

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

6 10 26 30 34
Meganumber: 26
Jackpot: \$40 Million

FANTASY 5

10 13 17 21 26

DAILY 3

Daytime: 9 2 2
Evening: 8 5 9

DAILY DERBY

1st: 01 Gold Rush
2nd: 04 Big Ben
3rd: 07 Eureka

RACE TIME: 1:43.18

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

According to a transcript obtained by the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle in September, convicted rapist John Horace, 60, was turned down by the New York Parole Board after offering a new excuse for his crime (which was committed against a nursing home resident in a near coma). Horace, then an aide at the home, said he had read in a medical book somewhere that the sensation of pregnancy would snap a woman out of a coma and that he was thus only trying to help.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1846, Iowa became the 29th state to be admitted to the Union.
In 1856, the 28th president of the United States, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, was born in Staunton, Va.
In 1897, the play "Cyrano de Bergerac," by Edmond Rostand, premiered in Paris.
In 1917, the New York Evening Mail published a facetious — as well as fictitious — essay by H.L. Mencken on the history of bathtubs in America.
In 1937, composer Maurice Ravel died in Paris.
In 1944, the musical "On the Town" opened on Broadway.
In 1973, Alexander Solzhenitsyn published "Gulag Archipelago," an expose of the Soviet prison system.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The masses gladly take revenge for the honors they render us."

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE (1769-1821)

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Battle over gas station fueled by landmark status

Stripped of its historic pumps, Canyon Service is in escrow to be sold

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

SM CANYON — Fences have gone up around an 80-year-old service station here, but the fight isn't nearly finished between preservationists and some residents.

A last-ditch effort to have Canyon Service landmarked as an historic site has stalled the sale of the nearly 17,000-square-foot property to a nearby homeowner



File photo

Santa Monica Canyon Service dried up earlier this year after the gas station's owner was forced to close as a result of a lawsuit levied by neighbors.

who wants to dismantle the old station and donate it to an automotive museum.

Escrow in that sale has been put on hold while the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission reviews the site at 507 Entrada Dr. for landmarking. Commissioners visited the station earlier this month and were expected to make a decision early in 2005.

The sale pits former station operator Brian Clark against residents who live near the station and have complained it's out of place in the well-heeled Santa Monica Canyon. Clark hopes to landmark the station and continue running it.

If that doesn't happen, neighbor Christopher Hoffman will complete his purchase of the property, move the gas station building to a museum and possibly raze an historic two-story bungalow also on the site, Clark claimed. Hoffman couldn't be reached for comment, and broker Patt Frank declined to comment on future plans for the site or the pending sale of the property, which was last listed for \$2.3 million.

Canyon Service is owned by descendants of Francisco Marquez, who, with Ysidro Reyes, was granted the 6,600-plus-acre Rancho Boca de Santa Monica by the Mexican government in 1838. Sale of the property is believed to be part of settling the estate of Angelina Marquez Olivera, who died in 2002.

It's not just Clark who hopes to preserve the old station. The proposal was put forward by the

After disaster, Asia mulls early warning system

BY MIRANDA LEITSINGER

Associated Press Writer

BANGKOK, Thailand — The extraordinary loss of life from Sunday's earthquake and tsunami waves has prompted Asian governments to consider developing a more comprehensive and effective warning system so that more lives can be saved in future natural disasters.

Scientists nearest the quake's epicenter knew shockwaves could create tidal surges that would threaten coastal regions and shipping, but said Monday they had no way of measuring the size of the danger because a warning network like the one used in the Pacific is not installed in countries lying on the Indian Ocean.

The technology could have

saved countless lives in this week's disaster by giving residents in coastal areas — especially in Sri Lanka and India, the hardest-hit nations hundreds of miles from the quake site — time to flee to higher ground.

Officials in Thailand issued the only warnings of Sunday's impending carnage — but the radio broadcasts beamed to tourist

resorts in the country's south vastly underestimated the threat and a Web site caution was posted three hours after the first waves hit.

Residents in Sri Lanka — where thousands were swept away or drowned — expressed disbelief that a warning system was in place elsewhere in the world but not in the Indian Ocean region.

See **TSUNAMI**, page 11

On the third day of Christmas ...



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Some Santa Monicans were quick to ditch their Christmas trees before the New Year, as evidenced by this pile of trees being hauled off by city worker Michael Morrissey on Monday at Reed Park.

By Daily Press staff

It's that time of year again.

Old Christmas trees can be left at several parks in Santa Monica through January. Residents can discard their trees at Clover Park, Douglas Park, Christine Emerson Reed Park or Los Amigos Park, as well as the city of Santa Monica's transfer station at 2401 Delaware Ave.

All of the trees will be recycled.

The 12 days of Christmas are probably the most misunderstood part of the church year, according to The Voice Christian Resource Institute. Contrary to popular belief, these are not the 12 days before Christmas, but the 12 days from Christmas until the beginning of Epiphany on Jan. 6. However, rarely does anyone keep their Christmas trees that long.

Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association, and was supported by Los Angeles City Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski, the Palisades Historical Society, the Palisades Community Council, the Society for Commercial Archeology and the Route 66 Association. If the Cultural Heritage Commission decides to support landmarking, the matter will go before the Los Angeles City Council.

While both sides wait for a decision on the landmark status, the fenced-off station has been stripped of its vintage orange-and-white gas pumps, its old Coca-Cola vending machine and its neon signs, all of which belong to Clark and are being held in storage.

About 700 gallons of high-octane gas still sit in the old tanks underground, Clark said.

See **CANYON SERVICE**, page 6



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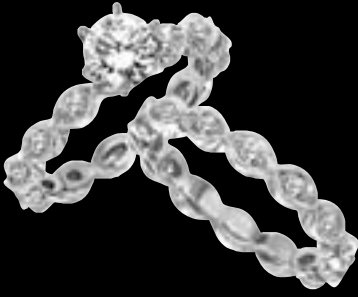
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Don't hold back, Cap

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)
★★★★★ You might be slow to get going, but once you do, you are unstoppable. Impulsiveness stimulates your creativity. Reach out for experts. Others appreciate your efforts. Brainstorm and be open to other ideas. Add a touch of fun and laughter. Tonight: Do only what you consider fun.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Use the morning to call others and for key meetings. You might be overly serious. In the afternoon, you will want to work on and complete a project. Deal with individuals, not groups. Praise comes your way. Tonight: Cuddle at home.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Others have a lot to share. Someone might be quite shy or reticent to express his or her feelings. Help this person open up. You have a way of putting people at ease. Muzzle yourself and be less chatty; others need time to express themselves. Tonight: Follow the music.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ You could be stiff or overly serious as you start your day. Through concentrating on work, you'll loosen up. Co-workers certainly want to chat rather than work. Take a financial matter seriously. Tonight: Pay bills or at least organize them.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ You might choose to keep certain thoughts private. By the afternoon, the Moon enters your sign, cheering you on. Ask yourself what you might enjoy. Be impulsive but direct, especially if you are in an artistic profession and/or with your sweetie. Tonight: Your wish is another's pleasure.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Slow down this afternoon. You might need and/or want some time alone. Deal with a personal matter or a real estate investment carefully. Discussions with close associates finally bring agreement. Tonight: Snuggle in.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Work and responsibilities weigh on you this morning. By the afternoon, you buzz around. Make calls, get busy and reach out to others. A friendship will open up if you give this person time. Express yourself. Tonight: Happy with others.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Do research in the morning, even if you don't feel like it. You take a stand through your words and/or actions. You make a financial move quickly. Enjoy what is happening between you and someone you admire. Tonight: In the limelight.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ You have a lot to say and share. You could find an associate a bit austere. Detach and walk in this person's shoes. You'll gain a deeper understanding. Look to a different type of solution or plan. Take action ASAP. Tonight: Flip through some travel brochures.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ It becomes apparent that you need to deal with individuals rather than groups. Certainly an important discussion needs to happen on a one-on-one level, in a very private spot where you won't be disturbed. Tonight: Don't hold back. Be vulnerable.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Complete as much work as you can in the a.m. You enter a very social period where you network and socialize. Don't hesitate to grab what you want. Friends contribute to your sense of direction. Tonight: Accept an invitation.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ You can only be so playful for so long. You need to buckle down and get a project or some work done. You find that a boss is very helpful and full of suggestions. Be the follower and not the leader. You will gain. Tonight: Work late.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SM Red Cross needs help with tsunami disaster

