INSIDE SCOOP
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A CAGED TIGER IS A WRONGED TIGER PAGE 4 | SPORTS
BRADY HAS A BUNCH PAGE 12

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2007
Volume 7 Issue 39



NO MOMENT ON THE LIPS
SEE PAGE 8

Santa Monica Daily Press

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE PHOTOGRAPHER HAS A TWO-DRINK LIMIT ISSUE

Sweet redemption

Armed with gift cards, shoppers are keeping retailers out of the red

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN SM For Maria Urbina, Wednesday was a long day that began at 8 a.m.

But not in the office.

The Santa Monican was among the hordes of shoppers that enjoyed an extra day off work by taking advantage of post-Christmas Day markdowns in retail stores across the city, staking out the stores early in the morning to grab the best bargains.

A shopping trip the day following Christmas is a tradition for Urbina, who after six hours, had accomplished the bulk of her retail excursion, spending a few minutes to catch her breath in front of the Mrs. Fields in Santa Monica Place before calling it a day; a day that involved transactions at GAP, Banana Republic and Macy's, the latter of which she believed had the best deals.

"(The sales) haven't been that great," Urbina said.

Unlike the post-Thanksgiving Day sales — which kick off the holiday shopping season — the day following Christmas is a time when many consumers exchange those unwanted gifts, redeem gift cards and

SEE **RETAIL** PAGE 10



Brandon Wise *news@smdp.com*

GOODS TIME: **Shoppers on extended holiday breaks took to the stores in droves Wednesday.**

2007: YEAR IN REVIEW

GOING PLACES

TRANSPORTATION PLANS ARE TALK OF TOWN

STORY BY MELODY HANATANI PAGE 3



Brandon Wise *news@smdp.com*

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Screw 2007
1328 Montana Ave., 7:30 p.m.
The Aero presents a new series tonight with a double feature. "Midnight" (1939) stars Claudette Colbert and John Barrymore. Capping off the night is "Easy Living" (1937) with Jean Arthur. For ticket information, call (323) 466-3456.

'I Made it Through the Holidays Alive'
8162 Melrose Ave., L.A., 8 p.m.
The Improv is putting salve on those holidays-with-the-family scars with some laughter. Tickets are $13, plus two-drink minimum. For line-up information, visit www.improv.com.

What's New This Week
2101 Ocean Park Blvd., 1 p.m. — 2:30 p.m.
A free-wheeling review and discussion of the week's key news stories at home and abroad.

Santa Monica Laughter Club
717 Broadway, 11 a.m. — noon
The Laughter Club meets at Shakti's Elements for a Laughter Yoga class led by Kim Selbert. For more information, call Kim at (310) 471-5773. Donations are welcome.

Cool School revisited
1611 Electric Ave., Venice, by appointment only
The "Cool School" exhibit, named for the film which features Ferus Gallery artists, will be on display through Jan. 11. A portion of the proceeds from sold paintings will go to the "Films for Schools" outreach program. For more information, visit www.VeniceTrust.com.

Friday, Dec. 28, 2007

Holiday performance
Santa Monica Mall, 10 a.m. — noon
Kindergarten and first grade students from Grant Elementary perform in Center Court at Santa Monica Place.

Funky Lemonade Fridays
1301 Fifth St., 9 p.m. — 2 a.m.
Zanzibar presents DJs spinning hip hop, rock, top 40, and some reggae and house to round off the night. $5 drink specials. For more information or to RSVP, e-mail rsvpmenow@gmail.com.

Griffith Park Light Festival
4730 Crystal Springs Dr., L.A., times vary
Walk or drive through this annual festival, which turns the north side of Griffith Park into a monument of light displays created by Department of Water and Power employees. Local attractions like the Hollywood sign, the L.A. Zoo and Staples Center are celebrated, along with traditional seasonal imagery. For more information, visit www.dwplightfestival.com.

Ice, ice, baby
1324 Fifth St., 10 a.m. — 10 p.m.
Bring back childhood memories — or create new ones — as you slice through the ice at the city's new public rink. Admission is $10, including skate rental.

Santa Monica Nativity display
Palisades Park, open viewing
The annual Santa Monica Nativity scene, featuring 14 lit scenes with life-size figures, will be on display through the end of the year — continuing a community tradition that began in 1953.

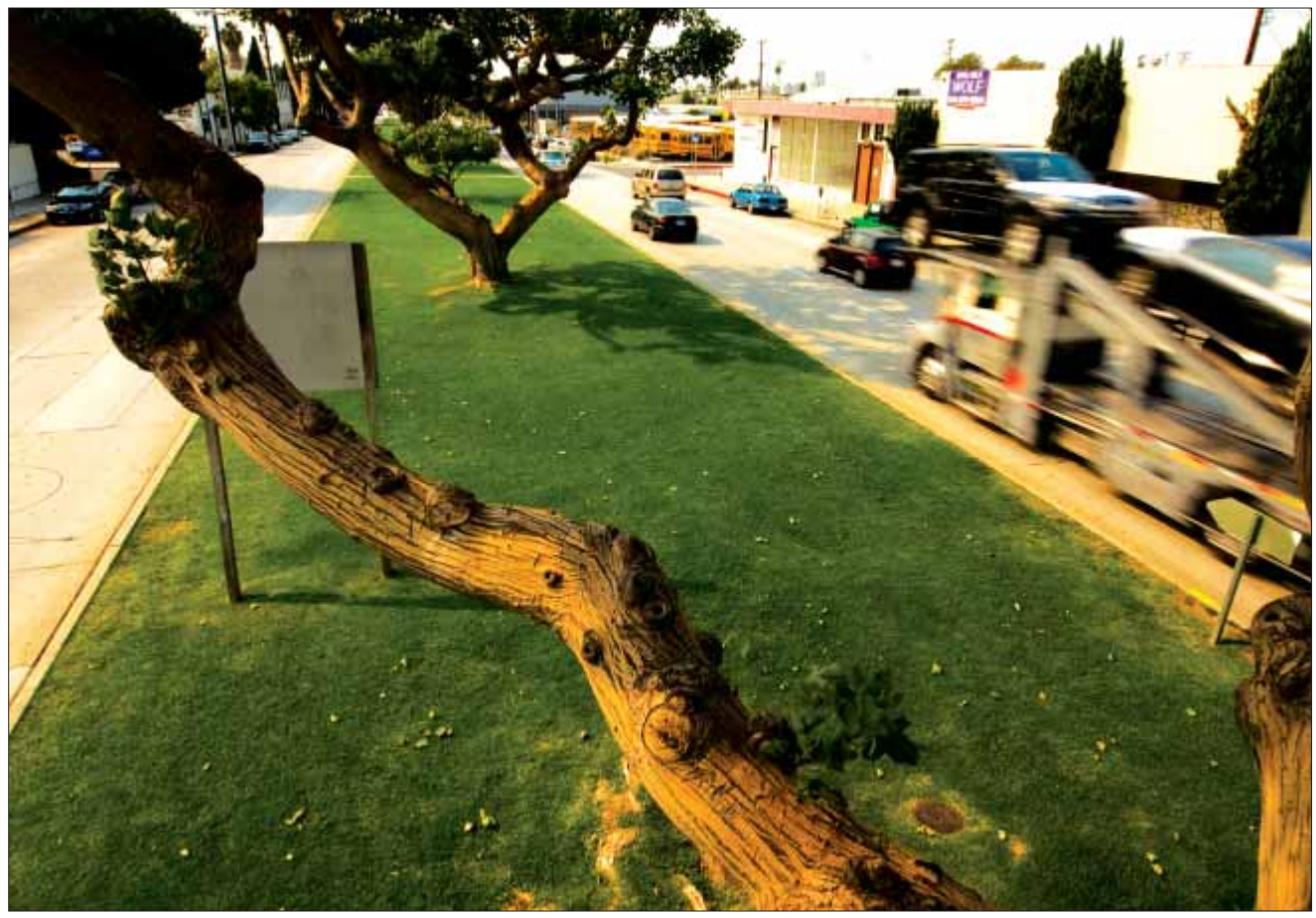
For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com and click the "Events" tab for the given day's calendar.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Rail talks stalled by shortfall

Transportation issues speed along as a city mulls future

BY MELODY HANATANI | Daily Press Staff Writer



File photo

TRAIN IN VAIN? **Dreams of the Expo Light Rail reaching Santa Monica via Olympic Boulevard may have hit a considerable snag.**

CITYWIDE Santa Monicans keep on trucking.

Thanks to some movement in the public transit movement in 2007, rail advocates are one step closer toward realizing the dream of bypassing vehicular traffic and riding the Expo Light Rail from Santa Monica to Downtown Los Angeles.

Among the issues that shaped Santa Monica this year, perhaps none has experienced more changes than transportation, from the ground-breaking of the highly-anticipated Exposition Light Rail in Downtown Los Angeles earlier this year, to the introduction of a fleet of smaller buses that run on alternative fuel, affectionately named "Mini Blue."

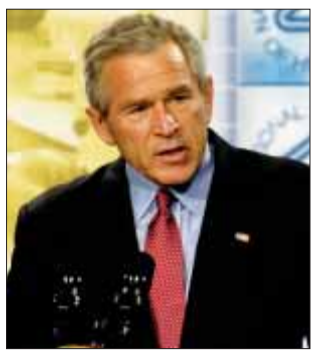
Through the smaller version of its flagship fleet, the Big Blue Bus introduced the new Sunset Ride in August, a line that connects various Santa Monica College satellite locations and parking lots with the main campus on Pico Boulevard. The Sunset Ride is part of the Big Blue Bus' community transit initiative, aimed at bringing public transportation into the neighborhood in order to encourage residents to stay out of their cars and spend more time on the busses, decreasing not only congestion, but air pollution. The busses run frequently, arriving at a stop every 15-20 minutes, and has been successful, drawing more than 2,500 boardings a day in its first three months.

But the Sunset Ride hasn't been without its share of controversy. In November, a group of residents living near the line's stop at 20th and Pearl streets — right off of Santa Monica College — voiced their frustrations at a community meeting held by the Big Blue Bus. Many of the neighbors complained about the volume of students loitering around the bus stop, which in itself has more than 250 boardings a day. Among the complaints were of students smoking in front of windows and littering on private property. While neighbors asked the line be rerouted to Pico Boulevard instead of Pearl Street, Big Blue Bus officials proposed

SEE TRANSPORTATION PAGE 11

Poll: Bush, Hillary are most admired by Americans

BY NATASHA METZLER
Associated Press Writer



BUSH



CLINTON

WASHINGTON They're the odd couple again: George Bush and Hillary Clinton, the most admired man and woman in America.

