

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

00000

FANTASY 5

14, 19, 36, 23, 31

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 4, 7, 1

Evening picks: 0, 7, 1

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 08, Gorgeous George

2nd Place: 03, Hot Shot

3rd Place: 06, Whirl Win

Race Time: 1:45.92



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

In November, the town of Bolinas, Calif., voted 314-152 to adopt the following ballot measure (the official wording): "Vote for Bolinas to be a socially acknowledged nature-loving town because to like to drink the water out of the lakes to like to eat the blueberries to like the bears is not hatred to hotels and motor boats. Dakar. Temporary and way to save life, skunks and foxes (airplanes to go over the ocean) and to make it beautiful."

A San Francisco Chronicle reporter attributed the town's support for it to the fact that its sponsor, artist Jane "Dakar" Blethen, is a beloved, though eccentric, local character.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Egotist: A person ... more interested in himself than in me."

— Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914)

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Strings might get attached to school funding

City Hall to consider contract with school district for multi-million donation

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Local officials want to take the guesswork out of how much money cash-strapped City Hall will give to the cash-strapped school district in coming years.

For several years, City Hall has given local schools \$3 million annually in exchange for the use of its facilities. Recently, it's also gotten into the habit of handing over millions of dollars in last-minute, "one-time" donations.

As budget woes worsen and school supporters continue to rely on City Hall for funding, officials are looking for a permanent fix. The City Council is expected to consider tonight whether a contractual arrangement should be made between the two entities.

Though the parameters have not been set, City Councilman Herb Katz said he wants to contractually tie City Hall's funding to the amount of money given to schools. In the long term, Katz said he was interested in having City Hall buy or lease land from the schools.

"The school district is tired of coming to us every year and groveling for money," Katz said. "We are in a position where we don't have much money ... and still they think we can give them more money, and that's a problem."

A four- or five-year contract that sets up a formula and designates a certain portion of City Hall money for schools may be the answer, Katz said. He added that a contract may diffuse some of the political pressure put on local politicians to fund the schools when the state falls short.

"If our revenue decreases, how the hell can we give them the same amount? That's why we're talking," Katz said.

John Deasy, superintendent of the Santa Monica-

See CONTRIBUTIONS, page 5

Shipping 'em out



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Dozens of people line up at the U.S. Post Office at Fifth Street and Arizona Avenue on Monday to send holiday gifts across the country. It was the busiest day of the year at the post office and also the last day to ensure the packages will arrive before Christmas Day.

Report from living wage commission to be reviewed

By Daily Press staff

COUNCIL CHAMBERS — The City Council is expected tonight to mull campaign reforms pushed by proponents of the living wage measure, which was narrowly defeated last year.

Living wage backers, smarting from what they say were unfair campaign tactics, are proposing a host of measures to stop the strategies. But city staffers suggest a host of problems may await the reforms.

The living wage would have increased pay and benefits for workers in non-union businesses near the beach that gross more than \$5 million annually. In the report, backers accuse opponents of deliberately misleading voters, prompting a narrow defeat — the margin was 1.7 percent — at the polls.

Another living wage proposal is expected on next year's ballot. A "living wage commission" comprised of

See LIVING WAGE, page 6

City Hall to accept cash for parks, beaches

(Editor's note: This is part of an ongoing series that tracks expenditures on the Santa Monica City Council consent agenda. Consent agenda items are routinely passed with little or no discussion, though many of the items have been discussed in the past).

By Daily Press staff

COUNCIL CHAMBERS — The City Council isn't scheduled to spend any money tonight, but it does plan to accept more than a half million dollars from the state to keep the

beach clean and improve the parks.

City Council members are expected to take steps that would allow City Hall to accept the money — \$387,000 under Proposition 40 and \$238,292 under the Roberti-Z'berg-Harris Block Grant Program. Once the contracts are executed, City Hall will be able to submit individual project applications to the state department of parks and recreation for approval.

The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Bond Act of 2002, also known as Prop. 40, was developed

to respond to the state's recreational and open space needs as the population continues to increase and urban areas expand. It's intended to revive state stewardship of natural resources by investing in neighborhood and state parks, clean water protection and coastal beaches and scenic areas.

The other program is designed to meet the need for safe, open, and accessible park and recreational facilities. City Hall's use of the funds will be considered for capital improvement programs beginning in 2004.

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Features



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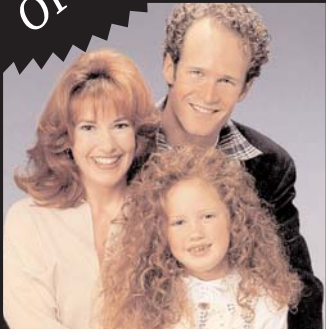
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The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

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



HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2003

You have high energy this year, especially when the issue is creative or financial. You will tend to be more amorous than you have been in years, which will delight your partner, whether single or attached. If you are an artist, you will most likely increase your productivity. You will find that many are drawn to you and perhaps to a special gift you might have. You will bloom professionally and see the results in a way that makes a difference to you, be it a pay raise or a promotion. If you are single, you might go through several relationships before you meet the person who feels right. Be careful if attached, you might be so amorous that a new addition could be a possibility. LIBRA is always a pal.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ With Mars moving into your sign, you become a powerhouse. But be careful, in the next few weeks, you could be a bit too blunt or difficult for those around you. Be willing to pitch in where others seem to slow down. Tonight: Work only as late as you need to, then play.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Use caution with your temper. What you want to learn to do is to express your feelings in a way that others can hear and respond to. Don't let your temper build, because it is not only bad for you but also for others. Tonight: Think carefully before taking on another project.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You will have a strong drive to make what you want happen in the near future. Others might be stunned by your one-sidedness and your need to head for what you want and come out a winner. Tonight: Bring extra work home.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ You're extremely verbal and direct about what you want. A boss, as well, could be unusually demanding and difficult in the next few weeks. Choose carefully the time to present your view, especially if you want it accepted! Tonight: Get together with a pal.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Spending could definitely get out of whack. Try something different. Do your research, and you'll come up with unusually special ideas. Know that anything is possible with your newfound creativity. Tonight: Finish up some spending.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ You have your winning ways, which you are going to need in order to deal with a fiery associate who often has you tossing your hands in the air. Use your creativity and charm, if necessary, to make your point. Lie back more. Tonight: What you want.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Try not to take everyone too seriously. You could find that someone close to you becomes most contentious in the next few weeks. Kick back and play it cool. You have the support of your family and loved ones. Just don't trigger. Tonight: Nap and then out.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Groups and meetings prove to be most successful. Others seem to be able to get behind what you feel and want. Together, though you certainly are the cheerleader, you make what you want happen. Tonight: Make it early.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ A boss sits back and carefully thinks about what he or she expects. You will come up with ways of making more money with active brainstorming. You might be unusually active. Don't start a problem with this high energy. Tonight: Join your friends.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Use your softer nature, and you'll get what you want. What you see as others respond could be quite rewarding. Someone at a distance might be highly responsive. Look to changes on the home front. Perhaps you might want to initiate them. Tonight: A must appearance.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You might want to think before you leap on someone else's idea. You might ask questions, but the tone in which you ask them could make a big difference. In the next few weeks, you could come off a lot harsher than you realize. Tonight: Love the one you're with.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Others seek you out, but you might not be sure of what you want or where you're heading. Investigate and ask questions while others seem so open. Avoid getting involved in a situation that might cause you to spend your money. Tonight: As you like it.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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LOCAL



Culinary class



Students from Grant Elementary School watch as Ismael Esparza, a cook at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, demonstrates one aspect of meal preparation for hospital patients, visitors and staff. More than 40 students from Grant Elementary toured the hospital's food services, radiology and maternity departments on Dec. 11 before presenting the hospital with handmade tray favors to give to patients over the holidays.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Samohi students awarded

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica High School sophomore Desiree Flores recently won the Samohi Library Reading Award for excellence in reading.

