

FREE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2001

Volume 1, Issue 30

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Horses win first round in courtroom battle

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

Facing an eviction within three weeks, horses at Will Rogers State Park will be allowed to stay at their home until at least February.

Superior Court Judge Jerry K. Fields issued a temporary stay last week after 35 plaintiffs filed suit to prevent the state from removing the horses at the park, located at the base of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The department of parks and recreation determined in October that the horse operation was significantly degrading the environment in the area. State officials announced that they would suspend overnight horse boarding so they can evaluate the environmental damage they say is caused by the horses. The state claims that the horses generate nitrogen, potassium and phos-

"We wanted the horses out before the rainy season because it only exacerbates the problem. It's just not good for the park."

— STEVE CAPPS

Parks and recreation spokesman

phorous, which ecologists fear are chemicals that are being carried by run-off into adjacent streams.

As a result, all horses were to be removed from the public property by Jan. 10. Now they have until Feb.

13, when a court calendared hearing will consider the merits of the petitioners' claims.

The lawsuit alleges that the department's eviction notice is unlawful because the department has flouted the state's promise in 1944 to Will Rogers' widow that the park will be used "as a memorial and historical monument to the memory of the late Will Rogers." The suit also claims that the department's actions violate its own 1992 plan governing the park's operations, which deemed an equestrian presence "essential to any realistic interpretation of Will Rogers' life."

But state officials say the removal of the horses is only temporary. Department of parks and recreation director Rusty Areias has always said equestrian activity should be part of Will Rogers' operation, said Steve Capps, the deputy director of communications for

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Fate of Promenade rests with a small group

It's undecided who will be asked to help improve mall's economy

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Special to the Daily Press

The responsibility of rebuilding the Third Street Promenade into the strong economic engine it once was will rest with just a handful of people.

But the make-up of the group that will ultimately steer the Third Street Promenade out of the treacherous waters it is now navigating has not yet been decided. And there is concern among some business representatives that not all voices will be heard when the new "task force" is formed.

City officials say they are almost done with blueprints for the new Third Street Promenade task force, which will be

charged with finding ways to make sure no more retail stores take up precious space for restaurants.

The task force also will be asked to consider regulations that would prevent any new retail stores from coming in and how — if at all possible — the city can deter landlords from raising rents so small, locally owned stores and restaurants can remain there.

City officials say the Promenade is quickly becoming a retail corridor without any flavor, resembling shopping fare commonly found in suburban malls. The city for years has tried to manage the mall so it would be a unique and vibrant entertainment center. Ten years ago there were too many restaurants and not enough retail. Today, it's just the opposite — large retailers are able to pay more per square foot than small businesses. Looking for the greatest return on their investment, landlords let the space go for whatever the market will bear.

But the Santa Monica City Council is trying to buck that economic trend. It voted last month to place a 45-day moratorium on all development and expansion, consolidation and changes in use of commercial properties along the Promenade. In the meantime, a task force is being formed to address the issues.

City administrators say they are on track to finish their report before the holidays. The city council wants the report presented at its first meeting in January so it can have a functioning task force by the end of next month.

"I think the approach will likely be the same (as the downtown parking task force)," said Mark Richter, economic management director the city "But it's ultimately up to council as to how many members there will be and what their range and scope of work will be."

Typically, the city has created similar task forces that have two council members, two Bayside committee members and a planning commissioner. City officials would not confirm if their recommendation would be similar to past task

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Pilot dead after plane crashes into mountains

Plane took off from Santa Monica

By staff and wire reports

An unidentified pilot, who took off from Santa Monica Airport, died Friday when his small plane crashed into a mountainous region, authorities said Saturday.

Wreckage of the single-engine Cessna 210 was found at 6:30 a.m. Saturday, said Riverside County sheriff's Deputy Earl Quinata.

The craft left Santa Monica Airport about 3:30 p.m. Friday en route to Hemet, said FAA operations officer Bruce Nelson.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating.

The pilot's name was withheld by authorities.



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Santa Monica police and firefighters spent Sunday afternoon handing out some sweetness at area parks during their annual candy cane drive. Kids line up at Douglas Park to give Santa Claus their last-minute gift requests.