Though they stand on opposite sides of a political divide, the Republican president and the Democratic senator from New York are sharing the honor for a sixth straight year, according to a USA Today-Gallup poll.

They didn't win by much. Oprah Winfrey and Clinton's husband, former president Bill, were right behind.

When people were asked to name the man they most admire, 10 percent picked Bush, his lowest figure in the seven years he has been president. Bill Clinton got 8 percent within the poll's margin of sampling error while Nobel Prize winner and former Vice President Al Gore had 6 percent and Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, a presidential hopeful, was chosen by 5 percent.

Whoever is president has won the most-admired title every year since 1981.

Sen. Clinton, hoping to be president-elect by the time of the next poll, was named by 18 percent as the most-admired woman, the 12th time she's been in the top spot. Talk show host Winfrey came in a close second with 16 percent. First lady Laura Bush and actress Angelina Jolie were each selected by 3 percent.

The poll, released Wednesday, asked participants an open-ended question, allowing them to respond with any names that came to mind. The rest of the votes were spread among a wide variety of government figures, movie stars, friends and relatives. Queen Elizabeth II was in the top 10 for a record 41st time.

The poll of 1,011 adults was taken between Dec. 14 and 16 and had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Choking traffic will be city's ruin

Editor:

The city of Santa Monica supplied yet another gift to it's residents and visitors, just in time for Christmas – the squeezing down of the East/West bound lanes of Ocean Park Boulevard. Much like the plaque in an arteriosclerotic condition, which in the body leads to a heart attack, the narrowing of lanes is merrily collapsing the flow of traffic. One "calming" lane now yields a continuous day-long freight train-like row of cars. This scene is only altered during rush hours, when said traffic totally relaxes and backs up for blocks; or when a bus stops, acting as a kindly break for the cars behind it; or when a confused or errant driver fails to use the empty wasteland center lane to make it's turn, causing a jovial slamming on of breaks behind it.

Yes, Santa Monica is indeed a city of many stances. In psychological circles, one might even call it schizophrenic. In it's own commercial contracts and interests, it runs homegrown family businesses/vendors financially out of town to make way for corporate businesses and a more densely developed central district. City Hall's administratively liberal policies and developer "deals," in turn, serves to increase the glut of tourists, non-residents and new high-priced rentals spewing from what now resembles unrestrained urban sprawl.

One nasty little byproduct, though, of too many people for too small of an area, is how to contend with an increase of motor vehicles, their impact on neighborhoods, and how to get them in, parked, and then out of this area in a no-muss-no-fuss fashion. One idea was the fast tract bus lane in our civic center, making downtown more of a mini New York in feeling and fumes. Another was to decorate our roads with lumpy speed bumps, more traffic signs, preferential parking zones blanketing the entire city, augmented by an increase of lucrative parking meters. Then there is the imaginative narrowing and, oftentimes, nonfunctioning reconfiguration of roadways, more commonly called "traffic calming" measures.

It is the people of Santa Monica, however, who grumble but courteously have adapted to over 30 years of topographical, cultural and social changes – from the erosion of movement throughout this city to the radical alteration of what once used to be a small, closely knit beach community. But, more is yet to come. Even though streets are clogged and roadways are ironically being narrowed, the powers that be have ideas ripe with how to add still more people to the metropolitan mix; by going up and strangling our ocean views and sea air.

I fervently hope the New Year will usher in more sanity and temperance towards the creation of public policy. Perhaps, this can only be accomplished at the behest of an involved citizenry – a consortium of people who treasure quality of life over the interests of big business, flights of traffic control fancy, or the intellectual social engineering conducted by those elected to oversee the health and well-being of our city. One such prudent reconsideration would be the restoration of Ocean Park Boulevard to its original design, whereby it can once again be a viable roadway of getting from here to there, with relative ease and calm. However, much more remains to be done.

Jan Zambas
Santa Monica

No wonder the cat's out of the bag

Editor:

It's little wonder that Tatiana, the tiger who escaped from the San Francisco Zoo, longed for her freedom. An Oxford University study published in the journal Nature found that wide-ranging carnivores such as tigers and other big cats "show the most evidence of stress and/or psychological dysfunction in captivity."

Tigers are designed by nature to roam far and wide, hunt, claim territory, and seek out mates. In captivity, they are denied everything that comes naturally to them and pose a serious danger to the public and keepers alike when they attack or escape. These acts of independence are often their last, as, like Tatiana, most animals who attempt to follow their natural instincts are killed.

How many people and animals must pay with their lives before we acknowledge that big cats don't belong in captivity?

Jennifer O'Connor
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Your column here

Fred Foldvary — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

It's time to ditch Electoral College

WE ARE SO USED TO VOTING FOR president that most folks regard doing so as a normal part of democracy. But technically, Americans don't vote directly for the president. When Californians cast their ballots in the primary election, they are selecting a set of delegates to the party convention who are pledged to vote for that candidate. In the general election, voters are choosing representatives to an assembly called the "Electoral College," who then meet to vote for the president.

The term "college" in the context of elections means a group of colleagues. The authors of the U.S. Constitution rejected a direct election of the president. Instead, they created an indirect process in which presumably well-informed electors would be chosen in each state, and the electors would vote for the candidate they thought would be the best president. The founders feared that a mass of ignorant voters could be swayed by deceptive campaigns and the influence of moneyed interests.

Later, the Electoral College became a mere formality, as the candidate who won the state's election got the votes of that state's electors. We got what the founders feared: Mass democracy, in which ill-informed voters choose among candidates who seek to sway the voters with emotional appeals, negative attacks on other candidates, and misleading images.

One of the problems with the Electoral College system is that a president can obtain a majority of the electoral votes while another candidate gets the majority of the people's votes. To prevent this situation, some have proposed that the states deliver their votes to the candidate who wins the people's votes.

The state legislatures have the power to allocate the electoral votes. In California, as in most states, the candidate who wins the most votes in the state gets all of the state's 55 electoral votes. The assembly of New Jersey has approved legislation to have that state's electoral votes go to the candidate who wins the national election if states with a majority of votes in the Electoral College also do so. Maryland and Illinois already have enacted this election method being promoted by National Popular Vote, but in California, the governor vetoed the legislature's approval to join this states' compact.

Here, there has been a movement, supported by Republicans, to allocate the state's electoral votes in proportion to the popular vote, so that, for example, a Democrat who wins 60 percent of the popular vote would get around 60 percent of the electoral votes. This method seems to better represent the wishes of the voters, although of course it would reduce the electoral vote for Democratic candidates as long as the majority of Californians continue to vote Democratic. The backers failed to put the measure on the June 2008 ballot, but the effort to enact it continues.

The way the system is set up now, states such as Ohio and Florida can swing the vote, since states such as California are locked up with solid party majorities. However, replacing the Electoral College with a direct election of the president also would result in the very problems the founders feared – campaigns controlled by special interests, and demagogues who sway the ignorant public with appeals to prejudice and emotion.

From a logical perspective, it is madness for a mass of voters to elect presidents they know little about and whom they cannot control once in office. We should therefore abolish presidential elections rather than seek to reform our inherently dysfunctional mass democracy.

From a libertarian perspective, we get better government if power is decentralized as much as possible. It would be best for voters to only elect neighborhood councils made up of individuals whom they can know personally, then have these councils elect higher-level councils, and so on up to the highest level, Congress, which would then elect the president, like prime ministers are elected in parliamentary systems. Elected officials could be recalled at any time by the lower-level council that elected them.

I realize that we won't have such a radically decentralized bottom-up reform soon, but having this approach as an alternative should help people realize that mass voting for president is inherently problematic, no matter how it's done.

FRED E. FOLDVARY teaches economics at Santa Clara University. His main areas of research include public finance, public choice, social ethics and the economics of real estate.

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CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL

The Santa Monica Daily Press is published six days a week, Monday through Saturday.

19,000 daily circulation, 46,450 daily readership. Circulation is audited and verified by Circulation Verification Council, 2006. Serving the City of Santa Monica, and the communities of Venice Beach, Brentwood, West LA. Members of CNPA, AFCP, CVC, Associated Press, IFPA, Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce.

Published by Newlon Rouge, LLC

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Meredith Pro Tem

Meredith C. Carroll
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Forgettable flubs dominated in 2007

WITH 2008 JUST A FEW DAYS AWAY, New Year's resolutions are figuring as prominently as Britney and Jamie Lynn Spears' children inevitably will in future police lineups. However, some folks haven't started thinking about fresh starts for next year yet because they're still scratching their heads trying to pinpoint how 2007 went so wrong.

Take Kevin Rudd, for example. This year will go down in the Rudd family as the one in which their little bespectacled dairy farm-raised boy was elected the 26th prime minister of Australia. The rest of the world will remember that, too, of course ... but more as an afterthought. More significant in most people's minds will forever be the viral video that exploded this fall of Rudd absentmindedly probing his ear for wax and then orally consuming the results — while sitting in Parliament, in front of Parliament's official TV camera. Rudd is said to be mulling over enrolling next year in the Howard Dean School of How Not to Become a Universal Media Laughingstock.

The Vienna Chamber of Commerce recently issued a bulletin to travel agencies alerting them to a large block of vacant hotel rooms next fall. Austria's largest city showcased a new convention this past October — the world's first divorce fair — but the response was disappointing. Only a few dozen people showed up, and most of their time was occupied being interviewed by dozens of members of the media. The convention offered seemingly standard fare, like legal services, mediation and conflict management, as well as more uncommon exhibitors, such as DNA analysts, private investigators and a company offering hair extensions, volume treatments and highlights ("A new look to accompany a new start"). The Roman Catholic Church also had a booth at the convention. Event organizers are hoping turnout at next year's convention — ex-girlfriends and illegitimate children of James Brown, P. Diddy and Jack Nicholson — will prove more successful.

This holiday season, a father in Montreal sold his son's $90 Christmas present — the coveted "Guitar Hero III" Nintendo Wii video game — for $9,100 on eBay after catching him smoking pot in the backyard with some friends. In turn, the son has offered money on eBay to anyone who will take his father and not return him home until he leaves for college so that he and his friends can enjoy their drugs and video games in peace.

