

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM THE STAFF
AT THE
SANTA MONICA
DAILY PRESS!**

**NEWS OF
THE WEIRD**
by Chuck Shepard

In October, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported on the heated clash in the Twin Cities suburb of Eden Prairie over how much money to spend on a new historic preservation program, which the Star Tribune noted was ironic because the town was nothing more than farms until the 1950s. Said a City Council member, "I think an argument can be made that the word 'historic' is being loosely used." And an August Boston Globe story deglamorized Plymouth Rock, supposedly where the first pilgrims stepped in 1620 as they disembarked near what is now Plymouth, Mass. It's just a large rock, kept in an open pen (and was named by TV's Learning Channel as one of America's 10 lamest landmarks).

**QUOTE OF
THE DAY**

"I'm not a real movie star — I've still got the same wife I started out with twenty-eight years ago."

— Will Rogers

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John Wood/Daily Press
Samohi students prepare to deliver more than 150 gifts to needy children at local elementary schools throughout Santa Monica.

A very charitable trend at Samohi delivers the goods

Students buy, deliver presents to needy kids

BY JOHN WOOD
Daily Press Staff Writer

SAMOHİ — More than 150 needy youngsters will open an extra gift this holiday season thanks to the hard work of a group of students at Santa Monica High School.

The gifts range from dolls and miniature cars to electric keyboards, scooters and art kits. They were given this month to students on free-lunch programs at area elementary schools.

"We want to give inspiration to these kids that don't have anything," said Erendira Gracida, 17, a senior at Samohi. "It's just very empowering ..."

Here's how the plan worked: Armed with a list of needy stu-

"We want to give inspiration to these kids that don't have anything."

— **ERENDIRA GRACIDA**
Samohi senior

dents, Gracida and a small band of students went to each home-room at Samohi and asked them to raise money to buy a gift, priced between \$20 and \$30. The gifts were then collected by the group, wrapped and taken to six local schools. When they arrived at the schools, the gifts already

See SAMOHİ, page 5

Counselors help debtors beat the burden

BY ED STOVER
Associated Press Writer

YAKIMA, Wash. — The box of Kleenex strategically located on the front corner of Merry Ames' desk doesn't care if you're rich or poor — those who pluck a tissue to dab their eyes share a common woe.

They're in serious debt.

"We get lots of tears," said Ames, director of counseling and community services at Consumer Credit Counseling Service of the Yakima Valley, the Yakima-based nonprofit

that aids those with a propensity to spend more than they have.

"And it's truly Everyperson," added CCCS Executive Director Geoff Baker, describing the more than 1,000 clients served by CCCS, which, with satellite offices in Wenatchee and Moses Lake, covers central Washington from the Canadian border south to the Columbia River.

CCCS is one of four such agencies in the state affiliated with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, which has more than 1,000 community-based offices throughout the United States.

"It's a human problem, and if you truly love human beings you can't help but get emotionally involved," said Baker, explaining that his staff of 11 really empathize with those who pass through their doors.

Soon, in the wake of Christmas, the biggest spending season of the year, those doors will open more often. It happens every year.

"January and February are times when people are getting into trouble," said Baker.

"There's usually a gap after the holidays,"

See COUNSELORS, page 8

Botched errand becomes \$20 million business

MARIANNE COSTANTINOU
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Some careers stem from a lifelong dream. But one began as 550 pounds of raw chocolate stashed in a garage.

To keep his girlfriend from discovering that a simple errand

to get some chocolate for her fledgling pastry business had somehow turned into a truckload, Joseph Schmidt decided to melt the evidence and turn it into candy when she wasn't looking — even though he didn't know anything about chocolate candies.

As his luck would have it, the chocolates became a culinary suc-

cess. His girlfriend forgave him, gave up her petits fours, and joined him in starting a new American confection company soon made famous by its signature egg-shaped, hard-shell chocolates with creamy-flavored centers. The candy is known in the industry as "The American Truffle," and it's Schmidt's creation.

And that, in a truffle shell, is how a botched errand became a \$20 million business.

This year, the private company in San Francisco will sell about 20 million truffles at major department stores and gourmet food shops across the country, as

See ERRAND, page 8

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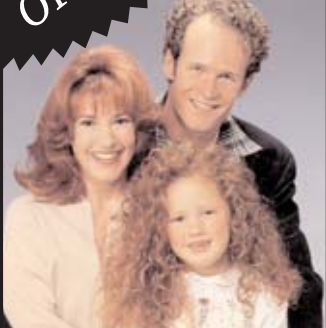


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Pitch in when you can, Libra

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)
★★★★ Step up and do what is required of you. You might not want to, but unfortunately, you are the best qualified. You have a way of steaming through work that others admire. Do not take a family member's criticism too personally. This person could be jealous. Tonight: Check in on an older relative.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Deal with others in your customary nice manner, even if you might want to hit someone on the head with a frying pan. Once you complete what you need to, you will feel good about yourself. At the same time, you might need to establish limits. Tonight: Put on some Christmas music.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ If interfered with, you could lose your temper. Don't, if you can help it, because you could alienate a close friend. The season might be getting to you more than you realize. Be positive about the possibilities that surround you. Tonight: Make nice with a partner.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Others might challenge you, though on some level, they really don't mean to. The holiday could be getting the best of those you care about, as well as those in your work life. Keep communication flowing. Tonight: Go along with another's plans.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Pitch right in — you might not have a choice. Still, your mood could make or break a situation. Use care with others and when selecting gifts. You might want to get an extra gift or two for those who might surprise you. Relax as much as you can. Tonight: Clean up any last-minute details.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ You're in the pink and ready to celebrate. You might wonder what is going on with a partner who appears to be on the warpath. Remember the tension the holidays can create and be more indulgent. You are the one who will make the difference right now. Tonight: Add more spunk to a relationship.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Head on home, where you might have to deal with a bit of unpleasantness, but nothing you cannot handle. Be indulgent and understanding about the tension that can build around the holidays. Help others remember the true meaning of the holidays. Tonight: Pitch in wherever you can.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ What you say might have a lot to do with what happens right now. Use your charm and help an irate associate work through a problem or gain perspective. Take off early and finish up holiday errands or do something ultimately cheery. Tonight: Share the holiday spirit. Ignore a Scrooge-like person in your life.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Think of the person who might have been left out and take action toward him or her. Often people are left out. You might upset a spoiled loved one by your efforts, but ultimately, it all works out. Teach a child that gifts are not everything. Tonight: Share last-minute details.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Someone might not see you the way you see him or her. Remember, right now, you might be more upbeat than you realize, drawing a strong reaction from someone who really might not be so upbeat. Express your caring. Tonight: As you like it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ You might be a bit out of sorts with what is going on in the next few days. Rather than impact others in your life, work through your feelings. You just might be too tired for your own good. Tonight: Vanish; get some extra sleep.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ You might be hearing Christmas bells and caroling wherever you are, putting you in the frame of mind for the holiday. Do remember a special friend. You could be pulling everything together for those around you. Tonight: Make it your pleasure.

