



Santa Monica Daily Press

December 9-10, 2006

Since 2001: A news odyssey

Volume 6 Issue 23

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS
1 15 29 32 45
Meganumber: 8
Jackpot: \$15M

Super LOTTO PLUS
1 4 17 36 42
Meganumber: 24
Jackpot: \$17M

Fantasy 5
15 26 29 33 36

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

The Tel Aviv newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth reported in October that the much tighter border security that resulted from the recent war with Hezbollah guerrillas had caused marijuana prices in Israel to jump as much as 800 percent. And, though general tensions between Arabs and Jews remain high inside Israel, prominent ultra-Orthodox Jews joined militant Palestinian Muslims in fierce opposition to the November gay-pride parade in Jerusalem, according to a Boston Globe dispatch. (Said activist Rabbi Yehuda Levin, "Only this onslaught of homosexual radicalism could bring together such disparate voices.")

TODAY IN HISTORY

1854 Alfred, Lord Tennyson's famous poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," was published in England.

1941 China declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy.

WORD UP!

interstice \in-TUR-stuh-s/, noun;
interstices \in-TUR-stuh-seez/, -suhz/;
1. A space between things or parts, especially a space between things closely set; a narrow chink; a crack; a crevice; an interval. 2. An interval of time.

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PASSING THE BAR

Where to mingle when you're single

BY AMY KAUFMAN
Special to the Daily Press

CITYWIDE — There you are, quietly sipping your vodka martini and minding your own business when it happens. He's Mr. Rico Suave, dressed in an overpriced suit and all-too flashy tie. He motions his finger towards the bartender, indicating a fresh round of drinks for the both of you.

Then he leans in and whispers in your ear: "If this bar is a meat market, you must be the prime rib."

Leaving the bar and letting out a sigh, the scene is enough to make most single Santa Monicans wonder: Isn't there any better place in the city to find a mate?

With so many beautiful residents that are single and ready to mingle, it would seem that living in Santa Monica would present a prime opportunity to find that certain someone. Still, one can easily become tangled up in the web of cheesy pick-up lines and free drinks at local bars and clubs if there's seemingly no alternatives.

"There's never been a better time for singles looking for love,"

See PASSING THE BAR, page 21



Fabian Lewkowicz fabian@smdp.com

FORE THOUGHT: Picking up in bars is passe with a wealth of hook-up hotspots.

Labors of love

One can be the loneliest number around holidays

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE — Something about the holidays makes Jason want to cozy up with someone special.

"The cold weather makes me want to be near someone," said Jason, who works in a Third Street Promenade coffee shop. "I need the warmth of someone physically next to me. I need warm eyes to look into."

It's a feeling that millions of singles across the nation share this time of year, whether it's because of the mistletoes dangling overhead begging for two people underneath to share a kiss; because of the cold wintry weather drawing two lonely peo-

See HOLIDAY DATING, page 20

Electric slide

Alternative Car Expo lands in SM

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SM AIRPORT — Alternative fuel car lovers, now it's your turn.

Just 15 minutes from where the LA Auto Show is featuring an array of swanky new cars, the City of Santa Monica is hosting an event this weekend that could leave Los Angeles officials green with envy.

More than 100 different alternative fuel vehicles will be showcased this weekend at the Alternative Car and Transportation Expo, an event that city officials call the largest and most comprehensive alternative car convention in the nation. It's an event befitting a city known as a leader in sustainability efforts.

"There is no more of an appropriate place than Santa Monica," said Christine Dzilvelis, organizer of the event being staged at Barker Hangar. The Alternative Car and

See ALTERNATIVE CARS, page 18



Fabian Lewkowicz fabian@smdp.com

PLUGGING AWAY: Alternative cars rally along Colorado Avenue on Friday in preparation for this weekend's exposition at Santa Monica Airport.

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THE WESTSIDE TODAY

IT'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SANTA MONICA



Run to Benefit Harvest Home

Venice, 7:30 a.m. — noon

To register, log on to www.w2promo.com or contact Harvest Home at (310) 452-1223.

Santa Monica High School Choir Fundraiser

1201 Third St. Promenade, 9 a.m. — 11 p.m.

Caroling by SaMoHi Chamber Singers and Madrigals from 4 p.m. — 8 p.m. at Barnes and Noble. A portion of book sales will benefit the SaMoHi Choir.

Winterlit Fun Kid's Weekend and Breakfast with Santa

Santa Monica Place Mall, 10 a.m. — 4 p.m.

Breakfast with Santa and an afternoon of holiday arts and crafts facilitated by The Children's Museum of Los Angeles.

Winterlit Best Gift Ever gift drive

Third Street Promenade, 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.

St. Monica Catholic High School's Open House

1030 Lincoln Blvd., 1 p.m. — 4 p.m.

Take a campus tour, meet teachers, coaches, students and parents.

Holiday Menu Tasting at Whole Foods Market

Southern CA, noon — 3 p.m.

Whole Foods Market stores will offer samplings from their holiday menu.

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2006

Winterlit Best Gift Ever gift drive

Third Street Promenade, 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.

Car Show and Grand Opening

2420 Lincoln Blvd., 9 a.m. — 3 p.m.

Classic and performance cars will be exhibited at Westside Classics.

Lawn Bowling Lessons

Wilshire Boulevard and 25th Street, 10:15 a.m. — 11:45 a.m.

Winterlit Fun Kid's Weekend

Third Street Promenade, 11 a.m. — 4 p.m.

On the 1200 block of the Promenade, between Wilshire and Arizona, there will be snow, a petting zoo, pony rides, interactive booths and musical entertainment.

Carousel Open House

Santa Monica Pier, 2 p.m. — 5 p.m.

The event will feature crafts and activities, free carousel rides and Santa.

Santa Monica Daily Press
**To post your event
visit smdp.com/events**
For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com
and click the "Events" tab for the given day's calendar.

coltura... 2 settembre 2006... Chiesa S. Pietro alla Carità



Bayside wants off Weller trial

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Daily Press Staff Writer

SM COURTHOUSE — Attorneys for a non-profit that oversees the downtown district argued here on Friday to have their client removed from a civil lawsuit filed by victims of the deadly Farmer's Market crash that occurred more than three years ago.

Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Valerie Baker listened intently for nearly three hours as attorneys for Bayside District Corp. presented evidence they said proves the public-private management company is responsible for advising City Hall on matters related to downtown, but never assumed the duty of providing security or ensuring the safety of visitors to the Farmers' Market on Arizona Avenue.

Bayside is essentially a chamber of commerce that "puts up Christmas lights and the Hanukkah menorah," and not a governing body whose responsibility is to develop and implement a traffic management plan, said Dana Fox, an attorney for Bayside and City Hall.

"There is no evidence that Bayside has any knowledge of traffic engineering," Fox added.

Attorneys for the victims argued that Bayside's contract with City Hall explicitly states that the organization is responsible for "planning, development, management and coordination of programs, projects and services designed to benefit the community as a whole," which includes the Farmers' Market, held every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and every Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Arizona Avenue, between Fourth and Second streets.

By failing to adequately protect shoppers from vehicles entering the market, attorneys for the victims said Bayside should be held responsible for those who were killed or injured on July 16, 2003, when George Russell Weller, then 86, drove his car through plastic barricades and into the crowded market.

Baker tentatively ruled earlier this week that Bayside seems to have accepted the duty of providing a safe environment for visitors and a jury should decide whether or not the management company was negligent in doing so.

See BAYSIDE, page 18



Kevin Herrera kevinh@smdp.com

FEELIN' PLUCKY: Susan McCorry, chair of the community gardens advisory committee, pulls greens from her plot on Main Street. McCorry and other gardeners have been working to expand the number of plots within the city so that residents do not have to wait for years in order to secure one.

City has room to grow

Would-be gardeners become frustrated waiting years for one of 70 community plots

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Daily Press Staff Writer

MAIN STREET —Kneeling beside her lemon-scented geraniums, artichokes and collard greens, community gardener Susan McCorry beams with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

Not only have her crops performed well despite the erratic weather, so have efforts to grow City Hall's community gardens program, which offers small plots of city-owned land to residents looking to test their green thumbs.

"It seems that all of our hard work is starting to pay off," said McCorry, chair of the garden advisory committee, who spends much of her free time pulling weeds and planting vegetables in her roughly 100-

square-foot garden located at Main and Strand streets. "It looks as if our efforts are starting to bear fruit."

McCorry and other horticulturists have worked diligently over the last two years with members of the Recreation and Parks Commission and city staff to increase the number of community gardens and refine rules and regulations to accommodate the ever-increasing demand.

There are currently 70 community gardens on approximately one-half acre of land — 60 at 2200 Main Street and the remaining 10 on Park Drive, just off Broadway.

That number will increase by 52 plots in the coming months, representing a 74 percent bump in the number of gardens in the city, according to a city staff report. The new

plots, which will be located on Park Drive and the still-under construction Euclid Park, will include two soil beds that will be elevated for those who are handicapped. There will also be three "demonstration" gardens where city staff and horticulturists can demonstrate proper gardening techniques.

"We have such a high demand that we are doing whatever we can to come up with creative ways to create more gardens," McCorry said.

There are currently 80 households on a waiting list for plots, with an average wait of about four years. That is an improvement over prior years when applicants have waited as long as six years to secure a plot. McCorry said she waited that long before she was given some soil.

"When I got my garden, I felt like I had won the lottery," McCorry said.

The demand is so high because many res-

See PLOT THICKENS, page 19

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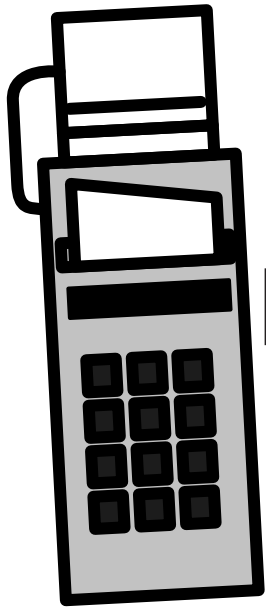
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The QLine

You Can Say That Again

This past week, Q-line asked:

Should businesses and communities try to encompass all religious beliefs by using generic slogans like "Happy Holidays" or is it fine to appeal to the majority with tidings of "Merry Christmas?" Is there a way to make all religions feel accepted while maintaining tradition?
Here are your responses:

☺“This country was founded on Judeo Christian beliefs, and for 200 years no one found fault with ‘Merry Christmas’ and Christmas trees. All of a sudden, the past few years found all types of religions springing up to attack these basic celebrations. We are a country that respects all peoples’ rights to celebrate according to their own beliefs. But it is ludicrous to think that we can incorporate them all publicly. The same for printing public flyers and literature in all the world’s languages. This is the United States of America, an English-speaking country. Love and accept it or go back to where you came from.”

☺“During the month of December, there are two celebrations of major historical events. On Dec. 15, starts Chanukah — an eight-day Jewish festival of lights that commemorates the rededication of the temple of Jerusalem after its defilement of those people under the reign of King Antiochus. On Dec. 25, we have Christmas — the annual celebration of the memory of the birth of a Jew named Jesus, known over the world as Christ. Both of these December events should be respectfully held separately due to both having separate meanings for celebration. I personally wish the Jews would come out of the closet on Chanukah and blow their horns in a gala celebration. I also personally wish all Christians come out on Christmas and blow their horns in a gala celebration. A festive good time should be had by all. In my opinion, Jesus would want it that way.”

☺“It’s better to say ‘Merry Christmas’ than ‘Happy Holidays’ because Christmas is that season. That’s the name of the holiday. Since most people in this country do observe Christmas, it is better than

saying ‘Happy Holidays.’ Other religions don’t celebrate Christmas and there is no law that says they have to. We don’t force them to celebrate it, they don’t force us to celebrate theirs. So if they don’t like it they can find some country that doesn’t celebrate Christmas, like our so-called ally Saudi Arabia. Nothing’s legal there except what the Muslims say is legal.”

☺“I think that ‘Happy Holidays’ is a good idea. Because not to offend Jews and Kwanza like that ‘Merry Christmas.’”

☺“Businesses and the communities — I guess we live in a free market capitalistic society they can encompass all religious beliefs if they feel it will benefit them, then ‘Happy Holidays,’ ‘Merry Christmas,’ whatever ... The only way you can make all religions feel accepted is if everyone keeps their religion in their house.”

☺“As an atheist, I have no problem with the Christmas season and Christmas greetings ... as long as they have nothing to do with Christianity.”

☺“Yes, we should be supporting ‘Merry Christmas’ in the United States of America. This is not another country. This is our country, and we should always be supporting ‘Merry Christmas,’ not ‘Happy Holidays.’ We need our freedom of speech and belief. Merry Christmas!”

☺“Having been raised a Christian and having it shoved down my throat, I feel very strongly about not introducing Christian values into commerce. I think it is inappropriate. I think ‘Happy Holidays’ is totally appropriate, so to respect all people of all religions so that we don’t promote one.”

Will new citizens rise to occasion?



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

The federal government recently came out with a new citizenship test, because the feeling was that to pass the old test, prospective citizens could just memorize facts rather than understand principles. For example, on the old test, they might’ve been asked the question, “How many stripes are there in the flag?” On the new test, they may be asked the question, “Why does the flag have 13 stripes?”

Here are a few examples of the questions on the new exam:

How many amendments does the Constitution have?

Do non-citizens living in the United States have the right to bear arms?

Who becomes president if both the president and the vice president can no longer serve?

How many members does the House of Representatives have?

Not so easy, huh? I hate to think what would happen if all current U.S. citizens had to take the test.

But in addition to making the new exam harder, I think they should make it more relevant. I’d like them to include questions that would indicate a greater understanding of America, so these new Americans will be able to be fully informed citizens.

For example:

1. Q: What is the “two-party” system?

A: It’s the system in which one party is held after a political group wins an election, and the second party is held when they gleefully decide to exclude those from the other political group from participating in anything meaningful.

2. Q: What are the three branches of the federal government?

A: Lately, that would be the Presidency, the State Department and the Department of Defense.

3. Q: Which of the 50 states lies in the middle of the Pacific Ocean?

A: Hawaii, and, let me look out the window for a second ... Yep, California’s still attached.

4. Q: What does “Separation of church and state” mean?

A: It means that religion and government should be separate, except when politicians are pandering to the large bloc of religious extremists.

5. Q: What is “bipartisanship?”

A: That is a way to participate in government that the party not in power always asks for.

6. Q: What is our system of “checks and balances?”

A: This is a system in which politicians receive big checks from powerful people and still try to bal-

ance their books.

7. Q: Regarding the war in Iraq, what is the difference between the “cut and run” approach and the “reasonable exit strategy” approach?

A: There is no difference. One just sounds worse, so that’s what they say their political opponent believes in.

8. Q: Even though the nominees have already been determined before then, why do the Republicans and Democrats still hold political conventions every four years?

