

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

1 6 14 33 36
Meganumber: 10
Jackpot: \$12 Million

FANTASY 5

1 13 19 25 29

DAILY 3

Daytime: 4 1 2
Evening: 1 8 4

DAILY DERBY

1st: 12 Lucky Charms
2nd: 10 Solid Gold
3rd: 01 Gold Rush

RACE TIME: 1:49.37

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

Colin Hancock, a convicted drug dealer serving time in Perth Prison in Scotland, filed a lawsuit in October, asking the equivalent of about US\$55,000 because of an improper rectal exam (responding to his symptom of urine blockage) given by a prison physician. Dr. Alexander MacFarlane said he was forced to use, as lubricant, milk from a bowl of porridge because that was all the prison had on hand.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1958, the first domestic passenger jet flight took place in the U.S. as a National Airlines Boeing 707 flew 111 passengers from New York to Miami in about 2 1/2 hours.

Ten years ago: Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin received the Nobel Peace Prize, pledging to pursue their mission of healing the anguished Middle East.

Ten years ago: Advertising executive Thomas Mosser of North Caldwell, N.J., was killed by a mail bomb blamed on the Unabomber.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It is only in romances that people undergo a sudden metamorphosis. In real life, even after the most terrible experiences, the main character remains exactly the same."

ISADORA DUNCAN
AMERICAN MODERN DANCE PIONEER (1878-1927).

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MtBE trial set over \$60M legal bill

Lawyers hired by City Hall want to be paid for work on MtBE lawsuit

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — A trial has been set in the battle over more than \$60 million in legal fees attorneys claim they're owed by City Hall.

But before lawyers face off in August of 2005, they'll meet next

month to decide what may be the critical issue in the case — whether City Hall should reimburse outside attorneys hired to work on the MtBE contamination case using a contingency formula.

Lawyers Fred Baron, Duane Miller and Vick Sher claim City Hall owes them more than \$60 million for work they did helping to secure a water treatment plant and a multi-million dollar settlement from oil companies for Santa Monica. Those were the spoils procured in the MtBE case,

launched after the city's water supply was tainted by errant oil companies.

According to the lawyers' contract, City Hall was to pay the lawyers 25 percent of the value of the settlement, up to \$250 million. The attorneys were entitled to another 5 percent of the next \$100 million of the settlement, and 10 percent of any portion of the settlement in excess of \$350 million, attorneys said.

City Hall in 2000 sued 18 oil companies that allowed MtBE to

seep into the groundwater in 1996. All but one of the oil companies has agreed to settle the lawsuits rather than go to court, paying City Hall more than \$120 million. The major oil companies also agreed to pay for the design, construction and maintenance of a water treatment plant to run until the wells are again clean. That plant has not been valued.

At issue in the legal fee dispute is whether the outside lawyers nullified their contract by arranging a

See **MTBE**, page 5

An Israel light



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Tomer Zakheim, 13, lights the menorah on the Third Street Promenade Thursday, the third day of Chanukah. Zakheim, who lives in Israel, is visiting Southern California with his family to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah.

'Dawn sesh' anew for Samohi Surf Club

BY SUSAN TAM

Special to the Daily Press

SAMOHİ — Students here have caught a wave that will rewrite surf history in Santa Monica.

What began as a father videotaping the start of a surf club at his son's high school has now turned into a broadcast-quality documentary that is planned to be marketed around the world.

Originally just trying to record the journey, filmmaker and surf coach Christopher Dill believes that students in other countries can relate to the club experience at

Santa Monica High School.

"It's essentially about starting a surf club at a beach school," Dill said.

Samohi's surf team, which now carries a roster of 37 surfers, was reborn last year after 15 years of no official representation from the school, according to the club's Web site.

"(How can) Santa Monica not have a team?" Dill asked.

Samohi, situated at the hub of Southern California surf culture and home to many past role models, now has the opportunity for students

See **SURF'S UP**, page 7

Moratorium on new development in Santa Monica proposed

Critics of Santa Monica Place overhaul want to delay new projects

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — A movement is building to halt all large developments in Santa Monica.

Members of the Planning Commission next week will discuss a suggestion to ban new projects over 50,000 square feet until an update to City Hall's planning codes is completed. That process is expected to take two and a half years.

At issue is a controversial proposal to build five high-rise buildings on 10 acres in downtown Santa Monica currently occupied by Santa Monica Place mall, designed in the late 1970s by architect Frank Gehry. The new proposal includes nearly 600,000 square feet of retail space, and 450 housing units in towers stretching up to 21 stories high.

Opponents of the project said the towers will clutter the Santa Monica skyline. They also criticized the way developers put forward the plans.

"As it's been put forward, I

See **MORATORIUM**, page 6



Photo courtesy of Samohi Surf Club

Santa Monica High School student Gabriel Dill at Bay Street.

Jacquie Banks

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ A discussion in the morning furthers understanding between you and a key associate. Later in the day, take the initiative to investigate options, whether it is calling in an expert or hopping on the computer. Tonight: Take some thinking time for yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Others suddenly move into a new style of relating. Whereas group meetings had been in demand, suddenly everyone wants private time. You might want to clone yourself. A relationship needs time if you want it to work. Tonight: Find some mistletoe.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Others seek you out midday. Obviously the weekend spirit floats through your workplace. You might as well give up getting any quiet work done. Network and catch up on news. Someone in charge could be hard on you. Tonight: Ever popular.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Slow down. In fact, if you can do less physically and more mentally, you will gain. Use shortcuts, delegate and ask for others' support. Your mind adds an imaginative touch to any situation, conversation or plan. Tonight: Get some R and R.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Your energy swings midday, allowing more freedom, imagination and humor into your life. A childlike quality emerges from you. Just be sure you don't give someone you care about too much a jolt. Tonight: Spice up your night.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Keep information close to your heart and don't share much. Your focus might be on building greater security and well-being. A purchase might not be OK with a close associate. Think about this person carefully as you choose. Tonight: Weave your way home.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ What you say makes a difference. If you are feeling jittery or uptight, take a walk or try another type of stress-buster. If you cannot concentrate, don't try; instead, make calls and reach out for others around you. Tonight: Eggnog with your pals.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Use the morning for anything you think is key and important. You have a great sense of timing, except with a creative matter that might involve a risk. A child or new friend could act up. Go with the flow. Tonight: Work on holiday gifts.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ From a very laid-back position you reverse gears midday and charge onward. Some might do a double-take. Handle a domestic or personal matter before it handles you. Your magnetism soars. Tonight: Do what comes naturally.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Use the morning for meetings and whatever you are vested in. You are most likely to succeed with others in the a.m. Close your door and get as much done as you can in the afternoon. You might need to chat with a trusted adviser. Tonight: Toss plans to the wind if you want.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Take a vision or unusual idea and make it a reality. Express your thoughts and ask those who are more practical to help. You might be surprised by another's thoughts. Together you'll come up with a winner. Tonight: Out on the town.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ You manage to toss others' plans and generally agreed-upon concepts in the air. First, an associate reacts. How others have learned to view personal matters could change dramatically. You are subconsciously helping others think outside of the box. Tonight: Out and about....

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LOCAL

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Holiday fashion show dresses up the season

By Daily Press staff

Fashion, beauty and styling professionals will be on hand Saturday, Dec. 11 when many of the top stores in downtown Santa Monica will provide a free fashion, styling and makeover show, beginning at 2 p.m. on the Third Street Promenade north of Santa Monica Boulevard.

Participating shops and professionals include Sephora (makeup), Salon Vivace (hair), Robinsons May, Planet Funk, Hot Topic, Wet Seal Payless, Nine West, Banana Republic, French Connection, Hype, Old Navy, Miss Sixty, Max Studio, Tiffany & Jax, Club Monaco, Lucky Brand Jeans, Vans 9two5 Jewelry, Two Lips Shoes, Mudra, Ann Taylor, Image, Forever 21, Charles David, A|X Armani Exchange, O My Sole, among others.

At 3:30 p.m., free styling and makeover sessions will be held in Santa Monica Place between Robinsons May and William Sonoma. Three lines from Sephora and 10 lines from Robinsons May will be available, including Estee Lauder, Clinique and Origins. Beauty gift baskets will be raffled off during the show.

The day's activities are being produced by fashion consultant James Campbell. For further information call (310) 393-8355 or (310) 394-5451.

Nativity scenes back on display

By Daily Press staff

The annual Santa Monica Nativity Scenes display will open in Palisades Park along Ocean Avenue near Arizona at 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12, with narration of the Christmas story and Christmas music. A singing Christmas cross of young carolers starts at 4 p.m. down the Third Street Promenade and onto Wilshire Boulevard to the opening ceremony. Young people interested in participating in the singing Christmas cross are welcome to join group practices at the Lighthouse Church, 1220 20th St, at 3:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 10, and 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 11.

After the ceremony, the 14 lighted scenes with lifesize figures depicting events surrounding Christ's birth will remain on display through the end of the year.

Gospel good for the Pico spirit

By Daily Press staff

A gospel concert is set for Saturday to benefit the Pico Youth and Neighborhood Foundation.

From noon to 4 p.m. at the Santa Monica College amphitheater, you can hear the sounds of choirs and duets from the Chosen Generation, Lynwood High School's gospel choir and the Pearson Family, the Gospel Fest winners of 2003; Martin's Favor Gospel Recording Family; Soldiers on Soul Patrol; Band Pure "N" Heart Band and soloists Jessica Nakao, Niya Powell, John G. Tolbert, and Santa Monica College students Marshall Bang Salomae Kpohanu.