In August, a small Lexington, S.C.-based parts supplier was caught having collected more than $20 million from the Pentagon for fraudulent shipping costs. C&D Distributors discovered a flaw in an automated purchasing system used by the Defense Department that allowed them to charge $455,009 to ship three machine screws costing a total of $3.93 to Iraq and $998,798 to ship two 19-cent washers to Texas. Owners of the company expressed regret for their actions, saying they might consider using a North Pole return address instead the next time they figure out a way to rip off the government.

Speaking of Santa, law enforcement officials in Ottawa have been searching for a "rogue elf" who sent obscene letters to nearly a dozen children on behalf of Mr. Claus. The postal service in Canada operates a "Write to Santa" program in which 11,000 volunteers respond to letters from kids, although postal officials believe there is only one errant sprite in the bunch. In the meantime, the program has been shut down until which time Michael Jackson can be found and brought in for questioning.

A new beauty queen was crowned earlier this month at the Miss Belgium pageant in Brussels, but not without some controversy. Winner Alizee Poulicek, a 20-year-old language student from the Wallonia region, admitted she cannot speak Dutch even through language is the focus of her studies and Dutch is the language spoken by the majority of the people in the country she will represent in the Miss World, Miss Universe and Miss International pageants.

At least one big mistake in 2007 resulted in a happy ending. An oil field worker in Western Canada received a bill for $85,000 after hooking his cell phone to his computer and using it as a modem for downloads. Twenty-two year-old Piotr Staniaszek said he thought the $150 monthly fee that covered him for unlimited mobile Web browsing extended the service to his PC. However, Staniaszek isn't worried about finding the money to pay his bill, as he recently received the news that he is the rightful heir to the multi-million dollar fortune of a distant relative in Nigeria who recently passed away. He is expecting payment any day now.

MEREDITH CARROLL can be reached at meredithccarroll@hotmail.com.

The Q Line

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News that mattered most

Drinking fluoride ... chopping trees ... biking en masse ... building up and tearing down. The year 2007 is drawing to a close, giving us time to both look ahead with hope, as well as ponder the past. Take this time to assess the top stories in Santa Monica over the past year and how they affected our lives.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

What were the top stories of 2007 and how did they shape life in Santa Monica?

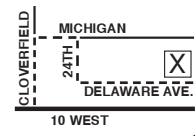
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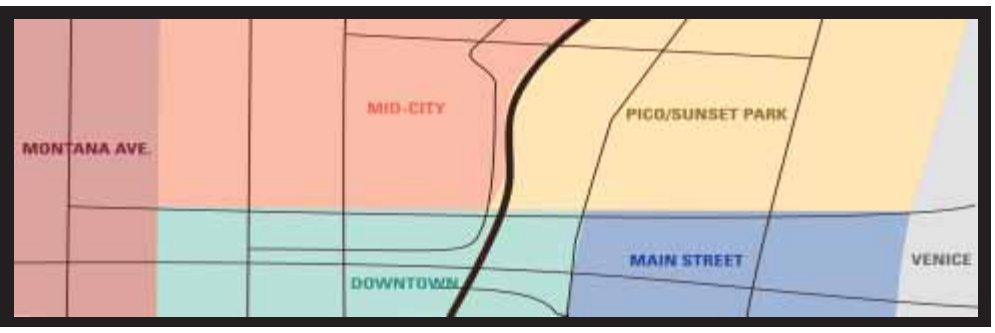
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2 + 2 + 2
Two eggs, two bacon or sausage and two pancakes



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Killer tiger stuns keepers

San Francisco Zoo staffers grapple with cat's puzzling escape

BY LOUISE CHU
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO Investigators trying to determine how a tiger escaped its zoo enclosure on Christmas Day — killing one man and mauling two others — plan a thorough sweep of the zoo grounds Wednesday to look for clues.

Authorities do not believe more people were attacked, but they want to inspect the area in the daylight. Zoo officials are still uncertain how long the tiger, which last year badly mauled a zookeeper, was loose before being shot dead.

The three men who were attacked Tuesday while visiting the zoo were in their 20s, police spokesman Steve Mannina said. The attack occurred just after the 5 p.m. closing time, on the east end of the 125-acre grounds.

They suffered "pretty aggressive bite marks," Mannina said.

The two injured men were listed in critical but stable condition at San Francisco General Hospital. John Brown, an emergency room physician, told the San Francisco Chronicle that they suffered deep bites and claw cuts to their heads and upper bodies.

The Siberian tiger, named Tatiana, was the same giant cat that attacked a zookeeper just about a year ago during a public feeding, said Robert Jenkins, the zoo's director of animal care and conservation.

The approximately 300-pound female did not leave through an open door, Jenkins said. But he could not explain how it escaped _ the tiger's enclosure is surrounded by a 15-foot-wide moat and 20-foot-high walls.

"There was no way out through the door," Jenkins said. "The animal appears to have climbed or otherwise leapt out of the enclosure."

The first attack happened right outside the Siberian's enclosure _ the victim died at the scene. A group of four responding officers came across his body when they made their way into the dark zoo grounds, Mannina said.

Then they saw the second victim. He was about 300 yards away, in front of the Terrace Cafe.

The man was sitting on the ground, blood running from gashes in his head. Tatiana sat next to him. Suddenly, the cat attacked the man again, Mannina said.

The officers started approaching the tiger, bearing their handguns. Tatiana started moving in their direction. Several of the officers then fired, killing the animal.

Only then did they see the third victim, who had also been mauled.

The zoo is open 365 days a year. Although no new visitors were let in after 5 p.m., the grounds were not scheduled to close until an hour later, and there were between 20 and 25 people still on site when the attacks happened, zoo officials said. Employees and visitors were told to take shelter when zoo officials learned of the attacks.

"This is a tragic event for San Francisco," Fire Department spokesman Lt. Ken Smith said. "We pride ourselves in our zoo, and we pride ourselves in tourists coming and looking at our city."

There are five tigers at the zoo _ three Sumatrans and two Siberians. Officials initially worried that four tigers had escaped, but soon learned only one had escaped its pen, Mannina said.

On Dec. 22, 2006, Tatiana reached through the cage's iron bars and attacked a keeper with her claws and teeth, causing deep lacerations to the worker's arms. The zoo's Lion House was temporarily closed during an investigation.

California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health blamed the zoo for the assault and imposed a $18,000 penalty. A medical claim filed against the city by the keeper was denied.

Mayor Gavin Newsom said in a statement he was deeply saddened by the latest attack and that a thorough investigation was under way.

After last year's attack, the zoo added customized steel mesh over the bars, built in a feeding shoot and increased the distance between the public and the cats.

Tatiana arrived at the San Francisco Zoo from the Denver Zoo a few years ago, with zoo officials hoping she would mate with a male tiger. Siberian tigers are classified as endangered and there are more than 600 of the animals living in captivity worldwide.

The zoo will be closed Wednesday.

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Lohan denies she drank before crash with busboy

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES Lindsay Lohan says she was sober before a 2005 car crash near Beverly Hills.

The 21-year-old actress is being sued for negligence over the accident in which her Mercedes-Benz hit a van and injured the driver, Raymundo Ortega.

Ortega, a busboy, alleges Lohan had been drinking at The Ivy restaurant before the crash even though she was underage at the time. Ortega is seeking at least $200,000 in damages from Lohan and the restaurant.

But in a Dec. 15 declaration, Lohan stated: "I did not consume an alcoholic beverage or any type of medication or drug" either before or during her restaurant visit.

A call to Lohan attorney David J. Ozeran wasn't immediately returned Wednesday.

Lohan's declaration was filed Friday in Superior Court by attorneys for The Ivy along with other documents, including a declaration by the waiter who served Lohan. The server, Adam Novicki, said Lohan didn't order alcohol.

Alonzo Howell, a Los Angeles police officer who was providing security for The Ivy that day, also said he didn't see Lohan drinking.

Lohan has countersued Ortega, citing a California Highway Patrol report that said he was at fault for the crash because he made an illegal U-turn.


LOHAN

Lohan served 84 minutes in jail last month after pleading guilty to misdemeanor drunken driving and cocaine charges unrelated to the 2005 crash.

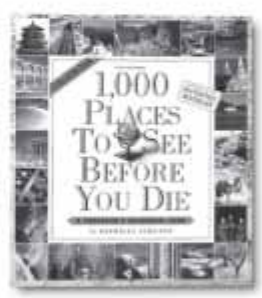
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Death of snowmobiler sheds light on dangers

By The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY A 53-year-old man killed by an avalanche while snowmobiling underscores the dangers of Utah's rapidly building snowpack, experts said.

Dave Balls of Oakley was snowmobiling with his four sons on Christmas when a 400-foot-wide slide broke in the Thousand Peaks area of Summit County, about 35 miles east of Salt Lake City.

At nearly 10,000 feet in elevation, the steep bowl contained plenty of fresh snow, but underneath was a layer of "rotten" or sugary snow that set up in November, avalanche forecaster Craig Gordon said.

"I just don't trust it," Gordon reported on the center's Web site, adding the weak layers of snow take a long time to become stable. "Just when you think it's safe to start going after big terrain, these weaknesses come back to bite you."

The avalanche center has warned for days of the avalanche danger, which is expected to get worse with another storm moving across Utah on Wednesday.

Balls, who wasn't wearing an avalanche beacon, was caught up in a 4-foot-deep slide and buried for 90 minutes before his body was recovered, Gordon said.

He had six children, including two daughters adopted from Russia.

"He was up enjoying the day when the slide broke loose. He just wasn't able to outrun (it)," said Howard Sorensen, a local Mormon bishop.

It was Utah's second avalanche death this week. Jesse Williams, 30, of Grand Junction, Colo., was killed by a slide Sunday at The Canyons ski resort.

That avalanche also injured an 11-year-old boy, Max Zilvitis, but he is "doing incredibly well" at Primary Children's Medical Center, his parents said Wednesday.

"Max has been recovering steadily since he awoke Monday afternoon. We are forever grateful to the volunteers and ski patrol who helped recover Max," parents Brian and Samantha Zilvitis said in a statement.

Jabs sharpen on eve of voting

BY DAVID ESPO I AP Special Correspondent

MT. PLEASANT, Iowa The most wide-open presidential race in a half century pushed unpredictably into a decisive new phase Wednesday, the rhetoric a bit more pointed and the appeals a tad more urgent in the final run-up to the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary.

"This is crunch time," said former Democratic Sen. John Edwards, and he spoke for all.

In a race without front-runners, a brief Christmas lull yielded quickly in both early-voting states to a new round of subtle digs, outright criticism, fresh TV ads and stepped-up efforts by independent organizations.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, surprise leader in the Republican pre-caucus polls, bagged an Iowa pheasant with a .12-gauge shotgun and said caucus-goers on Jan. 3 should take notice.

