

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

28, 37, 6, 1, 18

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 3, 4, 6

Evening picks: 3, 3, 6

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 12, Lucky Charms

2nd Place: 11, Money Bags

3rd Place: 3, Hot Shot

Race Time: 1:42.88



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Angela Bridges filed a lawsuit in June against the Washington County (Ga.) Regional Medical Center and a doctor for failing to clean her wound properly. She fell into some shrubbery in her yard in 2002, cut her leg, and reported to the emergency room for cleaning and suturing. Nine months later, another physician found that a small boxwood twig, with five thriving green leaves, had broken through the sutured skin.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I hate women because they always know where things are."

— James Thurber



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A little apple with that carmel?



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Hundreds of employees, patients and visitors at Saint John's Health Care Center took advantage of the hospital's annual Christmas party, which was held in the fully decorated cafeteria on Thursday. The party included pictures with Santa, face painting for the kids, free turkey and all the fixings. The party, although a bit scaled back this year, went on as planned despite that the hospital laid off 200 employees last week.

A little 'peace' inside

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

SM COURTHOUSE — A local peace activist with a political bent celebrated a victory of sorts on Thursday, even while officials remain adamant that he can't list his occupation on the ballot.

Three years after filing a lawsuit against City Hall for not allowing the words "peace activist" to appear under his name on the election ballot, the man formerly known as Jerry Rubin legally changed his name.

It's illegal for someone to

change their name for political reasons. But Rubin, who as of Thursday is "Jerry Peace Activist Rubin," was successful anyway, apparently convincing Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Alan Haber the change was for moral reasons.



'Jerry Peace Activist Rubin'

In explaining his request to Haber, Rubin wrote, "I would like my name to reflect who I am and to always be a most personal reminder of the responsibility I have to work for peace and to be an activist."

See RUBIN, page 6

Council to schools: 'Money does not grow on trees'

City council proposes novel plan to buy or lease school properties

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

COUNCIL CHAMBERS — Weary of creating financial dependence and anxious to quell a movement among school boosters that would force City Hall to fork over a set percentage of its cash, the City Council voted this week to explore a different approach.

Suggested by City Councilmen Herb Katz and Mike Feinstein, the plan would allow City Hall to purchase or rent nearly two dozen district properties. Under the proposed plan, schools would earn millions of dollars while local officials would have an opportunity to build more underground parking, create open space and make other improvements that could benefit greater Santa Monica.

It's a better solution than forcing local government to earmark a portion of its annual revenues for schools, several council members said. Members of the Committee for Excellent Public Schools have discussed putting such a proposal on the November 2004 ballot. Some have suggested increasing

See PROPOSAL, page 5

Cop crackdown aimed at sobering up drivers

By Daily Press staff

SMPD — Local police will be out in full force beginning today to crack down on drunk drivers during the holidays.

The campaign against drunk drivers will run until Jan. 4 with saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints throughout Santa Monica. The first sobriety checkpoint will be on Saturday after 8 p.m. in the 700 block of Wilshire Boulevard.

With more people expected to travel on America's highways during the extended holiday season, it could be one of the deadliest periods ever for impaired driving fatalities, police say.

As part of a national cam-

paign, the SMPD will work with the California Highway Patrol to get drunk drivers off of the roadway this holiday season.

"There will be no warnings," said SMPD Chief James T. Butts Jr. "Our message is simple, you drink and drive, you lose. Violators can lose their licenses, time from their jobs, and lose money in high fines and court costs, as well as possibly face imprisonment for repeat offenses, assault and vehicular manslaughter.

"Refuse a blood alcohol concentration test and you can lose your license on the spot and have your car impounded," Butts added. "You'll be spending your

See CRACKDOWN, page 6

Hanukkah gains significance by proximity to Xmas

BY RACHEL ZOLL

AP Religion Writer

MINNEAPOLIS — Only one other Jewish family lives in Wendy Grosser's Minneapolis neighborhood, where the Christmas season

arrived in twinkling lights and Nativity scenes on front lawns.

Her son and two daughters, all under age 8, know their friends will soon gather with their families, ripping red-and-green ribbon from piles of gifts. But Grosser, a

Conservative Jew, won't compete by giving a bundle of toys to her own children as Hanukkah begins tonight.

Like many American Jews, she is resisting the pull of the holidays' close timing — an annual

occurrence that has spread a misperception about Hanukkah, that it has near equivalent religious significance as Christmas.

"We are trying to emphasize its unimportance," Grosser said, of

See HANUKKAH, page 14



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

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ To be as effective as you might like, you will find that working individually with others proves most successful. A friend demonstrates his or her creativity in a way that counts, but it could be most distracting. Express your strong caring so that others will respond in a surprisingly positive manner. Tonight: Be a duo.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Others come to you wanting your feedback. Be subtle right now if you really want to keep the peace. A boss or superior might have a great idea, but making it a reality could be quite a job. Think before taking this one on. You might be sorry later. Tonight: Go along with another's plans.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Pace yourself, making it possible to get your work done. Close off your wandering mind, if possible. You want to leave on Friday with a clear desk, don't you? Your creativity emerges in a romantic situation. Let your libido run the show. Tonight: Pace yourself.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ A partner might push funds beyond what you can take. He or she means well, but just the same, you might have to say "no." Your ability to find creative gifts makes a big difference in your budget. Tonight: Play away.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ Stay anchored when dealing with a child or loved one. Family becomes unusually demanding. You might be feeling like someone close to you is pushing your buttons. Be realistic about what this person can and cannot do. Tonight: At home.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Reach out for someone who might be quite needy but has a difficult time saying so. Your way of stating issues might not be as clear as possible right now. Be ready to repeat yourself several times. A friend might have a difficult time "getting" it. Tonight: Celebrate the fact that it's Friday.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Expenses go way overboard. Stay in control of work, even if you feel burdened. You will feel better once you clear your desk. You cannot read a loved one's reaction, as you put him or her on a pedestal. Tonight: Do some shopping.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ The Moon in your sign highlights you. You might be able to get to the bottom of a situation faster than many. A discussion illuminates a situation. You might not see a family member or domestic issue clearly. Tonight: Whatever makes you happy.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★ Sit back and take your time. You might not take in the whole picture, as your perspective could be distorted. Consider last-minute gifts that don't murder your budget. You make strong decisions, for you. Tonight: Get some extra sleep.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Follow-through counts, especially with a friendship or a goal. You might overspend, not realizing what you are doing. Be very careful handling money. A pickpocket could be a lot closer than you think. Tonight: Celebrate the weekend.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ You might have a difficult time making your point clear. You have unusual ideas that sometimes might be difficult to put into words. Handle work efficiently, as you want to clear out for a fun weekend. Tonight: Leader of the gang.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Take an overview. Others just might not understand what you think and feel. You have an unusual imagination that takes you down a strange path at times. A meeting proves instrumental. Consider a seminar or a trip in the near future. Tonight: Do something totally different.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

CHIP officers host toy drive with former TV star

By Daily Press staff

Erik Estrada, former star of the TV series, "CHIPS," will help police officers collect toys for children at today's CHIPS for Kids Toy Drive at Santa Monica Place.

Donated toys, which will be distributed to disadvantaged or hospitalized children in the Los Angeles area, are asked to be new and unwrapped. Upon making a donation, participants will have the opportunity to have their photo taken with Estrada and CHIPS officers while posing in front of a new, high-tech highway patrol motorcycle.

The drive will be sponsored by the California Highway Patrol and will be held from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the mall's center court. Free three-hour parking is available between Fourth Street and Third Street, off Broadway.

Bowling for the hungry

By Daily Press staff

A friendly bowling competition to benefit the homeless is gearing up.

The SuperBowl-A-Thon VIII, featuring more than 60 teams representing various businesses, community organizations and government, compete with their bowling and fundraising skills for awards.

Proceeds from SuperBowl-A-Thon VIII will be used to support projects of the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition to assist hungry, homeless and low-income adults, children and families in the western part of Los Angeles County. The coalition brings together more than 25 organizations representing local human service, government agencies and faith-based programs. In addition to team registrations and sponsorship donations, individual bowlers solicit pledges, and compete for prizes, to enhance the proceeds.

The event is Jan. 30, scheduled from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at AMF Bay Shore Lanes, 234 Pico Blvd. The entry fee is \$100 for a team of five people, which includes shoe rental, an official SuperBowl-A-Thon VIII T-shirt, food and soft drinks.

There will be three sessions of competition during the afternoon.

First Federal Bank of California is the event's "Perfect Game" title sponsor and currently the "Spare" level sponsors are Fairmont Miramar Hotel, The Lobster restaurant and Santa Monica Place. Food for the three afternoon sessions will be provided by Arby's Market Fresh Santa Monica, Buca di Beppo and more.

In addition to the sponsors, teams representing business, government, media and social service organizations will "bowl for dollars" for the coalition.

JAMS students shed light on Main Street

By Daily Press staff

It was an illuminating experience for Main Street merchants last week when a group of local school kids showed up.

Teams of red-shirted John Adams Middle School Science Magnet students last week traveled up one side of Main Street and down the other, distributing bags of free compact fluorescent light bulbs to business owners and managers.

The student volunteers were using the gifts to get the attention of the businesses and to let them know about special energy efficiency tune-ups. The no-cost tune-ups, being made available through the city of Santa Monica, demonstrate the significant savings that can be achieved through relatively simple, low-cost energy upgrades.

"Our students have been studying and practicing smart energy management at home and in our school for the last three years as part of the PEAK program," said Joel Post, one of the JAMS teachers on duty that day. "But this was the first time they've brought their knowledge into the small business community."



