

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

7 16 19 32 36
Meganumber: 24
Jackpot: \$21 Million

FANTASY 5

3 9 13 18 33

DAILY 3

Daytime: 5 0 4
Evening: 0 6 0

DAILY DERBY

1st: 10 Solid Gold
2nd: 07 Eureka!
3rd: 05 California Classic

RACE TIME: 1:42.39

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site: <http://www.calottery.com>



NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

The Official Shoe of Illegal Immigrants: Artist Judi Werthein's high-top sneaker "Brinco" went on sale recently (\$215 a pair) at boutiques in San Diego and New York City, with tiny accessories (compass and flashlight on the shoelaces, secret pocket in the shoe's tongue), but she also gives away many pairs in Tijuana because she actually designed the shoe for Mexican migrants to wear when they sneak across the border into the United States. (The back of the shoe has a drawing of the country's patron saint of migrants, and a removable foot support has a crude map of the U.S.-Mexico border, according to a November Associated Press report).

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 336th day of 2005.
There are 29 days left in the year.

On Dec. 2, 1954, the Senate voted to condemn Wisconsin Republican Joseph R. McCarthy for "conduct that tends to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute."
In 1804, Napoleon was crowned emperor of France.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Misery loves company, but company does not reciprocate."

ADDISON MIZNER
AMERICAN ARCHITECT (1872-1933)

INDEX

Horoscopes

Get early start, Libra 2

Snow & Surf Report

Water temperature: 61° 3

Opinion

Jury out on city manager 4

Local

Crime doesn't pay 5

National

Reform is in the air 9

Entertainment

Aisle seat's all yours 10

Comics

Strips tease 16

Classifieds

Ad space odyssey 17-19

National

A 'Blue' Christmas 20

SMC faculty rejects offer

Professors still working under expired pact's terms

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

SMC — The faculty at Santa Monica College this week overwhelmingly rejected administrators' latest salary proposal, tossing out more than a year and half of contract negotiations.

The faculty voted 393-25 on Tuesday to reject the proposal.

Meanwhile, SMC administrators contend their offer would have equaled the raises given to all other district employees over the past few years.

SMC has been slowly recovering from years of severe budget shortfalls.

The contract negotiations began before August of 2004, when the faculty's last agreement expired. College faculty have been living under the terms of that old agreement, signed in 2002, ever since.

The salary proposal would have included no raise for faculty for the 2004-05 academic year. SMC faculty would have received a 3.5 percent raise for the 2005-06 academic year, starting Feb. 13.

Faculty negotiators, however, contend that raise would not have equaled the raises other college employees have recently received. Over the summer, SMC's board of trustees granted college administrators and classified employees a 2-percent raise retroactive from Jan. 1, 2005, which faculty weren't offered.

Administrators and classified employees also received the 3.5-percent raise that faculty were offered.

See TALKS BALK, page 6

Passengers take a stand



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

While it's standing-room only on this crosstown trek, one seat was reserved on all Big Blue Buses Thursday for Rosa Parks on the 50th anniversary of her refusal to abide by Montgomery, Ala., segregation laws, helping to spark the Montgomery bus boycott and subsequent Civil Rights Movement. A black ribbon was draped across the first seat of each bus.



Michael Vaughan/Special to the Daily Press

Los Angeles Police cars line through Pico Neighborhood early Thursday morning as a woman was arrested on murder charges related to an unborn child.

Police nab woman who allegedly stabbed fetus

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

PICO NEIGHBORHOOD — A Santa Monica woman was arrested Thursday for allegedly stabbing to death another woman's unborn child.

Victoria Nadine Caldwell-Later, 35, was arrested for murder

by the Los Angeles Police Department in the 1800 block of 18th Street early Thursday, according to P.J. Morris, homicide coordinator for LAPD's northeast division.

Caldwell-Later was arrested for

See MURDER, page 6

LOCAL

No contest: Physician gets prison for fraud

By Daily Press staff

LOS ANGELES — A Brentwood physician who pleaded no contest to fraud charges in three separate cases was sentenced on Thursday to eight years in prison and ordered to pay his victims \$5 million, the District Attorney's office announced.

Deputy District Attorney Albert MacKenzie said Parviz Kahn Berjis, 71, pleaded no contest on Nov. 1 to one count of automobile insurance fraud, one count of workers' compensation insurance fraud and one count of tax evasion. He also admitted the loss from the crimes was more than \$500,000, according to the DA's office.

Berjis was sentenced by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Larry P. Fidler.

See FRAUD, page 7

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Red Cross offers disaster survival training

By Daily Press staff

Community members interested in learning disaster relief techniques from the Red Cross are invited to participate in an upcoming series of classes.

As part of the American Red Cross of Santa Monica’s effort to assure that the community is ready for the next disaster, the chapter is offering a series of disaster response classes in conjunction with Santa Monica College for the first time.

In addition to the basic level disaster response training currently offered, the chapter also has scheduled several advanced classes for those residents who are ready to take on the responsibility of supervisory and leadership rolls. All classes are taught by certified American Red Cross instructors and required for persons who wish to volunteer at a disaster response scene, whether it be a local incident or in a disaster away from home. Prerequisite for all classes is the basic Red Cross disaster response course, “Introduction to Disaster Services.” Some other classes have additional prerequisites.

The courses and dates for classes currently being offered are as follows:

■ Public Affairs in Disaster — Public affairs functions in disaster relief operations, working with media and delivering the Red Cross message. Saturday, Dec. 3, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Emergency Assistance to Families — Learn the skills and tools necessary to conduct an effective client interview and providing emergency assistance to those clients. Saturday, Dec. 3, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Supervision in Disaster — Learn effective communications and problem solving skills necessary to assess and manage the performance of the work unit. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 10 and 11, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (two days, 16-hour class)

■ Damage Assessment — Learn the four methods of collecting accurate damage assessment information for disaster relief operations. Saturday, Dec. 10, 8 a.m. to noon.

■ Shelter Simulation — Apply the skills required to run a successful shelter. Saturday, Dec. 10, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

■ ERV: Ready, Set, Roll — Learn what is required of an emergency response vehicle crew to properly support the feeding function in a relief operation. Must be a currently licensed and insured driver with an excellent driving record. You must bring your DMV record to class. Sunday, Dec. 11, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Disaster Instructor Training — Teaching uniform and quality disaster training consistent with Red Cross policies, regulations and procedures of disaster services. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 17 and 18, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (two days, 16-hour class)

■ Shelter Operations — Learn what is required in running a successful a shelter. This class should be taken along with Shelter Simulation. Saturday, Dec. 17, 8 a.m. to Noon

■ Shelter Simulation — Apply the skills required to run a successful shelter. Saturday, Dec. 17, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

This is the first time in many years that most of these courses have been available through the Santa Monica Red Cross. Advance registration is a must. Class sizes are limited to 20 persons. To register for a course, call the Santa Monica Red Cross during business hours, Monday through Friday at (310) 394-3773.

For specific questions about a class, call (310) 394-3773, ext. 103. All classes will be held on the Santa Monica College campus, 1900 Pico Blvd. and are free.

Museum offers free open house to new exhibit

By Daily Press staff

The public is invited to view a new exhibit hosted by the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum. The museum will offer a free Christmas Open House of “Marion Davies Estate” on Dec. 11 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. This new exhibit will explore the architecture and interior design of the Marion Davies Estate through historic photographs from the Bison Archives. The exhibit reception will be on Jan. 8 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. with a special lecture by Marc Wanamaker, a celebrity historian of Bison Archives Production. For more information, call (310) 395-2290.

SNOW AND SURF REPORTS

CONDITIONS

DATA PROVIDED BY ONTHESNOW.COM

MAMMOTH

NEW SNOW	BASE DEPTH	CONDITIONS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
24 HRS - 6"	12" - 18"	Powder Packed Powder Machine Groomed Icy Spots Bare Spots Obstacles	10	7

MOUNTAIN HIGH

NEW SNOW	BASE DEPTH	CONDITIONS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
24 HRS - 0"	6" - 10"	Machine Made Wet	3	2

SNOW SUMMIT

NEW SNOW	BASE DEPTH	CONDITIONS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
24 HRS - 0"	12" - 12"	Machine Groomed Wet Packed	2	2

BEAR MOUNTAIN

CLOSED

JUNE MOUNTAIN

CLOSED

MT. BALDY

CLOSED

SNOW VALLEY

CLOSED

CONDITIONS

WATER TEMP: 61°

DATA PROVIDED BY WETSAND.COM

SWELL FORECAST (2-5FT)

Friday the 2nd we'll be seeing some wind swell, and unfortunately, winds and rain. As the storm hitting NCal right now traverses southward, it will bring with it rain, winds and wind swell. Size from the wind swell should be around chest high by the looks of things right now, but with short, sloppy sets having only 8-10 second periods.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

Wind swell due Friday, but rain in forecast... Tracking WNW for 8th...