By Daily Press staff

The Red Cross has begun a massive relief effort in response to the devastating tsunamis that occurred as a result of the 9.0 earthquake off the coast of Sumatra. Due to the overwhelming damage and loss of life, the Red Cross will be unable to give information on the welfare of those living or visiting the affected areas for at least 48 hours. The Red Cross is in urgent need of financial donations to support its efforts. The Red Cross is not accepting in-kind donations, such as clothing and food due to the expense and logistical challenges of delivering the items. If you would like to make a donation, send a check to the Santa Monica Red Cross with a note stating that you would like your contribution to support the Red Cross tsunami relief efforts. For more information, contact Tom Viscount at (310) 394-3773.

The caroling company sings at St. Joseph Center

By Daily Press staff

Local girl and boy scouts last week prepared a memorable Christmas for many low-income individuals. Volunteers from Pacific Palisades Girl Scout Troop 729, Westchester Boy Scout Troop 927, and The Caroling Company were on hand at St. Joseph Center's annual Family Center holiday party Dec. 21, providing songs, gifts and games for low-income men, women and children in need. This is the 24th season for The Caroling Company, singing for the less fortunate, as well as on Los Angeles radio stations, including K-Earth, KLAC, and Coast 103. "We love to use our professional talents for the entire community during the holiday season," said Diane Burt, the company's director. "We look forward to it all year long." The Girl Scouts brought 16 dozen Christmas cookies, and made bracelets for the children and frames for the family photos taken with Santa Claus. "They are an inspiration to all of us," says Leticia Garcia-Greenman, director of family services at St. Joseph Center. "It's organizations like these that help to bring joy and the holiday spirit to the center." St. Joseph Center has 11 programs on eight sites in Venice, Santa Monica, and West Los Angeles, providing case management, childcare, job training, and senior services to more than 7,000 homeless and low-income individuals and families so that they can achieve self-sufficiency.



Photo courtesy of St. Joseph's Center
(Left to right) Rich Brunner, Carmen Rupe, Leslie Soutanian, Dennis Rupp, Lisa Temple, Nick D'Amico, Breta LaVon, Garrick LaVon, Diane Burt, Danny Faragher, and John Revheim sing Christmas Carols at St. Joseph Center Holiday Party.



Jay Heiserman is this week's mystery photo winner. He accurately described where this photo of a shaker-style chair is located. It's suspended upside down from the ceiling of a condo on Pacific Street. Heiserman has received a gift certificate to Over Under Sports Bar and Grill. Check out Monday's edition for the next mystery photo contest.



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SURF REPORT

On Tuesday a mix of short-period SSE-SW wind swell and intermediate-period WNW (270-290) ground swell puts most Northern LA beaches in sloppy waist-plus waves. Top combo breaks in the north end of the South Bay hit shoulder plus. More SW wind swell fills in on Wednesday. Winds will be 10-20kts S/SE for most of Tuesday and it will be raining. Winds turn SSW Wednesday.

Today the water is:

59°

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

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	1:26	2.4	3:10	-0.7	7:44	6.1	9:49	3.6
SUNDAY	1:57	2.5	3:43	-0.7	7:44	6.1	9:49	3.6
MONDAY	2:29	2.6	4:16	-0.6	8:46	6.0	11:00	3.5
TUESDAY	3:01	2.6	4:50	-0.5	9:18	5.9	11:38	3.5
WEDNESDAY	3:36	2.7	5:24	-0.3	9:51	5.6	N/A	N/A
THURSDAY	4:17	2.8	5:58	0.0	12:18	3.6	(10:25	5.3)
FRIDAY	5:08	2.9	6:34	0.3	1:00	3.6	(11:03	4.9)

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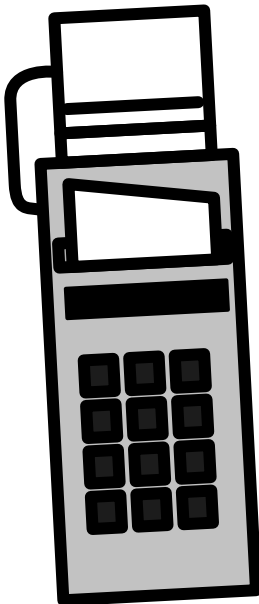
The Q Line

With Christmas behind us, it's time to gear up for a new year. Many of us have New Year's resolutions, but how many of them do we really stick to? That goes double for city politicians who have prioritized what they think are the most important issues facing Santa Monica in 2005.

This week, Q-Line wants to know,

"What should your elected leaders' New Year's resolutions be for 2005?"

Call (310) 285-8106 before Thursday before 5 p.m. and we'll print your response in the weekend edition. Please limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Elderly drivers aren't the problem, the Press is

Editor:

I was embarrassed for the Santa Monica Daily Press to see the low reasoning power shown by the editor in her rush to connect the recent occurrences at Fisher Lumber with the tragic occurrences at the downtown Farmers' Market and, through that to the alleged dangers of older drivers and drivers with disabilities (SMDP, Dec. 22, page 1).

What you never clarify is that the man who caused the accident was not the driver of the pick-up truck but the passenger. He had not driven himself on public streets to arrive at the lumber company, but had been driven there by a young man who left him in the passenger seat while he went into the store to shop. He was therefore not a driver and therefore the public could not be protected from him by retesting of elderly drivers. How could the public be protected from someone who decides to try to drive the car from the passenger seat absent the licensed driver?

Further the editor, who wrote the story, states that this "driver" got the gas and the brake pedals mixed up, thus again neatly connecting this incident to the Farmer's Market tragedy and the general unreliability of older drivers early in the story, without mentioning that all the "driving" was being done from the wrong seat and the sheer physical difficulty of doing such a difficult maneuver with your legs and arms could fully explain the accident without the implication of senility. And, by the way, who told her that he had gotten the brakes and gas peddle (sic) mixed up?

Building on her story line, which had little to do with the later revealed facts, she quotes an onlooker to the effect that no one using a walker should be allowed to drive. Note that the driver at the Farmer's Market did not use a walker. What should not be allowed to happen is that passengers not lean over and try to drive a car. But exactly how do you prevent that rare a deed?

The way that the story is written, if carried forward logically to more stringent regulation, one would conclude that there should be a law against leaving elderly passengers in an illegally parked car lest they try to drive the car from the passenger seat. What a weird looking law that would make.