Admission for SMC students is free with SMC ID card, as well as children under 12 years old. For everyone else, it's \$5, or an unwrapped gift. For more information, call (310) 434-4435.

Post office ready for holiday packages

By Daily Press staff

One hundred fifty-seven U.S. Post Offices serving the Los Angeles metropolitan area are ready to deliver the holidays with expanded office hours. The post offices are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Dec. 21, Monday through Friday, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

"Our post offices are expecting a very busy holiday mail season, and we are working hard to make everything quick, easy and convenient for our customers," said Postmaster Robert McGuire. "We encourage customers to mail early and to ship all their holiday packages with the Postal Service."

Santa Monica has two U.S. Post Offices — 1248 Fifth St. and the Will Rogers

See BRIEFS, page 5



SURF REPORT

The WNW swell whipped up by the winter storm will peak today with head-high plus surf for lots of exposed spots, easily overhead sets at good breaks and double overhead stuff at stand-outs in parts of Ventura and the South Bay.

Expect four to five feet, shoulder- to head-high, occasionally eight feet and fair to good conditions.

Mainly light N/NE winds Friday morning will turn NW in the afternoon.

Today the water is:

59°

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

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	9:12	3.2	9:20	0.9	4:18	4.0	1:52	3.9
SUNDAY	10:34	2.6	10:04	1.0	4:41	4.3	3:29	3.7
MONDAY	11:27	1.9	10:44	1.2	5:03	4.7	4:51	3.6
TUESDAY	12:11	1.1	11:23	1.4	5:28	5.2	5:58	3.7
WEDNESDAY	NA	NA	12:53	0.2	5:56	5.8	6:57	3.8
THURSDAY	12:01	1.6	1:35	-0.5	6:28	6.3	7:51	3.9
FRIDAY	12:40	1.8	2:18	-1.1	7:04	6.7	8:44	3.9

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The QLine

On Tuesday, the new slate of Santa Monica City Councilmembers will be sworn into office, as Bobby Shriver, Ken Genser, Herb Katz and Richard Bloom take the oath and usher in a new chapter for Santa Monica policy making. Within the next month or so, the council will take up the charge of anointing one of their own as the city's next mayor, to succeed Bloom for a two-year term.

Largely just a figurehead position, the

office of mayor puts a face on the city's elected representation.

This week, Q-Line wants to know: "Who should be appointed as the next mayor of Santa Monica, and why?"

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Verge a class act

Editor:

Thank you for your profile on Art Verge (SMDP, Dec. 6, page 1). My family has known him for over 25 years and he’s had a positive impact on all of us. Whether he’s singing a duet with my father at the annual Verge Christmas party, teaching history to my sister in Paris with SMC’s Study Abroad program, or cheering me on at a water polo game during my own years at Saint Monica’s, he’s been a positive influence to us all. Doctor Art Verge, hip hip hooray!

James Toomey
Santa Monica

Traffic calming stressing out high schooler

Editor:

In America’s large cities, a person needs to get to one place as fast as possible to do their daily tasks and responsibilities. Santa Monica is no different with a population of more than 85,000. But how can such a large amount of citizens get to work with a City Council adding “traffic calming measures” that only increase the amount of traffic congestion?

Many companies and the nation are losing productivity out of this major suburb of Los Angeles because of these traffic slowing measures. One citizen put it simply, “that streets are to be driven on, not blocked with sticks, islands and curb extensions which unduly slow traffic.” If the City Council is part of the government and the government is for the people, why isn’t the City Council for the people? California is already in a budget deficit of \$31.4 billion with no clear or easy way out and our city is spending money to make us late to work and school. This angers me because it just adds one more thing I need to worry about while driving. Traffic has become so horrible for some that “traffic has changed their lives. Transportation should not be a life changing experience for those of us just trying to get to work and school on time.

All of these measures to “calm” us raging Santa Monicans started in 2000 with the placement of median modifications, curb extensions, enhanced crosswalks and a traffic circle south of Pico to the city’s southern limits on Fourth Street. The estimated cost of this one section of our large city was for an astounding \$115,960. The city claims that these measures were implemented to slow the traffic in that neighborhood because local residents complained of high and dangerous speeds. The average speed before the placement of these modifications was 28 mph. The average speed now, with these modifications is 24 mph. An unanticipated result of the measure is that traffic on this street has decreased, loading other streets in Santa Monica with more traffic than they should have to handle. To top it all off, the ratio of accidents has remained the same since the completion of these measures. The only logical conclusion would be to label these “traffic calming measures” a huge mistake and waste of tax dollars.

The city’s most important services, the emergency services, have also complained about the measures being placed around the city. Emergency services estimate a negative impact on more than 8,200 emergency response calls a year and a rise of up to one minute per call. In a society that is growing in population and crime, emergency situations come with that growth in our society. If our City Council does not want us to work or be safe, what does it want us to do?

We can not let our City Council work against us. We must use our voice and be heard by the people that we employ, because without us, our City Council cannot exist. I personally know many people who agree with Matthew Glasser, a contributing columnist for the Santa Monica Daily Press, who said that he will “pledge all of (my) future votes to any political candidate who will make solving our traffic problems their one and only campaign issue.” We need to put the right people in the right positions to help us live more prosperously and more importantly, safer.

Robert Winthrop
11th grader, Santa Monica High School

Arafat not a villain

Editor:

What Elan Sournu (SMDP, Nov. 13, page 7) fails to attribute, indeed recognize about Yasser Arafat, is that he did once unanimously agree that Israel has a right to exist, that terrorism is evil, and that there was an Israeli whom he “loved like a brother” and with whom he un-alloyedly sought to come to terms with a peace agreement. That Israeli was Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. There was, in fact, a mutual agreement between the two men as to accords and reconciliations. For that, both were recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, and rightfully so.

And then along came an assassin of Rabin, with the consequence of reverting Arafat’s heart mournfully from the near-realization of accommodation to a hard, paranoid mechanical lump. There can be no decent apology for a (such a man) no matter what the cause. But with just a dollop of “to know all, is to forgive all,” there might be the onset of setting aside vilifications about Arafat and expending sweat and ink for finding another two such men to bring peace to the region.

William Cook
Santa Monica

A grand plan that’s doable: Rand building a bridge for homeless



OUR TOWN
BY TED WINTERER

I was battling insomnia the other night so I surfed through the city of Santa Monica’s Web site. I find it slows my heart rate and lulls me to sleep.

Posted there are the resident satisfaction surveys from 1998-2002. In each year, homelessness is identified by citizens as the predominate challenge facing our city and yet little has changed on our streets. A cynic might suggest that’s why no surveys are available for 2003 and 2004. If Wal-Mart was this responsive to its customers’ feedback, it would still be a small mom and pop operation in Arkansas — not that it’s necessarily a bad thing, mind you.

Why hasn’t our government made our primary concern an institutional priority? It’s telling that in a town with a plethora of boards, commissions and task forces convened to address everything from Albatross Rights to Zeppelin Management, there isn’t a Commission on Homelessness. Perhaps that’s because all of our City Council members live north of Wilshire or in Sunset Park, behind the invisible wall of proactive policing which minimizes the homeless population. Or maybe it’s because city staff is rarely exposed to the issue, as the only significant homeless presence at City Hall occurs at the Saturday feedings on the front lawn.

Do you think we’d get a sharper focus on the matter if we relocated homelessness to the Civic Center? During the last City Council campaign Herb Katz suggested setting up tents in an area parking lot to shelter the homeless. He’s since disavowed the notion, but he may have been headed in the right direction. What if a permanent tent city were erected in front of City Hall to house some of those without homes? Might that then inspire some genuine solutions to local homelessness?

Instead our City Council in recent years has pursued the same tired policy of doling out a modest \$2 million for social services, passing a couple of inadequately enforced ordinances posing as tough love, and bleating in Orwellian happy speak about providing a continuum of care. Excuse me, but what’s so compassionate about leaving people to fend for themselves on the streets?

You see, while many would argue we spend too much money on the homeless

in this city, I’m one of those deranged pinkos who believes we don’t spend enough and don’t spend it well. There’s a reason these unfortunate people are called the homeless and not the clothesless, temporary shelterless, foodless, or showerless: to provide these amenities without homes does little to cure this societal ill. Simply put, Santa Monica needs to provide supportive, transitional housing to substantially reduce our homeless population. To do so would improve the quality of life for both the homeless and the housed.

Bobby Shriver has proposed turning vacant buildings on the Veterans Administration land in West LA into housing for the chronically homeless. And I say bless him. Finally a local leader is talking about a real solution to homelessness: Homes. But even this farsighted proposal will take some time to implement.

In the meantime the city of Santa Monica owns its own vacant buildings which can sooner be put to a similar use. Now that the Rand Corporation has moved into its ungainly new fortress, the city has taken possession of the old Rand buildings. These structures are scheduled for demolition to make room for the implementation of the Civic Center Plan, a project which will cost more than \$100 million and amounts to the de facto McMansionization of City Hall. Incidentally, nowhere in those resident surveys did I see an iota of demand for a makeover of the Civic Center.

I say let’s put that notion on hold and instead use the Rand buildings to provide housing for the homeless with on-site support services to help those who want to steer their lives in a new direction. It’s a quick and relatively inexpensive stopgap measure to substantially reduce our homeless population while we wait for some of these grander regional schemes and 10-year plans to play out. And it puts the issue of homelessness right in front of City Hall. When our government truly ameliorates our citizens’ primary concern, then and only then should we proceed with a Civic Center remodel whose primary support comes from City Council and staff.