TIDE FORECAST FOR SANTA MONICA

MONDAY				
LOW TIDE:	12:05AM	1.6FT	1:29PM	0.3FT
HIGH TIDE:	6:33AM	5.7FT	7:35PM	3.8FT

TUESDAY				
LOW TIDE:	12:34AM	1.8FT	2:05	-0.3
HIGH TIDE:	6:59AM	6.1FT	8:21	3.8

WEDNESDAY				
LOW TIDE:	1:02AM	1.4FT	2:31	0.0
HIGH TIDE:	7:28AM	5.4FT	9:15	3.2

THURSDAY				
LOW TIDE:	1:37AM	1.2FT	3:04	-0.1
HIGH TIDE:	8:07AM	4.9FT	9:40	3.0

FRIDAY				
LOW TIDE:	2:06AM	1.1FT	3:41	-0.3
HIGH TIDE:	8:41AM	4.3FT	10:09	2.9

SURF AND SNOW QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? EMAIL ALEX@SMOP.COM



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The QLine

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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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EDITORIAL

Jury is still out after city manager decision



Santa Monica's elected officials made a bold move last week when they chose Lamont Ewell to run this city. It's not such a surprising move, however, considering that Santa Monica officials rarely shy away from controversy in their efforts to do what they think is right.

Ewell, who will take over as City Manager in mid-January, has been embroiled in controversy since he took the helm of the San Diego government last year. The 52-year-old former firefighter was named City Manager of San Diego in March of 2004 after Michael Uberuaga was forced to resign amid complaints about his role in that city's pension debacle. Ewell had served as assistant city manager in San Diego before his promotion.

Ewell — who has not been accused of any wrongdoing — will be leaving San Diego as it strives to recover from a \$1.4 billion pension deficit, investigations by the U.S. Attorney's Office and Securities and Exchange Commission, criminal charges against six pension board members, as well as an inability to sell bonds until a long-awaited audit is completed.

City officials here say Ewell was hired specifically to take San Diego out of its financial mess and was the best candidate for Santa Monica for a whole host of reasons. During his tenure in San Diego, Ewell made some enemies, including that city's attorney and mayor. Perhaps that's because his job was that difficult. We don't know because we're not familiar with the circumstances of what he faced politically in San Diego.

What we do know is that his hiring has raised eyebrows in Santa Monica. We are surprised that Santa Monica officials would bring in anyone with that kind of baggage. Ewell must be one hell of a city manager. He'd better be, because perception is reality, and the only thing the public really knows about Ewell is his controversial tenure in San Diego.

It would have been nice if the Santa Monica City Council would have opened up the hiring process to the community, at least with public forums. While the city charter dictates that the process be conducted behind closed doors, the City Council certainly could have hosted public forums so citizens could meet and hear from the top candidates. Citizens could then better understand their management styles, philosophical thoughts on city government and their values on what makes a well-functioning city.

That's what Santa Monica College recently did with its top three picks for a new president. While we acknowledge that the City Manager must answer to many more constituency groups than the local community college president, a more open process could have gleaned more insight into why the City Council chose Ewell.

Now, citizens have been put in a situation by the City Council in which the community must trust that it has made a wise choice. Only time will tell. This isn't to say we don't have confidence in the City Council or Ewell, but since Santa Monica operates on a city manager-form of government, Ewell will be the most powerful person in politics here. It would have benefited all to hear from him and his competitors before a decision was made.

Nevertheless, it is comforting to know that outgoing City Manager Susan McCarthy played an integral role in the hiring process. We trust her instincts and know she cares about the future of Santa Monica. We are sorry to see her go and hope Ewell can fill her enormous shoes.

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

Of primary concern: Dems shuffle the deck



HERE'S THE THING

BY LARA M. BROWN, Ph.D

While the 2008 presidential election may seem like a distant event far off in the future, the jockeying for the nominations has already begun. The primary season officially kicks off the day after the 2006 midterm election and serious contenders know that they must begin raising money, engaging the media and courting voters in the hopes of winning their party's nomination starting then.

These facts are driving the Democrats towards trying to resolve the tension that has cropped up in the party over the primary calendar. Michigan Senator Carl Levin has urged the party to reevaluate the order of the different states' primaries and caucuses because Iowa and New Hampshire have little racial or ethnic diversity. A party commission has been looking into it and their final meeting is set for Dec. 10.

While there is nothing ostensibly wrong with wanting to increase the diversity of the states that "go first," it seems as though Sen. Levin wasn't following things in 2004. On Feb. 3, 2004, the first weekend after New Hampshire, there were seven states that voted that day and at least three of them — Arizona, New Mexico and South Carolina — had very diverse electorates.

John Kerry won the nomination not because New Hampshire voters looked terribly different from Arizona voters, but because Kerry won both Iowa and New Hampshire. Kerry had what the media call "momentum" and he would have had it whether the first two states had been Colorado and California, or Alabama and Arkansas.

For the media, if you win two out of two, you're on a roll. And that is what the voters in the other states responded to — media hype about being on a roll. In three of the Feb. 3 states — North Dakota, Missouri and Delaware — Kerry won a majority of the votes cast and he had rarely, if ever, even visited those places.

The only states on Feb. 3 that did not go for Kerry were South Carolina and Oklahoma. They went for John Edwards and Wesley Clark, respectively. And that had to do with the campaigns — Edwards and Clark's campaigns, which had been positioned in South Carolina and Oklahoma for months before the election. Media hype wasn't going to change those voters' minds.

Michigan, which voted on Feb. 7, was largely ignored by the media because by

that point Kerry had won "seven of the nine" elections that had run previously. In short, it was the frontloading of elections that doomed Michigan's importance, not the state's diversity.

No offense to Sen. Levin — he does a lot of great things on foreign policy — but it's time to state the obvious. With the exception of Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, all of the candidates running were white males over fifty years of age, and with the exception of Senator Joe Lieberman, all of them were Protestant.

Does he really think that a diverse electorate will make a difference in the choice of the party's nominee? That logic flies in the face of successful candidates like Sens. Barack Obama and Ken Salazar who often did better than their white opponents in the rural areas of their states with those white electorates. It also negates the achievements of successful incumbents like Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius who has shown that she doesn't need to the voters to be liberal in order to support a woman.

Here's The Thing:

The Democratic Party has tied itself in knots making all sorts of arguments that quite frankly do not have a sound basis in political science research (see article: "Leeches, Lemmings, and Pet Rocks: The 2004 Democratic Nomination Campaign" available at: <http://www.larambrown-phd.com/polisci.cfm>), even though the commission studying the primary calendar heard from several scholars about ways to optimize the nomination process.

The New Hampshire Democratic Party has put forth a compromise plan that offers to put two states with diverse populations (of the committee's choosing) just after its primary on the calendar. It also suggests that the Democrats slow down their entire nomination process by limiting the number of delegates that are up for grabs on each successive election date. Given the issues that arose in 2004, this plan is entirely logical and it offers the Democrats an opportunity to stop what has been their biggest problem — frontloading and overheated momentum — in its tracks.

For those of you who think frontloading is good, let me just remind you that former two-term President Bill Clinton never would have been the party's nominee had the system been in 1992 what it was in 2004. Clinton did not win his first primary until Georgia on March 3, three weeks and three contests after Iowa.

(Lara M. Brown, Ph.D., is a political scientist from Los Angeles, and teaches at California State University, Channel Islands. She can be reached at larambrown@aol.com)

Walking to the nearest newsstand increases circulation.

Santa Monica Daily Press



CRIME WATCH

By Daily Press staff

Stalker snagged being a Thanksgiving turkey

At 6:33 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 24, the Santa Monica police responded to the 1400 block of Fourth Street regarding a burglary in progress. When officers arrived at the scene, they contacted the victim who said when she opened the door of her apartment she saw the door had been unlocked and heard someone inside. As she backed away from the door, the suspect exited the apartment and fled. The suspect was detained by police and subsequently arrested. On his possession was the victim's social security card. The suspect was a resident of the apartment building and allegedly had been stalking the victim. Sebastian Thomas Reinartz, 36, of Santa Monica, was booked for burglary and stalking. Bail was set at \$150,000.

At 9:34 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 18, the Santa Monica police responded to the 1200 block of the Third Street Promenade — the Apple Store — regarding a theft suspect in custody. When officers arrived at the scene, they spoke to the security guard, who said the suspect entered the store, lifted the item, and left failing to pay for the merchandise, valued at \$250. Yo Ling Tyson, 45 of Los Angeles, was arrested and transported to Santa Monica jail. Bail was set at \$1,000.

At 10:03 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 19, the Santa Monica police responded to the 1600 block of Cloverfield Boulevard — the Ralph's store — regarding an assault. When officers arrived at the scene, they spoke to the employee, who said the suspect came out of the restroom and when asked by an employee what he was doing, the suspect grabbed a bottle of wine from the display rack and struck a bystander in the back of the head. The suspect fled and was later detained. The victim received a two-inch laceration and was treated at a local hospital. William Lasalle Bell, 51, transient, was booked for assault with a deadly weapon and an outstanding warrant. Bail was set at \$31,420.

At 12:58 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 19, the Santa Monica police were in the 1400 block of Second Street — the parking structure — when they saw the suspect remove a rear tire from a bicycle and place it on his bicycle. Benjamin Miguel Lewis, 23, transient, was detained and later arrested for commercial burglary and possession of burglary tools. Also charged with petty theft with a prior. No bail was set.

At 7:06 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 20, the Santa Monica police responded to the 100 block of Santa Monica Place mall, at Robinsons-May, regarding a theft suspect in custody. When officers arrived at the scene, they spoke to the loss prevention officer who said the suspects entered the store, removed jewelry items and switched the price tag on the merchandise. The suspects left the store after paying for some of the merchandise and were detained with the jewelry that had the altered price tags. The loss was more than \$600. Sonia Noemy Cerna, 41, of Beverly Hills, and Lesbia de Leon Meridia, 47, of Beverly Hills, were both booked for commercial burglary. Bail was set at \$20,000.

