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DECEMBER 28-29, 2013
Volume 13 Issue 38



Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

2013 LOCAL RESTAURANT HIGHLIGHTS
SEE PAGE 8

THE MISSING AN IMPORTANT PIECE ISSUE

Council member absences up in 2013

BY DAVID MARK SIMPSON
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL City Council absences were up from last year, with a total of 25, a Daily Press review of City Hall records showed.

Mayor Pro Tem Terry O'Day led the group with eight absences, followed by Mayor Pam O'Connor with six.

The other five council members missed 11 meetings combined.

Last year, council members missed 20 meetings.

The council met a total of 28 times from Jan. 1 to Dec. 17 of this year.

Santa Monica City Council members are not full-time public servants like in larger cities such as Los Angeles. For their work they receive an annual salary of $13,449, while the mayor is paid $16,139, according to City Hall's latest salary schedule report. Council members have been known to spend many hours outside of meetings working on city issues or meeting with residents and business owners.

O'Day, who missed only two meetings last year, said that a new job at a start-up company combined with some family health issues were the reasons for his frequent absence.

"We all do this as a service and I do my best to be there for the important meetings," he said. "I have a demanding full-time job and two young kids and everyone has different kinds of demands on them. We do the best given those other priorities in our life."

O'Day missed nearly 29 percent of the meetings, the second highest annual percentage among council members in the past

SEE ATTENDANCE PAGE 6



HEAD OVER HEELS

Paul Alvarez Jr. *editor@smdp.com*

Izzy Gremillion practices her gymnastics with her coaches Beau Ioana and Shira Winitzky of What Tha Fit at the original Muscle Beach Friday afternoon. The temperature hit 74 degrees, making it feel more like summer instead of winter.

New year, no Big Blue Bus transfers

BY DAVID MARK SIMPSON
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE You're going to need some more quarters if your commute includes a transfer from one Big Blue Bus to another.

Starting Jan. 1, the local transfer rate of 50 cents disappears. All rides will cost a buck (50 cents for the senior, disabled, and Medicare fares). Interagency transfers, like those to and from Metro, are unaffected by the change.

Less than 5 percent of all annual rides are transfers, BBB spokesperson Suja Lowenthal said, but the total projected annual revenue increase is $325,000.

It cost $90,000 just to print the paper transfer tickets, Transit Director Ed King said earlier this year.

Of the 12 people waiting for buses with whom the Daily Press spoke, two were concerned with the eliminated discount.

"It sucks," said Nadine McGregor, who was waiting for Line 7 on Lincoln and Pico boulevards. "I buy a transfer everytime I ride the bus, which is everyday."

She needs to ride the bus, she said, so she'll probably just pay the difference.

Chailen August and Mikhail Brown, sophomores at Santa Monica High School, said the change wouldn't impact them.

"I live in Inglewood so I transfer from the Metro bus everyday," he said. "It's not a big deal. I do know people who transfer coming from Venice. They'll probably just pay the fees."

Ripta Pasay, who was waiting for a bus on Santa Monica Boulevard, lives and works in Santa Monica and takes four buses a day. He's got a monthly pass, for which he pays $60. It encourages him to ride the bus more frequently, he said.

One woman said the only time she transfers is when she's going to LAX. The transfer increase will mean a couple extra bucks a year and the base rate is very reasonable, she said.

SEE TRANSFERS PAGE 6

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What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013

Art for kids
Paint:Lab
1453 14th St., Call for times
Kids 5-12 are invited to a special winter art camp. Cost: ranges from $55-$100. All art materials included in the price. For more information, call (310) 450-9200.

Sun on the ice
Fifth Street and Arizona Avenue
2 p.m. — 10 p.m.
Hit the skating rink at ICE at Santa Monica, a popular holiday attraction. For more information, call (310) 461-8333.

He is real
Miles Memorial Playhouse
1130 Lincoln Blvd., 3 p.m.
Creating Arts Co. presents a holiday classic that is sure to put a smile on even the Scrooges of the season. Based on actual events, "Yes, Virginia" follows 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon on a journey to discover if Santa Claus is real. She decides to write a letter to the editor of the Chicago Sun to find out the truth. For more information, call (310) 804-0223.