Like my idea? Then e-mail the City Council at council@smgov.net. Every day the old Rand buildings move one step closer towards demolition. Soon a rare opportunity will be lost.

(Ted Winterer is a writer and lives in Ocean Park).

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

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Santa Monica Daily Press

LOCAL



January hearing could decide fate of City Hall's \$60 million legal bill

MTBE, from page 1

fee split among themselves and not disclosing the terms to City Hall. City officials claim the fee split canceled the contract. The lawyers cited California case law indicating they weren't required to disclose the fee split until the case was completed.

City Attorney Marsha Moutrie countered that even if a judge rules against City Hall and determines the lawyers should be paid on a contingency basis, there still may be a legal issue that precludes the attorneys from charging exorbitant rates.

"There is some potential that a court could find that the fee they want is just unconscionable, because of the circumstances of the case, including the fact that the case did not progress far towards trial and that a good deal of the work was done in-house by the city," said Moutrie, adding that the MtBE lawsuit was the largest in city history. Assistant City Attorney Joe Lawrence and Deputy City Attorney Carol Kurtz also worked on the case.

The size of the legal bill gave some officials sticker shock.

"What they're asking for and what they believe they're entitled to, it just staggers my imagination," City Councilman Bob Holbrook said. "I'm a pharmacist, and it would be like paying me \$100,000 an hour for my work. It just staggers my imagination."

"I couldn't even calculate it," Holbrook added. "It's such an enormous figure per hour. It's unimaginable. I guess you'd have to be an attorney to even think about it in those terms. They probably make more money, per minute, than a heavyweight champion does battling in the ring. You have to think of it in those terms."

Baron maintained the "unconscionable" issue already had been addressed when the lawyers hashed out the contract.

"We've already done that," he said. "(Moutrie) negotiated that unconscionable clause in the contract ... We're very disappointed that the city hired us on a contingency fee. We wanted to work for a reduced contingency fee, plus an hourly rate so we would not have to take any risk. The city refused."

With the court proceedings pending, a judge has ordered City Hall to appraise the value of the water treatment plant.

"We have objected to that procedure occurring at this time, because we think it kind of puts the cart before the horse," Moutrie said. "We think the liability issue in this case should be resolved first."

Still, Moutrie said a January hearing on whether or not City Hall should pay the lawyers based on contingency will resolve what she views as the "threshold issue" in the case. While Moutrie claimed the contract was unclear, the outside attorneys maintained City Hall is simply trying to evade paying out on the large settlement.

Baron said he didn't understand why City Hall was hesitant to settle the bill, adding the city would still profit by an estimated \$30 to \$40 million after having its water supply cleaned up. He added he was confident he and his partners would succeed in court.

"No lawyer ever wants to say, 'You're going to win this one,' but I think we have the longer end of the stick," added Baron, who said the lawyers will fight for legal fees if they win the case. "It's very disappointing that we have to go through this. We sure would like to have avoided this."

"Having been hired in June of 2001, as of today we haven't been paid anything at all. Not any of us. Not a penny."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

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Customers also have the option of sending their holiday packages from their homes or businesses by using the Click-N-Ship online package service at <http://www.usps.com/clicknship>. Insurance is available, and delivery confirmation is free using the service, he said. With Click-N-Ship, the regular carrier will pick up an unlimited number of Priority or Express Mail packages for free when scheduled in advance, he said.

When using First-class Mail and Priority Mail to mail cards and packages domestically, the Postal Service recommends mailing out-of-state mail by Tuesday, Dec. 21, and in-state mail by Wednesday, Dec. 22. After those dates, customers can still use Express Mail for their packages going to many destinations.

Customers mailing to military service persons overseas and to international locations are advised to mail those packages as soon as possible to save on rates and get them there by Christmas. Most military overseas mail and international mail should be sent by Dec. 11 to arrive by Christmas. Express Mail is available after those dates.

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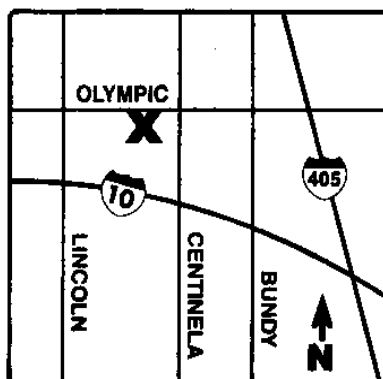
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To read a brief message about how to order your free copy of this report, visit www.westsidehomesource.com. Visit this site now to learn how to obtain the best financing rats when you buy your next home.

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LOCAL

Council to review Macerich plans sometime next year

MORATORIUM, from page 1

think that people miss ... (that) the towers start four stories above the ground, and the park, which is supposed to be one of the public amenities, doesn't meet the ground level," said Patricia Hoffman, former president of the Santa Monica Democratic Club, which proposed the moratorium.

"It's the wrong starting place for a community discussion. I would like to see an honest community discussion that starts with step one, rather than with step seven or 10 or 20 or whatever it is, and I think that's been missed completely," Hoffman added.

A senior mall executive said he understood the negative emotional reaction the towers received, but added a moratorium was the wrong response.

"A moratorium or anything that postpones the direction of Santa Monica Place ... would be very frustrating for Macerich, since we have been working with the city for close to three years," said Randy Brant, a vice president at Macerich Co., which owns the mall. "It's an emotional subject and I understand that. Macerich did the right thing by suggesting what we thinks works best. We're certainly open to considering alternatives."

If the Planning Commission backs the concept of a moratorium, the issue would be forwarded onto the City Council, which is currently scheduled to discuss the Macerich proposal in January. It's unclear where the council stands on the issue.

"I don't think there needs to be a moratorium on development," said City Councilman Bob Holbrook, adding the public process would be thorough. "The Macerich project, if they redevelop — and that's a big 'if' — there's adequate zoning in place to do that and to do it reasonably. We just need to work with them on a project that everybody thinks is a great one ... The spirit of redeveloping (Santa Monica Place) is something that everybody's going to have to buy into."

City Councilman Kevin McKeown said now may be an ideal time for a development moratorium because City Hall is beginning the process of updating the city's general plan, which will govern growth in Santa Monica for decades to come.

"In general, this kind of a temporary freeze on development is something that

other cities have done," said McKeown, an open critic of the Macerich plans.

"I think it's very interesting that this proposal is coming from a grassroots organization," McKeown added. "It's not coming from planners. It's not coming from council members. It's really coming from the community. That to me says something."

Former Mayor Nat Trives, who supported a temporary development moratorium when he served on the council, said the proposal was worth considering.

"Moratoriums are used just like you would if you were driving a big truck — you have your clutch and your brake, and if you're going too fast downhill, and you don't want to burn out your brakes, you use the clutch," Trives said.

"'Moratorium' is not a bad word," added Trives, who chairs the chamber of commerce. "When used properly, the moratorium is a legitimate function of government."

Large, city-wide moratoriums were instituted in the late '70s and again for several years in the late '80s, said Assistant Planning Director Andy Agle. Several smaller moratoriums, for specific areas of the city and specific types of development, have also been set up, Agle added.

Myriad legal issues are entailed, officials said.

"For me, the bottom line is ... the law does allow cities to impose moratoria on a showing under certain circumstances where there is a need, and (the moratorium is) for a limited period of time," City Attorney Marsha Moutrie said.

With next week's discussion pending, members of the Planning Commission were hesitant to comment publicly on the proposal.

"It's a really sticky, mucky situation," Planning Commissioner Arlene Hopkins said.

Added Planning Commissioner Julie Dad, also president of the Santa Monica Democratic Club, which put forward the suggestion to halt development: "I've not seen the plan and I'm not going to have anything to say about it until next Wednesday night.

"In this case, and you can tell from the records, Commissioner (Gwynne) Pugh and I more than others (agree that) ... we need to not move forward on things, especially text amendments, before we have revised the general plan," Dad added.

Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy

The Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy is seeking donations. Situated in a courtyard garden visible to the community, the fountain will be a respite for those seeking faith, peace and hope amongst the challenges of the world.

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LOCAL



Surf Club documentary to be distributed around globe

SURF'S UP, from page 1

to compete with a school team. But money, leadership and support had to come first.

A WAVE OF NEW TALENT

"The level of surfing in high school is phenomenal," Dill said. "Competing against some teams from other schools would be like the Santa Monica High School basketball team playing the Detroit Pistons."

"The old adage that surfers are slackers (isn't true). This is the most difficult and demanding sport I've been involved in, and I've coached (other sports) for years and years," he added.

With the evolution of surfing, the image of the beach bum, slacker lifestyle has been tossed aside. Although the spirit remains, the current multi-billion dollar industry now sells to teens who are regulars at before-school dawn patrol sessions. Also included in that culture are grueling practices, competitions, sponsorships, commercials and media coverage that push the pastime to the next level.

Some Southern California schools, like in San Clemente and Torrey Pines, have a physical education class with 100 surfers, Dill said. He hopes to have a similar program one day at Samohi.

The club at Samohi started off strong but then tapered off, Dill said.

"A lot of it was cold water, bad conditions that scared people off," he said. "They didn't want to deal with it and the commitment was a lot. Also, our faculty advisor was leaving at the end of the year."

"At times there were five or six kids at a meeting, I mean, it was depressing," he added.

As with any new club, the initial push was the most difficult. But many parents were committed to getting the team up and running, Dill said.

The group found a way to revive itself by recruiting new members at an on-campus "Club Day," then threw a beach party and surf competition that they called the "Samohi Valhalla Luau," sponsored by 9star. Other sponsors later jumped on board, including local merchants Patagonia, Island Surf Shop, the Library Alehouse, ZJ's Boardinghouse, and the Main Street Merchants Association. Other companies donated food and helped coordinate events, Dill said.