As to the quote from the bystander about not allowing people with walkers from driving, a guide to quotes is usually that the person you are quoting has some credibility on the topic you are dealing with, in this case disabilities and driving. Instead the editor clearly chose this quote to buttress the fear-mongering argument that she is promoting of the killer old. Of course, people who cannot control their legs, whether young or old, should not drive cars that are not specially equipped. But, again, the painfully constructed connection between this accident and the Farmers' Market one does not hold, nor does the connection of this accident with controlling elderly licensed drivers hold, since this man was not even the driver and would not have been prevented from what he did, no matter how many tests of elderly drivers were introduced, particularly since the Oklahoma plates on the car suggests that no California driving testing would affect this person.

What scares me is that sloppy stories like this one are building a witch hunt atmosphere against drivers with gray hair or even those with a wheelchair symbol on their license plate, generating fear and resentment and an assumption that any accident is their fault. The fear and contempt of the old and disabled, increasingly prevalent in a society fixed on youth and bodily perfection, needs no added fear mongering from you.

My experience with disabilities has been great. I have driven with a very famous disabled woman who could only move one arm back and forth and sideways when Velcroed in position, yet she drove her own specially equipped van. I've seen a cerebral palsied woman who was so uncoordinated when she moved and walked, yet when she sat down in her Jag sports car became as smooth and snappy a driver as one can imagine. I've seen a tiny dwarf step into his expensive sports car and whip away.

I myself have been driving specially equipped vehicles of many sizes and shapes since my first year in college in 1952 with an outstanding safety record. The last accident that I had was when a semi headed straight at me forced me off a narrow Baja road and onto an average sized boulder without injury to me or my two young sons. That was about 1980. I regularly did the driving to find lonely beaches on which to camp. The car was a 4WD Toyota Land Cruiser station wagon.

Now I drive a lift equipped van with more sophisticated, power-operated controls that allows me to drive from my power wheelchair. The only difference in my driving as I age is that I am even more cautious and never in a rush.

What I dread, though, are people like you who will create a loathsome stereotype of people like me, with gray hair and a physical disability, that can result in horrendous problems for me from being blamed and attacked for something that I did not do to being eaten alive by stupid bureaucrats at the DMV simply covering their asses with armor plating in the name of a misinformed public. Truth is that people with physical disabilities are safer drivers. Truth is that I had the body of an 80-year-old when I was 2-years-old, thanks to polio, so, in a way, I have been driving as an old person for decades. I've had lots of practice at it. As with other disabled folks, I look at it as a practical problem of providing for my physical needs while others without disabilities are terrified.

Please try to hold your inner terror of aging and disability down to a quiet roar in your future reporting and deal more logically with the facts. Remember, if you are lucky enough to live a long life you will be unlucky enough to be old and have to live with disabilities. So don't recklessly feed the fear. Otherwise you may end up a victim yourself. Don't rearrange and stretch the facts and the connections to fit your inner fears.

See LETTERS, page 5

One man's trash is another's money maker



WHAT'S THE POINT?

BY DAVID PISARRA

American consumerism is at an all time high, thanks to the efforts of every major retailer who tells us we just can't live without the latest gadgets and googaws. Things like the electric hot chocolate maker, and the Coleman BBQ Caddy Radio, which allows one to carry the mayo and listen to the shrill rantings of Dr. Laura Hypocrite at the same time, are clogging the lifestyles of America today.

This mad rush to acquire more, hold on to everything and buy an electric tool to do what grandma used to do with her hands, is creating a fat, bloated, lazy, physically weak society that is scared out of its wits that they might lose out on something that will change their world and finally make them happy.

We have been beaten over the head with a message of fear and potential loss for so long that we are now incapable of letting go of our useless junk and instead, we store it.

My partner and I have just moved. I carried with me boxes of old letters, my Freshmen Greek manual and other junk. There are other boxes of stuff I have moved from West LA to Burbank, to Venice, to Santa Monica, and now to Topanga, and yet I haven't used them once in the last 15 years.

I have an old china cabinet from my mother. It doesn't even vaguely fit in with the style I like, yet I am having a hard time deciding what to do with it. I don't want to store it, yet I don't want to use it in my house.

Why do we have such an easy time collecting things and such a hard time letting go of the past? Is it this vain idea that someday I might be famous and my "papers" will be good fodder for a retrospective?

What is the source of our societal passion for hoarding?

I think it comes from two places. One, our desire to keep up with the neighbors. If they have something, we want one just like it, but a little better. It is this constant competition that allows marketers to introduce new products every year with the ever popular "new and improved" moniker that is so cherished, particularly for soap. Seriously, does soap ever get improved?

The second source is the sense of fear that we are fed on a daily basis. Not just of the Al Qaeda variety, but the fear that we might need something and not have it. We get this message from our parents, from our Boy Scout leaders, and from the media. My parents grew up in the depression and my mother instilled me a sense of, "better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it." Which probably

applies more to extra food supplies than that old wooden monkey head dad got in the Philippines during the war.

Reporters are always warning us about some dire emergency right around the corner, and asking us if we are prepared for the next firestorm, winter storm, earthquake, hurricane, tornado or depression. It is this sense of impending doom that keeps us always wanting to hold tighter to the past.

All this fear mongering results in a tremendous business opportunity. There is a staggering amount of money to be made in the storage business. There are several companies that do nothing but take investors' money to build these boxes of boxes for storing boxes, and they make money hand over fist. They buy a piece of low-cost land, like under a freeway, where no one wants to build housing, office space or retail. They then build a cement block square building of rabbit warrens. This is the cheapest development because all they have to run is electricity and enough plumbing for a fire sprinkler system. There's none of that expensive sewage and gas plumbing to do, no windows, and only interior walls and doors.

In the storage industry, people are paying \$100 a month for a five foot by five foot, cement block closet, to store their old wrestling shoes and ballet slippers, or their latest E-Bay treasures. I know of people who have two or three of these storage units filled to the brim with old trinkets. That means that a storage unit is generating \$4 per square foot in monthly rent. In comparison, some of the highest office space on the Third Street Promenade is going for \$2.65 a square foot.

The storage companies have actually found a way to make even more money by using warehouses in outlying areas, and having you fill a pallet sized tower of trash that they then store in an even more compact way, at a cheaper facility, but they still charge you a lot of money for it. At first it looks like a great idea to just get a little extra storage but frankly, if you can put it away for a year and not need it, chances are you don't need it all and should just throw it out.

Is there anything you are storing for a year that costs what you are paying to store? If you pay \$100 a month for a year you've spent \$1,200. If you threw out all that is your storage unit, and then in the future had to replace something you've disposed of, what would it cost to replace? If the answer is a few hundred dollars, you need to do a junk-ectomy and toss your trash.

And in a year when you decide that you really need that electric hot chocolate maker, go buy a new one. It's improved, you know.

(David Pizarra is a business development lawyer in the Santa Monica firm of Pizarra & Grist. He welcomes your questions and comments. He can be reached at dpizarra@pizarra.com or (310) 664-9969).

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.

COMMENTARY



All I wanted for Christmas was my suitcase back

ANY DAY IN LA

BY HEIDI MANTEUFFEL



Family and I gathered around the Christmas tree with eyes aglow as we eagerly unwrapped masterpieces in ribbon and Walgreen's paper.