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Don't try to tell the boss anything in the morning. Do as he or she suggests. Remember who is in charge. In the afternoon, enlist "the boss" to look at a situation collectively. You get results, perhaps not today, but soon. Walk on egg shells in this situation. Tonight: Where the crowds are.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Make phone calls in the morning and finish off any paperwork. Clear your desk. You're on the front burner this afternoon, with everyone asking you for something or dumping extra work on you. Practice saying the word "no" more often. Tonight: Burn the mid-night oil.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ A partner will share this morning. Once the valve is open, you might have a difficult time turning it off! Remember, you asked for this. In any case, deal with calls, messages and other matters related to your work this afternoon. Do not listen to gossip. Tonight: Take a break. See a movie. Listen to music. Read a book.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Your popularity rises. People seek you out. You cannot close others off this morning, so let the gabfest continue. This afternoon, nail down details about a gift and clear out work. The pace will become even more hectic than you anticipate. Tonight: Pick up the phone and call a loved one.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ Focus on work quickly this morning before others distract you! Schedule meetings and phone calls for the afternoon, when a convivial mood spreads to those around you. Be careful as to just how far you mix business and play. Tonight: Don't count on an early bedtime.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You wrestle out of bed, thinking of so many other activities that seem more preferable than the daily grind. By afternoon, you develop into an efficiency expert as you clear out work and draw in an important contact or two. Others appreciate your hard work. Tonight: Out as late as need be.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Your family and personal matters weigh you down in the morning. Don't ponder the problem; clear it out. Be more creative in private matters as well. Choose a significant gift for a special person who lights up your life. Tonight: Dance the night away.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Speak your mind in the morning. Make calls. Rally around someone who might need a special push or some help dealing with a personal matter. Realize your limits as well as another's. Humor goes a long way with this person. Know that you make a difference. Tonight: Take a night off.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Balance your checkbook before you race into your work or errands. You need to keep a firm hold on what is happening. Schedule meetings for the afternoon, when getting together with others proves to be more fruitful. Friendship abounds, even in work circles. Tonight: Where the action is.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ In the morning, push key projects or clear out what is important. Take an extended lunch to complete some errands and gift buying before the hoards descend on the mall or another favorite shopping spot. Be especially careful with your wallet. You could lose funds. Tonight: Treat someone to munchies.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ If you feel like getting a slow start or taking your time warming up, make it OK to do so. As a result, you will be high-voltage material later on, if you follow your inner rhythm. Your smile warms everyone up and helps form an agreement among others. Tonight: Whatever makes you happy.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ Charge in the a.m. and slow down in the p.m. As a result, you get answers that help you make an important decision later on in the week. Do not feel pushed by time or circumstances. Mellow out and play with ideas and different paths to what you want. Tonight: Vanish while you can.



WEATHER

Today ... Partly cloudy with a high 64°F. Winds from the Northwest at 7mph.

Tonight ... Clear with a low of 44°F. Winds from the Northwest at 3mph.

Tomorrow ... Sunny High—66°F Low—44°F



QUOTE of the DAY

“And he that will to bed go sober,
falls with the leaf in October.”

— John Fletcher

Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday
Phone: 310.458.PRESS(7737) • Fax: 310.576.9913
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LOCAL



State says horse activity will be at park



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

This horse, who wears a pad with the name 'reckless,' along with 44 other horses, are able to stay at their home at Will Rogers State Park until Feb. 13, a judge ruled last week. The state had ordered the horses be removed by Jan. 10, until the owners of the horses filed a lawsuit last week asking them to stay.

HORSES, from page 1

parks and recreation.

"We at the state think it's not about the merits of the case," Capps said regarding the judge's ruling. "We wanted the horses out before the rainy season because it only exacerbates the problem. It's just not good for the park."

"I know Will would be proud of this community for challenging the state's unilateral, indefinite and unlawful order."

— KELLY HARRISON
Petitioner

State officials argue that private boarding shouldn't be part of a public-funded park. Rather, they would like to see equestrian activity like public riding lessons, polo matches and trail riding — not a permanent place for people who

can afford to board their horses there.

There are about 45 privately owned horses being boarded at Will Rogers State Historic Park, some of which are owned by prominent people like Maria Shriver, Jim Carey and Billy Crystal.

But boarders say it's not the interests of a few celebrities that is at the heart of their argument. The lead plaintiff in the lawsuit filed against the state is an 8-year-old Los Angeles girl who took riding lessons at the park this past summer. The boarders fear the state's eviction is the first step to outlawing any horse activity there in the future.