Stories at the pier
Santa Monica Pier Aquarium
1600 Ocean Front Walk, 3:30 p.m.
Visit the Santa Monica Pier every Saturday for a whale of a tale. The aquarium will host story time in the Dorothy Green Room. Children (and adults) love to hear a good story, and the aquarium has a nearly endless supply of books celebrating life of the sea. For more information, call (310) 393-6149.

Time to knit
Fairview Library
2101 Ocean Park Blvd., 3:30 p.m.
Knitting, conversation, and tea at the library. Everyone welcome. For more information, call (310) 458-8681.

Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013

Walk with the plovers
Annenberg Community Beach House
415 PCH, 8:30 a.m.
Looking for a new holiday tradition? Join the Santa Monica and L.A. Audubon societies and connect with your inner naturalist! Explore the habitat and life cycles of the federally threatened snowy plover, a small white bird that makes Santa Monica and surrounding beach cities its home this time of year. Binoculars will be provided, or bring your own. Comfortable clothing and sun protection are recommended. For more information, visit beachhouse.smgov.net.

Turning of the year
Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica
1260 18th St., 11 a.m.
The church's tower bell will ring out the old and ring in the new with guest minister Jim Grant, an affiliate minister from the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. Cost: free.

Let down your hair
Miles Memorial Playhouse
1130 Lincoln Blvd., 1 p.m.
Creating Arts Co. presents a new adaptation of the classic Grimm fairy-tale of the girl with magical golden locks, Rapunzel. Cheer for the prince and boo for the mean witch Gothel who has locked the beautiful Rapunzel high atop a tower. Will Rapunzel escape the tower and learn she's a princess and find her way back to her rightful mother and father, King and Queen Windsor? For more information, visit www.creatingarts.org.

To create your own listing, log on to smdp.com/submitevent

For help, contact Daniel Archuleta at **310-458-7737** or submit to editor@smdp.com

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to **smdp.com/communitylistings**



Honduras police say Santa Monica heiress/spa owner slain

BY FREDDY CUEVAS
Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras The great-granddaughter of heiress and socialite Marjorie Merriweather Post has been found slain at her luxury spa resort on the Caribbean island of Roatan, Honduras police said Friday.

Roatan police chief Alex Madrid said Nedenia Post Dye was found stabbed in her room on Dec. 22. He said police had arrested a local singer whom Dye was helping quit drugs.

"She was a good woman who worked with young people at risk, drug addicts and alcoholics," Madrid said.

The suspect, Lenin Roberto Arana, told police that he and Dye, 46, had been romantically involved, Madrid said. Arana, who used the stage name "The Canary," told local reporters that he was innocent.

Madrid said Dye had been living for 15 years on Roatan, where she ran the Baan Suerte luxury spa.

Dye, of Santa Monica, Calif., told an alumni publication of her alma mater, George Washington University, last year that she shared a love of risk-taking and adventure with her great-grandmother, who inherited the cereal company that would become General Foods Inc.

"My friend and I had an idea to start a business," Dye told the alumni magazine. "I wanted to go to Asia but she said 'No, Central America is closer. If (the business) fails, we can swim home.'"

Madrid said Arana had been captured wearing blood-soaked clothing as he tried to flee in Dye's car.

"I'm innocent," Arana told local reporters. "Nedenia was like a mother to me. She protected me."

Police said Dye appeared to have been stabbed many times in the back.

Roatan is an island renowned for its scenic beaches, scuba diving, luxury resorts and vacation homes.