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LOCAL



A military tribute



Photo courtesy

Soldiers of the Baker Company, one of the only Marine Infantry Battalions left in Iraq, pay tribute to their fallen comrades.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Mothers, daughters bond during holiday party

By Daily Press staff

Volunteers from St. Mark's Church, St. Luke's Church, and the National Charity League's Ticktockers were on hand earlier this month at St. Joseph Center's annual Family Center holiday party, providing donations of food and toys to families in need, as well as providing face-painting and taking photos of Santa Claus with the families.

Children jumped on a giant pillow, played football toss, received holiday gifts, and, along with their parents, enjoyed an afternoon of cultural food and crafts. This year four eighth-graders and eight twelfth-graders from the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Charity League took part by painting whiskers and clown faces on many of the happy children.

The NCL is a national non-profit organization of mothers and daughters, who join together in community involvement to foster a sense of responsibility in the girls as well as to strengthen the mother-daughter relationship. They have helped at St. Joseph Center for the past four years by participating in child care classrooms and mentoring Fifth and Sixth graders after school.

"They are an inspiration to us," said Leticia Garcia-Greenman, director of Family Services at St. Joseph Center. "Without the volunteer efforts of organizations like the National Charity League, the center would not be able to provide our ongoing continuum of services to men, women, and children with special needs."

St. Joseph Center provides life-building services for homeless and low-income individuals and families on eight sites in Venice, Santa Monica and West Los Angeles, and holds 11 holiday events and parties in December, one for each of its programs. Volunteers provide decorations and party supplies, serve meals, and donate food, clothing and holiday gifts.

For more information on St. Joseph Center, call (310) 396-6468 ext. 325 or visit their Web site at www.stjosephctr.org.

Red Cross, fire department get in giving spirit

By Daily Press staff

Working in collaboration with the City of Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Fire Department and Virginia Park, the Santa Monica Red Cross distributed more than 1,200 toys to needy families at their chapter last Saturday. The event began at 10 a.m. and included free breakfast and dance performances by youth groups from Virginia Park. More than 285 children had received toys at the conclusion of the festivities at 2 p.m.

surf report

Merry Christmas surf friends...

Today, the WNW swell is expected to slowly drop. Best exposed areas will continue to have some 3-5' surf. NW winds are expected to build quickly and bring rain through most of the day.

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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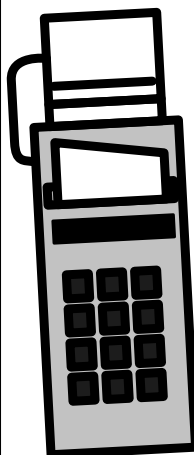
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OPINION

LETTERS

Plastic or cloth?

Editor:

Last week I was dropping off items at the recycling center at 2411 Delaware Ave. in Santa Monica. There is a dumpster that is specifically for plastic bags. This dumpster faces west. It is located on the left side of the entrance to the recycling center which faces north. This dumpster does not have a sign above it. For years I have saved every plastic bag I had to put in this bin. I had been told that plastic bags would be recycled.

For many years I went to the trouble of rinsing out baby broccoli flowers and other miscellaneous small pieces of produce that were stuck to the inside of the bag. What I would like readers to know is this: I found out recently that this recycling center throws all of the plastic bags out.

I now throw away my plastic produce bags. I would like to know if readers have found another way to keep refrigerated vegetables fresh for six days. I don't think cloth keeps them as fresh.

Carrie Weil
Santa Monica



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An open letter to the people of Afghanistan

Afghans should embrace ideals of America's founding fathers in framing a new constitution

On Dec. 15, 1791, 212 years ago, the American Bill of Rights was ratified. Thus ended a long and difficult process by which the American people first liberated themselves from tyranny and then established the first government in history founded on individual rights protected by a written constitution. Now you, the Afghan people, liberated from the despotism of the Taliban, must assume the daunting task of framing a constitution, instituting a new government, and rebuilding civil society. The challenges that confront you are formidable.

Modern history teaches that constitutions are easy to write. Over the course of the last 200 years, almost every nation in the world, including communist dictatorships and Islamic theocracies, has drafted a constitution. The sad reality, however, is that few have brought freedom.

The particular difficulties that you face in establishing a new constitution are enormous. If you are to have any chance at creating a prosperous, just and free Afghan future, you must confront and overcome your own history. This means two things. First, you must face directly the uncomfortable fact that you have no useable tradition of self-government. Yours is a nation long governed by traditions of fascist-like political rulers, medieval forms of tribal and ethnic justice, and warring religions that are hostile

to freedom. Second, you must reject the political anarchy of your ethnic chieftains and the religious tyranny of your Islamic mullahs. In a free Afghan society, neither tribe nor mosque must be able to gain governmental power.

More important, you must discover and accept the moral preconditions of a free society. Afghanistan's political, social, and economic reconstruction will require an ideological reconstruction. Bad ideas destroyed your society and only good ones can save it.

Once freed from the political grip of the twin evils of ethnic collectivism and religious oppression, it is imperative that you import and accept the ideas of the Western Enlightenment. Philosophers such as John Locke and America's founding statesmen discovered the moral foundations and the political institutions necessary to establish a free and just society. You must begin, as we did in our revolution, by recognizing the moral sovereignty of the individual. A free society recognizes that each and every man is capable of rational self-government in the fullest sense. You must enshrine as inalienable the rights of all men and women to their lives, liberty, and property.

Through our revolutionary experience, we learned that the protection of man's individual rights is the only legitimate function of government. This means that you must design a government limited to making and enforcing objective laws of social conduct. This is

no easy task.

According to James Madison, the father of our constitution, the great problem in framing a government that is to be administered by men over men is this: "You must first enable the government to control the governed. And in the next place, oblige it to control itself." The genius of America's founding fathers was to have discovered a solution to this perennial problem — i.e., the idea of a written constitution as fundamental law. Men such as John Adams and James Madison learned through experience that a written constitution must stand above government as a higher law that creates, defines, and limits the powers of government. Politically, your supreme law must be the constitution and not the Koran or sharia

law. Otherwise, your constitution will be little more than a "parchment barrier" against the encroachments of power-lusting mullahs.

In order to elevate the rule of law over the rule of men, America's founding statesmen designed a constitutional system that curbed power in two important ways. First, they limited the role of government to making and enforcing laws that define crimes and punishments objectively, resolve civil disputes between individuals, and enforce the sanctity of contracts. These functions serve to protect the rights of the individual from the arbitrary power of other men. Second, they built into our constitution several crucial principles, proce-

dures, and institutions that are necessary barriers to the concentration and abuse of political power: e.g., separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism. These mechanisms serve to protect the rights of the individual from the arbitrary use of government power.

In addition to these general principles of constitutional construction, Afghanistan's founding fathers should add a double security to the freedom of the Afghan people by explicitly identifying and protecting individual rights in two crucial areas: Freedom of thought and freedom of production and trade. The Afghan state must be barred from interfering in the intellectual and moral lives of its citizens, and it must not attempt to regulate wealth creation or redistribute the fruits of a man's labor. In other words, there must be a strict separation of mosque and state, as well as a strict separation between the economy and the state.