This police report was prepared by Daily Press staff writer Ryan Hyatt.



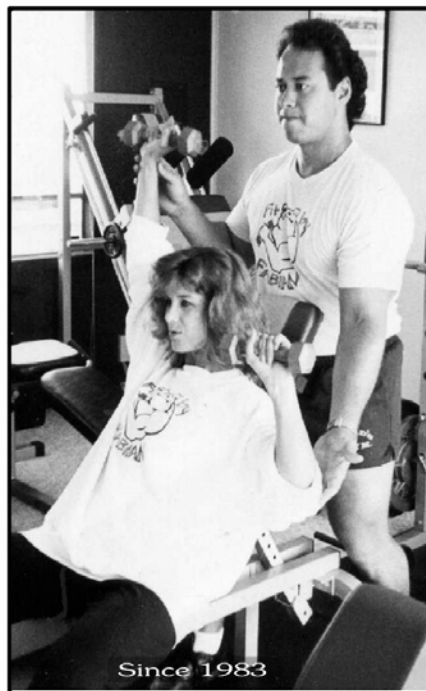
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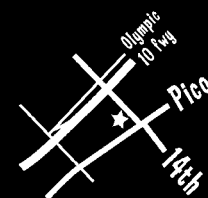
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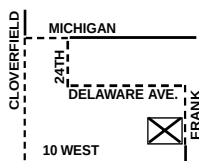


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Incoming president may play role in deal

TALKS BALK, from page 1

However, SMC interim president Tom Donner said that 2-percent raise which administrators and classified employees received for 2005 was intended to equalize a previous raise which had been given to faculty.

"It really comes down to whether you acknowledge that 2 percent or not," Donner said. "The faculty has received that 2-percent increase, but do they acknowledge it? Well, it's on their pay-checks."

Lantz Simpson, president of SMC faculty association, said that 2-percent raise, however, was awarded to faculty members as the result of a lawsuit they won from the 1990s.

Simpson said the litigation proved the 2-percent "so-called" raise was money SMC already owed faculty. Because of that, it wasn't fair SMC administrators treat that money as an additional concession, he said.

"That's money they already owed us," Simpson said. "But the college has taken a position it's a raise."

Simpson said the faculty negotiators

and administrators will have a chance to reconvene and come to a better agreement in three weeks.

By then, SMC will have likely named a new college president, who may play a large role in the negotiations.

"The new president will be going through a transition period during which he or she will choose how he or she wants to run the administrative staff," Donner said.

Donner said he will likely serve as the deputy superintendent of the district — a position he's held in the past. He'll also likely assist the new president get familiar with the position.

Meanwhile, Simpson said he is looking forward to resolving the labor dispute with either Donner or the new college president.

He said his group is more concerned with the fairness of the agreement than the person who helps them make it.

"We're ready to settle a fair contract at any time, before or after a new president comes on board," Simpson said. "If not, we look forward to working with the new president."

Woman is being held on \$1M bail for murder

MURDER, from page 1

allegedly stabbing a 32-year-old pregnant woman outside of her home in the Los Feliz area on Oct. 13. The woman survived, but her unborn daughter did not, Det. Morris said.

"It was a viable fetus," he said. "We do believe we have the suspect responsible for this heinous crime."

The victim was leaving her home to go to work when Caldwell-Later allegedly approached her and stabbed her, Morris said.

"They knew each other and we don't believe it was a random situation," he said.

The fetus was 23 weeks old.

Close to two dozen LAPD uniformed officers and detectives descended upon a

residence on 18th Street shortly after 6:30 a.m. Police believe that Caldwell-Later had been staying at the residence for several weeks. She was arrested without incident.

LAPD detectives also served a search warrant at a home in the 1100 block of Ozone Street, where several items were seized as evidence. Morris declined to discuss what that evidence was or if the murder weapon was recovered.

The murder case has yet to be filed with the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, but Morris expects it to be reviewed by Monday, when Caldwell-Later will appear in court for an arraignment. She is being held on \$1 million bail at the LAPD's 77th Street women's detention center.

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Pair who died in '83 plane crash identified

By The Associated Press

GOLDENDALE, Wash. — The skeletal remains of two Southern California men who died 22 years ago in a plane crash near Satus Pass have been identified.

Max Weldon Shaffer, 59, of Long Beach, Calif., and his brother-in-law, Eugene Carlton Goodrow, 54, of Santa Ana, Calif., previously listed as missing with the plane, were identified Wednesday by Klickitat County Prosecutor-Coroner Timothy S. O'Neill.

Their remains are being kept at Erdman Funeral Home in Goldendale, said Derald Erdman, the funeral home's director.

The men had long been listed as miss-

ing with the one-engine 1959 Bellenca, but formal release of their names was delayed for verification of the identity of their remains and for notification of their families, O'Neill said.

Shaffer and Goodrow were in the plane that vanished in turbulent, icy weather on Jan. 8, 1983, after taking off for Long Beach from Yakima, where the plane was refueled after arriving from Winthrop.

The crash site was discovered Aug. 31 by Yakama Indian Nation workers installing telecommunications equipment in a heavily forested area about 40 miles south of Yakima. Authorities said the wreckage was spread over 200 feet.

Fraudulent physician also cops to tax evasion

FRAUD, from page 1

MacKenzie, who works in the DA's fraud interdiction program, said Berjis was charged in three separate cases. One involved a long-running workers' compensation fraud case in which Los Angeles County was victimized. Another involved an automobile insurance fraud case in which the state of California, the Automobile Club of California and several insurance companies were victims. Berjis also was charged with evading hundreds of thousands of dollars in state taxes.

According to MacKenzie, the cases were investigated by the DA's bureau of investigation and the California Franchise Tax Board. Berjis was first arrested in August 2003. The cases were filed against him in 2003 and 2004.

MacKenzie said Berjis, who had a medical office at 11645 Wilshire Blvd., had his medical license suspended in 2003.

The \$5 million restitution includes \$2.8 million to the state franchise tax board and \$2.2 million to Los Angeles County.



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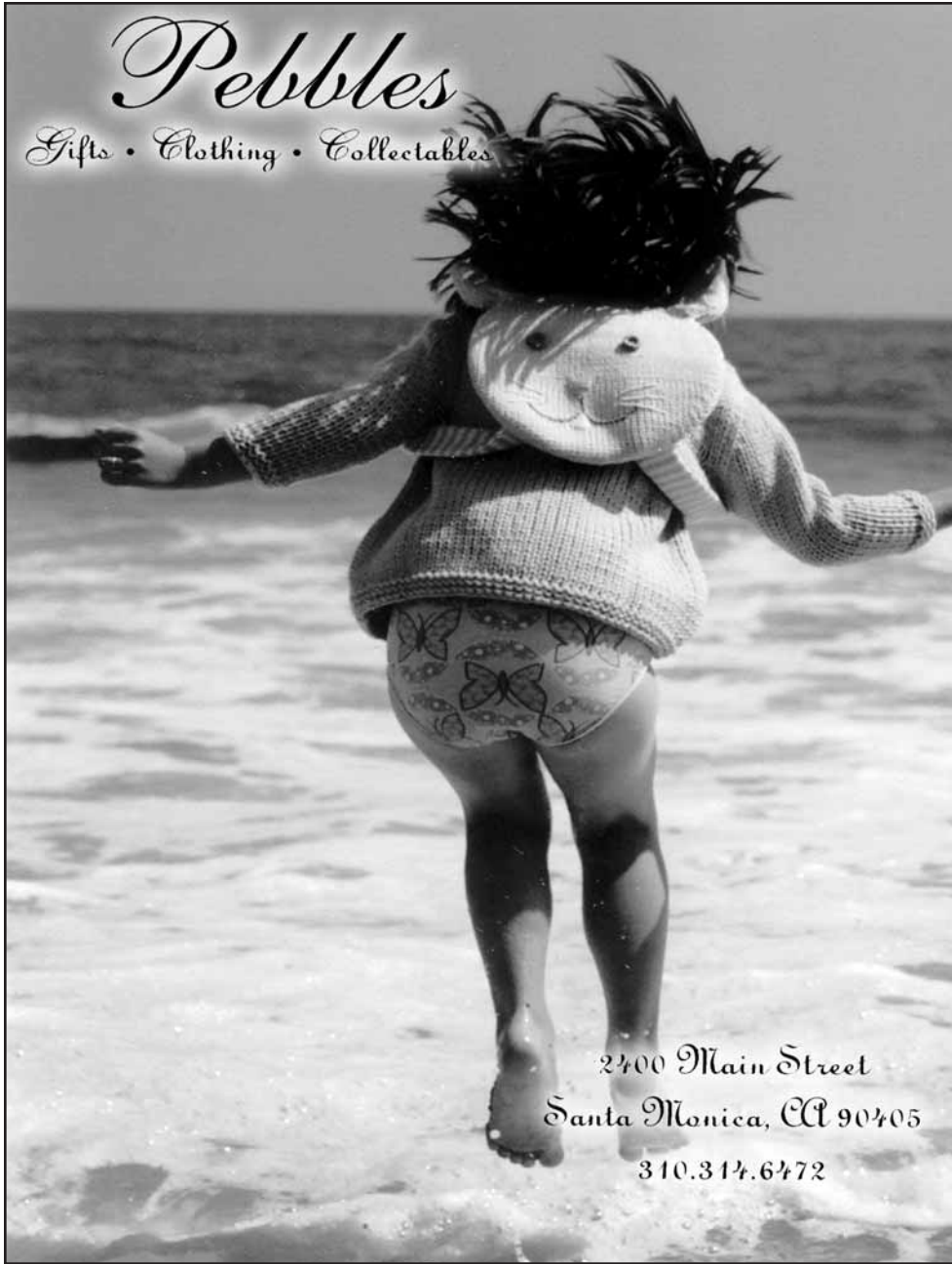
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VIOLET-At Violet restaurant the atmosphere is casual, comfortable, and, like its cuisine, is uncluttered. Chef Jared Simons' flavorful small plate fare has something to suit everyone, from light eaters to those with a taste for a more robust fare. The Braised Short Ribs with Shallot Potatoes (\$14.50) melt apart while the Multi-Colored Beet Salad with Eel delights with Kumquat and Ginger Vinaigrette (\$9) and the favorite among the regulars is the Baked Macaroni and Gruyere Cheese with Serrano Ham (\$7.50). Unique selection of new and old world wines by the bottle, glass or flight as well as an impressive list of domestic & imported artisan beers. Hours: Lunch: Tuesday-Friday, 11:30am-2pm. Dinner: Tuesday-Friday, 6pm-10pm & Saturday and Sunday, 5:30pm-10pm. 3221 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica. www.violetrestaurant.com (310) 453-9113.

