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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2009

Volume 9 Issue 34



Santa Monica Daily Press

BARACK'S WIN TOPS '09
SEE PAGE 11

We have you covered

THE PLEASE LET SOMETHING HAPPEN ISSUE

Residents upset over loss of chess

BY NICK TABOREK
Daily Press Staff Writer

FAIRVIEW LIBRARY In many respects, the group's members have little in common. They range in age from 3-and-a-half to 92 and speak a variety of different languages — Russian, Chinese, Spanish and Hindi, to name a few. Some are casual dabblers, others are master practitioners.

But for the past five years, each Thursday afternoon they've gathered at the Fairview Branch Public Library, brought together by the game of chess.

"There's people of every single age and from all over the world," said Maxine Meltzer, who has attended the chess program with her 6-year-old daughter. "Neither of us are stellar chess players, but it's a beautiful, beautiful community."

The library's free program has become a hit in the community around Fairview by welcoming players of all levels and cultivating a friendly and safe environment, said Mel Bloch, a part-time library employee who coordinates the program. He said about 40 people take part each week.

But now the chess program is ending at Fairview, apparently the victim of budget cuts, Bloch said this week. He was told in November the program would no longer be offered at the library because money for staff hours had been reduced.

The program, though, is being moved to the Ocean Park branch, where despite a 5 percent budget cut Branch Manager Celia Carroll said there will be no problem overseeing the program.

"I love what it does," she said of the program, nothing that it affords kids an opportunity to earn community service hours by volunteering as chess tutors. Beginning in January, the Ocean Park branch will host the chess program each week on Wednesday and Thursday from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m.

For many participants, though, the end of the program at the Fairview branch is a major loss for the library and a blow to the community. Bloch and others are concerned

SEE CHESS PAGE 10



OFF THE COURT

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

Lakers forward Josh Powell gives Christmas gifts to Faisal Al Enezi, 3, at the Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center on Monday on behalf of the 21 Reasons to Give Foundation. Powell visited with children throughout the hospital, hoping to spread some holiday cheer.

Despite recession, crime keeps falling

DEVLIN BARRETT
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON High unemployment. More folks on food stamps. Fewer owning their homes. Yet for all the signs of recession, something is missing: More crime.

Experts are scratching their heads over why crime has ebbed so far during this recession, making it different from other economic downturns of the past half-century. Early guesses include jobless folks at home keeping closer watch for thieves, or the American population just getting older—and older people commit fewer crimes.

Preliminary FBI crime figures for the first half of 2009 show crime falling across the country, even at a time of high unemployment, foreclosures and layoffs. Most surprisingly, murder and manslaughter fell 10 percent for the first half of the year.

"That's a remarkable decline, given the economic conditions," said Richard

SEE CRIME PAGE 8

'Sesame Street' star Reed-Amini,63, dies

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MID-CITY Alaina Reed-Amini, the Broadway star and TV actress best known for her long-running roles on "Sesame Street" and "227," has died. She was 63.

Publicist Billy Laurence says Reed-Amini died Thursday at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica after a two-year battle with breast cancer.

Previously known as Alaina Reed-Hall, she recently remarried. Her stage credits include "Chicago" and "Hair." She appeared in several movies, including "Cruel Intentions" and "Death Becomes Her," and on TV shows such as "The Drew Carey Show" and "Ally McBeal."

Reed-Amini is survived by her husband, Tamim Amini, and two children from a previous marriage. According to her husband, a celebration of Reed-Amini's life is being planned for next year.

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WHAT'S UP
WESTSIDE
OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009

Have wheels, will travel
18th Street Arts Center
1639 18th St., 6 p.m. — 9 p.m.
"Without a Car in the World (100 Car-less Angelenos Tell Stories of Living in Los Angeles)." This final exhibit of 2009 features 100 photographs by artist Diane Meyer with accompanying narratives from people who live without a car in Los Angeles.
For further information, call (310) 435-3711.

Write Away
Fairview Branch Library
2101 Ocean Park Blvd., Noon — 3 p.m.
Published and closet writers are welcome to seek inspiration, guidance and support at this weekly writer's group.
Call (310) 899-0361 for more information.

Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2009

Ballroom by the bay
Santa Monica Bay Women's Club
1210 Fourth St., 7 p.m. — 11 p.m.
Dance the night away on the 3,000 square foot dance floor. Learn how to do the waltz, fox trot, swing, hustle and other dances, all for $10. No partner required. Parking is available next door at Parking Structure No. 1. For more information call (310) 487-0911.

Divorce detox
212 Marine St., 12:30 p.m.
Everybody needs a break, especially with the added stress of divorce, which can make some people feel like they are in a war zone. This one-hour class provides a brief break from the challenges and hurdles in your day and gives you the opportunity to de-stress, refocus and revitalize yourself. Sign up 48 hours in advance and get lunch included. Cost: $20. To get more information or to register call (310) 439-8964 or www.divorcedetox.com.

Making moves
Best Western Hotel
1920 Santa Monica Blvd., 7 a.m. — 8:30 a.m.
LeTip Santa Monica Business Referral Club
Business owners and professionals meet each Wednesday morning to share tips or referrals to help one another grow their businesses. Breakfast is served. Cost: First visit is free.
For more information, call (310) 920-9649.

ICE at Santa Monica
Arizona Avenue at Fifth Street
10 a.m. — 10 p.m.
Bring back childhood memories — and create new ones — as you slice through the ice in a festive atmosphere filled with holiday cheer and balmy ocean breezes. The ice rink will remain open through January. Admission is $10 and includes skate rental. The rink is periodically cleared for short periods to groom the ice. If raining, the rink will remain open in light rain or drizzle conditions, closing only for heavy downpours. For more information go to www.downtownsm.com.

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com and click the "Events" tab for the given day's calendar.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

DOWNTOWN

Two arrested for DUI

Santa Monica police officers on Friday arrested two people for driving while intoxicated and cited 10 others for driving without a license or other vehicle code violations during a checkpoint.

The sobriety/driver's license checkpoint was set up in the westbound side of the 300 block of Pico Boulevard from 8 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., said SMPD Sgt. Jay Trisler.

During that time, 978 vehicles passed through the checkpoint, 224 vehicles were screened and two were arrested for DUI. Five others were cited for driving without a license and another five for various vehicle code violations. Five vehicles were towed.

Funding for the checkpoint was provided by a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety, through the national Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

DAILY PRESS

UCLA

And the award goes to...

UCLA's Cotsen Institute of Archaeology and a research associate have won the governor's Historic Preservation Award for high-tech mapping efforts at the Marquez Family Cemetery in Santa Monica Canyon.

Using ground-penetrating radar, the Cotsen team early this year identified 15 possible grave sites, as well as a possible mass burial pit. The results are being used by descendants of Francisco Marquez, the Mexican co-holder of the Rancho Boca de Santa Monica land grant, to develop a restoration plan for the site.

Marquez is thought to have established a burial ground in the canyon in the 1840s. The cemetery contains the remains of his youngest son, Pascual, and perhaps 30 other family members, American Indian servants and friends, including a number of guests who died of botulism after eating home-canned peaches at a New Year's Eve gathering in 1909.

In 2000, the city of Los Angeles named the cemetery a historic-cultural monument and declared it an "extremely historic" landmark for representing the region's early ranch families.

The award will be presented to the Cotsen Institute and research associate Dean Goodman on Jan. 20 in Sacramento.

DP



ALL SMILES

Natalie Saito *news@smdp.com*

Heartfelt Foundation hosts its annual Christmas Service Project at the Santa Monica Pier on Saturday. Homeless children and underprivileged students from impoverished schools are bussed to the pier to receive gifts, go on carousel rides, eat hot dogs, and take a photo with Santa Claus.

Calif. school team's success linked to Snoop Dogg

BY CHRISTINA HOAG
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES Football has long been the athletic stepchild at inner-city Crenshaw High School. Trophy cases are crammed with basketball awards. Gym walls are lined with hoops championship flags.

But the football team is undefeated this season and headed for the California state championship bowl game this weekend, and the coach attributes part of the success to an unlikely off-field source: rapper Snoop Dogg.

Nine of this year's Crenshaw High School Cougars went through the 5-year-old Snoop Youth Football League, representing the first crop of varsity players to cut their teeth in the program. The league has produced standouts at other schools, but none has more players or a better record than Crenshaw.

The league has made Snoop Dogg, whose real name is Calvin Broadus, a savior of sorts for football in an impoverished area of Los Angeles where gangs roam many of the streets.

"It is more of an advantage to have kids who played in the Snoop Dogg league," coach Robert Garrett said. "They also have the experience, the fundamentals and the attitude that guys who started from scratch don't have."

Broadus' reputation for raunchy lyrics and run-ins with the law brought some initial apprehension from the mostly single mothers who wanted to enroll their sons.

"It was kind of hard to separate Snoop Dogg the entertainer from Snoop Dogg the coach, the father," league Commissioner Haamid Wadood said.

But the league soon caught on, especially when fathers with criminal records learned they could coach, unlike most other youth sports. Broadus, himself a former gang member, has several convictions for drugs and weapons offenses, and if the league didn't allow ex-cons, there wouldn't be enough coaches.

"When you look at the demographics of the area, this is the reality of the situation," Wadood said. "We don't condone any of that, but we look at the nature of the offense, how recent it was."

Sex offenders and domestic violence convicts, for instance, are banned from the sidelines.

The coaching exception has also reconnected boys with their dads, or at least with positive male role models in neighborhoods where fathers are often behind bars or otherwise absent.