In stark contrast to your Arab and Persian neighbors, you have a unique opportunity to liberate yourself from the darkness of your past. The United States of America has freed you from the tyranny of a brutal and wicked regime, but its greatest and most enduring gift is contained in two old and musty documents written more than two hundred years ago — the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. It is here that you will find the true meaning of freedom.

(C. Bradley Thompson is the author of *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty*, and a senior writer for the *Ayn Rand Institute* in Irvine. The Institute promotes the philosophy of Ayn Rand, author of *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*.)

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

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

Send your letters to Santa Monica Daily Press Attn. Editor:
1427 Third Street Promenade Suite 202 Santa Monica • 90401 • sack@smdp.com

LOCAL



CALIFORNIA BRIEFS

Earthquake takes toll on wine industry

The Associated Press

PASO ROBLES — The earthquake that rumbled through California's central coast struck hard at the region's burgeoning wine industry, toppling barrels, spilling cases and leaving some wineries awash in rivers of merlot and cabernet.

The area roughly midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco has become one of California's most productive wine-producing regions, with more than 80 wineries ringing Paso Robles, the small town hit hardest in Monday's magnitude-6.5 earthquake.

The quake created a mess for dozens of those wineries, with owners left to mop up their tasting rooms and cellars.

Many said it would take them years to recover, particularly because the quake struck when most of this year's vintage was stored in unstable barrels, instead of in mounted fermentation tanks or bottles.

At the Dover Canyon winery, 100 wooden barrels stacked in a pyramid collapsed in a heap, breaking open a half-dozen casks and crushing dozens of cases of bottled wine, some of premium vintage.

"We walked in here and it was ankle-deep, with wine flowing out the door into the rocks and garden area," said co-owner Mary Baker. "It was pretty distressing. We can absorb a certain amount of loss, but it's going to be hard because we're a boutique winery on a boutique budget."

SEC cracks down on \$813M scandal

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — The federal Securities and Exchange Commission on Tuesday froze the accounts of an unlicensed Southern California firm it says held more than \$813 million for more than 5,200 investors as part of "a fraudulent scheme."

The SEC alleges that the owner of Financial Advisory Consultants, James Paul Lewis Jr., withdrew \$3 million from the Orange County firm's accounts even as he was telling his clients across the nation that they couldn't have their money.

A federal judge on Tuesday granted the SEC's request for a temporary restraining order against Lewis, 57, of Laguna Niguel, freezing his assets and those of his company and its two investment funds.

The SEC filed its complaint against Lewis in federal court Monday, the same day the FBI raided the El Toro firm and removed most of its documents and computer equipment.

No criminal charges have been filed, but the FBI says in a search warrant affidavit that it has probable cause to believe Lewis was operating a Ponzi scheme in which early investors were paid with money contributed by later investors.

MEChA delivers more than 150 holiday gifts

SAMOHI, from page 1

had the individual students' names written on them. School workers then distributed the gifts after school was let out.

Participating elementary schools included John Muir, Edison, McKinley, Will Rogers, Grant and Franklin. This year's effort was overseen by Samohi math teacher and alumnus Alicia Gonzalez, who participated in the program herself before graduating in 1992.

Gonzalez is one of the faculty advisors that oversees MEChA, a group of 28 Latino students who organized the gift-giving campaign. MEChA stands for "Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanos de Aztlan," or, roughly, the movement of Chicano students for Aztlan. Aztlan is a

mythical place in the American Southwest that dates back to the Aztec era, Gonzalez said.

MEChA is an organization aimed at empowering Latino students, and promoting higher education and community service. Gracida, the president, said she is waiting to hear back from colleges she applied to earlier this year. Her first choice is Penn State University.

In the meantime, Gonzalez, the advisor, said the gift-giving effort has benefited everyone involved.

"It's a lot of work, but it's really fun," she said, adding the younger students usually send back thank you cards after the holidays. "It's a reminder — I'm an idealist, so I always believe in the inherent goodness of people."

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STATE

Insurance statistics: Pets mirror America's obesity problem

BY DON THOMPSON
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — America's obesity problem and related health risks are spreading to its pets, says the nation's largest provider of pet health insurance.

Cardiac arrest claims for pets have increased 47 percent the last two years alone, while claims for other obesity-related illnesses have been steadily increasing, according to Veterinary Pet Insurance of Brea, Calif.

The company has more than 350,000 policyholders, which it says provides it with the nation's largest actuarial data base on dogs and cats.

Diabetes claims are up 16 percent and hypertension claims up 27 percent over two years, while claims have nearly tripled for a type of spinal surgery that can be related to obesity. Treatments for arthritis and cancer also are up sharply — diseases that become more prevalent as animals grow older, but also because they're overweight.

"We've seen an explosion in pet obesity probably since the mid-90s," said Aine McCarthy, the company's director of veterinary marketing and a pet health expert on the television show "Totally Pets." "They're adopting the sedentary lifestyle of their owners."

Perhaps 15 percent of pets were overweight a decade ago, she said, while some studies say 40 percent may be obese today.

The National Research Council, an arm of the National Academies, estimated in a study this fall that as many as 25 percent of pets in the Western world are obese, a problem more common in neutered animals and one that often increases with the age of the pet. That means a nation of more than 19 million fat cats and 16 million flabby dogs.

Dogs of overweight owners are nearly three times more likely to be overweight themselves, according to a 1998 study of 120 dog owners by German researchers published in the Journal of Nutrition.

Pets don't get exercised by couch-potato owners, many of whom feed their pets human food high in fat and calories. "Owners argue that they love their pet so much that they just cannot deny it treats in the form of food," concluded the authors of the German study.

In addition, most pet owners can't tell if their pets are overweight, so they don't recognize the problem, according to a study in the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine.

"As we have moved to a more sedentary and pampered culture, so have our pets," said McCarthy.

As with humans, medical bills and insurance costs are getting larger along with the pets. The increase in pet obesity hasn't forced a rate increase, but cancer is becoming so common that the company created a cancer rider in 1994 to pay for the expensive treatments. Though the company dates to 1980, changes in the insurance plans it offers means precise claims comparisons could only be made for the last two years.

**"We've seen an explosion
in pet obesity probably
since the mid-90s."**

— AINE MCCARTHY
Pet health expert

The good news is that 82 percent of dogs and 55 percent of their owners lost weight if they followed a shared exercise and diet program, found a six-month study of 11 families by the Iams Company and Bassett Healthcare Center. Iams sells what it bills as healthier and weight control pet foods.

Owners should check to see if they can feel the ribs of their dog or cat. From the top the animal should have a definite waist, and the side profile should present a trim belly — "There shouldn't be anything dragging on the ground," said McCarthy.

As with humans, a healthy, reasonable diet and regular exercise is the best way to get weight off or keep it off, experts said.

Owners should measure out a specific quantity of food, not simply fill the bowl, nor should they trust their pet to know when to stop eating — many won't quit when they should, studies show. Cutting out table scraps alone can be a great improvement.

Dogs kept to a healthy weight lived 15 percent longer, about two more years for the Labrador Retrievers involved in a 14-year study funded by Nestle Purina Petcare and published last year in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Owners have no one to blame but themselves if their pet is overweight, McCarthy noted: "The dogs and cats don't know how to work the can-opener."