Photo courtesy

PEAK students tell the 'energy story' to Main Street shopkeepers.

surf report

Look for NW swell to be fading pretty quickly. The better exposed spots can expect waves in the waist- to shoulder-high range. By noon a new W swell will start to fill in and will eventually peak overnight and into early Saturday morning. Because of the very westerly angle on this swell a lot more spots will be able to pick up surf. By sunset look for many spots to see shoulder- to head-high waves with occasional bigger sets.

OUTLOOK: Look for a gradual fade in surf by Saturday afternoon and into Sunday as the swell turns more to the WNW. We'll also see building SW into Saturday with waist- to chest-high waves.

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

Today the water is:

57°

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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In groups of three or four, with an adult in the wings, they identified their business target and surrounded him or her.

"We have a gift for you," they chorused. "These are special light bulbs that use only one-fourth the energy of regular bulbs, and last 10 times longer." And when people hesitated, the students repeated, "They're free! It's a gift." The students then followed up by handing over a description of the Small Business Efficiency Tune-Up program — \$1,000 worth of energy efficiency upgrades available to Main Street businesses as part of the Six Cities Energy Project.

"The bulbs we distributed today are worth about \$50 each in long-term savings," said Stuart Cooley, the energy efficiency engineer from the City of Santa Monica, who helped train the students. "But they were really just a way for us to let these businesses know about the free tune-ups. The tune-ups consist of relatively simple upgrades that will save businesses from \$5,000 to \$10,000."

As a member of the Six Cities Energy Project, Santa Monica has joined Irvine, Moreno Valley, Palm Desert, Brea and West Hollywood in special energy-related activities aimed at bringing residents together to learn more about energy issues and to start them on savings through installation of energy efficiency measures. Over the past 18 months of the program, more than 25,000 citizens — seniors, students, renters, small business owners, city personnel — have participated.

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OPINION

The Q Line

Hussein's capture not the keystone to war's closure

This past week, Q-line asked:

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

Here are your responses:

■ "Definitely no. All we have to do is take a look at Palestine and Israel and we find out that that kind of conflagration, which has been going on for decades, will continue with Iraq with insurgents from outside focusing on assisting insurgents on the inside. Propaganda-wise, globally, the tide will have turned — at least in the eyes of the media ... We will be there at least 10 years."

■ "Not unless he tells us where the damn weapons of mass destruction are."

■ "Where the hell is Osama bin Laden? He's the one we should be worried about. Saddam is nothing compared

to that guy. Billions of dollars spent and we still don't have the guy who actually attacked us."

■ "I'm not sure it's going to make a difference. I seems like the people of Iraq would rather have Hussein in power than have the U.S. there, but who knows?"

■ "I personally am very happy that Saddam has been captured, however, I don't know how much of a long-term impact this will have. I tend to suspect that it will not have very much because Saddam, in a lot of ways, is a symbol."

■ "No, I don't think the capture will

turn the tide in the war with Iraq. I think it is good that the man has been captured, but I think after all of the hoopla dies down it's going to change very little over there. It is

obvious that the Iraqi people do not want the U.S. Army over there and I think that until they can have their own country back, not a whole lot will change."



Member: AMEC, HGS, dSG, SCGS

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City on to something with school funding proposal



**MY
WRITE**
By Bill Bauer

Councilmen Herb Katz and Michael Feinstein proposed a plan earlier this week wherein the city would buy or lease up to 22 properties from the Santa Monica/Malibu Unified School District.

They recommended a ballot measure to enable the city to buy or lease school properties under a Mello-Roos bond which, if approved by voters, might result in higher property taxes.

The proposal allows for a revenue stream for the schools while providing needed park land, open space and other public facilities.

The high school football athletic field and Madison School campus, now being leased to Santa Monica College, could be among the sites included.

But, wait! Another school funding proposal might be before voters in 2004. A ballot initiative is being floated by the Committee for Excellence in Public Schools and some local businessmen.

I've learned an initiative will be filed

with the city clerk within a week or two that will call for a change in the city charter to require the city to set aside a percentage of its annual budget for the SMMUSD. A phone poll was conducted a couple of months ago to gauge public reaction to such a proposal.

The percentage would be somewhere between 3 to 6 percent of the city budget that, this year, is \$353.7 million.

The initiative would be circulated to Santa Monica voters in the coming months. About 10,000 valid signatures are needed for it to qualify for the November 2004 ballot.

I've not read the initiative but I've written many times in this space that the city could and should provide more support for schools in this manner. It could easily afford to give \$8, \$10 or \$12 million to our schools on an annual basis without raising taxes. But city leaders must reprioritize the budget.

The city historically helps the SMMUSD with about \$3 million in funding. However, in previous years, an extra million or two have been added to help the district deal with various budget shortfalls.

Last June, voters narrowly approved Measure S, a \$225 parcel tax increase that should contribute about \$6.5 million to our schools annually over the next six years.

I opposed the tax increase because I believed City Hall had the money and that our elected politicians needed to place our children ahead of the homeless, pet projects and other expensive services that seem to benefit mostly non-residents.

It appears this initiative, if approved by voters in the fall, could finally make that happen.

It seems City Hall was not content with allowing just the Third Street Promenade to become a carnival with carts of cheap merchandise, wall-to-wall amateur entertainers and calligraphy artists.

They allowed Third Street's flea market atmosphere to spread to the Santa Monica Pier where visitors now must work their way through a maze of junky carts, crappy entertainers, spin-art vendors — and don't forget the Bubbleman — to catch a glimpse of the ocean.

The City Council approved an interim ordinance at Tuesday's council meeting that could turn Main Street and Montana Avenue into two big swap meets. Both avenues already have narrow sidewalks crowded with news racks, poles, parking meters, fireplugs, trees and other municipal accouterments.

City staff has suggested approving even more flotsam to make 8- to 12-foot wide

sidewalks harder to navigate. The staff report says this will "enhance the streetscape and enliven the pedestrian experience." "Enliven" is right, especially while tripping over some merchant's inventory.

To top it off, staff urged immediate passage because "There exists a current and immediate threat to the public safety, health, and welfare should this interim ordinance not be adopted." Huh? The lack of sidewalk junk is a threat to public safety?

This is a bad ordinance that might be nearly impossible to enforce. And it has the potential for lots of abuse by merchants out to make an extra buck. This will come back in the near future as a permanent ordinance, and it should be rejected once and for all.

Swap-meet clutter on the public right-of-way does nothing to attract business to local merchants or make sidewalks safer.

If City Hall was really serious about "preserving the economic vitality of local businesses," it would start by doing something about aggressive panhandlers, vagrants and street drunks which they continue to pretend don't exist.

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

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

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LOCAL



School district plan to be discussed Jan. 27

PROPOSAL, from page 1

taxes on hotel rooms to widen the revenue stream funneled into City Hall, thereby increasing school funding.

"There is a threat out there, and I consider it just that, of getting an item on the ballot to force us to give money every year on a long-term basis," Katz said at the Tuesday meeting. "I think that is totally destructive. I'd like to see it stopped — because it will do nothing but divide this town. Whoever wins will not win."

While buying and leasing school property will likely require voters to approve a higher tax and may be difficult to push forward, Feinstein said it's a sound approach.

"I believe that's the high road, that is the community building road, that's the righteous thing for everybody," he said. "Let's save the bed tax for later. That's easier. There's always going to be more things the residents are going to want out of city government."

The discussion came early this year — the budget isn't adopted until next summer and community priorities aren't discussed until next month — because council members have grown weary of being asked for extra cash by the district.

The City Council gives \$3 million each year to the district in exchange for the use of its facilities. For several years, the council also has given millions of dollars more at the last minute, when schools are desperate to find money or face cutting programs.

Council members asked City Hall staffers to return with more information about a possible long-term contract, whether property values need to be evaluated and which properties would be of use to the community.

Current properties being discussed include the Santa Monica High School football field, where underground parking could be built and thereby negate the need for a massive parking garage approved for behind the courthouse, the Santa Monica College Madison Campus, where underground parking could be built with a park on top and the school district headquarters, which could be moved downtown to expand the adjacent Memorial Park. Another 19 properties also are expected to be looked at under the proposal.

The heads of the Committee for Excellent Public Schools could not be reached for comment. Treasurer Graham Pope and steering committee member Laura Rosenthal declined to comment, saying they didn't feel qualified to discuss the status of the committee's proposal.

But former mayor and committee member Denny Zane said he was encouraged by the council's direction. He said even if the council's proposal moves forward, it's still too soon to say if the group will push its proposal to take a set percentage of City Hall's money.

"Whatever's happening is in process and when it gets to a conclusion there will be an opportunity for the people assigned to speak, to speak," Zane added.

City Councilwoman Pam O'Connor said it's important City Hall not be tied to giving huge amounts of money because it, too, is

facing a deficit and further uncertainties.

Mayor Richard Bloom said schools are important, but so are social service programs for youth and others, as well as environmental programs and senior services.

"Our children span great culture and economic divides ... but they all have one thing in common. They rely on us to prepare them for the future."

— MARIA RODRIGUEZ
Council president,
Parent Teacher Association

"In many areas the things we do are important to us as a community and we can't afford to lose our focus," Bloom said.

Six members of the public spoke out on the matter. Some praised the council for its support of schools and others asked it to remember other duties.

Lauralee Asch, president of the Coalition of Santa Monica City Employees, a group of non-sworn police department worker unions, urged the council to be cautious of devoting discretionary funds to the school district.