The dads, many of them members of the rival Bloods and Crips, must agree to leave their gang disputes away from the field.

"This is kind of like a peace treaty," Wadood said. "Everybody wants something

SEE FOOTBALL PAGE 10

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Smoking ban's slippery slope

Editor:

The recent march toward the moralization and cleansing of the populace of Santa Monica in regard to banning the private act of smoking in one's own living room may have consequences its self-righteous crusaders have overlooked. The state of California created a similar law in regards to the smoking of marijuana. Tenants could be summarily evicted upon the first whiff of this evil substance by any landlord or property manager. Evidence or proof was simply not necessary, just the solemn and always truthful word of the landlord or their agent. The result – literally thousands of children and their mostly single mothers rendered homeless and hopeless on the streets. With an unlawful detainer on their records, the prospect of renting another place to live is quite out of the question. Now the advocates of the abolition of rent control in Santa Monica want to kick grandma and grandpa onto the streets as well if they choose to light up another politically incorrect herb in their own living rooms – this time it's tobacco. Wake up and smell the coffee people. (Oops, is this a politically correct beverage?) This is about money, not about public morality. On the other hand, children should have access to their grandparents, so maybe kicking all of them onto the streets – grandparents, moms, and kids – will open up more trendy locations for the young and affluent with no children, solve the landlords problem of rent control as a curb to personal wealth acquisition, and bring several generations of family members together on the streets. Next public morality issue for Santa Monica's Narciso-Fascists: How do we make the homeless people disappear? That's another job for the public-and-private behavior control freaks who lost their consciences in the back of a Ferrari on a warm summer night so long ago in Malibu. Do they really care about grandma and the kids? Or is money the only love in their lives? You decide.

Jon Howard
Santa Monica

Privatization is the way to go

Editor:

RE: "Promenade performer speaks out," Dec. 17.

Privatizing the Third Street Promenade and side blocks between Second and Fourth streets and Wilshire Boulevard and Broadway would solve several problems. Privatization would give the structure to put in an audition process which would limit the number of performers and allow for only talented acts that would enhance the Downtown shopping, dining and strolling experience. As well, privatization would allow for greater control over the area, including ejecting homeless loiterers.

It would be much more enjoyable to come Downtown on a Thanksgiving afternoon and not see a homeless woman vomiting with the violence of Krakatoa (true story), and not see a homeless man sitting on a Promenade bench let loose with gallons of urine (yes, another true story).

If shoppers are expected to pay inflated prices to dine Downtown, City Hall should, at a minimum, provide civilization.

Nan Jefferies
Santa Monica

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Back to Nature

Reese Halter

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

The power of the mighty tree

IT IS INDEED APPROPRIATE THAT THE most recognized and celebrated day of the year — Christmas, the birth of Christ — is also focused around trees.

Trees are truly remarkable.

Urban trees provide a healthy environment for people and animals. Urban trees and forests remove air pollution and smog; and they save communities millions of dollars a year by stabilizing storm-water runoff. Moreover, urban trees reduce energy costs for both heating and cooling by some 40 percent in our homes and buildings.

In the wild, our forests provide massive watersheds all throughout western North America that support 55 million people. Those mature subalpine forests help retain snowfall in the winter and slowly release melt-waters in the springtime that recharge reservoirs. Hundreds of billions of tree roots provide the most effective form of water filtration known to humankind.

Wild forests in California's Sierra Nevada's supply almost 90 percent of the fresh water for the most intensive agricultural system on the planet, 38 million people's daily drinking water, the eighth mightiest industrial economy on the globe and tens of millions of tourists that visit our state each year.

Trees provide scrumptious spices including cinnamon, which is known to lower our blood sugar.

Trees grow incredible fruits like apples with apple-skin being one of the highest recognized natural fibers that helps prevent colon cancer.

In California, trees provide us with lemons, oranges and grapefruits; and we grow more almonds than anywhere else in the world. Almonds are also an excellent source of protein and fiber. And let's not forget that California is also a world leader in avocado production, which are rich in Omega-3s that help preclude coronary disease.

Trees produce potent medicines. From the South American cinchona trees, the drug quinine was derived to help fight the mosquito-borne disease malaria. From the Pacific Northwest yew tree came taxol, the billion-dollar blockbuster that offers hope to those afflicted with breast, ovarian and lung cancers, coronary disease and even AIDS. From the Chinese Camptotheca trees, camptothecin is being trialed for breast, prostate, pancreas, ovarian, leukemia, and lymphoma cancers as well as malignant melanoma.

Interestingly, scientists have known for at least the past couple decades that old trees are particularly important. In fact, the largest single stemmed tree — General Sherman — a Sierra Nevada Sequoia, holds several astounding records. He's been hit at least three times with over 100 million volts of electricity or lightning yet he's likely still the fastest growing tree on the planet adding the equivalent volume of wood in a tree 1.5 feet thick and 60 feet tall every year. Incidentally, the tannic acid present in his near-fireproof bark is the same chemical used in all fire extinguishers around the globe.

The oldest single stemmed tree, a bristlecone pine named Methuselah, lives in east central California on the White Mountains almost two miles above sea level in an extreme environment bombarded by ultra violet radiation, blasted regularly by 80 mile an hour winds and a growing season of about 6 weeks a year. He's over 4,700 years old and witnessed more than 1.6 million sunrises. The tree rings he lays down, almost ever year, are a living window back in time assisting climate scientists as they grapple to comprehend how life is adjusting to climate change.

THIS CHRISTMAS CONSIDER BUYING A LIVE TREE AND CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY; THEN CELEBRATE THE MAGNIFICENCE OF YOUR LIVING TREE BY PLANTING IT IN YOUR YARD.

Some ground-breaking work by Dr. Mark Harmond at others found that the conversion of Pacific Northwest old growth to young fast growing forests did not decrease atmospheric carbon as compared to old growth forests, which capture and store vast amounts of CO2. It took those low elevation second growth forests at least 200 years to accumulate the CO2 storage capacity of the existing living old growth forests. In other words, old growth forests are invaluable, massive living carbon warehouses and must be protected at all costs.

Urban trees also play a crucial role in our towns and cities. In one year's time, one mature tree gives off enough oxygen for a family of four while at the same time urban trees help suck the rising greenhouse gas CO2 out of the air.

This Christmas consider buying a live tree and celebrate the holidays with friends and family; then celebrate the magnificence of your living tree by planting it in your yard.

DR. REESE HALTER is a public speaker, conservation biologist and founder of the international conservation institute Global Forest Science. His most recent book is "The Incomparable Honeybee and the Economics of Pollination," Rocky Mountain Books. Contact him through www.DrReese.com

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What's the Point?

David Pisarra
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Merry RamaKwanakuhbodimastice

HERE'S A HOLIDAY WISH I PICKED UP this year, "Have a happy or merry RamaKwanakuhbodimastice." It incorporates Ramadan, Kwanzaa, Chanukah, Bodhi Day, Christmas and the Winter Solstice. If I missed anyone please let me know and I'll add them in.

One of the great benefits of living in Los Angeles, and Santa Monica in particular, is the immense variety of lifestyles, beliefs and cultures that we get to meet and come in contact with. While Christmas is certainly a major event around these parts, Chanukah is also a big one, just note the number of menorahs that were around town and maintained.

We're lucky to have the ability to live in a society that has such diversity, and embraces it so thoroughly. When I look at the world, and how much anger, hatred, vitriol and sadness, racial and religious differences have brought, it makes me glad that I live in a society that allows my Persian Jewish neighbors to celebrate their religious holidays as freely and openly as my black Christian ones.

This time of year there is the usual media blitz of feel good stories; the puppy that saved the family, the image of Jesus in a spoon that proves he lives, and the anonymous donor who dropped a huge amount of money in a Salvation Army red kettle. As much as they make us feel hope in humanity, we need to remind ourselves that the real hope for humanity is in our day to day living and how we treat each other on an ongoing basis.

One day, a week, even a month, of being nice to others is a start, but the real test of anything is its durability, and sustainability. I can eat healthy for one meal, but if I live on junk food, I'm not going to be healthy. It is the long term that matters, and that is where we as a society have made great strides, even though we have a long way to go.

If America is a mosaic of peoples and religions, looking at Santa Monica is like focusing on a small part of the mosaic and seeing all the colors and pieces of the image. We have tremendous variety and more importantly, we have exceptional tolerance for each other. And that tolerance, to my mind, is the true message of RamaKwanakuhbodimastice.

Intolerance is what leads to hatred. To use an example from my own life, when the cabal led by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints decided to be intolerant of gays' right to marry, I retaliated in hurt and anger. The hurt and anger was directed not against the members of the church, for in my own life I have Mormons who I love dearly, but against the actions of the church as a political body. I saw, and still see, the political actions of all churches as against their mission.

Right after the discriminatory Proposition 8 was passed, I engaged in an e-mail correspondence that became incendiary. My hurt and frustration enraged me to the point of suggesting that the churches should be burned to the ground for their intolerance and lack of Christian charity. It was only partly metaphorical, but it was definitely a highly intolerant stance on my part. I justified it to myself by relying on the story of Jesus in the temple with the money changers. The lesson in that parable is that those who defile the house and love of God, have no right to claim moral authority.

The practice of hate and intolerance, whether cloaked by the Ten Commandments, the "loving word of Jesus," or the morality of the Koran, is not conducive to a peaceful society. All the great spiritual leaders focused their efforts on the message of living peacefully, not on building temples. Jesus, Buddha, Moses, and Mohammed all lived simply, that others may simply live.