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Conn. lawmakers pass sweeping campaign finance bill

BY SUSAN HAIGH
Associated Press Writer

HARTFORD, Conn. — Connecticut lawmakers passed some of the nation's toughest campaign finance laws early Thursday morning, placing strict limits on campaign contributions and creating a publicly funded election system.

Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell pledged to sign the measure into law.

It was the first time a legislature passed a campaign finance bill that applies to all statewide races. Other states have systems created by ballot initiatives, or systems that only apply to only a handful of races.

Nick Nyhart, executive director of Public Campaign, a national organization that supports public financing and campaign reform, called it "the strongest piece of reform legislation in the country."

"For the first time, a legislature has gone ahead and done this, not just for other seats but also done it for themselves," he said.

The bill passed after separate seven-hour debates in the House and Senate. The Senate voted 27-8 in favor of the legislation Wednesday; the House followed with a 82-65 vote Thursday morning.

The bill, which takes effect on Dec. 31, 2006, allots about \$17 million each year in public funds for political campaigns. To reduce the influence of special interests, it bans political contributions from lobbyists and state contractors.

The fund comes from unclaimed property, such as forgotten pay checks and bank accounts that currently flow into the state's general fund. Some lawmakers disagreed with the use of the funds.

"I think our forefathers would turn in their graves if they knew public funds were used this way," said Rep. Julia Wasserman, R-Newtown.

Candidates must raise a certain amount to qualify for public funds and agree to campaign spending limits. Candidates who opt out of the plan are still barred from collecting money from lobbyists and contractors.

Connecticut's legislation comes in the wake of a corruption scandal last year that sent former Gov. John G. Rowland to prison and led his former co-chief of staff and a major state contractor to plead guilty in federal court. Rell, who pushed lawmakers for months to pass reforms, was lieutenant governor during Rowland's tenure.

But the bill's passage does not mean the debate is over. Several lawmakers raised concerns about it, saying it stifled free speech rights of lobbyists and could be ripe for a court challenge. Others said the money could be doled out with few restrictions.

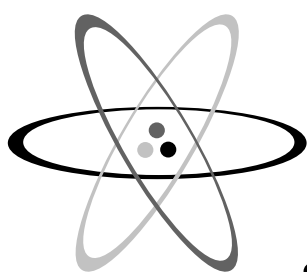
After much discussion of loopholes, lawmakers promised to return during the regular session in February to make changes.

"Frankly, the stars are aligned with this legislation," said Rep. Christopher Caruso, D-Bridgeport, co-chairman of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. "It's our opportunity to take advantage of this moment, to pass this legislation, to build a foundation and then make changes."

Other state legislatures have created public financing for just a few elected offices, such as the governor and lieutenant governor in Vermont, top judges in North Carolina and a regulatory commission in New Mexico that oversees corporations.

Maine and Arizona have public financing systems created by ballot initiatives. New Jersey recently passed a trial public financing program that affected two legislative seats this year and will apply to four in 2007.

THINK

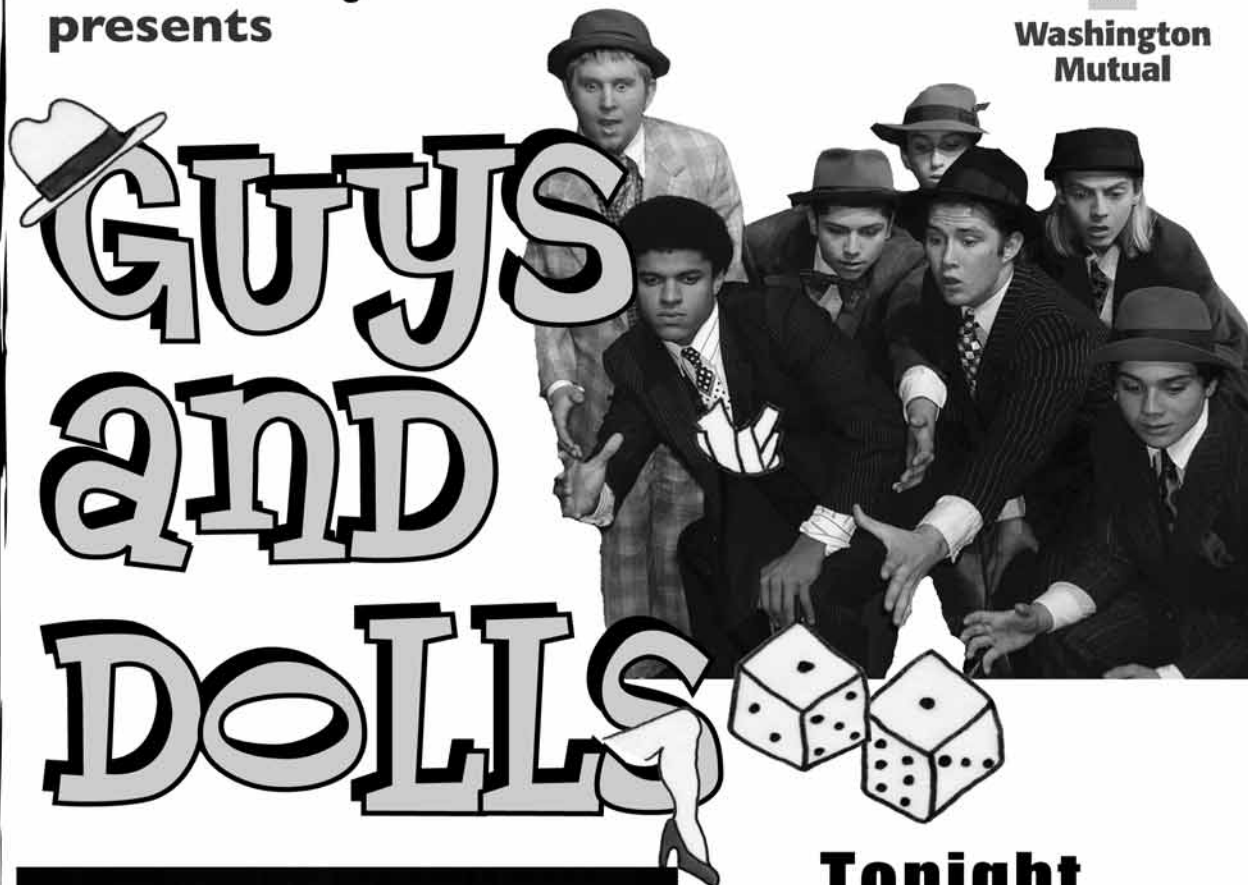


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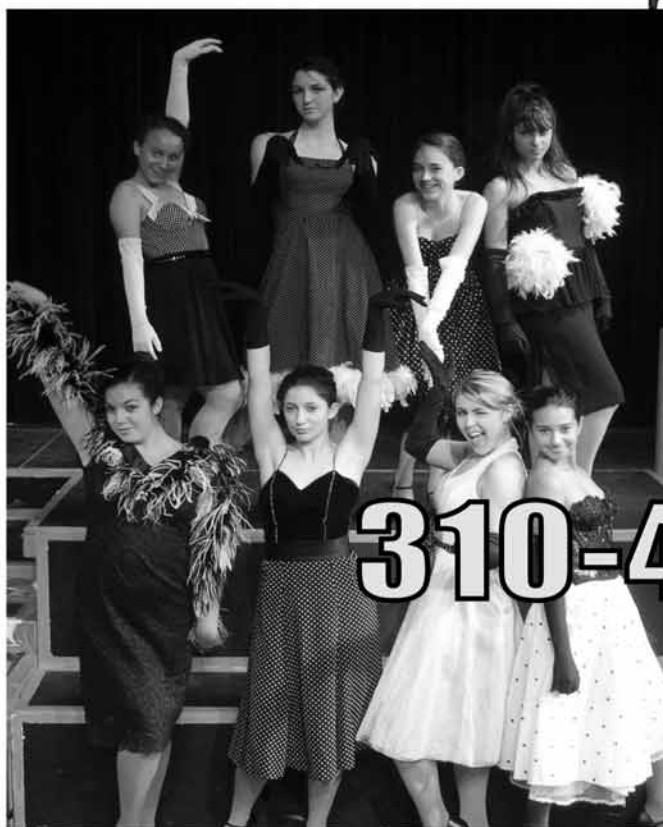
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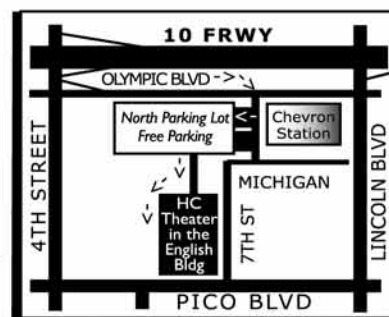