The team has gathered more momentum since last year.

"We have a new crop of groms, and all have improved," Dill said.

The team competes anywhere from North County in San Diego to Santa Monica, as part of the Interscholastic Surfing Federation (ISF), which includes 80 teams.

For each competition, there are 16 available roster spots, which are determined by a combination of a surf-off, attitude and commitment, and seniority on the team, Dill said. During the season, the team participates in five tournaments and the state championship.

So far, the team has had surfers advance into semifinal rounds of competition — an improvement from last year when no athletes made it past the first rounds, according to the team's Web site.

LEGENDS

Surf culture has changed from the endless summer of the '60s. Today, it's found an urban niche in Santa Monica's envi-

ronment, said Randy Wright, owner of Horizons West surf shop on Main Street. These days, surfers from mixed backgrounds are found in the Southern California surfing scene that was once associated with stereotypical blond beach bums from Orange County.

Santa Monica, though, has had a long history of nurturing many surfers to success.

In 1913, George Freeth who invented the red buoys that lifeguards use, and Dave Rochlen, who created clothing company, Jam's World Hawaii, came from Santa Monica, Dill said. Now, professional surfers, like Strider Raspberry Wasilewski, a former Santa Monica resident and Quiksilver team captain, led the way for other city-sprung surfers.

In the 1980s, Wright was in charge of a group of competitors that included, "a lot of Venice High students, and also the hot rippers from Samohi," he said, who was himself a top surfer. After the inevitable shift of aging athletes began to get jobs and move away, and the death of two members who died surfing Pipeline — a historically fast and powerful wave on the North Shore of Oahu — the informal club slowly disbanded, Wright said.

With the passage of Proposition 13, the available money for the Samohi surf club dried up, Dill said. For years, there was no organization or leadership to start the surf club again. Until now, with the recent rise in popularity of snowboarding, as well as public action against ocean pollution, and a renewed mainstream interest in the sport, the time was ripe for more surfers getting in the water, Wright said.

AN ONSCREEN MEMORY

On Wednesday night in Barnum Hall at Samohi, the club screened a documentary film that follows the journey of the fledgling team from the moment the students walked into the first meeting to the development of the club as it experienced a year of struggles and triumphs.

The documentary started from Dill's background as a filmmaker, and his desire to capture and remember the experience.

"Something told me to take a camera along, that maybe it was the first and only year (of the club), and I want to have it for my kids," Dill said.

The documentary isn't the first one to come out of Samohi. In 1965, another school surf film was screened at Barnum Hall. In the future, Dill hopes to bring the two films together for a 40-year reunion of Samohi surfers.

Dill's son, Gabriel, has been president of the club and worked hard to get the group recognized. He was one of the first to see the film.

"I am pretty proud of him for the way it's turned out," Gabriel Dill said. "I think people will like it a lot but I'm not sure what they are expecting."

"There's a lot of narration, describing some of our obstacles. It's not really a surf movie. The majority isn't surfing footage but (more about) lifestyle, and about our tournaments."

Christopher Dill hopes to market the video throughout the United States to high schools, junior high schools and all the sport cable networks. He also sees a possibility of "going international with it. Kids in Japan, China, Europe, might be interested," he said.

"My goal is to tell the world about the Santa Monica high school surf team."

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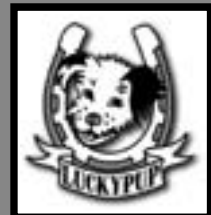
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STATE

\$8 billion CalFed plan shifts funding to feds and water users

BY DON THOMPSON

Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — An \$8 billion plan to restore the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which serves as both water filter and straw for 22 million Californians, was approved Thursday, despite critics' warnings that Congress and the state Legislature would not provide the money.

The finance plan unanimously adopted by the California Bay-Delta Authority proposes to shift more of the future cost to the federal government and to water agencies that benefit from the Delta, after state taxpayers carried much of the burden for years.

Congress and President Bush reauthorized the joint California Federal Bay-Delta Program in October, devoting \$395 million to rebuild levees, restore ecosystems and study new water storage projects.

The Delta collects Northern California water that is sucked through massive pipes to feed much of Southern California and some of the nation's most productive farmland.

CalFed was created a decade ago in an attempt to end the water wars between farmers, urban users, fishermen and environmental groups. Its multibillion-dollar projects are bringing the first major changes to California's water systems since the 1960s.

The approved plan would chop state funding in half, to 30 percent, and triple federal funding, to 21 percent of the overall cost. The burden assumed by major water users would increase by half, from 6 percent to 9 percent, while the proportion paid by local governments and water agencies would increase from 27 percent to 40 percent.

The plan is "simply unrealistic" and unlikely to win legislative approval, warned state Sen. Mike Machado, D-Linden, who will chair a Natural Resources subcommittee with CalFed jurisdiction.

It calls for \$1.5 billion in state funding over 10 years, twice what had been allo-

cated for CalFed under the \$3.4 billion Proposition 50 water quality bond approved by voters in 2002. It assumes \$1.7 billion in scarce federal funding, more than four times the recent CalFed congressional funding level.

Yet the \$800 million-a-year finance plan already is 36 percent smaller than the plan that has guided the authority the last four years. CalFed has been funded largely by voter-approved state water bonds, but the money is projected to soon run out.

The plan is driven by what needs to be done, not what money is likely to be available, said authority Chairman Gary Hunt. Without significant new funding, "we can maybe get the \$395 million out of the federal government, and then we can pack up and go home in about three years."

"We've got to shoot high," said authority Director Patrick Wright. "We think the plan is reasonable."

The plan will go to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for consideration in next year's state budget, and to Congress for consideration in the 2006 fiscal year.

The shortfall has sparked a battle over how much should be paid by the public at large, and how much by beneficiaries like water districts that provide water to urban and agricultural users.

A coalition of environmental groups and Bay area municipalities says there should be no taxpayer or bond money used. The California Farm Bureau Federation and a coalition of water agencies — including the giant Westlands and Metropolitan water districts — argue Delta improvements carry public benefits and deserve public funding.

The plan calls for shifting about 15 percent of the cost from taxpayers to users. "The question is, is that enough?" said Hunt.

The authority will spend the next three to four months debating the details of how to meet the funding goals in the finance framework. The plan will then be reviewed annually to match spending to actual funding.

Public officials living high off taxpayers

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — City Controller Laura Chick said lax oversight of \$6.3 million spent on travel by city officials in the last three years led to excessive hotel bills and airfares, including \$385 per night hotel rooms and \$1,559 for a round-trip flight to Washington.

Chick wrote in a report released Wednesday that her office found "numerous violations of travel guidelines, policies and procedures." Councilman Jack Weiss had requested an examination of travel costs in the Information Technology Agency.

"Laura Chick's report confirms that problems we initially found in ITA are systemic and require a citywide response," Weiss said. "To the extent there are abuses, they have occurred because of a lack of rigor, a lack of policy and a lack of management."

In examining 346 trips, Chick said she found travel records were kept inconsistently and manually, making it difficult to track and supervise trips to make sure they complied with city policies.

Chick asked the City Council to adopt major changes in travel practices, including computerization of the process, elimination of cash advances and a requirement that employees provide written reasons when they buy airplane tickets that cost more than the lowest available fares.

The study looked at 22 roundtrips to Washington by city employees and found the average cost was \$553, but the mayor's office paid \$1,559 for Deputy Chief of Staff Nathalie Rayes to fly there in March.

Rayes was part of a seven-person delegation, including Mayor James K. Hahn, that went to the capital to seek legislative help on homeland security and policing issues.

STATE BRIEFS

High court to decide who lives and dies

By The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Two years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it was unconstitutionally cruel and unusual to execute retarded murderers, California’s high court began weighing who should live or die on the nation’s largest death row.

The nation’s highest court left it to the states to define what constitutes retardation, paving the way for new laws and court challenges in more than two dozen states that did not outlaw the practice. California lawmakers last year adopted a ban on such punishment for the mentally infirm, but state prosecutors fear California’s entire death row population — about 650 inmates — may claim it is retarded unless the court sets limits.

The issue was argued before the California Supreme Court on Tuesday as the justices weighed the fate of a Los Angeles gang member condemned for killing two rivals in 1982. State prosecutors said the defendant, Anderson Hawthorne, who could not recite the alphabet as a school-aged boy, is close to being retarded but should die in what has become the state’s first test-case expected to set ground rules for condemned inmates who claim they should be spared.

“Our opinion is that Mr. Hawthorne is not mentally retarded,” Deputy Attorney General Robert Henry told the justices.

Environmentalists sue county over development

By The Associated Press

SANTA ANA — Environmentalists sued Orange County for approving the 14,000-home Rancho Mission Viejo development plan, claiming the county didn’t adequately assess the impact on wildlife in the area.

The lawsuit was filed Wednesday by a coalition of environmental groups. “The environmental assessment rubber-stamped by the county claims that this colossal development on mostly unspoiled land will have no significant environmental impact, and that’s simply not plausible,” Endangered Habitats League executive director Dan Silver said.

The Board of Supervisors approved zoning changes and a development agreement last month. Bryan Speegle, director of the county’s Resources and Development Management Department, described the project’s environmental impact report as “very adequate.”

Rancho Mission Viejo, the landowner, plans to leave two-thirds of the 23,000-acre property as open space with homes and commercial development on the rest. The county still must approve specific plans, such as tract maps.