Kristin seemed to like her shirt, movie and Mozartkugeln (don't ask), and mom her books and CD. Dad, well ... some of my favorite deliveries were a pug calendar, Christmas Tic-Tacs, and even an I Pod from dad. Yet, like a selfish child I longed for the one thing I did not receive — my Samsonite luggage.

Wearing my mother's pants, shirts, and well, you know, for the majority of the Christmas holiday, I would like to take this time and tell you the story of the missing luggage.

There are no illustrations as of yet, but if anyone is interested in providing them, go for it.

Dec. 23 I had taken a 6:40 a.m. flight that got me into Chicago at 3:40 p.m. — courtesy of the San Jose connection. Only with "mechanical errors," I was bumped to the 8 a.m., making for two minutes between landing and boarding in San Jose. With some concern over the quick change in planes, I asked the flight attendant if she thought my bag would have time to make the next flight.

"Don't worry," she assured me. "Bags move much faster than people." I relaxed and checked my pessimistic attitude with my carry-on. Too soon though.

The woman to my left admitted that this was her first time flying. My immediate future passed in front of me — four hours of this woman screaming and grip-

ping my arms with her French tip manicure.

My mollifying attitude kicked into high gear, and I assured her that airplanes are much safer than cars. I kept her in conversation until after we had breached the first section of turbulence. From then on it was smooth flying all the way to Chicago.

Like a child waiting for Santa, mom and I looked for my darling blue Samsonite with the light-yellow bandana at carousel No. 9. However, as the baggage claim monitor changed from San Jose to Phoenix, we knew Santa hadn't come that day.

We got in line with all the bad boys and girls, and filed a complaint for missing baggage.

The woman at the desk was dumbfounded. The records showed my bag had made it in at 4:20 p.m., yet there was no sign of it in sight. She did a 20-minute search, but resigned to asking for our phone number and street address and said we would receive it that night.

I didn't waiver in my belief of a Samsonite Christmas. Kris offered pants, clothes, toiletries, but I proudly said "no." I knew my bag would be there, just like Santa.

On Friday, as I awoke in my mom's pajamas, I still didn't lose hope. Christmas was tomorrow and what better gift to receive than your own underwear? I braved the day in ankle high corduroys, found some toothpaste from the '80s, and knew the luggage would come out tomorrow.

Christmas morning I ran down the stairs as I did as a child. Instead of half-eaten cookies, there was a note on the counter! Was it from Santa? No, it was from my parents, saying they went to O'Hare to pick up my luggage.

There were more than 2,000 pieces of luggage lost this year by the airline, making it their worst record ever. Sad to say

on Christmas my baggage was just a statistic, like a bad anti-drug commercial.

I eventually did get my luggage the day after Christmas, and not a fleece sock missing. I rushed to wrap my father's presents 10 p.m. that night in hopes I could do Christmas 2 with him the next morning.

Now that I have my suitcase, I'm almost glad that I lost it. It reaffirmed an ongoing life lesson I have been trying to teach myself, and apparently others are as

well: Don't focus on the one thing you don't have, focus on the many things that you do.

As the weary airline worker headed back to his van, I embraced my long lost luggage. The prodigal Samsonite had finally come home. I just wished he brought some pictures of his travels.

(To reach Heidi, e-mail her at anydayinla@gmail.com).

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS, from page 4

Yes, of course, there is a point where an old driver should no longer drive, but it should not be based upon a fearful stereotype of aging and it should not prompt a harassment of the older driver. All drivers should be tested equally, thoroughly and regularly. Arbitrary and discriminatory testing of the elderly and those with physical disabilities based upon fear rather than proven results will hurt the quality, independence, and productiveness of their lives with no increase in safety.

Bill Bolt
Santa Monica

(Editor's note: As Mr. Bolt points out, the man who caused the accident at Fisher Lumber was the passenger in the car, which was reported in the article. The article also points out that he became the driver once he decided to move the vehicle from the passenger seat. The Santa Monica Police Department requested that the Oklahoma Department of Motor Vehicles, where the man's driver's license is issued, re-test the individual who caused the accident. The accident report filed with the SMPD suggests that the man confused the gas pedal with the brake).



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CANYON SERVICE, from page 1

Even if the site is landmarked, it's unclear how it would be used. The station, which is located in a residentially zoned area, has operated for years with a conditional use permit. That permit expires when the property is sold, no matter to whom.

"Once ownership passes ... the only thing that will occur is you'll have a vacant station that people will drive by and that's all there will be," said attorney Ted Stolman, who for nearly a quarter

century has lived behind Canyon Service on Amalfi Court.

Stolman successfully stopped the station from running its car detailing service earlier this year, after arguing in a lawsuit the operation wasn't legally allowed. Stolman also fought against the station on the grounds that allowing detailing would set a precedent that could lead to other commercial developments in the canyon.

"If you allow (Clark) to get away with this type of action, then next week he'll open a 7-11 store and the next week he'll

open a liquor store," Stolman told the Daily Press in April. "A line needs to be drawn."

If the site is landmarked, plans have been floated to turn the historic two-story bungalow into a museum of early Californian history. The station, some hope, would continue to operate.

"The use is also part of the history," said canyon resident Mike Deasy, who filed the petition for landmark status on behalf of the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association.

Fellow canyon resident Frank Langen, a friend of Clark's and real estate agent

who focuses on properties in the Santa Monica Canyon, suggested the lot be split and the station be sold to Clark for \$1 million. The other portion of the property, which measures about 10,000 square feet, could then be used to build a new house, or neighbors could raise money to purchase it and keep it as park space.

"There are a lot of things that are more important than a silly gas station, but I think it's one of those things that, if it's torn down, we're all going to miss it," Langen said.

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STATE



Spiritual leader of Greek Orthodox church in seven states dies

BY TOM VERDIN
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — The spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox church in seven Western states has died after battling a rare form of cancer.

Metropolitan Anthony Gergiannakis died Saturday at the University of California, Davis Medical Center, where he was admitted in November for treatment of Burkitt's lymphoma, a malignancy of the lymph nodes. He was 69.

An exact cause of death is expected to be released later Monday, medical center spokeswoman Claudia Morain said.

Archbishop Demetrios, leader of America's Greek Orthodox Christians, issued a statement saying the San Francisco leader leaves "a precious legacy" that includes "a remarkably strong love for the people, a burning passion for Orthodoxy and a joy for multidimensional ministry."

Metropolitan Anthony was spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco. In that role, he presided over 70 Greek Orthodox parishes with 150,000 members in California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii.

Expanding the reach of the church through ministry, evangelizing and construction programs will be among his most lasting accomplishments, said the Rev. Theodore Dorrance, a Portland, Ore., pastor who is president of the organization that represents all clergy in the metropolis.

During the 25 years he led the Metropolis of San Francisco, Metropolitan Anthony oversaw the construction of three monasteries and about two dozen parishes and missions, as well as renovations to existing churches.

"It was God's providence that brought him out to the West, which has always been seen as a frontier," Dorrance said.

"He saw himself as a visionary and creative."

His vision was not just limited to the West. Remembered as a charismatic leader, Metropolitan Anthony also established programs to evangelize aboard, sending teams of missionaries or money to Africa, Romania, Albania and states of the former Soviet Union.

"He was a doer, very active," Dorrance said. "He was out there in the midst of his people — always traveling, very vivacious, outgoing."

He maintained a particular interest in youth programs. He started an annual folk dance, costume and music festival that has evolved into a competition involving thousands of children from throughout the western parishes.

