

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

Council note passing may be a necessary evil, residents say

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Daily Press Staff Writer

While the common practice of council members passing notes to each other during public meetings isn't a violation of the law, it sure looks bad, some residents and officials say.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley sent City Hall a stern warning last week because former Mayor Mike Feinstein allegedly passed a note during an April meeting that said, "I have received two late requests to speak. Let's vote no."

A resident — who was one of the late requests to speak — fished the note out of the garbage after the meeting and sent it to Cooley's office, which launched an investigation.

Feinstein sent the message during a special April 16 council meeting, which was called to instruct members of the city's boards and commissions on how to comply with the Brown Act, the state's public meeting law.

"It's like it's still the third grade up there, except everybody is over 40 years old."

— PETER TIGLER
Santa Monica resident

"I am not aware and I don't believe the note went to anyone but one other council member, and this was not a decision making meeting and only a study session," Feinstein said. "But that being said, this was an error, and it won't happen again."

For now, Cooley's office has said it will only warn the council to clean up its act when it comes to passing notes. A spokeswoman for the district attorney's office

See NOTES, page 6

Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel allows union reps in

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Daily Press Staff Writer

Tired of protests in front of its building, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel gave in to union pressure by announcing Thursday it would not interfere with efforts to unionize its workforce.

Starting in January, officials with the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Union will have unfettered access to workers during their breaks. The hotel's management has agreed not to take a position on the union's efforts and to provide a positive environment for their workers to make their decision.

In exchange, the union has agreed not to march or picket the hotel, and it has agreed to not coerce employees into accepting union representation.

While the hotel's management and union officials came to the agreement this week, talks between both sides began shortly after the narrow defeat of the proposed living wage ordinance in the November election.

The living wage ordinance would have set a minimum wage between \$10.50 and \$12.25 an hour, depending on whether benefits were provided. Only businesses making more than \$5 million a year in the coastal zone would have had to pay the wage.

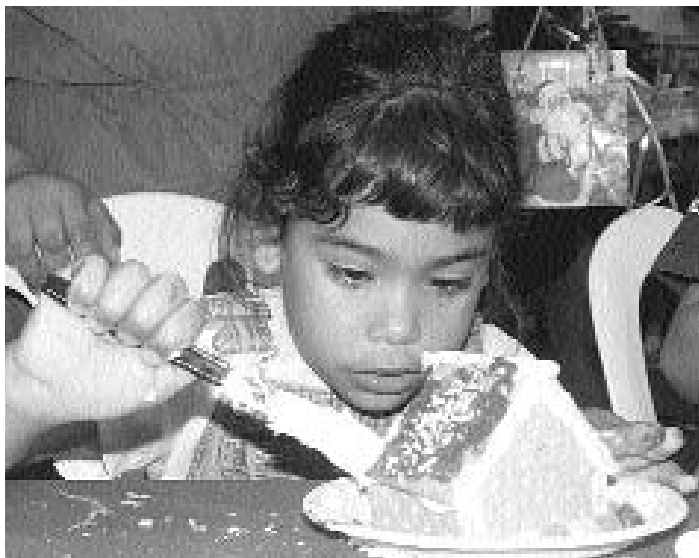
Some people in the community believe the living wage movement is really about making luxury hotels pay their workers a better wage and provide health insurance because attempts to unionize them had failed.

Loews spent more than \$175,000 to help defeat the living wage, which supporters have said they will bring back within a year.

A Loews spokeswoman said last year the hotel would never capitulate to the union. But rather than go through another year of having its business disrupted by union protests, hotel management want the issue resolved, said Loews General Manager John Thacker.

See LOEWS, page 7

A house of sugar



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Susan Escobar, 6, tries her hand at decorating a gingerbread house while stealing a lick or two of the icing on Thursday. Hundreds of kids turned out at the Police Activities League's holiday season celebration, which included free presents from Santa, crafts and other festivities.

Runoff pollution efforts will take too long, groups say

By Daily Press staff

Two environmental groups are disappointed with new county rules to control bacteria-laden runoff pollution, which makes beachgoers sick when it rains.

Santa Monica BayKeeper Executive Director Steve Fleischli and Natural Resources Defense Council Senior Attorney David Beckman said their organizations were "disappointed" with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board's new plan to require

municipalities to reduce the number of beach closures to levels that would be observed under "natural" conditions during and after rain.

The plan, however, allows affected coastal cities 10 to 18 years to comply with the new standard, depending on the approach a town chooses to implement the board's policy.

Both Beckman and Fleischli are not pleased with the board's action, which was undertaken Thursday.

See POLLUTION, page 7

Parking meters are removed to bring back shoppers

By The Associated Press

MERRILL, Wis. — Looking to raise some pocket change?

The city of Merrill is selling more than 400 parking meters for \$50 each. The city council voted in October to remove them from downtown streets

because of complaints that they deterred shoppers.

More than 100 meters have been sold, Mayor Doug Williams said.

He said people have put them in basements or dens, and that one man put a meter in his driveway — where his in-laws park.

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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Everything is coming up roses as you swing into the next few days. Your convivial mood flows into the workplace as well as anywhere your smile goes. Spread mistletoe and happiness around. You can never be too generous with positive vibes. Tonight: Let the party begin.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★ Take your time with decision-making, or postpone any resolution for the next few days. Togetherness builds because of your willingness to let go of a problem. Good news drops on you. Give others the benefit of the doubt, including you. Tonight: Lay back.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Where your friends are is where you want to be. Listen to others and check in with your pals. Talk up a storm; keep conversations moving. Walk on out the door as soon as you can. Let the good times roll. Accept an invitation. Tonight: Where the action is.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Others look to you for ideas. Take charge with work and clear out as much as possible. The more you do, the better your weekend will be. Touch base with a co-worker or an associate who might have a lot to share. Tonight: Lead the gang out the door.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Your mind roams from one topic to another, but rarely will your thoughts be related to work. Skip out the door early, if you can. Catch up with a loved one early on. Get seats to a Christmas or New Year's concert. Tonight: Find mistletoe.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ A partner taps on your door, full of holiday cheer. Please join him or her as soon as you can. Whether shopping or going to a holiday party, you'll have a good time. Know when to say you've had enough. Listen to someone's suggestion. It will make life easier. Tonight: Start thinking tree, apple cider and other such seasonal happenings.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Others knock on your door. If you can remember a dream from last night, it might be quite significant. Take an extended lunch break or skip lunch and leave early. You'll want plenty of time for holiday errands and gatherings. Tonight: Carefully choose your words in response to a partner.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★ Finances play a significant role in your work decisions. You might not choose to discuss what you're thinking. A boss or a higher-up favors you. You'll see results soon enough. Consider your options more carefully. Tonight: In the limelight.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ You reverse course more easily than many. You could rethink plans or a project because of news. Because of your ability to adjust, assume you'll be in charge here. Touch base with someone at a distance. Tonight: Find your favorite person.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Deal with the basics. Ask an associate or partner for more feedback. Together you become quite a team, capable of networking, finding the right holiday gift or anything else that comes your way. Loosen up with others. Tonight: Head on home.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Your efforts come back in multiples. Keep reaching out. A contrary friend lets you know where he or she is coming from. You might not care, as you're in one of your positive, gregarious periods. Others gather around you. Tonight: Hang with others.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ A boss does a reversal, which works with your plans. Still, clear out your work. Make a list of what you want to do after you leave work. Stress getting what you need done. You cannot avoid a must appearance. Budget yourself tightly. Tonight: Treat yourself well.



QUOTE of the DAY

"There are only two kinds of men – the dead and the deadly."

— Helen Rowland (1876-1950)

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Eat for free and help the homeless

By Daily Press staff

By entering into a raffle, you could eat free meals at area restaurants once a week for a year and help those less fortunate find a place to live.

The Resource Board of Turning Point Transitional Housing is partnering with Santa Monica and westside restaurants for the fifth annual "Year on the House" drawing, with 52 gift certificates to be given to one winner.

The drawing will be held Dec. 17 and all proceeds will help support Turning Point Transitional Housing.

A partial list of restaurants include: Baja Buds, Border Grille, Britannia Pub, Broadway Deli, Café 50s, Casa del Mar, Casa Escobar, Chaya Venice, Chez Jay, Chez Mimi, DoubleTree Guest Suites, El Cholo, Engine Co. 28, Enterprise Fish Co., Fritto Misto, Fromins, i. Cugini, Il Moro, Izzy's Deli, Juniors Restaurant, Kings Seafood, Lawry's The Prime Rib, Le Merigot Hotel, Le Meridien, Locanda Del Lago, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, Marisol, Marmalade, Michael's, Mistro's, PF Changs, Rusty's Surf Ranch, Sushi Roku, the Fairmont Miramar Hotel, The Lobster, Tudor House, Wabi Sabi and World Café.

Turning Point not only provides homeless adult women and men with housing, food and clothing assistance, but the staff and volunteers also provide counseling and advocacy aimed at reversing the cycle of homelessness in the community.

Turning Point further assists its clients with obtaining permanent housing, medical referrals, legal counseling and provides job readiness programs designed specifically to assist its guests with acquiring the fundamental tools for self-sufficiency. Turning Point helps individuals regain their dignity. Tickets are \$10 each, or \$50 for 6 and can be purchased by calling the Ocean Park Community Center at (310) 246-6646, ext. 235.

A Christmas Victorian style

By Daily Press staff

A Victorian Christmas and open house will be celebrated at the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum on Sunday, Dec. 15, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The event is free to the public. A Laurel and Hardy film "Babes In Toyland" will begin at 1 p.m.

Festivities include music, antique postcards, vintage Christmas books, a tabletop original 1890s decorated Christmas tree and a life-size mechanical talking Santa Claus.

The museum is located at 1539 Euclid St., Santa Monica. Parking is available at the rear of the building.

For further information, call (310) 395-2290.