Environmentalists claim the plan will damage the environment by fragmenting fragile habitat with roads and buildings. The lawsuit seeks to reverse county approval and stop Rancho Mission Viejo from proceeding until a new plan is drafted.

The development company said it had worked for more than a decade to strike a fair balance between the need for growth and environmental protection. The company was disappointed by the lawsuit, spokesman Dan Kelly said.

“We will be talking with the parties to determine any opportunities for settlement,” Kelly added.

County to blame for flash floods, suit alleges

By The Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO — Two more wrongful death lawsuits were filed against the county on behalf of the families of people killed in last year’s Christmas Day flash floods.

Like the first suit filed Dec. 2, the new suits this week accuse the county of failing to properly warn the public of the likelihood of flash floods on hillsides left bare by the Old and Grand Prix fires.

The latest suits also list as defendants the owners of Camp St. Sophia, a Greek Orthodox Church-owned property where 14 people were killed by torrents of water, mud and rock as they celebrated the holiday.

“This tragic avalanche, or whatever you want to call it, is nothing anyone could have expected or anticipated,” church attorney George Preonas said. “There was no way to predict the magnitude of what happened.”

Attorney Dennis Sherwin, who filed a lawsuit for the relatives of six people who died on the property and two others who were injured, said St. Sophia officials were aware of the danger, noting the church published a newsletter containing information about the threat.

“The bottom line is, they shouldn’t have had anyone up there in inclement weather,” he said.

The plaintiffs in Sherwin’s suit include Ricardo Navarro, who had been with his children at St. Sophia when heavy rain formed a deadly deluge. A \$1 million claim filed in advance of the lawsuit contained Navarro’s recollection of the day Pablo, his 11-year-old son, and Yoleila, his 7-year-old daughter, were swept away from him by the force of the floods.

“(Navarro) could hear the decedents screaming and yelling as they were entrapped and overcome by said flow of dirt, mud, water and debris,” the claim stated.

The other new case was filed on behalf of survivors of Rosa Najera-Juarez, 40, and her 6-year-old daughter, Katherine, who also died at the St. Sophia site.

“The county hasn’t seen any of these lawsuits, so the county can’t specifically address the causes of action,” county spokesman David Wert said Wednesday. “The county wasn’t responsible for the tragedy that occurred.”



Entertainment

WHAT’S PLAYING ...

CLOSER
The sum of this tragicomedy’s compet- ing parts adds up to the best-looking portrait of moral depravity on the big screen this year.
Starring: Julia Roberts, Jude Law, Natalie Portman, Clive Owen

HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS
This devastating love story disguised as a kung fu flick is one of the year’s most astonishing cinematic achieve- ments.
Starring: Takeshi Kaneshiro, Andy Lau, Zhang Ziyi

ALEXANDER
Oliver Stone has depicted a hero so shaken and internally conflicted, that it’s hard to imagine him being the leg- endary ruler he was.
Starring: Colin Farrell, Angelina Jolie

NATIONAL TREASURE
This sprawling treasure hunt is cacophonous, eye-popping and unabashedly devoid of nuance. Despite a promising high concept, the best that can be said about it is it could have been worse.
Starring: Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger

BAD EDUCATION
An uneven stab at film noir in which director Pedro Almodovar indulges cross-dressing fetishes, maligns child- molesting priests and celebrates French New Wave cinema.
Starring: Gael Garcia Bernal, Fele Martinez

BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON
Feels a lot like premeditated cock-up, filled with uneven sitcommish set pieces, credulity-stretching conven- iences and humor that is as flat as its buxom, chain-smoking heroine isn’t.
Starring: Renee Zellweger, Colin Firth, Hugh Grant

FINDING NEVERLAND
As moving a motion picture as we’re likely to see this year, and – as the movie poster contends – one that is sure to unlock even the most immured imagination.
Starring: Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet

KINSEY
Kinsey’s history is nimbly recounted, and bristles with fun and, on occasion, arresting poignance. Captivating cine- ma that feels particularly relevant in these retrogressive times.
Starring: Liam Neeson, Laura Linney

AFTER THE SUNSET
Surely the world doesn’t need another weak Elmore Leonard knock-off popu- lated with one-dimensional charac- ters engaging in humdrum high jinks.
Starring: Pierce Brosnan, Salma Hayek

THE INCREDIBLES
Boasts the total package: Great cast, invigorating storytelling, state-of-the- art 3-D animation and, best of all, that elusive quality known as movie magic.
Starring: Holly Hunter, Craig T. Nelson

ALFIE
Remake is lighter in tone, decidedly more farcical than the original. Law’s a movie star who’s awfully easy on the eyes and boundlessly talented.
Starring: Jude Law, Susan Sarandon

RAY
An instant inductee into the pantheon of great biographic movies. There isn’t a moment in the entire picture in which we’re not convinced Foxx IS Ray Charles.
Starring: Jamie Foxx, Regina King, Kerry Washington

Twelfth take: It was all fun and games for Pitt and Clooney

The A-list cast of “Ocean’s Twelve” is rumored to have had a blast both on and off the set of director Steven Soderbergh’s much-anticipated heist film, and for two of the stars at least, the shenanigans continued long after production wrapped. During an interview at a recent promotional junket, George Clooney and Brad Pitt — tongues firmly planted in cheek — traded good-natured barbs and yukked it up from start to finish. As for what really transpired during the making of this sequel, like the too-cool-for-school con men they portray in the movie, neither actor would spill the beans.

Q&A

Was making “Ocean’s Twelve” as much fun is it appears to have been?

BRAD PITT: We didn’t actually know we were shoot- ing a movie. We thought we were on holiday, but appar- ently some things got done.

GEORGE CLOONEY: Apparently, Steven was shooting a film during the party.

And he shot a good one. How did he pull in the reigns? When was enough, enough?

GC: Three-thirty in the afternoon-ish. And then he’d go, “OK, guys, help me out here. I’m trying to shoot a film.” Then we’d work for an hour, which was in my contract.

BP: No more than two takes. He refused to do any- thing more than two takes.

GC: That’s because my acting range only goes from A to B, so I give him two options.

BP: Really, it’s one option twice.

What was it like the day you, Julia, Matt and the rest of the cast reunited on location?

GC: Like a Turkish bath.

BP: I don’t want to talk about it. I’m still emotionally scarred from that day.

GC: The first day was shot in a warehouse in Chicago with everyone there. It’s fun to be around when Carl (Reiner) walks in. There are all these big stars around, but Carl’s the guy everybody sort of gravitates towards.

What will you remember most about the experience? Several of the other actors have mentioned the time spent at Lake Como in Italy.

BP: Lake Como was a highlight, yes. We jammed as much of the cast as we could into George’s, uh ...

GC: House.

BP: Yeah, house. Or, some might say, mansion. Or palatial estate.

GC: Maturity wasn’t really on our radar while we were there.

How did newcomer Catherine Zeta-Jones take to such a freewheeling style of filmmaking?

BP: She thought we were actually making a movie, which was the biggest joke of all.

GC: She would go to bed early at night saying, “I’ve got to get up early and shoot.” We were, like, “You what?” But it paid off because most of what she did is still in the film.

BP: And is far superior to anything the two of us did.

Why do audiences enjoy heist movies so much?

GC: Don’t you think most heist films actually end up tanking? Most of them don’t do very well.

BP: Most of my films in general don’t do very well. (Laughs)

Any plans for a third “Ocean’s” film?

BP: We did it.

GC: Already shot it.



Ocean’s Twelve has got star power and is ‘messy’

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

Much like that pie-eyed Playboy of an uncle who flies off the handle every year at the family reunion, this sequel is messy yet still fun to watch. It’s been widely report- ed that director Steven Soderbergh’s production was a nonstop globe-trotting party for his fun-loving superstar cast, and the gleeful esprit de corps it engendered permeates

Review

the finished product like a martini-soaked olive. “Ocean’s Twelve” is relentlessly insouciant and asks audiences to adopt a similar atti- tude. Brad Pitt and George Clooney sure are a couple of cut-ups, and Julia Roberts and Catherine Zeta-Jones exude va-va-voom. Throw in Matt Damon, Bernie Mac, a Cockney-fied Don Cheadle ... hell, Bruce Willis and Topher Grace even make cameo appearances as themselves. And they’re all so dandy and seem to be having such a fantastic time, why not get in on the revelry vic- ariously for a few hours? After all, they are the brightest stars in the pop cultural galaxy for a reason: People LOVE watching them.

As for what they’re all doing besides charming us, three years after being bilked out of \$160 million, ruthless casino boss Terry Benedict (Andy Garcia) has tracked down Danny Ocean (Clooney) and his crew and demanded recompense with interest. With a two-week deadline looming, Ocean’s eleven pack up their designer duds and jet off to Europe (they’re “too hot” to operate in the states, plus it’s much cheaper to film abroad) intent on stealing the dough needed to save their skins. What’s new this time around? Well, Pitt gets a chance to play ladykiller thanks to the addition of newcomer Zeta- Jones, and Damon’s nerdy character asserts himself and steps into a leadership role. The script by George Nolfi isn’t as polished as the one Ted Griffin wrote for “Eleven,” but the actors are able to buff most of the dull areas with sheer charisma. Soderbergh — saddled with too many characters and storylines — takes so many shortcuts that the film feels like a bit of a cheat. But when taken — not too seriously — as a pastiche of beautiful people, exotic places, groovy tunes, and loosely comic set pieces, this sequel is a snazzy delight.

