

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

27, 20, 8, 3, 1

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 1, 8, 0

Evening picks: 1, 9, 2

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 12, Lucky Charms

2nd Place: 10, Solid Gold

3rd Place: 1, Gold Rush

Race Time: 1:46.93



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

In October, about \$450,000 worth of marijuana plants were discovered in a downtown Chicago apartment after police noted an overpowering scent that wafted the length of the building's hallway. They arrested a Navy Pier worker and five students, one of whom voluntarily answered the police knock to inadvertently reveal marijuana plants covering almost every surface in the front room (as well as one room air freshener, which an occupant had optimistically placed near the door).



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Someday we'll look back at this moment and plow into a parked car"

— Evan Davis



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Water contamination settlement approved

City Hall gets \$312M

By Daily Press staff

CITY HALL — A seven-year legal dispute ended on Monday after a judge approved a \$300 million settlement between City Hall and three oil companies for contaminating Santa Monica's water.

Orange County Superior Court Judge Stephen J. Sunvold approved "good faith" settlements between Shell Oil Company, ChevronTexaco and Exxon Mobil.

The settlement is valued at \$312.85 million, which includes a commitment to provide the city with a new water treatment facility, as well as \$92.5 million in cash.

The settlement is valued at \$312.85 million, which includes a commitment to provide the city with a new water treatment facility, as well as \$92.5 million in cash.

A new treatment facility, the first of its kind, will be built specifically to clean up the city's

water at the Charnock Well Field in West LA, the city's main water source. The settlement ensures that the oil companies will pay for all costs to construct, operate and maintain the treatment plant, which officials expect will clean the city's water supply by 2008.

The court also approved separate settlements between City Hall and Union Oil Company (Unocal) for \$5 million and with ConocoPhillips, on behalf of its subsidiary Tosco, for \$6 million. City Hall previously settled with Atlantic Richfield (ARCO) for \$9.75 million, Ultramar for \$4.5 million and Conoco for \$4 million.

Only one major oil industry defendant remains in the lawsuit — Lyondell Chemical Company,

See SETTLEMENT, page 5



John Wood/Daily Press

Children march during Monday's 'Posada' for worker's rights.

Activists walk for workers' rights

'Posada' targets Doubletree Hotel

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN — About 150 local activists took to the streets here Monday night, marching in a traditional Mexican "posada" to the Doubletree Guest Suites Hotel on Fourth Street, where labor organizers have called for unionization.

The Christian-themed event was designed to promote work-

ers' rights and unionization. It was organized by officials from St. Anne's Church and Santa Monicans Allied for responsible Tourism, a nonprofit pushing for a higher minimum wage in the city.

Starting at the SMART offices at Sixth Street and Colorado Boulevard, the procession moved down Fourth Street, across the freeway and to the doorstep of the Public Safety Facility building. It then proceeded to the footstep of the Doubletree, before turning around and heading back to

where it started.

At various points along the way, the group stopped to act out versions of the Christmas journey of Joseph and Mary, who, according to the Bible, were rejected from several inns before resting at the manger where Jesus was born.

But this particular posada had a social justice theme. Jesus and Mary had to leave their loved ones in Mexico, contend with and be rejected by hostile border guards and, once in the United States, work for

See POSADA, page 5

St. John's hospital built up gingerly

By Daily Press staff

A fully constructed Saint John's hospital was unveiled last week.

The gingerbread version, that is.

In the hospital's main lobby is a massive gingerbread village that extends 12 feet by 12 feet. It required 48 sheet pans of gingerbread, 200 pounds of powered sugar and hours of work by the hospital's executive chef Bill Sharp and his helpers, including his daughter, 10-year-old Mariah Sharp.

Sharp began working on the village, which has a replica of the new hospital and a "Cat In The Hat" theme, shortly after Thanksgiving. The village took two and a half weeks to create, before it was unveiled on Dec. 15.

The gingerbread village has been a tradition at Saint John's for eight years, and each year it gets more extravagant. The first one only had eight houses and a church. This year, it takes up nearly half of the hospital lobby and sits on four large pieces of plywood.



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Bill Sharp, executive chef at Saint John's Healthcare Center, tweaks the train that runs through his gingerbread village in the lobby of the hospital.

See HOSPITAL, page 6

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HOROSCOPE

Be out and about, Scorpio



JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

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

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Stay on top of what is happening, because your actions can and will make a difference. In some manner, you take control of the situation and complete details. The good news is that you have the energy to do this. Tonight: A must appearance.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Reach out for someone you really care about. This person might have a unique quality that you admire. Let this person know how very special he or she is. Follow your instincts, and you'll do the right thing naturally. Tonight: Read between the lines.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Stop and take special time for a loved one or friend. Understand this person more thoroughly. Build a strong foundation. Let the energy flow from your inner self. Make your home another's refuge, if need be. Tonight: Pour the egg nog.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Others know what they want from you and let you know it. In the holiday frame of mind you are in, you will do whatever you need to do for others. Take today for those around you, touching base with the people you care about. Tonight: Start looking for Santa!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Be imaginative as you wish the best of the holiday season to those who are part of your daily life, not necessarily family or friends. Everyone appreciates a gesture of thoughtfulness, even the mailman. Remember these people today. Tonight: Shore up last-minute details.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Your spirit uplifts others and adds many happy moments to their lives. Romance remains a major factor in your life. You cannot deny what you want, nor can another. You could look silly standing under the mistletoe all day. Just go for it. Tonight: Become a kid again.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Join family and get ahead on a project that could weigh you down if you let it. Others sometimes become demanding without meaning to. Instead of getting upset, look at each person and enjoy the child within him or her. Tonight: Home is where the heart is.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Make the last-minute round of calls. Carefully deal with others who make a difference in your life. An extra gift here or there can only add to the joy of the moment. Help others get into the spirit; put on a favorite piece of music. Tonight: Out and about.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Expenses continually mount, and you discover there isn't much you can do here. You could be upset by this, but why bother? A parent has a great deal of significance in your life right now. Don't forget a boss in your holiday wishes. Tonight: Make it easy. Stay away from last-minute complications.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ You are all smiles right now and can deal with anything, but hopefully you won't have to. Do be sensitive to those around you. Allow your unusual imagination and creativity to emerge. Your job is to express the Christmas experience. Tonight: Keep on smiling.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You might not be in the mood to deal with others. You could potentially be a Scrooge this year. Be honest. You might need some time alone, and you need to say so. A partner will pull you out of the doldrums if you let him or her. Be generous with this person. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Head out the door and visit with your friends. Get together for a last-minute hoorah and some egg nog. It is not everyday that you can get away with partying and not working. The more the merrier on this particular date. Make the most out of the social moment. Tonight: Live it up!

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LOCAL



Christmas services in Santa Monica

First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica

1008 11th St.
(310) 393-8258
Dec. 24 — Family service: seasonal music, full service — 6 p.m.
Candlelight service — 11 p.m.

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

3734 Centinela Ave.
(310) 397-1201
Dec. 24 — Traditional scriptures, children's recitations and candlelight carol singing — 7 p.m.

Metro Church Calvary

(310) 315-9255
Dec. 24 — Full service, music, families welcome — 6 p.m. at the Four Points Sheraton bar room, 630 W Pico Blvd.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church

1730 Wilshire Blvd.
(310) 829-4113
Dec. 24 — Candlelight service — 7 p.m.

St. Augustine by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

1227 Fourth St.
(310) 395-0977
Dec. 24 — Children's mass — 5:30 p.m.
"Midnight Service" with full choir — 10:30 p.m.

Trinity Baptist Church

1015 California Ave.
(310) 395-9961
Dec. 24 — Candlelight service — 6 p.m.

Westside Christian Fellowship

2948 Colorado Ave.
(310) 829-9344
Dec. 24 — Candlelight service — 6 p.m.

Calvary Baptist Church

1502 20th St.
(310) 829-3291
Dec. 24 — Prayer meeting — 7 p.m.

Delaware Avenue Seventh-Day Adventist Church

1845 20th St.
(310) 450-0919
Dec. 24 — Prayer and study — 7 p.m.

First African Methodist Episcopal Church

1823 Michigan Ave.
(310) 450-0331
Dec. 23 — Bible study — 7 p.m.

Christian Science Church of Santa Monica

505 Arizona Ave.
(310) 395-6023
Dec. 24 — Prayer and study — 8 p.m.

St. Clement's Catholic Church

3102 Third St.
(310) 396-2679
Dec. 24 — Full service (English, Spanish) 9:30 p.m.

St. Anne's Catholic Church

2017 Colorado Ave.
(310) 829-4411
Dec. 24 — Full service (English) — 4 p.m.
Children's mass — 5:30 p.m.
Midnight service (English, Spanish) — 12 a.m.
Dec. 25 — Full service (English) — 10 a.m.
Full service (Spanish) — 11:30 a.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

958 Lincoln Blvd.
(310) 451-1346
Dec. 24 — Candlelight service — 7:30 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Community Church

1260 18 St.
(310) 829-5436
Dec. 24 — Family vespera service — 6 p.m.
Candlelight vespera service — 8 p.m.

surf report

Exposed spots will see shoulder to head-high surf by late in the day with the swell building overnight into Thursday morning. Expect mild temperatures and poor to fair conditions. FYI: the rain hasn't helped the water quality.