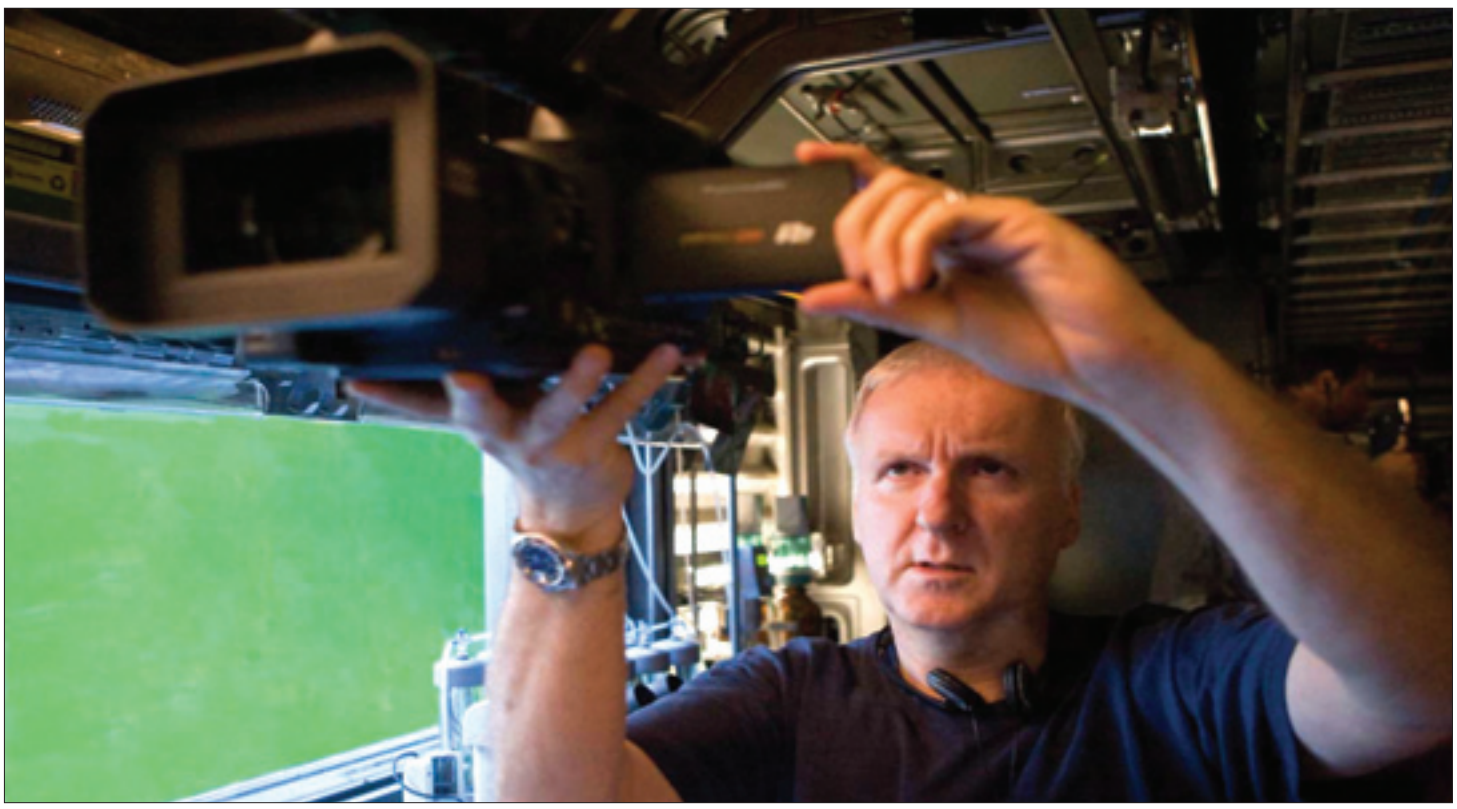


Photo courtesy www.avatarmovie.com

OVERSEAS: **Director James Cameron recently announced that he is making all three 'Avatar' sequels in New Zealand thanks to generous tax breaks.**

Hollywood struggling against new film meccas

BY NICK PERRY & RYAN NAKASHIMA
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES In the old days, filmmakers flocked to Hollywood for its abundant sunshine, beautiful people and sandy beaches. But today a new filmmaking diaspora is spreading across the globe to places like Vancouver, London and Wellington, New Zealand.