(Rated PG-13 for language. Running time: 120 minutes)

'Life Aquatic' exudes a celebration of brilliance

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

"We're being led on a suicide mission by a selfish maniac." So says a perennially topless female crew member as things take a turn for the worse aboard The Belafonte — maritime compound of legendary, anachronistic, dope-smoking oceanographer Steve Zissou. She's right — Zissou is an egoist and more than a bit unbalanced, and as portrayed by the inimitable Bill Murray he's one of the most wildly appealing movie characters imaginable. That's got a lot to do with the guy who imagined him, Wes Anderson, the droll mastermind behind "Rushmore," "Bottle Rocket" and "The Royal Tenenbaums." This, Anderson's fourth feature, is the plus ultra of whimsical cerebration, and fans of his work will no doubt be lifted into the empyrean. Others, though, might prefer something less high-reaching, like "Blade: Trinity" (And, yeah, you know who you are.)

Cut from the Jacques Cousteau mold, Zissou's "suicide mission" is to find the fabled Jaguar Shark that ate his best friend. He's joined on that quest by a team of dreamers that includes Ned Plimpton (Owen Wilson) a southern gentleman who may or not be son Steve never knew; pregnant journalist Jane Winslett-Richardson (Cate Blanchett), an adoring German engineer (Willem Dafoe) and his brilliant wife Eleanor (Angelica Huston). Also sailing along are Jeff Goldblum as Zissou's arch nemesis and the always-brilliant Michael Gambon as venerable documentary producer Oseary Drakoulis. The stellar cast is absolutely delightful, as is the film's score (by long-time Anderson collaborator and Devo frontman Mark Mothersbaugh), production design (Mark Friedberg) and, well, just about everything. It's an olla podrida of odd from a visionary filmmaker.

(Rated R for language, some drug use, violence and partial nudity. Running time: 118 minutes)

'Blade Trinity' just another vampire flick

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

While it's difficult to reach a consensus on anything these days, I think I speak for a sizable chunk of the over-20 movie-going population in imploring Hollywood to please stop with all the damn vampire movies. "Blade: Trinity," the third installment in a series running two films too long, is the latest cacophonous calamity to roll off the action flick assembly line

— an insipid sequel that puts the "suck" back in the bloodsucker genre. Returning to the titular role as the scourge of the nightcrawlers, Wesley Snipes affects a perpetual scowl that suggests frustration more so than menace. The star is getting old, and while his character's presence looms large in this picture, writer-director David S. Goyer has allotted many of the movie's pivotal moments to youngsters Jessica Biel ("The Texas Chainsaw Massacre") and Ryan Reynolds ("Van Wilder"). To his credit the latter, who buffed-up considerably to play gung-ho vampire hunter Hannibal King, outperforms everyone in "Blade: Trinity" — alas, it's a distinction akin to being named valedictorian at summer school.

Goyer trots out the progenitor of the vampire race, Dracula (Dominic Purcell), to battle Blade in what is hopefully the series' swan song. Ah, but this is no mere rehashing of one of the cinema's most timeworn villains — Goyer's version has runway-model looks, dons Goth-chic couture and has taken to calling himself Drake. After all, the old name is soooo 14th Century. Drake and his army of hipster vampires, which includes Parker Posey (exquisitely awful here) and pro wrestler Triple H (see previous parenthetical), want total world domination. Blade and his crew of teen-focus-group friendly freedom fighters are humanity's only hope. They've got Good on their side, along with a leather-loving costume design team to make them look really sexy. Plus they carry iPods and listen to kick-ass music while kicking ass. Unfortunately that stuff alone makes for a better video game than a movie.

(Rated R for strong pervasive violence and language, and some sexual content. Running time: 105 minutes)



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NATIONAL

Half of Bonnie and Clyde duo sentenced to 10 years

BY MELISSA TRUJILLO

Associated Press Writer

DENVER — Wrapping up a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde case that stretched around the world, a woman accused of helping her boyfriend rob banks across the West was sentenced Thursday to 10 years in prison and ordered to repay more than \$231,000.

Nova Guthrie, 31, turned and smiled at her parents and other relatives after hearing her punishment. Her father, Ralph Guthrie, waved at her as she was led away.

Guthrie pleaded guilty last year to three robberies in Colorado, New Mexico and Oregon in a deal that called for a sentence of nine to 11 years. Sentencing was delayed while her attorney challenged federal sentencing guidelines, saying she should serve five to seven years instead.

U.S. District Judge Daniel Sparr sentenced Guthrie to three 10-year sentences that will be served simultaneously. She also will be on probation for five years.

Authorities blamed Guthrie and her boyfriend, Craig Pritchert, for a string of bank robberies in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington between 1997 and 1999. The two, who allegedly got away with some \$500,000, were captured in South Africa last year, living under assumed names.

Guthrie spoke briefly to Sparr during the hearing, agreeing that she stayed with Pritchert even after finding out he robbed banks.

"All you thought about was how you wanted to be with Mr. Pritchert, how you wanted to protect him," Sparr said. But that protection ended up hurting others, the judge said, including two former bank workers who testified during the hearing.

Jeannie Wyatt told the court she was held at gunpoint by Pritchert in an Aztec, N.M., bank in 1998 and she saw Guthrie in a blue car.

"I looked right at her face and I thought she was here to help me," Wyatt said tearfully. She said she eventually quit the banking industry because she was too scared.

"I'm never able to forget Miss Guthrie," she said.

Guthrie's family submitted letters to the judge but declined to speak to him during the hearing. They declined comment to reporters.

Pritchert, 43, was recently sentenced to 22 1/2 years in prison after pleading guilty to robberies in Colorado, Oregon and Arizona. He also was ordered to pay \$206,406 in restitution.

Barring appeals, the sentencing wraps up a colorful case in which prosecutors say the pair used their ill-gotten

See **BONNIE AND CLYDE**, page 13

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NATIONAL



Second-term Bush Cabinet has heavy presence from Colorado

BY JON SANCHE

Associated Press Writer

DENVER — Colorado will have an unusually heavy presence in President Bush's second-term Cabinet, with two seats going former Colorado residents and a third held by a University of Denver graduate.

Bush said Thursday that Gale Norton, a two-term Colorado attorney general, will return as interior secretary. He also named Jim Nicholson, a former Englewood homebuilder, to be his new secretary for veterans affairs.

Condoleezza Rice, Bush's choice for secretary of state, also has ties to Colorado. She earned graduate and undergraduate degrees from the University of Denver.

"I don't know if it's a benefit beyond the ego satisfaction that comes with your natives reaching high levels of office," said Norm Ornstein, a political analyst for the American Enterprise Institute. "But it's certainly nice to know a small state is able to come up with talent."

Nicholson, a former Republican National Committee chairman and decorated Vietnam War veteran, is currently U.S. ambassador to the Vatican.

In announcing his nomination, Bush noted Nicholson's eight years as a paratrooper and Army Ranger in Vietnam, where he earned the Bronze Star, calling Nicholson "a patriot, a man of deep conviction who has answered his country's call many times."

Nicholson and Norton had both been mentioned as possible candidates for Colorado governor in 2006; Norton has also been suggested as a candidate for U.S. Senate.

She is one of only six Cabinet members to keep their jobs for Bush's second term; nine were replaced.

Ornstein said Norton's return reflects the fact that she shares Bush's desire to allow energy developers as well as recreationists to have access to public lands.

"The multiple-use philosophy resonated with him and an awful lot of his base," Ornstein said. "For her to go

would have raised some eyebrows, and there's no desire on his part to go through a bruising confirmation hearing that would raise all those environmental issues."

Norton is also a strong supporter of Bush's energy policy, including opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other public lands in the West to energy development.

"It's very hard to say what's Gale Norton's policy and what's the White House's policy," said Jim Martin, executive director of Western Resource Advocates. "Her management of resources on public land I think has been mostly badly done."

He criticized her for what he saw as a "single-minded focus" on increasing supplies of natural gas and oil at the expense of conservation interests.

Norton says that has helped balance economic use of public lands with conservation.

"She's been a very effective spokesperson and messenger for the administration's views," Wonstolen said.

But Pete Kolbenschlag of the Colorado Environmental Coalition dismissed the Four C's as a public relations ploy, saying she listens to people who agree with the administration and ignores those who don't.

Norton won praise for her work on water issues, forcing Southern California to stop taking more than its share of Colorado River water and pushing a plan for future use of water in the West.

But she angered environmentalists by striking deals with former Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt that they fear will gut protection of Western roadless areas and wilderness.

Like Rice, Nicholson and Norton have ties to the University of Denver. Both got their law degrees from the private, 9,500-student school.

"It's a very amazing kind of coincidence," said Mary Ricketson, dean of the DU Sturm College of Law. "It's a wonderful time for the university."

Fun times are over for con couple

BONNIE AND CLYDE, from page 12

gains to visit ski resorts and tropical paradises like Belize.

Prosecutors said a disguised Pritchert would carry a handgun into banks, tie up employees with plastic restraints and duct tape, and leave with bags of money. Guthrie drove the getaway car. At one time they were on the FBI's most-wanted list.

Pritchert is a father of three who played baseball for Arizona State University. At his sentencing, he apologized to his children "for being a disappointment" and to the bank workers he robbed.

He met Guthrie in 1997 in Farmington, N.M., after robbing an Arizona bank and getting away with \$32,000. Both

were smitten, and before long they were hitting banks.

Investigators' first big break came shortly after a 1999 heist in Bend, Ore. While passing through Phoenix, Pritchert and Guthrie stopped at the home of one of her relatives. The family persuaded her to stay, and she later surrendered to the FBI in Denver.