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

Today the water is:

58°

**Sunrise: 7:04 a.m.
Sunset: 4:58 p.m.**

	LOW TIDE				HIGH TIDE			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	N/A	N/A	1:18	-0.7	6:09	6.4	7:36	3.9
SUNDAY	12:25	1.7	2:05	-1.3	6:50	6.9	8:31	4.0
MONDAY	1:10	1.9	2:52	-1.7	7:32	7.2	9:24	4.0
TUESDAY	1:57	2.0	3:39	-1.8	8:17	7.3	10:15	4.0
WEDNESDAY	2:44	2.1	4:27	-1.7	9:03	7.1	11:08	4.0
THURSDAY	3:35	2.3	5:16	-1.4	9:50	6.8	N/A	N/A
FRIDAY	4:30	2.4	6:05	-0.9	12:02	4.0	(10:40)	6.2

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LETTERS

Homeless man's lifestyle is a choice

Editor:

Dear Santa: All I want for Christmas is for Charles Springer to stop IMPERSONATING a homeless person, (SMDP, Dec. 22, page 4).

Mr. Springer is "homeless" because he has made a choice. Anyone who has sucked off, burdened, and over used the handout system in this city for over a decade is not down and out. It's a lifestyle, supported by city leadership, that itself, once lived in a van in the Bay Street beach parking lot.

Anyone that has made a career of begging and freeloading for over 10 years, and can't find, at a minimum, a roommate situation or Section 8 accommodations just isn't trying hard enough.

Inasmuch as this city thrives (ad nauseam) on providing, supporting, funding, building, and negotiating low cost housing availability and construction, just what IS the problem in someone giving Charles somewhere to live for free?

Mr. Springer, you have made my point. There are many people like you on the streets, freeloading off of my tax dollar for years and years. Yes, in my mind and heart, you are the norm.

Again, here you go with "circumstances beyond your control." Ten years of circumstances beyond your control — come on! Where will it end? Will it ever end? Will you ever stop sucking off Santa Monica? And then you have the nerve to complain that you have to wait in line for a bathroom? What else do you and "your brothers" have to do with your day? Harass tourists, scare my kids in the parks? Yes, I would deny you food and clothing, because I am tired of supporting your excuses, and over a decade of pure, outright irresponsibility.

You accuse me of being heartless, I am not. I am and was touched at the outreach and support that the Jordan Mission downtown provides to the real homeless. That would be families, not people like yourself. When I see 3- and 4-year-olds in line for hours, just for a meal, I become completely intolerant of you and "your brothers," as you nap in the parks, waiting for your lunch to be delivered.

As for the OPCC and Mr. Maceri's "commitment to community service," that commitment comes along with the paycheck he receives for working in the homeless industry (Dec. 22, page 1). If we were to solve the homeless problem, wouldn't Mr. Maceri be out of a job? Where is the incentive for Mr. Maceri to solve the problem?

Basic math skills tell me that if the OPCC has \$5.1 million to oversee, that means that \$13,972 per day are going to people like Mr. Springer, rather than to the schools. What's wrong with this picture?

Lori Emerson
Santa Monica

Walk with common sense

Editor:

Evelyn, you forgot one of the most important. Thou shalt observe and obey "do not walk" signs, and refrain from yelling epithets and making rude hand gestures when made aware of it. (SMDP, "Think Twice," Dec. 23, page 4). Oh, and one other:

Thou shalt use some common sense when walking. Although this may sound obvious, take a look at Montana Avenue sometime. Common sense is not so common.

Michael Harris
Santa Monica

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Christmas: Celebrate reason, selfishness, capitalism

Christmas in America is an exuberant display of human ingenuity, capitalist productivity, and the enjoyment of life. Yet all of these are castigated as "materialistic." The real meaning of the holiday, we are told, is assorted Nativity tales and altruist injunctions (e.g., love thy neighbor) that no one takes seriously.

In fact, Christmas as we celebrate it today is a 19th-century American invention. The freedom and prosperity of post Civil War America created the happiest nation in history. The result was the desire to celebrate, to revel in the goods and pleasures of life on earth. Christmas (which was not a federal holiday until 1870) became the leading American outlet for this feeling.

Historically, people have always celebrated the winter solstice as the time when the days begin to lengthen, indicating the earth's return to life. Ancient Romans feasted and reveled during the festival of Saturnalia. Early Christians condemned these Roman celebrations — they were waiting for the end of the world and had only scorn for earthly pleasures. By the fourth century, the pagans were worshipping the god of the sun on Dec. 25, and the Christians came to a decision: If you can't stop 'em, join 'em. They claimed (contrary to known fact) that the date was Jesus' birthday, and usurped the solstice holiday for their Church.

Even after the Christians stole Christmas, they were ambivalent about it. The holiday was inherently a pro-life festival of earthly renewal, but the Christians preached renunciation, sacrifice, and concern for the next world, not this one. As Cotton Mather, an 18th-century clergyman, put it: "Can you in your consciences think that our Holy Savior is honored by mirth? ... Shall it be said that at the birth of our Savior ... we take time ... to do actions that have much more of hell than of heaven in them?"

Then came the major developments of 19th-century capitalism: Industrialization, urbanization, the triumph of science — all of it leading to easy transportation, efficient mail delivery, the widespread publishing of books and magazines, new inventions making life comfortable and exciting, and the rise of entrepreneurs who understood that the way to make a profit was to produce something good and sell it to a mass market.

For the first time, the giving of gifts became a major feature of Christmas. Early Christians denounced gift-giving as a Roman practice, and Puritans called it diabolical. But Americans were not to be deterred. Thanks to capitalism, there was enough wealth to make gifts possi-

ble, a great productive apparatus to advertise them and make them available cheaply, and a country so content that men wanted to reach out to their friends and express their enjoyment of life. The whole country took with glee to giving gifts on an unprecedented scale.

Santa Claus is a thoroughly American invention. There was a St. Nicholas long ago and a feeble holiday connected with him (on Dec. 5). In 1822, an American

named Clement Clarke Moore wrote a poem about a visit from St. Nick. It was Moore (and a few other New Yorkers) who invented St. Nick's physical appearance and personality, came up with the idea that Santa travels on Christmas Eve in a sleigh pulled by reindeer, comes down the chimney, stuffs toys in the kids' stockings, then goes back to the North Pole.

Of course, the Puritans denounced Santa as the Anti-Christ, because he pushed Jesus to the background. Furthermore, Santa implicitly rejected the whole Christian ethics. He did not denounce the rich and demand that they give everything to the poor. On the contrary, he gave gifts to rich and poor children alike. Nor is Santa a champion of Christian mercy or unconditional love. On

the contrary, he is for justice — Santa gives only to good children, not to bad ones.

All the best customs of Christmas, from carols to trees to spectacular decorations, have their root in pagan ideas and practices. These customs were greatly amplified by American culture, as the product of reason, science, business, worldliness, and egoism, i.e., the pursuit of happiness.

America's tragedy is that its intellectual leaders have typically tried to replace happiness with guilt by insisting that the spiritual meaning of Christmas is religion and self-sacrifice for Tiny Tim or his equivalent. But the spiritual must start with recognizing reality.

Life requires reason, selfishness, capitalism — that is what Christmas should celebrate — and really, underneath all the pretense, that is what it does celebrate. It is time to take the Christ out of Christmas, and turn the holiday into a guiltlessly egoistic, pro-reason, this-worldly, commercial celebration.

(Leonard Peikoff, who founded the Ayn Rand Institute, is the foremost authority on Objectivism, the philosophy of Ayn Rand. The Ayn Rand Institute (www.aynrand.org) in Irvine, promotes the philosophy of Ayn Rand, author of *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*. Send reactions to reaction@aynrand.org.)

Guest
Commentary

By Leonard Peikoff

LOCAL



Living wage proposal may go before council Jan. 13

POSADA, from page 1

villainous managers. They eventually found justice with the support of the community, church and union.

Avelino Alvarez, 48, played the part of Joseph in the procession. He said he was participating to promote unionization. As a cook at the Fairmont-Miramar Hotel, Alvarez is already a member of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11, which aims to organize all local luxury hotels.

"I'm here to support the Doubletree workers, since they don't have any respect, any benefits," said Alvarez, a Santa Monica resident.

Only three or four of those in the procession were Doubletree workers, organizers said. One was Maria Cortez, 37, a housekeeper at the Doubletree for the past seven years. Cortez said through a translator that she is required to clean 14 suites a day, whereas unionized housekeepers at other hotels clean 15 smaller rooms a day.

And the pay is low, she added. "It's not enough — not even to save for my kids to go to school," she said.

In documents distributed to members of the press, SMART spokesman Derek

Smith said the Doubletree has a history of mistreating its workers.

"In addition to telling an important story about the injustices endured by immigrant workers, this posada will also draw attention to the Doubletree Guest Suites, which has had a notorious relationship not only with its workers, but with the community as well. Truly, there is no room for justice at this inn," a press release reads.

Also included in press materials is a timeline of events highlighting, among other things, various charges filed by the union against the Doubletree with the National Labor Relations Board, a federal agency that polices labor law. However, that timeline is misleading because it leaves out the rulings by NLRB officials — who agreed the charges should be heard, but later found there was no violation.

Hotel officials did not return calls seeking comment. In the past, they have accused union officials of using threats and other tactics in their quest to organize workers.

Also attending the event was Kurt Petersen, HERE's organizing director, and Vivian Rothstein, a SMART official, among others. Rothstein said her group

plans to present a higher minimum wage proposal to the City Council on Jan. 13.

In 2002, a separate measure, called the "living wage," was narrowly defeated at the polls. That law would have required businesses along the beach that gross more than \$5 million each year to pay workers \$10.50 per hour or \$12.25 without benefits. However, under that law, unionized businesses would have been exempt from paying the living wage, giving large businesses an incentive to unionize.