This week, as the menorahs get packed away, and the Christmas trees get surrounded with presents, as the preparations are made for Kwanzaa, let's remember that love and tolerance is the real message of all truly spiritual people, not the slavish devotion to "laws" put down by some long forgotten scribe. Let's remember that goodwill to all is a message that can be carried forward throughout the year, and practiced in all our affairs, no matter what your spiritual beliefs.

DAVID PISARRA is a family law attorney focusing on father's rights and men's Issues in the Santa Monica firm of Pisarra & Grist. He can be reached at dpisarra@pisarra.com or (310) 664-9969.

The Q Line

Working 9 to 9

Santa Monica Police Chief Tim Jackman recently extended for one month a pilot program in which patrol officers work 12.5-hour shifts, three days a week instead of the traditional 10 hours, four days a week. Officers on the 3-12 schedule must also work an additional 10 hour day, once a month.

So, this week's Q-Line question asks:

What are your thoughts on the 3-12 switch? Should the schedule be made permanent?

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press.


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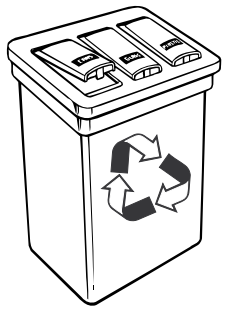
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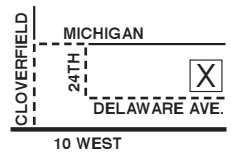


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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF RELOCATION PLAN FOR 430-508 PICO BOULEVARD, SANTA MONICA

City of Santa Monica

Community Corporation of Santa Monica ("CCSM") is preparing for the demolition and redevelopment of the property at 430-508 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica, California. Six (6) buildings containing fourteen (14) residential units (registered under Rent Control) and one commercial unit will be demolished to develop approximately 32 new affordable rental housing units using funds from the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Santa Monica (the "Agency"). Approval of a relocation plan for this property is scheduled for consideration by the City Council and Agency Board on January 26, 2010.

CCSM and the Agency have prepared a Relocation Plan in accordance with State Law.

The Relocation Plan has been prepared pursuant to California Relocation Assistance Law and California Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Guidelines. It describes the assistance and benefits that are being made available to persons who must relocate in order to allow the project to move forward.

The Relocation Plan is available for review at the following location:

Redevelopment Agency of the City of Santa Monica
1901 Main Street, Suite D
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Monday through Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Alternate Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Interested persons may submit written comments on the Relocation Plan before January 20, 2010 to the Redevelopment Agency at the address listed above.

Some schools are dropping driver's ed to cut costs

CHRISTINE ARMARIO
Associated Press Writer

MIAMI Beginning driver Ashley Crawford grips the worn gray steering wheel and warily begins maneuvering the 1999 Ford Escort through a set of bright orange traffic cones outside Killian Senior High School.

She considers herself lucky: Because of budget cuts, many schools around the country are leaving driver's ed by the side of the road. They are cutting back on behind-the-wheel instruction or eliminating it altogether, leaving it to parents to either teach their teenagers themselves or send them to commercial driving schools.

"If my parents would have taught me, it would have been different," said Ashley, a 16-year-old sophomore. "When I drive, they try to tell me what to do, and I get nervous."

Some educators and others worry that such cutbacks could prove tragic.

"As soon as people start taking driver's education away from the kids, we're going to pay for it with lost lives, collisions, and ultimately that costs everybody," said John Bolen, past president of the Florida Professional Driving School Association.

Some worry also that many parents can't afford the $350 to $700 that private lessons can cost or don't have the skills to teach their kids themselves. Even for those who can do it, the combination of parents, teenagers and learning how to drive can be volatile.

In more than half the states, minors who want a license must take driver's education from a certified instructor, said Allen Robinson, CEO of the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. However, that doesn't necessarily mean schools are required to offer a class. (Generally, after age 18, would-be drivers do not have to undergo any formal instruction.)

High schools started rolling back driver's ed after their effectiveness was called into question in the 1980s. The more recent cutbacks have been driven by school funding shortages, and the trend might be accelerating because of the downturn in the economy, said J. Peter Kissinger, president and CEO of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

Robinson said the nation's schools have all but eliminated driver's ed as an elective course offered during the school day.

Here in Miami-Dade County, the nation's fourth-largest school system got rid of driver's ed during the day at all but Killian and another school. Students can still enroll in a free after-school course at one of the district's adult education centers. But that is not an option for the many thousands of students who play sports or are involved in other extracurricular activities, or cannot get a ride.

About 10 high schools in Georgia eliminated or reduced driver's education this school year. A dozen more did the same in Kansas last year. In Volusia County, Fla., schools eliminated daytime driver's ed three years ago, replacing it with summer, after-school and Saturday classes. Enrollment plummeted two-thirds, saving about $400,000 a year.

"This is not because they don't believe in driver's ed," said Bob Dallas, director of the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety. "They do, but they're facing the same financial pressure that everybody in government is facing."

> **"AS SOON AS PEOPLE START TAKING DRIVER'S EDUCATION AWAY FROM THE KIDS, WE'RE GOING TO PAY FOR IT WITH LOST LIVES, COLLISIONS, AND ULTIMATELY THAT COSTS EVERYBODY."**
>
> John Bolen
> past president of the Florida Professional Driving School Association

In rural Pennsylvania, the Titusville district got rid of the behind-the-wheel portion of its program last spring, saving about $20,000. In Blountville, Tenn., the driver's education program was cut in half about five years ago because of budget woes. Administrators considered eliminating the $130,000-a-year program last spring, but did not.

"It could save lives. It's very simple," said Jack Barnes, director of schools in Sullivan County, Tenn. "We don't want any of our students injured or killed because of mistakes they made that possibly a program like this could help."

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens; in 2007, an average of 11 16- to 19-year-olds died every day. But Russ Rader, a spokesman for the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, said studies show there is no difference in crash risk between 16- and 17-year-olds who take driver's ed and those who don't.

"In some cases, driver's education has a negative effect because in some states you can get a license sooner if you take driver's ed," he said.

Private instructors aren't necessarily picking up all the students who can't take driver's ed at school.

Julio Torres, an instructor at the Easy Method Driving School in Miami, said he suspects the downturn in the economy is playing a role. He also said some parents simply prefer to teach their kids.

But Torres and others said parents, despite their best intentions, aren't always the best instructors. For one thing, they may pass their own bad driving habits on to their children.

Also, "the kids are at a stage where they're confrontational with their parents," said Brenda Bennett, owner of a driving school in Erie, Pa., that holds contracts to teach driver's ed through some area high schools. "Then you add driving with a parent and you have more confrontation. Whereas someone like myself, when we take kids out, there's no personality going there. It's just all business."

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Video game watchdog shuts down, victim of economy

JEFF BAENEN
Associated Press Writer

MINNEAPOLIS David Walsh said when he was assembling his first report card on video game violence 13 years ago, children were attacking on-screen monsters or aliens with imaginary chain saws and guns.

"When I saw kids as young as 8, 9 years old literally doing facial contortions as they killed and dismembered people, it was pretty shocking. And I think what happened is a lot of other people got shocked as well," Walsh recalls. "I don't think we want our kids' culture defined by killing, mayhem and dismemberment as entertainment."

That first report card, which singled out bloody first-person shooter games "Doom" and "Duke Nukem," made an instant splash on Capitol Hill in 1996 and made the annual reports issued each holiday season by Walsh's National Institute on Media and the Family a news fixture.

But there was no video game report card this year, and there won't be any more. The institute is closing its doors, a victim of the poor economy. Walsh, the group's founder and president, is packing his books as his staff of eight full-time employees prepares to shut down Dec. 23.

"Fundraising has been more and more difficult," Walsh said. "It really wasn't that we put ourselves out of business, because the technology is changing so quickly, the issues just won't quit."

It's a bittersweet end for the organization Walsh started in 1996. He takes pride in how "a little nonprofit in Minneapolis" was able to influence an industry that, according to the Entertainment Software Association, topped $22 billion in U.S. computer and video game hardware, software and peripheral sales in 2008.

"Ten years ago, a kid 10 years old could walk into any store in America and buy an ultra-violent, adult-rated game. That's no longer true," Walsh told The Associated Press in his office, where empty boxes await his books.

While some people have posted on gaming Web sites celebrating the institute's demise, others have praised its role in helping get retailers to post game ratings and ask for an identification when selling mature-rated games.

"Were it not for those collaborative efforts by all sides, it's questionable whether there would have been a non-legislative resolution," Hal Halpin, president of the gamers group the Entertainment Consumers Association, told the AP.

When he issued his first report card, Walsh said, there were two rating systems for video games battling it out and "when a game would be rated was a hit-or-miss deal." Since then, an industry group established in 1994, the Entertainment Software Rating Board, or ESRB, has become the standard in rating computer and video games.

Walsh said he got many tips about video games from industry insiders. His organization hired students to play video games and sent boys and girls to see if retailers would sell them M-rated games without asking for an ID.

It was Walsh's group that announced in 2005 that the best-selling video game "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" contained graphic sexual images that could be unlocked using an Internet download. The ESRB conducted its own investigation and revoked the game's M (mature) rating and tagged it AO (adults only). That led to major retailers pulling the game from their shelves.

Walsh said his group got a computer game developer to reverse-engineer the game and prove that the sex scenes were built into the disk, not a modification created by a hacker on the Internet as the parent company of the game's producer had suggested.

Last summer, the institute learned that founding sponsor Fairview Health Services was pulling out. After looking at going independent, the institute's board decided to shut down at the end of the year. Walsh said the organization is talking to three nonprofits about taking on its work.