"Maybe it will show that I certainly understand the culture of being outdoors," he said. It was a not-so-subtle jab at his leading rival in the state, Mitt Romney. The former Massachusetts governor once proclaimed himself a lifelong hunter, but later conceded he had shot only "small varmints" and did not have a gun or a hunting license.

Romney's political quarry for the day was Arizona Sen. John McCain, seemingly staging a comeback in New Hampshire. Romney accused his rival of flip-flops on immigration and tax cuts.

"The point is that under his bill, that he fought for, everybody who came here illegally could stay forever. And does he still believe that or does he not believe that?" Romney said on a radio program from New Hampshire.

"And likewise on taxation. He said, well now he's for making the Bush tax cuts permanent. Well, does he admit he was wrong in voting against them before?

McCain responded quickly.

"I know something about tailspins, and it's pretty clear Mitt Romney is in one," said the former front-runner. "It's disappointing that he would launch desperate, flailing and false attacks in an attempt to maintain relevance."

In the short term, the Republican race has become a pair of separate but connected two-man campaigns in early states. In Iowa, Huckabee, a former Baptist minister, is counting on the support of evangelical Christians to deliver a victory over Romney, who has spent millions in the state.

McCain is not mounting a significant effort in Iowa, but his hopes in New Hampshire — where he won the primary eight years ago — depend heavily on the outcome. A Huckabee victory, McCain's aides say, would put their man in much better position to defeat Romney in the first primary five days later.

By contrast, the Democratic race over the next eight days shapes up as a three-way fight for Iowa among Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton and Edwards, the party's 2004 vice presidential nominee. It's unlikely that Edwards, in particular, could sustain a loss in the first contest, particularly since he's been campaigning there virtually since the last election.

Obama was first among the leading contenders into the state after the holiday, renewing a campaign-long attempt to cast himself as an agent of change while trying to pre-empt Edwards' attacks on special interests in Washington.

Without naming Clinton, he said, "We're told that the lobbyists and the special interests, it's inevitable that they run things, and so the best you can do is to find somebody who knows how to work the system in Washington. ...

"That's essentially the argument that's being made in these last seven days. Don't try something different because that's going to be too risky. You don't know what you might get."

> **"I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT TAILSPINS, AND IT'S PRETTY CLEAR MITT ROMNEY IS IN ONE. IT'S DISAPPOINTING THAT HE WOULD LAUNCH DESPERATE, FLAILING AND FALSE ATTACKS IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN RELEVANCE."**
>
> Sen. John McCain, Republican, Arizona

The former first lady campaigned with her husband by her side, opening a final-week sprint with remarks designed to blunt Obama and Edwards.

"Some believe you can get change by demanding it, and some believe you can get change by hoping for it," she said in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. "I believe you can get change by working really, really hard for it."

"And I think it takes strength and experience to be able to make change in our political system," she said. "We don't have any time to waste."

Edwards was in Conway, N.H., where he had a succinct appeal.

"You'd better choose someone as your candidate who's ready for this battle. Nice words will not change anything," he said.

Several campaigns unveiled new television commercials during the day, including Edwards, Clinton and McCain, who was going on the air for the first time in South Carolina.

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Retailers still cashing in

FROM **RETAIL** PAGE 1

stock up on holiday-themed items — such as greeting cards and wrapping paper — which are marked down by retailers.

While Christmas may be over, retailers have yet to finalize their total holiday season sales figures, mainly because of gift cards, which aren't accounted for until they are redeemed.

"We're looking at probably a busy week as people head to the mall, especially today to redeem the gift cards they received for Christmas," said Erin Hershkowitz, spokeswoman for the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), which projected that one in five consumers would head to the malls on Wednesday. The ICSC is a global trade organization for the shopping center industry.

"Gift cards have transformed the holiday-shopping landscape and they have extended holiday shopping well past Christmas," Michael P. Niemira, the chief economics and director of research for ICSC, said in a statement on Wednesday.

As projected by retail forecasters in the fall, the holiday shopping season started slower than in previous years, particularly in late November to early December. Experts have attributed the lack of spending to the subprime credit fallout and the weak housing market, making consumers a bit antsy about spending.

While business was slow for shopping centers in late November and early December, the year-over-year sales increase is expected to be close to 2.5 percent, thanks to a surge from last-minute shoppers, according to the ICSC.

"Even though we saw some softness through the months doesn't mean we're not going to see a good amount of sales the coming week," Hershkowitz said.

Some Santa Monica retailers report surprisingly strong sales this winter.

Blonde, a women's fashion boutique on Main Street, experienced a 35-percent increase in December sales from the same period last year.

"It's not a good situation out there," said Amber Farr, the owner of Blonde. "I thought it was going to be horrible."

Other retailers note a more modest increase.

"It was better than last year," said Stephanie Silverman, the manager of Subtle Tones, a women's clothing store on Montana Avenue.



Brandon Wise *news@smdp.com*

GET A GRIP: **Shoppers stormed the Third Street Promenade on Wednesday, cashing in gift certificates and exchanging unwanted Christmas presents.**

"We didn't feel any of the issues going on around the country," Silverman said on Wednesday. "There was no resistance to the prices or anything."

> **"WE HAD A GREAT SEASON AND OUR RETAILERS HAVE CONTINUED TO HAVE A GREAT SEASON AS WELL."**
>
> **Ashley Walkley**, marketing manager, Santa Monica Place

LAST CHRISTMAS

Santa Monica Place had its last holiday shopping season before it closes temporarily for redevelopment on Jan. 31.

Macerich officials noted a high traffic count during the month of December, a high volume of shoppers starting with the day after Thanksgiving, despite the disproportionately small number of retailers in the mall.

"Overall, our traffic was in line with our expectations," said Ashley Walkley, the marketing manager for Santa Monica Place. "We had a great season and our retailers have continued to have a great season as well."

With the mall's closing date fast approaching, some stores have already begun putting up closing sale signs, clearances which shoppers have happily enjoyed.

Alexis Kennedy, a high school student from Playa del Rey, sat on the ground in front of Forever 21, text-messaging as she was surrounded by a sea of shopping bags. After three hours of shopping in Downtown Santa Monica, Kennedy said she was ready to take on another mall to spend her Christmas money.

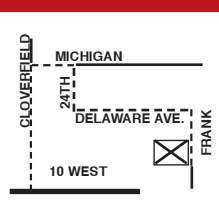
"Shopping's been good," Kennedy said. "Almost every store I've been in has had a sale."

melodyh@smdp.com

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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Mini busses bring debate

FROM **TRANSPORTATION** PAGE 3

moving the stop to 17th and Pearl, bringing the stop closer to the campus.

"We want to do the best (we can) to come to a compromise and make everyone happy and still allow us to offer the best transit service possible," Big Blue Bus Spokesman Dan Dawson said in November.

The Mini Blue Bus was just one among the slew of changes the Big Blue Bus underwent this year, the most recent being the opening of the Big Blue Bus transit store on Broadway, off Second Street, in mid-November, making customer service more accessible by moving it from the old location on Olympic Boulevard and Seventh Street, which ironically wasn't near a bus line.

The new digs include both a customer service center and a retail store, selling Big Blue Bus branded T-shirts and jewelry.

LIGHT RAIL GOES FORWARD

Exposition Light Rail advocates were all smiles in early August during a historic ground-breaking ceremony in Downtown Los Angeles. However, the ecstatic thoughts that a long-awaited project would finally come true were quickly replaced with worry over whether there would be enough funding to take the project all the way through to Santa Monica.

The Expo project is split into two phases — from Downtown Los Angeles to Culver City, and from Culver City to a proposed terminal at Fourth Street and Colorado Avenue in Santa Monica. The worries stemmed from a battle in Sacramento where, for months, state legislators grappled with reaching an agreement on the budget, keeping state transportation funding, including an estimated $314 million for the light rail project, tightly sealed for the time-being. The political stalemate was finally broken on Aug. 21 — 51 days after the beginning of the fiscal year. A few weeks later, the California Transportation Commission gave Expo its $314 million.

"It's critical that construction on phase one move forward and we have the necessary money now," Darrell Clarke, a Santa Monican who is a member of the Friends 4 Expo Transit, said in August.

It was a brief sigh of relief.

In November, officials with the Exposition Construction Authority announced that the light rail project had hit another snag — the first phase was battling a $145 million deficit.

"We have a lot of support for the project on this board and hopefully they will approve the increase," said Samantha Bricker, the chief operating officer for the Exposition Construction Authority.

Expo officials were planning to meet with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to seek additional funding.

It was also a good year for subway hopefuls when the Senate Appropriations Committee pushed for a removal of a ban on tunneling under the Wilshire Boulevard corridor, paving the way to bring the subway line from Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue in the Mid-Wilshire district to Santa Monica.

Congress is currently moving to lift the ban on tunneling. The measure, by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, is part of a year-end spending bill that passed the House recently and is sitting in the Senate. The federal ban was put into place in the mid 1980s, supported in part by Congressman Henry Waxman of West Los Angeles, who has since reversed his stance on tunneling.



Photo courtesy of MTA

A LIGHT AHEAD **Phase two of the Expo project would bring the light rail line from Culver City to Santa Monica.**

TRAFFIC SLOWS DOWN

Addressing traffic was one of the key issues for Santa Monica planning officials, from the formulation of the Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE), to speeding along Ocean Park Boulevard, to the everyday concerns like the lack of parking.

City officials are currently in the process of formulating the Land Use and Circulation Element, a plan that will shape the city's developmental landscape in the next 20 years. A good chunk of the plan addresses transportation-related matters, from public transit to congestion.

The Planning Department has hosted a series of workshops over the year, most recently this month, a session that focused solely on transportation. Residents in the workshop mainly raised concerns that have been heard throughout the decades — there's not enough street parking, there's too much traffic in the neighborhoods and there aren't enough bike lanes to encourage people to get out of their cars.

"We want to make sure if there is change in Santa Monica, it makes Santa Monica better," said Jeffrey Tumlin, a city traffic consultant for the LUCE project.

Five more LUCE workshops will be held after the new year.

One section of Santa Monicans saw some traffic solutions implemented recently when a stretch of Ocean Park Boulevard from Lincoln to Cloverfield boulevards was restriped from two lanes to one.

The move wasn't very popular among the business owners and residents in Sunset Park, who argued that changing the street to one lane would increase congestion.