"The uncertainty of future city revenue growth makes the decision to guarantee continued funding of the schools at current or greater levels a very big financial risk," she said. "We take this opportunity to remind you that there is no statutory mandate obligating, you the city, to fund local schools and that, ultimately, California's failed system for funding public education can only be fixed in Sacramento, not in Santa Monica."

Other city employees agreed.

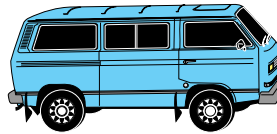
"Local government cannot provide a meaningful long-term solution to a statewide problem and we think that we should all be working together to ensure that Sacramento does the job that we hired them to do," said Shane Talbot, president of the Police Officers Association, a union for sworn police officers. Talbot added that state officials will quickly rely on cities and counties to continue shouldering the burden.

School supporters at the meeting kept their remarks upbeat, praising the council for past work it's done and asking council members to remember the children.

"As a community we need to continue to support the work of our excellent public schools," said Maria Rodriguez, council president of the district's Parent Teacher Association. "Our children span great culture and economic divides ... but they all have one thing in common. They rely on us to prepare them for the future."

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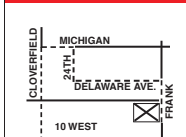


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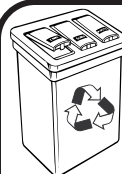


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LOCAL

Activist changes name

RUBIN, from page 1

Rubin said he was gratified that the court decided to allow the change, especially because Haber had expressed reservations when he heard Rubin's request on Dec. 11, also Rubin's 60th birthday.

"He had said it might be problematic," said Rubin, who sells peace-themed bumper stickers on the Third Street Promenade, and is a regular fixture at local meetings and events. "(Judge Haber) gave reasons such as that it might open up another can of worms, where other people might want to do something similar.

"I guess he decided to do it — better late than never," added Rubin, who said later, "There's a responsibility that goes with this name and I feel honored."

Rubin lost his bid for a seat on the Santa Monica City Council in 2000 and pulled out of the 2002 race just days before the election, citing personal reasons. He said he was waiting until January to decide if he'll run again in 2004, when he plans to hold a public meeting on the matter to gauge community interest.

Meanwhile, his lawsuit against City Hall has lost at every court level. James Fosbinder, Rubin's First Amendment lawyer, appealed the case straight up to the Supreme Court, who refused to hear it in October.

Rubin who had to scrape together \$350 to change his name, said he'll look next to State Sen. Sheila Kuehl and Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, and ask them to work towards adjusting the wording of the state law, which prohibits status positions, including "husband," "wife" and "activist" from being used as an occupation on the ballot.

"It seems that there should be some

legislative way to do that," Rubin said.

In the meantime, local officials aren't expected to allow Rubin to put "peace activist" under his name without permission from above.

**"There's a responsibility
that goes with this name
and I feel honored."**

— JERRY PEACE ACTIVIST RUBIN
Peace activist

Deputy City Attorney Lance Gams, who handled Rubin's case, has said City Hall has the backing of "state-authored guidelines and has acted properly, fairly and reasonably with regard to Rubin and the administration of its election procedures."

The formal name change makes legal what for years has been printed in the Santa Monica phone book. Rubin, who lives with his wife in Ocean Park, said he listed himself as "peace activist" as his middle name to avoid confusion with other Rubins in the area.

And for further clarification, "Jerry Peace Activist Rubin" is not the famous Jerry Rubin who was a peace activist in the 1960s.

On Thursday, Rubin was already in motion, formalizing his new legal identity.

"Right after this call, the first thing I'm going to do is change my voter registration," he said. "This is kind of a belated birthday gift to me, but it's nice to have it done during the holiday of peace."

Hundreds of thousands killed each year by drunk drivers

CRACKDOWN, from page 1

money on bail and towing fees instead of holiday gifts."

After a decade of gradual success, fatalities in alcohol-related crashes have not significantly improved nationally in the last three years. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimated that alcohol-related fatalities rose slightly from 17,000 in 2001 to 17,419 in 2002. An estimated 258,000 people were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present — an average of one person injured about every two minutes.

Studies show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, police said. Nearly 97 of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans support increased use of enforcement efforts like saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints. Also, two-thirds of Americans endorse stricter and more severe penalties against drunk drivers, police said.

DID YOU KNOW?: Los Angeles has the Nation's largest population of Native American Indians, over 150,000. The Satwiwa Cultural Center serves to preserve all these diverse Indian cultures found in Southern California as a learning institution.



STATE



Medicinal marijuana decision doesn't sanction pot sales to the sick

BY DAVID KRAVETS
AP Legal Affairs Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — A decision by a federal appeals court here approving the use and cultivation of medical marijuana did not address the broader question of whether medical marijuana can be bought and sold.

That issue, the next legal battle in the medical marijuana movement, still is pending before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. A three-judge panel of the same court ruled Tuesday that a congressional act outlawing marijuana can not apply in states with laws permitting sick people to use marijuana with a doctor's recommendation.

In Tuesday's ruling, the appeals court said prosecuting medical marijuana users under a 1970 federal drug law is unconstitutional if the marijuana isn't sold, transported across state lines or used for non-medicinal purposes.

The court, in explaining its reasoning, said states were free to experiment with their own laws and that the Constitution's Commerce Clause forbade federal intervention because the laws at issue did not impact commerce outside a state's boundaries.

"That means people could cultivate and consume cannabis for medical purposes free of federal interference, subject to state law," said Randy Barnett, a Boston University constitutional law scholar.

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Nevada, Oregon and Washington state have laws that allow persons to grow, smoke or use medical marijuana with a doctor's recommendation.

The Drug Enforcement Administration, refusing to recognize medical marijuana laws, has raided several California patients' backyards, along with pot clubs that sell marijuana to the sick. Most clubs, the only avenue by which many patients can obtain marijuana, have gone underground for fear of being raided.

California's 7-year-old medical marijuana law, the nation's first, does not expressly allow the sale of marijuana, but authorities in San Francisco, Oakland, Santa Cruz and elsewhere have tacitly allowed clubs to operate.

The Justice Department declined comment on whether it would appeal Tuesday's decision. The ruling was the first time the federal Controlled Substances Act, which outlaws marijuana, heroin, LSD and other drugs, was declared unconstitutional as applied to medical marijuana.

"We are currently reviewing the court's ruling," Justice Department spokesman Charles Miller said. "No determination has been made as to what our next step will be."

Jeff Jones, director of the Oakland

Cannabis Buyer's Cooperative, said the 9th Circuit panel's decision could bolster his bid to resume selling pot to the sick. Federal authorities shut the club down several years ago.

"We feel our case is more ripe now for an interpretation that creates affordable and safe access for these patients," Jones said.

"We are currently reviewing the court's ruling. No determination has been made as to what our next step will be."

— CHARLES MILLER
Justice Department spokesman

The government first began cracking down on medical marijuana under the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration has continued the policy. The federal government maintains marijuana has no medical benefits, but patients suffering from cancer and other serious ailments say it relieves pain and nausea when no other drugs can.

The Oakland cooperative has a lawsuit pending before the San Francisco-based 9th Circuit that it hopes will resolve the remaining legal questions that make it difficult for patients to obtain marijuana legally. In 2001, the Supreme Court said the Oakland club could not sell marijuana based on the "medical necessity" of sick and dying customers.

Ruling against the club at the time, Justice Clarence Thomas pointed out that the court addressed only the medical necessity argument, but not other legal issues central to the debate, including Congress' ability to interfere with intrastate commerce, the right of states to experiment with their own laws and whether Americans have a fundamental right to marijuana as an avenue to be pain free. Justice Thomas wrote that the court would not decide those "underlying constitutional issues today."

Robert Raich, an attorney representing the Oakland cooperative, said the club has taken Thomas' statement to heart. The cooperative's case pending before the San Francisco appeals court, he said, addresses the issues the Supreme Court dodged two years ago.

"We took their invitation and are bringing back another case," Raich said.

A decision in that case is expected here any day.

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State lawmakers move to protect military bases

BY ERICA WERNER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Moving to protect California's military bases, the state's congressional delegation is asking Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to consider factors favorable to the state during the next round of base closures.

The Defense Department must publish draft criteria for the closures, set for 2005, by the end of December.

A letter, signed by more than 40 Republicans and Democrats in California's 55-member delegation, was being sent to Rumsfeld Thursday.

It asks him to consider several factors that could weigh against closing California bases, include recognizing the role that skilled civilian workers in California play on bases; increasing consideration given to base functions important to homeland security; and considering the "disproportionate contribution our state has already made to the streamlining of the military's base infrastructure."

"We believe the upcoming (base realignment and closure) round should not force California to shoulder more than its fair share of cuts," the letter says. "California was particularly hard-hit by the prior closures."

The state lost more than 20 bases in four rounds of closures between 1988 and 1995; 97 bases nationwide were eliminated during that time. The state now has dozens of major military installations that employ more than 165,000 military and civilian personnel.

Nationwide there are about 425 major military installations. Defense experts have said the Pentagon could close more than 100 bases, but a Department of Defense spokesman cautioned that there is no target number of bases to close, and no list yet exists of bases that are at risk.

"All bases will be looked at," said the spokesman, Glenn Flood. "Our decision will be made after thorough analysis and information-gathering and the whole bit."

Installations most likely to be targeted include those that perform single functions. Several installations in California are thought to be at risk, including Los Angeles Air Force Base in El Segundo, which houses a Space and Missile Systems Center that develops missiles, rockets and satellites; the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow, a maintenance depot; and the Defense Language Institute in Monterey.