He also began a multimillion-dollar scholarship program to fund seminarians and students from the metropolis to attend Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, Mass.

Born in 1935 in a village on the Greek island of Crete, he came to the United States after being ordained as a priest in 1960, earning a master's of divinity degree from Yale.

In 1974, he was appointed Dean of the St. George Cathedral in Montreal, where he remained until his elevation to the episcopacy in 1978. He also served the archdiocese of Denver before coming to San Francisco.

Metropolitan Anthony became bishop of the newly created Diocese of San Francisco in 1979 and in 1997 was elevated to metropolitan, an office that is similar to an archbishop.

Last summer, he announced plans to retire at the end of 2005 but was admitted to the medical center in November after complaining of fatigue. He had been undergoing chemotherapy.

A memorial service is scheduled for Wednesday at Ascension Cathedral in Oakland.

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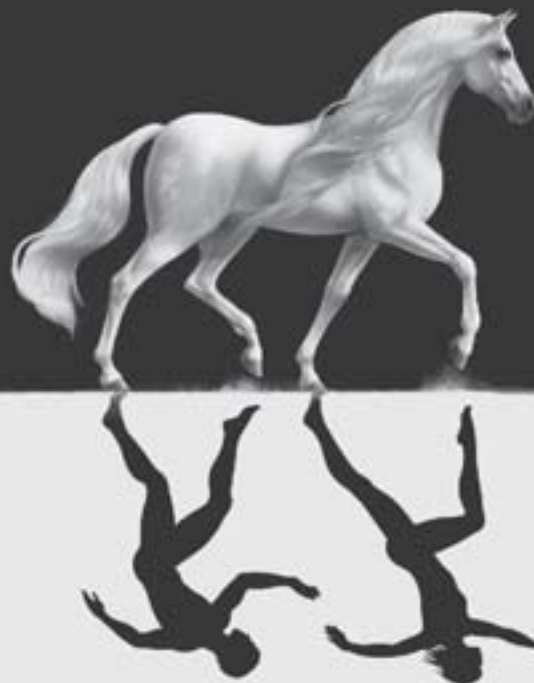
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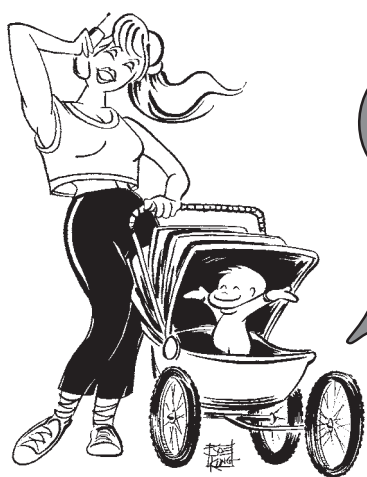
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Check Out the Question of the Week on Page 3 and let us hear what you have to say

The Q Line



Santa Monica

A weekly look at events and programs for



DEAR DORIE

How to ring in the new year with kids

Dear Dorie,

I have a preschooler and a first grader and I am wondering how to celebrate on New Year's Eve. We can afford a baby-sitter for the night but I'd like to do something special for the kids as well. Should I let them stay up until midnight?

— Eve with kids

Dear Parent,

Congratulations. You get an A in parenting for including the children in your plans for what is an especially adult holiday celebration. Well done.

You've got two categories of age appropriate celebration here — the preschooler who is not yet ready to understand the concepts of "eve" or "new year," and the school-age child who probably has some very keen ideas about what happens with the grown-ups at midnight on Dec. 31. This celebration is primarily for the latter. The preschooler should have her usual nighttime routine followed as much as possible (dinner, bath, pjs, books, etc.). Be sure to tell the young one that mommy and daddy are going out and will be back when she wakes up in the morning. That way if the midnight noise wakes her, the sitter's presence will make sense. Now for your first grader: Step one, book the sitter for a late start time, say 9 p.m. Step two, establish the hour for "new year's" for the children, say 8 p.m. If possible, invite two friends over to ring in the 8 p.m. new year with you. Step three, get some sparkling cider for a toast and some special finger foods for a buffet-type meal. Step four, get some pots and pans with wooden spoons ready for the children to "ring" in the new year at the given time. You're in charge of the countdown and very few first graders can tell time so you've got some flexibility here.

Now's the hard part, get yourself ready and try to stay clean while you celebrate with the children. Be creative and have fun. Afterward, put the preschooler to bed and let the baby-sitter handle your first grader. Then, pour yourself a cup of coffee or tea and enjoy a late evening with your spouse. Happy New Year!

(Dorie Meek is director of the Infant & Family Support Program, provided by Saint John's Health Center in partnership with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Meek answers questions concerning children ages birth to 5 years old. Submit your questions to "Dear Dorie" at meek@smmusd.org, or call (310) 452-6132; fax (310) 452-6392).

How to curb your pet's jealousy after the new arrival comes home

By Daily Press staff

You know that having a baby is going to change your life, but have you thought about how it will change life for the kitty-cat or beloved doggy you used to call you baby?

Bringing a new baby into the house is going to cause significant changes for any pet you may already have. Safety for your infant is the No. 1 concern, but there also are some steps you can follow to make sure your new addition isn't too traumatic for your beloved pets.

Prepare your pet before you bring the baby home. If you have a rambunctious dog or a cat that likes to jump and pounce, you may feel differently about them when you bring your newborn home. Behavior that seemed friendly and affectionate before may seem aggressive and territorial to you now that you have a baby.

If you think you will want to block off certain areas of the house to keep your pets and baby separated, do it before you bring your baby home. Your pet is less likely to associate restrictions with the baby if they are already in place.

If you have a cat that likes to jump, area specific barriers such as gates may not be effective. Instead, consider protective netting and screens over areas you want

your kitty to avoid — like the baby's crib, stroller or bouncy seat.

Even if your dog is well behaved, you may want to consider a refresher obedience course. You'll feel better bringing your baby home if you know your dog obeys basic commands. Again, take your dog to school before you bring your baby home.

The first few days (or weeks or months) after you bring your baby home may be hectic. As much as possible, try to keep your animals' routines in place. Take your dog for walks at the regular times. This is a great time to take the baby out in the stroller and get a little outdoor time for you.

Most importantly, accept that your feelings towards your pet may change now that you have a baby. Your dog's friendly bark when you enter the room may seem like one more deterrent to getting the baby to sleep. Your kitty's friendly habit of walking on your face in the morning may seem threatening if you have the baby in your arms. Your defensive reactions are normal, but don't let them get out of hand. If your pets are well trained, they should adjust to the baby without too much trouble, especially if you continue to spend some quality time with them each day. If your pets are not trained, consider obedience school before the baby arrives.

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SANTA MONICA COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES – REGISTER NOW!
Registration began Dec. 9 for the winter session that begins the second week of January. Classes for kids include Parent/Me with infants and toddlers, dance, gymnastics, sports and more. Visit www.RecEnroll.smgov.net or call 458-2239 for more info.

WE ARE RUNNING OUR REGULAR WEEKLY CALENDAR WITH SOME HOLIDAY CHANGES NOTED, HOWEVER YOU MAY WANT TO CALL TO CONFIRM THIS WEEK.

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms! “Phantom of the Opera” starring Girard Butler, Emmy Rossum and Patrick Wilson. Musical/Drama, Romance; Rated “PG-13.” 11:00 a.m., Loews Broadway, 1441 3rd St. Promenade – for Moms and babies newborn – 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. Visit www.enjoytheshow.com/reelmoms for details.