City officials said the street was restriped to enhance safety, addressing concerns of the increasing incidents of pedestrian and vehicular related accidents along Ocean Park Boulevard. The new one-lane Ocean Park Boulevard will be evaluated by city officials in the coming months.

"The intent was to improve traffic safety and pedestrian safety by slowing down people who were speeding and making it easier to make a decision at the intersections and also to provide more parking availability," Lucy Dyke, the city transportation planning manager.

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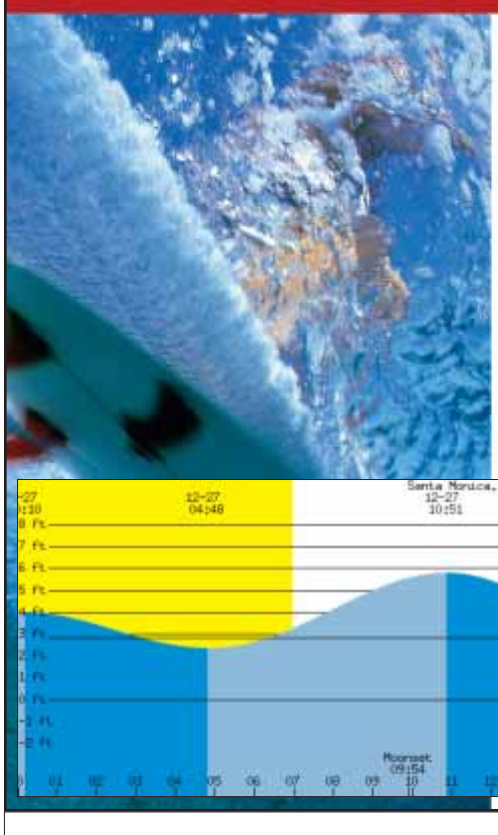
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SURF REPORT



SURF CONDITIONS **WATER TEMP: 56°**

SWELL FORECAST (2-3 FT)

Today should see a further increase in NW swell. This'll be a combo of ground and wind swell with average size at west facing breaks around chest to head high. Standout west facing breaks could run slightly overhead, but chest to head high should be the rule with overhead the exception at west facing spots.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

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NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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QUICK STATS (for the last 28 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 0
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 8
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 36 / 18
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 11 / 15

The Beach Report Card is made possible by a grant from Ford

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

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

LEGEND

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

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

Heal the Bay

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

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

Patriots' historic run is plain for all to see

BY RACHEL COHEN
AP Sports Writer



AP Photo

16 AND OH! **Brady and the Patriots' run at history will be broadcast for all to see.**

NEW YORK After weeks of insisting they wouldn't cave in, NFL officials did just that Wednesday. Now all of America can see the Patriots' shot at history.

Saturday night's game between New England and the New York Giants on the NFL Network, which is available in fewer than 40 percent of the nation's homes with TVs, will be simulcast on CBS and NBC.

The Patriots could become the first NFL team to go 16-0 in the regular season.

"We have taken this extraordinary step because it is in the best interest of our fans," commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement after the league announced it was reversing course. "What we have seen for the past year is a very strong consumer demand for NFL Network. We appreciate CBS and NBC delivering the NFL Network telecast on Saturday night to the broad audience that deserves to see this potentially historic game. Our commitment to the NFL Network is stronger than ever."

NFL Network spokesman Seth Palansky said officials would have no further comment Wednesday.

The NFL had claimed that the onus of making the game widely available fell on the major cable providers with which the league has bitterly feuded. Companies such as Comcast and Time Warner have declined to carry the network as part of basic packages.

But lawmakers have pressured the NFL to ensure more viewers could see the game. Last week, two prominent members of the Senate Judiciary Committee sent a letter to Goodell threatening to reconsider the league's antitrust exemption.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who co-wrote the letter with Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said he was "delighted" by the NFL's concession.

"I think it was a smart move on their part," he said in a phone interview.

Leahy expected to speak with Goodell again next month about the ongoing question of how many fans will be able to see games on the channel. Saturday's matchup wraps up the NFL Network's second season of airing live contests, with eight per year. This one and a key Thursday night game between Green Bay and Dallas last month drew widespread complaints about the lack of availability.

"I never completely gave up hope, but I was getting a little discouraged Christmas afternoon when we still had not gotten a positive answer," said Leahy, who added that his staff members were talking with NFL officials during the holiday.

Local TV affiliates in the Boston, Manchester, N.H., and New York areas that were already set to simulcast the game under NFL policy will still air it. That means viewers in those markets will have four channels to choose from if they get NFL Network.

"I couldn't be more thrilled that as the Patriots rush toward an historic undefeated season, football fans everywhere have won a victory of their own," said Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who had urged cable and NFL executives to settle the dispute. "With today's announcement, the NFL showed their loyalty to the sports fans who made the NFL an empire in the first place.

"The best news of all is that now no die-hard Pats fans will be shut out from watching their team take aim at football history," Kerry said in a statement.

Padres' pitch to Prior seals deal

BY BERNIE WILSON
AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO Mark Prior and his hometown San Diego Padres agreed to a $1 million, one-year contract on Wednesday, making him the second postoperative pitcher to join the team in less than a month.

Prior, whose once-promising career has been sidetracked by various injuries, missed the 2007 season after undergoing right shoulder surgery on April 24. He last pitched for the Chicago Cubs in 2006, when he made nine starts and went 1-6 with a 7.21 ERA.

The 27-year-old right-hander, who was 18-6 with a 2.43 ERA in 2003, can earn another $4.5 million in performance bonuses.

"Mark Prior is a competitor and is working hard to regain the form that made him one of the great young pitchers in the game," Padres general manager Kevin Towers said. "We are confident he is going to help us in our rotation this season. It's exciting that Mark is coming home to San Diego to pitch for the Padres."

Prior graduated from University of San Diego High School and was the second pick in the June 2001 draft, out of Southern California. He is 42-29 with a 3.51 ERA in five big league seasons.

He became a free agent when the Cubs declined to offer him a 2008 contract before the Dec. 13 deadline.

If healthy, Prior could join a deep Padres rotation that includes NL Cy Young Award winner Jake Peavy, 347-game winner Greg Maddux and 6-foot-10 right-hander Chris Young (3.12 ERA). San Diego led the major leagues with a 3.70 ERA this season and came within one victory of its third consecutive playoff berth.

Earlier this month, the Padres agreed to a one-year deal with left-hander Randy Wolf, who is coming off shoulder surgery in September.

In 2003, Prior nearly pitched the Cubs to their first World Series appearance since 1945. He took a 3-0 lead into the eighth inning against Florida in Game 6 of the NL championship series before the Marlins rallied for eight runs and an 8-3 victory at Wrigley Field. Florida also won Game 7 in Chicago and went on to beat the New York Yankees in the World Series.

He's a prince

Jewish group satisfied that Smith isn't a fan of Hitler

A Jewish group said Wednesday that it accepts WILL SMITH'S explanation that he never praised Adolf Hitler in remarks the star says were misinterpreted.

"We welcome and accept Will Smith's statement that Hitler was a `vicious killer' and that he did not mean for his remarks about the Nazi leader to be mistaken as praise," Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said in a statement. Smith "took immediate steps to clarify his words" and condemn Hitler, Foxman said.

Foxman said words "can be twisted by those with hate and bigotry in their hearts."

"This is why all celebrities bear a special responsibility to weigh their words carefully, and an obligation to speak out against racism, as Will Smith has done in this instance," he said.

The Daily Record, a Scottish newspaper, recently quoted Smith as saying: "Even Hitler didn't wake up going, `let me do the most evil thing I can do today.' I think he woke up in the morning and using a twisted, backwards logic, he set out to do what he thought was `good."' AP

Director Burton says he didn't sweat casting Depp to sing out in 'Sweeney'



"The Sound of Music" with blood. That's how TIM BURTON describes his latest film, "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street."

The movie, based on the Stephen Sondheim musical about a murderous barber, stars Johnny Depp as the title character and Helena Bonham Carter, whose character serves the barber's victims up in her meat pies.

Burton says he didn't worry about whether Depp could sing.

"I worry about a lot of things but I strangely did not fear that at all," the 49-year-old director told reporters recently, according to AP Radio. "He exceeded my expectation."

Burton also said Bonham Carter, his romantic partner, didn't pressure him for a role in the movie.

"She's been an actress for a long time. She gets the whole picture," he said. "She was very good about not overpressuring me because she knew I was probably putting that all on myself anyway."

Bonham Carter, 41, recently gave birth to the couple's second child, a girl. They also have a 4-year-old son, Billy. She has worked with Burton in several other films, including "Planet of the Apes" and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory."

"Sweeney Todd" has Golden Globe nominations for best musical or comedy, best director for Burton, and acting nominations for Depp and Bonham Carter.

Burton said he isn't thinking about possible Oscar nominations.

"The joy for me has been the film," he said. "I feel lucky to have the opportunity to do this particular project with these particular people. So for me, that's the reward that I get." AP

JACK NOT SO PATIENT

JACK NICHOLSON says he drew on his own experience in the hospital for his new film, "The Bucket List."

Nicholson and Morgan Freeman co-star as cancer patients who decide to travel the world following their wish list of things to do before they die. The film, a Warner Bros. release, was directed by Rob Reiner.

"A lot of this movie was informed by my being not what I thought I would be, an excellent patient, but rather a poor one," Nicholson told reporters recently, according to AP Radio.

"That happened by coincidence just before this movie," Nicholson, 70, said. "Nothing as frightening as what these fellows had to go through." AP

Be a duo, Capricorn

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

Happy Birthday!

You are a power unto yourself this year. Once you make a decision, you might be close to unstoppable. When necessary, you will team up with a partner with ease. If you are single and would like to change your status, you will. With the assortment of potential suitors, it might be hard to stay single! If you are attached, you'll see a difference in how you relate, you do need to defer. LEO walks you through difficult situations.