Celebrity chef signs books and makes dessert

By Daily Press staff

Master chef and restaurateur Wolfgang Puck will have a book signing of his new cookbook, "Live, Love, Eat! The Best of Wolfgang Puck," at his Grand Cafe located at 1323 Montana Ave. in Santa Monica. Puck will team with Cafe chef Ed Huante in preparing a holiday dessert buffet featuring recipes inspired by his new book. The event will take place between 2 and 5 p.m. and cost \$30 per person. The fee will include a copy of the cookbook. Afterwards, the celebrity chef will be available to sign cookbooks and autographs. Seating is limited, so reservations are suggested. For more information, call (310) 393-0290.

The Q-Line

A juvenile affair

This week, Q-Line wants to know:

"Do you think elected officials passing notes to each other creates a level of distrust with the public? Why or why not?"

■ "The City Council is in violation of the Brown Act. This City Council, and especially Feinstein, has a penchant for doing just what they please. If they want to pass notes, they should do it before or after the meeting, not in front of the public during an open meeting. This just shows their continued and flagrant ignoring of the state laws. I think if the process continues, the district attorney should prosecute those that are doing it, and I hope I would get selected for the jury. P.S. I hope this gets printed because the last three responses that I sent in to questions you have not been put in the paper. Thank you."

■ "Well, that's a no-brainer, of course it creates distrust. I think the City Council

is just a bunch of morons anyway."

■ "I think elected officials on their own create a level of distrust with the public."

■ "In response to your question, my opinion is that the city officials have the right to pass notes, whisper, take a time out and do whatever they need to do in order to come to a decision, or whatever they need to do. And the public ... I'm not interested in the process, but I'm very interested in the outcome. So to be telling them that they can't look at each other and whisper, or pass notes, is absolutely ridiculous and looks like we're in school. That's my opinion."

■ "Yes, I do believe it creates a dis-

See Q-LINE, page 5



Information compiled by Jesse Haley

California's tides are getting back to normal, with average highs dropping back to around 4 feet.

This is good news for surfers, and comes at an opportune time, coinciding with the arrival of two new swells. Forecasts show a northwest and southwest swell building today. By morning, we expect to see 3- and 4-foot surf at exposed spots. Breaks with a combination of exposures could be bigger, with occasional overhead waves.

We should see similar conditions Saturday, but with a good possibility of strong winds in the afternoon, which could do damage to shape.

However, reports are tracking a huge northwest swell bound for SoCal and due to hit Sunday, building to a peak late Monday.

Expect big surf.

Today's Tides:		
High-	5:28 a.m.	4.67'
Low-	12:11 p.m.	1.58'
High-	5:34 p.m.	3.38'
Low-	11:22 p.m.	1.37'

Location	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Water Quality
County Line	3-4'/Fair	3-4'/Fair	4-6'/Fair	A
Zuma	3-4'/Fair	3-4'/Fair	4-6'/Fair	A
Surfrider	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	3-5'/Fair	C
Topanga	3-4'/Good	3-4'/Fair	4-6'/Fair	C
Breakwater	3-4'/Fair	3-4'/Fair	4-7'/Fair	A
El Porto	3-4'/Fair	3-4'/Fair	5-7'/Fair	A

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OPINION

LETTERS

Landmarks Commission doesn't get it

Editor:

Mr. Roger Genser is correct when he says that a demolition permit was never applied for in the case of the Oscar Niemeyer house on La Mesa. However, the larger picture remains the same.

The house was recently sold to a new owner who intended to tear it down. Someone told the Landmarks Commission about this and they started proceedings on the house before he had a chance to apply for a demo permit. I have spoken to the new owner; there is no question this was his intent.

So, Mr. Genser gets points for semantics while missing the issue entirely. The house sat there completely ignored by the Landmarks Commission (including the one who lives across the street) for years until someone came along intending to tear it down. They were reactive rather than proactive. This is the issue that concerns people, not the timing of the application process, and it is indicative of the problem our city faces that the commissioners can't understand that.

Gregory Poirier
Santa Monica

Shut up, Santa Monica

Editor:

Often the delightful phrase of "A quiet little village by the sea" or similar descriptive term of Santa Monica is read in the papers, usually to lend some comparison to the then tranquility enjoyed hereabouts, and what exists today. There are growing pains in all communities to be sure, as we ourselves are creatures of change if we are anything at all. But there may still exist some fairly simple solutions to at least some of the "side effect" everyday problems associated with rapid growth and surges of prosperity in communities who dwell in remembrance of yesterday's tranquilities ...

One such side effect of community growing pains is the levels of unnecessary noises offhandedly tolerated and otherwise uncontrolled for the most part. It adds to the spoiling, if you will, of an otherwise much more tranquil community atmosphere for us all to enjoy.

Has anyone taken notice to the noise levels of the buses that service Santa Monica lately? Or at all? With the exception of the local Tide buses, all other buses, The Rapid, The Metro and even the Big Blue Buses are the loudest buses to be found it seems in all of California, and perhaps beyond. The decibel levels of unnecessary aggravating noise emitted from these vehicles (frequently, and at all hours of the day and night — into the early morning hours) is totally unacceptable by any standard.

Apartment dwellers and some homeowners residing on heavily traveled bus lines deserve some consideration wouldn't you think? Simply put, the buses have inadequate exhaust and muffler systems. And even though they enjoy an exempt status for licensing these vehicles, the bus companies ought to be compelled to do all that they can to reduce the unnecessary noise levels of their equipment.

I believe that the usual standard of maximum acceptable noise levels expressed in decibels is around 80 decibels. That is to be regarded as safe for human ears on a regular basis. But please check that out for accuracy. And while at it, check the current decibels emissions of the aforementioned buses for anything close to compliance with this level. Perhaps there are design faults in the exhaust/muffler systems of these buses from the manufacturer. And therefore could be corrected by the manufacturer over a period of time to make them all quieter for us. Maybe remedy lies in beefing up of the exhaust/muffler systems to achieve this. Seems like anything would be a step in the right direction in regards to this bus problem, of which will now be reminding us each and every day they roll by without attention to reducing the noise pollution. True, buses are not the lone offending vehicles. Motorcycles? Need I say more? Are there no local ordinances to quiet them some?

Paula Dryden
Santa Monica

Even Christmas is politically correct in the city



AS I SEE IT

By Bill Bauer

The holiday season is always a time of contrasts. There's the good, the bad and, sometimes, the downright ugly.

I went to the Main Street Merchant's Second Annual Get Festive! holiday event last Sunday. This is about as close to a traditional community Christmas event as Santa Monica is capable of. There was a cornucopia of free entertainment, activities and other events.

I listened to some great jazz courtesy of Joe Gaeta and Friends and the Shea Welsh Group. Christmas shoppers, families and those out for a Sunday stroll filled the sidewalks. Everyone was friendly and brimming with the spirit of the holidays. Heal the Bay, Santa Monica Baykeeper, the Coalition for Clean Air, Tree People, Santa Monica Public Works (Sustainable City) and our own police department gave away information as well as little stocking stuffers.

I thought the Main Street merchants and all those who gave of their time and talents did a terrific job.

As always, there is a negative side. In this case, as with many of the city's events, parking was a problem. With activities that draw large numbers of people such as Get Festive!, there is just not enough public parking. Even on the surrounding streets, two-hour parking zones impose a time limit on having fun, staying longer and spending more. But, on the other hand, the ever present vagrants and panhandlers seemed to have taken the day off.

Then there is the Third Street Promenade. In my opinion, this year's holiday decorations seem more to be designed for political correctness than holiday spirit. Over the years, there has been much criticism of the city's holiday decorations.

For example, a few years ago, a series of abstract banners with an "Oceania" theme were the butt of many jokes about how overly politically correct Santa Monica had become. Here in Santa Monica, we're proud of our own holiday tradition: non-holiday holiday decorations. This year is no exception.

Now, we have plastic icebergs that look

like they were left over from the 1968 movie "Ice Station Zebra." The only thing missing is the submarine. Maybe it doesn't make any difference. People are either going to shop downtown or they're going out of town to The Grove, the new Galleria in Century City, Westside Pavilion or elsewhere.

I was on the Third Street Promenade a couple of Fridays ago. I thought the decorations were clever, but not at all Christmasy. I wondered what the Bayside District Corp. (who is responsible for promoting the Third Street Promenade and the adjacent downtown shopping district) and the city have against stars, candles, bells, trees, garlands of pine, ribbon bows, ornaments, oversized presents, toys and Santa Claus — the traditional symbols of Christmas?

I was in New York City over the holidays last year and was literally dazzled by the mostly traditional public and private holiday displays throughout Manhattan. There's no overt political correctness there, and the viewing experience is much more enjoyable because of it. Maybe that's why New York is such a magical place to spend the holidays.

Despite the \$450,000 worth of Third Street holiday decor, all it took was one 21-year-old punk hanging out near center court to mutter he needed to get high as I walked by to wreck my experience. I knew that I, and anyone else who encountered this lowlife, would probably not be back here this holiday season.

There's something else about Manhattan, and that's public safety. The NYPD has beat cops on every block in midtown Manhattan. The Times Square Business Improvement District has its own security force. Add transit police and private security, and the shopping and sight-seeing not only feels safe but is also hassle free. Foul-mouthed vagrants and panhandlers are told to move along and they do.

While it might take years to straighten out downtown's traffic and parking, beefing up security can be done overnight. One local politico suggested that it might have been better if Bayside had taken some of the money it spent on plastic icebergs and spent it on additional security.

Maybe next year.

Bill Bauer is a longtime resident of Santa Monica and a freelance writer.

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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OPINION



How to avoid holiday debt

With continuing economic uncertainty and many consumers still recovering from last year's spending, creating a realistic holiday budget and being smart about spending is more important than ever before. Here are some helpful tips to avoid holiday debt:

■ Set a holiday budget. Determine ahead of time how much you can afford to spend and allocate the amount among your gift recipients.