Guthrie agreed to cooperate and began providing details about the holdups. But authorities released her and weeks later she reunited with Pritchert.

Authorities said it appeared the two lived a quiet life in South Africa before someone spotted a "wanted" poster that led to their arrest in Cape Town in August 2003. Guthrie, who was raised in tiny Boone, Colo., was a manager at a trendy Cape Town nightclub, Bossa Nova.

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NATIONAL

Court considers challenge of mandatory beef checkoff

BY GINA HOLLAND

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A food fight broke out at the Supreme Court this week, with justices considering whether the government can force farmers and ranchers to pay for ad campaigns with catchy phrases like “Beef: It’s what’s for dinner” and billboards featuring milk mustaches on celebrities.

Some ranchers are challenging the multimillion-dollar beef promotion program, saying they shouldn’t have to pay for ads they disagree with.

The eventual ruling could jeopardize more than 100 federal and state campaigns for other products — eggs, mangoes, popcorn and even alligators.

The programs are billed as a way to help farmers of all sizes with generic ads, but they have fared poorly in courts. Lower courts have already struck down the “Got Milk?” dairy promotion, advertisements calling pork “the other white meat,” and the beef program.

Attorney Gregory Garre, representing cattlemen who support the beef campaign, told justices the whole industry has bene-

fited from increased exports to other countries and consumer education.

“The part that’s good can’t save the whole thing,” Justice Antonin Scalia said.

And Justice Anthony M. Kennedy said, “There is something offensive” about forcing ranchers to pay for ads they do not support.

Still, the court seemed divided on how to settle the case.

“Every time we pay general taxes we’re supporting government speech we may not agree with,” Scalia said.

Some justices also seemed concerned that a ruling against the government would hurt efforts to force cigarette makers to pay for ads warning about the dangers of smoking.

“The ultimate beneficiary of the advertising is the consumer,” Bush administration lawyer Edwin Kneedler said, defending the beef campaign.

He said the government believes beef should be part of Americans’ diets, and formed the program to help small farmers who could not mount a national campaign on their own.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and several other court members appeared skepti-

cal of claims the beef program was government speech, giving the cattle ranchers no right to challenge it. She said government public health experts would not encourage people to eat lots of red meat.

Beef producers are required to pay a \$1 per-head fee on cattle sold in the United States, which generates more than \$80 million a year for ads, research and educational programs on mad cow disease. Federal officials oversee how the money is spent.

Producers get back \$5.67 for every dollar they contribute in increased prices because of the program, supporters contend.

However, Harvard Law School professor Laurence Tribe, representing ranchers who oppose the program, said the money never makes it to the 850,000 individual cattle producers. Instead, he said, restaurants, grocery stores and slaughterhouses get the benefits.

Tribe said the ad campaign is intended to help, but “the road to hell is often paved with good intentions.”

Among the complaints are that the ads do not specifically promote American beef, helping beef importers who do not have to

contribute, and that generic promotions do little good for specialized farmers.

The government was sued by ranchers who sell cattle in South Dakota and Montana. They won an appeals court ruling that found the 20-year-old program violated the First Amendment.

The federal government and Nebraska cattlemen appealed to the high court, which has dealt before with questions about government authority to force farmers into joint programs.

In 1997, the court upheld advertising programs for California fruit. But in 2001, justices struck down a mandatory campaign for the mushroom industry.

The court has never decided, however, if such programs are government speech.

Many groups and 34 states are supporting the government. Justices were told that in California alone, 48 mandatory programs are used to promote produce like grapes and lettuce.

The federal government has 17 research and promotion programs, for blueberries, beef, cotton, dairy, eggs, milk, Hass avocados, honey, lamb, mangoes, mushrooms, peanuts, popcorn, pork, potatoes, soybeans and watermelons.

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NATIONAL



Bill proposes nearly doubling Border Patrol and facilities

BY SUZANNE GAMBOA

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House intelligence bill negotiated this week would double the number of border agents and substantially increase the size of immigrant detention facilities over the next five years.

House and Senate conferees broke a stalemate over legislation containing recommendations from the 9/11 Commission, and final congressional votes could come as early as Wednesday. President Bush pushed for passage in recent days, but debate over authority of a new national intelligence director and proposed immigration restrictions threatened to kill it.

Although some say the bill doesn't go

far enough to restrict immigration, it authorizes the number of Border Patrol agents to grow by 10,000 and the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents by 7,500 by 2010. There are currently 11,200 Border Patrol agents and 5,500 ICE agents.

The bill also proposes 4,000 more beds by 2010 for detaining immigrants, up from about 21,000.

There also are other immigration measures in the bill, such as requiring a plan for remote-controlled aircraft for border surveillance, strengthening visa requirements and increasing penalties for smuggling of illegal immigrants.

But some provisions were dropped, to the dismay of conservative Republicans, including one that would have required states to only give drivers' licenses to

U.S. citizens or legal residents. Another would have restricted states' acceptance of foreign documents for identity.

Rep. David Dreier, chairman of the House Rules Committee, said one condition of the compromise is that the excluded immigration measures be addressed next session.

"There will be legislation that must pass that will have strong bipartisan support and it is our hope we will be able to attach these measures," said Dreier, R-Calif.

Rep. Mac Thornberry, a member of the House intelligence committee, said the bill will help update organizations that have been based on a Cold War threat but won't solve all problems.

"What I worry about is that some may think this is a magic fix for all our home-

land security problems," said Thornberry, R-Clarendon. "It's not, and I believe we have yet to confront some of the serious issues that are necessary for homeland security. Immigration and border enforcement is one of those issues."

Thornberry said he supported earlier versions of the legislation that provided more drastic intelligence reforms and more authority for the national intelligence director, but still supports the compromise bill.

Thornberry recently replaced Porter Goss, who became CIA director, on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He has been an advocate for reorganizing agencies responsible for homeland security since before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

More federal money needed for energy security, panel concludes

BY H. JOSEF HEBERT

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. energy policy over the long term will require new nuclear power plants, cleaner coal and cars that get more miles per gallon, experts said Wednesday.

They also said mandatory federal programs are needed to address climate change and scaled back the expected growth of greenhouse gases. The Bush administration has asserted that voluntary action by industry will do the job and opposes government-imposed rules.

The Commission on Energy Policy, a privately funded group, said in its report the government should spend billions of dollars on energy research and projects, including the development of a next-generation nuclear power reactors.

William Reilly, one of the commission's leaders, said any national energy policy must address climate change and propose mandatory emission requirements because "the long-term risks are real."

The commission sought a middle course between the administration's voluntary program and demands by environmentalists and some members of Congress for required cuts in greenhouse emissions along the lines outlined by a 1997 international agreement known as the Kyoto Treaty.

A mandatory program that focused at first on checking the growth of greenhouse gases — as opposed to actual

reductions in emissions — was viewed as "a meaningful first step," said Reilly, head of the Environmental Protection Agency under the first President Bush.

The proposal would offer industry a way to cap the cost of required emission reductions.

The recommendations from a commission whose members are energy experts, industry executives, labor leaders and former government officials are not binding on President Bush or Congress. But they could help move along the debate about the country's energy policy, which has stalled in Congress over the past four years.

The commission urged a larger federal role in developing cleaner sources of energy and said the government should double the amount of money spent on research and development. The experts said Congress should "significantly strengthen" the standards for vehicle fuel efficiency so the United States can reduce its oil consumption.

Commission member Susan Tierney, an energy consultant and former assistant energy secretary in the Clinton administration, said improvements in fuel economy has to be a "a centerpiece" of an energy agenda. The experts could not agree on how much farther vehicles should go on a gallon of fuel.

The commission avoided the contentious issue of whether to develop oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Opening the refuge to drilling has been a White House priority and the focus of

intense debate in Congress.

It was not included "because members of the commission do not agree on it," said a commission leader John Rowe, chairman of Exelon Corp.

The commission recommended expanded development of coal, natural gas and nuclear power, saying those sources will be needed to help the United States move toward energy security.

The report called for \$7 billion in federal spending over 10 years on clean coal technology and research into ways to capture emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants, thereby "ensuring a future for

the nation's most plentiful energy source."

Among the other recommendations were:

■ Spending \$2 billion over 10 years on reactor research.

■ Committing \$3 billion to advance development of hybrid gasoline-electric cars. They have proved popular among consumers but are not being produced on a large scale.

■ Encouraging construction of liquefied natural gas terminals.

■ Spending \$1.5 billion over 10 years to increase domestic production of nonpetroleum renewable transportation fuels.