Born Today

Actor Gerard Depardieu (1948)

Journalist Cokie Roberts (1943)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at http://www.jacquelinebigar.com
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ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ The unexpected occurs when you least expect it. Knowledge of what you want helps you focus and create. Excessive confusion surrounds plans and loved ones. Relax, and all will work out amenably. Tonight: Let fun in.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Let amusement enter, and worry less about reality. When you are tired and worn out, know that you do need to stop. Think before you move in a new direction. Your ability to understand takes you to a new level. Tonight: Enjoy yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You might be unusually inspired and, as a result, make strange decisions. You have the ability move in new directions, which might surprise others. Openly evaluate and consider an opportunity. Tonight: As you like.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ You might need and want to do some serious thinking, while others are slightly askew. If you have a second, take the time to return a gift that a loved one might not like. Don't get uptight. It was the gesture that counted. Tonight: Relax.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ You might be inspired and impaired by the immediate happenings. Attempts to clear the air are unsuccessful, for a while. Use your creativity, and break patterns. Investigate and understand differences. Tonight: Know what you want.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Take time and listen with care. Investigate and make choices that work well for you. Extremes might seem natural. You come from a place of tremendous resourcefulness. Your ability to understand and grow emerges. Tonight: Take a timeout.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ You have the ability to change and grow, which might startle a friend. Others might shake their head because they aren't sure of your actions, but you know what you are doing and where you are heading. Tonight: Get together with a pal.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ You might want to move in a new direction. Listen to your inner voice with a boss or someone you put on a pedestal. Understand what is expected as far as time and actions are concerned. Listen to feedback. Tonight: Out late.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Look beyond the obvious, and then you might understand someone's motive. What seems quite magical could become very confusing. A change of direction might be more important than you realize. Tonight: Read between the lines.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Togetherness earmarks a situation. If you work as a team, you'll accomplish more, but you will need to eliminate certain illusions. Your abilities can turn a situation around if you dig into them. Listen for a change. Tonight: Be a duo.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You'll discover the true nature of closeness by moving into a new realm. Your feelings touch a deep part of yourself. If you want more, ask. You will like the end results. A friendship changes in front of your very eyes. Tonight: Zoom in.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Dive in and get a lot done quickly. Your ability to achieve emerges as one of your best talents. Organize and clear out endless projects and errands. You will have reason to smile. Relax once you're done. Tonight: The world is your oyster.

MOVIEGUIDE

AERO THEATRE
1328 Montana Avenue
(310) 260.1528

Midnight (R)
7:30

AMC LOEWS BROADWAY 4
1441 3rd Street
(310) 458-1506

Aliens vs. Predator - Requiem (R)
10:20am, 12:45, 3:10, 5:50, 8:25, 10:50
Atonement (R)
10:30am, 1:25, 4:20, 7:25, 10:20
The Great Debaters (PG-13)
10:10am, 1:05, 4:00, 7:00, 9:55
P.S. I Love You (PG-13)
10:45am, 1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:40

AMC 7 SANTA MONICA
1310 3rd Street
(310) 289-4262

Charlie Wilson's War (R)
10:05am, 12:30, 3:00, 5:40, 8:15, 10:45
Enchanted (PG)
11:00am, 1:40, 4:30, 7:10
The Golden Compass (PG-13)
10:40am, 1:20, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45
The Kite Runner (PG-13)
10:55am, 2:00, 5:00, 8:00, 10:55
National Treasure: Book of Secrets (PG)
10:45am, 1:45, 4:45, 7:45, 9:55, 10:50
Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (R)
10:15am, 1:05, 4:05, 7:30, 10:25
The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep (PG)
10:00am, 12:40, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30, 11:05

LAEMMLE'S MONICA FOURPLEX
1332 2nd Street
(310) 394-9741

Juno (PG-13)
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
No Country for Old Men (R)
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:55
Persepolis (PG-13)
12:45, 3:00, 5:25, 7:50, 10:15
The Savages (R)
1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 9:55

MANN'S CRITERION THEATRE
1313 3rd Street
(310) 395-1599

27 Dresses (PG-13)
7:30
Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG)
11:10am, 12:10, 1:50, 2:50, 5:10, 10:00
I Am Legend (PG-13)
12:00, 2:40, 4:20, 5:20, 6:50, 7:50, 9:20, 10:20
Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story (R) DLP-Digital Projection
11:50am, 2:30, 5:00, 7:40, 10:10

More information email news@smdp.com

Janric Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty
BRONZE

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

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GETTING STARTED

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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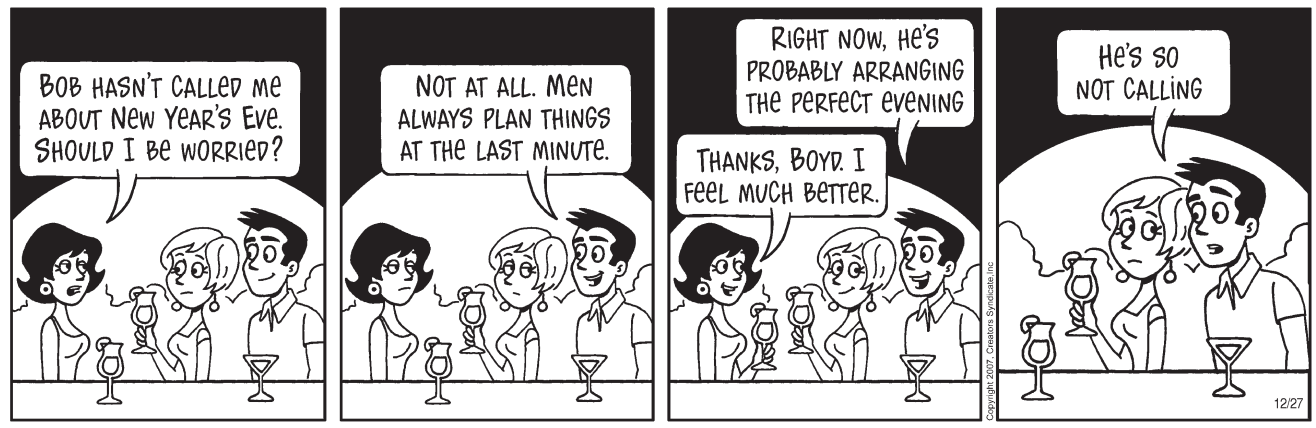
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



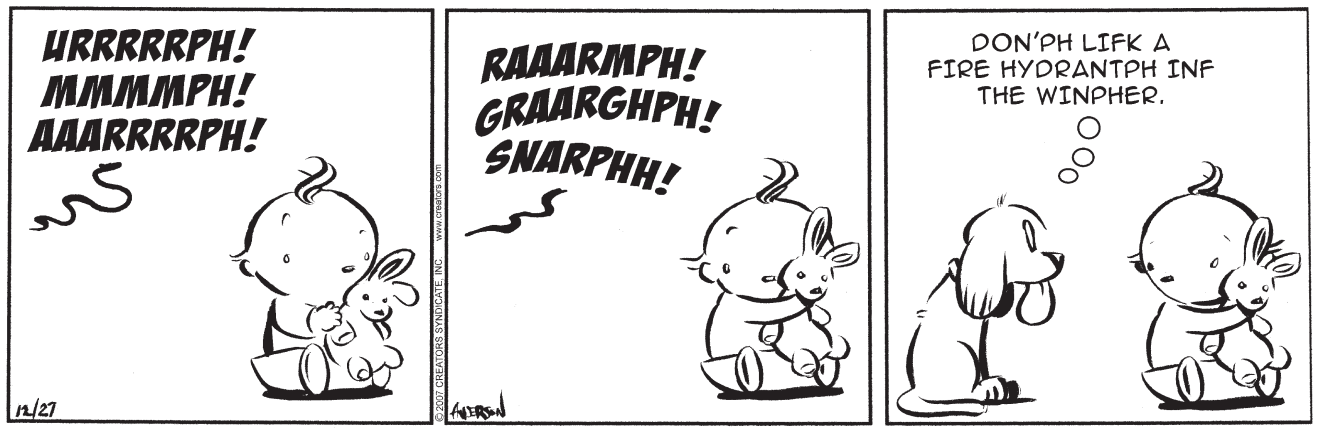
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Dog eat Doug

By Brian Anderson



The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



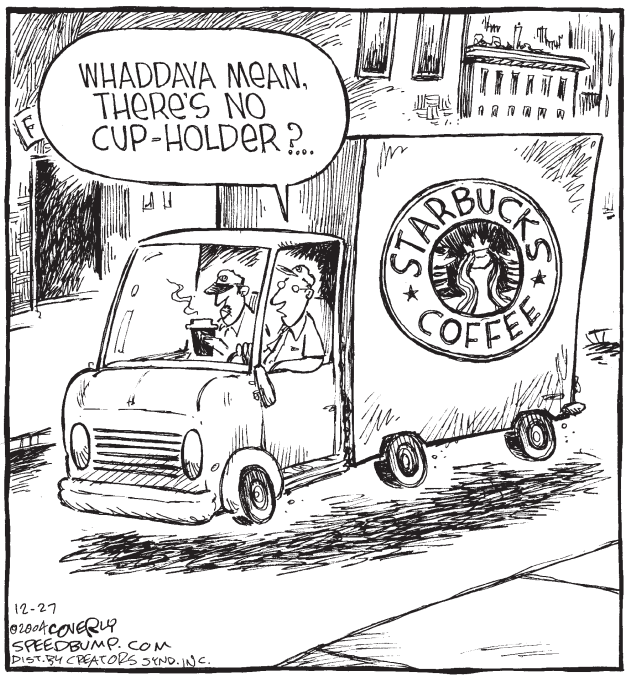
Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



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MYSTERY PHOTO

Brandon Wise *news@smdp.com*

The first one to identify where this shot was taken wins a prize from the Daily Press. Send answers to *editor@smdp.com*.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Like old lettuce
5 May honoree
11 Epps of "House"
12 Available
13 Tour de France vehicle
14 Black Sea port
15 Young-man joke
17 Succor
18 Telescope sight
22 They may be read
24 Scoundrel
25 Boxing great
26 Boxer Norton
27 Endures
30 Bouquet
32 Like bar beer
33 Bank offering
34 Bared bellies?
38 Japanese emperor
41 Royal address
42 Brunch dish
43 Understanding words
44 Bets
45 Dance move

DOWN

1 Timber wolf
2 Poker declaration
3 Prepare to go shopping
4 Early round, for short
5 Earth circler
6 Next at bat
7 "Monster" star
8 Owns
9 Print units
10 Nutrition panel letters
16 Check users' needs
19 Prepare to punch
20 Smooth
21 Circus setting
22 — Alto
23 Country star Jackson
28 Tex-Mex treat
29 Charlotte, for one
30 General address
31 Decisive moment
35 Periods
36 Unfettered
37 Percolate
38 Do yard work
39 "— Believer"
40 Beer bash need