■ Make a gift list and stick to it. You will reduce your chances of buying impulsively, which is typically what gets people into trouble.

■ Start early and be a bargain shopper. Surf the Web to compare prices at multiple retailers before heading to the stores.

■ Be smart with credit cards. Do not charge more than you can afford to pay each month. Use a charge card you must pay off in full every month. Use a card that offers a rewards program so that you can get paid when you do purchase with a card.

■ It's the thought that counts. Rather than spending a lot of money, make something special or do something nice for loved ones.

■ Teach kids about spending. Give kids a budget for the holiday gifts they want to buy and help them manage it.

■ Hold off on large holiday purchases. With layoffs and unemployment becoming a harsh reality, be practical about gift giving. You may want to shop for large items after the holidays to get bargains.

■ Start saving for next year now.

Consider setting up a separate bank account just for gifts and begin depositing money in the account each month for the next year.

■ Have a plan. With the possibility of tougher financial times ahead, remember to consult your financial advisor and incorporate holiday spending into your financial plan.

Guest Commentary

By Carolyn Hemann

Carolyn Hemann is a senior financial advisor with American Express in Santa Monica. For more information, call (310) 582-3535 or visit the company's Web site at www.americanexpress.com/advisors. American Express Financial Advisors Inc. Member NASD. American Express Company is separate from American Express Financial Advisors Inc. and is not a broker-dealer.

The QLine

CONT., from page 3

trust because if they have no respect for the Brown Act law which I believe prohibits this act, and even if whatever they're writing is not detrimental, it's still against the law. And they are representing us, and they're elected officials, and they have to abide by the law. And they should not pass notes."

■ "Look at me with a straight face and tell me that either Chuck Allord or Pro Se would have raised the issue of the notes if the majority on the council was conservative. Someone actually went to the council chambers late at night to retrieve torn pieces of paper to make a point? Am I the only one that thinks that these people desperately need a life?"

■ "Hi, thanks for your question regarding elected officials passing notes to one another. Number one, I think it does create an aura of distrust. Number two, I think it's childish and juvenile. It's supposed to be a public meeting, therefore I think everything should be out in public. Then I guess that means we can all sort of whisper to one another and they can do the same, and it can go on and on. The council is for the pits anyway, as far as I'm concerned, but that's another argument. Thank you very much for your paper. We really do enjoy it, it's great, I hope it expands. I enjoy all the articles in there. They're the meat of Santa Monica, and I just wish you were a larger paper. Thank you so much."

■ "The district attorney's office is correct regarding the passing of notes. Why should the City Council pass notes, when the public does not know what they are doing. And half the time we don't know what they're doing anyway. This is the worst, loudest City Council we've ever had, and I've been

in Santa Monica over 50 years."

■ "As children when we passed notes in school, we were reprimanded. The distrust of our government officials is present from big brother to little brother, as in our city. Although some of our servants have we citizens in their best interest, I believe the majority have their own best interest ahead of ours; i.e. they are constantly tempted with payoffs from all arenas of business, and money has a way of controlling their decisions. Thank you for letting we citizens of Santa Monica be heard. We appreciate your paper and the fact that you care about us. Thanks."

■ "In answer to your question regarding the City Council passing notes to each other at council meetings, first off, it is insulting to the public standing before them. Second, it is very juvenile. Third, it is against the Brown Act. I remember in school if you were found passing notes you were sent to the coat room, and if you repeated it, you were sent to the principal's office. Our council members should act like grown-ups and obey the Brown Act, and show respect to the Santa Monica citizens who appear before them. If they can't do that, then they should resign. Thank you."

■ "Passing notes is the kind of behavior to be expected of second grade kids, assuming they are able to read and write. As far as the Santa Monica City Council members are concerned, I am not particularly concerned about their passing notes, since they routinely do exactly what they please, and the public be damned. Passing notes is the least of our problems with the City Council members. Their attitude towards the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is yet another example of their juvenile behavior. The sooner Santa Monica voters dispose of that bunch of self-righteous twits, the better off the City of Santa Monica will be."



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LOCAL

Some residents offended by e-mail during meetings

NOTES, from page 1

said investigators will continue to randomly monitor the meetings and keep in contact with concerned residents in the city.

However, if the district attorney's office finds further evidence of wrongdoing by council members, Cooley said through a spokeswoman that he wouldn't hesitate pressing charges. Violating the Brown Act is a misdemeanor that carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a fine, said Jane Robinson, a spokeswoman for the prosecutor.

"This is exactly the kind of behavior Steve Cooley wanted to end when he decided to create the public integrity division two years ago," she said. "Usually we rely on citizens, but we also have investigators who we send out to meetings unannounced."

Many residents said they understand council members are typically sending each other notes that have little to do with what's going on during the meeting. But they also say the practice looks bad.

"Probably a lot of it is innocuous, but it makes people wonder what's going on because they can see it happening," said Tom Larmore, a resident who is regularly at city council meetings. "I mean, we think it's innocuous but we don't really know. Nobody knows (what they are writing)."

Other residents who attend the council meetings said passing notes is typically not controversial. They say the notes are on minor topics and are usually sent to staff members and not other council members.

"Sometimes it's just to say things like 'Did you bring a document with you?' or it could be something like 'Hey, you're fly's unzipped' or 'There's something in your teeth,'" said Patricia Hoffman, a former school board member who is routinely at council meetings. "They tend to be a little personal aside to someone. They tend not to be substance to the meetings."

Peter Tigler, a member of the Pico Neighborhood Association, sends a weekly political cartoon by e-mail. He said while he's still deciding whether to chime in on the note passing issue, he thinks the incident — as well as many other things the council does — makes great fodder for his cartoons.

"It's like it's still the third grade up there, except everybody is 40 years old," Tigler said.

After City Hall received Cooley's letter, City Attorney Marsha Moutrie wrote each council member a memo on the specifics of passing notes, and warned them that Cooley is known for being tough on Brown Act issues, officials said. She advised council members to cease passing notes to each other entirely, officials said.

Richard Bloom, who was appointed mayor of Santa Monica on Tuesday, said he would not instruct council members on how to act when it comes to passing notes, or instruct them to follow Moutrie's advice.

"In my opinion, each council member should make their own assessment of Ms. Moutrie's advice and act accordingly," Bloom said. "The facts of the incident are somewhat bizarre and certainly an aberration."

"I believe the district attorney understood this, but felt compelled to remind us

that elected and appointed officials are going to be held to a very high standard of conduct," he added. "Santa Monicans would not have it any other way."

Other residents brought up the issue of some council members sending and receiving e-mails from their laptops during council meetings. They said if a handwritten note is problematic, then what's to prevent a City Council member from sending e-mails to others on the dais about an issue discussed at the meeting.

"It sounds like people are home watch-

"It sounds like people are home watching T.V. and sending messages commenting about what's going on and the public has no idea that it's going on."

— TOM LARMORE
Santa Monica resident

ing T.V. and sending messages commenting about what's going on and the public has no idea that it's going on," Larmore said. "I don't think that's right."

It's not yet clear whether council members who send and receive e-mails during a meeting are violating any laws. The state attorney general has said the practice sends the wrong message to the public, but it's not illegal unless the message is sent to a majority of the council, officials said.

"The attorney general issued an opinion recently that members of a legislative body should be discouraged from sending e-mail, especially when it's relatively easy for one member to hit a 'reply all' key and create a ... situation," said Jim Ewert, an attorney for the California Newspaper Publishers Association.

Some council members defend the practice. They say sending and receiving e-mails from constituents during a meeting is no different than when members of the public talk to them when they are on a break during the meeting.

And they say parents who couldn't find a baby-sitter and are home watching the meeting on T.V. are able to still participate in local government.

"If we can include them, then should we not conscientiously do that?" said Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McKeown, who regularly checks e-mails during the public hearing portion of the meeting.

To some, it all comes down to how much you trust your public officials. In Santa Monica, there is a long tradition of making the process open to the public, and many here said they feel comfortable that if there were a problem it would be addressed.

"If any of them do receive a note of substance, something that is clearly a violation, then they should be man or woman enough to hand that over to the city attorney, or who ever is the referee," Tigler said. "How people feel about all this probably comes down to how they think council members would respond if something like that was ever sent to them."

LOCAL



Due to sour history, union predicts slow vote at Loews

LOEWS, from page 1

Thacker said the hotel had lost some business over the issue, mostly to groups sensitive to the living wage and unionization issues.

"This is all part of the healing process," he said. "I think the issue has divided the community, and now's the time to try to bring everyone back together."

Union officials hailed the move as a landmark agreement. It is legally binding and allows an impartial arbitrator to decide if either side violates the agreement.

If more than 50 percent of the hotel's 200 eligible workers sign up for union representation, the hotel has agreed to allow HERE to represent their employees and negotiate a contract.

If neither side can agree on a union contract within six months, either party can ask that the dispute be resolved by the arbitrator.

"It really comes down to the union and the hotel agreeing the employees have been caught in the middle," Thacker said, referring to the contentious relationship between Loews and HERE. "And for their benefit, both sides have agreed to let this issue be decided once and for all."

This is the first time a Santa Monica hotel has made such an agreement without pressure from federal, state or local officials. The two hotels in Santa Monica that are unionized — the Fairmont Miramar and the Viceroy — reached agreements with the union only after each hotel needed the city's permission for large remodeling projects.

After nearly 30 months of protests and marching in front of Loews, hotel workers and management said they were eager to put the issue behind them.

"I'm happy that we can start a better relationship with our managers," said Celia Talvera, a Loews housekeeper. "Now we can work together to make this as successful a hotel as possible."

Housekeepers at Loews make between \$10 and \$11 an hour plus health insurance, similar to unionized hotels in Santa Monica, Loews officials said. However,

union officials said workers at unionized hotels get a pension plan, dental insurance and a paid lunch break — amenities not offered at local non-unionized hotels.