The award is presented once a semester to a prolific reader who demonstrates a good understanding and appreciation of works read. Flores has read every book in the school's romance section, many young adult selections, approximately 30 books from the fiction section, and countless works from the nonfiction section in the areas of psychology and poetry.

Highway patrol gets into giving spirit

By Daily Press staff

A number of charitable events will be taking place in Santa Monica Place leading to the Christmas holiday.

CHIPS for Kids Toy Drive: Bring new, unwrapped toys to center court of Santa Monica Place through Dec. 20 and get your photo taken riding a Highway Patrol motorcycle. Your gifts will be distributed to disadvantaged or hospitalized children in the Los Angeles area. The drive is sponsored by the California Highway Patrol.

Food needed for holiday

By Daily Press staff

Westside Food Bank Holiday Food Drive is asking people to donate non-perishable food items in center court of Santa Monica Place through Dec. 24. The drive is sponsored by the Big Blue Bus and Westside Food Bank. And free gift wrapping is available on the Promenade.

surf report

Look for the current WNW wind and ground swell mix to be on the way down today, although you can expect plenty of fun surf at the better exposed breaks. Good winter spots see the best sets, especially in the morning.

OUTLOOK: Expect the trend of fading surf to continue into Wednesday morning. By the afternoon a new NW swell will be building with overhead surf at the better exposed spots. This swell will peak overnight into early Thursday.

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

Today the water is:

58°

Sunrise: 6:59 a.m.
Sunset: 4:53 a.m.

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	4:26	3.1	6:42	0.1	1:15	3.4	(10:46)	5.2
SUNDAY	5:40	3.3	7:32	0.3	2:17	3.6	(11:37)	4.8
MONDAY	7:31	3.2	8:23	0.6	3:07	3.9	12:47	4.3
TUESDAY	9:21	2.8	9:14	0.8	3:45	4.2	2:21	3.8
WEDNESDAY	10:40	2.0	10:04	1.1	4:20	4.7	4:00	3.6
THURSDAY	11:39	1.1	10:52	1.3	4:54	5.3	5:24	3.6
FRIDAY	(12:30)	0.1	11:39	1.6	5:30	5.9	6:35	3.8

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The Q Line

U.S. officials and its allies celebrated the capture of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein over the weekend. Hussein was discovered in a cramped hole near one of his sumptuous palaces, a humiliating fate for one of history's most brutal dictators.

During the arrest of Saddam, U.S. troops discovered "descriptive written material of significant value," a U.S. commander told The Associated Press. He declined to say whether the material related to the anti-coalition resistance.

Saddam, who waged and lost two wars

against the U.S. and its allies, could face trial before a new Iraqi tribunal for war crimes. Many feel his capture could have a detrimental effect on the insurgents resisting occupation.

Will the coalition's capture of Saddam Hussein turn the tide in the war with Iraq?

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response before Thursday at 5 p.m. We'll print them in Friday's paper. Please limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

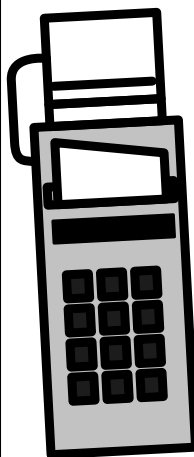
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OPINION

LETTERS

Boycott smoking on screen

Editor:

As a non-smoker I found my friend Bill Bauer's column on smokers being victimized very interesting (SMDP, Dec. 12, page 6). Law school taught us the axiom "Your rights end where my nose begins." Smoking's consequences are not confined to the smoker. A smoker's right to do himself harm is absolute in isolation; that right is limited by harm to others when not in isolation. Thus, where harm is undisputed, society's rights can interfere with the freedom of the individual.

The harm caused by tobacco has been known for nearly 400 years as evidenced by King James I of England in his 1604 counterblast to tobacco: "A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs ..."

Some time ago a television station in Sydney, Australia, aired an interview showing Russell Crowe smoking a cigarette on its "60 Minutes." The program also showed the "Gladiator" star holding a pack of Marlboros. The Australian Broadcasting Authority ruled that the station breached the Tobacco Advertisement Prohibition Act. An Australian court upheld this ruling.

Hopefully, some day, some U.S. president will use the bully pulpit to preach to our citizens the dangers of smoking and criticize the television and movie industry for continuing to show smoking in their shows and films. The president should even ask the nation to boycott such shows and films.

Norman G. Axe
Santa Monica

School tax a risk and a waste

Editor:

The Santa Monica Daily Press asked last week in its Q-Line question, "Is it fair that 15 percent of cash donations be distributed throughout all schools in the district?" I ask whether it is fair that the SMDP asks the question in such a biased and inaccurate way?

What if I rephrased your question and asked "Is it fair that I cannot donate money to my children's school, without the district taking a meaningful portion of my donation away from my children's school?" My question would be just as biased as yours. Your question was also inaccurate since the current proposal includes taxing non-cash donations the same way as cash.

This is a divisive issue for what had been a united community. We all recognize the benefits of our outstanding Santa Monica schools. We also know that California's budget crisis threatens funding for public education. As a parent of two Franklin

Elementary students, I know I speak for many who understand just how fortunate we are to have such a generous and enlightened community. We truly benefit from an environment in which a strong partnership exists between the district, teachers, the school PTAs, the Santa Monica City Council, the local merchants, and so many others who work so hard to do whatever they can to make up some of the gap of the state funding levels. Understand that not just money is donated, but also computers, books, food for carnivals, gifts for auctions, as well as hundreds of volunteer hours in our schools.

Superintendent John Deasy knows we have a serious funding crisis. Now is the worst time to jeopardize any of the generosity our schools receive today. We need everyone who supports our schools to be as enthusiastic as possible about their gifts. The better they feel, the more donations our schools will receive. Let's not kid ourselves. If we do not allow people to choose which groups receive their donations, we will lose donations. How can Deasy just rationalize away this risk? Why even take the risk?

The sad part is that controversy and debate has already hurt our schools. Instead of spending time arguing about this issue, people on both sides would have made a greater impact focusing that same energy on raising even more support for our schools' growing needs. What a waste.

David Marks
Santa Monica

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Spam e-mail and campaign finance law has nothing to do with First Amendment rights



Todd Flora

So called First Amendment advocates cried foul last week over two major policy decisions. First, the Supreme Court upheld nearly all provisions of the federal McCain-Feingold campaign finance law, angering those that feel money in politics should equal free speech. Second, some complained that free speech was in danger when a law was enacted that put new regulations on those who fan unwanted junk e-mail all over cyberspace.

Those who claim either action threatens the free speech provisions of the First Amendment are dead wrong.

The development of unwanted Internet "spam" has threatened the vitality of Internet service providers, e-commerce and office productivity. Modest e-mail users are turned off by an e-mail inbox filled with offers of sketchy mortgages, cheap Viagra or breast enhancements, and pornography. These users don't stay online long, and therefore don't take full advantage of other aspects of communication and e-commerce that move the economy. What's more, economists esti-

mate that the collective workforce incurs major losses in productivity as they dance the delete button through relevant and unwanted e-mail.

But here's the kicker in terms of the First Amendment: Spammers don't let you communicate with THEM. At best, a link that seemingly allows users to unsubscribe merely alerts spammers that an e-mail address is active, and that address is then rented out or shared with other spammers. At worst, there is no inability to "speak back" to your offending spammer, as they often use dummy e-mail addresses with no response function. Where is the consumer allowed free speech in that transaction? Case closed.

In the political world, the airwaves are polluted by endless ads that ask "Congressmember so-and-so to stand up for seniors," or "for crime victims," or "the environment" — you name it — without actually asking viewers to vote for or against the representative in question or their opponent. These "issue ads" are thinly veiled campaign ads paid for by political parties, and despite the annoyance, will still be allowed under McCain-Feingold reform provisions. But you would never hear that from campaign finance opponents. They balk at the

very fair and necessary provision that states 30 and 60 days before a primary and general election, respectively, that only ads paid for by direct donations to a candidate's campaign would be permissible. They say such a practice infringes on free speech. I say — and the Supreme Court has ruled — that the public has a right to protect against lopsided distortions to democracy.