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STATE

Groundfish fleet moving into global competition

BY JEFF BARNARD

Associated Press Writer

CRESCENT CITY — Richard Young patted the wooden railing of the 80-foot fishing trawler City of Eureka — now offered for sale on eBay for \$10,000 — and thought about the end of his life as a fisherman.

"I have memories associated with this boat here that go back to high school, when my dad bought it," said Young, 57, the collar of his blue parka turned up against the cold wind blowing off the Pacific Ocean. "One guy I worked with on this boat asked that I speak at his funeral. He put it in his will. I spoke at the funeral, then I carried his ashes on this boat out to spread them on the ocean."

"On the other hand, things have been so bad in this business the past few years, all in all I'm glad to be out of it."

Culminating nine years of work to bring the groundfish fleet in line with dwindling harvest limits, Young and the owners of 90 other West Coast groundfish trawlers got electronic bank transfers this week for their share of \$46 million in return for permanently retiring their boats and commercial fishing permits. The average payment is \$497,000.

"I'm a little worried about my future, where my next paycheck will come from, but I don't miss it," said Young. "Lately, it's been an industry that no matter how hard you worked, it was difficult to keep your head above water."

The owners of the 142 boats that stayed in the fleet can expect a 50 percent boost in their catch, but also face a brave new world of increasing competition from foreign fleets and fish farms, changing federal regulations, and increasing vertical integration and consolidation among fish processors.

"Groundfish has been the backbone of our industry for years," said Tim Horgan, chief operations officer of Pacific Seafood Group, the West Coast's leading fish processor. "We are real close as an industry to making a paradigm shift fundamentally changing the way we do things."

When Young started fishing full-time in 1978, it paid better than his job teaching college economics.

International treaties had set a 200-mile limit that pushed foreign boats off the Continental Shelf. Groundfish — bottom-dwelling species like rockfish, ling cod and petrale sole — were overtaking salmon as the West Coast's leading fishery, and the federal government would soon offer cheap financing to build up the fleet.

As the fleet grew and technology improved, scientists warned fishermen were taking too much. Changing ocean conditions robbed the fish of food and made things worse. By 2000, the federal government declared a disaster in the groundfish fishery after the 20-year average catch of 74,000 tons dropped to 36,000 tons. Nine

species have been declared overfished and may take decades to recover.

Recognizing the need to cull the fleet, the Fishermen's Marketing Association worked nine years to win congressional approval for a buyback plan. Congress put up \$10 million and authorized a loan of \$36 million that remaining fishermen remaining will repay.

The buyback took about a third of the boats out of the fleet, but many were big producers who regularly accounted for the bulk of the landings, so fishing capacity was cut almost in half, said Pete Leipzig of the Fishermen's Marketing Association. The heaviest concentration of boats taking the buyback are in Eureka and Crescent City, which account for about a third of the buyback.

Restoring profitability to fishermen was the first step toward a complete overhaul of the way fisheries are managed, Leipzig added. The Pacific Fishery Management Council, which sets ocean fishing seasons, is working on creating a new system of harvest quotas for individual boats, rather than one quota for the whole fleet.

Supporters hope that will correct three perennial problems: discard, bycatch and derby fishing.

Discard refers to dumping tons of dead fish overboard because the quota for that species has been filled, but the fishermen are trying to fill the quota for another. Bycatch is similar — dumping dead fish overboard that are protected from harvest or have no commercial value. Derby fishing is the race to get the biggest share possible of the harvest quota, increasing the risks from fishing in bad weather and producing alternating gluts and shortages on the market.

A new wrinkle is Pacific Seafood's desire to get its own quotas. The company is starting to buy up fishing boats and permits, extending the vertical integration of the company that is the leading producer of fresh and frozen fish in the lower 48 states.

"Our scramble right now is to protect our investment, and protect those jobs," of people working in processing plants, said Horgan.

In the wake of the buyback, Pacific Seafood has bought four boats with groundfish permits and is looking for more, Horgan acknowledged.

Where crab, shrimp and salmon are seasonal, groundfish is year-round, serving as the glue keeping a fish processing plant together, Horgan said. With fewer boats to buy from, Pacific Seafoods wants to assure it gets enough fish to retain its core of trained employees at plants in Eureka, Calif., Charleston, Ore., Newport, Ore., Warrenton, Ore., and Westport, Wash.

"We consciously as a company before this made the decision we did not want to be in the boat business," Horgan said. "Unfortunately, if we don't add groundfish

vessels to deliver with certainty to that plant, I don't know if we'll have enough work to be a good employer."

Randy Smith, 46, took the buyback on his boat, the Miss Jo Anne, but is now skipper of the Sea Princess, one of the groundfish boats bought by Pacific Seafood.

"I've got three more kids I hope will go to college, and taxes," said Smith. "Besides, I don't know anything else."

Individual quotas have transformed Canadian fisheries, fostering a greater sensitivity to providing a high-quality product on a regular basis that stands up to competition from foreign fleets and aquaculture, Young said. Both Smith and Young see crab and other fisheries one day having their own buyback and moving into individual quotas.

"It's the difference between having a cattle ranch and rounding up strays in the west Texas brush," Young said. Canadian fishermen, "are businessmen now, not just cowboys trying to catch fish as fast as they can."

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Metro Briefs

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL

MTA Board Commits To Eastside

Recent action by the MTA board reaffirmed the Metro Gold Line Eastside extension as the agency's highest priority for regional transit corridor projects. The 6-mile extension of the Gold Line from Pasadena will run between downtown Los Angeles and Atlantic Boulevard in East LA when it opens mid-2009.

Metro Fares Are Changing

Effective January 1, Metro Bus and Metro Rail cash fares will be lowered from \$1.35 to \$1.25 and a new \$3 Day Pass good for all day unlimited local travel will be available. Discounted weekly, semimonthly and monthly pass prices will increase. See metro.net for details.

Metro Westside/Central Council Named

Eight community members have been named to the Metro Westside/Central governance council. The representatives from Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Culver City, Santa Monica, West Hollywood and the County of Los Angeles hold regular public meetings on ways to improve Metro Bus service.

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The modern truffle was born by mistake in SF

ERRAND, from page 1

well as in England and Japan. Schmidt runs the chocolate factory with 150 employees, and Audrey Ryan runs the sole retail store.

The candy business is especially busy this time of year. Chocolatiers sell more during the Christmas season than every other holiday combined. It's become almost a tradition for folks in the days before Christmas to line up outside the Joseph Schmidt store to buy chocolates.

This year, the Christmas season is especially important. It was 20 years ago this month when Schmidt and Ryan moved their part-time business out of their home kitchen and opened the shop in the Castro, officially launching Joseph Schmidt Confections.

"What tastes good to you, to your tongue, that's the best," says Schmidt. "But nobody makes chocolate as pretty as we do. We have beautiful chocolates, if I may say so. Our chocolate is sexy."

Schmidt is known not only for his truffles but also for his designs. Tulips. Santas. Skyscrapers. Even full-sized

human bodies. To Schmidt, it is art. Edible art.