"I can tell you the economic package at a unionized hotel far exceeds anything at a non-unionized hotel," said Kurt Petersen, HERE local 11 organizing director. "If that wasn't the case, our union workers would be upset, and they're not."

Union dues at Santa Monica hotels average \$35 a month, HERE officials said.

"I think the issue has divided the community, and now's the time to try to bring everyone back together."

— JOHN THACKER
Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel,
general manager

California Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamante (D-San Joaquin) attended the press conference Thursday and said the agreement is an example that other hotels across the state could follow.

"I feel this is a wonderful moment, not just for Santa Monica," he said. "I hope this will be a model that will show an accord can be reached between business and workers everywhere."

Some union officials speculated it would take them about a year to collect the union votes needed to qualify as the official representatives of the hotel's workforce.

"We know because of our history and background we're going to have to work this in ... I guess you could say slowly," said Maria Elena Durazo, president of HERE local 11. "We're taking it in good solid, small steps."

People still visit L.A. County beaches despite pollution

POLLUTION, from page 1

"Making Southern California's world famous beaches safe and clean year-round is a public policy no-brainer," Beckman stated. "It is good for public health, the environment and our billion-dollar coastal economy. It is high time we got on with the effort."

Fleischli added, "No matter how you look at it, 10 to 18 years is a long time, but we are trying to give the cities flexibility in their implementation of programs to solve these problems. This is not everything we had hoped for, but it comes close. Some of the scientific assumptions still favor dischargers rather than the public health, which is disappointing and illegal."

The Santa Monica BayKeeper and Natural Resources Defense Council have been at the forefront to force governmental agencies to set pollution limits for waterways in the Los Angeles region. And the new rules, the two organizations say,

are the result of a 1998 lawsuit they brought against the United States Environmental Protection Agency for failing to set such limits. Santa Monica-based Heal the Bay also was a part of that litigation.

Santa Monica beaches have been regularly closed during and after rainstorms because of high pollution levels. The county's Health Department advises individuals to avoid swimming in the Santa Monica Bay within three days of any rain. Also, urban runoff and sewage spills contribute to more than 1,000 beach closures and postings every year in Los Angeles County, according to the Santa Monica BayKeeper.

Despite the pollution, Southern California beaches remain to be a major destination for tourists and locals. According to the county's Lifeguard Department, more than 1 million people a month visit Los Angeles County beaches during the winter.

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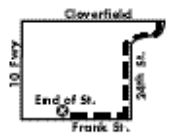
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STATE

Nick Nolte pleads no contest to drug-driving

BY LISA LEFF
Associated Press Writer

MALIBU — Actor Nick Nolte pleaded no contest Thursday to one count of driving under the influence of drugs and he was immediately sentenced to three years of probation, which includes counseling and drug testing.

Superior Court Judge Lawrence Mira warned the 61-year-old film star that he would be jailed for six months if he violates conditions of his probation.

Nolte was behind the wheel of his black 1992 Mercedes-Benz on Pacific Coast Highway, swerving into oncoming lanes, when he was stopped Sept. 11 near his west Malibu home.

Lab tests showed he was under the influence of the banned depressant gamma hydroxybutyrate, the so-called date-rape drug known as GHB, although Nolte said after sentencing that he had taken "a synergistic amino acid thing."

"I have deep regrets being on the road in that condition," Nolte said after the hearing. Nolte voluntarily entered a Connecticut rehabilitation facility four days after his arrest.

In exchange for his no-contest plea, prosecutors dropped a second misdemeanor charge of being under the influence of a controlled substance.

Nolte, wearing a black suit and sporting a gray beard and long, gray hair slicked back, stood in court and leaned on a chair as Deputy District Attorney Loni Petersen asked the actor if he understood that the plea means he was giving up his right to a jury trial.

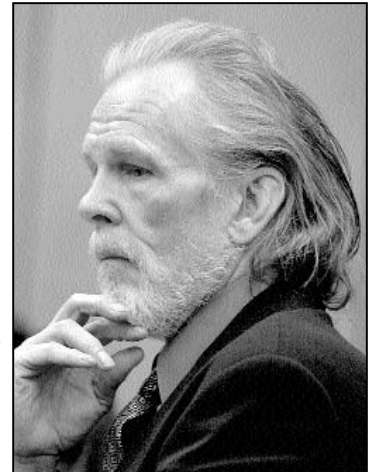
He answered, "Yes," one of the few words uttered by the actor during the 15-minute hearing.

Mira reviewed a report from the actor's drug counselor, then said he was inclined to accept the plea because of Nolte's progress.

"I understand you are doing very well in this approach to rehabilitation," the judge said. "If there are any problems I will invite you to come back early (to court)."

The judge placed Nolte on probation, and specified probation conditions: He must take a 90-day safe driving program, undergo random drug and alcohol testing, participate in weekly drug counseling sessions and attend a 12-step anti-drug program.

Petersen said Nolte must have a hearing with the Department of Motor Vehicles to regain his driving privileges,



Nick Ut/Associated Press

Actor Nick Nolte is shown at the Malibu Courthouse Thursday in Malibu, Calif. Nolte pleaded no contest Thursday to one count of driving under the influence of drugs and he was immediately sentenced to three years of probation, which includes counseling and drug testing.

and complete the driving program before he can drive without restrictions on his license.

Nolte was also fined \$400 and ordered to pay \$100 in restitution. With court costs, his total penalty will amount to about \$1,000, according to the district's attorney's office.

After the hearing, Nolte said he was feeling "excellent."

"I went into rehabilitation right afterwards for 30 days. It was kind of a god-send, a wake-up call. I've been wanting to get out from under this substance because I have been sober from 1989 to 1999," the actor said.

The brawny 6-foot-1 actor had a reputation as a heavy drinker for years, once describing himself as a "functioning drunk." After quitting alcohol, he became a health-and-fitness buff.

Nolte has made dozens of films. He was nominated for Academy Awards for 1991's "The Prince of Tides" and 1997's "Affliction." He also received an Emmy nomination for his breakout role as Tom Jordache in the 1976 television miniseries "Rich Man, Poor Man."

Border Patrol seizes 949 pounds of marijuana in S.D.

By The Associated Press

BOULEVARD — The U.S. Border Patrol seized a half ton of marijuana stuffed inside an overloaded sport utility vehicle they tracked to a gas station not far from the Mexican border.

Agents said they followed the Ford Explorer for some time Wednesday afternoon after it left a remote location near Jacumba, a border town 60 miles east of San Diego. A Border Patrol helicopter also tracked the vehicle.

Agents arrested the driver, who was not identified, after he pulled into a gas station and the agents saw hundreds of cellophane-wrapped bundles of marijuana inside the vehicle.

The 32-year-old driver, who is a U.S. citizen, told authorities the vehicle belonged to a friend, but later said he did not know the owner. He also told agents that he did not realize he was surrounded by 949 pounds of drugs.

The driver and the drugs were handed over to the Drug Enforcement Agency.

STATE

California law makes gift certificates timeless

BY MICHAEL LIEDTKE

AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Here's a little holiday shopping secret that many retailers aren't eager to advertise — gift certificates are good forever in California, no matter what the fine print might say.

Since 1997, state law has prohibited expiration dates on most gift certificates in California. Still, many merchants keep adding warnings that threaten to wipe out the value if they're not used by a certain date. "Retailers are still out there trying to skin the public," said Myron "Mike" Klarfeld, a San Diego lawyer who helped write California's law against gift card expirations.

The alleged violations have spurred a flurry of class-action lawsuits filed by Klarfeld and other lawyers who want the courts to ensure Californians can use gift certificates at their leisure.

A lot of money is at stake, with the rise of prepaid debit cards turning gift certificates into increasingly popular items. Shoppers nationwide are expected to spend somewhere between \$20 billion and \$30 billion on gift certificates this year.

Klarfeld took up the gift certificate crusade again last year after Judith Sanchez of Chula Vista showed him a \$50 gift certificate from Barnes and Noble that imposed a \$1.50 monthly service fee if she didn't use it in 18 months.

"That's not right," said Sanchez, who ended up giving away her gift card to her daughter. "Someone paid them money for the card already, so they shouldn't be able to take the cash away."

Many merchants impose monthly fees on idle gift cards, which is illegal because the fees eventually make unused cards worthless, Klarfeld said.

More than two dozen cases alleging gift certificate violations have been filed during the last two years against a long list of major merchants, including Blockbuster, Home Depot, Sharper Image, Petsmart, Restoration Hardware, Sunglass Hut and Zale's.

In most cases, retailers quickly drop the time limits.

The cases are difficult to defend because it's difficult to explain why a gift certificate worth \$50 today shouldn't still be worth \$50 a decade from now, said Paul Griffin, a San Francisco attorney who has represented merchants in several suits.

"This is a good law for consumers. If you pay full value for something, why should it ever expire?" Griffin said.

But the concept hasn't been widely embraced. Only four other states — New Hampshire, Hawaii, Massachusetts and Rhode Island — have laws limiting the use of expiration dates on gift certificates.

None are tougher than California's law, said Griffin, whose firm, Pillsbury Winthrop, is studying the regulations in all 50 states.

There are a few exceptions to California's law. Expiration dates are permitted on gift certificates issued for food, or sold to employers or charities for fundraising purposes, or distributed as part of a customer rewards program.

In most other states, gift certificates typically expire in six months to two years.

By some industry estimates, 10 percent to 15 percent of gift certificates sold nationwide aren't redeemed.

But evidence submitted by Walgreens in a recent lawsuit indicated the percentage isn't nearly that high in California.

In San Francisco Superior Court documents, Walgreens said its California stores had sold 22,261 electronic gift cards that imposed a \$2 monthly fee after a year of nonuse.

The monthly charges on the cards totaled \$4,234.62, or 1.3 percent of the combined \$330,340 value of the cards, according to court documents.

Some retailers say they impose expiration dates to offset the administrative costs of tracking unused gift certificates.