A: They’re just being responsible. If they canceled the conventions, the silly hat industry would go out of business.

9. Q: Why have former presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush been hanging out with each other so much lately?

A: Some people will do almost anything to get out of the house.

10. Q: My son recently had a partially used tube of toothpaste confiscated at an airport checkpoint. Was this over zealotry on the part of the inspector?

A: Absolutely not. It turned out that they didn’t just get him for “possession,” but it was “possession with intent to brush.”

11. Q: What is the meaning of the term, “distrustful immigrant?”

A: A “distrustful immigrant” is someone who wants to become a citizen after you and your family have already become citizens.

12. Q: Can a poor person be elected president?

A: Of course, just not of the United States.

13. Q: Who decides when members of Congress should get a raise?

A: Members of Congress.

14. Q: Isn’t that a conflict of interest?

A: Not by Congressional standards.

15. Q: Why is it so hard to get people to vote in American political elections, but TV shows like “American Idol” seem to have no problem getting people to vote?

A: When more politicians do things worthy of applause, maybe more people will vote.

So, I think that if there were questions like the ones above, new citizens would be better prepared for their responsibilities as new Americans. Oh, I almost forgot one:

Q: Since our enemy usually becomes our friend after we fight them in wars, why don’t we just skip the wars?

A: This sounds like something a naïve child would ask. In other words, it’s something we should think about.

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We need something concrete to lean on



COMMON SCENTS

BY CAROLE ORLIN

Since my last column appeared ("Mental illness is the tragedy within," Nov. 27, pages 4-5), I have received numerous e-mails and noted a number of Letters to the Editor touching on the same subject matter. Because of space constraints with the prior column, I wanted to continue with some additional thoughts about this critical problem that faces us on a daily basis in Santa Monica.

Unfortunately, we are confronted with the reality that a small percentage of mentally ill people, deprived of medications and support, can become violent. Civil liberty advocates, with all their political correctness, have changed state laws to the point that it is now almost impossible to medicate or treat psychotic people unless they are an imminent threat to themselves or others. The flaw in that approach is that when a person is psychotic, his or her judgment is impaired, and therefore, unable to make rational decisions about most things, least of all their care.

It is hard to believe that anyone who is thinking clearly would choose to eat from trash cans, sleep and relieve themselves in alleys, be tortured by auditory and visual hallucinations, and put themselves at risk of bodily harm. Reality also tells us that there is no sign of this trend changing, despite the tragedy we see on our streets every day. In the 1990s, 44 state hospitals closed, which is more than all the closings in the last two decades combined. This is truly a shameful debacle. For many of these people, three hots and a cot are more than they are getting now. I know we cannot unring the bell, but this untenable situation should not be allowed to continue.

We need to be able to separate the anti-social street people from the vulnerable homeless. We have more than our share of anti-social transients here in SM. I recent-

ly read the "Crime Watch" section of SMDP, and as usual, a significantly, disproportionate number of crimes were committed by transients. We need to deal with the criminal element that makes up a large part of our "homeless" population in one way, and the vulnerable mentally ill that make up the remainder, in another. We cannot lump them all together. One approach is not adequate for the diversity within the "homeless" population. I have not seen any evidence that the City Council is making any real progress with this situation.

The city's new multimillion-dollar community services center on Cloverfield Boulevard will help a few people, but come on! It is a woefully inadequate way of dealing with the overwhelming number of transients we citizens are faced with every day. I know homelessness is a nationwide problem. The issue on the table is not: Why does Santa Monica have homeless people; but why does Santa Monica have such a disproportionately large number of "permanent transients"?

I have been pleased to see an occasional police presence on Montana Avenue, Main Street and the Promenade during this holiday season while tourists fill our streets. Will this continue after the holidays are over? When are we going to see something of substance that addresses both the mentally ill, and the anti-social transients, and shows the law-abiding, taxpaying citizens of Santa Monica that our concerns are being heard, and our elected representatives care enough about their constituents to finally do something?

The apparent lack of response to citizens' concerns creates more ill feelings towards both the City Council and the homeless population in general. It is the City Council's apparent "let them eat cake" attitude that brings out the worst in people and is adding to an already very bad situation.

Show us you hear us, and give us a concrete plan.

Carole Orlin can be reached at Caroleorlin@yahoo.com.

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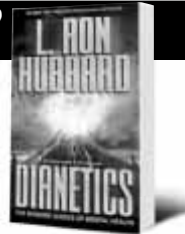
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Yahoo woes illustrate blip in programming plan

BY GARY GENTILE
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — The departure of television veteran Lloyd Braun from Yahoo Inc. underscores a shift, or at least a major hiccup, by Internet companies away from creating costly original content.

Braun, who once ran primetime programming for the Walt Disney Co.'s ABC network, left Yahoo this week after his role was greatly diminished in a companywide reorganization that placed his group into a newly created division.

Yahoo's hiring of Braun to run the new Yahoo Media Group two years ago sparked speculation that the online company was itching to become, in effect, a TV network on the Web, producing its own shows to attract

eyeballs to its lucrative Internet advertising.

After all, Braun was responsible for ABC's nascent turnaround and the genius behind its hit show "Lost." Analysts saw great symbolism in the consolidation of Yahoo's far-flung media sites — music, video, finance and news — into a new Santa Monica office that was once home of fabled movie studio Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

But two years ago, no one foresaw the rise of sites such as YouTube and MySpace, which became huge companies by aggregating user-generated videos and creating communities where people could network. YouTube was eventually bought by search giant Google Inc. for \$1.76 billion, while MySpace was snatched by News Corp. for \$580 million.

Few people also foresaw that major media companies such as Disney, CBS Corp. and

Time Warner Inc. would begin selling TV episodes or full-length films over Apple Computer Inc.'s iTunes store.

As YouTube and similar sites grew in popularity, Braun struggled to get competing Yahoo divisions to think in terms of content rather than technology, Braun recounted in an interview at his Santa Monica office several weeks before his departure.

One major glitch that consumed more than a year, for instance, was the lack of common software for producing and publishing content at the various product units inside Yahoo. Incompatible technology made it nearly impossible to design a template that could be easily shared by the various sites.

Before redesigns of such services as Yahoo Music or Yahoo Games could be launched, Braun's unit had to develop a common soft-

ware platform, a task now completed. Yahoo recently started to rollout redesigned sites and introduced a new offering, Yahoo Food.

Braun also had to curtail ambitions to produce original shows for the Web. Replicating the TV network model would be prohibitively expensive, especially if such shows could only be viewed on a small computer screen.

Yahoo did create several new video and other programs, including news dispatches from war journalist Kevin Sites. The company also recently launched a series of live music performances similar to those featured on rival AOL's site.

But in a twist, one of its most popular shows, called "The Nine," features host Maria Sansone counting down nine notable user-generated video clips found on other sites such as YouTube.

Google enrolls teachers for its online software crusade

BY MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Business Writer

PALO ALTO — Google Inc., a company synonymous with searching the Internet, hopes to define far more of the world's computing experience with a helping hand from schoolchildren.

For several months, it has been giving away to all takers an online word processor, spreadsheet and other programs that can perform tasks usually handled by desktop software. Offering a convenience that worries some privacy experts, the programs automatically store everything in Google's

vast data centers so the information can be retrieved on any Internet-connected computer.

As it tries to usher in a new era in computing, Google is promoting its software applications in kindergarten through high school classrooms, where kids who have grown up with the Web are more likely to experiment with different technology.

"It's the perfect place for them to target the next generation of computer users," said James McQuivey, a former Forrester Research analyst who is now a Boston University professor specializing in technology and communications.

The free-software approach poses a challenge to Microsoft Corp., whose success revolves around sales of its long-dominant Windows operating system and Office suite. The programs — including Word and Excel — are installed on hard drives and information is usually stored locally as well.

Google views its educational initiative as a public service for teachers who often lack the money and expertise to introduce more technological tools into their classrooms. The company doesn't allow advertising in its word processing and spreadsheets programs, leaving it unclear how Google expects to make money.

"We think it's good to get people familiar with the other things we do (besides search), but it's not like we are trying to get some kind of lifetime value out of each student," said Cristin Frodella, a Google product manager overseeing the education project.

"We just want to help teachers engage kids with technology that makes learning seem less like drudgery."

Google is trying to engage the teachers first. In October, the company posted an online guide to provide instructors with ideas on how to incorporate the applications into their curricula.

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Taco Bell struggling after E. coli outbreak

BY ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — An E. coli outbreak linked to Taco Bell restaurants left the fast-food chain with a major damage-control challenge Thursday: How can it reassure customers its food is safe even as the suspected cause of the outbreak remained unconfirmed?

The outbreak has left more than four dozen people sick in at least three states. Taco Bell ordered the removal of green onions from its 5,800 restaurants nationwide Wednesday after testing by an independent lab suggested the bacteria may have come from scallions.

Analysts said the Mexican-style restaurant chain is likely to see sales decline in the short term.

“You’ve got a crisis of confidence right now,” said Michael Sitrick, a crisis-management expert. “What they need to do to bring people back in the stores is to assure them that what happened in the past cannot happen in the future.”

Taco Bell, an Irvine, Calif., unit of Yum Brands Inc., told customers that in addition to getting rid of all its green onions, it sanitized the affected restaurants and set up a toll-free number for people to call with concerns.

Paul Argenti, a business professor at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., said Taco Bell appeared to be doing a good job handling the problem.

“When you’re in the middle of it, give people any information that you know, as much as possible,” he said. “Try to be honest and open and transparent.”

Argenti said he believes a television ad campaign to reassure customers is not necessary. Taco Bell has a loyal customer base that “will be looking for a reason to go back,” he said. “Within six months, everything rights itself.”

Taco Bell spokesman Rob Poetsch said the chain is preoccupied with the investigation. He would not say if it plans a major publicity effort. The restaurant is working as closely as possible with authorities “to find the root cause of this,” he said.

Also Thursday, federal health officials said they were investigating two more suspected cases of E. coli linked to the outbreak in Utah and South Carolina, far from the other cases concentrated in the Northeast. And in Delaware, all 14 Taco Bell restaurants

closed for cleaning after a 15-year-old girl who ate at a Taco Bell in New Jersey was hospitalized.

At least five people remained hospitalized. Some loyal customers seemed unconcerned about the outbreak.

“I don’t care. I’ve been eating at Taco Bell my whole life,” said Josh Dowiak, 20, of Philadelphia, as devoured a meal dripping with cheese behind a Taco Bell in Glassboro, N.J.

But his co-worker, a fellow college student, expressed less gusto for his lunch after learning about the outbreak. “I didn’t know about it. Otherwise I don’t know if we would have come here,” said Dale Gadnorsa, 23, also of Philadelphia.

The company suggests that customers who are worried about the outbreak call its hot line, 1-800-TACO-BELL.

Barry Sawyer, an operator who answered the phone at the Miami-based call center, said he has handled 25 calls since Wednesday. Most callers were not ill; they just wanted to understand the situation.

“The majority are calling in and asking ‘What’s going on?’” Sawyer said. “I don’t think I’ve received any irate calls about it.”

Dr. Douglas Archer, associate dean for research at the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida, said throwing out more than the scallions would be premature.

“If nothing’s pointing to anything else, where would you stop if you started down that path?” he said. “Taco Bell has been around for a long, long time, and they’ve served billions and billions safely.”

Ready Pac Produce of Irwindale, Calif. — which washed, chopped and packed the green onions suspected in the outbreak — said it bought its scallions from a grower in Oxnard, Calif., about 45 miles northwest of Los Angeles.

This is the second E. coli scare to hit Ready Pac in the past four months. In September, spinach with the Ready Pac label was among dozens of brands pulled from the shelves before federal authorities traced a nationwide E. coli outbreak to another California processing plant that bags spinach.

Associated Press writers **Lisa Leff** in San Francisco, **Gillian Flaccus** in Irvine, **Garance Burke** in Fresno, **Janet Frankston Lorin** in Jersey City, N.J., and **Bruce Schreiner** in Louisville, Ky., contributed to this report.

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Flywheel takes off in ports, reducing emissions

BY KRISTOPHER HANSON

Associated Press Writer

LONG BEACH — This is one small business that may just be in the right place with the right product at the right time.

A small Cerritos company is marketing a flywheel device to port crane operators that claims to save fuel, reduce dangerous emissions and improve efficiency and power.

With high fuel prices, public pressure to clean port-generated emissions and the always-present effort to streamline operations, shipyard managers are taking a close look at Vycon Energy and its new machine.

The \$150,000 flywheel regenerator works by capturing kinetic energy wasted when a

crane lowers containers. The regenerator uses that energy during lifting operations.

By supplementing power to the crane's diesel motor, the high-speed magnetic flywheel conserves fuel up to 25 percent while reducing the level of toxic emissions spewing into the air as much as 67 percent.

Inventors say it pays for itself within a few years, has a 20-year lifespan and requires little maintenance, if any.

Despite its enormous potential at shipyards, the flywheel device only took off in recent months.

"In the U.S., fuel is still relatively cheap, so we were spending a lot of time in Europe and Asia selling the system for its fuel-saving benefits," said Octavio Solis, a Vycon product man-

ager. "Then the ports made the decision to get serious about air pollution, and we stepped up to prove we can help in that area, too."

Invented by a group of curious electrical engineers, Vycon's "Regen" flywheel system is a cutting-edge version of an ancient system.

Flywheels, or pottery wheels, were used to make pottery in Egypt during the reign of the Great Pharaohs and later helped fuel steam engines during the Industrial Revolution.

Still in use, the pottery wheel is a spinning round surface, usually powered by a foot pedal, on which clay is shaped into ceramics. The simple concept works by permitting the energy stored in the wheel to be directed to where it's required — the point where the potter's hand meets the clay.

In the 1990s, Vycon employees began tinkering with a much more complex flywheel using a magnet motor/generator, magnetic bearings and integrated control mechanisms.

To beat the competition, engineers had to develop a working flywheel capable of recharging every minute without overheating — making it practicable for machines with heavy cycles — like trains and cranes.

On cranes, the flywheel works by capturing energy from AC hoist motors regenerated when the motors are used as brakes during lowering cycles.

Typically, that regenerated energy is directed to the crane's resistor banks, where it's wasted as heat.

Idaho hunting ranch may have had illegal red deer hybrid

BY JOHN MILLER

Associated Press Writer

BOISE, Idaho — A domesticated elk from an eastern Idaho hunting ranch where some animals escaped in August has tested positive as a red deer hybrid, which are illegal in Idaho.

The ranch's owner, Rex Rammell, was skeptical of the result. Idaho Department of Agriculture officials also say they're retesting in case the result was a false positive.

Hybrids can produce the large antlers that hunters prize more efficiently than pure elk, but they're banned in Idaho for fear they could pollute the wild elk gene pool. Elk are Idaho's premier game animals and attract millions of dollars to the economy.