Schmidt's chocolate creations have been displayed at the American Crafts Museum. His chocolate flowers have been showcased at the Macy's Flower Show. One of his earliest claims to fame was the 3-by-2-foot chocolate cable car he made for the St. Francis Hotel during the 1980s visit of Queen Elizabeth II. His chocolates have also been given as state gifts to Mikhail Gorbachev and Nelson Mandela.

"He's an artist," says John Scharffenberger, president of the chocolate company that bears his name. "Joe is one of the people who embodies how good chocolate makes you feel."

He may be white-haired and 64, but Schmidt still charges around his gleaming factory in the Mission district like it's his first day. When he's not grinning, he's about to grin. He says repeatedly that he's the luckiest man in the world and that he loves his job, and you believe him.

As he strides around to make sure everything is as it should be, he nibbles on truffles he nabs from trays. "Quality con-

trol," he says with a grin.

He greets employees by first name, and they call him Joseph. He rewards them with profit sharing, 401(k) plans and health insurance. The first five employees he hired 20 years ago still work there, he says, rattling off their names. He likes to hire employees' family members because he thinks of everyone as a family. Visitors to the factory get laden with boxes the size of pizza cartons, all filled with truffles.

That generosity is also spread to the community. Cultural fund-raisers and events in the city almost always have trays of Schmidt truffles that were donated. And Schmidt freely gives advice and support to budding candymakers.

Soon after Recchiuti opened his business in the Ferry Building in 1997, he says Schmidt brought buyers from Neiman Marcus by his shop to sample his chocolates. The visit ended up with the department store chain becoming a customer.

Ryan, who shies away from publicity, believes that Joseph Schmidt Confections is a testament to the value of good luck and good timing. The launch of their gourmet

chocolate business coincided with the food revolution of the 1980s, she says.

"There was an awakening to food on the West Coast," she says, noting the rise of California cuisine, gourmet coffee and artisan bread around the time their chocolate business was taking off.

But Schmidt's success is also quintessential American Dream. He was born in 1939, the child of Viennese parents who settled in Israel. After serving in the Israeli Army, Schmidt came to the United States in the early 1960s. A few years later he moved to the Bay Area.

After a few stints at various pastry shops, and a short time running his own ice cream store in the Marina, Schmidt ended up at Fantasia Bakery in Laurel Village, where he met Ryan, with whom he still lives today in San Francisco.

From the very outset, the business has grown at a steady clip. Earlier this year, Schmidt decided to concentrate full time on the truffle designs and passed the chief executive reins to Charles "Chip" Huggins, a longtime executive at See's whose father runs the company.

Consumer counselors dole out upwards of \$5M

COUNSELORS, from page 1

said Ames. "Then, once the bills start coming in, we begin to see people: 'Gosh, how did I do that,' they say."

The problem doesn't have to be Christmas spending. Rising medical costs are a common refrain cited by those in debt.

The resulting bills are a rude awakening, particularly if they're on top of old bills that haven't been paid.

Jack and Kay Hickie of Yakima know the feeling.

"I didn't want to get out bed, I didn't want to do anything, I was constantly worried," said Kay, 51, who, with husband Jack, 48, got caught up in a heady

spiral of credit-card spending a little over five years ago.

"We were over \$14,000 in debt," said Kay, who knows about the box of Kleenex on Merry Ames' desk. "I came here in tears. That was 3 1/2 years ago."

Thus began a process of education, counseling and debt repayment.

"I was introduced to Merry, and she said, 'Now this is the way it's going to have to be ...,'" recalled Kay.

What Ames did — and what other CCCS counselors do with clients — is engage in some frank talk. The Hickles' financial situation was analyzed, their credit-card debt was averaged out, and

their monthly ability to repay that debt was determined.

"She told us that we managed to manipulate ourselves into debt, and we could also manipulate our way out of it," said Kay, admitting that in their high-flying credit-card days, she and Jack became adept at juggling their cards, paying a little bit over here, while charging a whole bunch over there.

After setting aside enough for necessities, it was determined the Hickles could afford to put \$403 a month toward paying off their debts. That amount was given to CCCS, which in turn paid their creditors.

"We keep (our) fees as low as possible," said Baker, explaining that the only costs for a debt-repayment plan is a \$25 set-up fee and a \$15 monthly administration fee.

Ames also asked the Hickles to hand over all their credit cards.

"That's part of our agreement with creditors," said Baker.

Once the plan was in place, the Hickles, through CCCS, went after their bills. First, the little ones were paid off. Then they tackled the big ones — those were \$1,000, \$2,000 and \$3,000 each.

Meanwhile, they took classes such as "Credit When Credit Is Due," an eight-hour, four-week course that costs \$50. The Hickles also received counseling, a service that CCCS offers its clients free of charge, both in Spanish and English.

Baker differentiates his organization from some so-called credit counseling services that recently caught the eyes of the Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Trade Commission.

"Some of these bad boys say they're nonprofit, but they're not truly nonprofits. That's why the IRS is investigating them," said Baker, who suggests contacting the Better Business Bureau to check out suspect agencies.

One national firm, AmeriDebt, based in Pennsylvania, has been sued in at least two states. The suits allege the company defrauds consumers by citing its nonprofit status to encourage them to sign up, then charges excessive, hidden fees.

Client contributions account for only 30 percent of CCCS revenues. Most of its roughly \$500,000 in operating costs — about 65 percent — comes from creditors and businesses who support what CCCS does. There is also income from grants and classes.

Meanwhile, CCCS distributes upwards of \$5 million a year to creditors through the debt-management plans it sets up for clients like the Hickles, who got all their debts paid off in September.

There are bound to be others like the Hickles. According to the Federal Reserve Bank, Americans had racked up a revolving debt load amounting to more than \$727 billion as of last August. Bank credit-card debt (excluding store and gasoline credit cards) accounts for 90 percent of that.

Everyone is vulnerable when it comes to overspending, said Baker, who has seen respected community leaders come through his doors seeking help.

"We try to reduce the problem to a piece of information that takes the emotion out of it," he said. "That's when they have a sort of 'a-ha' moment. That's when the lights come on."

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NATIONAL



Luminarias, chili lights spark holiday spirit

BY ANANDA SHOREY

Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Cowboys drive stage-coaches filled with carolers down luminaria-lined streets. Red chili pepper lights dangle from rooftops, and Christmas trees are built of tumbleweed.

Holidays in the Southwest — where the rims of margarita glasses are often the most likely places to find frost — aren't necessarily about dreaming of a white Christmas.

"Jesus wasn't born in a blizzard. He was born in a place like this," said 78-year-old Laszlo Szanto, who has a Christmas light-covered saguaro in his yard.

People who live in cities in the Southwest still put up snowflake decorations, bake gingerbread cookies, check out neighborhood Christmas lights and erect snowmen in their yards.

It's just that they can often hang decorations in shorts and T-shirts and drive around looking at lights in convertibles. Their snowmen are inflatable.

Celebrations have a regional twist, as well.

Taos, N.M., for example, marked the beginning of the season with a Cowboy Christmas Concert.