Other merchants set expiration dates to prod shoppers into stores more quickly, said Bill Dombrowski, president of the California Retailers Association.

"Retailers use gift certificates to promote their business," he said. "They hope when people come in to use their (gift certificates) that they will buy even more things."

Lost bag from plane crash washes ashore after eight years

By The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A duffel bag containing hundreds of Bank of America financial documents that were lost in a 1994 plane crash washed ashore this week at a beach north of here.

The bag was found Tuesday by lifeguards at Black's Beach and was turned over to bank officials.

It was one of 19 bags aboard a twin-engine Cessna that crashed about four miles west of La Jolla on Feb. 7, 1994. Pilot Cindy Rice was found several weeks later along with the plane's wreckage about 1,000 feet below the water's surface.

Nearly all of the duffel bags were lost, forcing Bank of America to hold emergency meetings on how to deal with the void. Many customers at the time discovered that deposits had not been posted. Bank of America later reconstructed the transactions through computer records.

"This has been in the ocean since

February 1994, so the materials have basically deteriorated. They were able to find the date 1994 on a couple of pieces," said Bank of America spokesman Ken Preston.

The stuff has been shipped to our corporate security office in Los Angeles. They're trying to make sure that there is no work that can be recovered from it, and all the number of the deposits are secure."

Edward Dever, a researcher from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, said the bag probably had been caught below plane fragments that could have been freed by underwater currents.

"I think it's unlikely that it drifted on the surface for eight years," Dever said. "If you put something in the ocean here, it might stay around for weeks or perhaps a month, or be beached."

Preston said he wasn't sure how many of the 19 duffel bags on the flight have been recovered. At least one other duffel bag washed ashore the day of the crash in 1994.

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NATIONAL

Transportation Authority seeks injunction to bar job action

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — With a strike that could affect more than 7 million subway and bus riders looming, transit officials sought a preliminary injunction Thursday to bar a walkout or other job action.

In papers filed in state Supreme Court, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority asked a judge to stop the bus and subway workers union from conducting "a strike, work stoppage, sickout, slow down, refusal to work as assigned, sabotage, vandalism, or any other concerted activity with the intent of interrupting normal and regular operations."

Justice Ann Pfau scheduled a hearing Friday to hear arguments in the case.

The motion came a day after the Transport Workers Union, representing 34,000 subway and bus workers, lowered its contract demand for the first time, asking for 6 percent annual raises over three years instead of the 8 percent annual raises they had sought.

The union has authorized a strike as early as Monday if a deal is not reached by Sunday, when its contract expires.

A union spokesman said the two sides would be meeting Thursday.

Despite the union's stance, the state's Taylor Law prohibits public employees from striking. Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Gov. George Pataki have said they would respond quickly by seeking the court injunction and fines against the union and individual members.

The MTA, citing a projected deficit, has proposed no raise in the first year of a contract and has tied raises in the second and third years to productivity increases.

"While we acknowledge the union's movement on wages, they still fundamentally miss the point," MTA spokesman Tom Kelly said. "These are not traditional negotiations. The MTA and its funding partners (city and state) are in deep financial distress. The TWU must incorporate these undeniable economic realities into their bargaining posture for an agreement to be reached."

Union President Roger Toussaint accused the MTA of inflexibility.

"We've modified our demands ... and they have not done likewise," Toussaint said. "The Transport Workers Union is working very hard to resolve this by the deadline on Sunday."

While contract negotiations lingered, suburban gov-

ernments set up car pool lots, corporations rented hotel rooms for employees and transit officials planned to reroute trains as the metropolitan area braced for a potential strike.

The city has had two earlier walkouts, in 1966 and in 1980. The 1980 strike lasted 11 days. In other years, legal action was taken to prevent strikes. In 1999, the MTA obtained a restraining order against the union. The union would have faced an initial fine of \$1 million had it violated the order.

New York mayor unveils vision for Lower Manhattan

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mayor Michael Bloomberg on Thursday unveiled his vision of a revitalized Lower Manhattan with vast green spaces, new neighborhoods, a large public marketplace and a transit hub with direct links to the region's airports.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation is scheduled next week to present seven proposals for redeveloping the 16 acres where the World Trade Center stood.

"We must reinvent Lower Manhattan. We must reopen the waterfront. We must continue to reassure that New York continues to lead in the global economy," Bloomberg told a gathering of business leaders.

His redevelopment plan would cost \$10.6 billion and take years to complete. A rail link to Kennedy Airport, for example, would take nine years to build.

Coles, a soft-spoken conservative Mormon with a reputation for sermon-like speeches, has enjoyed political successes. His city of 200,000 has been ranked by Forbes Magazine among the nation's top 10 cities for business, and he championed voter passage of a two-year, \$10 million property tax levy for land preservation.

But he's also suffered embarrassing public incidents. In 1997, his wife, Julie, was ordered by a small claims court to make good on \$2,100 in bounced checks, including a mortgage payment.

One-time leader of nation's mayors under investigation by attorney general

BY CHUCK OXLEY

Associated Press Writer

BOISE, Idaho — The Idaho attorney general has opened a criminal investigation into allegations of spending irregularities by Boise Mayor Brent Coles, a past president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and once considered a rising political star.

The investigation comes after Coles and his chief of staff, Gary Lyman, billed the city for an expensive New York City trip that included a Broadway musical and dinner at an upscale restaurant.

Coles and Lyman were attending a Conference of Mayors meeting in November in Rochester, N.Y. At the same time, City Attorney Susan Mimura and her assistant were in New York on other business.

In what Coles has called a "creative annual bonus" for Mimura, Coles and Lyman flew to New York and treated Mimura and her assistant to the night's outing.

The mayor expensed the air travel, tickets and dinner

to the city, but paid back the \$1,871 after City Councilman Mike Wetherell found the items during a routine spot check of city payments.

"I'm not Sherlock Holmes, I'm not Dick Tracy, but I knew something wasn't right," said Wetherell.

Lyman has been placed on administrative leave with pay. The City Council asked Attorney General Al Lance to begin a criminal investigation. And Coles, who refused an interview request from The Associated Press, said in a prepared statement that he recognized the trip "did violate the public trust and the trust of the City Council."

But he said he won't resign as mayor.

The chorus against Coles has swelled. Boise residents, newspaper editorials and letters to the editor have all been highly critical.

Other travel by Coles has drawn scrutiny, most recently over a \$150 dining bill for Coles and Lyman at an adult-oriented Key West, Fla., resort where nude sunbathing is permitted. In Boise, Coles has been an outspoken opponent of public nudity.

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INTERNATIONAL



U.S. military helicopter crashes, killing five soldiers

BY FREDDY CUEVAS

Associated Press Writer

SANTA CRUZ DE YOJOA, Honduras — An American Black Hawk helicopter crashed in the hills of central Honduras during a night training exercise, killing five U.S. soldiers.

The helicopter, from Soto Cano Air Force Base in Palmerola, Honduras,

crashed about 9 p.m. Wednesday while on routine training, said Lt. Col. Bill Costello, a spokesman for the U.S. Southern Command in Florida.

"Right now, we are classifying it as a training accident," Costello said Thursday. "It is being investigated."

The names of the dead were being withheld until their families could be notified. The crew belonged to the 1st

Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, based at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico.

There had been heavy rains in the area over the past three days, but the cause of the crash was not known.

Pieces of metal and other debris were strewn across a hillside, which was guarded by both Honduran and U.S. military officials. The helicopter crashed in a remote, agricultural area near a small highway.

U.S. Army South spokesman Maj. Rich Crusan confirmed that five crew members were aboard the helicopter. He said the bodies were taken to Soto Cano Air Force Base on Thursday.

The unit involved in the crash was assigned to Joint Task Force Bravo, the U.S. military command that conducts training, counter-drug, and humanitarian missions in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Many of its members helped Central America recover after Hurricane Mitch killed thousands and caused billions of

dollars in damage in 1998.

The task force's spokesman, Master Sgt. Guy Vollb, said the unit is "like a very small town. Our community is so closely knit it affects everybody. It's a pretty sad day for us here."

The control tower at La Mesa international airport in San Pedro Sula, about 110 miles north of the capital Tegucigalpa, reported that the helicopter had arrived there from the Palmerola base to participate in a night landing exercise and to refuel.

The helicopter headed back to the base and crashed 40 minutes after taking off for the hills near Santa Cruz de Yojoa, about 85 miles north of the capital, Tegucigalpa.

Palmerola is a \$30 million base built in 1983 and used by both U.S. and Honduran forces. It lodges about 500 U.S. soldiers, most of whom stay for just a few months.

During the wars of the 1980s in Central America, the base was the main U.S. military operations center in the area.

Carter willing to mediate peace talks with Israel

BY KARL RITTER

Associated Press Writer

UPPSALA, Sweden — Former President Jimmy Carter said Thursday he was willing to mediate peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians, but only if they and the U.S. government asked him to.

"We would go immediately and with great alacrity," the Nobel Peace Prize laureate said during a speech to students at the University of Uppsala.

However, Carter gave no indication he had been asked to mediate.

Carter helped broker the 1978 Camp David accords that led to peace between Israel and Egypt. The agreement resulted in the Nobel Peace Prize for Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Carter

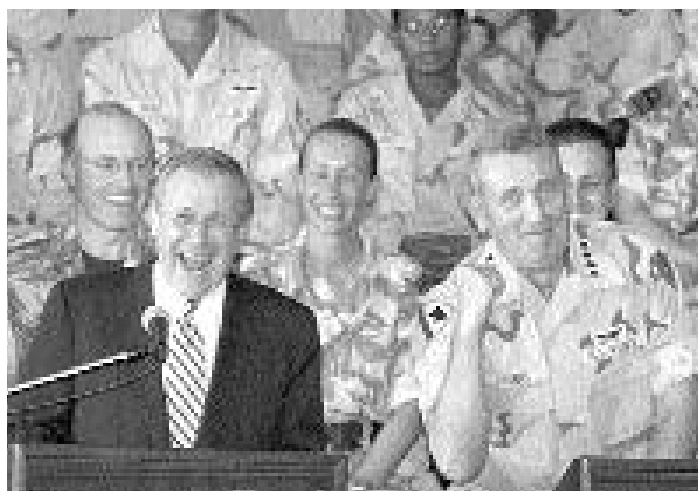
was not nominated then, but won the Peace Prize this year.