Reform foes who like to point to the famous 1976 "Buckley vs. Valeo" Supreme Court decision which barred spending caps in political campaigns selectively forget another important provision in the landmark decision. The Court also used "Buckley vs. Valeo" to affirm the public's disgust with unlimited donations by single individuals to a particular candidate. The decision held that 1974 reforms limiting donations to \$1,000 per election to federal candidates was justified given the clear and present danger to democracy presented by unregulated contributions from wealthy individuals, interests, and corporations. So, while no overall spending limit was approved for campaigns, contribution totals themselves were limited.

We have an equally clear and present danger to democracy in the unregulated

"soft money" that the political parties use to fund these issue ads. Clearly the values affirmed by the Supreme Court can be applied to the proliferation of issue ads without destroying candidates, political parties, or the First Amendment.

I applaud those that wish to defend free speech. But my advice to you would be to focus on John Ashcroft, not toward responsible public policies that have curbed an abuse of speech. There is a matter of degree here. Those that criticize McCain-Feingold's limit on issue-ads make an earnest policy argument, while seedy spam artists have no leg to stand on. At the end of the day, both are wrong, however, and should not hide behind a false banner of free speech in disparaging those that fight to reform our marketplace or political campaigns.

(Todd Flora is a six-year resident of Santa Monica. He is a government relations representative with a statewide children's network, and the former state director of the California Clean Money Campaign. To comment or reach Todd, e-mail him at reformadvocate@yahoo.com).

LOCAL



January hearing to examine community priorities

CONTRIBUTIONS, from page 1

Malibu Unified School District, said the public expects a well-funded school system.

"We're open to all discussions with the City Council in trying to make ongoing support for the public schools dependable and regular, and increase," he said. "I understand that the city is going through difficult times, but I also understand that the city's actual budget grows every year as well, so the school (district's) ability to share in that, as the residents expect, is good."

Deasy said he personally supports the idea that schools should shoulder some of the burden if City Hall collects less revenue in coming years. The school board hasn't taken any position on the matter.

"I believe strongly in the notion that the schools share in the gain but also share in the pain," he said. "We'd never want to put the city in a situation where it had an obligation to suffer, so to speak, and we didn't."

A more permanent fix to the problem may lie in a property arrangement between the two groups, some council members said.

Katz is expected to join City Councilman Mike Feinstein in a request that City Hall staffers explore buying or leasing properties from the school. The idea, Katz said, would be to use City Hall funds to support schools while also buying something that may be good for the larger community.

"We can get parks out of it. We can get open space. We can get maybe some parking, etcetera — and maybe even some housing," Katz said.

For example, Katz said City Hall could lease the Santa Monica High School soccer field and build a subterranean parking lot underneath it, or buy the Madison Campus, which is rented by Santa Monica College, and build an underground parking lot and some surface-level open space there.

"It's illegal to just give them money,

"This could be an overall, 30-year plan."

— HERB KATZ
City Councilman

because they're an elected body with a whole budget of their own," Katz said. "So what we're trying to do is give them money and get something for it, and do something for the community all in one shot ... I think we need to take the three entities, get out of the box and start looking at a longer term plan for the city."

"This could be an overall, 30-year plan."

While Deasy said he was looking forward to hearing council members discuss the concept, he cautioned that there are numerous restrictions governing how the

district can use money generated by selling or leasing property.

City Hall's substantial donations to local schools is uncommon in other cities, according to a document prepared by City Manager Susan McCarthy and Steve Stark, City Hall's finance director, who warned that coming months may bear more bad news for the economy.

The bottom line, according to the document, is that expenditures are expected to be cut in order for them to meet revenues. More information will be provided by City Hall staffers in January.

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City Council to discuss commission suggestions

LIVING WAGE, from page 1

academics, clergy and other community members in June recommended a series of changes.

Reforms pushed by living wage backers may be a ticklish issue for the council. Its political control rests in the hands of the Santa Monica Renters Rights (SMRR), which backs a living wage. But legal and ethical issues raised by city staff may blunt the push for reforms sparked by an electoral defeat more stinging due its closeness.

One recommendation would make it more clear who's building political war chests and how the money from them is

spent. Another would create a new commission just to review election complaints.

City Hall staffers said several of the suggestions are already in place in Santa Monica. Others may be unrealistic because they cost too much in either time or money. Still others have legal complications, according to documents prepared by City Attorney Marsha Moutrie and City Clerk Maria Stewart.

"Generally speaking, California cities may enact contribution and disclosure laws in addition to those required by state law ... Nonetheless, constitutional restrictions, which protect rights of speech, privacy, association and petition, limit cities'

ability to legislate in the area of campaign reform," a note written by Moutrie and Stewart says.

The commission recommended that groups paying for advertisements be required to disclose their top five sources of revenue on each ad. A similar change would require that the leading five contributors that paid to qualify a measure be identified on ballot pamphlets.

City Hall staffers said enforcing that requirement may be difficult because often groups are formed after a measure qualifies. They go on to say that the ballot format requirement, among other suggestions, would necessitate statewide action.

Identifying all five of a political committee's top contributors may not be feasible, according to Moutrie and Stewart.

"Because of the printing and mailing deadlines for the ballot pamphlet, any information printed regarding the contributors would become 'stale' by the time voters received the information pamphlet ... Also, adopting the proposal would create an incentive for forming committees after the printing deadline," they wrote.

And then there are legal concerns. According to Moutrie and Stewart, printing contributors on a ballot or ad may violate state law. What's more, there may be constitutional issues surrounding the right to anonymous political speech, even if included in advertising.

Backers of the living wage think the City Clerk should make available campaign finance information about "slate mailer" organizations. Slate mailers, which are sent to residents before an election, can be misleading because they often group several candidates and measures together, leading to the false assumption that the candidates support all the issues.

A last-minute blitz of misleading slate mailers descended on Santa Monica before the last living wage election.

The living wage commission asked the City Clerk to post online within 24 hours all campaign statements — including late payments to slate mailer organizations. City Hall staffers said they already post statements as soon as possible.

In the area of campaign finance reporting, the commission recommended requiring slate mailer organizations to file statements of organization with the City Clerk two weeks prior to an election. But Moutrie

Backers of the living wage think the City Clerk should make available campaign finance information about "slate mailer" organizations.

and Stewart said that may cause legal problems because it "could be perceived to hinder the exercise of constitutional rights to participate in the electoral process."

Another suggestion from the commission was to require all groups that spend \$1,000 or more to report to the City Clerk. Moutrie and Stewart said City Hall's reporting levels could be made more strict than the state's, but noted possible additional enforcement costs.

The living wage backers also encouraged the state and City Hall to include an explanation of slate mailers in ballot pamphlets. But Moutrie and Stewart said City Hall already offers a free pamphlet explaining slate mailers, and added that there are two additional concerns surrounding the suggestion.

Moutrie and Stewart warned that while slate mailers were a factor in the last election, abuses may surface from any quarter. "Thus, it is unclear why there should be a particular warning about slate mailers that are, like other election campaign materials, protected speech," they wrote.

Finally, the commission recommended creating a "Santa Monica Ethics Commission" to review election complaints, provide training to candidates and treasurers, and monitor other issues. Moutrie and Stewart said that issue is a matter of policy for the council, but added that other agencies and avenues exist for reaching the same goals.

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San Bernardino officials believe federal delays helped fuel fires

By The Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO — Efforts to fight the October wildfires were hampered because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for years delayed requests for controlled burns, city officials said.