Supporters have accused opponents of foul play in defeating the measure and a proposal to amend local procedures is

being considered by City Hall leaders. Those complaints were largely spurred by a spate of misleading slate mailers sent out immediately before the election that indicated school and women's rights groups, as well as various Democratic candidates, were against the living wage.

While that matter plays itself out, Rothstein said Monday's procession was an important opportunity to show solidarity in the community.

"The St. Anne's community has been very involved in standing up for a living wage," she said. "This is a way of combining the visions for social justice."

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MTBE lawsuit: Lyondell still pursued by City Hall

SETTLEMENT, from page 1

which is the successor to ARCO Chemical. Lyondell, along with the other companies, is a manufacturer of Methyl tertiary Butyl Ether, a gasoline additive that leaked into the city's groundwater in 1996, forcing several wells to be closed, according to city officials.

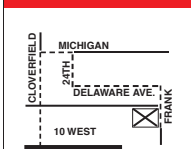
The court rejected Lyondell's challenge that the \$312 million value placed on the settlement by Shell, ChevronTexaco and Exxon Mobil was too low and that Lyondell should be dismissed from the lawsuit because it caused the city no harm.

In rejecting the claims, the court noted that the settlement was proper and was the product of negotiations conducted "through mediators, at arms length, in an adversarial proceeding." With respect to Lyondell's assertions that it should be let out of the lawsuit, the court stated that Lyondell "can be held liable to (the city) in strict liability for the manufacturing of a defective product (MTBE). The fact is, Lyondell placed the product into commerce. Liability can be found from that even if it didn't transport it, put it in pipes, own any stations, etc. Second, Lyondell can be held liable for failure to warn."

No date has been set yet by the court on when the trial between the city and Lyondell would occur. Assistant City Attorney Joe Lawrence said he expects it will be sometime early next year.

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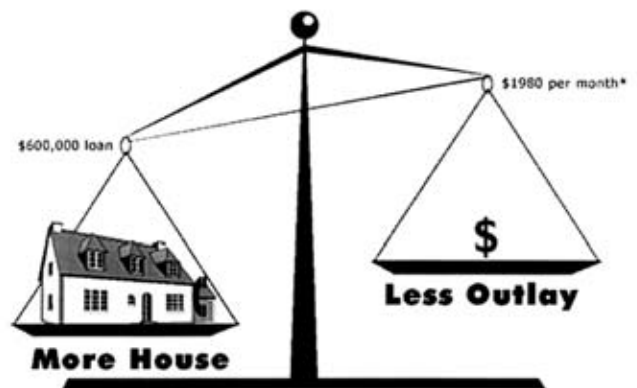
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LOCAL □ STATE



FBI raids multi-million dollar investment firm

BY DON THOMPSON
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — The FBI raided a Southern California investment company Monday, alleging that more than 1,800 clients who invested tens of millions of dollars were victims of a long-running confidence scheme.

No charges have been filed, but the FBI is investigating Financial Advisory Consultants as a possible "Ponzi scheme," where early investors are paid with money from later investors, said FBI spokeswoman Laura Bosley.

James Lewis, who variously lists himself as the firm's president or, more recently, its funds manager, told an investor in August that his "growth fund" alone had \$62 million in assets, according to an FBI affidavit. Lewis also operated an income fund that clients said is worth tens of millions of dollars.

His firm had more than 1,800 clients across the nation, one of Lewis' assistants told the FBI.

The Associated Press disclosed earlier this month that Lewis, 57, has been investing millions of dollars for clients and claiming extraordinary financial returns for 20 years, without being licensed or regulated as required.

Moreover, the firm has never provided clients with any details on how it invests their money. Since July, Lewis has been delaying withdrawal requests with the excuse that millions of dollars in investments have been frozen by the Department of Homeland Security — a freeze the AP reported does not exist.

Those details were confirmed in a sworn affidavit used to obtain the search warrant from a federal magistrate.

"There is probable cause to believe that FAC and Lewis, through the use of the mails, engaged in a scheme to defraud investors in FAC's Income and Growth Funds by operating a Ponzi scheme," FBI agent Brad Howard said in his affidavit. He further alleges that Lewis and the firm

used the U.S. mail to sell securities without registering with the federal Securities and Exchange Commission.

Investors previously said they had been interviewed and provided financial records to investigators from both the SEC and the state Department of Corporations, although the FBI acted alone Monday.

Chuck Woolstenhulme of Temecula invested \$100,000. He tried to get his money back, but failed.

"It's an important step, I think, to see if there's any money left and how it gets distributed."

— CHUCK WOOLSTENHULME
Investor

"I'm glad it's come to this," Woolstenhulme said Monday. "It's an important step, I think, to see if there's any money left and how it gets distributed."

Lewis has not responded to multiple telephone messages left by the AP over two weeks, nor to letters sent to him by registered mail and overnight delivery.

In a letter faxed to investors Friday, Lewis said his firm has "never charged for financial advice, nor have we ever sold any securities." He said that means he doesn't need to be registered with the SEC nor the state Corporations Department.

But in its reports to investors, the Orange County firm says it charges a 5 percent "management fee" on any profits it earns for its clients.

The state Corporations Department has identified investors in Idaho, Utah, Oregon, Colorado, Georgia and California, according to the FBI affidavit. The AP has had calls from investors living as far away as Michigan.

Sugar, spice and everything nice for used for Saint John's village

HOSPITAL, from page 1

"It's a good-sized bedroom," Sharp said. "We tried to go a little whimsical this year."

Sharp began the task by creating a floor plan, then cut out templates of the buildings from large sheet pans, which required eight cases of gingerbread mix. Once the templates were created, the platform and stage were built. Then came the fun part — decorating the houses and buildings with icing and candy.

The village's anchor building is a model of the 225,000-square-foot inpatient building, which after four years of construction is scheduled to be done in May.

"I give credit to Bill," joked Terry Muldoon, who oversees the construction of the new hospital. "He built the hospital a lot faster than me."



NATIONAL



Museum exhibit showcases St. Peter's Basilica

BY DIANE SCARPONI
Associated Press Writer

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — For Roman Catholics around the world, Christmas Eve means midnight Mass celebrated by the pope in St. Peter's Basilica, the home of the church and a jewel of Renaissance architecture.

If you can't travel to Rome for the holidays, you can still get a taste of St. Peter's through a new exhibit at the Knights of Columbus Museum about the design and building of the basilica.

The exhibit features a 16-foot wooden model of the basilica's dome from the 16th century. It was commissioned by artist and architect Michelangelo, designer of the dome and many other features of the basilica.

The entire building process took 120 years and required the work of many architects, engineers and artisans and the support of several popes.

Over 100 items in the exhibit, including etchings, construction tools and models, are on loan from the Vatican.

"It's our most special exhibit because these are precious items and one-of-a-kind objects, almost none of which have ever traveled outside the Vatican or come to the United States," said Carl Anderson, head of the Knights of Columbus, a Roman Catholic men's fraternal organization.

The exhibit is partly a thank-you for financial help from the Knights of Columbus, said Cardinal Francesco Marchisano, the head administrator and caretaker of St. Peter's.

"The Knights of Columbus has helped with the restoration of many beautiful things, and we are grateful for the many things that they have done," Marchisano said in a recent interview at the New Haven museum.

St. Peter's Basilica is built over the tomb of the apostle Peter, the church's first pope. It also stands on the grounds of the Roman circus — a giant amphitheater where gladi-

ators fought and early Christians were killed for sport.

Church history tells that St. Peter himself was crucified in the circus. His remains were entombed nearby, and Christians have maintained the spot ever since.

"The Knights of Columbus has helped with the restoration of many beautiful things, and we are grateful for the many things that they have done."

— **CARDINAL FRANCESCO MARCHISANO**
Head administrator and caretaker of St. Peter's

The exhibit includes models of the way Christians have venerated the tomb, beginning with a protective wall, later an altar, up to today's interior of the basilica with Bernini's baldachhino, a bronze canopy whose twisted columns are nearly 100 feet high.

Emperor Constantine, who converted the Roman empire to Christianity, ordered a church built on the site in the year 324. The first St. Peter's Basilica was a giant wooden structure. Models and drawings of the early church building are on display alongside drawings and models of the current church.

By the 1500s, the building had deteriorated to the point where a new church was needed. The exhibit

chronicles the feats of engineering and architecture required to create the present-day St. Peter's.

Engineers had to devise ways to move an Egyptian obelisk that stood in the way. Romans took the obelisk as a prize from their conquest of Egypt; it stood in the middle of the circus.

The obelisk was moved to the center of the piazza around St. Peter's. A hoist that was used in the move is on display, its thick wooden handles worn smooth during the effort.

"Everything here is a feat of genius, brawn and dedication," said Lawrence Sowinski, director of the museum.

Engineers also devised intricate scaffolding and other building techniques.

Michelangelo designed the basilica with a dome-within-a dome: An eye-pleasing, perfectly round dome on the inside, and a stronger, egg-shaped dome on the outside.

Museum visitors can appreciate this design, and other facets of the dome's construction, by viewing a wooden 1:15 scale model built to Michelangelo's specifications.

Michelangelo ordered many such wooden models of his designs because he knew he would not live long enough to see the building completed. He was 72 in 1546, when Pope Paul III hired him for the job. Construction of the basilica was finished in 1626.

Also on display are photographs of many artworks and rooms in the basilica that were restored over 20 years through contributions from the Knights of Columbus.

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DID YOU KNOW?: Ian Fleming, creator of the James Bond adventure novels also wrote "Chitty-Chitty bang Bang."

Entertainment

What's Playing

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

CALENDAR GIRLS

Boasts an appealing British sensibility and echoes the uplifting themes that made "Billy Elliott" a surprise hit stateside a few years back.