In August, up to 160 elk fled Rammell's Chief Joseph hunting preserve near Rexburg. That prompted Gov. Jim Risch to order an emergency hunt, saying the elk could spread inferior genes or disease to wild herds near Yellowstone National Park.

Since then, state Department of Agriculture employees have tested more than 90 of Rammell's animals, including about 36 shot after their flight and 60 live animals from Rammell's enclosure now in quarantine, spokesman Wayne Hoffman said. Hoffman cautioned against jumping to conclusions on the lone test, due to frequent occurrences of false positives and because the elk in question came to Idaho from another state in 1997 with a certificate

vouching for its genetic purity.

"The fact that only one elk tested positive, and the fact that we have certification that it's already been tested free of red deer, should cause anyone to go back and reverify," said Hoffman, whose agency regulates Idaho's game farms. "There are a lot of clues here that give us pause."

The state didn't immediately say if the elk was a bull or a cow. Follow-up tests are being conducted by labs in California and Canada.

Rammell, a veterinarian who has accused Risch of violating his private property rights with the emergency hunt, was dubious of the test result. It would be very unusual for just a single animal to test positive when it lived in a herd that offered

ample opportunity to breed and produce offspring, he said.

Rammell said he has sold his elk operation where he charged \$6,000 to kill a large-antlered bull. His former animals have gone to another elk breeder and his 168-acre preserve is now owned by a California real-estate investor, he said.

Foes of so-called "shooter buck" operations like Rammell's hope to capitalize on the elk escape to persuade the Idaho Legislature to enact a ban similar to those already in effect in neighboring Wyoming and Montana. Idaho game farm owners argue that raising the specter of disease or genetic impurities in domestic elk amounts to fear-mongering that demonizes their industry.

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Missing father died due to hypothermia

BY JEFF BARNARD

Associated Press Writer

CENTRAL POINT, Ore. — Lost in the snowy wilderness and seeking help for his stranded family, James Kim probably traveled more than 10 miles on foot before he died, believing he could find a nearby town, authorities said Thursday.

An autopsy showed that he died alone of hypothermia. Authorities said when his body was found in a creek's shallow water on Wednesday, he was about a mile away from a fishing lodge stacked with food.

"James Kim did nothing wrong. He was trying to save his family," said Lt. Gregg Hastings of the Oregon State Police said at a Thursday news conference. "He thought that if he could get to the river, he could make it to the town."

Kim thought the nearby town of Galice was only 4 miles away, although it was really 15 miles, Hastings said. Just a mile or so down the road, however, was a fishing lodge where he could have found shelter, warmth, and enough food for months.

"It would have been a beautiful ending to sad story," said John James, the owner of the nearby Black Bar Lodge.

After scouring the mountains of southern Oregon for days, a search helicopter hired by Kim's family spotted the man's body fully clothed on his back in Big Windy Creek near the Rogue River, authorities said. During the search, authorities found several pieces of clothing they believed Kim left as a trail to find him; medical experts said it could be a sign of hypothermia, which can make victims feel warm and shed clothing.

A deputy state medical examiner was unable to determine the exact time of death, Hastings said. The autopsy revealed no inca-

pacitating injuries, he added.

Kim's wife, Kati, and two daughters were rescued Monday when they were spotted by a search helicopter as they were leaving the car to find help themselves. She told authorities they had missed a turnoff Nov. 25, and after consulting a map, made another turn. They passed signs warning Bear Camp Road could be blocked by snow, but kept going. At times James had to stick his head out the window to see through the falling snow, said Hastings.

A dozen miles up the one-lane paved road, they came to a fork, and turned right, descending into a confusing warren of logging roads. By the time they turned around they were 15 miles off Bear Camp Road and stopped in a place they hoped to be spotted from the air, fearing they were running out of gas, searchers said. It snowed for the next three days, and the car was stranded.

Hastings said Kati told officers it snowed hard several days while the family was stuck, and they heard helicopters at least twice. When help didn't arrive, James Kim, a senior editor for the technology media company CNET Networks Inc., struck out to look for help.

"Kati and the kids are in good condition as it relates to the ordeal that they've been through," Hastings said.

E-mail messages and Web site postings have been pouring in from people who knew the Kim family and people who didn't. On jamesandkati.com, a Web site set up by family friend Scott Nelson Windels, more than 6,000 e-mails for the family had been sent as of Thursday.

"It's a little bit overwhelming," Windels said. "There's a lot of people who know James from CNet and TechTV. But there are also a lot of parents with a lot of affinity to the story, people who travel with their kids who realized this could happen to them."

Chop, chop, mister: Tree farmer bowing out

BY AMY LORENTZEN

Associated Press Writer

ANKENY, Iowa — Within a few weeks, visitors to the Captain Jack Christmas Tree Farm won't be able to stroll the fields, eating free popcorn and candy canes as they search for the perfect holiday centerpiece.

Bill "Captain Jack" Dennis is shutting down his 50-acre, choose-and-cut Christmas tree farm in this upscale Des Moines suburb.

The Christmas tree business has been good to Dennis and his wife, Rhonda, for 22 years. They've created one of the most popular holiday hot spots in the region, drawing up to 35,000 visitors some years. They sell as many as 3,000 trees each season at about \$5 per foot of evergreen.

"There will be both the relief and then sorrow because we know that it's going to be our last year," said Dennis, a former commercial pilot and radio traffic reporter who became known as Captain Jack.

The couple plan to keep the original 37 1/2 acres of land they bought in the 1980s and sell the rest to a buyer who wants to build a house in the forest of Christmas trees.

"A lot of people come up to you and say 'We've been coming here for 20 years or more. We're really going to miss it,'" Bill Dennis said.

One person who will miss the holiday hustle and bustle is Ernie Green, a longtime employee at the farm. He'll stay on to help care for the land and assist in possibly running a wholesale tree business.

"Basically, it's time," Green said of the decision to close, though he added that harvesting a Christmas tree is "an experience that everybody should have."

The Dennises started their forest with 1,500 seedlings. Today, it's home to about 50,000 evergreen trees and seedlings. The average growing time for a 6-foot tree is seven years. The trees require plenty of attention, especially during years of drought when expensive and bulky equipment must be run into the fields to quench the growing evergreens' thirst.

Nationwide, there are about 15,000 Christmas tree growers, and more than 100,000 people are employed full- or part-time in the industry. In Iowa, there are about 100 choose-and-cut farms, according to the state Christmas Tree Growers Association.

Dennis, 64, still flies about once a week. He has been involved in aerial photography and is also an HTML programmer who operates an Internet server under Captain Jack Communications. His wife keeps the books for that venture, something they'll continue to do as they become snowbirds for a few months a year in Florida.

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Las Vegas battles homelessness amid the glitz

BY KATHLEEN HENNESSEY
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — This may be a boomtown, but Las Vegas is scattered with signs of bust. The newest sits outside a rare grassy refuge near the city’s withered downtown.

The “Park Closed” sign was posted last week, after a fight between two homeless men turned deadly, and city officials, led by Mayor Oscar Goodman, took the unusual step of closing the park. They called it a safety hazard.

Others, who point out the park is a hang-out for homeless people, read the move differently. Advocates say it’s another maneuver in Sin City’s ongoing war against its poor.

“There is a brokenness here, it’s a brokenness,” said Julia Occhiogrosso, an advocate for the poor with Catholic Worker. “The whole sense of this ancient act of hospitality,

the sense that to be human is to help each other out, it’s under siege.”

Las Vegas, known as the land of fast money and cheap living, has for years grappled with how to handle those who don’t strike it rich — one of the many growing pains in a region that expands by more than 5,000 people a month. A January 2005 census counted 14,500 homeless people in southern Nevada.

No one has made more news and sparked more debate on the issue than the outspoken Goodman, a former mob lawyer with a flair for the dramatic. His city’s boundary stops short of the big-ticket glitz of the Strip, and Goodman has sought to extend the prosperity northward by cleaning up and revitalizing Las Vegas’ aging downtown.

The mayor once proposed moving the homeless to an abandoned prison 30 miles

outside the city, and he’s talked about his desire to move those who are healthy but refuse help “as far away from Las Vegas as possible.” Goodman once accused Salt Lake City officials of busing its destitute to his town, but later apologized.

Under Goodman’s watch, the city has conducted massive sweeps of homeless encampments but also has tried to better coordinate its regional resources and outreach.

Goodman and city officials say they’re struggling to deal with the chronically homeless, often the mentally ill and substance addicted, who refuse shelter.

The current battleground is in public parks.

In August, the Las Vegas City Council banned sleeping within 500 feet of feces — an administrative blunder, officials admit, that has since been repealed. (Still, three homeless men were arrested under the law,

and the city is investigating why the men were “mistakenly charged.”)

In July, Las Vegas became one of the first cities to make it illegal to feed the poor in parks — a reaction to a homeless advocate who frequently bought homemade spaghetti, vegetable soup, sandwiches and water to the now shuttered Huntridge Circle Park.

“Nobody wants it their backyard,” said Gail Sacco, who began offering the six free meals a week last year.

The closure moved the homeless issue to Goodman’s backyard.

Sacco now brings food to the homeless in another park — this one across the street from City Hall. On a recent afternoon, her delivery brought a dozen people to huddle around a bucket of vegetable soup sending steam up toward the mayor’s 10th floor offices.

Bright meteor streaks by, but onlookers left in dust

By The Associated Press

DENVER — A bright meteor streaked across Colorado and Utah early Friday, prompting a rash of calls to authorities and researchers, but no debris was immediately reported.

“It came in from the east, over the plains, and was seen to disappear over the mountains to the west,” said Chris Peterson, a meteor researcher with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Dispatchers in Utah County, south of Salt Lake City, also received reports of the object.

Jim Rickard of Denver saw the meteor

while he was driving to work. He said it was green-colored and seemed to move slowly.

“It would compare to landing lights on an aircraft,” he said. “Noticeably bright but not brilliant.”

The meteor was spotted at about 6:45 a.m. MST and was bright enough to be categorized as a fireball, Peterson said. He said it was not captured on a network of meteor-watching cameras in Colorado because they had been turned off as the day dawned.

Meteors are common but this one was unusual because it was so bright it could be

seen as the sky was getting light, Peterson said.

“This one may have been much brighter (than most), more like the brightness of the moon,” he said. “Events like that happen every year or so.”

Peterson, who operates a Web site on meteors, said he received several witness reports but did not see the meteor himself. He lives in the mountain town of Guffey, about 75 miles southwest of Denver.

He said any debris from the meteor would be hard to find.

“You’d just be looking at a handful of rocks,” he said. “The rocks would have

probably fallen somewhere where there’s a lot of other rocks.”

Peterson said the meteor could have come from the asteroid belt, a ring of rocky debris between Mars and Jupiter, or could have been debris from a passing comet.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado Springs reported “a heightened state of meteor activity” from the Geminids meteor shower but did not mention the object witnesses saw Friday.

Researcher **Chris Peterson’s** Web site to report or read about meteors: <http://www.cloudbait.com>



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Court grants 15-day stay on smoking ban

BY KATHLEEN HENNESSEY

Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — A Las Vegas judge has granted a 15-day restraining order to prevent southern Nevada police and prosecutors from enforcing a voter-approved statewide smoking ban that was to take effect Friday.

Clark County District Court Judge Douglas Herndon said Thursday that there was a sufficient likelihood that a group of southern Nevada business owners could persuade him the ban was unconstitutional, and ordered both sides to present their cases at a Dec. 19 hearing.

Herndon was cautious to note that he was not taking a position on the ban or undermining the vote of the people.

"In terms of the view of activist judges, this is not an issue of my telling the voters their vote is wrong. It's an issue of the constitutionality of the law they voted on," Herndon said.

The groups' lawyer, Kirk Lenhard, had asked for a "breathing period" in which both parties could prepare briefs on the constitutionality of the measure.

The Clean Indoor Air Act, approved as Question 5 on the Nov. 7 ballot, 54 percent to 46 percent, would ban smoking in bars that serve meals; in slot machine sections of grocery and convenience stores; and at video arcades, shopping malls, schools and day-care centers.

It would allow smoking in the gambling areas of casinos.

The business group filed suit Tuesday

asking for an injunction and a restraining order to keep law enforcement officials from enforcing the law, claiming it was unconstitutional, too vague to comply with, and unfairly discriminated against some businesses.

Besides the attorney general's office, the group named only Las Vegas-area agencies as defendants in the suit, so the restraining order applies only to those agencies, Herndon said. His ruling does not affect enforcement of the smoking ban in other parts of the state, and the attorney general's office said its role was to defend the state law, not enforce its provisions.

It wasn't immediately clear how evenly the ban would be enforced outside of southern Nevada. Sparks Police Cmdr. Steve Asher said the department will prioritize calls related to the ban.

"We wouldn't out-and-out, completely ignore that. If someone was to call and say, 'this is what's going on,' we'd take a case and submit it to the city attorney," he said.

Elko County Sheriff Neil Harris said he needs more information before he starts enforcing the law in his rural eastern Nevada county.

If a smoker lights up in a restaurant Friday, "we're not going to do anything with it, we need more direction from the attorney general or the district attorney before we can enforce it," Harris said.

Lenhard pointed to guidelines recently drafted by the Southern Nevada Public Health District as evidence the district was "filling in the blanks" left by holes in the measure.

Law enforcer pledges allegiance to leader of polygamious sect

By The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — The chief law enforcer in two Utah-Arizona border towns is accused of misconduct after writing a letter in which he warmly referred to the leader of a polygamious sect as "Uncle Warren" and pledged "our desire to stand with you and the priesthood."

"I am praying for you to be protected and yearn to be with you again," wrote Fred Barlow, who referred to himself as a "servant" to Warren Jeffs.

Jeffs is the leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which has 10,000 members in Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Ariz. Barlow is the marshal who oversees officers in the towns.

The letter was written in October 2005 while Jeffs was on the run from criminal charges.

The Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board is using the letter as evidence in one of three misconduct charges against Barlow, who could lose his certification. The letter was obtained by The Salt Lake Tribune.

Separately, the Utah Peace Officer Standards and Training Council this week voted to conduct its own probe of the police force, whose officers are accused of being too loyal to Jeffs.

The FLDS is a sect that practices polygamy in marriages determined by its leaders. For nearly 100 years, members have lived a quiet, insular life in Hildale and Colorado City.

Jeffs was on the FBI's most wanted listed when he was arrested near Las Vegas Aug. 28.

A Washington County judge next Thursday will decide whether he will stand trial on charges of rape as an accomplice for forcing a teenage girl to marry an older cousin.

In his letter, Barlow pledges allegiance to Jeffs and keeps him informed about personnel.

"I do not know exactly what we have ahead of us but I do know that I and all of the other officers have expressed our desire to stand with you and the priesthood. ... Without the priesthood I am nothing," Barlow wrote.

He told Jeffs that he planned to hire a new officer — "unless you would like us to do something different."