"I know Will would be proud of this community for challenging the state's unilateral, indefinite and unlawful order," said Kelly Harrison, a petitioner to the lawsuit and one of the boarders.

State officials said last week that they are seeking members for a public advisory committee that will make recommendations for a new equestrian activity plan for the park, which will include a restoration plan for the historic ranch.

Although the judge allowed the horses to remain there for another month, Capps is confident that the judge will understand the state's position when it can present its arguments in February.

"We are still confident that we will prevail," he said. "Our lawyers think it will be a pretty cut and dry issue."

City Hall taking requests for task force on Third Street Promenade mall

PROMENADE, from page 1

force ratios.

"Generally speaking, we like to keep these kinds of task forces with no more than seven members," said Suzanne Frick, the city's planning director. "After that, we start to lose efficiency as the group gets larger."

Officials say the goal is to develop city regulations

"Generally speaking, we like to keep these kinds of task forces with no more than seven members."

— SUZANNE FRICK
Santa Monica planning director

"If it swings too far out of balance not only will the Promenade be hurt but a lot of the rest of the downtown as well," said Mayor Michael Feinstein recently, "and also the entire city's economy because the

Promenade is (the city's) primary draw."

Landlords say the regulation is unneeded meddling in an already fragile economy along the Promenade.

"We are very concerned there are businesses that are already not making it along the Promenade and we feel this might scare away any potential businesses that might want to move there," Kathryn Dodson, executive director of the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce, told the Daily Press last month.

City officials say they have made an effort to be mindful of businesses' concerns, and they said Kathleen Rawson, president of the Bayside Committee, has been allowed to make recommendations on the creation of the Promenade task force.

"I know we want to work closely with them on drafting these recommendations," said Richter, "to address the changes in use we're seeing along Third Street from restaurants to retail."

Individuals interested in serving on the Third Street Promenade task force should write a letter addressed to the city council at 1234 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90041.

"I know many of us feel, including many council members, what needs to be addressed is more than a change of use," said Richter, "but the root causes for the changes we're seeing."

LA film critics vote 'In the Bedroom' top movie for 2001

BY GISELE DURHAM
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Film Critics Association on Saturday voted the drama "In the Bedroom" as the best movie of 2001.

Director Todd Field's story of a grieving Maine couple whose marriage nearly collapses under the strain of their son's murder also received best actress honors for Academy Award-winner Sissy Spacek.

"In the Bedroom" was Field's directorial debut and also stars Tom Wilkinson opposite Spacek.

The 27th annual awards were announced Saturday and will be presented Jan. 22 at a ceremony in Santa Monica.

David Lynch received top honors in directing for the twisting, turning "Mulholland Drive." The film, a dark tale of obsession, danger and amnesia in Hollywood, also won Lynch best director at this year's Cannes Film Festival and was chosen as best 2001 movie by the New York Film Critics Circle.

Actor Denzel Washington was chosen best actor for his role in "Training Day," in which Washington plays a rogue cop

who initiates co-star Ethan Hawke to the darker side of crime fighting.

The supporting actor nod this year went to Jim Broadbent for his roles in the musical "Moulin Rouge," and "Iris," a story depicting the life of British female novelist Iris Murdoch whose writing career was cut short by the onslaught of Alzheimer's disease.

"Iris" also brought Kate Winslet best supporting actress honors by the Association.

Other picks:

Screenplay — Christopher Nolan, "Memento."

Foreign Film — Danis Tanovic, "No Man's Land" (Bosnia).

Documentary — Agnes Varda, "The Gleaners and I."

Animation — "Shrek."

Production Design — Catherine Martin, "Moulin Rouge."

Music/Score — Howard Shore, "Lord of the Rings."

Cinematography — Roger Deakins, "The Man Who Wasn't There."

Career Achievement — Ennio Morricone.

New Generation Award — John Cameron Mitchell, "Hedwig and the Angry Inch."

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STATE

Suburban shopping malls old-fashioned style

BY JIM WASSERMAN
Associated Press Writer

MOUNTAIN VIEW — That epicenter of holiday shopping, the enclosed suburban mall that came to symbolize 1980s culture, is becoming a powerful engine for redeveloping California. Malls where millions of teen-agers had their first kiss and suburban families roamed the food courts are being razed and reborn as entirely new visions for life, work and shopping, architects say.

Stepping in where several malls have died, Californians are pioneering an old-fashioned return to downtown and Main Street, blending offices and restaurants with homes above stores.