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Santa Monica Daily Press

LOEWS SANTA MONICA
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Entertainment

Nice thought, lousy movie

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press



REVIEW

THE MOVIE: The Kid & I
THE DIRECTOR: Penelope Spheeris
THE STARS: Tom Arnold, Eric Gores, Joe Mantegna, Henry Winkler, Shannon Elizabeth

Perhaps only an insensitive jerk would be callous enough to criticize an ostensibly well-meaning film starring an infectiously upbeat teenager afflicted with cerebral palsy (Eric Gores). OK, I'm game: "The Kid & I" is an awful movie — hell, it's an awful after-school special — and no amount of good intentions can cover up that fact. One of the most baffling and indulgent projects ever to come out of Tinseltown — and, boy, is that saying a lot — "Kid" was financed by Gores' father, who happens to be star-scribe Tom Arnold's next door neighbor.

Highly suspect art imitates life with Arnold as Bill Williams, fittingly a never-has-been actor on the verge of suicide who gets a new lease on life when he's hired to pen and star in a "True Lies"-like action movie. The catch: His co-star Aaron "A-Dog" Roman (Gores), the son of the film's wealthy financier (Joe Mantegna) has no professional acting experience AND suffers from CP. Needing the break and the dough, Williams reluctantly signs on, unaware that film is intended solely for a private showing at A-Dog's 18th birthday party. Ironically, the fictional film Williams writes is more interesting (barely) than Arnold's actual one. Co-stars, some of whom it's safe to assume must also live on Gores' block, include Linda Hamilton, Henry Winkler and Shannon Elizabeth. Head-scratching cameos from Shaquille O'Neal, football Hall of Famer Eric Dickerson, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jamie Lee Curtis put the \$#@% in "What the \$#@% is going on here?"

While there's nothing wrong with a well-to-do dad and his celebrity pals doing something special for a special kid, it seems almost cruel to subject the lad to the sort of public scrutiny a project such as this was certain to invite. On top of that, theatrical releases are for-profit ventures, and that raises all sorts of questions about the dubious ethics of attempting to cash in a young man's misfortune and asking us to foot the bill.

(RATED PG-13. RUNNING TIME: 93 MINUTES)



Final cut: 'Trans' a good choice

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press



REVIEW

THE MOVIE: Transamerica
THE DIRECTOR: Duncan Tucker
THE STARS: Felicity Huffman, Kevin Zegers, Graham Greene

Bree (Felicity Huffman of "Desperate Housewives") is a prim pre-operative transsexual living in Los Angeles whose life takes an unexpected turn when, mere days before her scheduled reassignment surgery, she learns that her sole heterosexual roll in the hay years earlier yielded a son, Toby (Kevin Zegers), a teenaged street hustler being held for drug possession in a New York City jail. Bree's therapist (Elizabeth Peña) deems it necessary she confront her past and, to Bree's dismay, refuses to grant legal permission for the surgery until Bree meets her progeny. Gotta love these Christmas movies, eh! Actually, unseasonable subject matter and

too-clever title aside, there is a lot to like about the off-color "Transamerica," especially Huffman and Zeger's spirited performances and the engaging story spun by writer-director Duncan Tucker.

So Bree hops a plane to the Big Apple, determined to bail out Toby and return home — alone — as soon as possible. Of course, it wouldn't be much of a movie if that happened, so Bree instead finds herself on a cross-country road trip in a beat-up station wagon with her coke-snorting (yet good-hearted) son, who assumes Bree to be nothing more than an agent from a Christian missionary that rescues street walkers in the hopes of converting them. Much of the film's laugh out loud humor and dramatic tension is generated via anticipation of the big reveal, which turns out to be somewhat anticlimactic. The finest segment in Tucker's episodic offering involves a stopover in Phoenix at the home of Bree's parents (Fionnula Flanagan and Burt Young), who have yet to accept their son Stanley's "choice" to become a woman.

(RATED R. RUNNING TIME: 103 MINUTES)

Klum back and ready to hit the 'Runway'

BY EMILY CHRISTIANSON
Special to the Daily Press

Calling all future fashionistas: Bravo launches its second season of "Project Runway" at 10 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 7 with two back-to-back episodes. Supermodel and host Heidi Klum not only discusses her Emmy nominated show, but her husband Seal and their new baby, Henry, who was born in September in Santa Monica.



QUESTION: What did you learn during the first season that helped you out the second time around?

HEIDI KLUM: The second time around it goes much faster ... we know how long it takes. The first time around we were there sometimes until two or three in the morning and then did interviews with the

people so we all got a little loopy after awhile.

Q: Will we see even more aggressive and larger than life characters this season?

HK: All I have to say is that it isn't about the personality. Really it is about how good of a designer they are. We have 16 designers on the show and, of course, some are more aggressive than others and some are more quiet, but we did not choose them or cast them as actors.

Q: I think all women want to know how you looked so amazing at the Emmys, just days after giving birth.

HK: I really wanted to be there because it is such a huge success to be nominated for a show the first time around. It is really about finding the perfect outfit and I found a great outfit. Now it has been six weeks and I have been training a little bit with my trainer ... and eating healthy. I think the key is to not get too big while you are pregnant and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Q: How did you muster up the energy to go?

HK: The energy is not the problem for me ... I was full of energy after we had Henry. I was very fortunate that way ... I didn't stay out and party all night. I was there for the show and then I went home.

Q: How do you balance motherhood and work?

HK: It is challenging. It is hard. You don't want to leave your house. I just want to stay home ... I had Henry in Los Angeles and then afterward I had two months before I started again and that time just flies by ... It is really about scheduling and having a great mom. My mom helps me a lot and a great husband.

Q: How is Seal at changing diapers?

HK: He is good at that, sometimes he is probably better than I am. He has a lot of patience. You know how we mothers are, we always try to multitask and do 10 things at a time. He really does one thing and really puts his all into that and then goes on to something else. Like I would be on the phone while I'm changing the diaper, while I'm having the milk heated up for my daughter.

AP Movie Writer

Also among lead-actress contenders were Felicity Huffman in a gender-bending role in "Transamerica," a road-trip tale about a man preparing for the final surgical procedures to become a woman; Dina Korzun as a Russian woman married to a rock 'n' roll legend who becomes

Joining Baumbach in the directing category were Gregg Araki for the teen drama "Mysterious Skin"; George Clooney for "Good Night, and Good Luck"; Rodrigo Garcia for "Nine Lives"; and Ang Lee for "Brokeback Mountain."

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ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS



Sounds of Christmas to ring out

By Daily Press staff

A local church is hosting a concert to ring in the holiday season.

On Saturday Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m., the First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica will present its annual “A Christmas Celebration” concert. The church’s Chancel Choir will be joined by the Santa Monica College Concert Chorals, the Los Angeles Concert Orchestra and the Spirit of L.A. Ringers to present J.S. Bach’s Magnificat and Carols, etc.

Television personality Peter Graves will be featured as guest narrator. Dr. James E. Smith, director of music at the church and the chairman of the music department at SMC will be conductor of the nearly 200 musicians. Soloists will be Barbara Smith, soprano; Maurita Phillips-Thornburgh, mezzo soprano; Erin Wood, alto; Alvin Brightbill and Rolando Sanz, tenors; and William Trabold, bass.

Suggested donation of \$15 general admission, \$10 seniors and students may be made at the door.

The church is located at 1008 11th St. in Santa Monica.

For the best seating, guests should arrive before 7 p.m. For further information, call the church office at (310) 393-8258.

Free jazz on tap next week

By Daily Press staff

An award-winning musician is coming to Santa Monica College for an exclusive free concert next week.

Latin Grammy Award-winning jazz flautist will perform at SMC on Thursday, Dec. 8 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:35 p.m. The concert will be held in the art 214 building at SMC.

He will be performing live for the first time from his latest work in progress. “Prayers & Meditations for Peace,” due to be released in April 2006.

Nestor will be joined by professor Ric Alviso of the SMC music department in an open forum dialog on how music and education can effectively work towards a peaceful world.

The event is sponsored by the SMC Value Creation Society Club and the Associated Students. It is free and open to the general public.

Santa Monica Symphony to play a free family show

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Symphony will present an evening of music for the whole family in a free concert on Sunday, Dec. 11, under the baton of music director and conductor Allen Robert Gross. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. in the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, on Main Street just north of Pico Boulevard.