Barlow said the officers have stated "their desire to follow the directives that are placed before us. I feel that I am the weakest one among them, but I want to fill the position that you would have me fill and do the job the way that you would like it done."

Federal authorities obtained the letter on Oct. 28, 2005, when Jeffs' brother, Seth Jeffs, was arrested in Colorado with correspondence, money and other supplies believed to be intended for Warren Jeffs.

The Arizona police board has accused Barlow of seeking direction from Jeffs, a federal fugitive; refusing to ask questions during a deposition; and refusing to answer questions posed by an investigator for the Arizona attorney general.

No date has been set for an administrative hearing.

The Arizona board's compliance manager, Bob Forry, said he doesn't know how much contact Barlow had with Jeffs.



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Hit to affordable housing

BY SCOTT SONNER

Associated Press Writer

RENO, Nev. — About one of every three of the nation's cities has less affordable housing than they had a year ago, according to a survey the League of Cities released Thursday at its annual Congress of Cities.

Four out of five of the housing directors surveyed in more than 1,000 U.S. cities of all sizes also said the value of homes and rental costs have increased significantly, putting severe financial strain on families, the league's State of America's Cities Survey on Municipal Housing said.

In addition, one-third reported predatory lending was increasing, and more than half indicated it was a problem in their cities.

League leaders said the survey shows cities are struggling to meet the housing needs of lower-income working families, especially those with disabilities, people in transition and immigrant families.

The survey suggests the most significant challenges include the increasing number of foreclosures, need for home repairs among elderly and low-income families, deteriorating housing stock, absentee landlords and vacant and abandoned properties.

"Ensuring an adequate housing stock is just one of the major obstacles faced by cities in this decade, but all the obstacles are linked together," said Cynthia McCollum, a league vice president and city councilwoman from Madison, Ala.

"We are facing increasing numbers of older residents, more fiscal challenges, problems

with crumbling infrastructure and a changing economic climate," she said in a statement.

Henry Cisneros, former U.S. secretary of housing and urban development under President Clinton, said part of the problem is that only 2.2 million new affordable housing units — primarily rentals — were built during the 1990s compared with 5 million in the 1970s.

"I'm a big fan of home ownership, but the most pressing problem we have in cities today is the lack of affordable rentals," Cisneros said in a keynote address Thursday.

"A family with one full-time worker earning minimum wage cannot afford local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the country today," he said.

Cisneros admitted that, like others, he did not put enough emphasis on increasing housing stock while he was mayor of San Antonio in the 1980s.

"We all work hard at bringing new industry to town. ... but a home is where a job goes to sleep. It is a basic function of a city to provide housing for working people," he said.

"I drive through parts of cities, like Los Angeles, and I see working people, custodial people, at 10 o'clock at night having to board buses to go 40 miles out into the suburbs because they cannot afford a home," he said.

The league's survey of 1,167 municipal employees with a margin of error of plus or minus 4.5 percent showed 34 percent believed the availability of housing had worsened in the past year while 36 percent

said it was about the same and 29 percent said it had improved.

At the same time, at least four of five local housing directors reported severe financial strain on families as a result of significant increases in house values and rental costs.

Specifically, 91 percent reported a significant increase in home values while 7 percent said the values were about the same and 2 percent reported declines. In rental rates, 80 percent reported increases, 17 percent said rates were about the same, 2 percent said they declined and 1 percent did not know, the league said.

Other findings include:

— 31 percent reported predatory lending on the increase

— 41 percent reported more foreclosures

— 36 reported an increase in absentee landlords

Part of the conference will address prospects for federal housing programs under the new Democrat-controlled Congress.

"We know that the core of the American dream is homeownership. But are rents and housing prices continue to rise, where can our younger workers, our lower-income families, our municipal employees live? McCollum said.

"We must find a place for them in our communities and we must commit to programs that will assist them," she said.

The nonprofit league based in Washington D.C. works as a resource and advocate for more than 18,000 cities, towns and villages in the U.S.

Ex-Qwest exec gets sentenced to time served

By The Associated Press

DENVER — A former Qwest Communications manager who pleaded guilty to an accessory count in a multimillion-dollar fraud scheme was released from government supervision Friday when a judge sentenced him to time served and waived a \$5,000 fine.

Grant Graham was one of four midlevel Qwest managers accused of improperly booking nearly \$34 million in revenue during a 2001 deal to link Arizona schools to the Internet.

He pleaded guilty in May 2004 to one count of accessory after the fact to wire fraud, and prosecutors dropped eight other charges. The agreement called for Graham to receive one year on probation if he cooperated with prosecutors looking into an accounting scandal at Qwest.

Prosecutors said in a court filing last month that Graham provided substantial assistance in their investigation.

Graham has spent three years and nine months under federal court supervision, including 2 1/2 years after the plea was entered. U.S. District Judge Robert Blackburn ruled that time covered the terms of the plea agreement and ordered Graham to pay a \$100 special assessment fee.

Former managers Bryan Treadway and John Walker were acquitted of all 11 charges.

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Mine on border may be a drain on lakes

BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH

Associated Press Writer

SANDPOINT, Idaho — A century ago, the mountains in northern Idaho's Panhandle and neighboring northwestern Montana were sprinkled with glory holes, mines that cleaved millions of tons of ore laden with precious metals from the ground.

Most of those mines have since played out. The new economic glory holes are what Sunset magazine last spring called "the West's most beautiful lakes," tourist-magnet blue-green oases nestled among the pine-carpeted peaks.

But a new \$200 million copper and silver mine awaiting federal and state regulators' approval under Montana's Cabinet Mountains Wilderness near the Idaho border could pull the plug on some of the region's mountain lakes, turning them into dry holes, officials fear.

"Their biggest challenge is on top of the Cabinet Mountains there are several naturally occurring lakes and there are faults that run through that mountain range," Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "Unless they can demonstrate that they are going to be able to pierce into that mountain and not allow that fault to drain those lakes, they are not going to get those permits."

Spokane, Wash.-based Revett Minerals bills the Rock Creek Mine as a new generation of environmentally benign and aesthetically pleasing mineral extraction plants. The company's advertising slogan for the mine is, "You won't even know we're there."

The project has been mired in lawsuits almost since its inception 20 years ago as the first mine beneath a federally protected wilderness area. Environmental groups have

successfully overturned two of the three biological opinions in favor of the mine by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are challenging the U.S. Forest Service's initial approval for the mine to move forward. In 2004, Tiffany and Co. took out a full-page Washington Post newspaper ad opposing the mine, declaring the area more valuable for wildlife than for jewelry.

Revett has pledged to boost the area's dwindling grizzly bear population by creating a 2,450-acre sanctuary and paying 35 years' worth of salaries for a Montana state bear management specialist and a security guard to protect the bear habitat. The Fish and Wildlife Service said in October that building the mine would be better for the bears than leaving intact the 114 million ounces of silver and 935 million ounces of copper lying underground.

Revett CEO William Orchow said he was surprised that Schweitzer, who has previously expressed support for the mine proposal, would raise the lake-draining issue after the Forest Service had determined it was not a threat.

"This has been exhaustively studied," said Orchow, whose company expects to begin exploratory digging at the site as soon as the snow melts next spring. "We are going to stay a minimum of a thousand feet away from the edge and the bottom of the lake and it's been determined that will be a sufficient safeguard to prevent any draining."

A 2001 Montana Department of Environmental Quality study of Cliff and Rock lakes — two of the six Cabinet Mountain lakes above the ore body — found that tunneling into the complex fracture system of rock might create artificial hydraulic forces that could suck water from the aquifer that feeds the lakes.

Fishing businesses decry large mine being proposed for Alaska

BY MARY PEMBERTON

Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A large mine in the heart of some of the best salmon and trout fishing in the world is a fly fisherman's worst nightmare, says an official of a trade association.

"The prospect of hard rock mining in the Bristol Bay area of Alaska scares the hell out of the fly angling community and the businesses that service it," American Fly Fishing Trade Association President Robert Ramsay said. "These are some of the most cherished fly fishing waters on earth."

That's why 37 leaders in the sport fishing industry have formed an alliance to fight the proposed Pebble Mine in southwest Alaska, Ramsay said. If built, the association says the mine would be the largest open pit copper and gold mine in North America — a claim that the company proposing the mine denies.

The association, along with some of the biggest names in the sport fishing industry, including Orvis, Sage, Simms, St. Croix, Patagonia, Scientific Anglers and G. Loomis, want not only the mine project stopped but permanent protection for the Bristol Bay watershed from industrial mining.

In an open letter to the governor of Alaska, the association says: "Many of us, along with our customers from across America and around the world, travel to

Bristol Bay to pursue some of the world's last great runs of wild salmon and trophy rainbow trout.

"Alaska's Bristol Bay is a national and international treasure; its salmon, trout and wilderness character are worth far more than the gold that may lie below the land's surface."

The message will be delivered in full-page, color ads to run in the Fish Alaska magazine in December, January and February. It will also run in the February issue of Fly Fisherman Magazine.

Trout Unlimited, which is paying for the ads, says the combined circulation for the two fishing magazines is more than 155,000. A copy of the letter and the ad is on the Web at <http://www.renewableresourcescoalition.org/troutunlimited.pdf>.

Tim Bristol, director of Trout Unlimited's Alaska program, said the idea for the ad started at a trade show last August in Denver. He said it was surprising how much people already knew about the Pebble Mine.

"I think many of the companies and their representatives were chomping at the bit to help out," Bristol said. "It is more than just about an ad. This is about these highly-regarded and successful businesses. They decided to lend their support to what we are doing... They said this is the wrong kind of mine in absolutely the wrong place."

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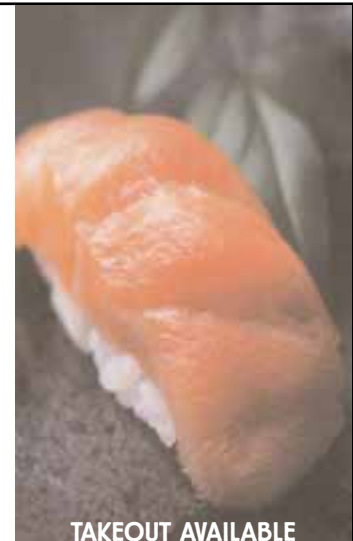
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Bush quickens pace

President is seeking ideas, fast, for a policy shift in Iraq war

BY DEB RIECHMANN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Quickening his search for a new war strategy, President Bush sought ideas from lawmakers on Friday and lined up three days of urgent talks with military brass, diplomats and outside experts on how to stop Iraq's slide toward anarchy.

Bush is expected to settle on a new course and present it to the nation in a speech before Christmas, the debate and his new efforts framed by the Iraq Study Group's stinging rebuke this week of U.S. policy.

In the meantime, Americans' dissatisfaction with his handling of Iraq has climbed to an all-time high of 71 percent in the latest Associated Press-Ipsos poll.

Incoming Senate Democratic leaders said Bush did not offer them hints of his plan when they met with him in the Cabinet Room to talk about Iraq. They also talked about ending the bitter bipartisan divide that has characterized relations between the White House and Congress.

Incoming Senate Democratic Whip Richard Durbin of Illinois said the president talked about the Iraq panel's report and said he was open to changing tactics.

"I think we all understand tactics need to be changed, but the Iraq Study Group went further than tactics," Durbin said. "The Iraq Study Group talked about the new direction in Iraq in terms of starting to bring American troops home, redeploying them to safer places, holding Iraq to new standards of responsibility and opening up a new line of diplomacy."

"That goes beyond tactics. So the president did not endorse the Iraq Study Group at this meeting and his statements leave me (with) question(s) as to whether or not he is ever going to support their conclusions," Durbin said.

Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., a longtime supporter of the

war, compounded the White House's problems with a blistering speech on the Senate floor.

"I, for one, am at the end of my rope when it comes to supporting a policy that has our soldiers patrolling the same streets in the same way, being blown up by the same bombs day after day," Smith said Thursday night. "That is absurd. It may even be criminal. I cannot support that any more. ... So either we clear and hold and build or let's go home."

Bush goes to the State Department on Monday for talks, and then meets in the Oval Office with independent experts on Iraq. On Tuesday, the president confers in a video conference with senior military commanders and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the top U.S. diplomat in Iraq.

On Wednesday, he meets with senior defense officials at the Pentagon. Outgoing Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said Friday that the U.S. military is doing everything it can but the war cannot be won only "militarily." He said the power struggle in Iraq is partly about religion, economics and political power, and "not terribly military in its nature."

The release of the Iraq report set in motion a delicate waltz for the administration. On the one hand, it doesn't want to dismiss the ideas of a bipartisan commission partly led by former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, a Bush family friend. On the other hand, Bush doesn't want to be held hostage to the panel's recommendations.

Baker said the administration should not pick and choose among the report's 79 recommendations. "I hope we don't treat this like a fruit salad," he said. White House press secretary Tony Snow said the president was not treating the panel's document as a fruit salad, but neither did he offer any tidbits about the president's thinking.

"I am loath to characterize it because, frankly, the final recommendations have not been delivered, nor has the president determined what he will recommend as the way forward," Snow said.

Congress struggles to break final logjam

BY JIM ABRAMS

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The bipartisan drive to bring the 109th session of Congress to an end slowed as the lawmakers struggled with the finale, a catchall bill covering everything from tax breaks for college tuition to normal trade relations with Vietnam.

With a compromise on the trade and tax bill eluding negotiators, House Majority Leader John Boehner late Wednesday announced that the goal of adjourning on Thursday was not feasible and that members should put off plane reservations until Saturday morning.

Republicans, reeling from their defeat in last month's midterm elections, have shown little desire to prolong this lame duck session, while Democrats already are looking to January when they will take over both the House and Senate.

Before leaving, though, Congress must deal with two major issues:

—It must approve the continued funding of federal programs at fiscal 2006 levels because this Congress failed, with the exception of defense and homeland security bills, to agree on any annual spending bills for the 2007 fiscal year that began Oct. 1.

The GOP plan is to stretch current funding amounts until Feb. 15, leaving it for the new Democratic-controlled Congress to deal with tough spending and deficit issues.

—It must address a package of tax breaks, many of which expired at the beginning of 2006. Included are an extension of college tuition deductions, costing \$3.3 billion over two years; an option for taxpayers in states without income taxes to deduct state and local sales taxes, costing \$5.5 billion; a research and development tax credit, costing \$16.5 billion, and a deduction for teachers who spend their own money for classroom supplies, costing \$379 million.

The tax breaks are supported by both parties, but efforts to extend them have been thwarted by moves to link them to other, more controversial, bills.

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Traveler risk assessments being questioned

BY MICHAEL J. SNIFFEN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Homeland Security Department's newly revealed computerized risk assessments of international travelers may violate a specific ban that Congress imposed as part of the agency's budget over the past three years.