Unlike the origin of shopping malls, which wooed stores out of downtown cores in the 1960s and 1970s, their renovations a generation later are considered urban infill projects.

"It's ironic. When we built them they were on the edges, and now they're in the center of our towns," says Joe Scanga, principal at Calthorpe Associates, a Berkeley-based architecture firm.

In Mountain View, Scanga's firm designed an 18-acre residential neighborhood known as The Crossings on the site of a Silicon Valley favorite: the Old Mill Mall. In the 1970s shoppers strolled among indoor trees, creeks and waterfalls.

Now Jim Li shops the site with real estate agent Lucy Wu — for a home among 397 townhouses, apartments and houses built on foundations of the crushed mall.

"It's incredible what they did with a little bit of land here," says Crossings resident Carolyn Herrick.

Herrick, a three-year resident of the neighborhood, with its front porch steps, narrow streets and designs that harken back to small towns before World War II, calls the atmosphere "Mary Poppins-like."

Likewise, in downtown Pasadena, developers are building nearly 400 rentals above stores at the just-opened Paseo Colorado, a glitzy three-block successor to a failed downtown mall.

"These studios in Pasadena are going for \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month," says Steven Bodzin, communications director for the San Francisco-based Congress for the New Urbanism. "They're getting lines out the door for people who want this."

Bodzin, representing an organization that advocates more growth in existing cities and less at suburban edges, says, "It's clear this is a lot more of a success than what was there before."

In San Jose, the dead Town and Country Mall is being razed and resurrected as an upscale downtown-style vision called Santana Row. Builders are promising 1,300 apartments and a hotel among its lushly landscaped plazas, stores and restaurants.

It opens next August.

In their time, enclosed malls were "slick engines for consumption, and people were blissed out with this kind of thing," says Los Angeles architect Jon Jerde.

Jerde, who designed San Diego's downtown Horton Plaza and Universal City Walk in Los Angeles, says malls kept

out the rain and bugs, and were "the place where one man could own it all."

Near the nation's first mall, the 1956-era Southdale Mall in Edina, Minn., Jerde designed the cathedral of mall culture, the Mall of America.

Now, he says, more people want something old that's new again: Main Street environments and downtown-like experiences. In his hometown of Long Beach, Jerde designed CityPlace, an urban mix of houses and stores now under construction to replace dying indoor Long Beach Plaza.

Although California has the most examples of these mall conversions, dead malls are being reborn across the nation. In Colorado, New York, Tennessee and Florida, local governments are kicking in hundreds of millions of dollars to help developers make a renaissance of their dying retail environments.

Collectively, sites renamed CityCenter and BelMar, New Roc City and Mizner Park house millions of square feet of stores and office space and thousands of apartments. In suburban Denver, a city hall moved into a vacated department store.

"They have a lot in common in how they're redeveloping," Bodzin says. "They've all moved away from relying on large individual anchors to having more smaller shops. And most have residential components."

Dead malls, surrounded by acres of parking designed for the weeks just before Christmas, make ideal redevelopment sites, authorities say.

"It's a huge national opportunity," says Bodzin.

In 1999, Bodzin's Congress for the New Urbanism commissioned a study by Price, WaterhouseCoopers that estimated 7 percent of America's 2,800 malls are dead or languishing. It said 12 percent more are headed that way.

While most malls remain strong retail performers, and new malls keep opening, analysts say the less fortunate ones are undermined by a new constellation of trends: people with less money moving in nearby, competition from new giant, open-air regional shopping centers and people with less time to shop.

"People don't shop at small stores anymore, and that's what malls are comprised of. Everybody's moving to a larger format," says Peter Blackbird, 21, an amateur student of malls from Queensbury, N.Y.

Blackbird has visited dying suburban malls throughout the northeastern United States.

"Some of my fondest memories were in the hometown mall," he says. Now he maintains a Web site of mall pictures and anecdotes called Deadmalls.com.

In California, while superstar renovations get most of the attention, other malls are also quietly finding new lives.

The San Fernando Valley's Sherman Oaks Galleria, famous as the setting for the 1982 movie "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," has become an office center. Mountain View's Mayfield Mall, famed during its 1972 opening for being a carpeted mall, is a campus for Hewlett-Packard Corp.