Storytelling
Main Library – held at Reed Park, corner of 7th and Wilshire.
Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m. For 2 year olds with adult. (not Dec. 21 & 28)
Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5. (not Dec. 21 & 28)
Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.
Cuentos Para Pequenos – 10:00 a.m., six-week series in Spanish for 24 – 36 month olds with adult. Next session Jan. 4 – Feb.8.
Lap Time – 11:00 a.m, six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the

SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Programs. Next session Jan. 4 – Feb.8.
Twilight Story Time -7pm – an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.
Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.
Family Story Time – 7:00 p.m., all ages.
Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.
Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30. Music, rhymes and stories for 24-36 month olds.
Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis
For ages infant to 3. 11:00 a.m. 116 North Robertson, Plaza A, LA. 310-358-2500, www.storyopolis.com
Barnes and Noble at the Grove
Storytime for ages 2 – 6. 10:00 a.m. 189 Grove Drive, LA, 323-525-0270

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.; Infant & Me, Transitional Group (7 – 14 mos.) – 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.; Infant & Me (0-12 mos.) – 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.; classes in partnership with the Infant and Family Support Program. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA
10:00 – 11:00 a.m and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Thursday nights 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.
Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.
Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711. Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)
Itsy Bitsy Yoga – Tots (crawling to 24 months) – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. (Register now for new session beginning Jan. 4.) Baby (6 weeks to pre-crawling) – 11:30 – 12:30 a.m. With Khefri Riley at Ocean Oasis, 1333 Ocean Ave. Register at www.khefri.net or call 323-549-5383.
Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free,

\$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Storytelling

The Talking Stick Coffee Lounge – 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., 450-6052
10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4 at this neighborhood coffee shop.
Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.
Preschool Story Time – 10:30 a.m.; six-week series for 3-5 year olds with adult. Next session Jan. 5 – Feb. 9.
Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.
****New Time - Lap Time –** 10:15 & 11:15 a.m., ages 0-2. Next session Jan. 5 – Feb. 9.
Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. –392-3804.
Preschool Twilight Story Time – 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Parents/children ages 3-5.
Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 2 pm – ages 2-5 – 310-475-4144
Border’s, Westwood – 11am – 310-475-3444.

Classes

Rhythm Child Parent & Me Rhythms, Santa Monica Studios, 3025 Olympic Blvd., 9:30 – 10:15 a.m. Children explore rhythms through drum play. Ages 6 mos. – 3.5 years; \$15 per session. Call 204-5466 or visit www.rhythm-child.net for more info.
YWCA – A Place for Parents – Parent Support (3 – 5 years) – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.; Infant Plus (0-12 mos.) – 10:30 a.m. – noon; Parents of Adolescents Support Group – 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15
Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Step Aerobics, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay \$90 for 10 classes.
Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774, no pre-reg required, first class free,

\$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Other

Puppetolio – 1:00 p.m., 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

THURSDAY

Babystyle, 1324 Montana Avenue, 434-9590 10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4.
Main Library – held at Reed Park, corner of 7th and Wilshire.
Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m.; for 2 year olds with adult. (not Dec. 23 & 30)
Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5. (not Dec. 23 & 30)
Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.
Toddler Story Time – 10:30 a.m; for ages 2 –3. Next session begins Jan. 6.
La Hora Del Cuento – 7:00 p.m. Spanish stories, songs and rhymes for all ages.
Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.
Toddler Story Time – 10:15 a.m., for 2 year olds. Next session begins Jan. 6.
Preschool Story Time – 11:15 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds.
Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.
Lap Time – 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., 6-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Program. Next session begins Jan. 6.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.; classes in partnership with the Infant and Family Support Program.
Parent Support (3 – 5 years) – 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA
7:30 – 8:30 p.m.; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.
Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 4-8 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

FRIDAY – NEW YEAR’S EVE – CALL FOR POSSIBLE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE CHANGES
La Leche League of LA/Mar Vista – meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Call 310-390-2529 for info.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:20 – 10:20 a.m.; Parent Support (1-3 years) – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.
Mommy and Me Dance – celebrate the wonderful world of imagination Fridays at the Electric Lodge. 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. ages 14 - 24 months; 10:45 – 11:45 a.m. ages 2 – 4. 6 classes for \$75 or \$14 per class. First class free! 1416 Electric Ave, Venice, 306-1854.

Yoga & Exercise

Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Indoor Cycling, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay \$90 for 10 classes.
Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45 p.m., \$15.
Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

Baby Attuned - Fridays, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., A new program promoting sensitive parenting and developmental awareness. Learn about and keep a record of your baby’s unique development, ages 3 to 60 months. Parent-completed developmental screening, with review and feedback from a licensed clinical developmental psychologist and experienced pediatric nurse practitioner, Eileen Escarce, PhD, MSN. (PSY 18819). Introductory fee: \$15 per screening with feedback. 1137 2nd Ave, Suite 213. By appointment only 310-367-1155.

SATURDAY – HAPPY NEW YEAR!

May the coming year bring all the best to you and yours!

SUNDAY – CALL FOR POSSIBLE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE CHANGES

Main Street Farmer’s Market – 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., corner of Main St. and Ocean Park Blvd. Pony rides, live music, lots of vendors and great family socializing.
Puppetolio – 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested
Magicopolis – 2 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$15. Call 310-451-2241 for info.

MONDAY

Storytelling

Main Library – Lap Time at Joslyn Park, Craft Room, 9:30 a.m. A series for babies up to two years old. (No lap time Dec. 20, 27, Jan. 17 & Feb. 21)
“Family Connections” – on break until Jan. Check back here for start date.
Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main Street, 310-392-3804.
“Spanish for Little Ones”, 11:15 a.m. Next session begins Jan. 24.
Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade – Toddler Story Time – 10am – 310-260-9110

MOMS Club of Santa Monica – New Mother Group – for new moms with babies ages 0-6 months. Meet for conversation, support and playtime. All new Moms welcome! Call Clare at 395-7422 for time, location and more info.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:20 – 10:20 a.m.; Parent Support (1-3 years) – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15
Yoga Garden, - Restorative yoga for pre/postnatal – 6:30 p.m., 310-450-0133. www.yogagardenstudios.com
Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

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NATIONAL

Oil and gas bonds leave taxpayers with potentially costly cleanup liability

BY DAVID PACE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Bonds posted by companies with federal oil and gas leases cover only a small fraction of the projected costs of plugging wells and restoring land once the fuel is extracted, leaving taxpayers with the potential for huge cleanup bills, an Associated Press analysis of federal records shows.

The Bureau of Land Management has collected just \$132 million in bonds from oil and gas companies responsible for more than 100,000 wells on federal lands. The government estimates it costs between \$2,500 and \$75,000 to cap each well and restore the surface area.

In the past five years, the BLM has spent \$2.2 million to clean up 167 wells where operators defaulted on their bonds.

At that average rate of \$13,066 per well, the shortfall between the bonds and the actual cleanup costs could leave taxpayers with as much as a \$1 billion potential liability if companies reneged on their cleanup responsibilities, the AP analysis found.

The Bush administration this fall quietly shelved an eight-year effort to increase the minimum bond requirements for oil and gas drilling on federal lands.

The current rates were set in 1960, and gas and oil companies are the only federal mineral lease holders that aren't required to post full reclamation bonds. Coal and hard rock mineral companies must post bonds equivalent to the estimated cleanup costs.