The city received federal funding in 1995 to burn areas of heavy brush along the border with the San Bernardino National Forest. It took the Fish and Wildlife Service, however, seven years to conclude the burns would not jeopardize rare plants and animals. The decision came a few months before the Old fire destroyed hundreds of homes.

Fish and Wildlife officials accepted some responsibility, saying some former workers may have acted slowly because they opposed controlled burns. Federal officials also said the city submitted incomplete applications.

"I'll certainly shoulder some blame for

lack of responsiveness," said Jim Bartel, a field supervisor in Carlsbad. "But we're not alone."

If the prescribed burns had been performed, it possibly could have prevented the fire from jumping off the hill and into residential neighborhoods, said fire Capt. Paul Drasil.

City firefighters in 1995 had \$315,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and \$105,000 from the city's budget to pay for the burns.

The land was home to animals such as the coastal California gnatcatcher and plants such as Nevin's barberry, making the burn subject to Fish and Wildlife Service approval. Negotiations dragged on for seven years.

Firefighters finally were prepared to move forward with the controlled burns when the Old fire started and charred the areas where the burns were to be set.

STATE



American woman appealing 5-year drug sentence in Mexico

BY MICHELLE MORGANTE

Associated Press Writer

TIJUANA, Mexico — No one disputes that Dawn Wilson was carrying prescription drugs in her bag. No one disputes she had no prescription with her as she walked along a road just after day-break in the port city of Ensenada.

But how she ended up sentenced to a federal prison for five years, and fined thousands of dollars, is being disputed by friends and attorneys of the American woman who moved to the waters of Baja California years ago to live a sailor's life.

"This is an unbelievable story," says Terry Kennedy, her longtime partner. "This could have happened to anybody."

Her case, though not unprecedented, is building a following of defenders among the Pacific boating community and, coming amid an Iowa woman's claim that she was raped by a Tijuana policeman, raising concerns about security in the border region south of San Diego.

In April, Wilson, 48, was heading south to the tiny port of Puerto Escondido, where she and Kennedy live aboard their 45-foot Trimaran. As a boater who spends long periods at sea, she was carrying a three-month supply of a Mexican version of Dilantin, a drug prescribed to her for seizures resulting from a horse-riding accident she had during her childhood in San Diego County.

On the highway in Ensenada, a truck in front of her dropped a piece of furniture. She swerved and hit a concrete barrier. Her Toyota was towed to a shop and Wilson spent the night with a friend.

The next morning, on April 12, Wilson, an avid jogger and walker, decided to make a 45-minute walk to the mechanic's shop, according to Kennedy and a statement from Wilson.

Wilson said a Jeep filled with Mexican police officers passed her and one of them

whistled at her. According to police, Wilson was hitchhiking when they decided to question her. Officers found the anti-seizure pills — along with diabetic pills she was delivering to a boating friend — in her bag. Given the large supply and the fact she had no prescription, Wilson was arrested and jailed.

For several days, Kennedy waited for her down the coast, assuming her truck had broken down. Growing worried, he checked with her bank and found that her accounts were nearly cleared out.

"I said, this is not Dawn. She doesn't buy things with (the bank card)," he said.

Documents from Washington Mutual show a series of withdrawals were made in Tijuana and Ensenada totaling nearly \$4,000 over three days after Wilson was jailed and all of her belongings confiscated.

No criminal complaint has been filed regarding the withdrawals, though the bank refunded the loss. Police and prosecutors in Ensenada did not answer telephone calls to their offices Saturday seeking comment.

Kennedy eventually found Wilson at the federal penitentiary. Consulting with a local friend, he hired an Ensenada attorney, Rogelio Iniguez, to defend her.

Iniguez did not return telephone messages left at his office Friday. A call to the office Saturday connected to a message saying the number was temporarily suspended.

According to Fernando Benitez, a Tijuana attorney who took over Wilson's case, Iniguez failed to present any proof of Wilson's medical condition or evidence to explain why she carried such a large quantity of medicine. No evidence of the bank withdrawals was presented.

"Basically, Dawn lost her case because she had a highly incompetent attorney. A lot could have been done for her and it wasn't. Now the case is closed," Benitez said.

Under Mexican law, Benitez cannot introduce new evidence at this point. Instead, he and his colleagues are chal-

lenging the evidence used to convict her.

During an appellate hearing on Dec. 9, Benitez argued that the federal prosecutor's chemist failed to follow the law in declaring the pills a controlled substance: A report submitted to the court says the chemist visually matched the medicine bought in Tijuana to information in an American Physician's Desk Reference.

"The chemist was bound by law to at least try to practice one or two or several of the experiments readily available ... to determine the nature of the pills," Benitez said.

A ruling by the appellate magistrate is expected by Dec. 19. Though he is prepared to challenge any decision upholding the sentence, Benitez is optimistic.

"Ultimately she will be released, mind you. And I'm willing to, as Americans put it, I'm willing to bet the farm on that," he said. "The only question is will the magistrate release her, or will we have to go all the way to (the federal appellate panel in) Mexicali."

"I honestly hope we don't, because I'd really like to bring her home for

Christmas."

Kennedy, who serves as a dive guide to boaters, has rallied the sailing community to Wilson's defense, urging them to contact lawmakers and judicial authorities. Her case has been profiled in sailing magazines and on Web sites and television.

"There is a rising tide of indignation building among the many American and Canadian sailors cruising Mexico," sailors Gwen Hamlin and Don Wilson, no relation, wrote in an e-mail appealing to the U.S. State Department for help. "A travesty such as this can only make each and every one of us feel vulnerable."

Kennedy said U.S. and Mexican authorities have told him they are powerless to interfere in the judicial system. Many of them point to the fact Wilson was in violation of Mexican drug laws.

Benitez is careful to stress he does not see the case as a miscarriage of justice, but rather a result of Wilson's misunderstanding of the law, and a weak defense lawyer. Nor is her case the first of its kind.

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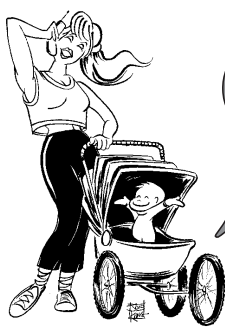
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Christina S. Porter
Senior Associate



Santa Monica

A weekly look at events and programs for Santa Mo

Get over the need to feel guilt of being a parent

Guest Commentary

By Margaret Altman

Parents are often forced to make difficult choices very early in their infant's life. They may have to depend upon child care when the baby is 3 or 4 months old. They may decide to follow a program for sleep that entails letting the baby cry for periods of time. They may choose an irresponsible baby-sitter, or the wrong formula.

Parents worry a lot about everything that they do and they are anxious that something could impact the baby for years to come.

Guilt is painful neither parents nor infant benefit one bit from. Fortunately, everyone benefits from research which shows that parents can and do effectively repair most mistakes. When they do this in a positive way they teach the child a great deal about recovering

from stressful situations.

The important parenting issue of providing timely emotional repair is sweeping the scientific domain in terms of the brain's ability to recover function and the child's ability to learn from experiences that are not always pleasant or easy.

The answers to the following questions will demonstrate what we mean.

Question: My baby doesn't love me anymore. What did I do wrong?

Jen wrung her hands and tears flowed down her cheeks. "My baby is mad at me and it's my fault for putting him into daycare. But I have to work! When I pick him up after work he won't cuddle with me even though I hold him closely for a long time."

Response: Jen is not alone in feeling frustrated by this common situation. Infants at 3 months old are being cared for while parents work and many moms and dads worry about how their baby will adjust. Most babies who are being cared for by warm and responsible people do well in these situations, especially when the parents' expectations and attitudes

help the infant to adjust. The key words here are expectations and attitudes, and these apply to the baby as well as the parent. Parents should expect that their child will have some initial adjustment problems and not become overwhelmed with guilt and anxiety. A warm and calm and consistent routine is good for all young children both before and after daycare. Make the transition into and from daycare smooth and unrushed even though you may have things to do so that the child does not become anxious. With young infants it is important not to overwhelm them with hugs, kisses and demands for affection when you get them back into your arms. Parents should expect kids to be tired or irritable after a long day away from home and they need time to make their own transition. Your baby benefits from your calm and consistent approach to their needs. This kind of parenting brings the child back into the balanced comfort zone which, as we know, is healthy for the mind and the body.