The program includes the rousing dance music from Copland’s American classic “Rodeo,” Schubert’s lyrical Third Symphony evoking the romance of old Vienna, and a new concerto for the tiny piccolo and huge contrabassoon in a delightful interplay of rhythm and melody, by young Los Angeles composer Damian Montano.

Montano began teaching himself composition at the age of 7 on the family piano. Although his formal music education has been as an instrumentalist, he is an award winning composer with commissions from symphony orchestras and scores for movies and television. His “Concerto for Piccolo, Contrabassoon & Orchestra” is having its west coast premiere after being commissioned

by the Houston Symphony Orchestra, where the audience gave it a standing ovation.

Montano is himself a bassoon/contrabassoonist with symphony orchestras, which has encouraged him to compose for those instruments.

Montano will be introduced on-stage by Maestro Gross, and after the concert there will be an opportunity to chat with him in the lobby about his music. He also will appear at the pre-concert talk given at 6:30 p.m. by professor Raymond Knapp in the meeting room.

The soloists for Damian’s work are Susan Greenberg, piccolo, of Pacific Palisades, and Patricia Kindel, contrabassoon. Both are well known to concert-goers at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Hollywood Bowl, and other major orchestras.

Seats are not reserved. The balcony is a favorite place for the many young people, dating couples, and families with school age children who come to the Santa Monica Symphony concerts.

For further information, call (310) 395-6330 or visit the symphony’s Web site, www.smsymphony.org.

Mass appeal: Dome music blows into SM

By Daily Press staff

The internationally renowned Mass Ensemble’s large-scale instruments and kinetic performances have entertained audiences throughout the U.S. and abroad. Now it’s here in Santa Monica, positioned on the pier with the Pacific Ocean as a backdrop.

The performance group that invented the world’s largest stringed instrument has partnered with the design firm o2 creative solutions to create Mass Music Dome, a completely immersive visual and musical performance event, in which the venue is the musical instrument.

Mass Music Dome employs geodesic dome technology, originally developed by Buckminster Fuller in 1954, to create a complex instrument whose music can be experienced from within. The skin of the dome acts like a percussion instrument, resonating the hundreds of strings on the interior and exterior of the dome while simultaneously playing the part of canvas to a 360-degree projection of visual imagery. Architecturally and artistically, Mass Music Dome is the ultimate integration of form and function.

The show will be held at the Santa Monica Pier through Dec. 4 and Dec. 7 through 11. All shows are at 8 p.m. except on Dec. 4 which is at 7 p.m. and Dec. 11 which is at 6 p.m. Tickets for the standing lounge are \$30, general admission is \$40 and VIP seating is \$50.

Dec. 4 will feature a celebrity night performance benefiting the David Lynch Foundation and an after party featuring a live vintage poster art display with the famous playboy models and champagne art. Tickets to the special event night are \$75. Tickets can be purchased at www.massmusicdome.com.

Mass Music Dome performers include: Billy Close, artistic director, instrument designer, earth harp, drums sculptures; Andrea Brook, associate director, earth harp, wing harp, drums sculptures; Chrysta Bell, vocals; Cameron Morgan, guitar, aquatar, vocals; Rich Sherwood, drums and drum sculptures; Chris Woods, violin.

The collaboration of o2 creative solutions with Mass Ensemble is a logical product of the two organizations’ exploitation of unique, multi-dimensional experiences through the use of art, communications and technology.

For Mass Music Dome, o2 creative solutions uses



Derek Goes/Special to the Daily Press

Mass Music Dome players perform their innovative brand of concert on Thursday at the Santa Monica Pier. They will play to crowds in Santa Monica through Dec. 11.

advanced projection and lighting technology to transform the skin of the dome into animated architecture, awash with motion graphics and visual energy. The music Mass Ensemble creates evokes classical, new age, avant-garde, trance, rock, pop and world music themes, while the playing of the instruments is, in itself, a dance.

Non-traditional lighting and graphics, custom-programmed by o2 creative solutions, are integrated with the individual instruments, so that specific visual images are triggered to animate across the dome by the playing of each string or drum pad. The instruments are constructed to literally play the dome and are at the heart of the performance, creating an atmosphere of extraordinary visual beauty and dynamic sound, made all the more dynamic and immediate by the inclusion of an interactive play-bill which will invite the audience to “play along” with the musicians of Mass.



YOUR OPINION MATTERS! Send your letters to Santa Monica Daily Press Attn. Editor:
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Oscar wannabes walk tight line of modesty

BY DAVID GERMAIN

AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — With three months to go until Hollywood's big night, Academy Awards contenders already are practicing their speeches.

Not their winners' speeches, but the humble-pie patter about how they don't give the Oscars the slightest thought. Whether for fear of sounding like egomaniacs or jinxing their chances, most stars play modest even as they fantasize about hoisting that little gold statuette.

"I don't know what kind of lies filmmakers tell you, and I could be accused of vanity for admitting I think about it," says director Bennett Miller, whose "Capote" put Philip Seymour Hoffman in the best-actor race. "I think it's vanity ... to say that you don't. Because you do."

Moderation is the key. Acknowledge that the recogni-

tion of your peers would be nice, but that such honors are out of your hands — and were the furthest thing from your mind when making the film.

"I don't like to have to dream about those kinds of things," said Ziyi Zhang, a possible best-actress nominee as a poor girl who rises to prominence in "Memoirs of a Geisha." "I care about my work and just try to do my best. Afterward, you can't control what happens. If it's a good movie, maybe we'll have a chance."

"If my work is recognized in that way, great," said Claire Danes, who has caught Oscar buzz for the romantic drama "Shopgirl." "If not, that's fine. That's not why I do the work that I do."

That's precisely the sort of rhetoric favored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, whose 5,800 actors, filmmakers and other industry professionals vote on the Oscars, whose nominations come out Jan. 31 with the awards following March 5. Academy manage-

ment frowns on anything that smacks of campaigning.

The best strategy for stars and directors is to keep visible enough, but never look as though they're glad-handing for an Oscar.

Too much exposure can backfire. During the 1999 Oscar race, best-actress front-runner Annette Bening of "American Beauty" looked as though she was running for office with endless appearances on talk shows and at Hollywood events. She lost to Hilary Swank for "Boys Don't Cry."

Two years later, "Moulin Rouge" director Baz Luhrmann was everywhere talking up his film. It was nominated for best picture and seven other awards — but Luhrmann was shut out in the directing category.

"There actually can be a backlash," said Tom O'Neil, who oversees TheEnvelope.com, a Web site that tracks entertainment awards. "They've got to tread that delicate balance."

Bob Schneider brings his versatility to the Roxy

By Daily Press staff

Bob Schneider, a musician who has been dubbed a "daredevil of versatility," takes the stage in Hollywood this weekend at the Roxy Theatre to give the fans something to remember.

Suffrajett opens for Schneider, who was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and raised in Munich, Germany. Not that it should matter, since Schneider will never ask where you were born and doesn't care. He only wants you to dig his music and rock your ass off at his shows. And the odds are very much in his favor that you will do both.



BOB SCHNEIDER

Performing since he was a tot, generally for the amusement of his parents and their friends, Schneider gained his first real professional experience while backing his musician father on drums at numerous moonlighting gigs throughout Germany.

After he developed his talents, Schneider moved to Austin to pursue the dream. With Joe Rockhead, Schneider established his reputation as a frenetic and engaging lead singer, performing with a wild abandon, aggression and lack of pretension on stage, which he will be the first to admit is pretty much the opposite of his offstage self.

After Joe Rockhead disbanded, Schneider devoted his immensely diverse songwriting talents and trademark stage presence to the Ugly Americans, a freeform soul-rock group that eventually signed with Capricorn Records in 1995. Always in need of at least one side project as an outlet for his hyperactive creative energies, he formed the raunchy party band The Scabs in 1996, the live performances of which became infamously popular and spawned four albums between 1998 and 2001. In 1998, Schneider ventured into more introspective singer-songwriter territory with his solo outfit, Lonelyland, which led to a deal with Universal in 2001.

These days, the Bob Schneider Group, as he and his band are now called, plays weekly shows in Austin and tours extensively.

People expect to see a straight-up rock god when they go to rock shows, and Schneider delivers. Schneider manages to embody and simultaneously lampoon every single persona you can think of within a two-hour show. When it comes to musical styles and genres, he is a daredevil of versatility — able to go from twangy country crooner to spit-screaming punk, from Latin salsa king to mellow reggae mon, from funk soul brother to white-boy trash rapper, all with perfect fluidity and commanding virtuosity. In addition to his chameleonic tendencies, Schneider has the ability to persuade audiences to enjoy a kind of music that they may have detested previously

such as bluegrass, perhaps, or polka.

Doors at the Roxy Theatre open at 8 p.m. The Roxy is located at 9009 West Sunset Blvd. in West Hollywood. Call (310) 278-9457 for more information.

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Many solutions, little consensus on illegals

BY JIM ABRAMS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — From building a fence to keep them out to passing a law to help them stay, members of Congress have lots of ideas on how to respond to President Bush’s challenge to take on the problem of illegal immigrants. There’s a will to act but so far not much consensus.