THE COOLER

Wayne Kramer's lowdown on the desperate lives of lost souls in Las Vegas is easily one of the best bets this year.

THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS

An emotionally charged, and often hilarious tale about a dying man who reconnects with old friends and his estranged son.

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.

'House of Sand and Fog' is tragically good

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

Jennifer Connelly learns a hard lesson about the dire consequences of not reading your mail in this dramatic thriller from director Vadim Perelman based on the hit novel by Andre Dubus III. Connelly's Kathy Nicolo is a recovering addict too depressed to even get out of bed most days, let alone deal with the letters that have been piling up since her husband split eight months earlier. After ignoring several notices about an unpaid business tax, Kathy is evicted from the Northern California bungalow she inherited from her father. Though the tax turns out to be a bureaucratic gaffe, the house is nevertheless sold at auction for a fraction of its worth to Massoud Amir Behrani (Ben Kingsley), a rigid former Colonel in the Iranian Air Force. Behrani, who lost everything when he and his family were forced to flee their homeland, sees the house as the fulfillment of the American Dream and refuses to sell it back to the county even after he learns of the tax mistake and Kathy's plight (she's living out of her car).

What begins as a battle over a modest piece of real estate quickly escalates into all-out war between the two desperate parties, culminating in a somewhat unbelievable series of events that tests the limits of reason — somewhere near the middle of the third act, you may find yourself wondering how a little fixer-upper could be the root of so much tragedy. That "House Of Sand And Fog" manages to be compelling despite a host of implausibilities is a credit to the lead actors, both of whom bring such conviction to their roles that what transpires almost seems feasible. Connelly, once known more for her pret-



Jennifer Connelly and Ben Kingsley in "House of Sand and Fog."

ty face than her acting ability, continues the career turnaround that began with her Academy Award-winning performance in "A Beautiful Mind." It's likely that the part of Kathy Nicolo will provide the 33-year-old actress a shot at a second Oscar. Kingsley is equally fine as the once-proud military man who's been reduced to working menial jobs to support his wife (Shohreh Aghdashloo) and

teenaged son (Jonathan Ahdout). Credit also goes to cinematographer Roger Deakins ("The Shawshank Redemption," "O Brother, Where Art Thou?") for the simple yet beautiful compositions in what is one of the best-looking movies of the year.

(Rated R for some violence/disturbing images, language and a scene of sexuality. Running time: 126 minutes)

Connelly clears air in 'House of Sand and Fog'

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

Jennifer Connelly has plenty to be thankful for this holiday season. The Academy Award-winning star of "A Beautiful Mind" and "The Hulk" has a new baby, a happy marriage (with actor Paul Bettany), and a place atop Hollywood's A-List. In the tense drama "House Of Sand And Fog," which co-stars Ben Kingsley and Ron Eldard, Connelly delivers what very well may be the finest performance of her career. She sat down recently with a group of reporters to discuss her latest film.

QUESTION: "House of Sand And Fog" is a dark and unsettling film. How did you feel after the first time you saw it?

JENNIFER CONNELLY: I felt like I'd been shaken, and I came out of the theater and thought that I just wanted to go home and see my family and hug my son. I felt so grateful for the things that I had. So I didn't find it depressing. I found it to be a great reminder to be grateful for the things that we have.

Q: Your character, Kathy Nicolo, endures a great deal of suffering. Was it a difficult movie to make?

A: Making it was a wonderful experience for me, because I liked the movie. For me, grueling is working on a project that I'm not happy with. That sort of thing, I



Jennifer Connelly

have a hard time with at the end of the day.

Q: How would you describe Kathy?

A: Kathy is an outsider. She's someone who's been an addict. One of those fringe characters you sometime see on the side of the road.

Q: What would you say are the central themes of "House Of Sand And Fog"?

A: Intolerance. The fact that these characters don't have much tolerance for one another. And then there's a question of who's entitled to live the American Dream, and what kind of citizens do they need to be.

Q: This film is considered a strong contender for several major awards. How much campaigning will you be doing, and are you comfortable with that aspect of the job?

A: We're doing the press junkets, premieres and the talk shows that everyone does. I won't be handing out pins with my picture on it. I won't be handing out fliers — that would probably be a little bit tacky. I just go out and do it. I don't really have any political feelings about it.

Q: Your resume is loaded with some pretty heavy fare. Ever think about doing comedy?

A: I'd love to do a comedy. I haven't found one that I love, that they are also willing to entrust me with. When comedies are floating around, (studio execs) aren't usually thinking, "Ooh, we need to get Jennifer Connelly. She's at the top of the list." But I'd love to do one, because I think it's about time.

Q: How do you plan to spend this Christmas?

A: We want to go away skiing or something. We're last-minute people, though, so we'll see if that actually comes together.

ENTERTAINMENT



'Cold Mountain' fits the bill

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

Writer-director Anthony Minghella's adaptation of Charles Frazier's best-selling Civil War novel leads all comers with an impressive eight Golden Globe nominations, and is likely to fare as well when the Academy Of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences announces its award finalists on Jan. 27. Just goes to show that the "experts" don't always know how to pick 'em. "Cold Mountain" is a good movie, not a great one — and it's fair to say that there are at least four better films in theaters right now. But award voters tend to fancy epic period pieces featuring big stars, and with Nicole Kidman, Jude Law and Renee Zellweger on board as a fabulous-looking trio of backwoods Southerners in war-torn 19th Century America, "Cold Mountain" certainly fits the profile.

After Inman (Law) is wounded in a brutal battle in Virginia, he decides it's time to make love, not war. The object of his desire is a preacher's daughter, Ada (Kidman), who is waiting for him back in his rustic village in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Though he hardly knows her — they met just before he departed for the war — Inman is hopelessly devoted to Ada, no doubt because she's a cultured beauty who always looks as though she just emerged from a salon. To get to Ada, Inman must travel a great distance on foot while avoiding the menacing Home Guard patrols that roam the countryside, shooting deserters. Along the way, he hooks up with a horny minister (Philip Seymour Hoffman), a kindly old crone (Eileen Atkins) and a comely young widow (Natalie Portman). Back in Cold Mountain, Ada is beset by one hardship after another following the death of her



Nicole Kidman in "Cold Mountain."

father (Donald Sutherland). Alone on a farm she doesn't know how to work, Ada's salvation comes in the form of the film's most entertaining character, Ruby (Zellweger), a hardscrabble country gal who can milk a cow, mend a fence and cuss like a sailor. "Cold Mountain" is a bleak portrait of the devastating costs of war, but every time she's on screen, Zellweger manages to brighten things up. Kidman is the bigger star, but make no mistake, this is Zellweger's picture. Law also impresses mightily as the weary soldier who seems to have lost his spirit on the battlefield. Any doubts that the pretty-boy Brit could convincingly portray a down-home Southerner are erased the moment he utters his first line. Yet despite the best efforts of the stars the movie simply fails to maintain momentum over its two-and-a-half hours, at times dragging so much it seems the projector may grind to a halt.

(Rated R for violence and sexuality. Running time: 155 minutes)

'Cheaper By The Dozen' a joke — and not a funny one

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

Don't look now, but it's another insipid flick about a dopey dad who can't control a pack of wild kids. And I mean it — you should not look at this movie — though I suspect lots of youngsters will do just that. From the way the film was cast, "Cheaper By The Dozen" seems to have been put together solely for the purpose of separating kids from their parents' hard-earned dough. The presence of teen queen Hilary Duff and heartthrob Tom Welling of TV's "Smallville" practically ensures this purported comedy will be a box office success despite a conspicuous lack of anything remotely humorous. After all, the target demographic isn't known for its sophisticated taste. The question is, what in the world was Steve Martin thinking when he took this job? Martin is one of the sharpest and funniest minds in show business, but try as he might, he can barely pull a single laugh out of the wreckage.

Tom and Kate Baker (Bonnie Hunt) live in small Illinois town with their dozen children (a Baker's dozen ... get it?). Day-to-day life is as wacky as you'd expect it to be with a house full of precocious moppets who are all entirely too vivacious for anyone's good. After Tom lands his dream job coaching a big university football team, he and his fertile spouse uproot the family,



Steve Martin in "Cheaper By The Dozen."

further amplifying the household chaos. And things really get out of hand when Kate is whisked away to do a book tour for her recently published memoirs and Tom is left to fend for himself against his boisterous brood. This is a formula that's been applied ad nauseum in Hollywood, and usually with better results. Next to "Cheaper By The Dozen," even the decidedly uninspired "Daddy Day Care" plays like the second-coming of "Blazing Saddles." Sure, the movie qualifies as family-friendly fare, but so does most of the pedestrian pap on network television. So why pay for it when you can get it for free at home? Last time I checked, they're still showing "Eight Is Enough" reruns on Nickelodeon.

(Rated PG for language and some thematic elements. Running time: 99 minutes)

'Big Fish' reels in a winner

Review

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

With "Big Fish," Tim Burton has exorcized the "Planet Of The Apes" demon. Whereas the latter was a very un-Burtoneque disaster that no doubt shocked his devotees, the former is a remarkable return to form for the auteur who brought us such wonderfully imaginative fare as "Edward Scissorhands," "Beetlejuice" and "Ed Wood." In fact, "Big Fish" — based on the popular novel by Daniel Wallace — may be Burton's most ambitious film to date in that he manages to fuse his flair for the fantastic with a very real, very accessible story of an adult son's desire to reconnect with his estranged, dying father. Shot almost entirely in the river-laden sticks of central Alabama near the actual setting of Wallace's stories, "Big Fish" is an amazing looking film thanks to the combined talents of Burton and Academy Award-winners Dennis Gassner (production designer) and Philippe Rousselot (director of photography).