On average, the institute's budget was $1.8 million a year, according to Walsh.

With white hair, rimless glasses and black sport jacket, Walsh, 64, resembles a high school teacher, which he was. The father of three grown children takes a low-key approach and says he's never endorsed censorship.

The New Jersey native has written books about the impact of consumerism and media on kids (his 10th book comes out next year) and says the institute was a way to help parents make informed choices for their children. Others were monitoring television, but less focus was on video games.

Author Steven L. Kent of Seattle, who wrote "The Ultimate History of Video Games," appeared at the annual releases of the Walsh reports. Kent said the institute's voice will be missed.

"I think the game industry will look back and pine for the days when their top opposing voice had as much self-restraint as Dr. Walsh had," Kent said.

On the Net:
National Institute on Media and the Family:
http://www.mediafamily.org

Officials: Beware of dangerous holiday toy imports from China

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

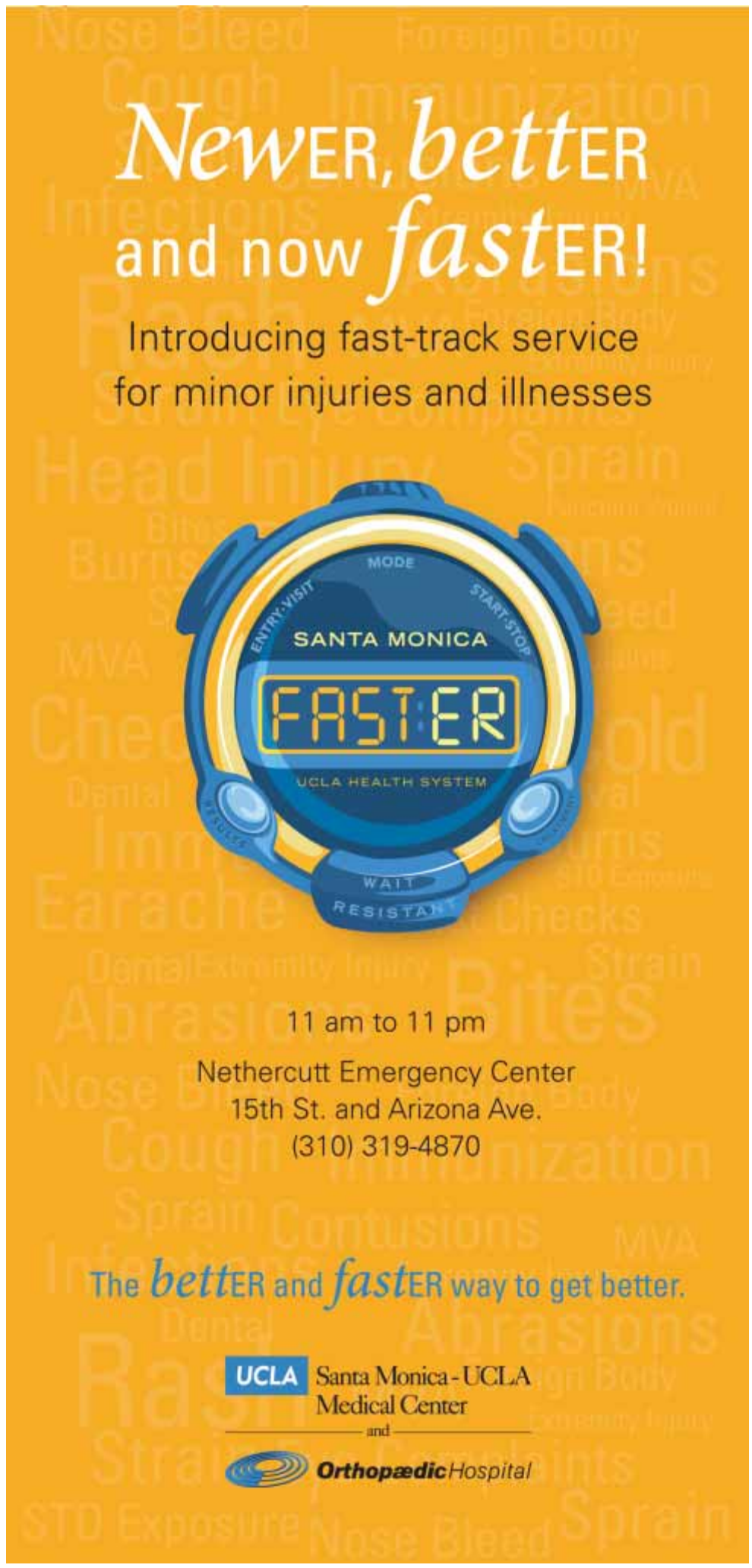
MIAMI U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials are warning holiday shoppers to stay away from imported toys that might be dangerous for kids or violate copyright laws.

Items intercepted this year so far include black toy guns that could be easily confused for real firearms, yellow toy ducks with lead paint and bright green, frog-shaped lighters without safety mechanisms.

At a press conference in Miami on Monday, customs officials said authorities last year seized more than 1,000 shipments of products that violated either intellectual property rights laws or consumer product safety standards.

Officials said the majority of the seized cargo came from China.





Aging population may be reason for decline

FROM **CRIME** PAGE 1

Rosenfeld, a sociologist at the University of Missouri-St. Louis who has studied crime trends.

Rosenfeld said he did not expect the 10 percent drop in killings to be sustained over the entire year, as more data is reported. But he said the broad declines are exceptional, given that past recessions stretching back to the 1950's have boosted crime rates.

Bill Bratton, the former chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, said the decrease comes from major police departments closely tracking developing crime patterns.

"Police have gotten much better at analyzing numbers and responding quickly," said Bratton, now chairman of Altegrity Security Consulting, a private security firm based in Virginia. "Los Angeles has been in an economic downturn almost two years ahead of the country and is now in its eighth straight year of crime decline."

In times of recession, property crimes, in particular, are expected to rise.

They haven't.

Overall, property crimes fell by 6.1 percent, and violent crimes by 4.4 percent, according to the six-month data collected by the FBI. Crime rates haven't been this low since the 1960's, and are nowhere near the peak reached in the early 1990's.

Rosenfeld said there are several possible explanations, including that extended unemployment benefits, food stamps, and other government-driven economic stimulus "have cushioned and delayed for many people the big blows that come from a recession."

Those benefits will have to run out eventually, he cautioned.

Another possible factor is that with more people home from work, it is harder for burglars to break into a home or apartment unnoticed by neighbors, he said. Rosenfeld said another possibility is that because big cities' technology-driven, "smart policing" efforts are driving down national rates.

The new figures show car thefts also dropped significantly, falling nearly 19 percent and continuing a sharp downward trend in that category. Some believe that big drop in car theft is due largely to the security locking systems installed on most models, as well as more high-tech deterrents like car recovery devices that use the Global Positioning System.

James Alan Fox, a criminal justice professor at Northeastern University, said he was not surprised by the overall downward trends.

"The popular wisdom is wrong," said Fox. "If a law-abiding citizen loses their job, they don't typically go on a crime spree."

Fox argued the decline is partly due to the graying of America. As the over-50 population grows, he said, crime goes down, even while other social costs, like health care, go up.

Like Rosenfeld, Fox also doubted that big changes — like a 10 percent drop in murders — are sustainable.

"We shouldn't celebrate too loudly," he said, arguing that it may be a statistical fluke, but one which can also generate complacency on the part of public officials.

"You don't solve the crime problem, you only control it," he said.

The figures are based on data supplied to the FBI by more than 11,700 police and law enforcement agencies. They compare reported crimes in the first six months of this year to the first six months of last year. Separate statistics compiled by the Justice Department measure both reported and unreported crimes.

The early 2009 data suggests the crime-dropping trend of 2008 is not just continuing but accelerating. In 2008, the same data showed a nearly 4 percent drop in murder and manslaughter, and an overall drop in violent crime of 1.9 percent from 2007 to 2008.

According to the FBI figures, reports of violent crime fell about 7 percent in cities with 1 million or more people. But in towns with 10,000 to 25,000 people, violent crime ticked up slightly by 1.7 percent.

Each city's data was different, but collectively pointed to less crime in every major category.

Nationwide, rape fell by 3.3 percent, and robbery by 6.5 percent. Arsons, which are subject to a variety of reporting standards, declined more than 8 percent.

The FBI's data for New York City shows 204 reported murders in the first half of 2009, compared to 252 in same period last year. By comparison, Oklahoma City saw reported killings increase from 26 to 32, the FBI said. Phoenix, Ariz., saw 10 fewer killings, dropping from 86 in the first half of 2008 to 76 in the first half of this year, according to the data.







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Chess program will continue at Ocean Park Library

FROM CHESS PAGE 1

participants at Fairview won't follow the program to Ocean Park, and Carroll said it's possible the library system could end up with just one day for chess if attendance drops.

"I regret it very much but it's not my decision to make," Carroll said of the end of chess at Fairview.

Contacted last week, Greg Mullen, City Hall's director of library systems, said he was unaware that the chess program was ending at Fairview. Decisions about specific programs are in the hands of branch managers, he said, adding that library staff "certainly has the authority to stop something if they think it's not working."

Catherine Ronan, the branch manager at Fairview, could not be reached for comment on Monday.

Though Bloch was told the reason for ending the program was financial, others have noted the program takes up very few resources.

"I don't see that there's that much to be gained by shutting it down and I think it is a nice way of integrating the community," said David Lappen, whose son Josh, 15, regularly plays at Fairview. "It serves all different levels of people form children to the homeless and the elderly."