INTERNATIONAL • NATIONAL



Victory in al-Qaida leave some U.S. soldiers injured

By the Associated Press

TORA BORA, Afghanistan — Tribal fighters said they took the last al-Qaida positions in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday, capturing 25 fighters and killing more than 200. In the south, several U.S. Marines were injured in an explosion at Kandahar's airport.

After weeks of fighting and relentless U.S. bombing in the White Mountains, commanders declared victory in an all-out assault on the al-Qaida fighters loyal to Osama bin Laden.

"This is the last day of al-Qaida in Afghanistan," said Mohammed Zaman, the eastern alliance defense chief.

Zaman said he had no information on the whereabouts of bin Laden himself, who many in these forested mountains believe was with the fighters. U.S. officials said they picked up his voice last week on short-range radio in the area.

Zaman said several hundred al-Qaida fighters might be on the run toward the border with Pakistan, only miles south of the caves and tunnels of Tora Bora. He and the other top eastern alliance commander, Hazrat Ali, said their forces were pursuing the fleeing fighters.

Marine Capt. David Romley said three Marines were wounded Sunday, one seriously, when one stepped on a land mine at the Kandahar airport, an area they have been checking for mines and booby traps.

Also Sunday, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld landed at Bagram airfield in the first visit by a top U.S. official to Afghanistan since the U.S.-led campaign began.

Rumsfeld was to meet the new interim prime minister of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai.

Across Afghanistan, civilians and fighters alike poured into mosques for Eid al-Fitr, Islam's most festive holiday, and mullahs leading their prayers appealed for peace.

The assault in the White Mountains began at midday Sunday, with tribal fighters marching up two parallel valleys to launch an assault from both sides on the mountain ridge where al-Qaida fighters were hiding.

Al-Qaida's only way out was to retreat through dense forest, but U.S. B-52 bombers pounded the woods with incendiary bombs Sunday, and flames leaped from the trees. The bombing appeared to stop as the eastern alliance moved up the mountain.

Many of the al-Qaida fighters had claimed they were ready to surrender, but alliance commanders were skeptical when they failed to emerge from the mountains.

"They refused to surrender, so now we must fight," Mohammed Aman Khairi said.

There had been several unconfirmed sightings around Tora Bora of bin Laden, chief suspect in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

A U.S. official said in Washington on Saturday that American forces in the area picked up his voice on short-range radio last week. But Afghan commanders knew nothing of the radio transmission.

"The Pentagon has their way of knowing things. I have no new information on Osama," said commander Atiqullah Rachan.

Before the assault, eastern alliance fighters emerged from the mountains in surrounding villages, their hair matted with dust, to stack their Kalashnikov rifles outside mud-walled mosques and celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the feast marking the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

In the southern city of Kandahar, the Taliban's former stronghold, the holiday was celebrated with gunfire and pink flares shot into the sky. Residents visited relatives with gifts of new turbans, money, clothing and dried fruit. Even gunmen standing guard outside the compound of Gov. Gul Agha sported spotless new shoes.

One group of unaccompanied women and girls, some holding hands, walked down a road in shiny red, embroidered

dress. Under the Taliban, females could face severe punishment for leaving their homes without a male escort.

Many people gathered to pray at the tile- and marble-inlaid Khalqa Sharif Mosque, which houses the mausoleum of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the 18th century founder of Afghanistan, and 500 more prayed at the Eid Mosque in the capital, Kabul.

"People of Afghanistan, you are a great nation, but now we must unite and live like brothers, and rebuild our country," the mullah, Abdul Jalil, told the crowd.

"I prayed to God to bring peace to our people," said eastern alliance commander Haji Qadir, who attended celebrations at a mosque in Jalalabad.



Astronaut Navy Capt. William Sheperd, right, is saluted by a side party of astronauts from the Johnson Space Center during his retirement ceremony held at the San Diego Aerospace Museum on Friday, in San Diego. Sheperd served for 30 years in the Navy and with NASA.

Cleveland Browns fans get rowdy after overturned call

BY TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND — Enraged Cleveland Browns fans pelted the field with thousands of plastic beer bottles when officials overturned a last-minute call Sunday, striking the players and forcing them to run for cover.

The game was stopped for about a half-hour with 48 seconds to play because of the violence, sparked by an instant-replay call that helped the Jacksonville Jaguars win 15-10.

Most of the bottles were plastic, but many were filled with beer. The Jaguars and Browns had to dodge flying objects as they sprinted to their locker rooms. Officials were doused with beer and cups of ice.