And the acting ain't bad, either. Albert Finney is in top form as Edward Bloom, a man who has spent a lifetime spinning tall tales, much to the chagrin of his skeptical son Will (a very good Billy Crudup), a just-the-facts-please reporter who fled to Paris to avoid the father he feels he never really knew. Will returns home to Alabama to be by his dying dad's side, and is once again regaled with wild stories about Edward's oversized life as a young man (Ewan McGregor). McGregor's resemblance to a young Finney is uncanny, and he more than



Albert Finney and Jessica Lange in "Big Fish."

compliments the elder actor's masterful turn with his best performance since "Trainspotting." Jessica Lange is, as always, a joy as Edward's loving wife. Alison Lohman fills that role in the flashback/fantasy sequences, which include excellent supporting appearances by Helena Bonham Carter, Danny DeVito and the fabulous Steve Buscemi as a poet turned bankrobber.

"Big Fish" goes unabashedly over the top, which some may find a bit tiresome. Heck, at times it's downright schmalzy. But it's Christmas, after all, and if you're willing to lose yourself for a few hours in a surrealist fish story, well, it's hard to imagine anything better than what Burton has conceived here.

(Rated PG-13, for a fight scene, some images of nudity and a suggestive reference. Running time: 125 minutes)

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Can the American Dream Downpayment Act help the state?



DAYS ON THE MARKET

By Jodi Summers

In the middle of the 19th century there were as few as 700 people living in what was to become the state of California. In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau declared that California is still the most populous state in the nation with 35.5 million people, an increase of over a half million people since 2002.

Our continued growth impacts our housing crisis. In 2004, our state's median home price is expected to climb 13 percent to \$414,000. What is a first time homebuyer to do?

"Some of the things the governor has signaled looking at was infill development and attached housing in order to all create an affordable product without being in conflict with environmental rules of preserving open space," predicted Jon Ross, legislative counsel for the California Mortgage Bankers Association.

And, in its own small way, the federal government is trying to help. On Dec. 16, President George W. Bush signed the American Dream Downpayment Act, a new program that provides grants to help first time homebuyers with downpayment

and closing costs. The proposal authorizes \$200 million for the program for fiscal year 2004. The rhetoric was strong:

"Today we are taking action to bring many thousands of Americans closer to the great goal of owning a home," said President Bush. "These funds will help American families achieve their goals, strengthen our communities, and our entire nation."

And even more was said:

"This is a good day for thousands of families who have only dreamed about sharing in the American dream of homeownership," said Housing and Urban Development Acting Secretary Alphonso Jackson. "Not only will this law allow thousands of hard working Americans to unlock the door to homeownership, it will also help close the gap that separates minority households from the rest of the country when it comes to owning a home to call their own."

How can the American Dream Downpayment Act work for California? A recent California Association of Realtors study indicated that only 23 percent of California households were able to afford a median-priced home. The minimum income needed to buy that home is \$93,490. Nationally, a minimum of \$40,990 in annual income was needed to purchase a median-price home, which cost \$177,500 in August of 2003.

According to American Dream Downpayment Act, the maximum down-

payment grant is \$10,000 or 6 percent of the purchase price of the home. Know anyone whose got a home to sell for under \$150,000? It's expected that the new legislation will provide an average of \$7,500 in down payment and closing cost assistance to help first-time homebuyers with annual incomes that do not exceed 80 percent of the area median income. (Or anyone earning under \$75,000 in California.)

It's a nice holiday gift, but should have marginal impact here in Santa Monica where the average cost of a single family home is in the neighborhood of \$1.2 million, and the average 20 percent down payment on such a property is nearly \$250,000. Closing costs are around 3 percent.

The objective of the American Dream Downpayment Act is to lower closing costs by approximately \$700 per loan in order to stimulate home ownership for all Americans. The government would like to increase the home ownership rate, especially among minority groups, who have lower rates of home ownership.

Grants will be made to state and local governments through HUD's Home Investment Partnership program. Families interested in applying for grants should contact their state or local housing agency, or check out www.hud.gov <<http://www.hud.gov>>.

The American Dream Downpayment Act includes two other important provisions. It will increase Federal Housing

Administration loan limits for the construction of multi-family housing in high-cost areas. The aim is to increase private construction of affordable rental housing in major urban areas like Boston, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. The per-unit maximum loan limit would increase from \$194,190 to \$218,465, which means the per-unit loan limit for a typical two-bedroom apartment in a high-cost urban area would rise from \$136,749 to \$153,843. If we can keep litigation costs and local government construction fees to a minimum, maybe we can address the local housing crisis.

Second, the American Dream Downpayment Act provides a technical correction to the FHA's adjustable-rate mortgage program that aims to make the product more available to consumers.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is concerned that the administration's emphasis on homeownership comes at the expense of a complete national housing policy. But rental rates aren't an issue unless you own units. Apartment rents are falling nationwide, and the 9.9 percent national vacancy rate is the highest since records began in 1956. Cause and effect: The more families that buy homes, the more rental properties on the market.

(For your real estate needs, e-mail Jodi Summers at jodis@boardwalkrealty.com, or call (310) 309-4219).

SANTA MONICA RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

SOLD	602 20TH ST SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	933 25TH ST SANTA MONICA 90403	SOLD	828 5TH ST #2 SANTA MONICA 90403
Sold Date: 12/15/2003	SqFt: N/A List Price: \$1,995,000 Bed: 4 Lot Size: 8,938 Sold Price: \$1,960,000 Bath: 4	Sold Date: 12/18/2003	SqFt: N/A List Price: \$1,295,000 Bed: 3 Lot Size: 8,350 Sold Price: \$1,385,000 Bath: 2	Sold Date: 12/16/2003	SqFt: 644 List Price: \$399,000 Bed: 1 HOD: \$174 Sold Price: \$364,500 Bath: 1
SOLD	615 KINGMAN AVE SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	644 SAN LORENZO ST SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	914 LINCOLN BL #306 SANTA MONICA 90403
Sold Date: 12/19/2003	SqFt: 2,000 List Price: \$1,699,000 Bed: 3 Lot Size: 4,660 Sold Price: \$0 Bath: 3	Sold Date: 12/16/2003	SqFt: N/A List Price: \$2,725,000 Bed: 5 Lot Size: 8,240 Sold Price: \$2,782,190 Pool Bath: 4.5	Sold Date: 12/16/2003	SqFt: 928 List Price: \$419,000 Bed: 2 HOD: \$283 Sold Price: \$424,000 Bath: 1.5
SOLD	721 GEORGINA AVE SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	734 25TH ST SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	937 5TH ST #2 SANTA MONICA 90403
Sold Date: 12/18/2003	SqFt: 3,025 List Price: \$2,195,000 Bed: 4 Lot Size: 9,800 Sold Price: \$2,205,000 Pool Bath: 5	Sold Date: 12/16/2003	SqFt: 6,000 List Price: \$3,400,000 Bed: 5 Lot Size: 8,698 Sold Price: \$3,400,000 Bath: 8	Sold Date: 12/15/2003	SqFt: N/A List Price: \$529,900 Bed: 3 HOD: \$224 Sold Price: \$530,000 Bath: 2
SOLD	2727 ARIZONA AVE SANTA MONICA 90404	SOLD	1440 23RD ST #322 SANTA MONICA 90404	SOLD	2306 ARIZONA AVE SANTA MONICA 90404
Sold Date: 12/18/2003	SqFt: N/A List Price: \$679,000 Bed: 2 Lot Size: 3,197 Sold Price: \$700,000 Bath: 1	Sold Date: 12/19/2003	SqFt: 966 List Price: \$395,989 Bed: 2 HOD: \$225 Sold Price: \$416,000 Bath: 2	Sold Date: 12/19/2003	SqFt: 1,217 List Price: \$459,000 Bed: 3 HOD: \$121 Sold Price: \$448,000 Bath: 2
SOLD	2415 31ST ST SANTA MONICA 90405	SOLD	441 RAYMOND AVE #5 SANTA MONICA 90405	SOLD	1137 26TH ST #B SANTA MONICA 90403
Sold Date: 12/16/2003	SqFt: 2,040 List Price: \$839,500 Bed: 4 Lot Size: 5,998 Sold Price: \$830,000 Bath: 3	Sold Date: 12/19/2003	SqFt: 1,009 List Price: \$429,000 Bed: 2 HOD: \$203 Sold Price: \$442,000 Bath: 2	Sold Date: 12/16/2003	SqFt: 781 List Price: \$385,000 Bed: 2 HOD: \$195 Sold Price: \$375,000 Bath: 1
SOLD	610 18TH ST SANTA MONICA 90402	SOLD	1934 IDAHO AVE SANTA MONICA 90403	Jodi Summers at Boardwalk Realty 310.309.4219 • jodis@boardwalkrealty.com	
Sold Date: 12/17/2003	SqFt: 2,283 List Price: \$1,535,000 Bed: 4 Lot Size: 8,938 Sold Price: \$1,500,000 Bath: 2	Sold Date: 12/19/2003	SqFt: 1,526 List Price: \$675,000 Bed: 3 HOD: \$250 Sold Price: \$670,000 Bath: 2.5		



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REAL ESTATE



Commercial real estate market shows signs of tightening



IN YOUR SPACE

By Christina S. Porter

Each quarter my company, NAI Capital Commercial, generates a market report. Below is our company's interpretation of the implications of the significant trends in commercial real estate for the West Los Angeles office market.