California can count on help from powerful members of Congress including Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Alpine, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and Rep. Jerry Lewis, R-Redlands, head of the defense subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

"Mr. Lewis believes that some California bases will certainly be on a proposed base closure list simply because there are a number of bases in the state that have been on past lists and then taken off," said Lewis spokesman Jim Specht, adding Lewis will work to protect them.

Lewis and Hunter did not sign the letter because they sit on committees dealing with the issue.

Reps. Sam Farr, D-Carmel, and Jane Harman, D-Venice, both of whom have installations in their district they want to protect, took the lead in gathering support for the letter. Harman's district includes the Los Angeles Air Force Base.

"Any calculation of the cost of a base closure must include the cost of disrupting the synergistic relationship between base and private sector, and having to recreate it elsewhere," Harman said in a statement. "On this score, in my view, California bases — including the LAAFB — would come out on top."

Town selling on eBay for \$5.5M

By The Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. — Tortilla Flat, a little spot of land in Arizona home to a few wood buildings near the Salt River Lakes, is for sale on the Internet for \$5.5 million.

Advertised as one of the "last remnants of the Old West," the town's listing on eBay has received more than 6,500 hits.

Dave Levi has shared ownership of the town and its well-known restaurant for five years with his sister and brother-in-law, Pam and Alvin Ross. But Levi said he and his partners are testing the waters by putting it up for sale.

"I'm getting too old for this stuff, plus (the Ross's) have their kids and grandkids back home," said Levi, 54.

Nestled in the Superstition Mountains about 18 miles northeast of Apache Junction on winding state Route 88, the restaurant offers prickly pear cactus ice cream, half-pound cowboy burgers and saddle seating at the bar.

"That little place is just like running a city. It's a young man or young couple's business. That's a lot of hours," Levi said.

With the purchase of one's very own historic Arizona town, which was settled as crews constructed the road to the Roosevelt Dam, comes old traditions that just won't die.

When the Roosevelt Dam was still

under construction in the early 1900s, the road between Tortilla Flat and the dam often flooded, stranding construction workers or family members in town.

To ensure they had funds to eat and buy supplies, they would leave cash with their names signed on it behind the restaurant bar.

Today, instead of leaving the money behind the bar, thousands of signed \$1 bills and currency from around the world are calling cards of visitors, decorating the restaurant and gift shop.

The town has also proven its mettle, surviving floods and fires over the years.

In August 1942, a flood wiped out the town at its peak of 125 residents. While no one was killed, most of the buildings were destroyed.

A 1987 fire destroyed the motel and the restaurant. The restaurant was rebuilt in 1988 with wood from old barns and other structures in Apache Junction to keep the Old West feel.

Tortilla Flat is popular among motorcycle riders, Phoenix residents seeking a day-trip getaway and also attracts thousands of visitors from around the world.

"It's enjoyable," Levi said. "Sometimes it's hectic, but all in all, it's pretty fun."

The land on which the town sits is leased from the U.S. Forest Service.

The 20-year transferrable lease, now in its third year, is included in the sale.

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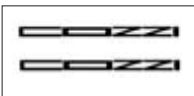
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Entertainment

‘Calendar girls’ is a movie that is sharp, witty and raw

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

Julie Walters and Helen Mirren lead an excellent ensemble cast in this feel-good film inspired by the true story of a group of middle-aged women from a small English village who became an international sensation after posing nude for a charity calendar. Directed by relative newcomer Nigel Cole from a screenplay by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth, “Calendar Girls” boasts an appealing British sensibility and echoes the uplifting themes that made “Billy Elliott” a surprise hit state-

side a few years back. It’s a great-looking film as well, owing to the considerable talents of Academy Award-winning production designer Martin Childs (“Shakespeare In Love”).

Chris (Mirren) and Annie (Walters) are two very different peas living happily together in the same bucolic pod. But when Annie’s husband John (John Alderton) dies of leukemia, the best friends’ well-ordered lives are turned upside down. Active in a local Women’s Institute group, Chris enlists some of her fellow WI members to appear in a calendar that will honor John’s memory and raise money for the local hospital. The catch is, she wants them to appear in the buff. After a bit of cajoling the calendar girls bare all, and before you can say “Happy New Year,” their tiny Yorkshire Dales village is besieged by the international media. Record sales and a whirlwind publicity tour ensues, culminating with a trip to LA and an appearance on “The Tonight Show.”

Adapting a true story such as this one is rife with challenges, and Cole and his writers deftly negotiate around several potential stumbling blocks. They avoid patronizing the characters and, more importantly, letting the narrative veer towards mawkishness. The humor is sharp, the tragedy raw, and the resolve of the women unwavering. The cast is up to the challenge, as well, letting it all hang out to demonstrate that sex appeal has no age limit.

(Rated PG-13 for nudity, some language and drug-related material. Running time: 108 minutes)

What’s Playing

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

THE RETURN OF THE KING

This film, the best of the year, seals the deal: Director Peter Jackson has delivered the most spectacular film trilogy of all-time.

SOMETHING’S GOTTA GIVE

If you enjoy lots of jokes about May-December romances and erectile dysfunction, this is the film for you.

STUCK ON YOU

Contains several laugh-out-loud moments and some surprisingly deft comedic performances.

IN AMERICA

An inescapably moving elegy about pain and loss and hope and renewal that unabashedly wears its broken heart on its tattered sleeve.

THE LAST SAMURAI

An entertaining film, but highly derivative of superior antecedents such as “Dances With Wolves” and “Unforgiven.”

HONEY

With Jessica Alba leading the way, it’s only a matter of time before the Crips and the Bloods trade in their colors and guns for tap shoes and ballet slippers.

THE CAT IN THE HAT

The cinematic equivalent of a massive flea infestation. For the crime they committed against Seuss’ compact classic, everyone associated with this film should be neutered without anesthesia.

THE HAUNTED MANSION

Even the best CGI wizardry cannot compensate for shoddy storytelling, which is precisely what haunts “The Haunted Mansion.”

THE MISSING

Ron Howard had the key elements of an extraordinary film at his disposal — great premise, cast — yet, frustratingly, it never quite realizes its potential.

BAD SANTA

If you’re game for a little R-rated Christmas fun, this is a great holiday gift, all wrapped up in F-bombs and slaughtered sacred cows.

TIMELINE

Quite possibly the most unintentionally funny film of the year.

SHATTERED GLASS

Strong film that meticulously connects the dots of the real events surrounding New Republic writer Stephen Glass’ incredible fall from grace.

ELF

A fantastic early Christmas present for moviegoers of all ages. Will Ferrell is one of the very best comedic actors working today.

LOVE ACTUALLY

Ten different storylines running concurrently is too hard to follow, especially when only half of them are all that interesting.



Kirsten Dunst and Jordan Bridges in “Mona Lisa Smile.”

Julia Roberts explains who she is and why

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

There are all sorts of battles raging in “Mona Lisa Smile,” as the establishment at Wellesley College doggedly defends the status quo against “subversive” influences over the minds of the best and brightest young ladies in 1950s America. Julia Roberts is the feminist heroine in director Mike Newell’s ambitious period piece — a resolute art history professor who challenges her impressionable charges to question authority, reexamine gender roles, explore sexual independence and eschew cultural conformity. As we learned in similar fare such as “Dead Poet’s Society,” she’s got her work cut out for her. But somehow, some way, you just know that Julia is going to win. Julia Roberts, it seems, always wins.

She sat down recently with a group of tape-recorder-toting scribes to chat up her latest picture.

QUESTION: The film is set in the Eisenhower era. Did you do much research on the period to prepare for the role of Katherine Watson?

JULIA ROBERTS: I watched some very nice documentaries on the ‘50s, which I thought were very informative. The ‘50s are kind of this unheralded decade — the ‘60s overpowered it in coolness. The ‘50s were an interesting period of time in which our culture became ruled by television and advertising. You were defined by the appliances you had, and it’s interesting to me that people measured their worth that way.



Julia Roberts

Q: Your character encourages her students to break from the rigid traditions held dear by the establishment at Wellesley. Would you consider yourself a maverick or a traditionalist?

JR: Somewhere in between. Certain traditions and a sense of continuity are glorious when applied to life. This particular school represented loyalty to tradition and

should be appreciated.

Q: Why is there such a persistent fascination with movies about the teaching profession?

JR: It’s an environment that we’re all perfectly familiar with, for one thing. Also, it offers a good structure for presenting conflict and personalities in a very clear way.

Q: Did any of your teachers growing up make a lasting impression on you the way Katherine did on her students?

JR: We didn’t have a theater department where I went to school, so there really was no mentor figure there. I look at it as a positive that no one really took much interest in me. Everything forms you, even if you don’t have some genius person who came down and enveloped you with self-confidence. To be ignored can shape you as well as being lauded, I suppose.

Q: Are you telling us that you were ignored in school, Julia?

JR: I’m not saying I was ignored, per se. I just didn’t have someone who necessarily saw some untapped potential in me, and made me feel as though I had some bright future ahead.

Q: Over the years, you’ve used your celebrity to help out with a number of good causes. How motivates you to want to give as much as you do?

JR: As much as it’s great to have the tool of celebrity to bring attention to things, it’s nice when celebrities help out in ways that they keep to themselves. Because it’s not about everyone knowing how philanthropic you are, it’s just about being that way.