Some members of Congress and privacy advocates on Thursday questioned the legality of Automated Targeting System, or ATS, risk assessments that have been assigned to millions of Americans and foreigners who entered or left the United States over the past four years.

"It clearly goes contrary to what we have in law," Rep. Martin Sabo, D-Minn., said in an interview. He said ATS is the kind of computerized risk assessment "we have been trying to prohibit."

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff told The Associated Press: "I don't think it (the prohibition) can be read as applying to this program. The statute doesn't bar the use of funds for the purpose of analyzing the risks for people entering the country."

Department spokesman Russ Knocke said Congress was informed many times since 2003 that ATS was being used to assess people.

The AP reported last week that ATS has been assessing millions of people since 2002.

A law prompted by the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, required air and cruise lines to give the Homeland Security Department advance data on all passengers and crew entering and leaving the country.

Jayson P. Ahern, assistant commissioner of customs and border protection, told the AP all that passenger data is analyzed by ATS. Data on rail and some land travelers also have been assessed, he said.

ATS has operated with little public notice or understanding until a description was published last month in the Federal Register, a fine print compendium of federal rules.

The Homeland Security Department's notice said people could not see their assessments or directly challenge them. It plans to keep the assessments for 40 years and share data with state, local and foreign governments for hiring, contracting, licensing and other decisions. In some instances, data could be shared with courts and private contractors.

Sabo, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations subcommittee on homeland security, wrote into the agency's spending bills the ban on computerized passenger risk assessments. For the past three budget years, the legislation has said no funds from the appropriations bill could be used to develop or test computerized data-min-

ing tools "assigning risk to passengers whose names are not on government watch lists."

"They keep going off on these wild scenarios on a regular basis," Sabo said. "They should concentrate on making their watch lists comprehensive and correctable."

Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, agreed. "There is growing concern in Congress that this program invites abuse, and that the administration is plowing ahead with it in apparent violation of the law," said Leahy, a member of the counterpart subcommittee in the Senate and incoming chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Chertoff noted that the prohibition barred risk assessments of "passengers." He said "other people may have a different opinion of what they intended, but it's clear this is all aimed at what Secure Flight was, which was deciding who could board aircraft" in the United States.

Man charged with killing tourist at Grand Canyon

By The Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — An 18-year-old man was charged in the May kidnapping, robbery and killing of a female Japanese tourist at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, authorities said Friday.

A federal grand jury indicted Randy Wescogame on Tuesday on charges of first degree murder, murder-robbery, robbery, murder-kidnapping and kidnapping in the killing of Tomomi Hanamure, 34, of Tokyo.

Wescogame, a member of the Havasupai Indian tribe, has been held by tribal authorities since May on unrelated assault charges. He was transferred Friday to federal custody and brought before a federal magistrate for an initial appearance in Flagstaff.

The indictment alleges that Wescogame willfully murdered the woman, who was traveling alone, in the course of kidnapping and robbing her on May 8.

"The facts underlying the indictment reflect the last moments of a young lady who came from Japan to enjoy the beauty of this country, and who, instead, met a senseless and tragic end to her life," said U.S. Attorney Paul Charlton. "Our thoughts remain with Ms. Hanamure's family during this difficult time."

Hanamure disappeared on May 8 after checking into a lodge on the Havasupai Indian Reservation and taking a hike to the Havasupai Falls.

She was reported missing the next day after a housekeeper found her bed apparently unused, with some of her belongings and passport still in her room.

On May 13, four days after the Coconino County Sheriff's Office and Bureau of Indian Affairs started search and rescue operations, a group of swimmers discovered her body floating in a pool beneath a waterfall.

An autopsy determined that Hanamure was stabbed 29 times but there was no sign that she was assaulted sexually.

After her body was discovered, an FBI dive team found some of her belongings, though not her cell phone, credit cards and cash.



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WINTERLIT EVENTS

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Winterlit Fun! Kid's Weekend

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Sunday, December 10
Winterlit Fun! Kid's Weekend

11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Real snow, pony rides, petting zoo, interactive booths and other entertainment. Stage prizes provided by Benihana, Border Grill, Curves, Fatburger, Hair Café and Color Blast Café, I Cugini, Laemmle Theatres, The Levi's Store, Locanda del Lago, Magicopolis, Skechers and more. All 3 Blocks of Third Street Promenade

Saturday, December 16
Pet Day with Santa

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tire your little tike out with our pet obstacle course then get them ready for pictures with Santa at our complimentary groomer. Santa Monica Place

Sunday, December 10
Winterlit Concert at the New Helio Store

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SMFD, Linnekens 'Share' toys

Panera Bread and Jenna Linnekens join together with the Santa Monica Fire Department for "Share of the Holiday" bringing toys to underprivileged children in Santa Monica.

Linnekens and Panera have engaged local businesses to house the toy contribution containers beginning Dec. 2 through Dec. 17. Visit the following businesses to drop off an unwrapped toy in the decorated donation containers: Revolution Fitness (1211 Montana Ave.), Scarboni (312 Wilshire Blvd.), Dr. Gruning Eye Care (1312 Montana Ave.), Yoga Hop (1612 Montana Ave.) Prudential California Realtors of Santa Monica (3130 Wilshire Blvd.), Panera Bread of Santa Monica (501 Wilshire Blvd.), Panera Bread of Marina del Rey (4720 Lincoln Blvd.) and Wahoo's (418 Wilshire Blvd.).

Additionally, Panera Bread will be providing free coffee coupons to the parents of the youngsters receiving gifts from the SMFD.

"This kind and compassionate group of business and community members believe in the stellar efforts of our Fire Department and the deep needs of the children of Santa Monica. We are all proud to join together in this wonderful event and look forward to many years of service." Linnekens said.

DP

Topo Ranch hosts Art Angels

Venice-based apparel brand, Topo Ranch, will host the first annual Art Angels Benefit on Dec. 14, to raise money for Venice Arts, the local non-profit organization that provides art education in photography and digital media for at-risk youth. The benefit will take place at the new clothing brand's holiday store, The Topo Ranch General Store, located at 1219 Abbot Kinney Blvd. from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

"Venice Arts plays an important role in keeping the Venice culture thriving," said Alex Kump of Topo Ranch. "We derived a lot of inspiration from the Venice culture while conceiving our brand, so it's nice to have an opportunity to give something back to the community."

Alongside the latest Topo Ranch fashions, the Art Angels Benefit will feature a raffle drawing for gift-worthy prizes from outdoor companies like, Arc'teryx, Brunton and CamelBak, as well as artwork from local Venice artists. Guests will also enjoy live music, tasty appetizers and regional brews.

All proceeds from the raffle will benefit the Venice Arts' Business Art Circle, which provides funding for the annual cost of supplies and equipment for art mentoring workshops.

Raffle tickets can be purchased directly at the Topo Ranch General Store at 1219 Abbot Kinney Blvd. or online at www.TopoRanch.com or www.VeniceArts.org, starting November 12th.

DP

Christmas at First Presbyterian Church

Children's Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 17 at 5:00 p.m. in the Chapel

Come celebrate with us as children re-enact the first Christmas.

Family Caroling Party

Thursday, December 21 at 5:30 p.m.

Meet in the church lobby

Singing and bringing holiday joy to the Santa Monica community.

Christmas Worship

Sunday, December 24

Communion Service at 8:45 a.m.

Traditional Service at 10 a.m.

Christmas Eve Family Service at 5 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m.

Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols at 9 p.m.

For more information on either of these events, please call the church office or e-mail info@fpcsantamonica.org.

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Monica
1220 Second Street, Santa Monica
Phone 310.451.1303 | Fax 310.451.4237
www.fpcsantamonica.org



A mighty wind

Fabian Lewkowicz fabianl@smdp.com

Englishman Luke Bennett, 20, plays the tuba on Friday as part of the Salvation Army Band's 'Red Kettle Day' presentation in front of the post office on Sixth Street. The band entertained patrons with a series of Christmas songs, as service clubs spent the day ringing the bell for the Salvation Army.

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City of Santa Monica
Request for Proposals (RFP)

Shoeshine Stand on
Third Street Promenade

The City of Santa Monica requests proposals from businesses or individuals seeking a 5 year license agreement for the purpose of operating an existing shoeshine stand on the Third Street Promenade.

The stand is approximately 48 square feet, and has all equipment and furnishings attached. The stand is located at 1300 Third Street Promenade, at the intersection of Third Street and Santa Monica Boulevard. The license agreement will be issued in early 2007.

The RFP package contains the key questions and informational requirements for respondents to address. For more information or to request an RFP package, please call 310-458-8906 or send your request via e-mail to Gretchen.kubacko@smgov.net.

Proposals are due no later than 2pm on Monday,
December 18, 2006.

The City of Santa Monica reserves the right to reject any and all bids and waive all minor irregularities.

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ALTERNATIVE CARS, from page 1

Transportation Expo will allow visitors to test drive and even purchase select cars from dealers on site. The event, which is free to the public, will also showcase other modes of transportation, such as skateboards, bicycles, scooters and Segways.

"This is an opportunity to get the word out that people do have real choices that are better for the environment and better for their pocketbooks," said Craig Perkins, director of the city's Environmental and Public Works Management.

The cars come in all shapes and sizes. Some are box-shaped, some are round, and some are shaped like an egg. Some cars even come with their own plug.

Besides showcasing quirky designed vehicles, the event will feature seminars covering the topics of alternative energy, transportation and the government's reliance on foreign oil. Featured speakers include former Assemblywoman Fran Pavley of the 41st District, former Secretary of the California EPA Terry Tamminen and Former CIA Director James Woolsey.

The event will exhibit hybrid, electric, natural gas and biodiesel vehicles to name a few. The gas alternative vehicles are not only cost-effective, they're safe and reliable, said Mayor Richard Bloom, during a kick-off event at the Santa Monica Pier on Friday morning, where media representatives were invited to view a sample of the vehicles and ride along during a car rally from the pier to the Santa Monica Airport.

The kick-off drew celebrities like actor and known environmentalist Ed Begley Jr., who currently stars in the feature length film "For Your Consideration" and will star in his own reality show on HGTV titled "Living with Ed," a look at what it is like to live with an environmental "zealot," as Begley calls himself. Actress and proud hybrid vehicle owner Sharon Lawrence, who has appeared in numerous television shows such as "Desperate Housewives" and "Monk," was also in attendance.

THE ELECTRIC SLIDE

Vehicles from several well-known Japanese automakers such as Toyota, Honda and Lexus made an appearance at the pier on Friday, though the majority of interest seemed to be directed toward the oddly shaped vehicles.

Many alternative fuel vehicles are manufactured by American companies. Therefore, by purchasing an electric car, consumers are helping the American economy, said Lawrence.

"You're not only making positive [environmental] choices, but sound business choices," Lawrence said. "It's more than just being a tree hugger. It's a smart look at how we can change our auto industry."

At the kick-off, environmental car lover Paul Pearson brought his all-electric California roadster along with his wife and dog, Bonzo, an American bulldog that was sitting in the backseat while sporting a sweater.

The roadster, which set Pearson back only \$10,000, goes only 25 miles an hour and has enough juice to make about three trips into the San Fernando Valley. It's the perfect vehicle to make the short trip to the grocery store, Pearson said.

"Santa Monica is such a small town," Pearson said. "We constantly make runs of two or three miles."

Many of the cars featured at the pier were in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 range and meant to travel short distances. Ontario, Canada-based ZENN, or Zero Emission No Noise, can run on less than 2 cents to the gallon and can travel 35 miles on a full charge.

"Sixty-five percent of people travel within five to six miles of their house," said Bill Williams, vice president of ZENN.

In fact, the short yet frequent trips to the grocery store is why Begley purchased a small Taylor Dunn electric car during the 1970s.

"They were great for me around the [San Fernando] Valley, where I live," Begley said on Friday. "I needed something to get me to the grocery store."

Today, Begley has moved on to an electric Toyota Rav4 and occasionally borrows his wife's Toyota Prius for long trips.

Purchasing an alternative fuel car is not only good for the environment, it's a sound financial decision on part of the car's owner, Begley said. There are two ways to be fiscally sound — possess a lot of money or eliminate the need for money.

"I did the latter," Begley said.

melodyh@smdp.com

City Hall may still have to pay millions

BAYSIDE, from page 3

Following a month-long criminal trial, Weller, who turns 90 this month, was found guilty in October of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence and was sentenced to five years probation in connection with the deaths of 10 people, including a 7-month old and a married couple from New York City.

Defense attorneys argued Weller suffered from "pedal error" — a rare phenomenon by which a panicked driver hits the accelerator rather than the brake — and mistakenly drove into the market, with the impact of collisions causing his air bag to deploy and preventing him from gaining control of his car.

The incident lasted roughly 20 seconds, according to defense attorneys.

Jurors sided with the prosecution, which said Weller acted recklessly following a minor fender-bender and failed to use all means at his disposal to direct his Buick LaSabre away from the market, instead sending it on a deadly collision course.

Weller's attorneys are appealing his conviction. He is named as a defendant in the civil case, which includes 36 plaintiffs.

City Hall, the Southland Farmers Market Association — promoters of the market — and Step Up on Second, a social service agency whose members volunteered at the market, were also named in the civil suit.

CITY MADE ITS CASE

In a 19-page ruling that took more than three weeks to draft, Baker earlier this year found City Hall could not be held liable for the accident because it had established and executed a traffic control plan that was approved by a licensed traffic engineer.

Known as design immunity, municipalities are protected in a lawsuit if the design of an intersection, or in this case, a

traffic management plan, meets conditions established by law. In this case, Baker ruled that the way in which streets were closed and traffic redirected during the Farmers' Market was acceptable.

Southland was subsequently granted a motion for summary judgment by Baker.

Meanwhile, Step Up on Second, whose clients placed the plastic barriers at the entrance to the market, is in the process of finalizing a \$5 million settlement with victims and their families, attorneys for the plaintiffs said.

"While we have believed from the very beginning that Step Up has had no responsibility for the tragedy — in fact, Step Up members were victims themselves that day — our insurance company decided the most prudent course of action was to settle the case," Tod Lipka, CEO of Step Up, told the Daily Press in October.

That leaves only Weller and Bayside as defendants in the case.

Earlier this year, Bayside asked Baker to remove the management company from the civil suit, a request which was denied. Friday's hearing marked the second time Bayside has asked to be removed from the case.

Attorneys filed a second motion for summary judgment on the grounds that new evidence had surfaced. The evidence included a deposition by Howard Robinson, a former economic development manager with City Hall who testified that Bayside could have asked about traffic management, but it was not their duty to do so.

Robinson's deposition was not considered by Baker when she denied the earlier motion for summary judgment, attorneys for Bayside said.

Because of an agreement with Bayside, City Hall may have to pay millions in damages if Bayside is found liable by a jury.

Baker may have a ruling as early as next week.