"West Los Angeles commands the highest rental rates in the Los Angeles Basin. It has a large concentration of high-profile firms (including those in entertainment, computer programming and finance), and is

in the midst of some of the most exclusive residential neighborhoods in the nation. It has a large office base, with 49.4 million square feet. It is a relatively young market, with 57 percent of its space built since 1980. It also is moderately dense, with 62 percent of its space in mid-or high-rise buildings.

Net absorption turned positive in West Los Angeles (+279,900 square feet) in early 2003, for the first time in more than two years. In 2001, net absorption was 1.9 million square feet, and in 2002 it was 1.2 million square feet. It appears as though the implosion of the dot.com and entertainment sectors may finally be ending.

Unfortunately, a large amount of new space came on-line during the first half of 2003 (1 million square feet), including the 775,000-square-foot MGM tower in

Century City. This caused vacancy rates to continue to climb, despite the positive net absorption. Vacancy rates reached 18.6 percent, up very sharply from 17.5 percent six months ago and 15.1 percent 12 months ago. Asking rental rates continued to drop, although at a much slower pace than in 2001 and 2002. They were down just \$0.02 or 1 percent relative to where they were at year-end 2002.

Fortunately, there is currently no construction activity under way. This will enable market conditions to now start tightening. The strengths of the westside are considerable — a very highly skilled labor force, high levels of amenities, access to executive housing and concentrations of cutting-edge entertainment and professional-service firms."

As hot as the investment market has been, a good cash flow has been hard to find. As market conditions "start tightening" the returns on your investments will, of course, increase. If you own investment office property, hopefully you have signed relatively short leases in order to take advantage of a higher demand for office space in the near future. If you are a tenant in this market, hopefully you have locked in a long term lease and taken advantage of the soft leasing market that is slowly coming to an end.

I think we all have a lot to look forward to in 2004. Happy New Year!

(Christina S. Porter is a senior associate at NAI Capital Commercial Real Estate, where she specializes in leasing and selling office and industrial buildings.)

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES LEASED OR SOLD

SOLD/LEASED

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April '04	Santa Monica Blvd	\$2.35 FS	9,500
July '04	Broadway	\$2.65 FS	19,500
January '04	Arizona	\$3.25 FS	2,368
December '03	Broadway	\$2.55 nnn	10,242
June '04	26th Street	Not Available	52,000
March '04	Colorado	\$3.20 FS	28,500

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DID YOU KNOW?: The California State Parks are the largest landowner within the recreation area, with some 42,000 acres. The National Park Service controls about 21,500 acres. There are some 6,000 additional acres of private recreation and local public parklands. When acquisition is complete, some 50,000 acres will still remain in private ownership.



NATIONAL

Nation's security increases amid heightened alert

BY BRAD FOSS

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — In ways big and small, obvious and opaque, already tight security has been fortified at transportation and energy facilities nationwide in response to government warnings that al-Qaida could attack this holiday season.

Bomb-sniffing canine units were added at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, maritime patrols were augmented near power plants that border Lake Erie, and more officers than usual were activated along the U.S.-Canadian border.

U.S. officials said Tuesday they also have received information from a credible source about an al-Qaida threat against oil interests in Alaska, which they have not fully corroborated. Still, officials were treating the information seriously and have taken extra security precautions.

Similar defenses have been increased around key bridges, tunnels, seaports and landmarks, as well as chemical facilities and other places that may be vulnerable to attack. Other layers of protection likely have been in place since Sunday, when the national security level was bumped up to orange, which is "high" alert, from yellow, or "elevated," security experts said.

"There's going to be a menu of visible and invisible measures that are implemented," said Brian Jenkins, research associate at the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University and a special adviser to the Rand Corp., a California-based think tank.

Among the covert steps likely taken, Jenkins said, are an increase in the number of air marshals, particularly on flights arriving from overseas, undercover surveillance around airports and more frequent air patrols near major cities.

There are some concerns about missiles being fired at planes taking off or landing, Jenkins said.

President Bush said the government was doing its best to protect the country and advised citizens "to go about their lives."

"But as they do so, they need to know that governments at all levels are working as hard as we possibly can to protect the American citizens," Bush said in a statement.

The fact that it's the holiday season partly drove the decision to raise the alert. During this time of year, many people are distracted and traveling, and several gather at events like football games and New Year's celebrations.

However, authorities also said the move was based on specific, corroborated intelligence that al-Qaida may soon try to pull off an attack in multiple places to cause mass casualties.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said such an attack could eclipse that of Sept. 11, 2001, which left nearly 3,000 people dead.

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement officials, speaking on condition of

anonymity, said that they did not have any specifics about a potential method, location or time of any attack. They noted that in light of the Sept. 11 attacks, aviation could be a prime possibility.

"We know, tragically, they turned four airplanes into missiles," Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge told reporters after a meeting of President Bush's Homeland Security Council.

Defense Department officials said they were launching more military air patrols over major cities, but they would provide no details. Other government sources said, however, that New York, Washington and Los Angeles were likely choices.

The Transportation Security Administration, the federal agency charged with protecting air travelers, would not discuss its planning at a detailed level, other than to confirm that vehicle inspections and parking restrictions have increased at airports and that Coast Guard patrols have been added near airports bordering oceans and lakes.

"We're putting all hands on deck," TSA spokesman Darrin Kayser said, adding that parking restrictions may require travelers to park a little farther away than they might normally.

The Nuclear Energy Institute, which represents the owners of more than 100 reactors in 31 states, said the power industry is coordinating with law enforcement and intelligence agencies and has 7,000 of its own patrolmen at the ready.

"Really, it's a paramilitary security force," said Steve Kerekes, a spokesman for the group.

In addition, cargo planes and flights originating overseas were of special concern in the latest warning.

To defend against another airborne attack, baggage and passenger screeners are working overtime at airports, and their managers have come out from behind the scenes to work the front lines, the TSA said.

The TSA also reminded travelers that it needs help, broadcasting messages over loudspeakers at airports and train stations that urge Americans to report any suspicious activity or unattended luggage.

The Coast Guard, meanwhile, cautioned boaters to avoid off-limits areas near power plants and to keep their eyes peeled for suspicious activity.

Amtrak said police officers are randomly riding and inspecting trains and that patrols have been beefed up inside stations and along platforms. Some baggage is also being checked, a spokesman said.

The Air Transport Association, which represents the country's major airlines, has urged travelers to arrive two hours before domestic or international flights and to check all bags in order to expedite the screening process.

Although commercial flight procedures have not changed as a result of the raised terror-threat level, the Federal Aviation Administration has imposed stricter rules for private pilots flying in and out of airports near the nation's capital.

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Schedule of Masses

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12:00 a.m. — Bilingual (Midnight Mass)



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NATIONAL

Reindeer games: Caribou herd still endangered

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press Writer

SPOKANE, Wash. — Despite 20 years of recovery efforts, the last wild herd of woodland caribou in the Lower 48 states continues to struggle for survival.

Only 41 of the caribou, a close relative of the reindeer, were counted in the 2003 annual census within the greater Selkirk Mountains north of Spokane.

This caribou herd was listed as endangered by the federal government in 1983, and remains under pressure from loss of habitat and predation by cougars.

"The population of caribou has been stable for a couple of years now," said Tom Buckley of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Spokane.

But the herd is not self-sustaining and the number of caribou remains low despite transplants brought in by wildlife officials. Between 1987 and 1998, 113 caribou from other regions were brought to the Selkirks. Without the transplants, the herd would already be extinct, researchers contend.

Importing caribou from Canada and Alaska into the Selkirks has not been as successful as wildlife officials hoped. Some of animals left the ecosystem and moved north. Others were killed by predators, were poached or died of unknown causes, officials said.

Scientists believe the herd must reach 200 caribou to survive on its own for the long term. They estimate that, historically, the herd had 200 to 400 animals.

There is no deadline for removing the animals from the endangered species list, said Fish and Wildlife scientist Suzanne Audett.

Mountain caribou were once found across the northern tier of the United States, from Washington to New England. But logging and other human encroachment wiped out their habitat. Now they are limited to a remote area of the Idaho Panhandle, northeastern Washington and southern British Columbia.

For a time in the 1990s the Selkirk herd was being devastated by a rising cougar population. But wildlife managers in the United States and British Columbia successfully reduced the number of cougars in the recovery area in recent years, Buckley said. That has reduced the number of caribou killed by the mountain lions.

Focus is now shifting to habitat issues.

Logging of old growth forests is hurting the caribou, because their winter diet is almost exclusively lichens that only grow on those tree branches, Buckley said.

It takes about 50 years for trees to grow tall enough to be above the snow line and support lichens. Another 50 years are needed before the lichens are abundant enough for caribou to eat.

Rein Atteman of The Lands Council, a Spokane-based environmental group, said more old-growth forest needs to be reserved for the caribou.

"The adult survival rate is higher in those tracts of old growth," Atteman said. "We are asking for the entire Selkirk Mountain range on the U.S. side, including state land in Idaho, to be set aside."

Just as important is restricting logging, motorized vehicle use and other human encroachment on caribou habitat, he said. Also, deer, elk and moose are competing with caribou for food in the region, and their numbers may need to be reduced, environmentalists contend.

In 1994, the goal of 50 caribou in the recovery area was set.

"The adult survival rate is higher in those tracts of old growth. We are asking for the entire Selkirk Mountain range on the U.S. side, including state land in Idaho, to be set aside."

— REIN ATTEMAN
The Lands Council

"The recovery team is still short on that goal," Atteman said.

Environmentalists worry the animals are on their way to extinction, Atteman told the International Mountain Caribou Technical Committee meeting earlier this month in Spokane.

