewart; Ruby, 18, with former girlfriend Kelly Emberg; and Renee, 13, and Liam, 11, from his marriage to Hunter.

Kimberly Stewart last week called off an engagement of her own. Just weeks after announcing wedding plans with “Laguna Beach” star Talan Torriero, the couple called it off Saturday.

NEW DELHI — Amitabh Bachchan, one of India’s

biggest movie stars, was hospitalized Monday after he complained of stomach pain.

Bachchan, 63, was admitted to Escorts Hospital for a series of medical tests, hospital director Dr. Naresh Trehan told Star News television channel.

Trehan said Bachchan’s condition wasn’t serious. Bachchan’s son Abhishek, a rising Bollywood star, and daughter Shweta Nanda were with the actor at the hospital.

Bachchan has appeared in more than 150 Hindi-language films in a career that has spanned three decades. He is reported to be the highest paid actor in Bollywood, as India’s prolific film industry is called.

He starred in three major hits this year — “Black,” “Bunty Aur (and) Babli” and “Sarkar (Boss).”

BOMBAY, India — Bollywood actor Shahid Kapur says he feels incomplete when Kareena Kapoor isn’t around — and that the feeling is mutual.

Kapur, who is normally guarded about his private life, said his two-year relationship with Kapoor keeps getting stronger, the 24-year-old was quoted as saying in Monday’s editions of The Times of India.

“She is my biggest ego booster. Since the last two years our bonding has grown deeper,” he said. “I am incomplete without her in my life, and vice versa.”

Kapoor, 22, is one of Bollywood’s leading actresses, starring in more than a dozen films in the past five years. Kapur has appeared in five movies since his 2003 debut.

Indian newspapers and television stations often carry pictures of the smiling couple at premieres and publicity campaigns, but “we’ve learnt to fiercely guard and carefully handle our relationship from the world,” Kapur said.

Although their 2004 thriller, “Fida (Smitten),” bombed at the box office, Kapur said they’ll be working together in three new movies.

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Bluegrass great Earl Scruggs fell as he walked offstage during a concert and needed 12 stitches above his eye.

Scruggs, 81, was performing at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center when he fell Saturday night, said Norman Adams, promoter of the South Carolina State Bluegrass Festival.

The bright stagelights apparently got in Scruggs’ eyes and he couldn’t see that he was about to fall, witnesses said.

“Everybody in the crowd was yelling for him to stop,” said Susanna Buck, who had a front-row seat. “There was just no way anybody could get there in time.”

Scruggs headed back to Nashville, Tenn., on a bus after his trip to an emergency room.

In 1969, Scruggs and guitarist Lester Flatt won a Grammy Award for Scruggs’ instrumental “Foggy Mountain Breakdown.” Scruggs won another Grammy for a 2001 recording of the same tune.

HONG KONG — Statues of Bruce Lee were unveiled in Bosnia and his hometown of Hong Kong to mark the 65th birthday of the late screen icon credited with introducing kung fu to the world.

A bronze likeness of a muscular Lee, torso bared, was set in a harbor-side perch against Hong Kong’s skyline Sunday as Lee’s trademark howl played on a stereo system.

Another Lee statue was inaugurated Saturday in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a war-ravaged city where Lee has been held up as a symbol of unity.

Lee soared to stardom in the early 1970s with his intense fighting style and by portraying characters that defended the Chinese and working class against oppressors.

He died of an edema, or swelling of the brain, at age 32 in 1973 in Hong Kong.



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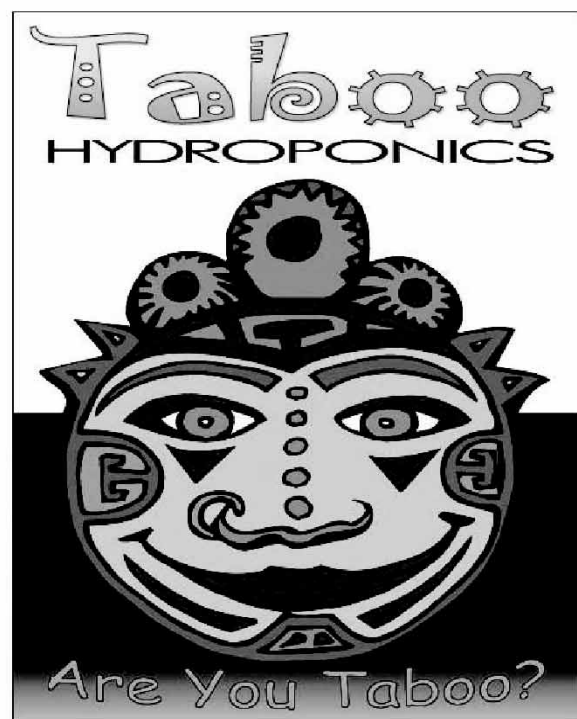
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