In Tombstone, Ariz., site of the famed gunfight at the OK Corral, carolers ride in horse-drawn stage coaches driven by cowboys.

Phoenix has tamale and mariachi festivals.

And in cities like San Antonio, posada celebrations commemorate Joseph and Mary's search for shelter. The parties often include gifts, pinatas, songs and food.

Besides unique holiday events, decorations on city streets and in homes have a Southwestern flare.

Tumbleweed is stuffed in a 40-foot, cone-shaped chicken wire frame to fashion a Christmas tree in Chandler, a Phoenix suburb.

Throughout Phoenix, palm tree trunks are wrapped with lights and poles are decorated with cactus-shaped twinklers.

Luminarias — paper bags weighted down with sand and holding candles to make them glow — burn alongside roads or in churchyards throughout the region to commemorate the birth of Christ and to guide people to midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

"Luminarias and chili-pepper lights is not the rage," said Mary-Jo McCarthy, owner of Southwest Decoratives in Albuquerque. "It is just how people decorate here."

Stores like McCarthy's offer scores of treats unique to the region.

Among the goods: chili pepper wreaths, tree skirts and wrapping paper; prickly pear party lights; American Indian advent calendars; cards with sombrero-wearing

Santas; and cowboy boot stockings.

"When you live in the Southwest and you're around it so much, you appreciate the culture more," said Scottsdale resident Diana Stanley, who decorates her tree with traditional and Southwest ornaments.

Irma Almazan decorates her Tucson house with dried chilies and garlic mingled with yucca pods, devil's claw, cholla rib, eucalyptus, seed pods, corn husks and anything else she finds in the desert.

Almazan said she especially likes chili wreaths, which offer unique alternatives to those crafted out of evergreen boughs.

"Luminarias and chili-pepper lights is not the rage. It is just how people decorate here."

— MARY-JO MCCARTHY
Owner of Southwest Decoratives

Cindy Riding, the president of the Arizona Nursery Association, said she knows people who prune their rosemary bushes in the shape of Christmas trees and decorate them with berries and ornaments.

Others make snowmen out of ocotillo spines, she said.

Coral and salmon poinsettias are also popular, along with similar colors of Desert Christmas Cactus, she said.

"There's much more variety than there has ever been so people can buy plants to match their decor," Riding said.

Holiday food is also full of Southwestern flavor.

The scents of gingerbread, peppermint, pumpkin, clove and nutmeg still waft through houses here. But in some homes, they mingle with the smell of tamales.

The tradition of holiday tamales dates back to the Aztecs in 16th century Mexico. Since making the treats wrapped in corn husks is time consuming, many people now just buy them.

Another favorite, especially around New Year's Day, is menudo. It's a soup that consists mainly of tripe and could include hominy, chili and lemons.

Spending the holidays in the Southwest can produce new outlooks on traditional ideas.

And, for many, like Larry James, a Kansas transplant who keeps his Christmas tree on his Scottsdale patio, that's fine because the holidays are more about the spirit of the season than sleighs zipping along snow-dusted landscapes.

"If I never see snow again," said James, "I will be happy."

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NATIONAL

Joblessness hitting home in posh Aspen area

By The Associated Press

ASPEN, Colo. — The jobless rate in the upscale Aspen area is one of the worst in Colorado and even an elected city official is scanning the help-wanted listings.

"It's a little bit of an embarrassment — here I am a community leader and I find myself without a job," City Councilman Terry Paulson said.

Pitkin County posted an 8.7 percent unemployment rate last month, fourth-highest in Colorado. Even though many jobs aren't filled until the ski season picks up in Denver, the rate suggests that finding a job here has become extremely difficult.

Beth Brin, a job training and employment specialist at the Colorado Workforce Center in nearby Glenwood Springs, said she has been busy.

"The applicants we're seeing here in the office come from professional occupations and labor occupations. It's across the board," she said.

Statewide last month, the unemployment rate was 5.6 percent.

Paulson, a 21-year Aspen resident, has worked at a food market, bike shop, Nordic center and mountaineering store. At 53, he said he is being selective about choosing a new vocation, but the part-time city job pays only \$20,400 a year.

"I'm looking for a job that has some meaning to it and that can be a problem when you're hunting for work in Aspen," Paulson said.

Jim Laing, Aspen Skiing Co.'s vice president of

human resources, said the company has not cut jobs in recent years. He also said as many as 3,400 full- and part-time jobs are offered at the company's four ski resorts during the holiday season.

Social problems in the region have risen along with joblessness.

"The one thing we have seen is an increase in the number of child abuse referrals and investigations. It's really gone up and we do attribute that to the economy," said Nan Sundeen, Pitkin County's health and human services director.

Additionally, couples and single parents in the county are having a harder time putting their children through school.

"What's unusual about that is the applications (for

tuition assistance) are coming from families that are employed," Sundeen said. "So either people are making less money or they are unable to manage the cost of child care with everything else going on."

Joe Winters, an economist for the state Department of Labor and Employment, said the construction industry is seeing the largest number of job losses in Colorado: 3,600 of those positions vanished in the last month.

"We've had a considerable job crunch statewide. Colorado's economy as a whole is a bit smaller," he said.

The tourism industry is slower than it was a few years ago, Winters said, and that is likely affecting the Aspen area's construction sector.

"As tourism slows down, you get less of a demand for vacation houses," he said.

Maryland expects worst crab harvest in 25 years despite storm

BY GRETCHEN PARKER

Associated Press Writer

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Despite a late burst of blue crabs churned up by Tropical Storm Isabel, Maryland is expecting the worst harvest of its signature seafood in 25 years.

The season that ended this week is expected to have yielded a little more than 18 million pounds when the final numbers come in, said Lynn Fegley, fisheries biologist and head of the blue crab program at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

That would be the worst harvest since 1978, when watermen pulled in 17 million pounds. About 24 million pounds were harvested last year.

Those who make their living processing and selling crabs felt the dearth, especially early in the season, which begins in April.

"We had to call everywhere there was to fill the orders," said Harvey Linton, who has been running a wholesale and retail crab house in Crisfield for 33 years. Linton said he ordered more out-of-state crabs than he usually does — from Louisiana, North Carolina and Virginia — to supplement the small crustaceans pulled in by Maryland crabbers.

Maryland's worst-ever crab harvest, 10 million pounds, was in 1968. The catch stayed low in the 1970s and rebounded in the 1980s and 1990s.

Fegley blamed the poor catch partly on this year's

frigid winter and spring. The weather was so cold that it killed some crabs, and the lateness of the chill kept crabs from moving around as much as usual — preventing them from being harvested, she said.

The season effectively began about a month late because of the cold, Fegley said. Those early catches were so low that the state in June gave watermen unprecedented one-time payments of \$500 to help them pay their bills.

Also, there simply are fewer crabs to harvest in the bay, Fegley said.

A dredge survey starting this week will predict how abundant crabs are and will help state officials anticipate next year's harvest.

In mid-September, crab harvests picked up dramatically, watermen and processors said. Many attribute the increase to Isabel, which they say plowed up crabs that had moved into deep waters. Crabs had lain deeper, they speculate, to escape the extra pollution washed into the bay by the year's heavy rains.