The first stab at the problem could come in the next two weeks, when the House may vote on legislation to strengthen border security. That’s the easiest of the three legs of immigration reform. The others, enforcing workplace hiring rules and setting up a guest-worker program that might incorporate illegal immigrants, are far more divisive.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Bill Frist plans to bring up a border security bill in February, and use that as a starting point for broader reform. “We must boldly address the challenges of border security first,” Frist, R-Tenn., said this week as Bush toured the Texas-Mexico border to stress the need for both tougher border controls and a guest-worker program.

The House bill will likely come from Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., with the focus on tighter borders and some elements of workplace enforcement. His spokesman, Jeff Lungren, said it could contain a proposal by Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Calif., to expand a program for verifying employee records with the Homeland Security Department and the Social Security Administration, and another by Rep. David Dreier, R-Calif., to make Social Security cards more tamperproof.

But there are lots of other proposals to choose from. The Homeland Security Committee this month approved a bill by its chairman, Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., that

would add Border Patrol agents, make use of new monitoring technology including unmanned aerial vehicles and end the “catch and release” practice for non-Mexican illegals.

Dozens of other border security bills have been introduced, many by conservatives and border state lawmakers fed up with the government’s failure to stop the flow of illegal immigrants.

Rep. Virgil Goode, R-Va., is seeking \$2 billion to build a fence along the border with Mexico. Rep. Tom Tancredo, R-Colo., who has made a crackdown on illegal immigrants the theme of a longshot presidential bid, is among several who would change existing law to allow use of the military for border enforcement. Rep. J.D. Hayworth, R-Ariz., has an extensive bill that would let state and local police enforce immigration law.

“I expect it to grow,” Lungren said of Sensenbrenner’s bill.

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said Thursday that fencing didn’t make sense in deserts. “A wall across the border would be phenomenally expensive,” he told reporters, and “it wouldn’t be particularly effective.”

Congress already has taken several steps this year to tighten border security, including making it easier to deny admission to people linked to terrorism and setting national standards for obtaining drivers licenses. A Homeland Security Department spending bill this October provided money to add 1,000 Border Patrol agents to the current 11,000.

In the Senate, Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter, R-Pa., has put together a more comprehensive bill that picks and chooses from various sources. It models border and interior enforcement provisions on a bill backed by Republican Sens. John Cornyn of Texas and Jon Kyl of Arizona, employment verification from a bill

by Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., and a guest-worker program put forth by Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Edward Kennedy, D-Mass.

“I do not necessarily endorse every provision” in the package, Specter wrote in a letter to Senate colleagues, saying it will “serve as a starting point for discussions.”

The Cornyn-Kyl and McCain-Kennedy bills are the top contenders on the guest-worker issue. Cornyn-Kyl would require people in the country illegally to return to their home countries to apply for a new temporary worker program. McCain-Kennedy would permit illegal immigrants to obtain work visas for up to six years, after which those not applying for permanent residency would have to leave the country.

Angela Kelley, deputy director of the pro-immigration National Immigration Forum, applauded the Senate for more directly confronting the issues of an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants and the demand for low-skilled workers that draws them to this country. “In order for this to work, you’ve got to get the people who are the subject of this legislation to participate” in the outcome, she said.

As a base bill on border security, the Senate could turn to a proposal by Sens. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., and Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., to hire more inspectors and patrol officers and ask the National Guard and a volunteer force of retired law enforcement officers to help monitor the northern and southern borders.

But as in the House, there are a variety of choices. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, would also give state and local law enforcement a greater role and create a “volunteer border Marshall plan” under which state-licensed peace officers would join the Border Patrol on temporary missions. Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, would allow migrant farmworkers to stay legally and earn points toward legal status.

Bush’s war strategy suggests less visible, possibly less deadly U.S. role

BY ROBERT BURNS
AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON — Amid growing pressure to bring U.S. troops home from Iraq, President Bush is refusing to set a timetable but indicating that by 2006, Iraqi forces will be sufficiently trained to let American troops shift to less visible and possibly less dangerous roles.

In a speech Wednesday at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., Bush spelled out what he called his strategy for victory in Iraq, a plan that contained no new approaches and no start date for withdrawing U.S. troops. He urged patience, claimed steady progress and vowed to accept nothing less than “complete victory.”

Democrats were quick to criticize, accusing Bush of failing to answer squarely the most pressing questions on the minds of Americans who wonder whether the cost in American blood and treasure has been worth it.

“If things on the ground in Iraq are as rosy as the picture the president painted today, then we should be able to begin to bring our troops home in 2006,” said Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass. “But, even according to the White House’s own document, we are a long way from victory.”

Kennedy was referring to a White House report, titled “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq,” that was released before Bush spoke as an outline of the administration’s rationale, strategy and measures of progress.

By next year, Bush said, U.S. commanders expect the Iraqi security forces to be able to assume more of the direct combat roles now performed by U.S. troops.

“We will continue to shift from providing security and conducting operations against the enemy nationwide to conducting more specialized operations targeted at the most dangerous terrorists,” Bush said. “We will increasingly move out of Iraqi cities, reduce the number of bases from which we operate and conduct fewer patrols and convoys.”

The implication is that fewer U.S. troops will be needed, at least for missions that have been causing the bulk of U.S. casualties. So far, more than 2,100 American troops have died in Iraq.

In noting that U.S. forces have begun turning over control of military bases to the Iraqis, Bush singled out the Nov. 22 handover of a base near Tikrit that includes one of Saddam Hussein’s former palace complexes. Bush said it had served as a U.S. military headquarters “in one of Iraq’s most dangerous regions.”

Bush’s definition of victory in Iraq suggested years of additional U.S. military assistance. But it also may have set the stage for what Pentagon officials already have said is an expected 2006 drawdown of U.S. forces, which now total nearly 160,000. Bush emphasized recent progress in the training of Iraqi security forces, noting that they now control several sections of Iraq, including large portions of Baghdad.

“Victory will come when the terrorists and Saddamists can no longer threaten Iraq’s democracy, when the Iraqi security forces can provide for the safety of their own citizens, and when Iraq is not a safe haven for terrorists to plot new attacks on our nation,” he said.

It’s not clear that terrorists have used Iraq as a haven to plot attacks on the United States, but Bush’s remark suggested a link between terrorists now in Iraq and those

who planned the 2001 suicide hijack attacks. The two “share the same ideology,” Bush said, of seeking to “sow anger and hatred and despair.”

While stoutly defending his war strategy, Bush also acknowledged some setbacks and cautioned that the months ahead would be difficult. He noted that the Iraqi security force originally created to fight the insurgents “proved to be no match” for the enemy, and that some early training for Iraqi police was inadequate.

“Their performance is still uneven in some areas,” Bush said, referring generally to Iraqi security forces.

Bush’s speech was the first in a series of planned presidential addresses aimed at shoring up public support for a war that has lasted much longer and caused more U.S. casualties than the administration originally expected.

“Our goal is to train enough Iraqi forces so they can carry the fight,” Bush said. “And this will take time and patience.”

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., called Bush’s remarks “nothing more than a spruced up version of more of the same, riddled with feel-good rhetoric that bears little relationship to the facts facing our troops.” He questioned why the White House waited until now — more than 2 1/2 years into the war — to lay out publicly its strategy for victory.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., embraced a call by a prominent defense hawk in her party to begin a troop withdrawal. Two weeks ago, Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., set off a political firestorm when he said a complete pullout should be achieved in six months.

“The status quo is not working,” Pelosi said.



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INTERNATIONAL



World AIDS Day observed with marches and education

BY WASBIR HUSSAIN

Associated Press Writer

GAUHATI, India — Dozens of HIV-infected women stepped out of the shadows in eastern India to acknowledge they carry the disease and say they should not be shunned. China, in its marking of World Aids Day, began an educational campaign targeting millions of migrant workers Thursday.

In Jakarta, the head of UNAIDS criticized Indonesia's leaders for not taking a more active role in combatting the disease, and thousands marched in anti-AIDS rallies in India's plagued northeast, including in Golaghat, a town in the eastern state of Assam, where HIV-infected women spoke publicly.

"I marched through the town with more than 70 HIV-positive women like me ... I'm happy many women have paid heed to our call and have openly admitted to their HIV-positive status," said Jahnabi Goswami, 28. "Men with the disease need to follow suit."

An estimated 5.1 million people are living with HIV in India — the most in any single country except South Africa. India's sparsely populated northeast, where heroin traffickers cross from Myanmar, is considered a flashpoint because of its high rate of infections among intravenous drug users.

Australia on Thursday announced it will spend \$7.4 million over five years to help India fight the virus in the northeast region.

China also focused attention on the disease by launching a campaign aimed at some 120 million migrant workers, with Chinese Central Television showing condoms being passed out to workers at a Beijing construction site.

"Because of this publicity, I really feel I learned something about the harm of AIDS and I will share what I learned with my co-workers, friends and relatives," said Li Hongjian, a young worker in a hard hat and work clothes with a large red ribbon pinned to his chest.

China's government estimates about 840,000 people could be infected with HIV and 80,000 others are likely to be living with full-blown AIDS. However, only about 167,000 are registered as being infected.

UNAIDS has warned up to 10 million could be infected in China by 2010 without more aggressive prevention.

The official China Daily newspaper said injecting drug users now account for the bulk of infections, followed by unclean blood selling practices and unsafe sex.

In Jakarta, UNAIDS head Peter Piot on Wednesday called Indonesia's response to the disease "inadequate" and said it was vital that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono step up and take charge of the campaign.