"When I heard that they were going to shut this down when it costs virtually nothing to put on, it just seemed wrong to me," said Paul Scott, 57, who has regularly attended in the past three years.

All of the chess boards were donated, Bloch said, and his wages at the library are about $13 per hour. When he was told the program was being discontinued he suggested seeking donations to cover the costs, but, he said, "when that was broached, there was no response."

To some, the program at Fairview has been particularly significant because it

> **NEITHER OF US ARE STELLAR CHESS PLAYERS, BUT IT'S A BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY."**
>
> **Maxine Meltzer**
> chess program participant

serves such a diverse cross section of the Santa Monica community.

"Everything that's in America walks into that room," Bloch said.

He's watched Palestinians play games with Israelis and Sri Lankans play with Tamils, he said. Many of the players come directly to the library to play chess from nearby Will Rogers Elementary and John Adams Middle School.

Cody O'Connell, 15, said he would drop by every week over the summer to volunteer. "It's pretty much everybody just trying to learn something from somebody else," he said.

The Fairview branch has even hosted rock stars of the game.

In 2007, the library held an event where Grand Master Var Akobian, California's highest rated player, played about 20 opponents simultaneously.

Jonah Blume-Kemkes, now 13, took part in the match and remembers the day vividly.

"He had beaten everybody and I was the last game," he said. "It was pretty close to a draw but in the end he beat me. I thought it was a great experience."

nickt@smdp.com

Others want to replicate Snoop's model

FROM FOOTBALL PAGE 3

better for their kids."

Broadus, 38, launched the league in 2005 with $1 million of his own money after noticing that much of urban Los Angeles had no football for boys ages 5 to 13. He's since invested about $300,000, Wadood said. The league now has 2,500 kids enrolled.

Broadus, who was promoting his new album "Malice in Wonderland" this week, would not comment.

The camaraderie that developed from playing together in the Snoop league has made the Crenshaw team a more cohesive, confident unit on and off the field. In a steamroller season, the Cougars have earned a 14-0 record, nabbing the Los Angeles city title.

"It's like a big family," said running back De'Anthony Thomas, a junior who sports a big gold and diamond cross pendant around his neck and who got his nickname "Black Mamba" in the Snoop league because of his speedy agility similar to the dangerous African snake.

It also helps team members fend off peer pressure to join gangs.

"It keeps me out of trouble, from hanging in places I shouldn't be," said wide receiver Geno Hall, a senior with diamond stud earrings. "It's helped me to grow mentally."

While Broadus' larger-than-life figure was not the motivation for the kids to play football, his personal involvement boosts the self-esteem of boys who often receive little attention at home. The rapper attends games and allows his bodyguards to let players approach him freely.

Those intangibles, said coach Garrett, are invaluable for inner-city youth. The burly coach sees his job as much about taking a troubled team member home for food or clothing as it is about football. He lectures about keeping up grades and has imposed a rule requiring neckties, dress shirts and trousers on Fridays during season to get players out of the "hood culture."

The success of Crenshaw and the Snoop league is capturing widespread attention. College recruiters have already approached players such as Thomas and Hall, and the league is fielding calls from cities such as Dallas and Pittsburgh that want to replicate the Snoop model.

In the short term, though, all eyes are on Saturday's championship game against Concord De La Salle, to be televised statewide from the 27,000-seat Home Depot Center in nearby Carson.

For Crenshaw, where almost 40 percent of students drop out and about 70 percent of students receive free or cheaper lunches, excitement is high.

Students have held fundraisers to buy tickets for families who cannot afford them and provide bus transportation to the game. News crews have trooped across campus to film the team, but players are working to stay focused.

"I just get down on the field and play football," Thomas said. "I'm blocking all that out."



Economy, Obama inauguration are named top stories of 2009

DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

NEW YORK The convoluted American economy — restoring windfalls to a lucky few while leaving millions jobless and distraught — was the top news story of 2009, followed closely by the inauguration of President Barack Obama, according to U.S. editors and news directors voting in The Associated Press' annual poll.

The economy, which has superseded other issues as Americans' No. 1 concern, received 61 first-place votes out of 117 ballots cast for the top 10 stories. A related saga, the tribulations of the U.S. auto industry, was voted the No. 4 story.

In 2008, the top story was Obama's election as the first African-American president. His inauguration this year was No. 2, receiving 45 first-place votes, while the bruising battle in Congress over a health care overhaul was No. 3.

For the first time, the AP also enabled members of the general public to select their list of top stories, setting up a separate vote on Facebook. Those voters, 1,410 in all, reversed the order of the editors' and news directors' top two stories — placing Obama's inauguration first and the economy second, but the two Top 10 lists had eight stories in common.

One notable difference was that Michael Jackson's death was No. 3 among Facebook voters, instead of seventh on the AP members' list.

Here are 2009's top 10 stories as voted by the U.S. editors and news directors:

1. THE ECONOMY: Despite a $787 billion federal stimulus package, much of the U.S. economy continued to sputter throughout the year. The jobless rate topped 10 percent, scores of banks failed, the federal deficit tripled to a record $1.4 trillion, and stocks fell to their lowest levels since 1997 before rallying. Yet investment banks' profits surged, triggering public anger and efforts in Washington to crack down on Wall Street bonuses.

2. OBAMA INAUGURATION: Inauguration Day in January was a moving moment for many Americans, as the nation's first black president took the oath of office. But Obama soon confronted the sobering realities of governing as he struggled to get the economy back on track and win support for his ambitious legislative priorities.

3. HEALTH CARE: A sweeping overhaul of the U.S. health care system, extending coverage to millions of Americans now without it, was a top priority for Obama and majority Democrats in Congress. But Republicans were almost unanimously opposed, leading to complex, bitterly partisan showdowns in both chambers.

4. AUTO INDUSTRY: It was an immensely challenging year for America's Big Three automakers. General Motors and Chrysler filed for bankruptcy, GM's CEO Rick Wagoner was ousted by the government, and Chrysler was pressured into an alliance with Italy's Fiat. Ford avoided bankruptcy, but its worldwide sales — like its competitors' — fell sharply.

5. SWINE FLU: Swine flu struck tens of millions of people worldwide, worrying governments as supplies of vaccine failed to meet demand. In the United States, according to federal authorities, swine flu sickened an estimated 50 million people, hospitalized close to 200,000 and killed 10,000.

6. AFGHANISTAN: Casualties on all sides mounted as U.S. forces, with their Afghan and NATO allies, battled the resilient Taliban. President Obama, after lengthy deliberations, opted to send 30,000 more troops. His decision was complicated by the disputed Afghan election, which prompted allegations of widespread fraud but resulted in President Hamid Karzai taking office for a second five-year term.

7. MICHAEL JACKSON DIES: The "King of Pop" died at the age of 50, triggering grief and nostalgia among his legions of fans around the world. His doctor became the focus of a Los Angeles police homicide investigation after telling investigators he administered propofol, a powerful operating room anesthetic, to help the pop star sleep.

8. FORT HOOD RAMPAGE: An Army psychiatrist, Maj. Nidal Hasan, was accused of killing 13 people at Fort Hood, a sprawling military base in Texas, before being seriously wounded by police gun fire. Investigations were launched to determine if authorities missed warning signs that might have prevented the rampage.

9. EDWARD KENNEDY DIES: Sen. Edward Kennedy, who carried on the family legacy after the deaths of his three older brothers, died of brain cancer after a distinctive political career filled with highs and lows. Though his own presidential aspirations were thwarted, he earned bipartisan respect for decades of hard work in the Senate.

10. MIRACLE ON HUDSON: A US Airways passenger jet, both its engines disabled, made an emergency ditching in the Hudson River, and all 155 on board survived in what was dubbed "The Miracle on the Hudson." The veteran pilot, Chesley Sullenberger, was hailed as a hero for averting a disaster.

Just missing the Top 10 was the confirmation of Sonia Sotomayor as the first Hispanic justice on the Supreme Court.

The war and political turmoil in Iraq was voted the No. 16 story, the first time since 2001 that Iraq was not in the Top 10.

The results of Facebook voting closely resembled the AP members' choices; each Top 10 list had only two stories not on the other list. Sotomayor's confirmation and Iran — the tensions related to its election and nuclear program — were in the Facebook Top 10 but not the members' Top 10. The Fort Hood rampage and Afghanistan did not make the Facebook Top 10.

In both cases, several write-in votes were cast for a development that occurred too late to be included on the ballot — the scandal enveloping golfer Tiger Woods after he crashed his car outside his home early one morning and eventually confessed to marital infidelity.

Here are the Facebook voting results:

1. Obama's inauguration.
2. The U.S. economy.
3. Michael Jackson dies.
4. Miracle on the Hudson.
5. Swine flu.
6. Health care overhaul.
7. Edward Kennedy dies.
8. Auto industry woes.
9. Iran.
10. Sotomayor joins Supreme Court.

The Facebook voting, conducted on a non-scientific basis, was for entertainment purposes only and shouldn't be considered an accurate reflection of public opinion.

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Green Brooms Music Academy Students:



Photography by www.nkpix.com

Green Brooms Music Academy would like to congratulate its students who performed at the 2009 Winter Recital, which was held at the Santa Monica Public Library Auditorium on Sunday, December 6th. Our recital featured 45 performances from 32 different student performers, many of whom had never participated in a recital before. In lieu of charging admission, Green Brooms family and friends were asked to bring non-perishable food items which were donated to Santa Monica's Westside Food Bank. Thank you to our community of music lovers for supporting our students and attending this joyous event.