Question: When I pick up my 4-year-old from daycare I try to make up for the hours he spent without me. He seems angry at me and doesn't like anything I do. I'm worn out. What am I doing wrong?

Response: When we asked Mary what she does to "make up" for the hours, she said that she takes her child to the park and then to a toddler karate class or a gymnastics group for young children. Many parents seek to make up for lost time by filling the available hours with intense activities. In this way they believe that they are doing things with their children. In fact, many youngsters prefer to have less stimulating and more face-to-face time with their parents after daycare. They enjoy telling stories about their day in school, or just sitting and being read to. Day care is often very stimulating for youngsters and they do need time to decompress with parents in a warm and comfortable environment.

Mom and dad provide the balanced kind of stimulation that brings the child back into his comfort zone. This is the kind of repair work that your child needs.

Question: We tried our best to protect our child but it wasn't enough. Shouldn't we work harder to make sure this doesn't ever happen again?

Response: Sam and Pat found out recently that their 5-year-old son had been picked on and bullied by an older child in the baby-sitter's home. This older child turned out to be the baby-sitter's nephew. The parents immediately took their child out of the situation and decided that mom would quit her job so that she could watch him all of the time. And she does keep her eye on him day and night. The child is now having sleep problems and doesn't want to play with his friends.

Parents who innocently expose their children to harm often become overwhelmed with guilt and anxiety. These emotions can lead to over-protecting the child in order to prevent future harm. The result is often that the child becomes anxious, avoids new situations and sometimes feels that he is the cause of the problem.

Depending upon the age of the child and the extent of the harm, it is important to help the youngster learn how to tell someone when he is being abused even if the abuse is fairly mild. Any child who has language skills can begin to learn that if someone hurts him he is to immediately seek help. The next lesson for parents to teach young children is that after a situation like this occurs, you take the lesson you have learned and move ahead. Children need to explore and to feel confident about their social skills. Over-protection may lead to stifling their enthusiasm and their sense of accomplishment in the social environment. Repairing the harm done in this kind of situation means teaching new skills and supporting the child's positive attitude towards life.

(Margaret Altman L.C.S.W. is the author of *Developing Your Child's Emotional Intelligence* (April 2003). She is in private practice with Alexander Korchmarev M.D. in Sherman Oaks, specializing in Child and Adolescent Development and Biobehavioral Medicine).

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Special Events

VISIT WITH SANTA CLAUS! You can find Santa at various places around town including: Santa Monica Place, See Santa daily from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. thru Christmas Eve. Santa breaks for lunch from noon to 12:30 p.m. and breaks to feed the reindeer from 5 - 6 p.m. Photos available.

SUNDAY FARMER'S MARKET - Market hours are 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Santa will be there Dec. 14 and 21. Market located on the corner of Main Street and Ocean Park Blvd.

SANTA MONICA PIER - Visit with Santa on Saturday & Sunday, December 20 & 21 from noon - 4 p.m.

CHANUKAH LIGHT INSTALLATION - December 19th - 26th the Menorah will be lit on the Promenade every night to celebrate the festival of light. Dancing and live music on Saturday, December 20.

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY FILMS AND CARTOONS - Tuesdays in December on the Third Street Promenade near Wilshire. Just after dark. Visit www.downtownsm.com on the web for more info.

RISE THE NORTH POLE EXPRESS! - 6:00 p.m., Thursday, 18 - 21. Have some family holiday fun on a vintage train ride at the Fillmore & Western Railway Company. The train departs at 6:00 p.m. and returns at 7:15. There are storytellers, carolers, cookies and chocolate milk and even Santa Claus. Kids wear your pajamas and bring your teddy bears, imagination and smiles. Dress warmly! Reservations required. Fillmore & Western Railway is located at 351 Santa Clara Avenue in the historic city of Fillmore off of Highway 126 in the Heritage Valley (about 50-55 miles from Santa Monica). Tickets are available by calling 800-773-8724. For more information and directions log onto www.fwry.com.

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms
Movies for Moms sponsored by:



"Something's Gotta Give" showing December 16 11:00 a.m., Loews Broadway, 1441 3rd St. Promenade - for Moms and babies newborn - 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. This week's film, directed by Nancy Meyers, stars Jack Nicholson as Harry, a New York music mogul with a libido much younger than his years. During a romantic rendezvous with his newest girlfriend Marin at her mother's Hamptons beach house, Harry develops chest pains and winds up being nursed by Marin's mother Erica (Diane Keaton). Erica is right for him in every way - but habits die hard. When he is reluctant to pursue Erica, a young doctor (Keanu Reeves) becomes smitten with her and Harry fights to win her back. Rated "PG-13" for sexual content, brief nudity and strong language.

Storytelling

Main Library - Toddler Story Time at 10:00 and 10:30 a.m., at Reed Park, 7th and Wilshire - 2 year olds with parents, 310-458-8600.

Fairview Branch - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443. Twilight Story Time - 7pm - an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.

Montana Avenue Branch - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081. Family Story Time - 7:00 p.m., all ages.

Ocean Park Branch - 2601 Main St - 310-392-3804. Toddler Story Time - 10 and 10:30 a.m. New series begins Nov. 11 - Dec. 16. Registration required. Music, rhymes and stories for 24 - 36 months with adult.

HANUKKAH AT THE GROVE - Thursday, Dec. 18, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Celebrate Hanukkah with music and stories, featuring storytellers David Steinberg, and entertainers Shep Rosenman and Ditta Zakai. Presented by the Jewish Community Library of Los Angeles. For all ages. Free. The Grove is located at 169 Grove Drive, LA. 323-761-6648.

CHRISTMAS CONCERTS at the new Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown LA. SING WE CHRISTMAS - Thursday, Dec. 18, 8 p.m. A holiday concert featuring Chanticleer for ages 5 and older. Tickets are \$20 - \$65.

A MERRY MANCINI CHRISTMAS

Tuesday, Dec. 23, 8 p.m. The Henry Mancini Orchestra and the Angel City Chorale present a premiere performance of "Santa's Last Ride," an original story set to music spotlighting young performers of the Debbie Allen Dance Academy. The evening also includes a sing-a-long of favorite holiday tunes. For ages 4 and older. Tickets are \$20 - \$65. The Walt Disney Concert Hall is located at 111 Grand Avenue in downtown LA. Call 323-850-2000 or visit www.laphil.com on the web for more info.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381, Prenatal yoga - 7:00-8:15pm, \$13, Mommy and Me (ages 0-5) - 10-11am, \$9

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

Mommy Care - 11870 Santa Monica Blvd, at the Dance Factory, West LA, 310-394-6711. Pregnancy Exercise - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise - 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Santa Monica YMCA - 1332 6th St., 310-393-2721

Pre-natal Water Work - 10 - 11 a.m. and 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Free for members. Non-members pay \$15.00 regular YMCA day fee or buy a ten-class card for \$70 (\$7 per class)

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 310-826-5774, no pre-reg required, \$10 per class, first class free. Moms/babies 4-8 months, 1:00 - 2:30pm

Other

Magiopolis - 8 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$20 Call 310-451-2241 for info. **Children's Holiday Films and Cartoons** - Tuesdays in December on the Third Street Promenade near Wilshire. Just after dark. Visit www.downtownsm.com for more info.

December 16 Nature Walk (Children's Nature Institute) - Temescal Canyon (Pacific Palisades) - 10:30am. Reservations required - 310-998-1151 or www.childrensnatureinstitute.org

WEDNESDAY

Storytelling

Ocean Park Branch - 2601 Main St - 310-392-3804. Twilight Story Time - 7:00 to 7:30pm - for parents with 3-5 year olds.