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Ban on genetically-altered plants approved

PLOT THICKENS, from page 3

idents live in apartments and do not have a backyard of their own to till, McCorry said.

To accommodate, City Hall is considering a wide range of options, including dividing larger plots whose gardeners are having difficulty maintaining their land. Rather than have these gardeners lose their plots, city staff is considering paring them with those on the waiting list, matching veterans with rookies in a mentoring program that can further enhance community gardens.

In the development phase of any new park, community gardens are being considered along with other recreational amenities. City staff is also looking at converting underutilized areas to community gardens.

Private and city owned buildings might also be retrofitted or designed to accommodate rooftop gardens. Partnerships between gardeners and schools could also be developed, matching mentors with students who cultivate their own land for shared benefit. Another innovative idea being considered is the creation of a front-yard registry in which homeowners who do not have enough time to build their own gardens can partner with community members on the waiting list who are willing to work together.

"We are continuing to look at all of our options," said

Kathy LeProvost, City Hall's community programs manager. "We will be expanding the program, but due to the large interest in community gardening, the demand for plots will still not be fully met."

For McCorry, it is critical for the survival of the city to find more plots. By gardening, residents are helping the city be more sustainable.

"More gardens help lower the temperature of the city, bring in pollinators and help provide clean air for us to breathe," McCorry said as she plucked greens for a salad. "Besides, there's nothing more incredible than growing your own food. The taste is just unbelievable."

Fellow gardener Sally Kutsunai said her plot has not only helped bring her family closer together, but has provided a great release for her on days when she is feeling a little overwhelmed.

"Whenever I get stressed, I come out here and pull some weeds," said Kutsunai, who was on the waiting list for six years before securing a plot two years ago.

GENETICALLY ALTERED PLANTS GET WHACKED

In addition to signing off on efforts by the gardening committee and city staff to create more plots, the City Council this week also approved a ban on genetically-engineered plants, keeping with the custom of growing only

organic fruits and vegetables.

Genetically engineered plants are created by artificially cutting and splicing genes of different, unrelated plants to create a whole new plant species with different qualities from the original plant. The reason for genetically engineered plants is to increase production while cutting down on labor costs, two factors that have minimal bearing on the community gardening concept, LeProvost said.

"The goals for community gardening are to promote personal fulfillment, education and an active and healthy lifestyle through the growing of organic plans for personal use," LeProvost said.

The potential dangers of developing genetically engineered plants are the possibility of creating soil toxicity and sterilization, stripping the nitrogen from the soil and upsetting the natural biological order by promoting the development of "super pests" that would be resistant to existing environmentally safe pest deterrents, LeProvost said.

"Super weeds" could also develop that would negatively affect the community biosystem as a whole, she added.

"While genetically engineered plants are really not an issue for us here, it's good to put the ban in place anyway," McCorry said. "It's better to be safe than sorry."

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Jeremy Whipple
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Experts: Embrace single status

HOLIDAY DATING, from page 1

ple together for warmth; or because of the fear of facing the parents during the holidays again without a significant other.

Though not on the same scale as Valentine's Day — otherwise known as "Single Awareness Day" — in terms of single men and women succumbing to depression over their lack of relationships, there is a heightened feeling of a need to find someone special for Christmas and New Year's Eve parties.

"There is a lot going on around the holidays with corporate parties and friends' parties," said Adele Testani, president and co-founder of HurryDate. "It's definitely a season that is more fun if you have someone."

The holidays serve as the perfect time to create wonderful memories and many people would want to start those memories with someone special, said Charla Howard, founder of the Santa Monica-based dating service Flirtysomething.com. It's natural for someone to want a companion with whom they can share the experiences of the holidays. When you're single, that feeling of being alone is more acute, Howard said on Thursday.

Family pressures can add another level of stress during the holidays to singles.

"It's because they love you and they want you to be with someone," said dating coach Liz Kelly of Santa Monica, the author of "Smart Man Hunting." "Expectations are so high to have a happy holiday with your family and loved ones that if you don't have a partner, it can feel like something is missing."

This year, Jason doesn't intend on seeking love for the holidays. His work schedule, averaging 55 hours a week, does not allow him to think about romance as much as he would like.

"If I worked 20 hours a week, I'd definitely be searching," Jason said. "There's something cool about the spontaneity of seeing someone right before the ball drops."

DATING AGENTS OF CHANGE

It's a wonderful time of the year for dating agencies and it's the reason why Howard launched her Web site in mid November.

Flirtysomething.com is an online dating site that is designed to "emulate the real-life falling in love process." Users can create online profiles, ask friends to write testimo-

nials and participate in "ice breaker" lounges. Users can post stories about their dream dates and their nightmare dates.

"This is my holiday gift to the single world," Howard said. "We observed people tended to miss significant others more during this time of year than during the rest of the year."

With holiday parties a common occurrence, HurryDate, a New York City-based online and offline dating company, does see more clients signing up around Christmas. One of HurryDate's most popular events is speed dating parties, usually held in restaurants, where singles rotate from table to table for quick four-minute "dates." In the next two months, HurryDate has three speed-dating parties in Santa Monica at Barcopa on Main Street.

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

"There are a hundred million singles in the United States right now," said Kelly. "You're not alone and you need to instead to try and take advantage of the season by meeting potential dates."

"It's the best time of year to get out there

and break the ice and meet people, because once January hits, people start to hibernate."

For single men, Santa Monica is a great place to meet people because almost 30 percent of households have single women, Kelly said. Single women should head down to Orange County, where they will be happily outnumbered by single men.

The most important thing singles can do during the holidays is to embrace their independence.

"No one wants to be with somebody who feels blue or is a Scrooge," warned Kelly. "If you go out with an I-love-my-life-and-I'm-not-upset-I'm-single-attitude, you're going to have much better luck because people are going to be more attracted to your positive energy."

Singles who don't want to venture into parties alone should try hosting their own dinner party, suggests Julie Ferman, a Ventura County-based dating consultant who has brought together more than 1,000 couples in marriage. The dating expert has held several romance seminars in Santa Monica hotels.

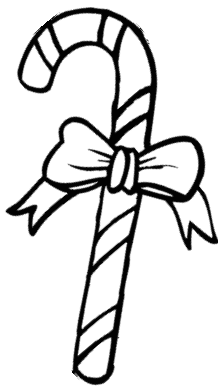
"If you don't want to be just with your girlfriend, plan a party where every girl has to bring a guy," Ferman said on Friday. "Plan something outrageous."

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Opportunity awaits singles at every turn

PASSING THE BAR, from page 1

believes Julie Ferman, a dating coach who has taught the “Single in LA” seminar at the Santa Monica DoubleTree Hotel. “It’s not a disease to be single anymore, as it was in June Cleaver’s day.

“A lot of people complain about being single in Los Angeles,” said Ferman. “We’re all so busy and spread out here, and somebody in Hermosa Beach doesn’t want to date someone who lives in Oxnard.”

Ferman, whose dating service, Cupid’s Coach, has secured more than 1,000 marriages, encourages her clients to continue talking to others despite the odds, honing their skills as “natural flirts.”

But even when attraction strikes, sometimes the words are hard to come by.

“All conversations are based on observations,” explained David Wygant, the renown dating coach who is paid an exorbitant \$10,000 per weekend by his celebrity clients. “Are you behind someone in the grocery store who has a carton of ice cream? Tell them you haven’t had that flavor in a long time.”

Whatever you do, said the author of “Always Talk to Strangers,” make your question open-ended, so that whomever you approach has the appropriate chance to respond.

“People also always try to practice talking to strangers that they’re really attracted to,” said co-author Bryan Swerling. “We try to encourage them to practice conversation before approaching that one person you want to date, so that when you do make the move, you’re not nervous.”

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

Wygant has his favorite singles walk outlined: “Walk Montana, grab a cup of coffee at Peet’s. Main Street on Sundays is great, especially when the Farmers’ Market is there. Say ‘Hi’ to someone while in line for the omelet guy. Abbott Kinney is fun to hang out at at night, with the art galleries and bookstores too.”

Locals seem to be ogling more than shapely laptops at the Apple store on the Third Street Promenade, a hopping retail outlet that has become the epitome of hip. Gone are the days of the geek stereotype which pervaded computer culture.

“There’s something about Apple that’s just cool and fun,” said Albert Meijer, who has been an employee at the location for just over a year.

Meijer should know. He recently met his girlfriend while on the job.

Marina Castro, 22, was only planning on picking up a new iPod when she walked through the store’s glass doors, but instead, she picked up Meijer.

“I saw him and thought, ‘Wow, that guy is so cute,’” recalled Castro.

A native of Brazil, Castro only recently moved to the U.S., living in Venice for the past five months. After moving to the Westside, she visited the store often in an attempt to meet new people, noticing the social nature of its visitors.

“Every single time I went and sat down in one of the seats, someone came to talk to me,” she shared.

The plethora of people coming in to use the computers at a veritable Internet cafe adds to the casual environment.

“Most people come in to use MySpace or AOL Instant Messenger, unfortunately,” noted Nathaniel Meek, an Apple employee for just one week. “Look, there’s a guy taking a picture of his abs with the webcam.”

Attractive people often enter the store, according to Meek, who gushed about actress Kate Beckinsale’s visit last week.

For Castro, the computers offer a nice “excuse” to talk to others in the store, who



Fabian Lewkowicz fabianl@smdp.com

DOUBLING THEIR PLEASURE: Singles need not look far for places to meet, experts contend. From grocery stores to the laundromat, opportunities to meet that special someone abound.

said that conversations within its confines seemed more authentic.

“It’s different when you go to a bar or nightclub,” she sighed. “People just want sex, and it’s hard to find a boyfriend there.”

Castro’s tactics seemed to work.

“We’ve seen each other every day since she gave me her number,” Meijer said of the fateful Oct. 4 day.

DOUBLING UP IN THE MOST UNUSUAL WAYS

Another unlikely “hot spot” is the Outdoor Antique & Collectible Market near Santa Monica Airport, a flea market held on the first Sunday of every month. Though one might not expect to find the trendiest individual sifting through worn furniture, market promoter Eleanor Hedge likened the event to “one big Country Club.”

“There are lots of savvy looking guys and beautiful girls,” she laughed. “I’m old, but I can still look at them.”

The market serves as a great spot for those who hold similar interests to meet, while simultaneously enjoying the outdoors.

Over at Joslyn Dog Park, on Seventh Street and Kensington Road, it wasn’t just singles who were interacting. Even on a slow Friday afternoon, the park welcomed many, along with their dogs, to the grounds.

“There’s lots of co-mingling,” said Frances Louie, a non-single observer. According to the co-parent, the dog park attracts more couples and elders than the younger crew.

“But if I were single, I might flirt here,” Louie laughed.

In her visits to the park, Louie has even picked up a few tricks of the trade, sharing that another person’s dog might be part of the mate selection process.

“If you have something up your sleeve, the dog will sniff it out right away,” she said, adding that there’s dog park etiquette as well.

“It’s impolite to ask a person’s name before your dog’s.”

Too many rules to that game? Singles may try their hands in another over at the AMF Bay Shore Lanes bowling alley on Pico Boulevard. There, glow-in-the dark extreme bowling on weekends allure groups of youngsters, often from UCLA, eager to strike one down.

“If a hot chick comes in, guys will check her out,” said employee Kevin Stein, who was handing out bowling shoes Monday afternoon.

A bowler since 1986, Stein says he’s observed the ways in which competition can

“get the blood and adrenaline pumping.”

“There were times when everybody was sleeping with everybody,” Stein chuckled.

Today, the alley is home to more couples teams and night leagues, though the employee noted that Wednesday quarter mania — where games cost a mere 25 cents — prove popular with the single sect.

Funkier twists on classic meeting spots such as the bowling lanes seem to attract individuals in Santa Monica. One such place is UnUrban Coffee House at 3301 Pico Boulevard. The joint isn’t your typical Starbucks, with painted murals strewn across the wall in bright colors and worn couches lining the back room.

“It’s a good place for conversation,” said Brandon Riker of the independent Coffee House. “It’s a Cannery Row kind of place ... it exudes [John] Steinbeck.”

With a full menu served until midnight, later hours attract those looking to schedule dates and meetings at any time of the day.

Nightly events also bring in an eclectic group, some participating in the House’s open mic nights and poetry readings.

“There’s a beat, not necessarily hippie, but very environmentally friendly, free-speech vibe here,” said Riker, an employee at UnUrban for about a year.

But UnUrban isn’t only home to tree huggers. Many screenwriters hold their script readings at the Coffee House, including the producers of the hit-television show “24,” said Riker.

“Many people have fallen in love and broken up here,” he smiled. “There are a few really sweet little couples who have come out of the shop.”

“Coffee shops are a huge opportunity to meet new people,” said dating coach Liz Kelly, author of “SMART Man Hunting.”

LET’S GET PHYSICAL

Kelly recommends a local bike club she has seen cycling by — such as Shifting Gears — as a fun place to meet singles.

“You have 100 people, mostly men, meeting every Saturday morning,” she said. “Why not get on a bike and ride out there?”

Getting physical can lead to getting intimate, according to John Casesse, the owner and namesake of Dance Doctor on Fourth Street.

“A lot of single people come to our classes,” the Dance Doctor noted. “It’s an excellent way to interact with someone prior to dating them.”

Casese believes dancing with someone lends itself to learning another person. In partner dancing, where the man leads, the teacher said women are able to gauge whether or not the man is a good leader.

“She can see if he’s aggressive or assertive enough,” Casese said.

On the other side of the coin, the lady must learn to become more passive, something he asserts is “more difficult in today’s world” of working women.

Furthermore, alcohol doesn’t impede the getting-to-know-you process, he said.

Another suggested athletic pursuit is yoga, an activity which invites fit and clear-minded individuals to its classes.

“People do make friends here, but I don’t really see people coming in to get a date,” said Bruce Bair, owner of Santa Monica Yoga on Ocean Park Boulevard.

“This isn’t the kind of place where you have to put on your makeup,” he said.

At Yoga Works on Main Street, manager Marnie Castor said she has noticed a “tight community of people” forming through the activity.

“I would advise single guys out there to come in,” she laughed, referring to the high percentage of women who participate in yoga classes. “If a young, cute guy comes in, some girls might try to join his class.”

Those feeling a tad overwhelmed by all the options might simply try to help someone else out by volunteering at a local organization, and perhaps wait for a little good karma.

“It’s the healthiest way to meet somebody,” said Joanna Vasquez, who has been the Director of Volunteers for 20 years at Meals on Wheels, a group which provides nutritious meals for homebound people. “You can find decent people who are doing good deeds with no strings attached.”

Coach Kelly agreed, stating that not only do “you feel good about volunteering, but you already have something in common with your fellow participants.”

EMBRACING THE LA SCENE

“It is difficult for the average Joe in L.A. to stick out because of the entertainment industry,” Swerling admitted. “There’s a lot of beautiful people out and everyone’s trying to get somewhere. It can be a little intimidating.”