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SURF REPORT

Surf Conditions **Water Temp:** 59°

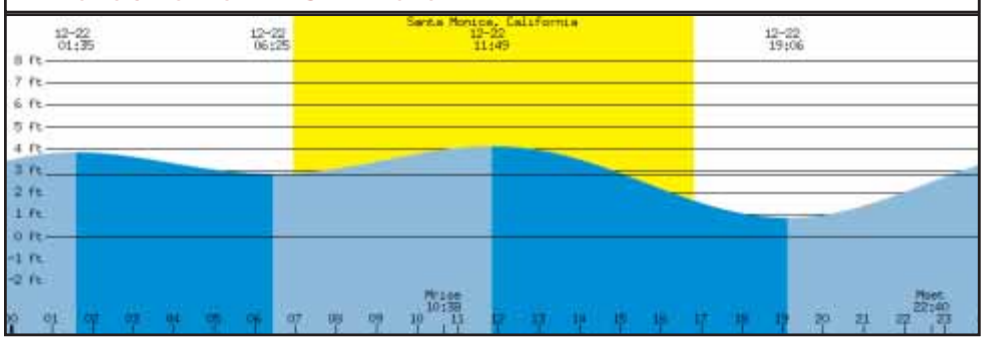
Swell Forecast

Should still see some head high sets around west facing breaks from this swell. NW wind swell though is also expected, which could be rather persistent and peaky.

Long Range Synopsis

Looks smaller, perhaps just waist high most everywhere. Winds are expected to become offshore in the morning, 10+ mph near the coast.

Tide Forecast for Today in Santa Monica



BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous 30 days up to the ending date of **December 15, 2009**

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QUICK STATS (for the last 28 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 1
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 9
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 37 / 16
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 5 / 23

The Beach Report Card is made possible by: The Diller – von Furstenberg Family Foundation; simplehuman; SIMA

Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for 3 days after a rainstorm. After a rain, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually far exceed health criteria in the state's Beach Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth.	A	F
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth.	A+	A+
El Pescador State Beach, between Lachasa and Las Alisos creeks.	A+	A+
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach.	A+	A+
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth.	A+	A+
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth.	A	C
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private).	A	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth.	A+	F
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach.	A+	A+
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth.	A+	F
Solstice Canyon at Don Blacker County Beach.	A+	D
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth.	A+	F
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd..	C	A+
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence.	A+	A+
Surfrider Beach (breach location)- daily.	A	F
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east.	A+	F
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon.	B	B
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (point zero).	A	F
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs.	C	A+
Pena Creek at Las Tunas County Beach.	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon.	ns	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth.	A	A
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	A+	ns
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	C	B
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain).	A+	D
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence.	B	B
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain.	A+	A
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua).	A	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain.	A+	D
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain.	A+	F
Santa Monica Municipal Pier.	F	D
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain.	A+	F
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms).	A+	D
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain.	A+	F
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain.	B	A
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain.	B	F
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain.	A+	F
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south.	A+	D
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St..	A+	D
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower.	F	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth.	A+	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain.	A+	B
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach.	A+	B
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty).	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain.	A+	B
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant.	B	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain.	A+	B

LEGEND

DRY -- each location is graded on an A – F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone
WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days
ns -- no sample taken

Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card® is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A–F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.

Heal the Bay

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NASCAR

Johnson named male athlete of the year

JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. There was little recognition outside the racing world when Jimmie Johnson won his first NASCAR championship.

Same with his second, and again with his third.

But four straight championships? That's a different story.

Johnson, the first driver in NASCAR history to win four consecutive titles, earned mainstream recognition Monday when he was honored as the Male Athlete of the Year by members of The Associated Press.

Johnson received 42 votes from editors at U.S. newspapers which are members of the AP. Tennis star Roger Federer (30 votes) and Olympic sprinter Usain Bolt (29) were the only other athletes with totals in the double- digits.

Although Tiger Woods was named Athlete of the Decade, the golfer received only nine votes for Athlete of the Year. He was tied with NBA star Kobe Bryant and slugger Albert Pujols in fourth place. Woods, who was ranked No. 1 in his sport but failed to win one of golf's majors this season, was never a top contender — even before the sex scandal that unraveled his personal life following a Nov. 27 traffic accident.

For Johnson, the first race car driver to be named the AP's Athlete of the Year in its 78-year history, the award is the validation he's been waiting for since he began his historic run in 2006.

"We'd been wondering the last few years, 'When is this going to hit?'" he said. "It seems like the answer is now. The wave is finally peaking, and we don't know where it's going to take us. The fourth straight title takes it out of our sport and makes it a point of discussion — like, 'Wow, a race car driver won this thing.'"

The 34-year-old Californian again schooled the competition, winning four of his seven races this season when the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship began in September. Two-time champion Tony Stewart dominated the "regular season," but it was Johnson and his No. 48 Hendrick Motorsports team that turned it up when the stakes were highest.

In the 10 Chase races, Johnson finished outside the top-10 only once: when he wrecked at Texas with Sam Hornish Jr. three laps into the eighth race. The crash proved Johnson's mettle, as he sat inside his car, helmet on, for more than an hour as crew chief Chad Knaus led a total rebuild of his Chevrolet so that Johnson could return to the track.

Although the 38th-place finish decimated his cozy lead in the standings, he shrugged off any potential challenge by rolling into Phoenix the next week and leading 238 of the 312 laps en route to a victory that turned the season finale into a low-key Sunday drive for Johnson.

"I'm pretty sure that dude's Superman," said teammate Mark Martin, who finished second in the standings, 141 points behind Johnson.

The march into the record books has attracted attention for Johnson far beyond NASCAR's insulated garage. HBO Sports' award-winning "24/7" program has tabbed Johnson for a four-episode series that will chronicle his preparation for the 2010 season-opening Daytona 500.

And he received widespread attention earlier this month when he donated $922,000 in educational grants to 26 schools in California, North Carolina and Oklahoma.


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MOVIE TIMES

Aero Theatre
1328 Montana Ave.
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Call theater for information.

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade

2012 (PG-13) 2hr 38min
12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:20

The Hurt Locker (R) 2hrs 11 min
1:40, 7:30

Fantastic Mr. Fox (PG) 1hr 27min
10:15 a.m., 12:25, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:35

The Messenger (R) 1hr 45min
11:00 a.m., 4:45, 10:30

Ninja Assassin (R) 1hr 39 min
10:20 a.m., 12:40, 3:00, 5:25, 7:50, 10:15

AMC 7 Santa Monica
1310 Third St.
(310) 289-4262

Fantastic Mr. Fox (PG) 1hr 27min
12:10, 2:20, 4:50

Ninja Assassin (R) 1hr 39min
12:30, 2:55, 5:15

Brothers (R) 1hr 50min
10:45 a.m., 1:50, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00

Princess and the Frog (G) 1hr 35min
11:00 a.m., 1:45, 4:15, 6:45, 9:30

Princess and the Frog (G): Closed Captions 1hr 35min
12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15

Up in the Air (R) 1hr 49min
11:15 a.m., 1:00, 2:00, 3:45, 4:45, 6:30, 7:30, 9:15, 10:30

Avatar 3D (PG-13) 2hrs 40min
10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 2:15, 3:15, 6:00, 7:00, 9:45, 10:45

Laemmle's Monica Fourplex
1332 Second St.
(310) 394-9741

Precious (R) 1hr 59min
1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:00

Road (R) 2hr 7min
1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50

An Education (PG13) 1hr 55min
1:55, 4:40, 7:30, 10:00

Home (2009) (PG-13) 1hr 24min
1:30, 7:10

Punctured Hope (NR) 1hr 46min
4:30, 9:40

Mann's Criterion Theatre
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

The Blind Side (PG-13) 2hrs 6min
12:20, 1:10, 3:30, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10

Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG-13) 1hr 43min
11:30 a.m., 12:30, 2:00, 3:00, 4:30, 5:30, 7:00, 8:00, 9:30, 10:30

The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG-13) 2hrs 10min
12:40, 3:40, 6:40, 9:40

Invictus (PG-13) 2hrs 12min
1:20, 4:20, 6:30, 7:20, 9:20, 10:20

For more information, e-mail news@smdp.com

Treat yourself, Aquarius

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★ Refuse to look backward. There is also a problem with looking forward. You cannot stay present in your life if you look in either direction. Think about how you feel when someone is distracted and not listening. Tonight: Do your thing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Your holiday goals are about to come to fruition. Make sure you complete as much as you can today, before events and people cause complications. Know what you want, and you'll be ahead of the game. Tonight: Where your friends are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Touch base with many of your friends and associates. This might be the last time you can wish them merry Christmas. You also might have to take the lead at work or domestically in order to get a project done. Tonight: Where the gang is.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Find expert advice, or listen to a partner who just might know more than you think. Being able to defer could be more significant than it appears to be. Flow with others and their needs. Tonight: Reach out for a loved one.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ You don't play second fiddle all that easily, but under the present circumstances you will need to. Your way or style of handling a personal matter perhaps needs a little bit of doctoring. Tonight: Defer to others' suggestions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ You understand that others demand the limelight in nearly all realms of your life. Though you might feel frustrated, tap into your ingenuity. Your ideas will become more important than you realize. Tonight: Say "yes."