Processors said watermen were hawking twice as many crabs after the storm.

But watermen suffered another blow when the late glut forced prices down.

"We couldn't move them," said Bill Sieling, executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Seafood Industries Association. "Buyers would tell them, 'We can only buy crabs so many days a week. Go find somewhere else to sell them.'"

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NATIONAL



With winter chill, the ice man cometh in Alaska

BY PHIL HERMANEK

Associated Press Writer

SOLDOTNA, Alaska — When the mercury drops to zero or below, most people head to warm hearths indoors, but one Soldotna man does just the opposite.

"Zero is a nice temperature for what I do," said Jeff Stout.

His pickup truck license plate tells the story "Ice 4U."

Every winter, Stout, who works construction through the other three seasons, lovingly lays down smooth sheets of ice on outdoor skating rinks in the central Kenai Peninsula.

Anyone who thinks the task means simply flooding the rinks and letting Mother Nature do the rest quickly learns otherwise after talking to Stout, who takes his work seriously.

When winter temperatures fall and consistently remain below freezing, Stout begins flooding the rinks at Kenai Central, Soldotna and Skyview high schools and at Soldotna Elementary School.

"I build up layers of ice, trying to get at least 2 inches over the highest spot in the rink," Stout said.

Because the outdoor rinks are unevenly paved, the thickness of ice in some lower spots eventually reaches as many as 8 inches to get a minimum 2-inch coverage everywhere.

"If I have 2 inches, I can maintain the ice if we do get some melting," Stout said.

At all the rinks save one, water spigots are available. But at Kenai Central High, Stout needs the help of the Kenai Fire Department.

"I build up layers of ice, trying to get at least 2 inches over the highest spot in the rink."

— JEFF STOUT
Ice layer

"They donate the men and a fire truck to bring water," he said.

The firefighters bring 10 fire-truck loads of water — 30,000 gallons — to fill the rink.

Once the layers of ice are built up, Stout, who works on a three-year contract with the Kenai Peninsula Borough, goes on a maintenance schedule.

The blades of hockey players and skaters chew up the ice, so Stout must periodically resurface the ice. He has a four-wheel-drive tractor with a blade attachment that shaves the ice, removing bumps, chunks and frost from the surface.

Stout, who says he likes to do mechanical tinkering in the shop of CIC Construction, where he works as a heavy equipment operator in warmer seasons, also has designed and built his own version of a Zamboni ice-resurfacing machine to help maintain outdoor ice rinks.

Formerly a 1984 Chevy Suburban, Stout's ice machine is a gray box-like contraption that resembles a World War II Normandy Beach landing craft or some sort of Cook Inlet amphibious fishing trawler.

Stout cut off the body of the Suburban from the firewall back.

"I wanted it short for the tight turns of the rink, so I cut four feet out of the middle of the frame rails," he said.

Then he mounted a 5-foot-long, 300-gallon tank where the driver's seat was, parallel with the frame rails and built a cab for the operator behind the tank. Stout's "Zam" is bedecked with battle-ship-gray painted plywood, and the little cab at the back sticks up like the pilot house on a fishing boat.

The cab is heated and contains a driver's seat and steering wheel as well as mechanical levers for raising and lowering the ice-grooming equipment at the rear of the vehicle.

On its hood, in white letters, are the words "Ice Man."

Although it still operates with the original 350 cubic-inch, V-8 Chevy engine, it now moves only at a very low speeds.

"I've had a lot of people ask, 'What is that thing and what do you do with it?'" Stout said.

Stout fills the ice machine's large tank with hot water, which flows through a perforated pipe at the back of the machine as it travels around the rink, putting down an 1/8-inch thick film of water.

"If I used cold water, it would peel

right off when it was hit by a skate," Stout said.

An 8-inch wide band of terry cloth, attached behind the perforated pipe, follows the hot water, mopping the ice to a mirror-like smoothness. Each rink is on a twice-a-week hot-mopping schedule.

If the temperature falls below minus-10 degrees, Stout can't hot mop. The water freezes almost instantly when it comes out of the tank, and the terry cloth mop turns solid.

When Stout first began making and grooming rink ice for the borough eight years ago, he used a pickup truck with a tank mounted on back for the hot water. But the rig was also used for road salt and sand, which marred the skating surface.

He used it for about a year while working on his own version of an ice machine.

Compared to the tens of thousands of dollars he believes a commercial ice resurfacing machine would cost, Stout's invention was a bargain.

"I paid \$1,100 for the Suburban, and I have about \$3,000 to \$3,500 in it in materials," he said.

Plus, it doesn't have a lot of plumbing to freeze up outdoors, he said.

Stout, who used to play hockey in a local league, occasionally puts on a pair of skates to try out the ice and even beats the puck around a bit.

His wife, Roylene, helps with the Ice Man's bookkeeping and has helped with hoses during the flooding operation. Other than that, it's a one-person job.

"I enjoy it. It's too much fun," Stout said.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2003

EVENTS

Youth computer skill classes

Students, grades 6-12, have the opportunity to get a head start in the business world by signing up for classes which teach Word, Excel and Power Point from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. for more information, call (310) 450-0443.
Fairview Branch - 2101 Ocean Park Bl.

Holiday Tea Party at the Miramar Hotel

Nothing creates holiday cheer like a warm cup of tea on a cold December day. That is why the Fairmont Miramar Hotel is hosting a holiday tea party this month to benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Greater Los Angeles. For every tea menu served, \$3 will be donated to the foundation. Teas include Cascade Peppermint, The Royal Tea, The Traditional Tea and many others. The event will be held at the Koi Pond Lobby Lounge and Garden Terrace Monday through Friday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. by reservation only. No reservations are required on weekends when the event is held from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Reservations: (310) 319-3111. So far, the tea party has generated over \$300.
101 Wilshire Blvd.

Rooms from the Heart at the Miramar Hotel

The Fairmont Miramar Hotel will donate \$10 of every booking made during the month of December to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Also, Fairmont will contribute an annual donation to

\$75,000 to the foundation, grating approximately 200 wishes each year - from tickets to amusement parks and sports events to arranging meetings with celebrities. For reservations, call the hotel at (310) 576-7777.
101 Wilshire Blvd.

CULTURE

Twelfth Night

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

Snowwhite

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

A Winter's Tale

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

ENTERTAINMENT

Temple Bar

Here visitors can enjoy concoctions like White Chocolate Martinis, a Gingitini or a Razzmatazz. Those who are really hungry can enjoy a Chicken Tamale Plate with Fried Plantains. Temple Bar even offers vegetarian options like veggie eggrolls and burgers. But no good bar would be complete without live music. On Friday night, the Temple Bar features DJ Rashida and the following: Ill Again at 9 p.m., Burning Star at 10:30 p.m. and Aceyalone at 11:30 p.m. \$10.
1026 Wilshire Blvd.,
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14 Below

An intimate and well-equipped club that is leading the Westside music scene with live performances seven nights a week. On Friday night 14 Below features the following from Sycamore Entertainment: Upset Territory, Ruffian Squad, Ciddle Gang and more.
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Harvelle's

Established in 1931, Harvelle's is the oldest blues club on the west side. This is the kind of blues joint you'd expect to find in a dark Chicago alley; yet even if it's your first visit, it feels familiar. On Friday night, Harvelle's presents Union 3 featuring Just Dave, Andy Waldo and Johnny Moezzi.
1432 4th St. (310) 395-1676

MOVIE °GUIDE

AMC SANTA MONICA 7

1310 Third Street Promenade

Bad Santa - 11:50 a.m., 2:15, 5:10, 7:45, 10:25 p.m.