Researcher Rob Weiglus of Washington State University told the committee his studies found that cougar numbers in the recovery area have declined, from 1.5 cougars per 100-square kilometers to 1 per 100 square kilometers.

But at the same time, Heiko Wittmer of the University of British Columbia said habitat continues to become fragmented. Woodland caribou do poorly when forests are cut up into small parcels by roads or by logging operations, he said.

Caribou do not reproduce very quickly. The females do not breed until they are about 3 1/2 years old and produce only one calf every other year. The reproduction rate is among the lowest of the deer family.

When the time for birth nears, a pregnant cow will leave the lower elevation where food is abundant and travel to steep, snowy ridges to have her calf. It is believed that this behavior occurs to avoid predators.

But it exposes the vulnerable calves to rain, snow, cold and winds. Only about three calves out of 10 survive each year.

Male caribou live about seven to eight years. Females live slightly longer, to 10 or more years.

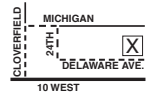
Recovery of caribou within the Selkirk Mountains is a cooperative effort of agencies from Washington and Idaho, the U.S. government and the British Columbia Ministry of Environments.

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NATIONAL

Mexican illegals choose to stay in U.S. for holidays

BY JUSTIN PRITCHARD

Associated Press Writer

Migrant workers who once crossed the border each spring from Mexico and returned south for the holidays at home are more likely than ever to spend Christmas in the United States.

It is a sea change in a once predictable migratory flow — and an unintended consequence of U.S. immigration policy that aims to keep people out by investing billions of dollars in beefier border security.

The new reality is clear in Northern California's Napa Valley, where farmhands once packed for Mexico after harvesting prized wine grapes. The vines are now bare, but many workers are still kicking around for odd jobs and finding refuge at the Rev. John Brenkle's St. Helena Roman Catholic Church.

"It's supposed to keep people out," Brenkle said of more muscular border security, "but it's locking people in, no question about it."

It was once hard to find Mexican workers in December. Now sign-up lists for an odd-jobs program are twice as long as usual. This year, for the first time, the church has set up eight men in a donated trailer.

From Nebraska to Alabama and across the West — in states where Mexicans have come as cheap labor — word is the same: This year, Christmas will be spent in the United States.

Population researchers in both countries say the phenomenon was building before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks

prompted a further crackdown on the U.S.-Mexico border, making the crossing more dangerous and expensive. Getting back to Mexico is easy, but the harder road north has caused migrants to delay trips home out of fear they won't be able to return to the United States.

In the year leading up to Sept. 11, 2001, the average undocumented migrant worker stayed just under a year, according to a large survey by one Mexican think tank. The most recent figures, from 2002, show the average stay surpassed 70 weeks — the longest since the Tijuana-based Colegio de la Frontera Norte began its study in 1993. Even legal workers saw a similar increase in stay, to about 45 weeks.

"It is not the desire of Mexican migrant workers to stay," said Rodolfo Cruz Pineiro, a researcher on the survey. "If they can cross the border without any problem, they would come one or two times a year."

Garrison Courtney, a spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said agents in the field have noticed a drop in the number of annual returnees.

Christmas is a focal point of Catholic Mexico, where towns all but abandoned during the American growing and construction seasons reanimate as workers return laden with gifts and money.

While workers continue to send cash, they are less likely to send themselves.

Investigators at the Inter-American Development Bank tracked the \$9.3 billion Mexican workers sent home in 2001.

They had expected to see the flow to slow that fall as people hoarded cash during uncertain times. In fact, the bank's surveys showed a surge in remittances. The explanation: Money for plane tickets was wired home instead.

The reasons for the shift go beyond the border crackdown, according to American and Mexican researchers. A wobbly U.S. economy means Mexican workers might stay longer to reach their savings target; the deterioration of subsistence farming in rural Mexico weakens the pull home; Mexican workers have fanned out to states thousands of miles from the Southwest border, making a trip home more journey than jaunt; Mexicans now work in factories and construction, jobs that are less tied to seasons; and single men once dispatched to provide for their extended family have sent for their wives and children, making a return trip less pressing and more expensive.

Around 10 percent of Mexican workers returned in 2000 — down from more than 20 percent in 1997, according to Public Policy Institute of California researcher Belinda Reyes.

During those three years, as tighter security in California and Texas funneled crossers into the deadly deserts of Arizona, deaths surged from 129 to 491 Mexican crossers, according to Mexican consulates that send their bodies home.

Deaths have since ebbed yet remain three times higher than when the border crackdown revved up six years ago. The number of illegal crossers apprehended has also fallen, but in 2003 stood at nearly 1 million — a historically high number that suggests increased security has not deterred Mexican migration.

Because crossing is harder, hiring a human smuggler is more expensive. The \$1,500 average is a fortune for workers whose wages in Mexico average a 10th of the United States. And the shift to more remote routes makes the work of bandits easier.

"You play with your life like dice in your hand," said one Mexican-born worker named Roberto with a flick of the wrist.

Roberto, 41, lives in his van around San Francisco and waits on corners to score \$8-an-hour jobs, mostly in construction.

Until the crackdown, he returned to Mexico regularly. Now he speaks of the border as despair and desperation.

"You feel it," he said. "People are afraid."

In Nebraska, the Rev. Damian Zuerlein

ministers to Omaha's Mexicans, many of them employed in meatpacking. He hasn't seen the statistics, but he has seen the change.

A few years ago, Christmas midnight mass attracted about 100 parishioners. Last year, more like 500 people came.

"I hear it over and over again. They're telling me they're not going home," Zuerlein said. "There is a little sadness, and you can kind of see that at the midnight mass."

In Alabama, the story is the same.

"They say, 'No, now it's more dangerous. I don't want to leave my kids here,'" said Hernan Prado, head of the Alabama Latin American Association.

Prado cites Spanish-language news beamed by satellite television into even packed, hardscrabble shacks. Reports from the border are inevitably grim: more than a dozen crossers die together, traffickers exchange gunfire after stealing each other's human cargo.

And then there are the Border Patrol agents with more technology than ever to intercept crossers. The government budgeted \$9 billion for border protection in the current fiscal year, up \$400 million from last year. The number of Border Patrol agents along the U.S.-Mexican line rose from 8,500 in 2000 to at least 9,500 today.

Miguel Escobar Valdez is the Mexican consul in the border town of Douglas, Ariz. Escobar, who has arranged for the bodies of dozens of crossers to be returned, said he understand why Mexican migrants are staying north.

"They're going to be yearning for their homeland," he said. "But first things come first — a job and the possibility of working and earning some money to send back."

Across the small checkpoint, in the Mexican town of Agua Prieta, Miguel Garcia Romero sits in a public park and wishes he could return to the sheep-herding job in Ogden, Utah that paid him \$900 a month. He went home to see his family but he has been trying for two weeks to cross back, only to be caught by the Border Patrol and marched back to Mexico.

Garcia, 43, is trying to scrounge money to buy a bus ticket back to his home state of Chihuahua.

If only he could make it back to Utah, he said, he would stay as long as he could — and his wife and three children would know he made it because of the money he would send back every month.



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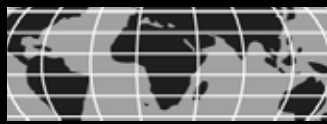
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WORLD BRIEFLY

Troops tighten security in Baghdad

By The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. forces arrested eight rebel suspects in a stronghold of anti-American resistance northwest of Baghdad, the military said Tuesday, as troops tightened security against possible attacks over the Christmas holidays.

Those arrested include an ex-colonel accused of recruiting guerrillas and four suspected associates of fugitive former Vice President Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, who is believed to have a leading role in Iraq's insurgency.

Three soldiers of the U.S.-led coalition died Monday. Two U.S. soldiers and an Iraqi translator were killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. A Polish soldier died when a fellow soldier's gun fired accidentally in Babylon, south of Baghdad, hours after a visit by Poland's

President Aleksander Kwasniewski.

In Mosul, the largest city in northern Iraq, gunmen fatally shot a judge, Youssef Murad, in his car. The assailants escaped.

South Korea is planning to send 3,000 troops to join 460 military medics and engineers already in Iraq, media reports from Seoul said Tuesday. That deployment, for nine months from April 1, would make the South Korean contingent the third largest in the 26-nation coalition after the United States and Britain.

Israeli raid kills five

By The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — An Israeli raid on a Gaza refugee camp killed five Palestinians Tuesday in a flare-up of violence that came just hours after a high-

level Egyptian peace mission to Israel.

The one-day visit Monday by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher was marred by a confrontation with Palestinian extremists at the Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third-holiest site.

Israel had told Maher earlier it would abide by a cease-fire with the Palestinians, though it would not sign a truce with militant groups.

Early Tuesday, about 40 Israeli tanks and armored vehicles entered the Rafah refugee camp on the Gaza-Egypt border, Palestinians said. Five Palestinians, including at least three civilians, were killed and 41 other people were wounded by Israeli gunfire, hospital officials said.

As part of Egypt's efforts to broker a cease-fire in the conflict, Maher met with Israeli officials Monday. On his return to Egypt early Tuesday, he said he was undaunted by the confrontation.

During the confrontation, Maher appeared shaken as bodyguards and Israeli police whisked him out of the mosque compound, while protesters shouted and hurled shoes — a deep insult in Islamic culture.

Israeli rescue workers treated him for a half hour before he was transferred by limousine to Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital. He was released five hours after the incident and flew home.

Anthrax vaccinations in question

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A court ruling against forcing soldiers to take anthrax vaccinations raises the question of whether officials should reconsider the punishments given those who refused the shots.

Ruling that some use of the vaccine is experimental, a federal judge said Monday that servicemen and women should not have to take the vaccine unless they consent.