ENTERTAINMENT

'The Cooler' hot on screen

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

"The Cooler" premiered at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival, and sparked a bidding war so intense that numerous studio execs reportedly were willing to sell their souls for the distribution rights ... if they still had souls, that is. It's easy to understand why, because tyro writer-director Wayne Kramer's lowdown on the desperate lives of lost souls in Las Vegas is easily one of the best bets this year. Like a vintage smoking jacket, "The Cooler" makes us feel hep and mysterious when we slide it on. It's a dirty nail of a picture that generously scratches that lingering itch for the hard-luck stories of Everyman.

William H. Macy may very well have been put on this earth to play Bernie Lootz, a dyspeptic serial loser so unlucky, his mere presence can cool off the hottest gaming tables on The Strip. His almost surreal misfortune makes Bernie a valuable commodity to his old pal Shelly Kaplow (Alec Baldwin), an old school manager of the timeworn Shangri-La casino with a penchant for breaking kneecaps. Bernie's spent many years in Shelly's coerced employ, paying off a massive gambling tab by cooling off gamblers at the Shangri-La. But with only a week to go before the debt is finally square, Bernie has his sights set on leaving Las Vegas behind. Shelly, however, isn't about to give up his unlucky charm easily, especially with a hotshot young consultant (Ron Livingston) brought in by the casino investors breathing down his neck. Enter Natalie (Maria Bello), a sexy



William H. Macy in "The Cooler."

cocktail waitress who doubles-down on Bernie's blackjack heart and comes up aces. With love comes good fortune for Bernie — or so it seems until the surprising denouement.

Macy is one of the finest actors in the business, and here, he gives as good as he ever has. Equally impressive are the inspired performances of Baldwin and Bello, who make the most of their complex roles. It begins as a gritty movie about sad saps stuck in a bad way, but in the end "The Cooler" ups the ante and becomes an uplifting testament to the transformative power of love.

(Rated R for strong sexuality, violence, language and some drug use. Running time: 101 minutes)

'Barbarian Invasion' has talent that makes the film

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

In "The Barbarian Invasions," accomplished French-Canadian filmmaker Denys Arcand reunites the characters from his most celebrated release, 1987's "The Decline of the American Empire," in an emotionally charged, and often hilarious tale about a dying man who reconnects with old friends and his estranged son.

Rémy (Rémy Girard) is a history professor with a storied sexual past whose body is being ravaged by cancer. Having been given a death sentence, it appears Rémy will spend his final days in a bleak, overcrowded hospital ward surrounded by his jilted but still-loving ex-wife (Dorothee Berryman), the near-dead, and thieves. Upon the arrival of his wealthy investment banker son Sébastien (Stéphane Rousseau), who Rémy hasn't seen in years, father and son are forced to confront their many differences. Though bitter, Sébastien pours his heart into making Rémy's remaining time as comfortable as possible — securing a private hospital room, reuniting his father with his old circle of friends, and enlisting a shattered but beautiful heroin addict (Marie-Josée Croze, whose performance garnered the Best Actress award at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival) to help dull the pain.



Stéphane Rousseau and Rémy Girard in "The Barbarian Invasions."

Arcand is a very smart writer, and he arms Rémy with an arsenal of strong opinions that make for some entertaining diatribes as the old man stumps about what he perceives to be humankind's many shortcomings. It's moving to watch as the ice slowly melts and unexpected tenderness emerges between Rémy and Sébastien. Rousseau, one of Canada's most popular comedians, acquires himself nicely in his first dramatic role, and Croze is altogether fantastic.

(Rated R for language, sexual dialogue and drug content. Running time: 99 minutes)



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NATIONAL

Relatives of Ridgway's victims decry the evil of Green River Killer

BY GENE JOHNSON
Associated Press Writer

SEATTLE — One after another, with an eloquence honed by decades of grief and waiting, relatives of the women that Green River Killer Gary Ridgway murdered told him Thursday of the loss, hurt and emptiness he caused.

"Gary Ridgway is an evil creature who I would condemn to many, many long years of anguish and despair," Nancy Gabbert, mother of victim Sandra Gabbert, told the court and Ridgway at his sentencing.

"No matter what you say, I will never, ever, ever forgive you," said Sarah King, the daughter of victim Carol Christensen, whose body was found May 8, 1983.

"I'm glad you didn't get death," she said, crying as she stared at Ridgway. "Death is too good for you. Someday you will die and you'll go to that place and you'll get what you deserve."

Ridgway, who confessed last month to strangling 48 women over the past two decades, watched each family member as they spoke at his sentencing. While their voices shook and sometimes broke with sadness and rage, Ridgway maintained a stony, blank stare, though he sometimes nodded at their comments and a few times, dabbed away a tear that slipped out beneath his dark-rimmed glasses.

"It was not your right to decide who lived and who died," said Tim Meehan, the brother of Mary Meehan, whose body was found Nov. 13, 1983. "Mary was no less a human being than your mother or your son, or as trash as you have classified all the victims."

"I'm done with you, Gary, finished," he said. "It's my turn to put you, the garbage, out, and throw away the key. It's garbage like you, not these victims that you took their lives, that doesn't deserve to live on."

"I can only hope that someday, someone, gets the opportunity to choke you unconscious 48 times. So you can live through the horror that you put our mothers and our daughters through ... To me you are already dead."

Kathy Mills, the mother of victim Opal Mills, 16, whose body was found Aug. 15, 1982, was able to offer Ridgway her forgiveness.

"We wanted to see you die, but it's all going to be over now," said Kathy Mills, "Gary Leon Ridgway, I forgive you. I forgive you. You can't hold me anymore. I'm through with you. I have a peace that is beyond human understanding."

Ridgway, 54, has been convicted of more murders than any serial killer in U.S. history. As Thursday's hearing started, assistant prosecutor Brian McDonald read Ridgway's guilty pleas and the mandatory sentence of life in prison without the possibility of release or parole. Prosecutors agreed not to seek the death penalty as part of a plea deal with Ridgway.

Several relatives of the victims lashed out at prosecutors, investigators and the news media.

"I believe we've been sold by the prosecutor for not giving us the justice that we

could expect," said Helen Dexter, whose daughter Constance Elizabeth Naon was killed in 1983.

"I believe we still are victimized by some very politically ambitious careers," she said. "The self-proclaimed heroes have put the victims and their families on a shelf."

J. Norman, the mother of Shawnda Leea Summers, whose body was found Aug. 11, 1983, said prosecutors should not have bargained with the death penalty to get Ridgway's guilty plea.

"The politicians, if they cared about this heinous crime, it would have been solved 20 years ago," Norman said. "There shouldn't have been no plea bargain."

"Come to Seattle, commit a crime and you can bargain if you want to live or die," she said. "Shame on Seattle."

Tony Savage, one of Ridgway's lawyers, has said he expects his client to apologize during the hearing.

As he entered the courthouse for Ridgway's sentencing, King County Sheriff Dave Reichert, one of the first detectives to investigate the killings in the early 1980s, said he wouldn't put much credence in any remorse Ridgway might show.

"I think that there is a piece of him that has always wanted to be cared for or loved or seen as a normal person," Reichert said. "But he's not been able to do that and so I think that's his attempt at having somebody at least recognize he's a human being and that he'd like to be treated as someone who's a part of the community."

"But that's all an act. He can't really figure that out. He's obviously very dysfunctional. He's a psychopath and a pathological liar."

Relatives of 21 of Ridgway's victims were to address King County Superior Court Judge Richard Jones. The court set aside a second day for Ridgway's sentencing in case relatives needed more time.

Ridgway pleaded guilty Nov. 5 to 48 counts of aggravated first-degree murder. In his confession, Ridgway said he killed because he hated prostitutes and didn't want to pay them for sex; that he dumped their bodies in the Green River and other inconspicuous parts of King County; and that he killed so many women he had a hard time keeping them straight.

Ridgway was arrested Nov. 30, 2001, after detectives linked his DNA to sperm found in three of the earliest victims. By spring 2002, prosecutors had charged him with seven murders, but they had all but given up hope of linking him to the dozens of other women, most of whom disappeared during a terrifying stretch from 1982-84.

Last spring, defense attorneys offered King County Prosecutor Norm Maleng a deal: If Maleng would not seek the death penalty, Ridgway would help solve those other cases. Though Maleng had previously said he would not bargain with the death penalty, he changed his mind, saying that a strong principle of justice is to know the truth.

Ridgway cooperated, eventually confessing to 48 murders — the most recent in 1998 — and leading investigators to four previously undiscovered sets of remains.

NATIONAL



Critics: Plan to cut deficit ignores long-term budget crunch

BY ALAN FRAM
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Bush's goal of halving this year's projected \$500 billion deficit by 2009 distracts from the more serious crunch the government faces later as the huge baby boom generation ages, critics say.

"Is it achievable? Yes," said Robert Reischauer, former head of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office who is now president of the Urban Institute. "Is it likely to occur? No. Is it sustainable? Probably not, because the world turns worse" at the end of this decade.

That is when the 76 million baby boomers will begin drawing on Medicare and other costly income support programs, likely pushing federal deficits ever higher.

Administration officials say they want a deficit in 2009 that is half of this year's level, which White House budget chief Joshua Bolten has said he expects to hit \$500 billion.

Achieving a \$250 billion deficit in five years, however, could take hundreds of billions in savings, a difficult political task.

Bush will seek to cut the deficit in his \$2.3 trillion budget request for 2005. He will send it to Congress in February, nine months from the presidential and congressional elections.