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Complete any errands if you can. Start clearing out work as well. Honor a natural give-and-take that goes on between you and another person. If an idea doesn't work, revamp it. Tonight: Mellow out.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Sometimes no one can stop you, and this is such a time. Your imagination, charisma and energy mix, making it close to impossible to say "no" to you. Knowing this, go for what you want. Tonight: Zero in on what you want.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Stay centered when others seem to be losing it with the heavy holiday schedule. You could choose to stay close to home or work from home, if that might help you stay on top of your work and personal schedule. Tonight: Easy does it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Zero in on what you want. Conversations open doors and allow greater flexibility. If you want to try a different approach or style, just communicate your intentions and go for it. Tonight: Where the action is.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ The time for conversation has come. You might want to open up with someone you look up to. You might be so much for an idea, that you could be overwhelmed and decide to overcommit your resources. Careful! Tonight: Your treat.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Think twice and understand what needs to happen. You could see a sudden change in what is happening. Keep an overview in mind as long as you can. You could be delightfully surprised. Tonight: Whatever knocks your socks off.

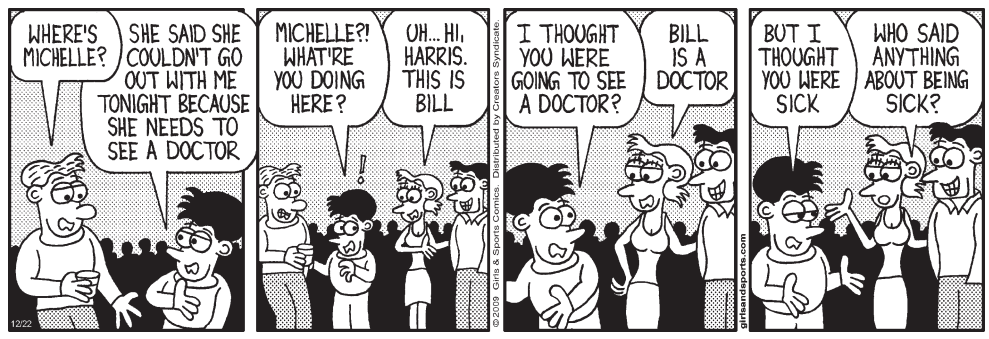
Happy birthday

This year, you want to change a lot about your daily life. You will have just that opportunity for transformation. Your vision of what could happen might not coincide with what really happens. In either case, you could be quite content. Examine your long-term desires, and don't focus too much on the status quo. Sometimes events occur in a tumultuous manner. If you are single, you'll open a new door. Welcome different types of people. In fact, the person you choose could be from a foreign country. If you are attached, the two of you will benefit from better communication and a willingness to detach. Work on the friendship that exists between you as well. PISCES understands you well.

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS
The stars show the kind of day you'll have:
★★★★★Dynamic ★★ So-So
★★★★ Positive ★ Difficult
★★★ Average

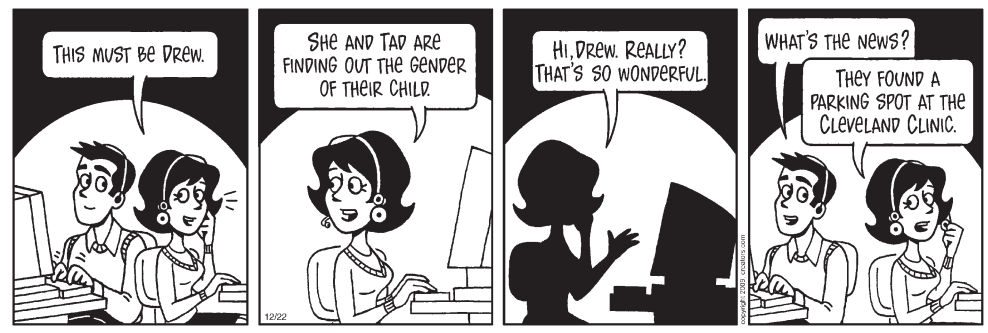
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



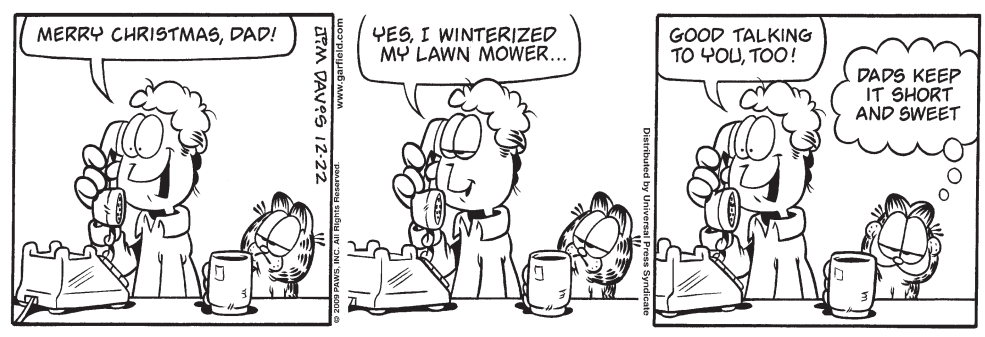
The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



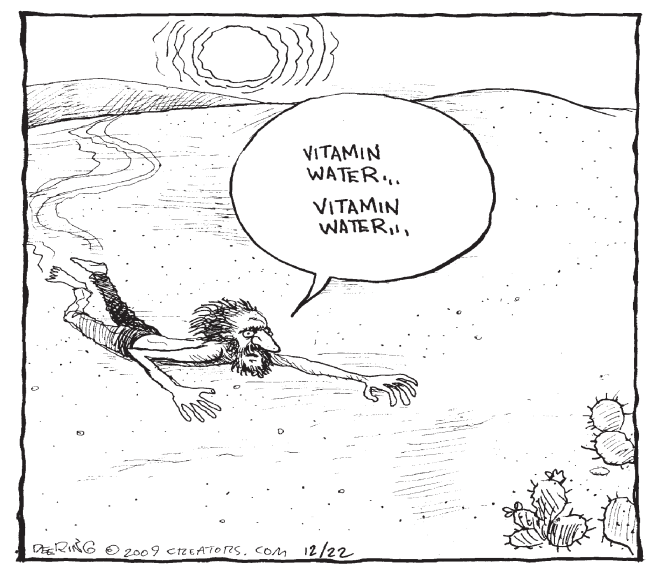
Garfield

By Jim Davis



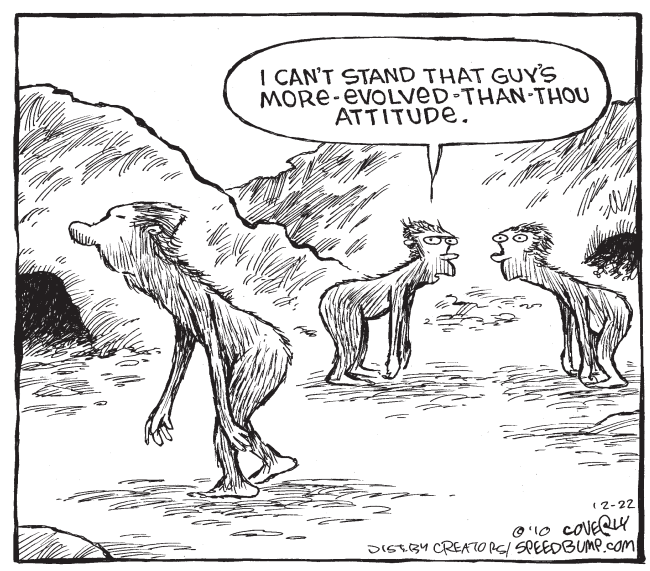
Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



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Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from ★ (easiest) to ★★★★★ (hardest).

Difficulty Level ★★

		2	7		3		8	
					4	6		2
4				1			9	
6					2		3	1
		4				9		
5	8		1					4
	6			4				9
2		7	6					
	9		8		7	1		

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

There are many strategies to solving Sudoku. One way to begin is to examine each 3x3 grid and figure out which numbers are missing. Then, based on the other numbers in the row and column of each blank cell, find which of the missing numbers will work. Eliminating numbers will eventually lead you to the answer.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

2	9	4	5	1	6	8	7	3
3	8	7	4	2	9	1	5	6
5	1	6	7	8	3	9	4	2
8	2	9	1	5	4	3	6	7
7	3	5	2	6	8	4	1	9
6	4	1	9	3	7	2	8	5
9	7	8	3	4	5	6	2	1
4	5	2	6	9	1	7	3	8
1	6	3	8	7	2	5	9	4

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MYSTERY REVEALED

Leslie Thomas *news@smdp.com*

Reader Brian Koch correctly identified this photo of a dinosaur head statue located in the 900 block of 11th Street. He will receive two VIP passes to Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier. Check tomorrow's paper for another chance to win.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Melville captain
5 Enjoys a book
10 Blood fluid
12 Concur
13 Game-show loser's prize
15 Quarterback Manning
16 Fish eggs
17 Used a couch
18 Echo
20 Sample recording
21 Home design
22 Avails oneself of
23 Make speeches
25 Writer Roald
28 Smidgens
31 General Robert —
32 Brain, slangily
34 Groan inducer
35 Salt, to Simone
36 That guy's
37 Ubiquitous
40 Asp or adder
41 Mournful music
42 Moved slowly
43 Lawman Eliot