Carter said escalating tension between Israelis and Palestinians hasn't been stemmed and asserted that President Bush was not impartial about the issue.

"Until President Bush, every president, Democratic or Republican, has in my opinion played a balancing role as a trusted mediator," he said. "Now, though, it seems obvious that the present administration in Washington is completely compatible with the Israeli government and they have completely ignored ... the Palestinian Authority."

Carter, a Democrat, praised the Republican administration for backing away from earlier threats of unilateral action against Iraq.

Rumsfeld visits soldiers



Remy de la Mauviniere/Associated Press

U.S. Gen. Tommy R. Franks, Commander of United States Central Command, right, jokes with U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as they meet U.S. soldiers at As Sayliyah military base in Doha, Qatar, Thursday. The U.S. troops are participating in exercise Internal Look, a war game many speculate is a rehearsal for U.S. military action in Iraq.

Iraqi general says inspections prove U.S.-British suspicions 'groundless' in 10 cases

BY CHARLES J. HANLEY

AP Special Correspondent

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A senior Iraqi general contended Thursday that the new round of U.N. weapons inspections has disproved "groundless" allegations by Western intelligence agencies that 10 Iraqi sites may be engaged in banned weapons production.

Lt. Gen. Hossam Mohammed Amin called the intelligence reports "just a lie." The inspectors have not yet issued their findings, however, from visits to the 10 installations.

At a news conference, Amin also was asked about an unconfirmed U.S. report that an Iraqi chemical weapon was delivered to an Islamic extremist group affiliated with al-Qaida.

"This is really a ridiculous assumption from the American administration," he said.

The general, the Iraqi government's chief liaison to the inspectors, spoke with reporters after a day in which the greatly reinforced corps of U.N. monitors — quadrupled to 100 this week — observed a test launch of a short-range Iraqi missile to verify it does not exceed U.N. range limits, and paid unannounced visits to a half-dozen other sites.

The U.N. inspections have resumed, after a four-year gap, under a new U.N. Security Council resolution requiring Iraq to report on nuclear, biological, chemical and missile research and production. It

filed that 12,000-page U.N. declaration last weekend.

The resolution also mandates that Iraq surrender any weapons of mass destruction — which it denies having. The U.S. government says it is sure Baghdad retains such weapons, and threatens war if Iraq fails, in Washington's view, to comply with U.N. disarmament demands.

In a round of inspections in the 1990s, after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, the United Nations destroyed tons of Iraqi chemical and biological weapons and dismantled Iraq's nuclear weapons program.

The U.N. monitors suspected they may not have traced all the weapons, however, and recently published British and U.S. intelligence reports said new construction at old weapons sites and other activities suggest the Iraqis may have resumed making weapons of mass destruction.

In their 58 site inspections since the U.N. operation resumed, the arms monitors have visited some of the sites considered suspect, including a chlorine plant whose product could be used in chemical weapons and an animal-vaccine plant linked to Iraq's previous biological weapons program.

Ten of the sites newly inspected "were allegedly said to practice and conduct some prohibited activities," Amin told reporters, without identifying the locations. "The visits of the inspection teams proved that those allegations are groundless."

The inspectors have generally not

reported the results of their visits, including to the chlorine and vaccine plants. But after an inspection Wednesday at a nuclear site questioned in the intelligence reports, the nuclear monitors reported they had verified it was not involved in revived weapons work.

Amin also was asked about an article in The Washington Post on Thursday quoting unnamed sources as saying the Bush administration had received a credible report that Islamic extremists affiliated with al-Qaida took possession of a chemical weapon — suspected to be the nerve agent VX — in Iraq in October or November.

Amin dismissed the report as "ridiculous," and said of the U.S. government, "They know very well we have no prohibited material or activities, and all the stockpile (of chemical weapons) have been destroyed."

The sources were said to be "two officials with firsthand knowledge of the report and its source." But other unnamed U.S. officials cited by the newspaper suggested the "report" may have been based

on a hypothetical case raised in a recent U.S. military communication.

"We are used to hearing such reports from the enemies of Iraq," Amin said, naming U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies.

In a wrap-up report in 1999, after U.N. inspectors withdrew from Iraq, the United Nations said the Iraqis had not adequately explained the disposition of 1.5 tons of 3.9 tons of VX nerve agent they acknowledged producing in the 1980s, all of which Iraq said it had destroyed.

The U.N. inspectors said they found VX traces in a plot of ground where the Iraqis said they had neutralized the chemical agent, but the inspectors could not confirm the amount.

Amin said the Iraqis thus far are satisfied with the "professionalism" of the inspections, and he hoped the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since it invaded Kuwait in 1990 could be lifted within eight months.

Under U.N. resolutions, if the inspectors ultimately report full Iraqi cooperation in their disarmament work, the Security Council is supposed to consider lifting those sanctions.



SPORTS

Stanford two-sport star Johnson to enter NFL draft

By The Associated Press

STANFORD — Stanford wide receiver and former basketball forward Teyo Johnson will skip his final two seasons of football eligibility to enter the NFL draft.

"It's time for me to advance to the next level," Johnson said Thursday. "I think I'm ready."

Johnson led the Cardinal this season with 41 catches for 467 yards and eight touchdowns. The 6-foot-7 receiver's departure was somewhat surprising — and another blow to Stanford, which went 2-9 under first-year coach Buddy Teevens.

"This year prepared me for the NFL more than any other previous season because I had to face a lot of adversity," Johnson said. "For the first time I will be able to focus on one position and one sport."

Johnson, projected as a tight end in the NFL, is just the second Stanford football player to leave school early, following Bob Whitfield in 1991. Last summer,

Curtis Borchardt and Casey Jacobsen became the first Cardinal basketball players to leave early.

"Teyo is a tremendous athlete with the size, skills and ability to have an outstanding career in the NFL," Teevens said. "We will certainly miss him as a member of our football team in 2003, but we wish him the best of luck in the next phase of his life."

Johnson, assessed as a late first-round or early second-round pick before the season, finalized his decision just as he completed his last exam for the fall quarter Wednesday. He officially withdrew from school to begin training.

Johnson has been a role player in two seasons on the Stanford basketball team, and there was talk that he would skip this season anyway. Johnson sprained his knee late in the Cardinal's loss to California in the Big Game last month, and won't be ready to train for another week.

His older brother, former Stanford linebacker Riall Johnson, plays for the Cincinnati Bengals.

GOP control of Senate may buoy NCAA gambling ban

BY SCOTT SONNER

Associated Press Writer

RENO, Nev. — The return to Republican control of the Senate could make it more difficult for the gambling industry to beat back a move to ban betting on college sports, a top lobbyist said.

The change in Congress means Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., the leader of the effort to end legalized betting on NCAA sports at Nevada casinos, will resume chairmanship of the Senate Commerce Committee.

At the same time, Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., the most influential defender of sports wagering, will relinquish his role as majority whip for the less powerful position of minority whip.

Reid and Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., lined up enough votes last year to stall McCain's bill in the Commerce Committee on a 10-10 vote.

"The first time the Senate Commerce Committee voted on this three or four years ago the vote was 22-1 in favor. So we've made a lot of progress on it," said Frank Fahrenkopf Jr., the former head of the Republican National Committee who now lobbies Congress for casinos as the president of the American Gaming Association.

Fahrenkopf said the industry will miss Reid serving as assistant majority leader.

"He had a great deal of say over which bills moved to the floor," Fahrenkopf said in an interview this week at Nevada's 19th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Fahrenkopf said he intends to meet with McCain in the coming weeks and expects him to reintroduce his bill in the next Congress.

Aides to McCain indicated he is likely to reintroduce the same bill he pushed last year, but won't decide until Congress reconvenes in January.

"The senator feels very strongly about this issue and will continue to fight to ban gambling on amateur sports," Senate Commerce Committee spokeswoman Pia Pialorsi said Thursday.

A number of coaches, including South

Carolina football coach Lou Holtz and Kentucky basketball coach Tubby Smith, have joined the NCAA in urging Congress to outlaw college betting to keep gamblers from influencing young athletes to throw games.

Fahrenkopf said McCain's proposal enjoys its strongest support from an unusual alliance of conservatives and liberals.

"It's a strange marriage of the extreme right and the extreme left," he said in a speech Wednesday to the tourism conference in Reno.

"In the Republican Party, it tends to be the extreme right who view gaming as a sin and therefore it is their duty to enact legislation to protect people from dying and going to hell and living eternity with the devil," he said.

"In the Democratic Party, its the extreme left wing, who don't trust people to be able to spend their own money and make decisions about their own money and that government must be this maternalistic entity to protect them from themselves."

Fahrenkopf said what might help Nevada's cause is a change of leadership at the NCAA, including the upcoming retirement of President Cedric Dempsey, to be succeeded in January by Indiana President Myles Brand.

"Very candidly, the people who were pushing this hard at the NCAA are gone," he told The Associated Press.