An estimated 150,000 to 250,000 people are infected

in the sprawling archipelago, but the virus is spreading quickly among injecting drug users, as well as sex workers and their clients, he said.

Countries across Asia said more focus must be placed on educating young people if the world has any chance of getting a grip on the disease. An estimated 8.3 million people are living with HIV in Asia, with 1.1 million newly infected last year, UNAIDS said in a recent report.

"Twenty-five years into the pandemic, this disease is becoming more visible in Pakistan yet continues to have an invisible face, a missing face, a young person's face. This needs to change," UNICEF representative Omar Abdi said in a statement Wednesday.

While its nationwide infection rate remains low, Pakistan contains all the ingredients for a potential HIV explosion, including poverty, illiteracy, a sex industry and injecting drug users, said Samia Hashim, UNAIDS senior national program officer in the country.

In South Korea, nearly 10,000 students at 300 high schools in Seoul were given HIV lessons.

"In Korea, people tend to think AIDS is a problem that has nothing to do with them," said Cha Hei-sun of World Vision Korea, which sponsored the event along with the United Nation's Children's Fund. "People's awareness of the disease is really needed here."

North Korea on Thursday said none of its people are infected with the disease, but that some foreigners have tested HIV-positive and have been sent home at their request.

"Preventive measures against AIDS have been taken so thoroughly that people are leading a happy life free from its damage thanks to the public health policy of the government," the communist North's Minju Joson newspaper said in a report carried by its official Korean Central News Agency.

Meanwhile, 24 million of condoms were expected to be distributed in Thailand to help raise awareness there, said Public Health Minister Phinij Jarusombat.

In Vietnam, U.S. Ambassador Michael Marine said Wednesday more emphasis must be placed on making sure the message reaches children to keep the disease from spreading into the general population.

"I think that education has to start very young," he said.

So far, the disease in Vietnam remains largely concentrated in high-risk groups, such as injecting drug users and sex workers, but health workers fear the virus will eventually spread to the general population and result in a major epidemic.

"It's certainly not sufficient to focus on HIV/AIDS one day a year," Marine said. "It's something that should be in the forefront of people's minds all the time."



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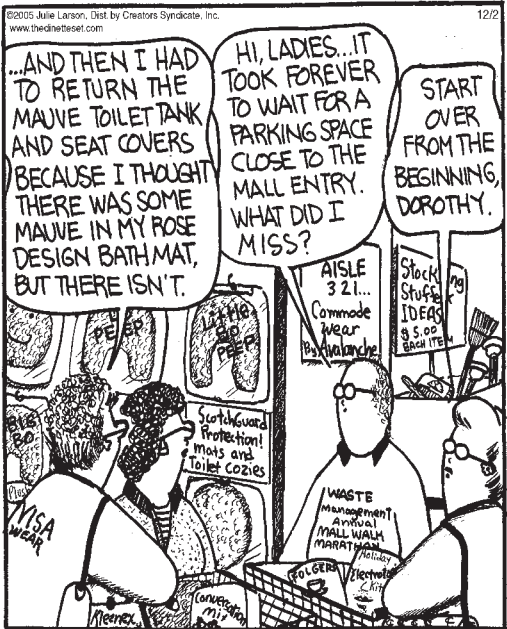


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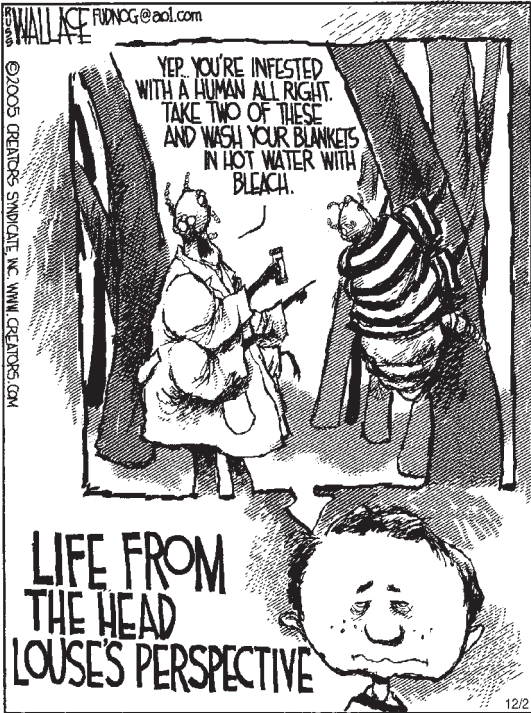


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A 'Blue' Christmas with Franz in driver's seat

By The Associated Press

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — "NYPD Blue" star Dennis Franz will serve as grand marshal of Santa Barbara's holiday parade, but plans to spend Christmas in Idaho.

Franz, who lives in Montecito, near Santa Barbara, will join marching bands, floats and Santa Claus in the Santa Barbara Downtown Organization's Holiday Parade on Friday. But Franz will then head to his family's new ranch in Idaho.

"Coming from Chicago, I like a white Christmas," said the 61-year-old actor, who played police Detective Andy Sipowicz on "NYPD Blue." "That was one of the things I had a hard time getting used to when I came to California in '78 — Santa Claus in shorts."

Franz also said he would avoid the phrase "Merry Christmas" in favor of a more secular message.

"I have to say that I now say 'happy holidays' to people," Franz told the Santa Barbara News-Press. "That's usually my greeting because there are so many people celebrating their own holidays. It's really just a generic way to say, 'Let's all have a great holiday season.'"

BARNSTABLE, Mass. — Joan Kennedy, the former wife of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, has sold her 13-room waterfront home on Cape Cod, according to her son's congressional office.

A spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island confirmed the house had been sold, but said she didn't know the price.

"He doesn't have any details of the sale," Robin Costello said of Patrick Kennedy, "(and) he does not know who the (new) owners are."

Barnstable County property tax records show the house, on Squaw Island near the Kennedy compound in Hyannis Port, has six bedrooms, sits on 1.18 acres and is assessed at \$3.7 million.

At the request of her three children, a court-appointed guardian was named in June to oversee the affairs of the 69-year-old Kennedy, who has battled alcoholism and been through several treatment programs. The children had contested her earlier attempts to sell the house.

BOMBAY, India — Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan was reported in stable condition Thursday after undergoing surgery for an intestinal ailment.

The operation was performed late Wednesday to treat the 63-year-old actor's diverticulitis, which involves ruptures in pockets of the intestine, Lilavati Hospital said in a statement.

Fans organized gatherings at temples to pray for Bachchan's speedy recovery. He has appeared in more than 150 Indian movies over three decades.

"There's life and there's the body, so something or the other will happen," the DNA newspaper quoted Bachchan as saying before the surgery.

When fellow actor Anupam Kher visited and asked if he needed cheering up, Bachchan replied, "Please do, I need to laugh," the Bombay-based newspaper reported.

Bachchan was admitted to the hospital Monday after complaining of stomach pain.

BERLIN — Charlotte Rampling will head the jury at next year's Berlin International Film Festival, which will run Feb. 9-19.

Rampling "has come to stand for unconventional and memorable cinema," festival director Dieter Kosslick said Wednesday.

The 59-year-old actress has starred in films such as Francois Ozon's "Swimming Pool," Dominik Moll's "Lemming" and Laurent Cantet's "Heading South."

Festival organizers didn't name the other members of the jury, which will award the top Golden Bear prize.

This year's winner was the South African film "Carmen in Khayelitsha," directed by Mark Dornford-May.

NEW YORK — John Bucchino is the first recipient of the Fred Ebb Award for aspiring musical-theater songwriters.

Bucchino received the \$50,000 prize Tuesday from Chita Rivera, who starred in "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and "The Rink," two musicals Ebb wrote with his longtime collaborator, composer John Kander.

Ebb, who died in September 2004, was the man behind the words for hit musicals such as "Chicago" and

that big-city anthem "New York, New York."

The lyricist, according to Kander, was a champion of new talent and loved awards, so the Fred Ebb Foundation was set up after his death by Ebb's nephew, Mitchell Bernard.

At the ceremony, held at the Roundabout's American Airlines Theatre, Bucchino sang his best-known song, appropriately titled, "Grateful."

BERLIN — Peter Gabriel, Jessye Norman and the Black Eyed Peas will perform at the World Cup's opening gala next year.

The two-hour show on June 7 at Berlin's Olympiastadion will kick off soccer's monthlong showcase.

FIFA hopes the new gala will become a tradition at future World Cups. It will be staged as a separate event from the first match, when the opening celebration has traditionally been held.

The opening match will take place June 9 in Munich. It will have its own show.

"This is a legacy that should be transferred to all World Cups," FIFA General Secretary Ours Lines said.

LAS VEGAS — Muhammad Ali is expected to be at the starting line Sunday when officials begin the New Las Vegas Marathon.

"He wants to be a part of this race," said race chairman Bernie Yuman, a longtime friend and agent for Ali. Yuman said the 63-year-old former heavyweight boxing champion was retooling his schedule to join local dignitaries for starting ceremonies on the Las Vegas Strip.

About 11,000 runners are signed up to start the race beneath neon, fireworks and the sound of Elvis Presley's recording of "Viva Las Vegas," race president Bill Burke said.

It's the first time in 39 races that the route includes the Las Vegas Strip.

Ali, who has Parkinson's disease, recently received the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the White House and attended the opening of the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Ky.

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