White House officials deny talk on Capitol Hill that they might define their goal as halving the deficit's percentage share of the U.S. economy in five years. This year's \$500 billion deficit represents 4.4 percent of the economy. That would make their target 2009 deficit 2.2 percent of that year's economy, or about \$320 billion, leaving their task \$70 billion easier.

When the budget year ended Sept. 30, the deficit was \$374 billion, the highest ever in dollar terms. Administration officials say a more important measure is how the shortfall compares with the size of economy, with last year's 3.5 percent share far below the 6 percent post-World War II peak of 1983.

"We can cut the deficit in half by 2009 by any number

of standards, though we feel the deficit as a percentage of" the economy "is the most economically relevant measure," said White House budget office spokesman Chad Kolton.

White House officials say Bush will rely chiefly on two strategies. He will propose extending tax cuts that would otherwise expire, which they say will spur the economy, and seek to limit the growth of spending that Congress must approve each year, probably to 4 percent or less.

"We're working with Congress to hold the line on spending," Bush said Monday. "And we do have a plan to cut the deficit in half."

The goal is backed by many Republicans, at least as a starting point. But conservatives want a bolder move against the record deficits and big spending increases that the administration has run up.

"It's a rather anemic goal, actually," said Stephen Moore, president of the conservative Club for Growth. "We should be talking about how to balance the budget."

Democrats say that even if Bush achieves his objective, he would leave huge shortfalls because he has driven deficits so high. Bush took office when large surpluses were projected for the foreseeable future. But the forecast has since been dashed by recession, the costs of fighting terrorism and wars, and tax cuts.

"Now that they've created the biggest deficits in American history, they say we'll have half a hole rather than a full hole, and they want credit for a victory," said Thomas Kahn, Democratic staff director of the House Budget Committee.

A \$250 billion deficit would be the fifth highest on record in dollar terms. A \$320 billion shortfall would be the second worst.

With projections that the economy will strengthen, deficits are expected to gradually improve after this year.

The Congressional Budget Office projected in August that after peaking at \$480 billion this year, the gap would

drop to \$170 billion by 2009 — if new tax cuts are enacted and spending grows only at the rate of inflation.

Those assumptions already have proved false. Since August, Congress has expanded Medicare, creating prescription drug coverage and improvements in veterans' benefits. They are expected to add \$52 billion to the deficit in 2009.

Other costly proposals in the works include Bush's plan to extend expiring tax cuts; a revision of the alternative minimum tax to prevent middle-income earners from paying it; and energy legislation already passed by the House.

If, along with those items, spending controlled by Congress grows at the average 7.7 percent annual rate seen since 1998, the resulting 2009 deficit would be \$666 billion, G. William Hoagland, budget aide to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., warned senators in a recent memo.

That would mean \$416 billion in budget savings would be needed to reduce that year's red ink to \$250 billion.

If congressionally approved spending grows only at the rate of inflation, the 2009 deficit would be \$432 billion, Hoagland wrote.

Lawmakers have shown little taste for such a small increase. If they did — and that would mean no unforeseen expenses like new wars — it would still require \$182 billion in 2009 savings.

Acknowledged House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle, R-Iowa, who supports Bush's goal, "It's not an easy lift."

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NATIONAL

Jews keep Hanukkah low key during Christmas hub bub

HANUKKAH, from page 1

the Jewish holiday, also known as the "Festival of Lights." "I didn't want to do a big party because it glorifies it too much."

Hanukkah is the third-most observed Jewish holiday in the United States behind Passover and Yom Kippur, according to surveys, but it is less significant under Jewish law than those two holidays and four others, including the weekly Sabbath and Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year.

Hanukkah commemorates how Jews reclaimed the defiled Jerusalem Temple from a Syrian despot in 165 B.C., and how one-day's worth of ritual oil that the Jews found miraculously burned for eight days.

The holiday is celebrated by lighting a menorah, or candelabra, for eight nights. Gift-giving is traditionally part of Hanukkah, too, but the custom is for children to receive coins — real or chocolate — called gelt.

That changed in the United States when Jewish immigrants, eager to adapt to American culture, took notice of secular Christmas traditions and began incorporating them into their own celebrations.

Terri Bernsohn, a religious school administrator, remembered being told as a child that Hanukkah gifts were from a Santa equivalent called "Hanukkah Herman." Her parents even put up a small, white Christmas tree with blue ornaments. (Blue is a color associated

"I try to keep Hanukkah low key because, when I was a kid, it was very low key. All I got was chocolate."

— DEBORAH FREEMAN
Jewish

with Jewish observance.)

"I don't remember it being called a Hanukkah bush, but many families had them," said Bernsohn, of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston, Ill.

Americans of other faiths have also played a role in the holiday hype, promoting Hanukkah in an effort to honor religious diversity, said Samuel Heilman, a sociologist at the City University of New York and an expert on American Judaism.

"There was a recognition that December might not just be the Christmas season," Heilman said. (Determined by a lunar calendar, the Jewish festival usually falls between late November and December.)

Advertisers took note and began promoting the holiday, and Hanukkah started looking a bit more like a visit from St. Nick.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, a scholar and author, said that his father once worked for a company that produced Hanukkah toys and candles, and the closer the two holidays fell, the more business the company did.

"It's become part of the American

economy," said Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, executive vice president of the Orthodox Union, which represents more than 1,000 North American synagogues.

Weinreb said "tasteful" gift giving does not violate the religious message of the holiday, but decried the "crassness" and "commercialism" that characterized some celebrations.

Certainly, exchanging presents other than chocolate coins has become the norm at Hanukkah, mimicking Christmas gift giving.

The Wordsworth bookstore in Cambridge, Mass., has steadily increased its stock of Hanukkah items in the past several years. Their products range from plastic dreidls — the four-sided tops that are used to play Hanukkah games — to menorahs styled like choo-choo trains.

"We're finding there's more of a demand for it," said Colby Cedar Smith, a store spokeswoman.

Items inspired by Christmas decorations are among the traditional silver menorahs and chocolate coins for sale on jewehsource.com, said Rabbi Herschel

Strauss, who founded the mail-order business 32 years ago.

One example is a Hanukkah banner similar to "Merry Christmas" banners people post in windows. One of his best-selling items years ago was a Star of David decoration with "Christmas-like lights," he said.

While Strauss occasionally hears complaints about these products from some of his more religious customers, he sees no danger in Jews buying the decorations.

"They want the spirit, the fun and the joy of it," said Strauss, who is Orthodox. "Jews have always, historically, from my perspective, taken and adapted from local cultures — and vice versa."

Bernsohn, a mother of three teenagers, said her family tries to avoid playing up the holiday by limiting the number of gifts they exchange and incorporating charity into the celebration, either by donating money or bringing her children to work in a soup kitchen.

Deborah Freeman, who is Jewish and married to a Roman Catholic, celebrates both holidays with their 17-year-old daughter, but gives only small gifts each night of the Jewish festival in keeping with tradition.

"I try to keep Hanukkah low key because, when I was a kid, it was very low key. All I got was chocolate," said Freeman, of Brooklyn, N.Y. "Just because it happens to fall in December, doesn't give it more significance than it deserves."

SANTA MONICA SCENE °CALENDAR EDITION

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2003

EVENTS

Santa Claus at the Pier

Santa Claus will be on the Santa Monica Pier on Saturday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. with musical friends. The Samohi Chamber Orchestra will perform, as well as a local choir, while Santa listens to wishes and radiates with seasonal spirit.

CULTURE

Kitty Claws & The Magic of Dreaming

The Miles Memorial Playhouse presents Kitty Claws and The Magic of Dreaming tonight at 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$12 for adults and \$8 for children. For more information or ticket reservations, call 1-888-566-2442. 1130 Lincoln Blvd.

Loose Ends

The Santa Monica Airport Playhouse presents the play, Loose Ends, tonight at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$20 for adults and \$15 for students and seniors. For more information or reservations, call (310) 397-3244. 3000 Airport Ave.

Noises Off

The Santa Monica High School Theatre presents Noises Off, a British comedy revealing the behind-the-scenes interactions of a theater troupe while they perform. For the set, designers have build a rotating platform to display both the real play and the "sub-play." Tickets cost \$15 and

can be reserved by calling (310) 458-5939. The play will begin at 8 p.m. Samohi Humanities Center Theater, English Building, Second Floor, 601 Pico Blvd.

Twelfth Night

The Powerhouse Theatre presents the drama, Twelfth Night, at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$12 and can be reserved by calling 1-866-OFF-MAIN ext. 3. The Powerhouse Theatre, 3116 2nd Street

Snowwhite

The Santa Monica Playhouse presents the musical, Snowwhite, based on the classic European fairytale. Written and directed by Chris DeCarlo & Evelyn Rudie. There are Saturday and Sunday showings at 12:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. through Feb. 29. Tickets cost \$10 for kids 12 and under, and \$12 for adults. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 Fourth St.

A Winter's Tale

The Morgan-Wixson Theatre presents a musical based on Charles Dickens' A Christmas Tale. Directed by Anne Gesling. There will be a showing on Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For reservations or more information, call (310) 828-7519. Morgan-Wixson Theatre, 2627 Pico Blvd

Cinderella

The Santa Monica Playhouse presents Chris DeCarlo &

Evelyn Rudie's version of the romantic musical classic, Cinderella, as part of their Fall Twilight Series. The performance begins at 6 p.m. and will be shown every Friday until Dec. 21. Tickets for kids 12 and under cost \$10 and \$12 for adults. For more information or reservations, call (310) 394-9779, ext. 1.

Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 Fourth Street

ENTERTAINMENT

Temple Bar

Here visitors can enjoy concoctions like White Chocolate Martinis, a Gingertini or a Razzmatazz. Those who are really hungry can enjoy a Chicken Tamale Plate with Fried Plantains. Temple Bar even offers vegetarian options like veggie eggrolls and burgers. But no good bar would be complete without live music. Tonight the Temple Bar features DJ Rashida and the following: The Dre Allen Project at 9 p.m., Kandace Lindsey at 10 p.m., Yossi Fine (of Excentric Sound System) 11 p.m. \$10. 1026 Wilshire Blvd., (310) 393-6611

Harvelle's

Established in 1931, Harvelle's is the oldest blues club on the west side. This is the kind of blues joint you'd expect to find in a dark Chicago alley; yet even if it's your first visit, it feels familiar. Tonight Harvelle's presents the Delgado Brothers. 1432 4th St., (310) 395-1676

MOVIE °GUIDE

AMC SANTA MONICA 7

1310 Third Street Promenade
Bad Santa — 11:50 a.m., 2:15, 5:10, 7:45, 10:25 p.m.
Calendar Girls — 10:45 a.m., 1:40, 4:35, 7:30, 10:20 p.m.
Elf PG — 11:10 a.m., 1:30, 4:15, 7:20, 9:55 p.m.
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King — 10:30 a.m., 1, 2:45, 6:10, 7, 10:35, 11:15 p.m.
Mona Lisa Smile — 11 a.m., 12:40, 2, 3:55, 5, 7:10, 8, 10:05, 10:50 p.m.

LAEMMLE'S MONICA 4-PLEX

1332 2nd Street
The Cooler — 12, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 10 p.m.
Girl With a Pearl Earring — 12, 2:25, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50 p.m.
In America — 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15 p.m.
The Station Agent R — 1, 3:15, 5:30, 8, 10:15 p.m.

LANDMARK NU-WILSHIRE

1314 Wilshire Blvd
21 Grams R — 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10 p.m.
Mystic River R — 1, 4, 7, 10 p.m.

LOEWS CINEPLEX BROADWAY CINEMAS

1441 Third Street Promenade
Love Actually — 12:45, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50 p.m.
Love Don't Cost a Thing — 11:30 a.m., 2, 4:30, 7:15, 9:30 p.m.
Something's Gotta Give — 11:40 a.m., 12:30, 2:45, 3:45, 6:15, 7, 9:15, 10 p.m.

MANN CRITERION 6 THEATERS

1313 Third Street Promenade
The Cat in the Hat — 11:30 a.m., 2, 4:40 p.m.
Gothika — 7:10, 9:35 p.m.
Honey — 11:40 a.m., 2:20, 4:50, 7:30 p.m.
The Last Samurai — 12, 12:45, 3:30, 4:10, 7, 7:50, 10:30, 11:15 p.m.
The Missing — 1:30, 7:20 p.m.
Stuck on You — 11:20 a.m., 2:10, 5, 8, 9:50, 10:50 p.m.

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Survivors of chemical attacks want Saddam executed

BY SCHEHEREZADE FARAMARZI
Associated Press Writer

HALABJA, Iraq — Amna Abdulqader lost two sons, a daughter, a daughter-in-law and three grandchildren when bombs carrying poisonous gases fell in a chemical attack Saddam Hussein ordered on this Kurdish town — killing 5,000 people.

She and other survivors of the March 16, 1988, attack say the former dictator must face justice in an Iraqi court that could impose the death penalty.

"If he had fallen into my hands, I would have bitten off his flesh with my teeth," Amna Abdulqader said Wednesday.

Some interim Iraqi leaders have suggested Saddam could be executed as early as this summer. But international human rights organizations reject the death penalty for Saddam and say his trial should be used as a starting point for healing the country.

Iraq's U.S.-appointed Governing Council met for the first time Wednesday to look into ways of appointing judges to a new war crimes tribunal that could try Saddam.

One council member, Adnan Pachachi, said Iraq's tribunal would welcome "foreign judges if we feel it's necessary."

Saddam was captured on Saturday, but he is in U.S. custody and the timeline and format of a possible trial has yet to be established.

"I would like to pour boiling oil on Saddam's head and cut his flesh into pieces."

— NESRIN MOHAMMED
Iraqi

The U.S.-led occupation authority suspended the death penalty, and Iraqi officials have said they will decide whether to reinstate it when a transitional government assumes sovereignty as scheduled by July 1.

President Bush says Saddam deserves the "ultimate penalty" for his crimes, but that it's up to the Iraqi people.

Amna Abdulqader said Saddam should be tried and hanged in the Halabja town square where there is a memorial statue of Omar Khawra, depicted lying dead and covering the body of his dead baby boy — a symbol of the street scenes after the gas attack.

She showed a picture of her son, Bakr, who was just 18 when he died. "He did all my shopping, took good care of me."

"Even if they hang him, my children will never come back," she said.

Abdulqader Hassan Mohammed, carries a picture in his wallet of his 3-year-old daughter, Narmin, who died as a result of the poison gas attack, part of Saddam's

scorched-earth campaign to wipe out a Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq.

Saddam's trial ought to be "just and comprehensive," Mohammed said. "Just" means that he has to be executed. If they don't hang him it won't be just. Five thousand innocent people were killed. It will be a mistake if he's not sentenced to death."

Narmin, his daughter, died in her mother's arms in Taran, Iran, where 50 members of the extended family fled across the mountains from Halabja after the attack.

Mohammed's three surviving sons, Asou, 22, Ahmed, 21, and Othman, 24, still suffer effects of the gas attack. Othman is being treated in Britain.

"I would like to pour boiling oil on Saddam's head and cut his flesh into pieces," said Mohammed's wife, Nesrin, 43.

Amna Abdulqader said she and other Kurds were ready to testify against Saddam. "My children died without being guilty. If everyone else testifies, I will too," she said.

Her granddaughter, Alwan Noorwari,

now 22, was 8 when her parents, sister and two brothers perished.

Noorwari, who still suffers from shortness of breath, said an Iraqi court is better than an international one, but it would be "better if they hand him to the people of Halabja to try him."

"If they leave it to human rights groups, they will do nothing to him," the granddaughter said.

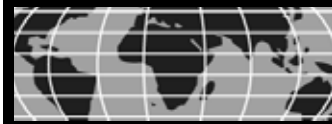
Noorwari was holding her younger sister's hand when the gas bombs fell. Her father was in bed with a back injury. Their house was full of people.

"There were sounds of bombs and rockets. My mother shouted to us to come back inside the house. We went into my father's room," said Noorwari.

A bomb had fallen into her uncle's house next door. Everyone in Noorwari's house went into the bomb shelter, except for her mother who ran to the brother's house.

When the sisters came out of the shelter they found two dead birds in the yard. Noorwari and her sister, Diyar, 4, went to poke at it. When she heard of Saddam's capture Saturday, Alwan danced and hugged her grandmother. Her uncle bought two pounds of chocolates and passed it around the neighborhood.

Kurds here declared a three-day holiday marking Saddam's capture. Celebratory gunfire still rings through the city, and men do Kurdish folk dances in the streets well into the night.



WORLD BRIEFLY

AIDS epidemic not going away

By The Associated Press

GENEVA — The fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases and efforts to reduce the number of women who die in childbirth will flounder unless the international community boosts basic medical care in poor countries, the U.N. health agency said Thursday.

Campaigns against individual diseases are essential, but policy-makers also must focus on overall health services because neglecting them increases the risk that epidemics will spread across borders, the World Health Organization said in its annual report.

AIDS kills 5,000 adults and 1,000 children every day in Africa. Life expectancy there has plunged as much as 20 years because of the disease.

Medical services are under such pressure from AIDS that they have trouble coping with a host of other diseases, widening the health divide between rich and poor nations, according to the WHO.

Jury mulls verdict in sniper case

By The Associated Press

CHESAPEAKE, Va. — Jurors deliberating in the capital murder trial of sniper suspect Lee Boyd Malvo had questions which, for the most part, remained unanswered.

First, they asked if they again could see the Chevrolet Caprice the snipers allegedly used for last year's shooting spree around Washington, D.C., that left 10 people dead and three wounded. The car had a modified back seat that could lift up and allow access to the trunk.

The jury also sought clarification of the definition of malice, a necessary element to a murder conviction. The definition provided in the jury instructions is "an intentional doing of a wrongful act ... at a time when the mind of the actor is under control of reason." The note said they have specific trouble with the phrase "under the control of reason."

The questions came after the jury deliberated seven hours Wednesday. They were set to resume Thursday.

John Hinckley fine on his own?

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The man who tried to kill President Reagan won permission to unmonitored visits with his parents, a decision criticized by the former president's family.

U.S. District Judge Paul L. Friedman said John Hinckley Jr. may have six visits with his parents in the Washington area without staff from the mental hospital where he has lived for more than two decades. Each visit may last 12 hours. If they go well, he and his parents may be allowed two 32-hour overnight visits within 50 miles of the capital.

However, he included a number of strict conditions and rejected Hinckley's request to travel to his parents' home in Williamsburg, Va., about three hours south of Washington. He said a detailed schedule must be submitted to him two weeks before each unsupervised visit.

Trade agreement a small step forward

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration is hailing its new free trade agreement with Central America as an important milestone toward the even bigger prize of achieving a hemisphere-wide free trade area.

But labor unions are vowing an all-out effort to defeat the measure in Congress.

Judging from the initial reaction from unions and such politically sensitive sectors of the economy as textile makers and sugar growers, President Bush could be facing a major trade battle on Capitol Hill in the midst of next year's presidential campaign.