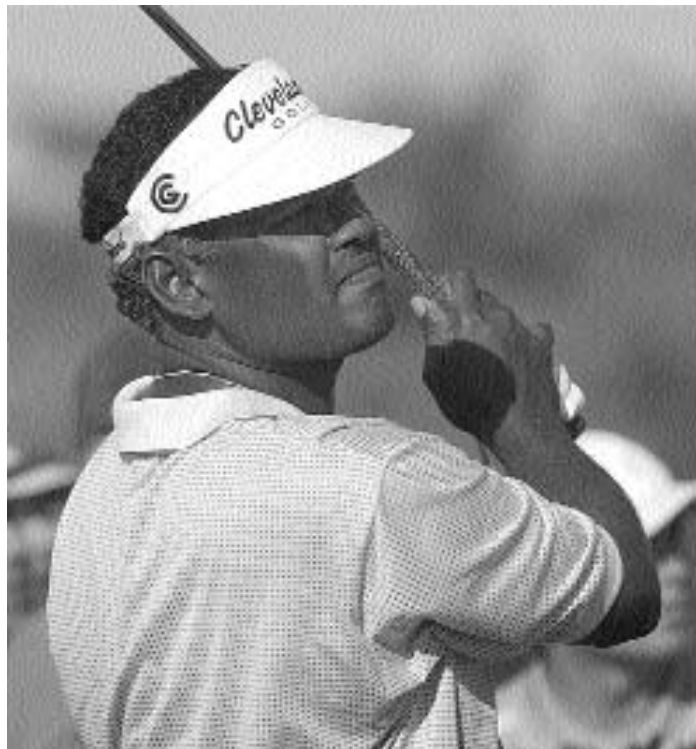
"Secondly, the lobbying team in Washington D.C. has totally changed for the NCAA. So they could have a different view. It's too early to tell," he said.

NCAA officials did not immediately return telephone messages left Thursday at their headquarters in Indianapolis.

Fahrenkopf said ending betting on college sports in Nevada casinos won't address what the NCAA and McCain say is their major concern — gambling on college campuses.

"From their position, I think they just think betting on athletics is morally wrong. But doing away with Nevada is not going to solve the problem at all. It's just

World Cup of golf



Eric Gay/Associated Press

Vijay Singh follows his tee shot on the second hole in the first round of the World Golf Championships EMC World Cup at the Vista Vallarta Golf Club in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Thursday. Singh and teammate Dinesh Chand represent Fiji among the 24 countries competing in the tournament.

Moss pleads guilty on two traffic counts; others dropped

BY JOSHUA FREED

Associated Press Writer

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Randy Moss pleaded guilty Thursday to two minor charges related to pushing a traffic officer with his car in downtown Minneapolis.

Three other counts, including a marijuana charge, were dismissed as part of a plea agreement.

Moss, who did not appear in court, was ordered to pay \$1,200 in fines and sentenced to 30 days in jail by Hennepin County District Judge Mark Wernick. Moss was given two days' credit for time already served, and the rest of his sentence will be stayed as long as Moss doesn't commit any similar driving offenses, the judge said. Moss was also ordered to perform 40 hours of community service.

"It's basically the resolution of the world's most famous traffic ticket," said Moss' agent, Dante DiTapano.

Moss' lawyer, Joe Friedberg, entered the plea on Moss' behalf.

Moss was arrested in downtown Minneapolis on Sept. 24 after a traffic officer stepped in front of his car to stop him from making an illegal turn. He was

accused of bumping her with his car, and she was slightly injured when she fell off it.

Moss also had to write a letter of apology, which was directed mostly toward his teammates and fans. He also apologized to any drivers or pedestrians "for any damage or undue distress I may have caused them" with his improper turn.

Asked later why there was no mention of the traffic officer, Amy Zaccardi, Moss' lawyer said, "Maybe we don't think she's entitled to that."

Police also found a marijuana cigarette in Moss' car, but Moss said it wasn't his. He added that he'd allowed other people to use his car in the days before the arrest.

Moss was in the NFL's substance-abuse program after testing positive for marijuana last year.

On Thursday, Moss' lawyer entered a plea of guilty to a misdemeanor count of careless driving and a petty misdemeanor count of obstructing traffic with a vehicle.

Moss has not missed any games since his arrest. He has 82 catches, tying the career high he set last year, for 1,015 yards. But he has a career-low five touchdowns, and his 12.4 yards per catch is well off his career average of 16.4.

going to drive it underground," he said.

Law enforcement agencies estimate Americans bet \$380 billion a year on sports, but "less than 1 percent is legally bet here in the state of Nevada where it is regulated, controlled and taxed," he said.

The NCAA acknowledged every U.S.

college campus "has illegal bookies on it — student bookies taking illegal bets on NCAA events," Fahrenkopf said.

"And we know there are approximately 1,500 Web sites now on any student's computer where they can get the odds and place bets offshore," he said.

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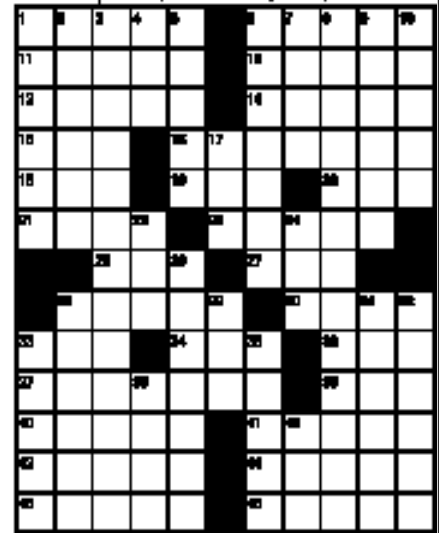
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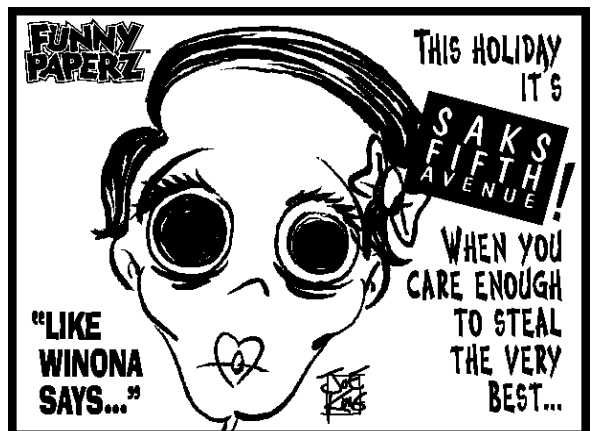
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NEWS OF THE WEIRD by Chuck Shepard

Right-to-spank law in question

■ In October, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child told Great Britain it should repeal its parental-right-to-spank law because spanking violates an international corporal-punishment treaty (which the U.S. has declined to honor, as well).

■ In September, the North Tyneside (England) Council advised a local business group not to hold the annual children's Christmas caroling contest this year because it would be a bad experience for the kids who did not win.



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SANTA MONICA \$550 Bachelor, pet ok, utilities included, parking. Westside Rentals 395-RENT.

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NO PETS ALLOWED
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1290 Berkeley \$1095
Upper 1 bed, huge & stove, parking, laundry room

1007 Ocean Park \$3095
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Upper 2 bed, 2 bath, new carpet & blinds, parking, fireplace

1448 Princeton \$1495
Upper 2 bed 1 1/2 baths, new carpet, fireplace, parking

143 Hillcrest \$1690
Upper 1 bed, garage entry, near beach, hardwood floors

1020 21st \$1650
Upper 2 bed, complete remodel, new floors, windows, kitchen bath

1111 17th St. \$3300
Owners unit, 3 bed, 4 bath, 2800 SF, Bonus room, 4 car garage

WILSHIRE BEACHWOOD

1234 Wellesley, W.L.A. \$1200
Lower 1 bed, completely remodeled, new carpet, floors & appliances

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SANTA MONICA \$695 Bachelor, neat beach, laundry, utilities included. Westside Rentals 395-RENT.

SANTA MONICA \$725 Studio, refrigerator, stove, utilities included, parking. Westside Rentals 395-RENT.

SANTA MONICA \$775 1bdrm/1ba. Refrigerator, stove, patio, yard, laundry. Westside Rentals 395-RENT.

SANTA MONICA \$775 Studio, pet ok, refrigerator, stove, hardwood floors, yard, parking. Westside Rentals 395-RENT.

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VENICE BEACH \$945.00 1bdrm/1ba, Douglas Fir floors, bright and airy, 1/2 block to beach, all utilities paid, 1 year lease, no pets. (310) 396-4443 x102.

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SANTA MONICA office units available. Some with Ocean view. 1318-1322 2nd St. Parking available. RTH Management Co. (949)946-1430.

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BLISSFUL RELAXATION! Heal your body, mind, spirit. Therapeutic, Swedish, Deep-tissue, energy balancing, non-sexual. Introductory specials from \$45.00/hr. In/out. Lynda, L.M.T. (310)749-0621

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STRONG & SOOTHING deep-tissue massage. Near Promenade. Intro: \$35/90min. Paul: (310)741-1901.

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE, Swedish, Accupressure, Deep-tissue, Sports Massage, Reflexology. For apt call Tracy at (310)435-0657.

Announcements

ASSISTANTS LEAGUE OF SANTA MONICA

Visit our bargain bazaar at 1453 15th St. Very reasonable prices. (310)395-2338

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HOUSE CLEANING Janet's at Your Service! House, yards, garage. Parties w/hot dog cart! (310)367-5436 (818)545-8914

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Yard Sales

TWO FAMILY Yard Sale. Sunday 12/15 9am-3pm. Kids stuff. 3541 Schaefer St. (near National/Washington) Culver City.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ANGELA!



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have a taco, have some flan...
eenie, meenie, minie, mive...
Party hardy, but don't drink and drive!
(From all of us at the Daily Press)

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SANTA MONICA SCENE °CALENDAR EDITION

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2002

TODAY'S EVENTS

Santa Monica High School Theater Arts Department presents *Romeo & Juliet*. Friday and Saturday nights at 8:00pm. November 22nd through December 21st. \$10.00 for students, children, and seniors, \$15.00 for adults. Humanities Center Theater at Santa Monica High School, 601 Pico Blvd. For more information please call (310)458-5939.