Fueled by politicians doling out generous tax breaks, filmmaking talent is migrating to where the money is. The result is an incentives arms race that pits California against governments around the world and allows powerful studios —with hundreds of millions of dollars at their disposal— to cherry-pick the best deals.

The most recent iteration of the phe-

SEE **FILMS** PAGE 7

Times Square's crystal ball gets gleaming skin

BY DAVID B. CARUSO
Associated Press

NEW YORK Electricians working atop a New York City skyscraper on Friday installed the last of the 2,688 crystal triangles that give the Times Square New Year's Eve Ball its shimmer, including a panel dreamt up by a 12-year-old former cancer patient.

Each year, the intricate Waterford crystals that make up the skin of the huge orb are replaced with new pieces of glass.

This year's design features a kaleidoscopic pattern that will refract light in a splash of 16 million colors as the ball drops down a flagpole at the stroke of midnight. The ball is lit from within by 32,256 powerful diodes.

One crystal panel stands out from the rest. It was crafted from a drawing submitted by Coraliz Martinez, who was treated for bone cancer at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., in 2011.

The girl's colored-pencil drawing featured a single rose bloom, which Waterford's master sculptor, Fred Curtis, traced into the glass and cut with a diamond wheel.

"I wanted to get as close to her design as possible," he said.

Coraliz, who lives in Alabama, is now cancer-free, the hospital said.

It takes Waterford craftsmen about a year to make the crystals used in the ball, Curtis said.

Bolting them onto the ball's metal frame takes two weeks. That task is carefully per-

SEE **BALL** PAGE 7

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Illogical assumption

Editor:

Charles Andrews claims ("Few bad apples spoil the bunch," Curious City, Dec. 25): "In the end, Beaird did the right thing." This is untrue and a complete distortion of the facts. In the end Beaird, the reckless driver of the Corvette, sped through an intersection and collided with another vehicle, sending the two occupants to the hospital. The sports car was severely damaged and non-functional, but the driver, nevertheless, tried to get away unsuccessfully.

Andrews also said: " ... he was surrendering ... and at that point not a threat to anyone." A presumptuous claim, for how would Andrews conclude that Beaird was no longer a threat? The police who were there obviously thought he might be, but Andrews, who was not, makes such an illogical assumption.

Furthermore, did Andrews watch the full video of the chase where the camera caught Beaird in a frenetic state grasping the steering wheel and thrusting his body up and down on his car seat? Is this normal behavior?

Andrews concludes his article with hyperbolic nonsense informing his readers that he will be in mortal fear if he's ever "again" stopped by police. Why? What does he have to fear? Is Andrews a reckless driver who habitually speeds through city traffic, endangering the lives of others? If this is true, then it might be a reason for him to be a little apprehensive.

Giuseppe Mirelli
Los Angeles

Bah humbug, Bill

Editor:

I have no idea what I'm going to get Bill Bauer for Christmas this year ("Ye olde holiday wish list," My Write, Dec. 23). Last year I committed to riding my bike to work everyday to help ease all the traffic congestion in Santa Monica that he hates so much, but now he thinks we need more police to enforce the non-issue of cyclists running over pedestrians and wants to stymie the progress of building new bike lanes. Tough customer!

I know Bill is a frequent columnist for the Santa Monica Daily Press, although he's yet to write anything interesting. His facts are consistently accurate, yet his opinions are invariably obnoxious and angry. Every blowhard has that right to be irritating, boring and well-informed, I just wish I could do it as publicly as him. I absolutely love his work, and read every column he writes. He's my third favorite septuagenarian, right behind Judi Dench, and way ahead of Wilford Brimley.

In his latest rant (love that he did this whole Christmas list theme; it's about as funny as an Albertsons coupon) he blasts two things that are reliable sticking points for him – vehicle traffic congestion, and cyclists in Santa Monica. There's this lame little gem: "I wish we had more traffic enforcement such as motorcycle officers to cite bicyclists who ride on the sidewalks, run stops signs and signal lights, cut off pedestrians and ride at night wearing dark clothing on bikes without lights or reflectors."

What a kook.

Love the work, keep it up.

Will Theisen
Venice, Calif.