R	A	M	S	■	V	E	S	S	E	L
A	L	O	E	■	I	N	H	A	L	E
S	A	V	E	■	S	T	U	P	I	D
P	S	I	■	B	A	R	N	■	■	■
■	■	N	O	R	S	E	■	B	I	D
S	I	G	M	A	■	E	R	O	D	E
C	O	D	A	■	■	■	A	X	L	E
A	W	A	R	D	■	S	K	I	E	D
M	A	Y	■	A	L	I	E	N	■	■
■	■	■	C	R	U	X	■	G	O	D
W	A	Y	A	N	S	■	E	D	G	E
I	G	E	T	I	T	■	W	A	R	N
T	O	A	S	T	Y	■	E	Y	E	S

Yesterday's answer

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

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	9	10
11				■	12					
13				■	14					
15				16				■	■	■
■	■	17			■	18		19	20	21
22	23				■	24				
25			■	■	■	■	■	26		
27			28	29	■	30	31			
32					■	33			■	■
■	■	■	34		35				36	37
38	39	40				■	41			
42						■	43			
44						■	45			

12-27

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS: 19 36 37 48 52
Meganumber: 8
Jackpot: $12M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 2 6 16 33 35
Meganumber: 5
Jackpot: $21M

Fantasy 5: 1 4 12 16 33

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 9 9 1
EVENING: 3 6 0

DAILY DERBY:
1st: 09 Winning Spirit
2nd: 02 Lucky Star
3rd: 05 California Classic
RACE TIME: 1.47.07

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

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Keith Bellanger, 20, failed in his attempted burglary in Duluth, Minn., in September when homeowner Wayne Boniface, age 69, walked in and beat him up so thoroughly that Bellanger had all his clothes ripped off trying to get away. And in Bay Shore, N.Y., in September, a 32-year-old man wielding a tire iron, who was attempting to mug Bruce Ferraro, 74, on the street, was forced to abandon the job and run for it when Ferraro, after a struggle, took the iron away from him. (The mugger was captured by police nearby when his car stalled.)

■ Some Americans continue to prefer to "do it themselves" to get rid of pests on their property, with tragic results. In June, Mike Harstad of Jamestown, Calif., attempting to eliminate a wasps' nest with a can of Pledge and a cigarette lighter, ultimately burned down his mobile home and contents and destroyed an outbuilding, a truck, a boat and a trailer. In August, a Whitehall, Pa., man, William Sekol, 82, attempting to destroy a yellow jackets' nest beneath a storm sewer grate in his front yard, put a dried tree over the grate, doused it with gasoline, and lit it (supposedly to suffocate the yellow jackets underneath). However, some gasoline ran into the sewer, where its fumes combusted. In the resulting explosion, Sekol's mustache and eyebrows were singed.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1831 Naturalist Charles Darwin set out on a round-the-world voyage aboard the HMS Beagle.

1904 James Barrie's play "Peter Pan: The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up" opened at the Duke of York's Theater in London.

1927 The musical play "Show Boat," with music by Jerome Kern and libretto by Oscar Hammerstein II, opened at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York.

1932 Radio City Music Hall opened in New York City.

1945 28 nations signed an agreement creating the World Bank.

1949 Queen Juliana of the Netherlands signed an act granting sovereignty to Indonesia after more than three centuries of Dutch rule.

1968 Apollo 8 and its three astronauts made a safe, nighttime splashdown in the Pacific.

WORD UP!

hermitage \HUHR-muh-tij\, *noun:* 1. The habitation of a hermit or group of hermits. 2. A monastery or abbey. 3. A secluded residence; a retreat; a hideaway. 4. (Capitalized) A palace in St. Petersburg, now an art museum.

Ducasse aims high inside Eiffel

BY ANGELA DOLAND
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Alain Ducasse has already taken haute cuisine to great heights, in menus for the Concorde jet and for astronauts. But opening a restaurant in the Eiffel Tower comes with its own challenges.

Though only 410 feet up, there's no gas cooking because of safety concerns. All the decor had to be light so as not to weigh on the 118-year-old iron structure. And because space is tight, food is washed and prepared in an underground kitchen.

The celebrity chef's new endeavor — called the Jules Verne, like the restaurant it replaced — opened for its first dinner Saturday. As staff frantically unwrapped cartons the day before, spilling bubble wrap and shards of cardboard onto the new carpeting, Ducasse took time out for an espresso and a chat about his vision.

"I think our only alternative in this monument is to be 100 percent French," he told The Associated Press.

So what exactly is his vision of modern French cuisine?

"Beautiful products, perfect technique, perfect harmony, a few precise, reduced sauces, (everything) in harmony with French wines," he said. Despite the buzz around the restaurant, critics have not yet sampled its cuisine.

> **"BEAUTIFUL PRODUCTS, PERFECT TECHNIQUE, PERFECT HARMONY, A FEW PRECISE, REDUCED SAUCES, (EVERYTHING) IN HARMONY WITH FRENCH WINES."**
>
> **Alain Ducasse,** chef

Ducasse, who has 16 Michelin stars and more than 20 restaurants around the world, says the menu price is "accessible to everyone": about $108 for lunch and $216 for dinner, without wine. He shrugged off a question about whether setting up in France's most famous landmark _ with more than 6.7 million visitors last year _ might be too touristy for his elite brand.

"For us, the Eiffel Tower is a restaurant more than a place to visit," the 51-year-old chef said, adding that he hopes to cultivate the right mix of tourists and Parisians. The restaurant seats up to 120 and takes reservations. As of Friday, there were still tables available for the first few days of business.

To get to the restaurant, diners take a private elevator _ ascending to one set of tunes and descending to another. The mix includes Edith Piaf as well as modern French artists.

The decor is minimalist, with unusual retro-style tan leather chairs, light-colored tablecloths and clean white plates. The setting's main attraction is the panoramic view of Paris.

The ceiling lighting is by designer Herve Descottes, who lit up the Mona Lisa in the Louvre, and it's crisscrossed by glowing lines that mimic the traffic patterns of Paris. The lighting is gentle, so the view isn't obscured at night.

As for the cuisine, the dinner menu includes roasted imperial langoustine with sauteed green vegetables and black truffles; pan-seared beef tournedos and fresh duck foie gras with souffled potatoes and Perigueux sauce; as well as lime souffle, wild strawberry in warm juice and tangy sorbet.

Ducasse no longer toils behind the stoves but jets between his award-winning restaurants in places from Tokyo to Las Vegas. Or, as he puts it: "I don't work, I dream ... I illustrate my dreams."

Ducasse just opened a restaurant at The Dorchester hotel in London, and he is working on two new ones in New York _ Adour at the St. Regis Hotel, to open in a month, and Bistro Benoit New York, debuting later in 2008.

For the Jules Verne, Ducasse enlisted chef Pascal Feraud, who has worked in many of his restaurants, including the Louis XV in Monaco. "We reworked the classics," Feraud said, as his staff sliced up foie gras.

The company that runs the Eiffel Tower awarded Ducasse a nine-year contract. His team worked on the project for about two years.

'Black Paris' celebrates city's tolerance

BY JAMEY KEATEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Any American with even a slight familiarity with Paris knows about Josephine Baker, the black swivel-hipped cabaret entertainer who shunned racism in America, vaulted to stardom here in 1925, and stayed on to become one of France's most adored 20th century icons.

But what about William Wells Brown, the 19th-century former slave turned abolitionist who once expressed awe that he could pray next to whites at La Madeleine church, or that some tipped their hat to him on Paris streets?

Both historical figures feature high in Black Paris Tours, offering a glimpse of the mutual love affair between black Americans and the City of Light.

Tour guide Ricki Stevenson let me tag along as she escorted four black tourists from Texas, who braved the weak U.S. dollar and a chilly and wet winter day as part of a birthday-celebration getaway.

They chose the full-day option, $129 per person for a trek zigzagging through offbeat areas like the Parc Monceau, where poet Langston Hughes once lived in maid's chambers, or a bustling, working-class area that Stevenson dubs "Little Africa."

Stevenson, an Oklahoma native and former TV journalist, has more than enough material to work with: Even after an information-packed tour lasting nine hours, I couldn't help thinking we had only scratched the surface.

The tour was especially eye-opening in France, where minorities from the substantial black and North African communities — often with origins in former French colonies — are not quantified in the census. The state considers everyone simply French, in its bid to be officially colorblind and stem discrimination. (In practice, though, North African immigrants and their children do complain of discrimination, and riots broke out in immigrant areas in 2005.)

American blacks in France, though, are a category unto themselves.

"In many ways, African-Americans came to France as a sort of privileged minority, a kind of model minority, if you will _ a group that benefited not only from French fascination with blackness, but a French fascination about Americanness," said Tyler Stovall, a history professor of the University of California, Berkeley. "Jazz comes to France at roughly the same time as Hollywood movies _ both are embraced enthusiastically."

Baker, who dazzled Paris audiences with her skimpy outfits and banana skirts, gets high billing in this tour. But so do jazz greats like Sidney Bechet, a longtime Paris resident, and the all-black 369th Regiment of World War I best known as the Harlem Hellfighters.

Paris tours about black history have come and gone, but Stevenson's has unusual lasting power, and is now in its ninth year.

This is informal, personal-touch tourism: Don't look for a heated tour bus or lunch included. Like everyday Parisians, you get around by Metro or — better for sightseeing — public bus. Forget the Louvre or the Eiffel Tower.

Ski resorts enjoy best conditions in several years

BY ROBERT WELLER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Santa brought just what the nation's ski resorts wanted — the best nationwide snow conditions in several years. From New England to California, the snow dumped in the days and weeks before Christmas. Even Taos, N.M. in the desert southwest, had a 60-inch base.

"This is our best opening since 1977," said Adriana Blake, marketing director for Taos. The resort couldn't open for Thanksgiving, but later got 68 inches in a week. "This is crazy. It never snows like this."

In November, with a few exceptions, some of the most popular resorts in the Rockies and California delayed their openings because of a lack of snow. Most only offered limited terrain because of an unusually balmy and dry fall that produced disastrous wildfires.

Then the jet stream moved south and the snow began to fall, and fall, and fall. Wolf Creek, Colo., which usually has the deepest base in the state, has suffered for the last two years. It debuted late last month with less than 10 inches. A week before Christmas it had 115 inches.

"It is spectacular. For the first time in recent time in recent history the industry is up and operating across the country. We looking for record Christmas attendance," said Michael Berry, president of the National Ski Areas Association.