Bush administration officials say they don't want high bonds to discourage oil and gas exploration on federal lands in the midst of an energy crunch and believe the risks are minimal given that relatively few companies have reneged on cleanup obligations in recent years.

In the past five years, 17 companies defaulted on their cleanup, causing their bonds to be revoked.

"There is a small risk here," said Bob Anderson, the BLM's deputy assistant director for minerals. "And it's a risk that we think is an equitable one."

But others, including landowners struggling to get older, non-producing wells plugged, believe it is unfair.

Eric Barlow, a Wyoming rancher who's been trying for years to get two nonproducing oil wells on his 18,000-acre spread plugged and abandoned, said the BLM's current bonding requirements are little more than "window dressing." Barlow owns the land but the government owns the rights to the minerals underneath and leases them.

"If you're accused of a felony crime and you go in front of a judge and you have a bond hearing, they're going to set a bond that will reasonably assure that you

stick around to face the charges," he said.

"What we have in this situation is these guys are released from custody immediately, or never even taken into custody, because the amount of the bonding is such a minimal amount. They have no incentive to take care of things that need to be cleaned up."

The Bush administration concluded this fall that rather than raise the minimum bonds for all oil and gas leases, they would use existing authority to selectively impose higher bond requirements on those companies they deem risky.

"The BLM has reviewed its policies and procedures and believes that the existing regulations... already provide the needed authority to increase bonds when the BLM determines that operators pose a risk on federal oil and gas leases," BLM Director Kathleen Clark and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Rebecca Watson wrote Sept. 30.

In the past five years, Anderson said the agency has increased 35 bonds, requiring operators to post an extra \$3.6 million. The increases account for less than 3 percent of total oil and gas bonds.

The September decision amounted to an about-face. A year earlier, Watson told a Denver newspaper that increases in a proposed new bond rule would take effect "sooner rather than later."

Interior Secretary Gale Norton, Watson said at the time, "has a firm view that companies are responsible for land reclamation, not individual taxpayers."

The 1960 regulations require that an operator post a minimum bond of \$10,000 per lease, regardless of how many wells will be drilled on that lease. Alternatively, a company can choose to post a minimum \$25,000 bond for statewide drilling, or a \$150,000 nationwide bond.

The bonds are intended to ensure that oil and gas wells are plugged and the surface area restored once production has ceased. Without such reclamation, abandoned wells can pose a pollution threat to groundwater if well casings fail.

Following a critical 1996 inspector general's report, the BLM in 1998 proposed a rule change that would have increased the minimum lease bond to \$20,000 and the minimum statewide bond to \$75,000. At the time, the agency said increases just to cover inflation since 1960 would require a lease bond of \$50,000 and a statewide bond of \$135,000.

The rule change was ready for final publication when Bush took office in 2001 and ordered a government-wide halt to all pending rule changes. The bond rule appeared to be back on track when the BLM's implementation plan for the rec-

See TAXES, page 11

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BLM-issued permits number in the thousands

TAXES, from page 10

ommendations of Vice President Cheney's energy task force in 2002 called for its completion.

But none of the four bond-related tasks in that implementation plan have been completed, while eight tasks related to speeding up drilling permit approvals and opening more federal lands to oil and gas development have been finished. BLM issued 5,824 drilling permits in five Rocky Mountain states during fiscal 2004, a 63 percent increase over 2003.

Environmentalists and ranchers critical of the agency say the risk to taxpayers is growing as larger, more estab-

lished oil and gas companies sell their lease holdings to smaller, less financially viable firms.

The explosive growth of coal-bed methane exploration in Wyoming and Montana also poses increased risks, they argue, because it requires far more wells and surface disturbances than traditional oil and gas activities.

Drilling for coal-bed methane involves releasing groundwater to relieve pressure holding gas in coal seams. Some farmers and conservationists contend that the water released is often salty or of poor quality, and can hurt crops or other vegetation.

In one coal-bed methane field in southeastern Montana, an engineering consultant retained by the Northern Plains

Resource Council testified in a civil case against BLM that it would cost \$2 million to \$213 million to reclaim the 1,564-acre field. Fidelity Exploration and Production Co., the operator, has posted a \$150,000 nationwide bond with BLM and a \$200,000 state bond with Montana.

The number of idle wells on federal lands also is growing. BLM data obtained with a Freedom of Information request show that more than 1,500 oil and gas wells are no longer producing, and in some case haven't been for decades.

That's 25 percent more than the 1,200 "temporarily abandoned" or "shut-in" wells the BLM told Congress existed on federal lands four years ago.

Tracking system could have warned people, experts say

TSUNAMI, from page 1

"This is tragic," said retired Sri Lankan air force chief Harry Goonetilleke. "There should have been such an arrangement for the region. This is absolutely not acceptable."

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake — the world's most powerful since 1964 — shifted huge geological plates beneath the ocean northwest of Indonesia's Sumatra island an hour or two after daybreak, causing a massive and sudden displacement of millions of tons of water.

Indonesian villages closest to the temblor's epicenter were swamped within minutes, but elsewhere the waves radiated outwards, gathering speed and ferocity until they made landfall.

Waves began pummeling southern Thailand about one hour after the earthquake. After 2 1/2 hours, the torrents had traveled some 1,000 miles and slammed into India and Sri Lanka. Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar and Bangladesh were also hit. Eventually they struck Somalia, on the east coast of Africa, 2,800 miles away.

Indonesian officials said they had no way to know that the earthquake had caused the earthquake-driven waves, or tsunamis, or how dangerous they might have been.

"Unfortunately, we have no equipment here that can warn about tsunamis," said Budi Waluyo, an official with Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency. "The instruments are very expensive and we don't have money to buy them."

But Thammasarote Smith, a former senior forecaster at Thailand's Meteorological Department, said governments could have done much more to warn people.

"The department had up to an hour to announce the

emergency message and evacuate people but they failed to do so," Thammasarote was quoted as saying in The Bangkok Post. "It is true that an earthquake is unpredictable, but a tsunami, which occurs after an earthquake, is predictable."

Kathawudhi Marlaiojanasiri, the meteorological department's chief weather forecaster, said it sent out warnings on radio and television beginning at 9 a.m. Sunday about a possible undertow along the southwest coast of Thailand, where tens of thousands of foreigners were vacationing.

But the warnings came after the first waves hit. A Web site warning went up three hours later — but by then, at least 700 people had died in Thailand, including a jet-skiing grandson of revered monarch King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Sulamee Prachuab, of the department's Seismological Bureau, said the government could not give a real-time warning because it did not have the satellite technology to do it.

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra refused to answer reporters' questions Tuesday about tsunami alerts.

India's Information Minister Dayanidhi Maran said his country would consider establishing a warning system. Australia and Japan indicated they would lend their expertise to help build it. One Australian official said at least a year would be needed to set one up. Establishing such a system would likely cost millions of dollars.

Scientists said seismic networks in the region recorded Sunday's earthquake but that without sensors in oceans to track the path of the waves, there was no way to determine the direction a tsunami would travel.

"If they had tidal gauges and a tsunami warning system, many people who died would have been saved," said Waverly Person, director of the U.S. Geological Survey national earthquake information service in Golden, Colo.

"They could have tracked the waves," he said. "They won't tell you how high the waves will be, but they can tell you when they will hit. Local authorities can warn citizens to get off the coast."