Montana Avenue Branch - 1704 Montana Avenue - 310-829-7081. Lap Time - 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. - New series begins Nov. 12-Dec. 17 for 0-24 months old, no registration required.

Toddler Story Time - 11:15 a.m. - New series begins Nov. 12-Dec. 17 for 2 year olds with adult, no registration required.

Fairview Branch - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443. Preschool Story Time - 10:30 a.m., New series begins Nov. 5-Dec. 18, a six-week series for 3-5 year olds.

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

Borders, Westwood - 11am - 310-475-3444.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381, Prenatal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., \$13, Mommy and Me (ages 0-5) - 10-11am, \$9, Mommy and Me (infants) 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Yoga Works - 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m., \$15.

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190.

Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 5:30 - 6:45 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station - 826-5774, no pre-reg required, \$10 per class, first class free. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

Storytelling

Main Library - Toddler Story Time - 10:00 a.m. - Reed Park, for 2 year olds. Preschool Story Time - 10:30am - Reed Park. Stories for ages 3-5. 310-458-8922 for info.

Montana Avenue Branch - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081. Toddler Story Time - 10:15 a.m. - Nov. 13 to Dec. 18, for 2 year olds with adult, no registration required.

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

Fairview Branch - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443. Toddler Story Time -

10:30 a.m., New series begins Nov. 6 - Dec. 18. A six-week series for children 24-36 months.

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

Ocean Park Branch - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804. Lap Time - 9:20 and 10:20 a.m. - Oct. 23 - Dec. 4 (no class Nov. 27) - for babies 0-24 months old.

Yoga & Exercise

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Breastfeeding Group

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Other

Ride the North Pole Express at the Fillmore & Western Railway Company! See Special Events section for details.

Nature Walk (Children's Nature Institute) - Topanga State Park (Topanga) - 10:00am. Reservations required - 310-998-1151 or www.childrensnatureinstitute.org

HANUKKAH AT THE GROVE - Thursday, Dec. 18, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

See Special Events section for more info. **SING WE CHRISTMAS** - Thursday, Dec. 18, 8 p.m., Walt Disney Concert Hall. See Special Events section for more info.

FRIDAY

Breastfeeding Group

La Leche League (toddler group), Mar Vista, 390-2529

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works - 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m., \$15.

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381; Prenatal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., \$13 Mommy and Me (ages 0-5) 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.; Mommy and Me (infants) 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., \$9

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190.

Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Other

Ride the North Pole Express at the Fillmore & Western Railway Company! See Special Events section for details.

Magiopolis - 8 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$20 Call 310-451-2241 for info.

Cinderella - thru Dec. 19, 6:00 p.m. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th St., 394-9779. www.santamonicalayhouse.com. The single most requested of all of the Santa Monica Playhouse Family Theatre musicals, Cinderella is a delightfully romantic, original classic. \$12.00 for adults, \$10.00 for ages 12 and under.

SATURDAY

Storytelling

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Prom-enade - Kid's Story Time - 10am - 310-260-9110 **Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion** - 10:30am - ages 2-5 - 310-475-4144.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381; Prenatal yoga - 9:15- 10:30 a.m., and 10:45 - noon, \$13.

Mommy Care - 11870 Santa Monica Blvd, at the Dance Factory, West LA, 394-6711; Pregnancy Exercise - 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise - 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Other

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

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

Alice and the Wonderful Tea Party - Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 8 - Dec. 28 at 12:30 and 3:00 p.m. Santa Monica Playhouse's Family Theatre presents this musical matinee based on Lewis Carroll's delightful and zany characters. Ages 2 and up; \$9 and \$10. 1211 Fourth St., 394-9779, ext. 2. www.santamonicalayhouse.com

Nature Walk (Children's Nature Institute) - December 13 - Temescal Canyon (Pacific Palisades) - 10:30am. Reservations required - 310-998-1151 or www.childrensnatureinstitute.org

Ride the North Pole Express at the Fillmore & Western Railway Company! See Special Events section for details.

Nature Walk (Children's Nature Institute) - Solstice Canyon (Malibu) - 10:00am. Reservations required - 310-998-1151 or www.childrensnatureinstitute.org

Yoga & Exercise - 310-306-9381, Prenatal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., \$13 Mommy and Me (ages 0-5) 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.; Mommy and Me (infants) 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., \$9

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190.

Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

SUNDAY

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

with Santa Nov. 30 and Dec. 7, 14 and 21.

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

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

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Ride the North Pole Express at the Fillmore & Western Railway Company! See Special Events section for details.

Fillmore & Western Railway Company - See Special Events section for details.

MONDAY

Storytelling

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Prom-enade - Toddler Story Time - 10am - 310-260-9110 **Main Library** - Lap Time at Joslyn Park - 9:30 a.m., September 8 - December 15 (no program Oct. 6), a series for children 0-24 months old with adult.

Ocean Park Branch - 2601 Main Street, 310-392-3804. Spanish for Little Ones - 11:15 a.m., September 22 - December 15 (no class Nov. 3). Rhymes, songs and very simple stories in Spanish for ages 2-5 with adult.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station - 310-826-5774, no pre-reg required, \$10 per class, first class free. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.; Moms/babies 4-8 months, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45pm, \$15 **Yoga Garden**, - Restorative yoga for pre/postnatal - 6:30 p.m., 310-450-0133. www.yogagardenstudios.com

Yoga Baby (Venice) - "Closed Dec. 22 - Jan. 4 for the holidays. Classes will resume Monday, January 5." Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190.

Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Yoga & Exercise - 310-306-9381, Prenatal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., \$13 Mommy and Me (ages 0-5) 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.; Mommy and Me (infants) 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., \$9

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REGISTRATION IS UNDERWAY FOR MANY WINTER PROGRAMS IN SANTA MONICA

Santa Monica YMCA - Parent/Child Gym and Water Enrichment - 3 months and up. Registration is underway for the winter session beginning January 3. Call 310-393-2721 for information or pick up a registration form at the YMCA at 1332 Sixth St.

City of Santa Monica - the city offers a number of classes for parents and children together, kids and adults including Baby/Toddler classes, dancing, yoga, art and a variety of sports. Registration began December 11, most classes begin the week of January 12th. Class details and registration forms can be found in the current winter issue of Seascap (in the RecScape insert) or online at www.santamonica.org then follow Seascap and registration links.

Music Together - a music and movement program for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. For ages birth to 4 years. Classes begin January 12th. Free demonstration classes are being held on January 7th & 10th. Classes are held in downtown Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Airport and Pacific Palisades. Call 310-396-4436 for info.

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NATIONAL

Supreme Court intervenes in dispute over Mexican trucks

BY ANNE GEARAN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court agreed Monday to intervene in a 2-decade-old fight over allowing Mexican trucks and buses on U.S. roadways.

The court said it will hear an appeal from the Bush administration, which wants to open the border to Mexican trucks without a court-ordered environmental study.

The \$1.8 million study is expected to take a year or more, further delaying the border opening President Bush ordered last fall over long-standing opposition from U.S. labor, consumer and environmental organizations.

The consumer group Public Citizen, the Teamsters and others sued on safety and environmental grounds, and a federal appeals court ruled earlier this year that the government must perform the lengthy study.

The Bush administration has said it will comply with that order, but also appealed to the Supreme Court in September.

"The court of appeals misapplied the nation's environmental laws and constrained the president's discretion to conduct foreign affairs," Solicitor General Theodore Olson wrote.

The ruling from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals "prevents the president's action from taking effect and thereby hampers commerce," Olson told the court.

The ruling also needlessly prolongs a trade dispute with Mexico over the requirements of the North American Free Trade Agreement, Olson wrote.

The San Francisco-based 9th Circuit handles appeals from the Mexican border states of California and Arizona, as well as other western states.