And the recent series of technological advances don’t help the matter, Swerling said, with cell phones and iPods making people seem even less approachable.

To avoid pretentious attitudes, he suggests breaking through people’s “shell” by showing genuine interest in the conversation.

“If you see somebody you’re really attracted to, don’t wait more than three seconds to approach them,” Swerling said. “If they reject you, learn to accept that not everyone in the world is attracted to you.”

If you’re still at a loss, “use Los Angeles to your advantage,” advises dating guru Ferman, who suggests using city-centric locales like sushi bars to meet others.

“You can just look over at someone’s sushi and ask what they’re eating,” she said.

If you’re ready to make your move after all this flirting, make the jump to asking someone out on a date smoothly with Wygant’s advice.

“If you’ve had a good conversation and actually listened to somebody, you bring it back to something interesting in the conversation and say you’d love to continue talking about the issue at a later date,” he suggests.

“Oh, and guys,” Wygant adds at the last moment. “If you want to meet a woman, please dress better. I see these guys wearing their cell phones on their belts with Bluetooths in their ear ... like those geeks are gonna get a date.”

British and Danish forces detain five Iraqis

By The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — More than 1,000 British and Danish troops stormed five houses Friday in southern Iraq, using ground forces, boats, helicopters and jets in a raid that detained five Iraqis and confiscated a large cache of weapons, a spokesman said.

U.S.-led coalition forces killed 20 insurgents, including two women, in an attack targeting al-Qaida in Iraq militants in Salahuddin province northwest of Baghdad, the U.S. command said.

British and Danish forces encountered insurgents using small arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades and a roadside bomb during

the raid in the Hartha area on the outskirts of Basra. The raid began at 3 a.m., causing no coalition or civilian casualties, said British Maj. Charlie Burbridge, the spokesman for the coalition in southern Iraq.

He would only identify the five detained Iraqis as members of “a rogue, breakaway element” of one of the many Shiite militias operating in the area and said it was unclear if the militants suffered any casualties. Burbridge said those captured were directly responsible for a large number of insurgent attacks in the area.

Burbridge called it the largest search and detention operation that coalition forces have conducted in southern Iraq since the

war began in March 2003. It surpassed earlier missions during which about 250 soldiers have quickly raided single targets identified by coalition intelligence reports, he said. It was not clear how many of the troops were directly involved in the raid and how many played a supporting role.

The raid on houses in five different locations involved Danish soldiers arriving from the north and British troops with armored vehicles arriving from the south, Burbridge said. Other British forces reached the area on boats in an operation that was supported by helicopters and jets, he said.

Two large mosques are located near one of the houses searched, but the raid ended long

before residents began to travel to them on Friday, the day of worship in mostly Muslim Iraq, said Capt. Tane Dunlop, another spokesman for multinational forces in Basra, where most British forces in Iraq are based.

The arms cache found in one of the houses included Chinese Katyusha rockets, roadside bombs, rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, indicating that the Iraqis involved were carrying out a variety of attacks in the area, Dunlop said.

He said the raid involved more than 800 British troops and about 200 Danish soldiers. The Danish forces are based in Shaiba, a military base south of Basra, 340 miles southeast of Baghdad, Dunlop said.



ODDS OF A CHILD PERFORMING AT CARNEGIE HALL:
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ODDS OF A CHILD BEING DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM:
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Senate approves fisheries bill

BY MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Congress was poised to pass a bill Friday to revamp management of the nation’s marine fisheries and strengthen protections against overfishing of dwindling stocks.

The sweeping bill requires the use of annual catch limits and enhances the authority of eight regional fishery management councils, as Congress struggles to protect vulnerable fish stocks while keeping struggling fishing industries afloat.

The Senate adopted the measure on Thursday. The House was expected to vote on it late Friday before Congress adjourns for the year.

The bill reauthorizes the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act through 2013. The 30-year-old law is the main law guiding fishery management in waters between three miles and 200 miles offshore.

Supporters said the bill would strengthen current law by requiring an end to overfishing, science-based management of the nation’s fisheries and penalties for illegal fishing in international waters.

“Our oceans are in serious trouble and this legislation will help to reverse their decline,” said Sarah Chasis, director of the Oceans Initiative for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

She and other environmentalists hailed a provision in the bill establishing a “cap and trade” system that sets overall limits on the number of fish that can be caught, while allowing fishermen flexibility in how they divide up shares of the total catch.

Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, who

 **ON THE NET**

Information on the bill, H.R. 5946, is at
<http://thomas.loc.gov>

chairs the subcommittee that oversees the nation’s fisheries, said the bill would provide an economic lifeline to fishermen while ensuring a secure supply of fish.

“This legislation is not a perfect solution, but I believe we have struck an appropriate balance between preserving the marine resources of our coastal communities with these fisheries management tools,” she said.

Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, who led efforts to update the law that bears his name, said lawmakers had heeded a call by President Bush to end overfishing. Bush, in a speech this fall, urged Congress to reauthorize the fishing law and called overfishing harmful to the United States and the world.

Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., said the new law builds on the legacy created by her predecessor, former Sen. Warren Magnuson, D-Wash., who co-sponsored the original fisheries law in 1976.

At the insistence of West Coast lawmakers, the bill includes language to speed recovery of Klamath River salmon stocks in California and Oregon. For fishermen adversely affected by recent closures aimed at protecting threatened fish, there would be disaster relief programs.

“Congress is finally realizing the enormous importance of the Klamath to West Coast salmon fisheries ... and it could not be more timely,” said Glen Spain of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations.

Walking to the nearest newsstand increases circulation.

Santa Monica Daily Press

BASEBALL

Bonds and Giants agree on \$16M deal for 2007

BY BEN WALKER
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — Barry Bonds and the San Francisco Giants reached agreement on a \$16 million, one-year contract Thursday night that will keep the controversial slugger in the Bay Area to take aim at baseball's home run record.

The deal includes four performance bonuses that could make the pact worth a total of \$20 million, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because there had been no official announcement.

While Oakland, San Diego, St. Louis and other teams showed interest in signing the 42-year-old free agent, the Giants had been considered the front-runners to re-sign their star.

Bonds has 734 home runs and is 22 from breaking Hank Aaron's career record. He has played 14 seasons for the Giants and is coming off a \$90 million, five-year contract.

Bonds missed nearly the entire 2005 season after three operations on his right knee, prompting speculation on whether he was almost done. But the left fielder bounced back this year to play 130 games, hitting .270 with 26 homers and 77 RBIs.

Shadowed by allegations of steroid use and a target of boo-birds in many opposing parks, Bonds has remained a fan favorite in the Bay Area. He has been tied to the Giants by family and history — his dad, Bobby, was a popular player with the team; his godfather, Willie Mays, is regarded as the greatest Giant of them all.

The Giants will host the All-Star game next year, and can certainly build the event around Bonds as he nears Aaron's mark.

A seven-time NL MVP, a 13-time All-Star and an eight-time Gold Glove winner, Bonds has stolen more than 500 bases and is baseball's all-time leaders in walks.

Bonds met Wednesday with his former Pirates manager and now-Detroit skipper Jim Leyland, who is close friends with St. Louis manager Tony La Russa.

The Giants have been busy since the season ended. They re-signed Ray Durham and Pedro Feliz and also signed free agents Dave Roberts, Rich Aurilia and Bengie Molina, hoping to boost their lineup.

San Francisco cut ties with manager Felipe Alou after going 76-85 this season, and saw his son, outfielder Moises Alou, sign a free-agent deal with the New York Mets. Pitcher Jason Schmidt is working to finalize an agreement with the Dodgers.

Bruce Bochy was hired away from San Diego to manage San Francisco. Among the first things Bochy did after joining the Giants was phone Bonds.

The day after this season ended, Giants owner Peter Magowan said Bonds would not be the team's main cog if he returned in 2007.

"I think we need to go in a new direction," Magowan said in early October. "We have for a long time had a strategy that has worked well until the last two years, when it hasn't worked so well. The strategy has been one of having a great player — maybe the greatest player in the game — at the centerpiece and filling in with veteran players."

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Two season-ticket holders buy Los Angeles Sparks

BY BETH HARRIS
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Sparks were sold for \$10 million Thursday to an investment group led by two of the team's longtime season-ticket holders.

Kathy Goodman, a high school English and social studies teacher, and Carla Christofferson, an attorney and former Miss North Dakota, are the new majority owners in Gemini Basketball Holdings.

"I'm probably the most excited of anybody," center Lisa Leslie said. "When I found out it was two women, it was really empowering to me."

The Sparks are the fourth WBNA team to have independent ownership, along with the Connecticut Sun, Washington Mystics and Chicago Sky. The sale was unanimously approved by the league's Board of Governors, WNBA president Donna Orender said.

One of the WNBA's eight original teams, the Sparks were sold by Jerry Buss, the Los Angeles Lakers' owner whose son, Johnny, was Sparks president.

"This is about as exciting as I thought it might be," Goodman joked at an outdoor news conference with the Los Angeles skyline as backdrop.

She thanked her students from HighTechHigh-LA, a charter school in Van Nuys, who joined her for the announcement.

"They wanted to stay back and discuss

"The Scarlet Letter," she said.

The team will continue to play at Staples Center, where attendance has dropped in recent years.

"It's important for the game to be an event they want to come to, so they don't miss a game," Christofferson said. "People are coming for great basketball and role models."

The women, though, offered no concrete examples of how they'll attract more fans to the team's summer schedule.

"It's about creating excitement," Goodman said. "If you're excited about doing something, you come out and do it. There's really no reason people won't come out and watch the Sparks."

At least for next season, Goodman and Christofferson won't have the services of three-time league MVP Leslie. She is pregnant with her first child, due in June, according to husband Michael Lockwood.

"I will be cheering my teammates on," said Leslie, who plans to return for the 2008 season and try for a spot on the U.S. Olympic team.

The 43-year-old Goodman attended the first Sparks game on June 21, 1997, at the Forum in Inglewood. Christofferson, 39, has been a season-ticket holder since 1999.

"I've missed fewer Sparks' games than family birthdays," said Goodman, a former lawyer and Harvard undergraduate who closed the deal through phone calls made during her free period at school.



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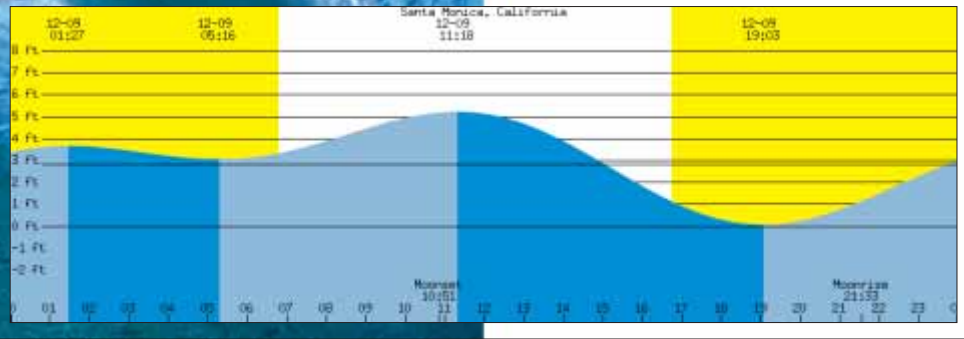
SURF REPORT

SURF CONDITIONS

SWELL FORECAST (9-14 FT)
NW swell will start to build as forerunners fill in from the hefty swell due this weekend. On Friday, once the NW energy starts to fill in, we're expecting 17-20 second periods, likely infrequent at times from 290 degrees with sets running chest to head high around west facing breaks, waist to at times chest high at south facing breaks that can work the diffraction/wrap.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS
MORE NW KEEPS SIZE UP INTO EARLY NEXT WEEK...

TIDE FORECAST FOR TODAY IN SANTA MONICA



BEACH REPORT CARD



NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous four weeks up to the ending date of **December 5, 2006**

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QUICK STATS
(for the last 28 days)

Number of sewage spills — 0
Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill — 0
Number of wet days — 4
Number of A grades for dry/wet weather — 27 / 31
Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather — 10 / 13

The Beach Report Card is made possible by a grant from 

Heal the Bay provides you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any floating debris or for 3 days after a rainstorm. After a rain, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually far exceed health criteria in the state's Beach Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Los Cerrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth	A	A+
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	A+
El Pescador State Beach, between Lachasa and Los Aliso creeks	A+	A+
Escorial Canyon at El Matador State Beach	A+	A+
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth	A+	A+
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth	A+	A+
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private)	A+	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth	F	F
Escamille Creek, just east of Escamille State Beach	A+	A+
Lorijo Canyon Creek mouth	A	F
Solstice Canyon at Dos Blodder County Beach	A	A+
Puerto State Beach at creek mouth	A	A+
Maric Canyon storm drain at Puerto Beach, at 24572 Molibu Rd.	F	F
Surfside Beach at Malibu Colony fence	A+	A+
Surfside Beach (beach location)- daily	A	F
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	A+	A+
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon	A+	ns
Los Flores State Beach at Los Flores Creek (point west)	A+	A+
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs	F	A+
Pena Creek at Las Torres County Beach	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon	ns	A+
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	A+
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain)	A+	A+

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bief Air Bay Club drain near fence	A+	F
Will Rogers State Beach at Paliza Canyon storm drain	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain	A+	F
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Christofferson)	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain	F	A+
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	D	D
Santa Monica Municipal Pier	F	A+
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kentner storm drain	A	F
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restaurants)	A	A+
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A	A+
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A+	A+
Venice Beach at Osaka Ave. drain	A	A+
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	B
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	A+	A+
Venice Beach- projection of Topgall St.	A+	A+
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower	C	A
Duckweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth	A	F
Duckweiler State Beach at Calver Blvd. drain	A+	D
North Woodchester Storm Drain at Duckweiler State Beach	A+	F
Duckweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty)	A+	A+
Duckweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	D
Duckweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant	A+	A+
Duckweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain	A+	A+

LEGEND

DRY -- each location is graded on an A-F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone

WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days

ns -- no sample taken



Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to working Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.

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The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas swam/swim. Our beaches are happy.