Such a system presumes, however, an organized communication system and widely understood procedures and discipline by hotel operators, fishing villages, and local authorities to clear the coastline quickly in case of a coming disaster.

Most of developing Asia lacks such infrastructure, and casualties were highest in three very impoverished areas — the coasts of eastern Sri Lanka and southeastern India, and the northern tip of Indonesia's Sumatra island.

An international warning system in the Pacific was started in 1965, the year after tsunamis associated with a magnitude 9.2 temblor struck Alaska in 1964. It is administered by the U.S.-based National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Member states include all the major Pacific rim nations in North America, Asia and South America, as well as the Pacific islands, Australia and New Zealand.

In Japan, a network of fiber-optic sensors record any seismic activity and passes the information to a powerful computer at the Meteorological Agency, which estimates the height, speed and arrival time of any tsunamis and the coastal areas most at risk. Within two minutes of the quake, the agency can sound the alarm.

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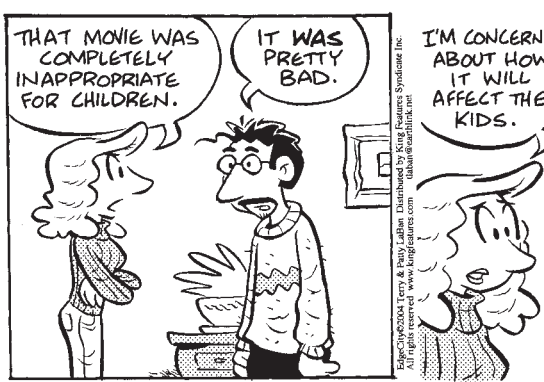


COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



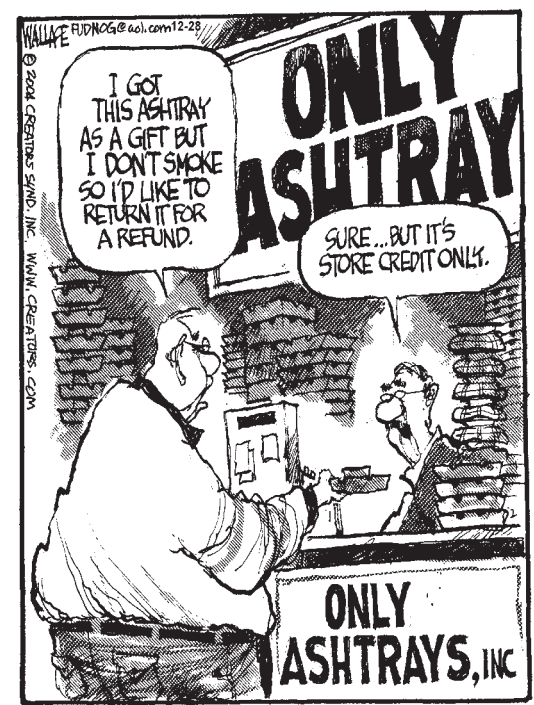
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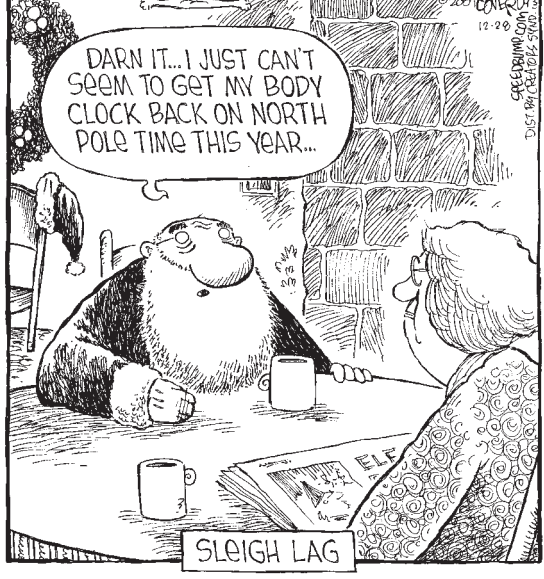
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12-28

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Obituaries

David W. Bergmann
1949-2004

David W. Bergmann, a respected executive and
community volunteer, died Friday (Dec. 24) after
falling through the ice on a pond near his home
while successfully rescuing his beloved dog, Red.
He was 55 and a resident of Huntleigh, MO.

Mr. Bergmann was an experienced venture capi-
talist and investment professional. In 1992, he co-
founded Advantage Capital Partners, a venture
capital and private equity firm focused on raising
investment capital for entrepreneurs in states and
communities historically underserved by venture
capital. To date the firm has raised \$650 million in
institutional capital with more than 40 employees
in St. Louis, New Orleans, New York, Tampa and
other cities. Mr. Bergmann's tireless work through
Advantage contributed dramatically to the growth
of many entrepreneurial businesses and the crea-
tion of thousands of jobs at these firms. Fulfilling
the hopes and dreams of entrepreneurs was a pas-
sion of Mr. Bergmann's throughout his career.

Reflecting his keen interest in small business capi-
tal formation, in 1995 he served as a delegate to
the White House Conference on Small Business. In
1998, Mr. Bergmann was presented an Ernst &
Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award for being a
supporter of entrepreneurship. In 1999, he re-
ceived a Financial Services Advocate award from
the U.S. Small Business Administration. He was a
member of the National Venture Capital Association
and the Missouri Venture Forum.

In addition to enjoying his family and his Welsh
Springer Spaniels, Mr. Bergmann was active in the
St. Louis community. Most recently he was a busi-
ness edition leader of the 2004 campaign of the
Old Newsboys Charities, a non-profit organization
formed by the Suburban Journal newspapers of St.
Louis that annually funds more than 300 organiza-
tions serving children in the St. Louis area. Mr.
Bergmann was involved with Old Newsboys for
several years and in 2003 received a Golden Plate
award to recognize his commitment to the lives of
area children.

Mr. Bergmann was the son of John Hermann Berg-
mann and Dorothea Maier Bergmann, both de-
ceased. Born and raised in St. Louis, Mr. Berg-
mann graduated from Horton Watkins High School.
He attended Northwestern University in Evanston,
IL., and Washington University in St. Louis, where
he earned an MBA degree.

Mr. Bergmann began his professional career with
the investment firm of Halsey, Stuart & Co. in Dal-
las in the 1970s and subsequently joined the local
office of Drexel Burnham Lambert. While in Texas
he married the former Peggy Timmons in 1979 and
four years later they moved to Los Angeles, where
Mr. Bergmann joined Drexel's High-Yield Securities
Department.

In 1991, Mr. Bergmann returned to St. Louis and
soon afterward partnered with Steven T. Stull to
found Advantage. Mr. Stull moved to New Orleans
to open Advantage's Louisiana office; Mr. Berg-
mann opened a St. Louis office.

In addition to his wife, survivors include a daugh-
ter, Katherine A. Bergmann, and a son John D.
Bergmann, both of the home; a sister, Susan Berg-
mann Calhoun of St. Louis, Mo., a brother, J. Ste-
phen Bergmann and his wife, Nancy, of James-
town, R.I.; a sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Ja-
nette and Terry Caviness of Amarillo, Texas; and
six nephews, Michael Bergmann of St. Louis, Scott
Calhoun of St. Louis, Brian Calhoun of Tahoe, Nev.,
Rodney Calhoun of Chicago, Trevor Caviness and
his wife, Sarah, of Amarillo, and Regan Caviness of
Amarillo.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be
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