Calendar Girls - 10:45 a.m., 1:40, 4:35, 7:30, 10:20 p.m.

Elf PG - 11:10 a.m., 1:30, 4:15, 7:20, 9:55 p.m.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King - 10:30 a.m., 1, 2, 4, 5, 6:10, 7, 10:35, 11:15 p.m.

Mona Lisa Smile - 11 a.m., 12:40, 2, 3:55, 5, 7:10, 8, 10:05, 10:50 p.m.

LAEMMLE'S MONICA 4-PLEX

1332 2nd Street

The Cooler - 12, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 10 p.m.

Girl With a Pearl Earring - 12, 2:25, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50 p.m.

In America - 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15 p.m.

The Station Agent R - 1, 3:15, 5:30, 8, 10:15 p.m.

LANDMARK NU-WILSHIRE

1314 Wilshire Blvd

21 Grams R - 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10 p.m.

Mystic River R - 1, 4, 7, 10 p.m.

LOEWS CINEPLEX BROADWAY CINEMAS

1441 Third Street Promenade

Love Actually - 12:45, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50 p.m.

Love Don't Cost a Thing - 11:30 a.m., 2, 4:30, 7:15, 9:30 p.m.

Something's Gotta Give - 11:40 a.m., 12:30, 2:45, 3:45, 6:15, 7, 9:15, 10 p.m.

MANN CRITERION 6 THEATERS

1313 Third Street Promenade

The Cat in the Hat - 11:30 a.m., 2, 4:40 p.m.

Gothika - 7:10, 9:35 p.m.

Honey - 11:40 a.m., 2:20, 4:50, 7:30 p.m.

The Last Samurai - 12, 12:45, 3:30, 4:10, 7, 7:50, 10:30, 11:15 p.m.

The Missing - 1:30, 7:20 p.m.

Stuck on You - 11:20 a.m., 2:10, 5, 8, 9:50, 10:50 p.m.

If you know of an upcoming event which may be included in the calendar please send the information to calendar@smdp.com or fax it to (310) 576 9913



BACK PAGE

Research team to study one of Alaska's ghost villages

BY RACHEL D'ORO

Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Returning to King Island for the first time in three decades, Helen Pushruk was struck by the impossible layout of the crumbling Eskimo village where she was born.

"It was scary, you know, real steep," Pushruk, 76, recalled of her 1983 visit to the village built on stilts. "Every time I went to the top of the island, I thought, 'Gee, we were just like monkeys.'"

But it was home, and like so many other elders, Pushruk would like to return again to the isolated Inupiat Eskimo community that was abandoned almost 40 years ago.

Now she'll get that chance, thanks to Oregon State University researchers who are launching a four-year study of King Island and its former inhabitants.

The project is being funded by a \$517,000 grant from the National Science Foundation. Researchers plan to document the oral history of surviving villagers while training Inupiat young people to collect samples for a scientific look at the vegetation and wildlife of the island — a tiny spot in the Bering Sea about 625 miles northwest of Anchorage.

"There are things elders know that they can teach to the western scientists. They have a pretty intimate knowledge of how their environment worked," said Deanna Kingston, the lead researcher and a descendant of King Island villagers.

"My oldest uncle was said to be able to predict the weather from the top of King Island," Kingston said. "He would go up there to observe the conditions and then tell the others that 'in three days, it will be safe to cross to the mainland.' And sure enough, in three days, they could cross."

Next summer, researchers will scout the 2 1/2-mile-long island to see if any of the buildings are stable

enough to serve as quarters for about 50 participants, including 10 scientists and 15 elders. If not, they'll use tents during field research the following two summers. In the fourth year, Kingston hopes to produce DVDs documenting place names and stories, village and burial sites, wildlife and vegetation.

Volunteers will be enlisted to help frail elders get around the rocky terrain. It's crucial to have old-timers along because they gave names to every rock, every nook and cranny, Kingston learned in preliminary interviews last summer. Most of the names reflect a bountiful subsistence lifestyle: qaluaquik is a place to hook tom cods, taiyaguk is where crested auklets might be found. The Inupiat word for the island is Ugiuvak, which means a place for winter.

"I've heard King Island called a place next door to heaven," Kingston said. "People say it was special because it provided them with a variety of food, including greens, fish, birds, sea mammals and berries."

Kingston, 39, an assistant professor of anthropology, is half Inupiat. Her mother was born on King Island and shared early memories Kingston hopes to relive during field research. For example, she hopes to locate a cave east of the village that kept meat frozen year round.

"Each family had its own spot in the cave," Kingston said. "We'd like to find it, though it may be iced over after 40 years. But there may also still be meat caches in there."

The island was named in 1778 by British explorer Capt. James Cook for James King, a member of his party. But it's unclear how long Inupiat lived there.

A century ago, about 200 people dwelled in walrus-skin homes tacked to the face of the cliffs. They hunted walrus, seal and seabirds and collected berries and plants. Every summer, they traveled by kayak and skin boat to the mainland 40 miles to the east, camping near Nome, where they sold ivory carvings. Pushruk recalled the trip taking 12 hours.

Starting in the 1950s, fewer people returned to King Island. The 1960 U.S. Census counted only 49 residents. The 1970 census found none. King Island is among 16 federally recognized Native villages that were deserted or used as seasonal camps.

Today, many former King Island residents and their descendants live in Nome.

Kingston said several factors contributed to the demise of King Island. Pregnant women were choosing to stay in Nome, where there were doctors. Many of the men were drafted into the military during World War II. In the late 1940s and 1950s, tuberculosis killed some people and hospitalized others. And ultimately, as with other Alaska villages vacated in modern times, paying jobs were available in more accessible towns.

Looking back, Pushruk said life on King Island was difficult, given its isolation and harsh storms that sent waves crashing to shore. She remembers times when there was no whale blubber left for lighting lamps inside her family's "antique house." She remembers having to melt snow and ice to wash clothes, the hours spent bending over to pick salmon berries and greens, the endless climbing.

In the early 1950s, when she was 27 years old, Pushruk was stricken with tuberculosis and left the island for treatment at the Mount Edgumbe Indian Health Service hospital in Sitka. Her oldest sister and her grandmother died of the disease.

Pushruk was hospitalized for 2 1/2 years and after her recovery decided she'd had enough of King Island. She now lives in Palmer, a town of more than 5,000 people, about 40 miles northeast of Anchorage.

"I love living where you can push a button to do things, like washing dishes in a washing machine," she said.

Still, Pushruk can't turn down an opportunity to revisit her roots with the researchers.

"If they pick me I would go, maybe for the last time."

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