"We feared for our lives," Jaguars wide receiver Jimmy Smith said. "We were just trying to dodge as many beer bottles as we could. It was like dodging bullets."

The Browns also were under attack.

"I was definitely looking over my shoulder for bottles flying," quarterback Tim Couch said.

Nobody was seriously hurt. Some fans tried to run onto the field but they were stopped by security. Police made arrests but exact numbers were not immediately released.

"I've never seen a game, heard of a game anything like this," Browns coach Butch Davis said. "I know the fans were upset, but our guys were getting hit along with the Jaguars and the officials."

The fans' ugly behavior came after the Browns had a first down at Jacksonville's 9-yard line taken away despite running a play before the officials reviewed the previous play.

Couch had apparently completed a fourth-and-2 pass to wide receiver Quincy time-out with 1:08 remaining, and the Browns, who were out of time-outs, quickly rushed to the line of scrimmage.

On first down, Couch spiked the ball with 48 seconds to go, and was headed to the sideline when the officials began to discuss Morgan's catch. After several confusing minutes, referee Terry McAulay announced that the officials were reviewing the play. When McAulay finally emerged from the TV review monitor, he announced that Morgan did not catch the ball.

Morgan was sure he caught the pass.

"I hit the ground, got up and spit the ball on the ground," the rookie said.

As Cleveland's bench erupted in protest, Browns fans in the "Dawg Pound" bleacher section closest to the play began hurling bottles and other objects from the stands.

Nearly 30 minutes after ordering players off the field, officials resumed play. Jacksonville's offense returned intact while the Browns sent three offensive players out with their defense since some players had already undressed.

About 5,000 fans were still in the stadium to see Brunell take two snaps and run out the clock.

Sierra snowpack well above normal after 2 dry seasons

BY MARTIN GRIFFITH

Associated Press Writer

RENO, Nev. — With five days to go before the start of winter, the Sierra snowpack is off to a flying start.

The latest in a string of potent storms pushed the Lake Tahoe Basin snowpack on Friday to 177 percent of average for this time of year.

To the south, the snowpack was even healthier: 195 percent of average in both the Carson and Walker river basins.

After two straight dry winters, the heavy snow is welcome news in Nevada and California, which depend on the Sierra snowpack for summer water supplies.

National Weather Service forecaster Mark Deutschendorf said the Tahoe area already has received about a third of the snow it gets during an average season — and winter hasn't even begun.

"It's definitely encouraging for the water situation," he said Saturday. "As long as the (storm) taps don't get shut off over the next three months, we'll have a good snowpack."

A storm late Thursday and Friday dumped 12-18 inches of snow at Tahoe, with higher elevations getting up to 20 inches, according to the weather service.

But that's nothing compared with a Dec. 2 storm that left as much as 3 to 4 feet of snow. It was branded by some forecasters as the region's strongest storm since December 1996.

Now, the weather service is calling for a series of weaker systems to bring a chance of snow to the Sierra on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

"At least the small storms do help," Deutschendorf said. "It helps out when you get six inches of snow here and a foot of snow there."

The recent storms also have set Tahoe ski resorts up for a busy Christmas holiday season.

"We've had a ton of snow. It's been great," Heavenly spokeswoman Molly Cuffe told the Reno Gazette-Journal. "It's definitely the best skiing we've had in the past 10 years."

A record-breaking, five-year wet spell in the Tahoe area officially ended two winters ago when snowpack figures checked in 10 to 25 percent below normal for the season.

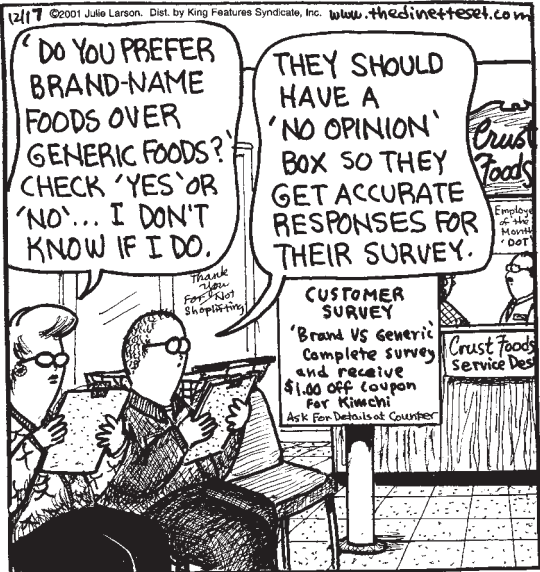
Last winter was even bleaker as snowpack totals ended up about half of average in the Tahoe area and prompted officials to declare a drought in parts of the region.