Your column here

Dr. E. Kirsten Peters — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Mental health treatment should get equal standing

WHEN I WAS A KID, JIMMY CARTER was in the White House. His wife, Rosalynn, was quite an active first lady. She sat in on official meetings held by her husband and was said to be one of his closest advisors.

Many first ladies have used their position to promote a cause. One of the things that most interested Rosalynn Carter was mental health research and treatment. She has remained active in promoting those areas since leaving the White House.

So it was fitting when Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius recently addressed the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy in Atlanta. Sebelius announced new federal rules that will beef up the 2008 mental health equity law.

Back in 2008, President George W. Bush signed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. The basic notion behind that law is that doctors -- and insurance companies -- should treat mental illness as they do physical illness. In other words, it shouldn't matter whether you have fallen on the ice or have fallen into depression.

What's new about a law signed in 2008, you might ask? Although the law has been on the books for a while, it has rarely been enforced.

"Up to now, the law has not been complied with. Companies have only sort of adhered to it," said Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman. Lieberman is head of the American Psychiatric Association, and he spoke about the law in an interview with CNN.

The new rules Sebelius announced will require private insurers to make similar co-payment charges to patients whether the problem they have is one of physical or mental health. That could have a real impact. Sebelius pointed out that twice as many Americans die from suicide as from homicides. And, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 25 percent of Americans experience a diagnosable mental disorder each year.

The 2008 law, "combined with the Affordable Care Act, will expand and protect behavioral health benefits for more than 62 million Americans," Sebelius said, as reported by CNN.

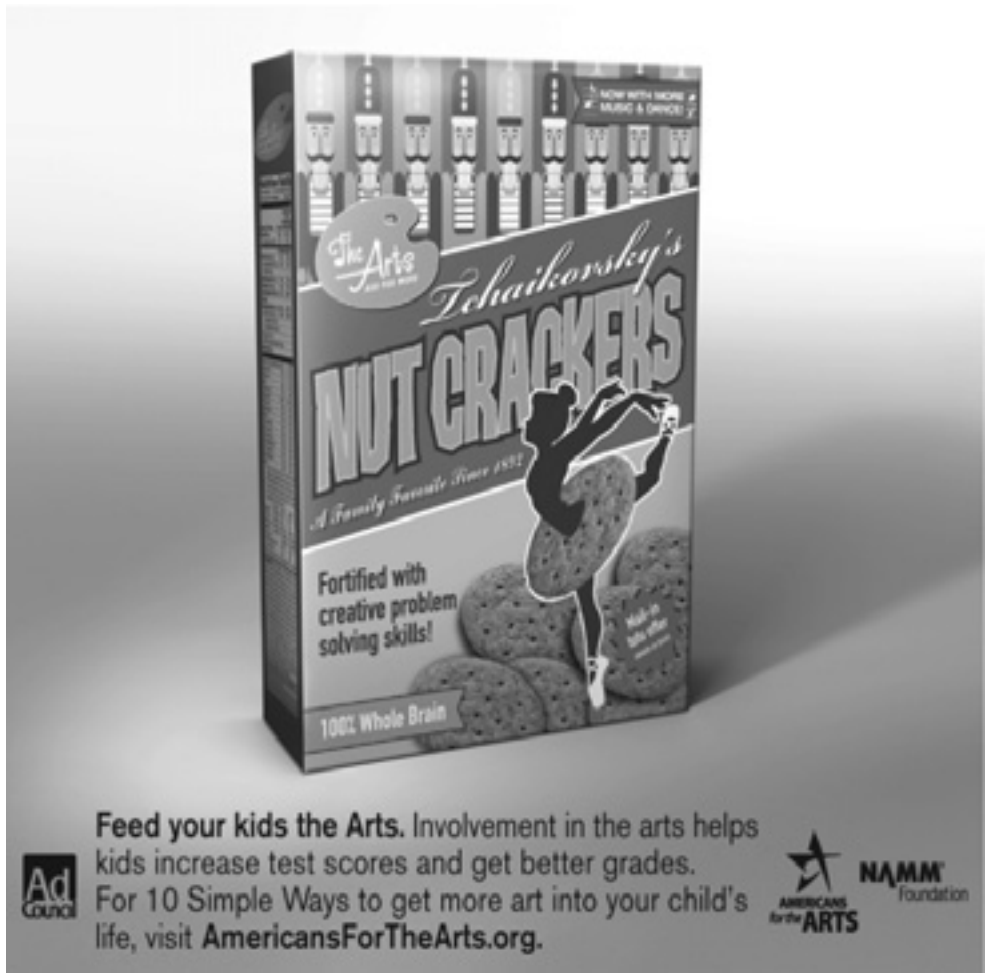
But it's certainly not all peaches and cream for people suffering from mental illness.