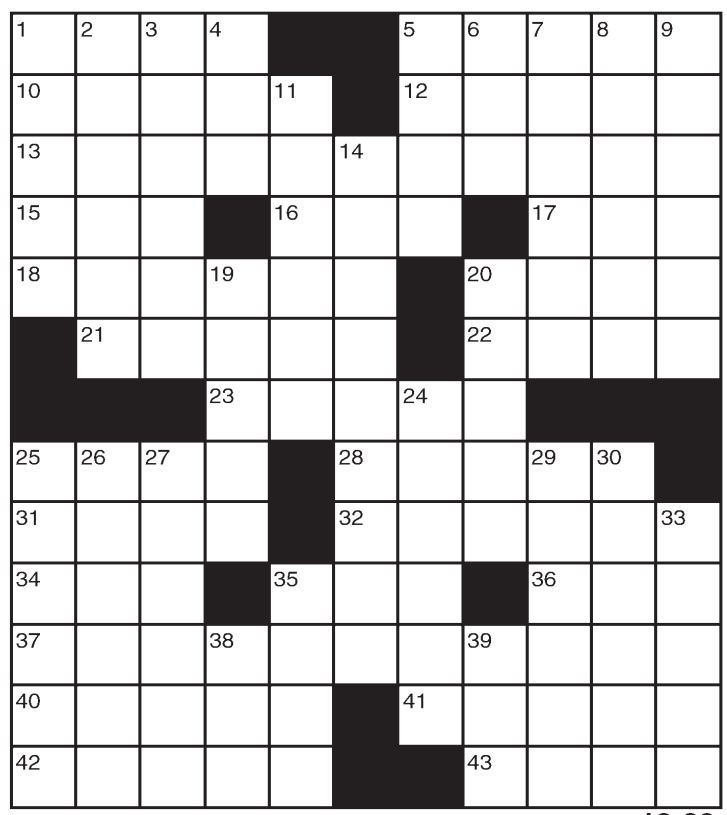
DOWN

1 According to
2 Made better
3 Show up
4 Except
5 Latest fad
6 Nest item
7 Stands
8 Slander
9 Brawls
11 Bathroom fixture
14 Easy decision
19 French school
20 As a result of
24 Worked leather
25 Take testimony from
26 Female grad
27 Hair colors
29 Stick
30 Arm supporters
33 Senator Kefauver
35 Went fast
38 Mamie's mate
39 Major no-no

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

Yesterday's answer

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send $4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 2, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



12-22

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS: 10 20 30 44 49
Meganumber: 24
Jackpot: $162M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 19 30 37 40 44
Meganumber: 6
Jackpot: $47M

Fantasy 5: 2 5 16 25 38

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 0 5 3
EVENING: 3 5 2

DAILY DERBY:
1st: 12 Lucky Charms
2nd: 09 Winning Spirit
3rd: 11 Money Bags
RACE TIME: 1.41.14

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site at http://www.calottery.com

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ From a police report in the North Bay (Ontario) Nugget (Nov. 7): An officer in line at a traffic light, realizing that cars had not moved through two light changes, walked up to the lead car to investigate. The driver said she was not able to move on the green lights because she was still on the phone and thus driving off would be illegal. The officer said a brief lecture improved the woman's understanding of the law.

■ The inspector general of the National Science Foundation revealed that on-the-job viewing of pornography Web sites was so widespread at the agency that the resultant ethics investigations hindered his primary mission of investigating fraud on grant contracts. The agency report, obtained by the Washington Times in September, said the heaviest user was a senior executive who logged on to pornography at least 331 days in 2008. He subsequently retired, but before leaving defended his habit, claiming that his Web site visits actually helped impoverished women in Third World countries to earn a decent living (by posing for pornography).

TODAY IN HISTORY

1890 Cornwallis Valley Railway begins operation between Kingsport and Kentville, Nova Scotia.

1894 The Dreyfus affair begins, in France, when Alfred Dreyfus is wrongly convicted of treason, on antisemitic grounds.

1920 The GOELRO economic development plan is adopted by the 8th Congress of Soviets of the Russian SFSR.

1937 The Lincoln Tunnel opens to traffic in New York City.

1940 World War II: Himarë is captured by the Greek army.

1942 World War II: Adolf Hitler signs the order to develop the V-2 rocket as a weapon.

1944 World War II: Battle of the Bulge – German troops demand the surrender of United States troops at Bastogne, Belgium, prompting the famous one word reply by General Anthony McAuliffe: "Nuts!"

WORD UP!

dolorous \DOH-luh-ruhs\ , adjective; 1. Marked by, causing, or expressing grief or sorrow.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Employment

Advertising Sales

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For Rent

MAR VISTA, 11621 Braddock Dr. unit 2 2bdrm. 1.5 bath, $1295, townhouse style, stove, carpt, w/d hookup, patio, gated parking, carpet, intercom entry, no pets.$700 off move-in (310)967-4471 www.jkwproperties.com

1244 Euclid 2+1 upper unit #10 stove, fridge, marble bathroom floors, carpets blinds, free standing balcony, parking, pets OK with deposit .$1675/mo (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

1248 11TH st.unit A 2bdrm/1 1/2bath, lower carpet stove, blinds, laundry, vinyl flooring, balcony parking, no pets.on site manager $1625.(310)393-6322 www.jkwproperties.com

12500 CULVER Blvd., near Marina 1+1 $975 Includes parking, laundry , elevator, gated MUST SEE Call Lenny (310)822-7282

2712 ABBOT Kinney, in Venice parking, laundry, gated. All utilities included 1+1 $1150, single $895. Call Doug (310)577-9609

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For Rent

833 5TH St. SM upper unit 206 single $1395 stove, carpet, blinds, swimming pool, laundry, granite countertops, wood/tile floors, intercom entry, gated parking, no pets. (310)393-2547 www.jkwproperties.com

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835 Pacific St. #7, Studio, hardwood floors utilities included $1050

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L.A. GROVE area 428 N Orange Grove unit 101 1+1 stove, fridge, blinds, tile bathroom separate tub/shower hardwood/ vinyl floors, on-site laundry no pets $1175/mo $700 off move-in (310) 578-7512 jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA 12450 Culver Blvd. Unit 213, Single stove, fridge, blinds, carpet, tiling, flooring, granite counter tops, with utilities, intercom entry, gated parking, no pets. $895/mo (888)414-7778 www.jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA 12766 Matteson Ave #8 2+2 $1375/mo stove, fridge, tile and vinlyn floors, blinds, parking, laundry, no pets call between 5:30-7:30pm units shown by appt.only $500 off move-in (310) 439-1928 jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA: 11932 Courtleigh Dr. unit 9, $1025/mo. 1+1 stove, fridge, carpet, blinds, carpet, utilities include, intercom entry, laundry, gated, parking, no pets. $500 off move-in (310) 737-7933 jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA: 12434 CULVER Blvd. unit 1 2+2 stove, fridge, AC, carpets blinds, laundry room, intercom entry, gated parking, no pets.$1375/mo $500 off move-in (888)414-7778 www.jkwproperties.com

MV/MDR adj.$1100 one bedroom upper appliances, new carpet, private balcony, laundry, parking, free month with one year lease
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MAR VISTA near Marina. Quiet area $1000/mo 1bd+den 1ba, carpet, blinds, stove, refrigerator, laundry, parking, no pets. 310-456-5659.

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1+1, st, hdwd, pkg, lwr **$1100**
2842 Exposition Blvd, 'B'
2+1, st, -fns, w/d hkp **$1400**
2344-A Ocean Park Blvd
Sgl, st, fr, lwr **$875**
1831 Pearl Street, #5
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WEST L.A.
1920 Manning Ave #6
2+1_ , st, fr, hdwd **$1500**
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2+1, st, fr, new kitchen & cpt, 1-car gar **$1600**
1657 Federal Ave, #12
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1766_ Malcolm Ave
Sgl, st, fr, pkg, cpt, ldry **$800**
1766 Malcolm Ave
2+1, st, fr, cpt, pkg-1, ldry **$1500**
1800 Kelton Ave, #5 & #7
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st *(stove),* ***fr*** *(fridge),* ***cpt*** *(carpet),* ***sgl*** *(single),* ***bach*** *(bachelor),* ***ldry*** *(laundry),* ***gar*** *(garage),* ***hdwd*** *(hardwood floors),* ***lwr*** *(lower),* ***upr*** *(upper) ,* ***htpl*** *(hotplate),* ***pkg*** *(parking),* ***w/d*** *(washer/dryer),* ***hkp*** *(hook-up),* ***d/w*** *(dishwasher),* ***c-fn*** *(ceiling fan), (fireplace)*

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For Rent

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MAR VISTA 3976 Inglewood Blvd. , 2+2 lower $1375/Mo stove, fridge, blinds, carpet, laundry, parking, no pets. $500 off move-in (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

MV/MDR adj. $900 Large Studio, single, Full kitchen, stove & refrigerator, large closets, carpets, laundry, parking. Info (310)828-4481 or (310)993-0414 after 6p.m.

PALMS 2+1 3633 Keystone ave #1 stove, blinds, tile flooring, carpets, ceiling fan, laundry,parking, AC, no pets. $1375/mo $500 off move-in (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

WLA 1457 Westgate #E 1+1 stove, fridge, blinds, tile , garage parking no pets $1200/mo $500 off move-in (310) 578-7512 jkwproperties.com

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DBAS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 20091736624 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as HILL ON BROADWAY, 825 HILL STREET, UNIT A, SANTA MONICA, CA 90405. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : KARIM ABJANI, 825 HILL STREET, UNIT A, SANTA MONICA, CA 90405 This Business is being conducted by, an individual. Signed: The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed on (Date)11/17/2009. /s/: KARIM ABJANI
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/17/2009. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 12/15/2009, 12/22/2009, 12/29/2009, 1/5/2010

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North of Montana	$2,795,000	$1,397,500
Between Wilshire & Montana	$2,400,000	$677,000
South of Wilshire	$865,000	$624,000
Sunset Park	$1,249,000	$650,000
Ocean Park	$1,365,000	$599,000

Statistics Updated Every Monday

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