In response, Public Citizen said the government's appeal, or petition, overplayed the notion that the president's foreign affairs power was cramped.

"This is a petition in search of a problem," the group's lawyers wrote. "Despite petitioners' attempt to turn this case into a foreign policy challenge, it concerns only the routine application of domestic environmental laws to federal agency action."

Public Citizen also noted that the study

is under way and would be well along by the time the Supreme Court heard and decided the case.

"The issue will soon resolve itself and there is no need for the court to intervene," the group argued.

The environmental study will analyze short- and long-term environmental effects of opening U.S. roads to Mexican trucks. The study will not stop Mexican trucks from operating in the long run, but Public Citizen has said it should lessen potentially harmful effects.

Since 1982, trucks from Mexico have

been allowed only in 20-mile commercial border zones, where Mexican rigs must transfer their cargo to U.S. trucks for deliveries within the United States.

Mexican trucks make approximately 4.5 million border crossings every year, and it is cumbersome and expensive to offload cargo to U.S. trucks, the administration filing said.

"Passengers using scheduled bus services must follow similarly inefficient procedures," Olson wrote.

Mexico claims the moratorium has cost it more than \$2 billion.

Border officials working to make holiday journeys easier

By The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Mexican officials are working to make the trip south of the border easier for the thousands of people who are expected to head to Mexico for Christmas.

And U.S. border officials are watching the flow of people going south to make plans for the travelers' return trip next month.

Nearly 30,000 Mexicans living in the United States and nearly 2,000 U.S. citizens have passed through the immigration checkpoint in Nogales since Dec. 1, said Jose Manuel Robles de La Torre, the assistant director of Mexico's immigration service in Nogales, Mexico.

That's expected to increase to as many as 5,000 people a day between Wednesday and Dec. 23, the peak of the annual holiday journeys to Mexico.

The most important thing, said Robles de La Torre, "is to reduce the long lines, the waiting, and to ensure there is a tranquil experience" for those going to Mexico for the holidays.

The Mexican government is also trying to protect holiday travelers from corruption, fraud or extortion by public officials they encounter as they make their way

through the bureaucratic process. A pamphlet outlining the entry process and the types of activities that constitute corruption is provided to every visa applicant.

"With all of the attention and effort that's been made in this regard, I don't believe we will be seeing that kind of activity," Robles de La Torre said.

The seasonal visitors typically include an unknown number of Mexicans living in the United States illegally who risk the lives they've built in this country for a chance to spend a few weeks at home. They'll join the flood of illegal border crossers who try to sneak back into the United States next month, the usual start of the U.S. Border Patrol's busy season.

But Mexicans lacking legal status in this country are a dwindling proportion of the expatriates returning home for the holidays, according to immigration experts and border enforcement officials in both countries.

"We do see people who are living in the U.S. without documents make the return trip, but there are very few. It's not worth it to them because of all of the enforcement operations conducted by the U.S.," said Robles de La Torre.



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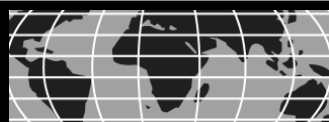
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WORLD BRIEFLY

Clark to testify in war crimes trial

By The Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — When retired Gen. Wesley Clark appears at Slobodan Milosevic's war crimes trial, it will be not only a meeting of wartime foes but also of two candidates vying for power in elections at home.

Clark was taking a hiatus from his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination to testify on Monday and Tuesday in closed sessions of the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal at The Hague.

Clark, who arrived in the Netherlands on Sunday, said he expected to give the court information from "meeting with Milosevic for more than 100 hours over nearly four years."

Speaking as U.S. authorities announced the capture of deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, Clark said "it's very important that international law is followed and that leaders who violate international law are held accountable."

Clark, who as NATO's supreme commander led the 1999 bombing campaign in Kosovo, declined to discuss specifics of his testimony.

Bitterness stalls peace talks

By The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — A U.S. mediator set up a three-way meeting with Israeli and Palestinian officials, designed to bring premiers together and restart long-stalled talks on a peace plan to end to more than three years of bitter violence.

The session was set for Monday afternoon, with top aides to the Israeli and Palestinian prime ministers taking part along with a U.S. diplomat, officials said.

The goal: To schedule a summit between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his Palestinian counterpart, Ahmed Qureia, a first step to unfreezing negotiations over the U.S.-backed "road map" plan.

In fresh violence, Israeli troops shot and killed two unarmed Palestinians early Monday when they tried to infiltrate Israel from the Gaza Strip. Four others managed to enter Israel, the army said. One was caught, and was also unarmed. Three others remained at large.

Rubber neckers on highway are the tourists

By The Associated Press

KNOB NOSTER, Mo. — To motorists enjoying the peaceful, rural scenery along meandering U.S. 50 in western Missouri, a stealth bomber's sudden appearance can be startling.

Knob Noster Police Lt. Jane Logan just chuckles.

"You always know the visitors and tourists, because they are pulled over on the highway shoulder to get a good look at it. But folks around here have gotten used to seeing that plane, and we like it," Logan said.

The plane is the B-2 Spirit, the world's most expensive aircraft at more than \$1.3 billion apiece. All 21 of the United States' batwing-shaped B-2 bombers are based next door to Knob Noster at Whiteman Air Force Base.

On Wednesday, the town and the base will mark the 10th anniversary of the B-2's arrival at its Missouri headquarters, a mission that re-energized Whiteman, where the end of the Cold War also concluded its role as home of nuclear-tipped missiles.

Bush goes for more support

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With Saddam Hussein firmly in hand, President Bush's new emissary on postwar Iraq is facing the task of turning congratulations from world powers into wider international support for reconstruction, including promises to erase Iraq's crushing burden of foreign debt.

Even leaders of nations that opposed the U.S.-led war in Iraq cheered the weekend capture of the ousted Iraqi leader.

Yet, no new offers were forthcoming to help the U.S.-led occupation — the very task facing former Secretary of State James A. Baker as he readied a trip Monday that will take him to France, Russia, Britain, Italy and Germany.

France, which has had a rocky relationship with the United States since it led the opposition to the war, said the capture of Saddam, the ousted Iraqi president, would help stabilize Iraq and lead to its sovereignty.

Time to pick the dictator's brain

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — First, find out whether Saddam Hussein knows of any impending guerrilla attacks planned against U.S. troops or Iraqis.

Then ask where Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri and other remaining senior regime officials and insurgent leaders are hiding. Get Saddam to paint a picture of the resistance — if he knows much about it, which some U.S. officials doubt.

Down the road, when his interrogators have perhaps established a rapport with him, or perhaps even broken his will to resist questions, try to answer the many unresolved questions about Iraq's efforts to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and ties to terrorists.

U.S. intelligence and military officials laid out these priorities Sunday for their interrogation of the ousted Iraqi president, believed to be under way already.

During the arrest of Saddam, U.S. troops discovered "descriptive written material of significant value," one U.S. commander in Iraq told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. He declined to say whether the material related to the anti-coalition resistance.

Pentagon plans come up for air

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ever wonder what's in the Pentagon's old war plans? Why, for instance, "Project Cornflakes" was a go in World War II, but Cold War-era plans dubbed "Dropshot," "Broiler," "Sizzle," "Trojan" and "Shakedown" stayed on the drawing board?

An upcoming "Top Secret" exhibit at the National Archives building, which houses the revered copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, may answer some questions.

Using a new interactive computer program, visitors will be able to inspect spy documents and war plans once limited to officials with special security clearances. While the exhibit itself won't open until next year, the Archives recently posted on its Web site a preview of the offerings.

Each year the National Archives declassifies hundreds of thousands of pages of documents as part of a regular review of old records or because of Freedom of Information Act requirements.