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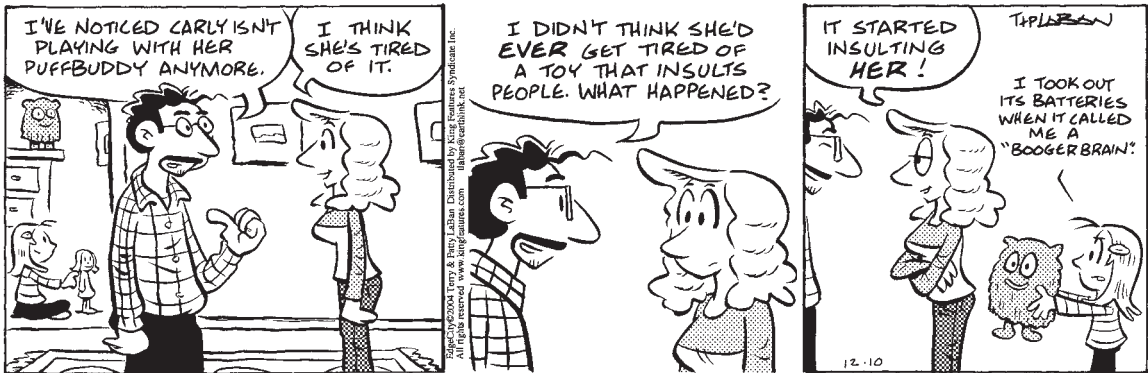


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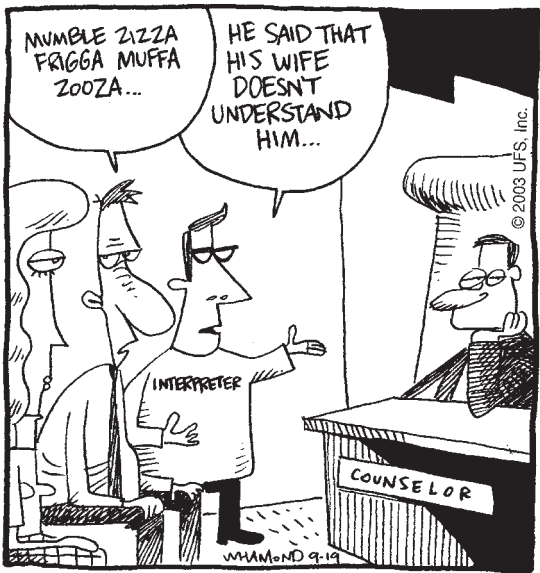
The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



edge city by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



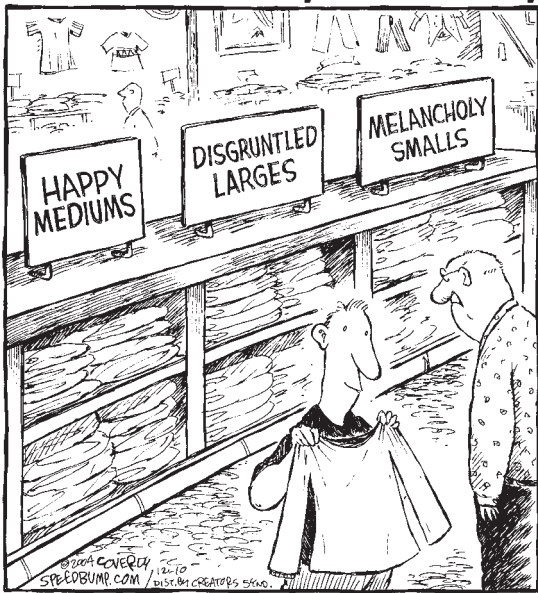
Reality Check® By Dave Whammond



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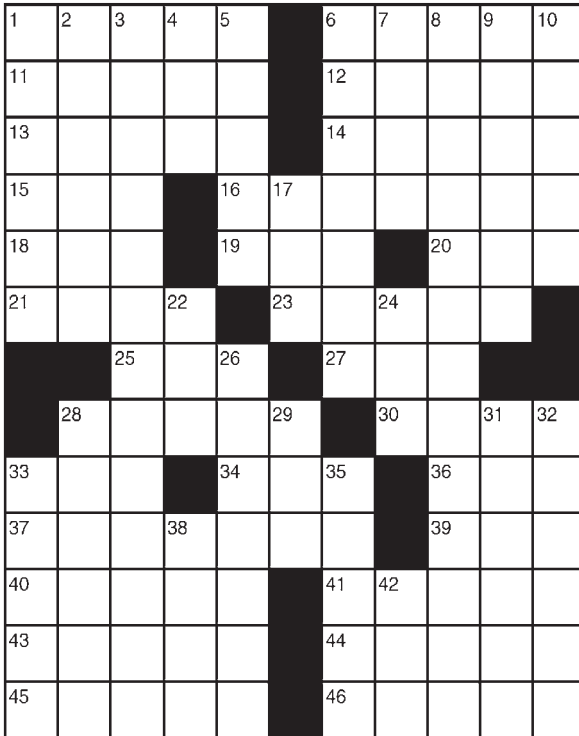
- ACROSS
- 1 Convoy over
 - 6 Jobs for gumshoes
 - 11 Kick out
 - 12 Defeatist exclamation
 - 13 "— We Dance?"
 - 14 Hint of color
 - 15 Scot's topper
 - 16 Conrad book
 - 18 New Haven student
 - 19 — Paulo
 - 20 Switch settings
 - 21 Kennedy and Koppel
 - 23 Not wordy
 - 25 Mine yield
 - 27 Maiden name indicator
 - 28 Blueprints
 - 30 Capital on a fjord
 - 33 With it
 - 34 Block
 - 36 Emulate a joey
 - 37 Moor of drama
 - 39 Great service
 - 40 Take for — (trick)

- 41 Showed over
- 43 Magician's props
- 44 Sock spot
- 45 Words of agreement
- 46 Sad sack

DOWN

- 1 Sonnet part
- 2 Let it out
- 3 NFL team
- 4 Suffering
- 5 Hawks
- 6 Car pioneer
- 7 Battery fill
- 8 NHL team
- 9 Car part
- 10 Flower supporters
- 17 Granola bit
- 22 Mrs. in Madrid
- 24 Old auto
- 26 Infinite
- 28 Role for Van Dyke
- 29 Gal of song
- 31 Place
- 32 First game
- 33 Ancient
- 35 Fable's point
- 38 Border
- 42 Rock's Brian

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Backstreet Boy looks to Christ for next album

By The Associated Press

FRANKLIN, Tenn. — Backstreet Boys member Brian Littrell has signed a deal with Christian label Provident Music Group’s Reunion Records.

“This has been a dream of mine ever since I was a little boy, singing in church in Kentucky,” Littrell said Wednesday.

Littrell, 29, said that singing with the Backstreet Boys was a “12-year steppingstone” to making his decision, and he hoped fans will realize through his music “that standing up for what you believe in is what’s important.”

He will release the single “In Christ Alone” on an upcoming WOW Christian Music compilation album next year. That will be followed with the debut of his solo album on the Franklin-based label.

Littrell also plans to tour with the Backstreet Boys, who are scheduled to end a three-year hiatus with a new project in March.

Their manager, Johnny Wright, said the group wasn’t breaking up — just taking the opportunity to do solo projects.

LONDON — Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, and U2 frontman Bono will be guest editors of the British Broadcasting Corp.’s flagship radio news program later this month.

They will be among five guest editors of “Today” over the Christmas period, the BBC said Wednesday. The celebrity guests will choose some of the stories to be tackled by the daily current affairs program.

Ferguson has decided to focus on motor neuron disease, while Bono said he would highlight the global fight against poverty.

The programs will air between Dec. 27-31.

“I have to confess, I’m not a natural editor,” Bono

said. “I want to start the countdown to next year, when Britain can change the world for the poorest people on the planet.”

Britain has said tackling world poverty will be one of its key goals when it holds the rotating presidencies of the European Union and the G8 group of wealthy countries next year.

TOKYO — It won’t be immediately clear whether “Godzilla: Final Wars,” which opened in Japan last week, has broken any box office records. But the giant radioactive reptile’s 28th film already has set the bar higher in one way — its cost.

Toho Co. executive producer Shogo Tomiyama said the studio shelled out \$19.3 million, small by Hollywood standards, but twice that of any of Toho’s past Godzilla movies.

“We wanted to make the best Godzilla movie ever,” Tomiyama explained Wednesday at a news conference.

Marking Godzilla’s 50th anniversary, “Final Wars” has the movie monster traveling around the world to fight old foes, as well as the new mysterious Monster X.

Tomiyama said Toho’s filming on locations over 100 days required a bigger staff than usual. Production was so complicated that Toho divided its special-effects team into two units to handle the work, he said.

The fire-breathing monster, spawned by nuclear weapons testing, first debuted in Japanese theaters in November 1954, while the United States was conducting nuclear tests in the South Pacific. It is played by an actor in a rubber suit who crushes miniature sets.

LOS ANGELES — Steve Guttenberg loves Christmas, so playing Santa’s son and heir in a new TV movie was the ideal role for an actor who lives like a big kid.

“Children have a terrific way of telling you like it is,” he said. “I’m attracted to that. That makes me feel

good.”

Guttenberg plays Nick in the romantic comedy “Single Santa Seeks Mrs. Claus,” airing Saturday on the Hallmark Channel.

“You have a single mom who is going along with her life and trying to get things done with work and her kid and trying to have a social life and this fellow comes into her surroundings and changes everything,” the 46-year-old actor said. “It’s about carrying on a kindness and goodness all year-round.”

Guttenberg’s interest in children’s welfare inspired him to create Guttenhouse, an apartment complex that houses young people making the transition from foster child status to adult responsibilities.

He also spearheaded Sight for Students, a program that provides eyeglasses for 50,000 underprivileged and visually challenged children.

NEW YORK — And you thought the Grateful Dead toured a lot.

The New York Philharmonic will set the Guinness World Record for “the most concerts performed by a symphony orchestra” with concert No. 14,000 on Dec. 18.

Sir Colin Davis will conduct the orchestra in works by Mozart, Britten and Haydn. The concert also will feature the Philharmonic debut of mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson.

Board chairman Paul B. Guenther said the orchestra was thrilled to be recognized for its 14,000th concert.

“In the course of our 163 years, we have commissioned 128 new works, and performed 485 world premieres and 443 U.S. premieres, including music that has become a staple of the classical repertoire,” he said in a statement Wednesday.

The New York Philharmonic is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States and one of the oldest in the world. It plays about 180 concerts a year.

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