It also was Reno's driest winter since record-keeping started in 1872.

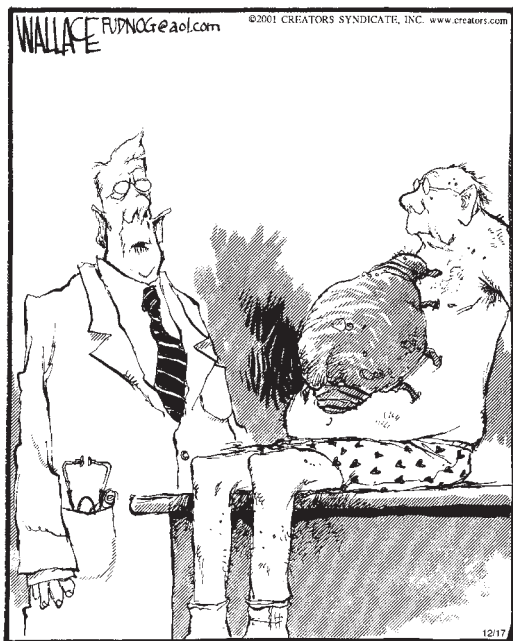


COMICS

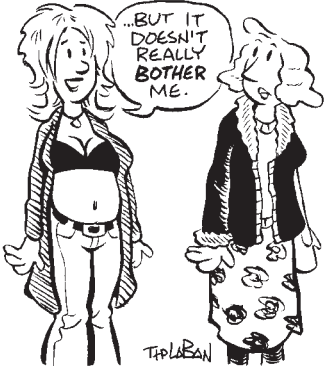
The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



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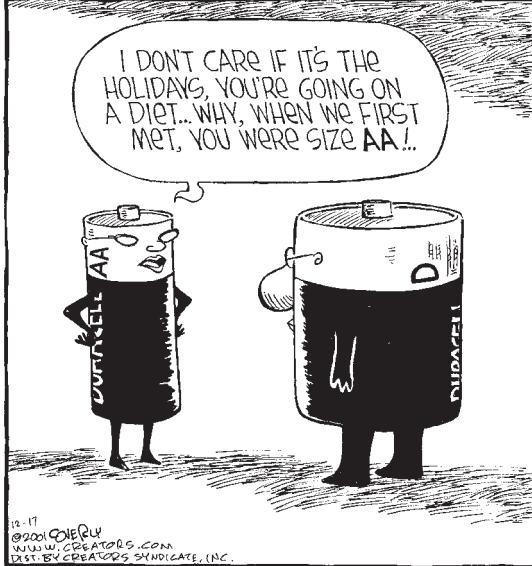
by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



Reality Check® By Dave Whammond



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CROSSWORD By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 1 Style of the 1920s
 - 5 Actor Brad
 - 9 Juan of Argentina
 - 10 Blundered
 - 12 Without help
 - 13 Large flower
 - 14 Buff buff
 - 16 Boxer Frazier
 - 17 Business bigwig
 - 18 Wanted poster amount
 - 21 Conducted
 - 22 Large couches
 - 23 Yarn component
 - 24 Car stopper
 - 26 Chapeau
 - 29 Canada's largest province
 - 30 Green stone
 - 31 Fancy planter
 - 32 Brazilian river
 - 34 San Antonio mission
 - 37 Eye-boggling posters
 - 38 Went out with
- DOWN
- 1 Elegant
 - 2 Wore down
 - 3 Like a dunce cap
 - 4 Small bills
 - 5 Vitality
 - 6 Fury
 - 7 Greek's foe
 - 8 Some opera stars
 - 9 Discussion group
 - 11 Colored
 - 15 Manhattan area
 - 19 Times before
 - 20 General concern
 - 22 Levee's kin
 - 23 Like the Beatles
 - 24 Sack material
 - 25 Singer Scotto
 - 26 Danger

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

Saturday's answer

- 27 Idolizes
- 28 Circus sights
- 29 Campus area
- 30 Hokkaido's nation
- 33 Be glum
- 35 Actress Ryan
- 36 Keats work

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34						35	36		37	
38									39	
									40	
									41	

12-17

STUMPED?