The Central American Free Trade Agreement would be the United States' sixth free trade agreement, all modeled along the lines of the 10-year-old North

American Free Trade Agreement, which links the United States, Mexico and Canada.

The CAFTA pact announced Wednesday would cover Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

'Dark energy' breakthrough of year

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Proof that a mysterious force called "dark energy" is pushing the universe to expand endlessly at a faster and faster rate has been selected as the "Breakthrough of the Year" by the editors of Science magazine.

The bizarre idea that some unknown force exists in the universe that is opposing gravity and flinging galaxies away from each other at an accelerating clip was first proposed in 1998. New studies in 2003 proved that the force does exist and this discovery captured the top prize by the editors of Science as the year's most important scientific development.

"It is one of the ultimate discoveries in basic science," said Don Kennedy, editor-in-chief of the journal. "It stirs our imagination even though it challenges our ability to understand."

The editors also selected nine other research advances.

Historic flight takes off

By The Associated Press

KILL DEVIL HILLS, N.C. — After waiting through a morning of downpours, some 35,000 people watched as a replica of the airplane used during the Wright brothers' first flight began its crawl down a wooden launching track.

The flyer's front rose for a moment — and then pilot Kevin Kochersberger cut the engine and it plopped into wet sand. The crowd groaned.

Despite Wednesday's failed re-enactment, aviation enthusiasts said they were happy to be there for the event, which marked the 100th anniversary of the Wrights' first flight on Dec. 17, 1903.

The crowd cheered President Bush, who arrived by helicopter to remind the shivering crowd that bad weather hadn't stopped the Wrights.

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ACROSS

- 1 Farm measure
- 5 Prepare for travel
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- 38 Greek enchantress
- 39 Big bombs

40 Invites

- 41 "You there!"

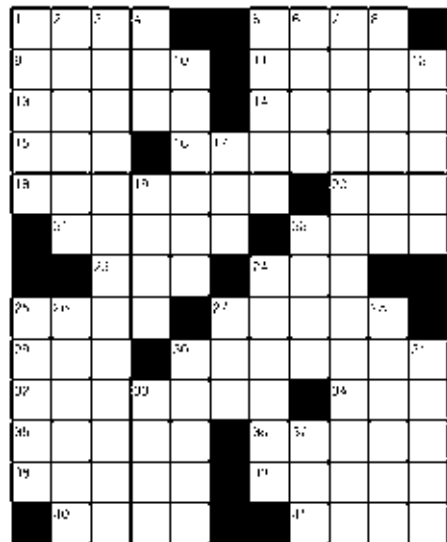
DOWN

- 1 Hall of a 1960s rock group
- 2 History, essential-ly
- 3 Airport sights
- 4 Family
- 5 Book makeup
- 6 Actor Baldwin
- 7 They do every-thing their way
- 8 Scoul citizen
- 10 Tyrant
- 12 Forest plants
- 17 Corral
- 19 French keys
- 22 Matador's foe
- 24 Surfer's shade
- 25 Of ancient Carthage
- 26 Lack of vitality
- 27 Polite address
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- 31 "Give it —!"
- 33 Cabby
- 37 Recipe amount

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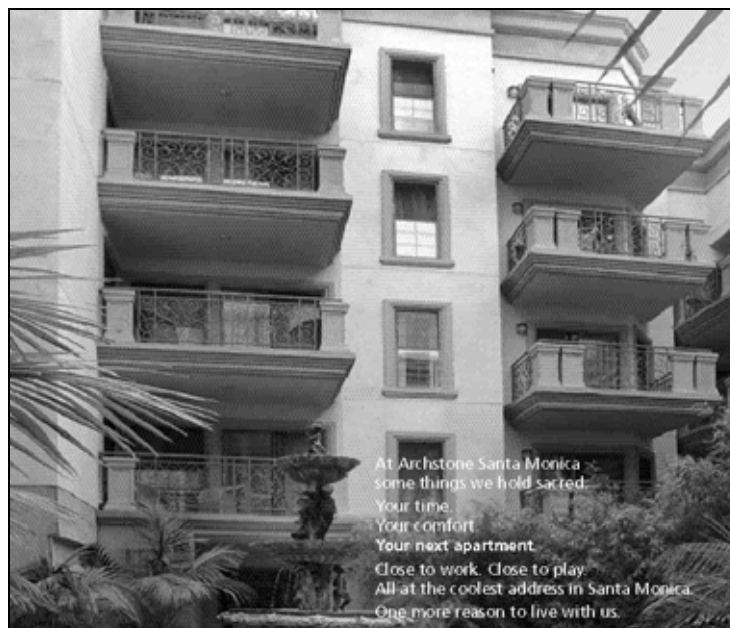


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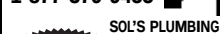
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Hef's limo, party invite and mansion tour yields \$77K

By The Associated Press

■ NEW YORK — Playboy founder Hugh Hefner's stretch limousine, along with an exclusive tour of the Playboy mansion and two tickets to an invitation-only New Year's Eve party, fetched \$77,675 at auction.

The 1988 Mercedes Benz limo, converted for Hefner in 1989, was among more than 300 items from the Playboy archives that sold at the Christie's auction Wednesday for a total of \$2.75 million, according to Playboy Enterprises Inc.

A 1953 photograph of Marilyn Monroe, the magazine's first centerfold, sold for \$17,925, and the image of Bo Derek featured on the March 1980 cover went for \$11,950.

Also sold were works by artists LeRoy Neiman and Alberto Vargas that were featured in Playboy, an original manuscript by Jack Kerouac and the 1968 Shel Silverstein cartoon "Silverstein Among the Hippies."

■ NEW YORK — Butters has become one of Trey Parker's favorite "South Park" characters.

Butters, who's blond and constantly being picked on, started playing a larger role when muffled, hooded Kenny was killed off for a year, says Parker, who created the popular Comedy Central animated show with Matt Stone.

"We ended up adding all these dimensions to Butters that I think were really great," Parker told AP Radio recently. "He's always the kid that's worried his parents are going to ground him, but on the other hand he's got this other persona where he thinks he's this evil superhero, but even in that he does the most mundane things."

Parker, 34, said he knows when he's writing a scene featuring Butters and Cartman that it's going to be good. (Stone voices Butters and Parker voices Cartman.)

The seventh season finale aired Wednesday night.

■ NEW YORK — Elijah Wood, star of "The Lord of the Rings" films, is bracing for separation anxiety.

"The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" opened Wednesday in theaters nationwide. It's the final installment in Peter Jackson's fantasy trilogy based on J.R.R. Tolkien's text. All three films were shot during a 15-month period in New Zealand.

"When the press is finished and the movies are out, there will be a certain feeling of sadness and separation anxiety," Wood told reporters recently, according to AP Radio. "We're going to have to arrange something for next year to bring us all back together."

"The Fellowship of the Ring" was released in 2001, followed by "The Two Towers" in 2002. The films also star Viggo Mortensen, Orlando Bloom, Ian McKellen, Sean Astin and Liv Tyler.

"The fellowship in many ways will carry on for the rest of our lives," said the 22-year-old Wood. "Even after we don't have to be together for the films, I think that we will always know each other and be together in one way or another."

■ SEATTLE — The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded Seattle Biomedical Research Institute a \$10 million grant to continue its research in developing a vaccine to prevent malaria in pregnant women.

The grant, which was announced Wednesday, supports the institute's malaria antigen discovery program. Initial testing for the program is done at the institute's labs in Seattle and at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. The most promising candidates for a vaccine will be studied at a field laboratory in Muheza, Tanzania, where the Seattle research institute and Tanzanian scientists are researching malaria in pregnant mothers and their infants.

"This grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will support SBRI's research that could lead to the first vaccine to prevent pregnancy malaria," said Ken Stuart, the research institute's president.

Three years ago, the Gates Foundation provided a \$5 million, three-year grant to start the institute's malaria

research program, which now has nearly 30 researchers.

■ SAN DIEGO — A gift of \$20 million to the San Diego Hospice, a nonprofit agency dedicated to nursing terminally ill patients, has been left by the estate of Joan B. Kroc, widow of McDonald's founder, Ray Kroc.

Kroc, 75, died in October.

Hospice officials announced the gift Tuesday, noting that Kroc had christened the building and enjoyed visiting the hospice, especially around the holidays.

Kroc spokesman Dick Starmann said the gift from her estate "three times larger than the hospice's yearly budget" is intended to make death more comfortable for patients.

"She wanted the people of San Diego who were gravely ill, terminally ill, to have a place that was serene and lovely," Starmann said.

Kroc also has bequeathed \$10 million to the San Diego Opera, \$200 million to National Public Radio and \$50 million apiece to peace institutes at the universities of Notre Dame and San Diego that bear her name.

■ PHOENIX — Welcome to Alice Cooper's radio show.

The 55-year-old rock star, who was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame earlier this month, will host the syndicated "Nights With Alice Cooper" starting Jan. 26.

"It'll be sort of an 'Alice's attic,'" Cooper said. "The way to do it is to make this kind of rock n' roll become theatrical on radio, the way I made it theatrical onstage. There will be ongoing stories and characters, but it will be wrapped up in classic rock."

The show, which will originate at Phoenix's KDKB-FM, will air on at least six stations in the Midwest and New England.

Cooper became known for shocking audiences with gruesome concert performances including acts like guillotines lopping off heads and simulated hangings.

Classic Cooper albums include "Killer" and "Welcome to My Nightmare."

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