U.S. District Judge Emmet G. Sullivan said he was convinced by plaintiffs in a class action suit that the vaccine is being "used for an unapproved purpose" — that is, for exposure to airborne anthrax as well as exposure through the skin.

More than 900,000 servicemen and women have received the shots, among the millions of doses of various vaccines administered annually to protect troops against disease and bioterror threats. Hundreds of service members have been punished or discharged for refusing them, according to the Pentagon.

Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., said he will ask the Defense Department to begin an immediate review of disciplinary actions taken against service members who refused the vaccines.

Shays, who conducted hearings on the issue in his House Government Reform national security subcommittee, said the program "should have been voluntary from the start."

Sept. 11 victims seek compensation

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The midnight deadline for the families of Sept. 11 victims to seek government compensation was marked by a flurry of last-minute applications from around the country and exhausted exultation in a downtown law office.

Just after the deadline expired 12:00 a.m. Tuesday, the fund's special master Kenneth Feinberg leaned into a plain white easel while an assistant in a neighboring office called out the night's tally: 2,833 filings from the families of the dead, and 3,624 from those claiming injuries.

The official death toll was 2,976 in the 2001 terror attacks in New York City, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania, meaning 95 percent of the families of those killed have now filed with the government program.

To date, the average payment has been \$1.8 million, with the highest award, \$7.9 million, going to a badly injured survivor.

Tuesday morning's numbers mean fewer than 150 families of those killed remain outside the fund, including 73 who filed lawsuits against the airlines and other U.S. entities. Those who accept compensation from the fund are barred from suing American companies and agencies for negligence.

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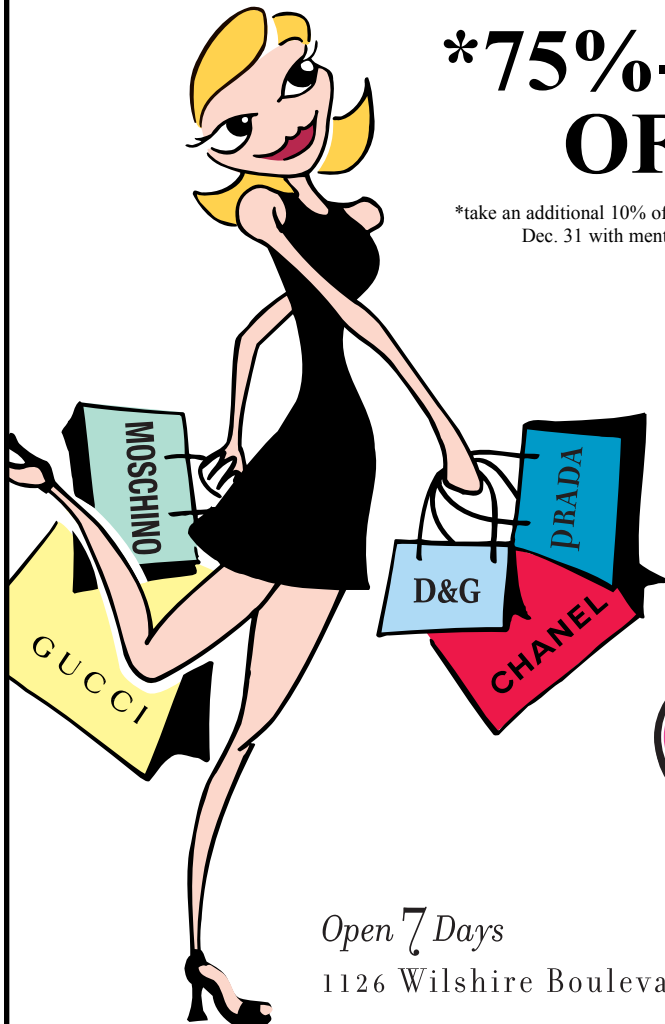
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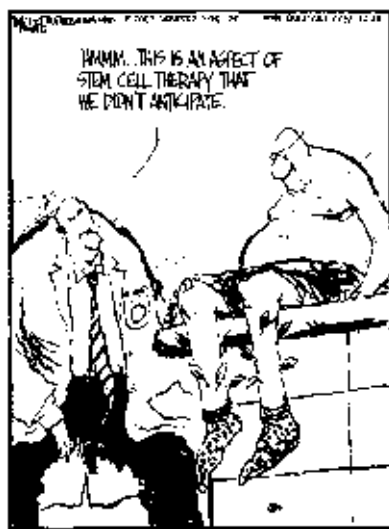
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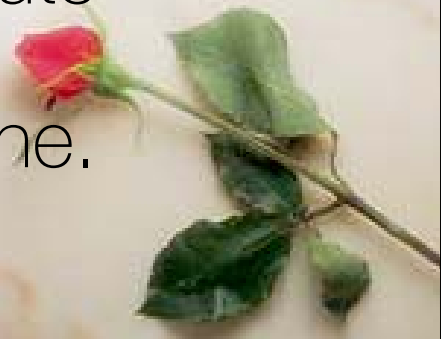
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Rapper puts his drug and prison experience to use

By The Associated Press

■ **MIAMI** — Rapper Trick Daddy, who avoided prison by pleading guilty to cocaine and weapons charges, will make 24 free appearances to talk to high school students about the dangers of guns, AIDS, drugs and violence.

Trick Daddy, whose real name is Maurice Young, will speak at high schools in troubled neighborhoods, assistant State Attorney Stacy Glick said Monday.

"I hope that these youngsters will learn lessons from his life that they don't want to happen in their own lives," she said.

Glick said Young entered his plea Thursday. Under the plea bargain, the most serious felony charge, aggravated assault with a firearm, was reduced to a misdemeanor, improper display of a deadly weapon or firearm. He also pleaded guilty to two felonies, possession of a firearm by a felon and possession of cocaine, and to misdemeanor marijuana possession.

The prosecutor said Young will be on three years' of supervised probation and will have to attend an anger control course.

Young's lawyer, David S. Markus, didn't immediately return a call Monday seeking comment.

The 29-year-old rapper, known for songs such as "Thug Life Again," "Sweatin' Me" and "In Da Wind," was arrested after a February dispute. He was arrested again in September after police allegedly found cocaine and marijuana in his shirt pocket. Young was convicted in 1991 of cocaine possession, carrying a concealed weapon and violating probation. He served 30 months in state prison.

■ **NEW YORK** — F. Gary Gray, director of "The Italian Job," will receive a special achievement award from the African American Film Critics Association.

"With this year's release of 'The Italian Job,' former music video director F. Gary Gray demonstrated strong growth and a solid command of the filmmaking process

with a stylish remake of the 1969 caper classic," Gil Robertson, a syndicated columnist and one of the group's vice presidents, said Monday.

The critics chose "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" as the top film of 2003, followed by "Lost in Translation" and "In America."

"The Italian Job," starring Mark Wahlberg, Charlize Theron and Mos Def, came in seventh on the group's top 10 list. The rest of the list, in order: "Dirty Pretty Things," "The Last Samurai," "Finding Nemo," "Tupac: Resurrection," "City of God" and "Mystic River."

The African American Film Critics Association, which consists of print, broadcast and online movie reviewers, aims to draw attention to movies with appeal to black audiences, or to works that come from black filmmakers or star black actors.

■ **NEW YORK** — Ben Affleck is a loyal Red Sox fan — and it's no coincidence that his character in the new movie "Paycheck" also roots for Boston.

Affleck's character was supposed to be a New York Mets fan, but the 31-year-old actor said he persuaded director John Woo to change the team to the Red Sox.

Still, it could have been worse.

"I would rather say the lines, 'I worship you, Satan,' than say my favorite baseball team is the New York Yankees," he told reporters recently, according to AP Radio.

"Paycheck," based on a sci-fi story by Philip K. Dick, stars Affleck as a high-tech engineer who allows three years of his memory to be erased after working on a secret project.

The film, also starring Uma Thurman, will open in theaters nationwide on Christmas Day.

■ **NEW YORK** — Katie Couric, co-anchor of NBC's "Today" show, will host next year's George Foster Peabody Awards ceremony.

The 63rd annual awards ceremony will be held May 17 at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York.

Couric received a Peabody Award for her five-part series, "Confronting Colon Cancer." Her husband, television legal analyst Jay Monahan, died from colon cancer in 1998.

"Katie Couric is the consummate newscaster, at ease with presidents and prime ministers, with Hollywood celebrities and intellectual leaders," Horace Newcomb, director of the Peabody Awards Program at the University of Georgia, said in a statement Monday. "Her wide-ranging experience as a broadcaster is a perfect match for the Peabodys."

The Peabody Awards, which are administered by the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, recognize excellence and meritorious work by radio and television stations, networks, webcasters, producing organizations and individuals. Entry deadline for programs aired in 2003 is Jan. 15. Winners will be announced in April.

■ **LONG BEACH** — Dennis Rodman is trying to revive his basketball career with the Long Beach Jam of the American Basketball Association.

The 42-year-old former NBA star signed a contract Friday and will start practicing with the team after Christmas, said Steve Chase, president of the first-year franchise.

Rodman, who last played in the NBA in 2000 with the Dallas Mavericks, most likely will play his first game for the Jam in mid-January, Chase told the Long Beach Press-Telegram.

Terms of Rodman's contract weren't released. ABA guidelines limit a team's player payroll to \$120,000 per season.

Rodman led the NBA in rebounds seven times but hasn't played since being released by the Mavericks. He was arrested in October in Las Vegas and charged with driving under the influence after crashing a motorcycle. He also was arrested in September in Newport Beach for investigation of being drunk in public.

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