MAGICOPOLIS presents *HOCUS POCUS!* (Fish Bones Choke Us). The stage explodes with a colorful mix of Magic, Special Effects, Sleight of Hand, Comedy and Music that's sure to delight audiences of all ages. At MAGICOPOLIS, 1418 Fourth Street, Santa Monica. Fridays & Saturdays at 8pm, \$20. Saturday & Sundays at 2pm, \$15. For tickets call 310-451-2241.

HYALINE @ Rusty's Surf Ranch, 256 Santa Monica Pier, Fri. Dec. 13, 11pm. \$5 cover. Hard Rock mixed w/ world music: heavy, hypnotic and tribal.

Santa Monica Strutters, a FREE program sponsored by UCLA Healthcare's 50-Plus Program! Walking programs for adults 50 or older looking for safe, low-impact exercise in a comfortable environment. The Santa Monica Strutters meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 8 a.m. To 10 a.m., at Santa Monica Place, Fourth St. and Broadway Ave. in Santa Monica.

Senior Suppers - Discounted meals for people AGE 55 or older are served daily, from 3:30 p.m. To 7 p.m., in the cafeteria at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, 1250 16th Street in Santa Monica. \$3.69 Info only: (310)319-4837.

SATURDAY'S EVENTS

The Santa Monica Red Cross will host a Big Holiday Boutique today from 9am to 5pm at 1450 11th Street (between Broadway and Santa Monica Blvd.) Local artisans will come together to sell their unique handmade creations just in time for the holidays. A

portion of the proceeds will benefit the American Red Cross of Santa Monica.

Lost Angels will have a holiday photo fundraiser from 10am to 7pm at Ultra House on the Third Street Promenade. (between Wilshire and Arizona) Pets and people welcome. \$20.00 donation per 8 x 10 photo pose with the Angels. For more information (310)260-3301.

Maurice Sendak Days. Saturday, December 7 and 14. 11am to 2pm, Third St. Promenade. Skirball Cultural Center will promote its installation of works by Maurice Sendak by hosting costumed Sendak characters to meet and greet children. To complement the event, Barnes & Noble will host a reading of Sendak's works for children.

Santa Monica College - Emeritus College presents *Scenes From Theatre*. Performances by members of the theater production class. Santa Monica College Concert Hall, 1900 Pico Blvd., 1:30pm. Admission is FREE!

The Empty State Theater at 2372 Veteran Ave. in W. Los Angeles proudly presents: "The Fortune Room Lounge Show" A musical improv show featuring the "Stella Ray Trio" and "The Lucky Players". Every Saturday night at 10:00 p.m. Admission is \$10.00, drinks included w/admission. Lots of parking! For information or reservations please call (310)470-3560.

The Red Ribbon Squares, Santa Monica's official square dance club, invited you to enjoy an evening of plus level square dancing, alternating with round dancing, with an A-1 tip during break time. We dance every Saturday at Marine Park from 7:45pm to 10:30pm. Prerounds begin at 7:15 Admission is \$5 for dancers, including refreshments. Spectators are free. For more information, please call (310)395-3383

Music Showcase. UnUrban Coffeehouse. 3301 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, (310)315-0056.

MOVIE °GUIDE

LOEWS CINIPLEX BROADWAY CINEMA

1441 Third St. at Broadway
The Emperor's Club (PG-13) 11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40. **Empire** (R) 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00. **Solaris** (2002) (PG-13) 10:40, 11:40, 1:20, 2:20, 4:00, 5:00, 6:40, 7:40, 9:20, 10:20.

MANN CRITERION

1313 Third St.
The Ring (PG-13) 12:45, 3:45. **Punch-Drunk Love** (R) 11:45, 2:15, 4:45, 7:30. **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets** (PG) 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:45. **Extreme Ops** (NR) 12:15, 10:05. **Friday After Next** (R) 2:45, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30. **Adaptation** (R) 11:00, 12:30, 2:00, 4:00, 5:00, 7:15, 8:00, 10:15, 11:00.

AMC THEATRE SM 7

1310 3rd Street
Santa Clause 2 (G) 1:35, 4:00, 7:00, 9:30. **8 Mile** (R) 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:05. **Analyze That** (R) 1:55, 3:10, 4:30, 5:30, 7:05, 7:55, 9:40. **Treasure Planet** (PG) 1:05, 3:05, 5:10, 7:25, 9:35. **Die Another Day** (PG-13) 1:25, 4:20, 7:20, 10:10. **Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights** (PG-13) 2:30, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00. **Wes Craven Presents: THEY** (PG-13) 1:00, 10:15.

LANDMARK NU-WILSHIRE

1314 Wilshire Blvd.
Bowling for Columbine (R) 1:30, 4:15, 7:30, 10:15. **Far From Heaven** (PG-13) 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30.

LAEMMLE MONICA

1332 2nd St.
Real Women Have Curves (PG-13) 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00. **Rabbit-Proof Fence** (PG) 12:15, 2:40, 5:05, 7:30, 9:55. **The Quiet American** (R) 1:45, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40. **El Crimen del Padre Amaro** (R) 1:30, 4:20, 7:15, 10:05.

AERO THEATRE

1328 Montana Ave.
Bloody Sunday 5:00 **Secretary** 7:30, 10:00



BACK PAGE

Talking President Bush doll takes company by storm

BY ERICA WERNER
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — A President Bush doll that says things like "We're working hard to put food on your family" and "I will not hold this nation hostile" has turned into a huge hit for a small Irvine company.

The 12.5-inch-tall likeness, which features actual clips from Bush speeches and campaign stops and costs \$29.99, sold out a first shipment of 12,000 this week. A second shipment won't arrive until after Christmas.

"Everything is gone. We're in a back-order situation right now," said Jim Wessling, co-founder of Talking Presidents.com, Inc. "We anticipated it being a very popular item but we just didn't think it was going to take off that quick."

Although the doll does utter some of Bush's malapropisms, most of the 17 sound clips are straightforward quotes about the

war on terrorism and other topics — statements such as "Terrorism against our nation will not stand."

Wessling and son-in-law John Warnock, the other co-founder, are "staunch Republicans," Wessling said. Warnock, a garage renovator who also collects action figures, came up with the idea partly out of admiration for Bush.

"Nobody had done what he considered the true action heroes, which would be George W. Bush," Wessling said.

It's unclear what the real Bush thinks of the little fake Bush — the White House press office did not immediately return a call for comment. But Wessling said some Washington-area customers were planning to give Bush a mini-Bush for Christmas.

"There's nothing derogatory, everything is complimentary, there's nothing to make fun of him ... (but) the doll is a good representation of the president, there are

two or three of his Bushisms," he said.

The company operates out of an Irvine warehouse where Wessling runs his business importing products from Hong Kong. Over the years he's brought in items such as a Pet Vac to vacuum your pets and a Cat Scram that shoos cats off countertops with an ultrasonic speaker.

The talking Bush has surpassed even the Pet Vac in popularity.

"It's been phenomenal," Wessling said.

The craziness started last week, when a picture of the doll appeared on the Drudge Report Web site. The company got 600,000 Web hits in a single day and media calls from around the world. They had to take their phone number off their Web site and post a message cautioning that no more dolls were immediately available.

Another shipment of 12,000 should ship from Hong Kong on Dec. 30 with a third shipment on its heels, but that won't satisfy disappointed Christmas shoppers.

The Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace ordered two cases but sold them out within days, said spokeswoman Arianna Barrios.

"It's so out of control," she said.

The fledgling company isn't planning to stop with Bush. A talking Ronald Reagan is in the works for the spring. After that, Wessling and Warnock plan to manufacture talking Richard Nixons, Bill Clintons, John F. Kennedys and George H.W. Bushes.

"It's endless where we can go as long as we can get good-quality sound clips," Wessling said.

Woman in Daytona Beach celebrates her 113th birthday

By The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — At the party celebrating her 113th birthday, Hazel Luther was asked if she wanted to live forever.

"I think I already have," said Luther, who the Gerontology Research Group lists as the world's ninth-oldest living person. She was born Dec. 11, 1889.

Friends and family joined nursing home residents and workers to celebrate

her longevity with a celebration Wednesday at the Olds Hall Good Samaritan Center. Luther, who is also the oldest graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, has trouble walking and problems with her vision, but still speaks clearly.

"It seems to me I live to make other people happy," Luther said.

Luther is the fifth-oldest living American, and the second-oldest current Floridian. John McMorran of Lakeland is older by 175 days.

Girl beats out 700 to name dolphin calf born at zoo

By The Associated Press

APPLE VALLEY, Minn. — A 9-year-old girl beat out 700 other contestants to name the first dolphin calf born at the Minnesota Zoo in six years.

Katie Turcotte said the dolphin would be named "Spree" because it is "bright and fun and kind of wild."

Zoo trainers agreed Tuesday that the name best fit the fun-loving 4-month-old calf, said head dolphin trainer Diane Fusco.

Since learning Tuesday night that she

won, Katie, a fourth-grader, has been ecstatic and a minor celebrity school, said her mother, Deanna Turcotte.

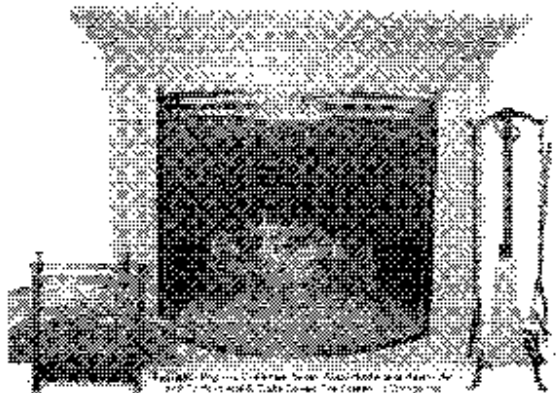
Katie, her parents and her 11-year-old brother will get to spend a night sleeping near the zoo's dolphins and learning more about marine mammal behavior.

People from ages 2 1/2 to 88 entered the contest, some from as far away as California and Florida.

Names also in the running included Sassy, Mauri and Makana, which is Hawaiian for gift.

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