Sugarbush is close to being 100 percent booked for Christmas, a record for the Vermont resort. It expects to have 100 percent terrain open for Christmas, said J.J. Toland, communications director. Also in Vermont, Mad River Glen, which relies mostly on natural snow, reported 100 percent open.

New England struggled last year. The Vermont Ski Areas Association said 59 percent of Vermont's 1,242 trails were open as of Dec. 10, compared with 14 percent at the same time last year.

The snow has been good from the start at Whistler-Blackcomb, British Columbia, the busiest resort in North America. "This season we have had cumulative snowfall of over 11 feet and we are forecast to have close to three feet more fall by Christmas," said Michelle Leroux, spokeswoman for Whistler.

"All of us are thankful that the snow will be here for Christmas. The skiers take note of that. If one region suffers the skies take note of that and tend to generalize that there is no snow," said Connie Marshall, spokeswoman for Alta, Utah's legendary powder palace.

Mammoth's 14-inch base had grown to 45. Squaw Valley, near Lake Tahoe, went from 5 inches to 40.

"It looks like this could be a pretty good white Christmas. It's just one storm after another," said Kyle Mozley, a Reno, Nev., National Weather Service meteorologist.

Underneath that snow at Vail, Colo., the nation's busiest resort, is $1 billion in improvements in lodging, retail facilities and other amenities like ice-skating. "All the streets feel like plazas. East Meadow Drive is so much more inviting _ and with the new restaurants and shops, it feels like our own 'Little Italy,"' said Beth Slifer, chairwoman of Vail's Local Marketing District Advisory Council.

"With our European street concept we've developed a look, a feel and a product that will last 100 years and that encourages shopping, dining and lingering during any season," said her husband, Rod, Vail's mayor.

Aspen's Snowmass resort has added a $17 million, 25,000-square foot children's center, called the Treehouse Kid's Adventure Center.

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Obituaries

MARGARET C. BONACHEA
Bonachea, Margaret C. Passed away on December 5, 2007 at the age of 92. Beloved mother, grandmother, and aunt. Services will be held on Tuesday December 11, 2007 at 10 A.M. Spalding Mortuary (323) 934-1181 may be contacted for further info.

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The bids must be submitted at the Cashier's Office, located on the Mezzanine level, 900 South Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, California 91803-1331, before 11 a.m. on Tuesday, January 22, 2008. The bids will then be publicly opened and read in Conference Room A or at the location posted in the main lobby.

The work shall be done in accordance with the Plans and Specifications on file and open for inspection at the County Board of Supervisors Executive Office and the Department of Public Works. The work is estimated to cost between $2,100,000 and $2,400,000 and shall be completed over a period of one year. The work requires a California Class A or C-10 contractor's license. Prebid questions regarding the Plans and Specifications should be directed to Mr. Harry Cong at (626) 458-3111.

A mandatory prebid meeting for this Contract will be held on Monday, January 14, 2008, at 10 a.m., in the Small Dining Room of the Headquarters Building, 900 South Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, California 91803-1331, Thomas Guide page 595, H-6. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory for award of the contract.

The bids must be submitted on the proposal forms included in the bidder's package of the contract documents, which may be purchased for $14, if picked up at the aforementioned Cashier's Office, (626) 458-6959, Monday through Thursday between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., or for $17, if mailed, which includes postage and handling.

Each bid must be accompanied by a certified check, cashier's check, or surety bond payable to the County of Los Angeles in an amount equal to at least 10 percent of the bid to guarantee that the bidder will enter into the contract if it is so awarded.

All persons performing the work shall be paid not less than the General Prevailing Wage Determination prepared by the Director of Industrial Relations pursuant to the California Labor Code. Copies of these wage rates are available at the Department of Public Works.

The bid must provide full disclosure of False Claims Act violations, labor law/payroll violations, debarments, and civil/criminal legal actions as provided for on the forms included as part of the proposal. Failure to complete these forms may result in a determination that the bidder is nonresponsive and/or not responsible.

The contract, if awarded, will be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder; however, the Board of Supervisors reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

A responsible bidder is a bidder who has demonstrated the attribute of trustworthiness, as well as quality, fitness, capacity, and experience to satisfactorily perform the contract. It is the County's policy to conduct business only with responsible contractors.

The successful bidder will be required to fully comply with all applicable State and Federal reporting requirements relating to employment reporting for its employees and comply with all lawfully served Wage and Earnings Assignment Orders and Notice of Assignment and continue to maintain compliance throughout the duration of the contract. Failure to comply may be cause for

Notices

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The successful bidder will be required to submit a faithful performance bond, payment bond, liability insurance, and workers' compensation insurance with the Contract.

As provided for in Section 22300 of the California Public Contract Code, the contractor may substitute securities for any monies withheld by the Department of Public Works to ensure performance under the contract, or enter into an escrow agreement for payment of such monies to an escrow agent.

Each person by submitting a response to this Notice Inviting Bids certifies that such bidder and each County lobbyist and County lobbying firm, as defined by Los Angeles County Code Section 2.160.010, retained by the bidder, is in full compliance with Chapter 2.160 of the Los Angeles County Code.

Para mas informacion con relacion a esta noticia, por favor llame a este numero (626) 458-3118. Nuestras horas de oficina son de 7 a.m. a 5:30 p.m. de Lunes a Jueves.

The County supports and encourages equal opportunity contracting.

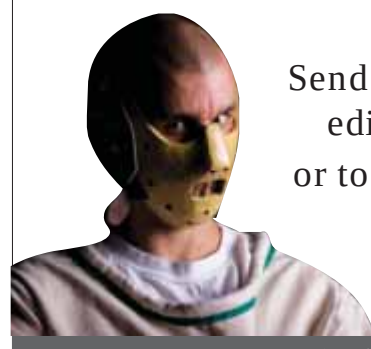
By order of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, State of California.

Dated December 18, 2007.

Sachi A. Hamai
Executive Officer
of the Board of Supervisors
Santa Monica Daily Press
CN789048 01557 Dec 21,22,24,26,27,28,29,31, 2007, Jan 2,3, 2008

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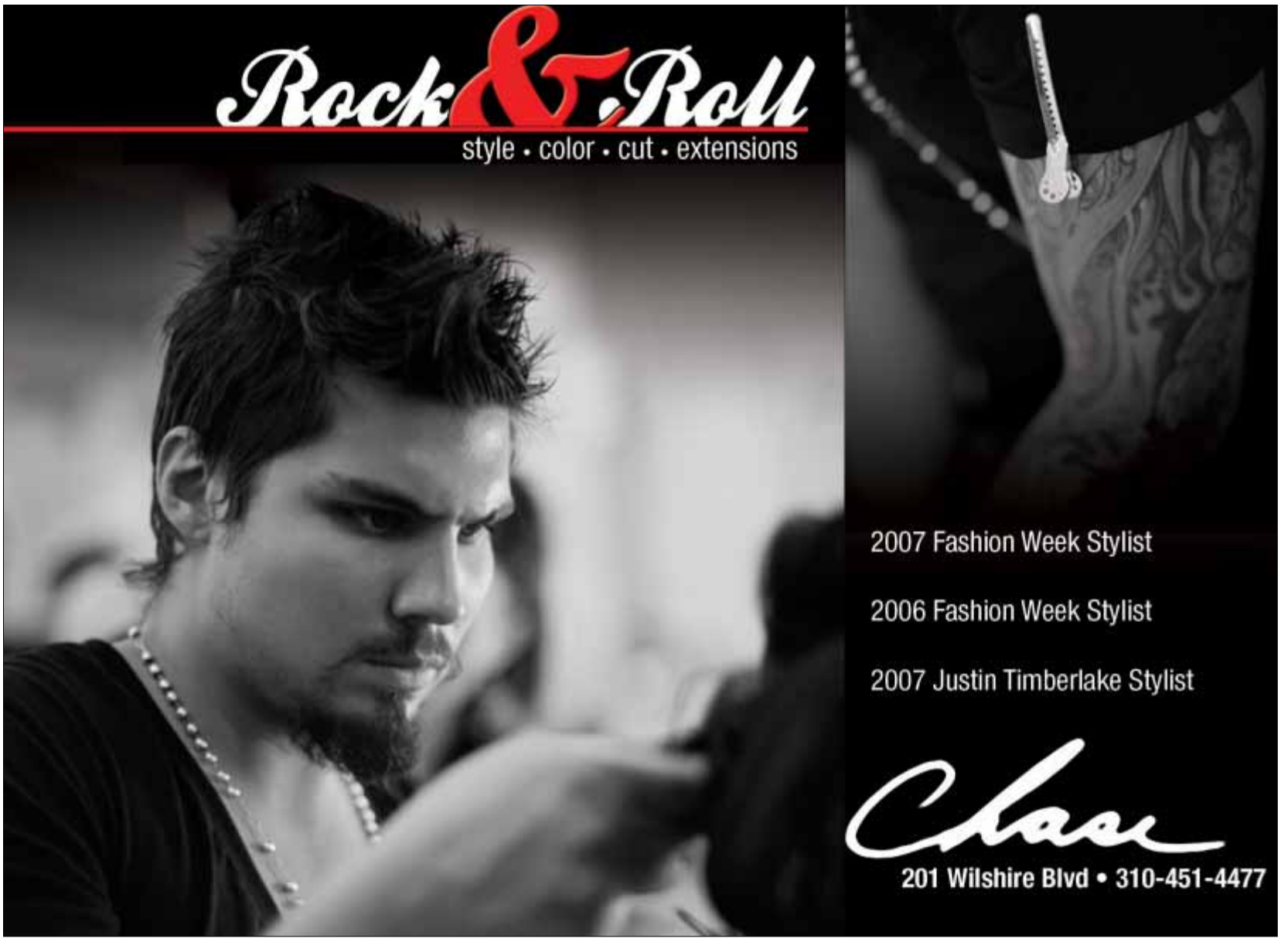
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- Bob

Average Price of Properties Listed for Sale As of Late December 2007

		Single Family Homes	Condos & Townhomes
Santa Monica Canyon	=	$ 2,663,286	No Listings
North of Montana	=	$ 4,142,182	$ 1,841,609
Between Wilshire & Montana	=	$ 2,123,500	$ 958,276
South of Wilshire	=	$ 1,049,800	$ 679,863
Sunset Park	=	$ 1,297,467	$ 683,385
Ocean Park	=	$ 2,043,188	$ 964,100

Statistics updated every Friday

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This is not intended as a solicitation if you currently have a broker. The information has been retrieved from the Multiple Listing Service. Some of these properties have been sold or listed with other Real Estate Agents.