All smiles tonight, Libra

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)

★★★★★ You suddenly feel unburdened, perhaps because of news that heads in your direction. New beginnings become possible because of a new mind-set. Tonight: What you love to do most.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Whether at home or elsewhere, you feel very secure. A partnership plays a significant role in your decisions. You might want to invest more in your home or your personal life. Line up your priorities. Tonight: Happy wherever you are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ You are gregarious by nature, but even more so right now. You have a lot going on. Look at the positives instead of feeling exasperated. Seek out someone who has unusual advice. Tonight: Swap jokes or flirt – just be out there.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ Expenses are a touch out of whack, though you might have plans for how to make both ends meet. Be sure the details are right. A flub-up could feel bad later. Work on your gifts by making a list, if you haven't already. Tonight: Your treat.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Nothing can stop you. If you see a situation as more complicated than it needs to be, look at yourself. Your creativity will soar if you are willing to forge new ground. A child or special person could make you very happy. Tonight: Your turn to wish upon a star.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ Sometimes you are best off reaching out, but right now do needed reflection, or at least plan on more downtime. You feel unusually good about a personal matter. An investment in real estate might be well advised. Tonight: Vanish early.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Your words draw the kind of results that would make anyone happy. Think in terms of friendship. Meetings, groups of people and friends in general play significant roles. You could hit a home run. Tonight: All smiles.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Take charge of a situation. You might wonder what this effort could mean, but trust that in some way you will benefit. Your finances will swing, especially if you aren't careful. Use care with any expenditures. Tonight: Extravagance is your enemy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ Your sixth sense works overtime. If you are unsure or confused, seek out experts. You might be very playful, but for important decisions, turn to your higher self. Planning a trip could be far more exciting than you think. Tonight: Opt for a new restaurant or activity.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Much might be going on in your head in response to an associate's or friend's actions or words. You don't have to reveal where you are coming from. Communication is starved, but on an individual level. Tonight: With a special person.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Others want and demand your attention. The good news is, whatever you do and whichever direction you head in all work out fine. Friends could play a substantial role in the next few days. Let them. Tonight: Where the party is.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ Make a list of what you must do. You have the energy to complete nearly everything. Others seem to expect a lot from you. Make it OK. Expect to be the focal point. Act accordingly. Nurture an older relative or friend. Tonight: Roll in early.

Born Today

Actor John Malkovich (1953)

Singer Donny Osmond (1957)

Actor Kirk Douglas (1916)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at <http://www.jacquelinebigar.com>

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Happy Birthday!

You are direct and creative this year. Your abilities to read between the lines, do needed research and gain a perspective come forward. Success is a natural byproduct. Optimism marks your actions as you bound in a new direction. In fact, travel and education could play strong roles in your choices. 2007 marks a new luck cycle. Christen it well. A dream can become a reality. If you are single, someone quite exotic could knock on your door at any time. Even if this person isn't right, you will grow in new ways because of the association.

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Snipes snagged Actor surrenders to face tax fraud charges

WESLEY SNIPES surrendered to authorities to face federal tax fraud charges and was released on \$1 million bond, two months after he was indicted in central Florida. The actor, known for films such as the “Blade” trilogy, didn’t speak at a court appearance Friday in Ocala. He went there after arriving in Orlando on a private jet Friday from the African nation of Namibia, where he has been filming “Gallow Walker,” his publicist said. Snipes, 44, was charged in October with fraudulently claiming refunds totaling nearly \$12 million in 1996 and 1997 on income taxes already paid. He was also charged with failure to file returns from 1999 through 2004. He will be allowed to

return to Namibia to finish the film, but must return to his home in Marina del Rey, Calif., on or before Jan. 10, U.S. Magistrate Gary Jones ruled. After that, he will be required to surrender his U.S. passport and will be restricted to traveling in the continental United States. A Feb. 22 status conference was scheduled, which Snipes is not required to attend. According to the indictment, Snipes had his taxes prepared by accountants with a history of filing false returns to reap payments for their clients. The firm American Rights Litigators would receive 20 percent of refunds from clients, according to the indictment. Snipes has said he is a scapegoat and was unfairly

targeted by prosecutors. If convicted, he faces up to 16 years in prison. “Gallow Walker,” a cowboy movie, will be completed next week and will be released sometime next fall, said Ian Thompson, spokesman for Sheer Films, which is producing the movie. Snipes’ arrest wasn’t expected to delay production, Thompson said. Associated Press

Fitness stalker is on mend

A man who authorities say broke into a mansion belonging to celebrity fitness trainer GUNNAR PETERSON is recovering after being stabbed by a private security guard. Nicholas Marino, 23, of Newport Beach, was hospitalized Thursday in stable condition after being treated for his injuries during a struggle late Wednesday, police Lt. Mitch McCann said. Marino was arrested for investigation of residential burglary, making criminal threats and stalking, McCann said. It was not

immediately known whether he had retained a lawyer. Peterson and his estranged wife have obtained restraining orders, alleging Marino has been stalking her, according to the celebrity Web site TMZ.com. Peterson told KABC-TV in an interview Thursday that he was not at home when the break-in occurred. The fitness guru has trained stars including Jennifer Lopez, Nick Lachey and Brooke Burke. Ap

Grammys oblige R&B singer with ‘Breakthrough’ nominations

BY SANDY COHEN
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES — Mary J. Blige, whose album “The Breakthrough” was perhaps the biggest in her career, was nominated for a leading eight Grammy Awards on Thursday, including R&B album, record and song of the year. The Red Hot Chili Peppers were also multiple nominees, garnering six. Other multiple nominees were the Dixie Chicks, British newcomer James Blunt, Justin Timberlake, John Mayer, Prince, and the Black Eyed Peas’ will.i.am. R&B veteran Blige was nominated for record of the year for “Be Without You” and song of the year for the same track. “That’s a beautiful thing, that I’m still going,” Blige, 35, told The Associated Press. “The Breakthrough’ is about triumph, about not being a victim, but being a victor. It’s about loving yourself.” Nominees for album of the year included the Dixie Chicks’ “Taking the Long Way,” Gnarls Barkley’s “St. Elsewhere,” Mayer’s “Continuum,” Justin Timberlake’s “FutureSex/LoveSounds,” and the Red Hot Chili Peppers’ “Stadium Arcadium.” Already a two-time Grammy winner, Timberlake, 25, said getting nominated never gets old. “It is definitely a special thing,” he said. “I look up to peo-

ple like Mary, who’s been doing this for way longer than me.” Corrine Bailey Rae, a silky pop-soul singer from Britain, was nominated for best new artist, but was a surprise nominee for record of the year for “Put Your Records On.” Other nominees in that category were Blunt’s ubiquitous ballad, “You’re Beautiful,” Gnarls Barkley’s psychedelic groove “Crazy,” and the Dixie Chicks angry “Not Ready to Make Nice.” Collecting three nominations is “brilliant,” Rae said. “It’s a great end to the year, to go home for Christmas knowing my name is on a list of people I’ve admired for a long time,” the 27-year-old told the AP. “The fact that I was on the stage with Mary J. Blige. I think it’s amazing, it’s hilarious. It’s really a big moment, when the weirdness of all of it comes home.” Besides Rae, other nominees for best new artist included teen R&B singer Chris Brown, Imogen Heap, Blunt, and former “American Idol” winner Carrie Underwood. Gnarls Barkley, a duo of producer Danger Mouse and rapper/singer Cee-Lo, were surprisingly shut out. However, they did receive a total of four nominations. The Dixie Chicks’ five nominations were a triumph for a group who weathered boycotts from the country music establishment and a drop in album sales after lead singer Natalie Maines’ criticized President Bush in 2003. “Taking the Long Way,” which found the trio leaning more toward rock, was still ignored by country music radio.

NO BLUFF BUFFETT

It took less than 45 minutes for WARREN BUFFETT, billionaire investor and avid bridge player, to go broke in a charity poker tournament.

“It’s different than bridge,” said Buffett, 76, the chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Inc. “I was confused. I thought the low score won.”

He was among 50 amateur, celebrity and professional players who competed in a Texas Hold’em poker tournament Thursday night

The tournament celebrated a recent \$5 million renovation of retailer Borsheims, which is owned by Berkshire Hathaway.

Donations from the event benefited the Nebraska Make-a-Wish program.

The field of players included Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps and professional poker players David Williams, Evelyn Ng and Michael Mizrachi. They competed for a \$3,500 watch featured in the new James Bond movie, “Casino Royale.”

An amateur player from Omaha won the watch.

Ap

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MOVIEGUIDE

AERO THEATRE
1328 Montana Avenue
(310) 395-4990

Friday
Goodfellas, They Shoot Horses, Don't They?
7:30

Saturday
Star Wars: Episode IV — A New Hope
7:30

Sunday
The Pursuit of Happyness
7:30

AMC LOEWS BROADWAY 4
1441 3rd Street
(310) 458-6232

Babel (R)
1:10, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30

The Departed (R)
12:30, 4:00, 7:30, 10:45

For Your Consideration (PG-13)
1:00, 3:10, 5:25, 8:00, 10:15

The Fountain (PG-13)
10:00

The Nativity Story (PG)
12:15, 2:35, 5:00, 7:45

AMC 7 SANTA MONICA
1310 3rd Street
(310) 289-4262

Apocalypto (R)
10:50am, 12:40, 2:00, 3:40, 5:10, 7:00, 8:15, 10:10, 11:20

Blood Diamond (R)
10:20am, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:40

Deja Vu (PG-13)
11:10am, 2:10, 5:00, 8:00, 10:50

The Holiday (PG-13)
10:00am, 11:20am, 12:50, 2:20, 4:00, 5:20, 7:20, 8:35, 10:30, 11:35

Unaccompanied Minors (PG)
10:10am, 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00

LANDMARK NUWILSHIRE
1314 Wilshire Blvd
(310) 281-8228

Bobby (R)
1:00, 4:05, 7:15, 9:55

Stranger Than Fiction (PG-13)
1:15, 4:15, 7:00, 10:00

LAEMMLE'S MONICA FOURPLEX
1332 2nd Street
(310) 394-9741

Days of Glory (Indigenes) (R)
12:45, 3:45, 7:00, 9:55

The History Boys (R)
1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:50

Little Children (R)
1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:15

The Queen (PG-13)
1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 9:40

Spike & Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation (NR)
12:00am

MAIN'S CRITERION THEATRE
1313 3rd Street
(310) 395-1599

Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan (R)
12:00, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:40

Casino Royale (PG-13)
11:30am, 3:00, 6:30, 7:10, 9:50, 10:20

Happy Feet (PG)
11:40am, 2:10, 4:40

Happy Feet (PG)
11:10am, 1:40, 4:10, 7:00, 9:30

National Lampoon's Van Wilder: The Rise of Taj (R)
2:40, 7:30

Screamers (NR)
12:10, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:00

Turistas (R)
12:20, 5:00, 10:10

More information email news@smdp.com

Janric Classic Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest).

Difficulty
SILVER

		7	4			2		
		1		2	3		5	
6	2					4		
	9		6					
1		3		7		5		9
					8		2	
		9					7	1
	1		9	4		6		
		5			1	9		

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GETTING STARTED

There are many strategies to solving Sudoku. One way to begin is to examine each 3x3 grid and figure out which numbers are missing. Then, based on the other numbers in the row and column of each blank cell, find which of the missing numbers will work. Eliminating numbers will eventually lead you to the answer.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST PUZZLE

8	9	3	5	7	6	4	1	2
1	7	4	8	3	2	6	5	9
6	5	2	9	1	4	7	8	3
3	8	9	2	6	5	1	7	4
4	1	6	3	8	7	2	9	5
7	2	5	4	9	1	3	6	8
2	6	8	7	4	9	5	3	1
9	4	1	6	5	3	8	2	7
5	3	7	1	2	8	9	4	6

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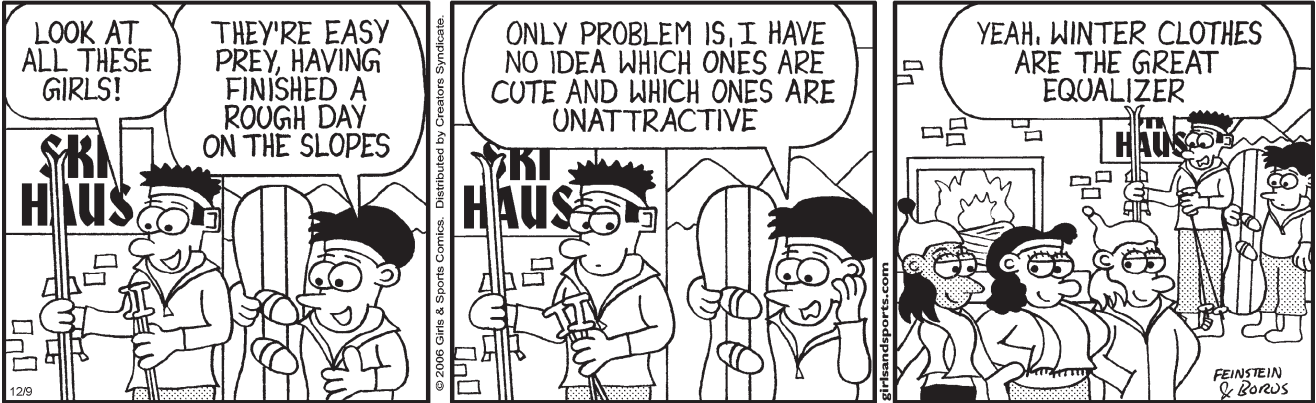
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By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose

The Other Coast



By Adrian Raeside

Garfield



By Jim Davis

Dog eat Doug



By Brian Anderson

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



Natural Selection

By Russ Wallace



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Church leader
5 Pirate address
10 Love, in Livorno
12 Texan landmark
13 Kick back
14 Annual race
15 Quarter-back Manning
16 Semi-circle
18 Chaotic spot
19 Fine point
21 June honorees
22 Witness's words
24 Wyoming's — Range
25 Thrift
29 Visitor to Oz
30 Chain
32 Be decisive
33 High pt.
34 Window-sill sitter
35 Practical
37 Birch of "American Beauty"
39 Parts
40 Taint

- 41 Gaiters
42 Ottoman rulers

DOWN

- 1 Trimmed
2 Brunch order
3 Diplo-matic
4 History segment
5 Created
6 Pub order
7 Fictional swinger
8 Repre-sent
9 They have their ups and downs
11 Fires up
17 Snob
20 Texas player
21 Blood bank visitor
23 Instants
25 Can feature
26 Hun leader
27 Tom's ex
28 Annual
29 City on the Loire
31 Doesn't go
33 Base meal
36 Charter
38 Center

T	R	U	T	H		F	A	C	E	T
R	E	P	R	O		E	R	O	D	E
U	T	T	E	R		R	A	M	I	S
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A	N	T			E	P	I		S	O
N	A	H	S		C	U	T	I	N	
			E	A	R		M	A	N	
			A	M	P	E	D		U	S
F	R	I			V	I	A		E	T
L	I	N	S	E	E	D			C	O
U	S	U	A	L				A	L	O
B	E	T	T	E				P	I	N
S	N	E	E	R				T	E	D

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1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
10				11		12			
13						14			
15				16	17			18	
19			20				21		
	22					23			
				24					
	25	26						27	28
29					30				31
32				33				34	
35			36			37	38		
39						40			
41							42		

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6%

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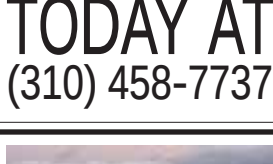
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