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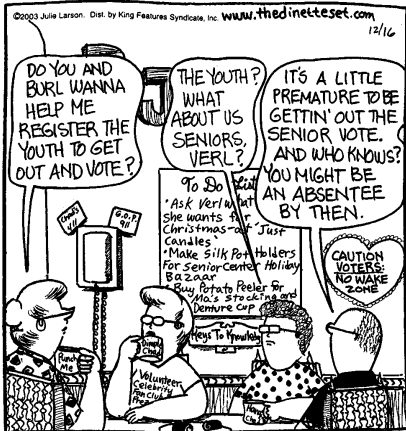
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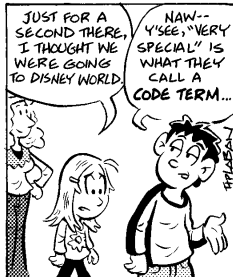
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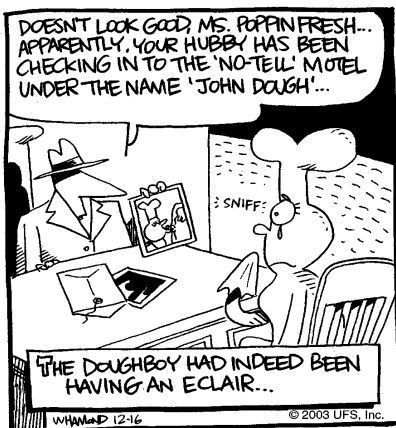
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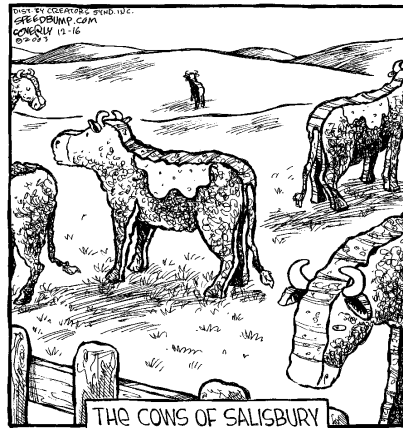
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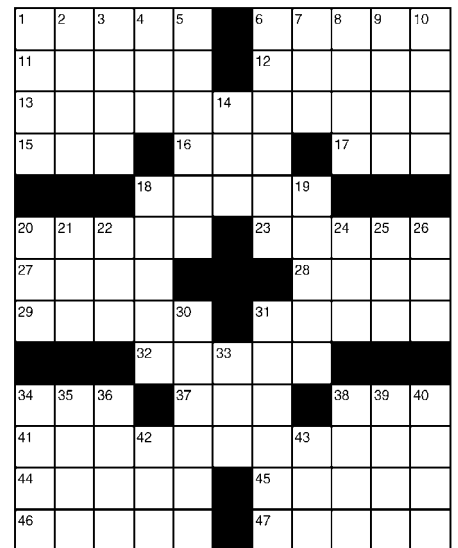
DOWN

- 1 Tarragon, for one
2 Blue shade
3 Ladder part
4 Bad review
5 Breaking pitch
6 Unkempt spot
7 Sphere
8 Thrash
9 Formerly
10 Confiscate
14 Neither follower
18 Fix code
19 Pottery ovens
20 Pop
21 Lyricist Gershwin
22 Dyeing spot
24 Addition-ally
25 Huck's pal
26 Singleton
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Ozzy on the mend in London after near death bike accident

By The Associated Press

LONDON — Ozzy Osbourne is making progress after his quad bike accident and can now breathe on his own, hospital officials said Monday.

The former Black Sabbath lead singer was able to talk to his wife, Sharon, at Wexham Park Hospital in Slough, west of London, where he was taken after the Dec. 8 accident, the hospital said in a statement.

Osbourne, 55, has been in intensive care since the accident at his estate in Buckinghamshire, southern England.

He fractured his left collarbone, eight ribs and a neck vertebra and had emergency surgery shortly after admission to restore the flow to a damaged blood vessel.

The Daily Mirror tabloid last week quoted Sharon Osbourne as saying her husband stopped breathing and his heart stopped for a minute after the accident. A security guard had resuscitated him, she said.

SANTA MARIA — About a dozen people rallied outside a courthouse complex to show their support for singer Michael Jackson, who's expected to be charged this week in a child molestation case.

His supporters included a preacher and several preschoolers who gathered in cold, windy weather Sunday to voice their opinions that Jackson already had been tried and convicted in the media and by the public.

"This is a travesty, a modern-day lynching," said Veronica Anielski of Santa Maria, who brought her two young daughters to the rally. Her words echoed the angry response from the singer's brother, Jermaine Jackson, to the allegations against Jackson.

Anielski was a co-organizer of the event with Tracee Reynaud; the two women distributed 1,000 fliers to encourage support for Jackson. Reynaud also is a former Jackson impersonator who spent more than a dozen years distributing gifts, many donated by Jackson, at children's hospitals.

"Justice for one, justice for all, stop trying to make Michael Jackson fall," the fliers read.

Rev. William Smith of Santa Maria met Reynaud at a

local store and was impressed by her passion. He watched as the demonstrators carried signs in front of the court complex.

The pop singer was booked Nov. 20 on suspicion of molesting a boy at his Neverland Ranch outside Santa Barbara, Calif. He has denied the allegations and was released on \$3 million bail.

NEW YORK — A recuperating Luther Vandross has another reason to celebrate.

The 52-year-old singer is hospitalized at a rehabilitation center after suffering a debilitating stroke. Earlier this month, he got word that he'd been nominated for five Grammy awards for his album, "Dance With My Father."

Last Friday, he received a visit from RCA Music Group Chairman Clive Davis, who gave him a platinum plaque for his album, marking more than 1 million in album sales, according to Vandross' publicist, Lois Najarian.

The visit was surprise, and it put Vandross in a joking mood.

"This calls for a special cake too!" the singer said, according to Najarian.

Vandross suffered his life-threatening stroke in April, two months before the release of "Dance With My Father." The album became Vandross' fastest-selling disc, and to date has sold 1.5 million copies.

NEW YORK — Sofia Coppola's "Lost in Translation" wasn't lost on the New York Film Critics Online, which named it the top film of the year.

Coppola also won the group's award for best director, and stars Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson were named best actor and best supporting actress.

Murray and Johansson play a pair of jetlagged Americans who wander bleary-eyed through a Tokyo hotel and form an unlikely friendship.

The online critics group, which voted Sunday on the top films of 2003, chose Charlize Theron as best actress for her portrayal of a serial killer in "Monster." Alec

Baldwin won the supporting-actor honor for "The Cooler," in which he plays a sleazy casino owner.

The group's top 10 films of 2003 in order are: "Lost in Translation," "American Splendor," "In America," "21 Grams," "A Mighty Wind," "Cold Mountain," "Girl With a Pearl Earring," "Lawless Heart," "The Barbarian Invasions" and "The Station Agent."

The New York Film Critics Online is made up of 23 reviewers whose work appears exclusively online or who work in print and broadcast but have a strong Internet presence.

TORONTO — Canadian singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot received a high-level government award at a private ceremony in Toronto.

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson presented the Companion of the Order of Canada to the 65-year-old, who has been recovering from a near-fatal abdominal hemorrhage a year ago.

Lightfoot, whose songs include "If You Could Read My Mind," has been through two rounds of surgery and has another scheduled for the spring.

He made a public appearance earlier this month when he was inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall Of Fame. At that time, the slim musician told the audience he hoped to return to the concert stage soon.

A tribute CD featuring covers of his country-folk songs, by Canadian artists including The Tragically Hip, Blue Rodeo, Ron Sexsmith, Cowboy Junkies and Bruce Cockburn, was released this year.

His promotion within the order comes a day after official ceremonies in Ottawa which honored other notable Canadians, including comedic actor Leslie Nielsen and former astronaut Marc Garneau.

The Order of Canada, established in 1967 to recognize outstanding achievement and service in various fields of human endeavor, has three levels: companion, officer and member. Appointments are made on the recommendation of an advisory council, chaired by the chief justice of Canada.

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