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD by Chuck Shepard

Dad orders kids to strip during halftime

• Jeffrey J. Harris, 39, was arrested at halftime of the Florida high school football game between St. Petersburg and Clearwater in October when he created a loud scene by blocking his two kids (starters for Clearwater) from entering their locker room (which is located in a public place with many students and parents mingling around outside). Harris was mad about something that happened in the first half and ordered the kids to immediately strip off their uniforms in a public display and to come home with him. The kids tried to rejoin their team, and when Harris intervened and struck a martial-arts stance, police arrested him.

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BACK PAGE

Hong Kong's single women become focus of concern

BY VERNA YU
Associated Press Writer

HONG KONG — Rainbow Chan is attractive, gregarious, independent and a success in her career. Like many Hong Kong women in their 30s, she still can't find "Mr. Right" but admits she's picky.

"Unless I meet someone so good it's worth giving up my freedom for, there isn't much point in getting married," says Chan.

A 35-year-old translator, she doesn't mince words when it comes to men: "They're superficial, arrogant, passive and egotistic. I mean, they are real cowards."

The number of Hong Kong women like Chan who remain single into their 30s or 40s has been on the rise for 15 years.

While that trend is a fact of life in many Western societies, it is still viewed as an aberration in Asia, where traditional values hold strong.

Hard economic times combined with a reversal in the city's gender ratio — there are 1,000 females for every 960 males, compared with 1,000 females per 1,038 males a decade ago — have made the issue the talk of the town.

Local newspapers feature analyses on how women are faring in the increasingly fierce competition for men, why Hong Kong men seem to prefer marrying more traditional mainland Chinese women, how women should lower their expectations for marriage partners, why some female professionals are making more money than their male counterparts.

With unemployment on the rise — the most recent figure of 5.5 percent was an 18-month high — many men fear they are losing out to women in the workplace, says Odalia Wong, assistant sociology professor at Hong Kong Baptist University.

"In an economic downturn, people look for people to blame," Wong says. "They accuse migrant workers of pinching their rice bowls; they blame women

professional jobs, making them financially independent. Many postpone or even give up the idea of marrying.

In 2000, 16 percent of Hong Kong women older than 15 had received higher education, twice as many as in 1986.

The percentage of women ages 30-49 who have never married hit a new high of nearly 17 percent last year, compared with just under 9 percent in 1986. That compares with an increase in single men in the

as a social problem, or some kind of deviant behavior."

Although perceptions are changing, many Hong Kong parents assume a daughter-in-law will devote herself to serving her husband's family — looking after elderly relatives, bearing children to extend his family line, managing the household, often while also holding down a job.

Such expectations clash with those of many professional women used to independent lifestyles.

"I'd have to think twice about a relationship if the parents-in-law expected me to spend a lot of time looking after them," says Yee Tam, a 28-year-old financial analyst.

Not that all women want to stay single.

"I'd definitely want to get married if an opportunity comes along. I just haven't met the right person yet," says May Cheung, a 34-year-old architect.

Government-owned Radio Hong Kong broadcasts a weekly matchmaking radio program to help eligible singles meet on the air.

"I saw this need and thought I could set up a platform to help single people broaden their social circles," says Maranda Chin, producer and presenter of the show. "We've noticed that the women who have come to us are usually far more accomplished than the men we've come across."

In one show, a confident 29-year-old financial adviser said she would like to meet someone "who is worth spending my time with."

"Unless I meet someone so good it's worth giving up my freedom for, there isn't much point in getting married. They're superficial, arrogant, passive and egotistic. I mean, they are real cowards."

— RAINBOW CHAN
Single woman

for taking away the jobs. Women have become the scapegoats."

Unlike in much of Asia, dual career households have been common in Hong Kong for decades, though women only began making significant inroads into managerial and professional ranks in the past two decades. Discrimination based on gender is illegal, and women have long held senior positions within the respected civil service.

Researchers say higher educational levels among women have put more into

same age bracket to 21 percent from 18 percent.

Similar trends are apparent in other Asian nations with advanced economies.

In Taiwan, 16 percent of women ages 30-39 were unmarried last year, compared with 13 percent in 1986. In Japan, 14 percent of women ages 30-49 were single, compared with 7.6 percent in 1990.

"I think this phenomenon isn't portrayed very positively," says Irene Tong, a Hong Kong University professor who researches women's issues. "It's regarded



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