"The not-so-good news is, you are eligible for treatment now, but often the services are not available," said Carolyn Reinarch Wolf, a lawyer whose specialty is cases related to mental illness.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, there are not enough psychiatrists in the nation to treat the people already seeking treatment. To be sure, medical research into mental health maladies is ongoing, but the number of medical students choosing to specialize in psychiatry has been going down. And most psychiatrists are age 55 or older, with many soon to retire.

Bit by bit, the stigma associated with psychiatric maladies is lessening and research is leading to more and better treatments. At least from where I stand, leaders like Rosalynn Carter deserve credit for working throughout their lives to help make such progress possible.

DR. E. KIRSTEN PETERS, a native of the rural Northwest, was trained as a geologist at Princeton and Harvard. This column is a service of the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences at Washington State University.



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The Q Line

For art's sake

City Hall has theoretically left millions of dollars on the table by subsidizing artists' studios at the Santa Monica Airport. A Daily Press report found that a lease negotiated by city officials included a base rent of 37 cents per month, per square foot. That lease now generates $9,885 a month.

This past week, Q-line asked:
Do you believe taxpayers should be subsidizing artists? What's the value in doing so?

Here are your responses:

"ABSOLUTELY NOT. IF PEOPLE CHOOSE to be artists then that is their choice. There is no reason the rest of us should be subsidizing them. I want to be a full-time surfer. Should the taxpayers pay me for this? Another case of a special interest group getting more than their fair share."

"WE LIVE IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC of Santa Monica. Private property rental-housing providers are forced by City Hall to subsidize high-income residential tenants with low rents. For sure city-owned property should be used to subsidize struggling artists. But City Hall should implement means testing. When the artist's annual income increases to 130 percent of the Los Angeles County median income, they no longer need a subsidy and the studio rent should increase to market rate for studio space."

"WHY SHOULD ARTISTS BE SUBSIDIZED when the rest of us are not? Let them sell their works; if they are good they will not need to be subsidized. If they have neither the artistic talent that makes people want their art, or the talent to convince suckers that that piece of garbage is actually art, then they do not deserve to be subsidized."

"THE SUBSIDY PLAN FAILED BECAUSE the artists' leases were for much more rent than was allowed and the city fell asleep by not enforcing its rights. Meanwhile, the city attorney reduced the rent of its tenant from 75 cents to 37 cents per month, per square foot without council approval. So the city and the artists were both cheated by the middle man."

"NO, TAXPAYERS SHOULD NOT SUBSIDIZE artists. What they do is a choice and should be a second job if they are that compelled. Most of what they do stinks and taxpayers do not need to be supporting every hack who calls themselves an artist. Let them set up a makeshift studio in their apartment until, or more likely if they are ever able to afford a rental studio. And please let's stop hailing every eccentric cook. The real cream will rise to the top on its own. This isn't the taxpayers' job."

"IF THE CITY COUNCIL, WHOM WE ELECT, decides that subsidizing artists is a good idea, a way to help foster a creative community that attracts visitors, who ultimately spend money here, then great. They just need to make sure that the right artists are being helped. City Hall failed in its responsibility to monitor those leases, according to the Daily Press' articles on the matter. That is negligent and possibly criminal. It's OK to create policy that helps artists remain in Santa Monica. It's not OK to drop the ball on monitoring it."

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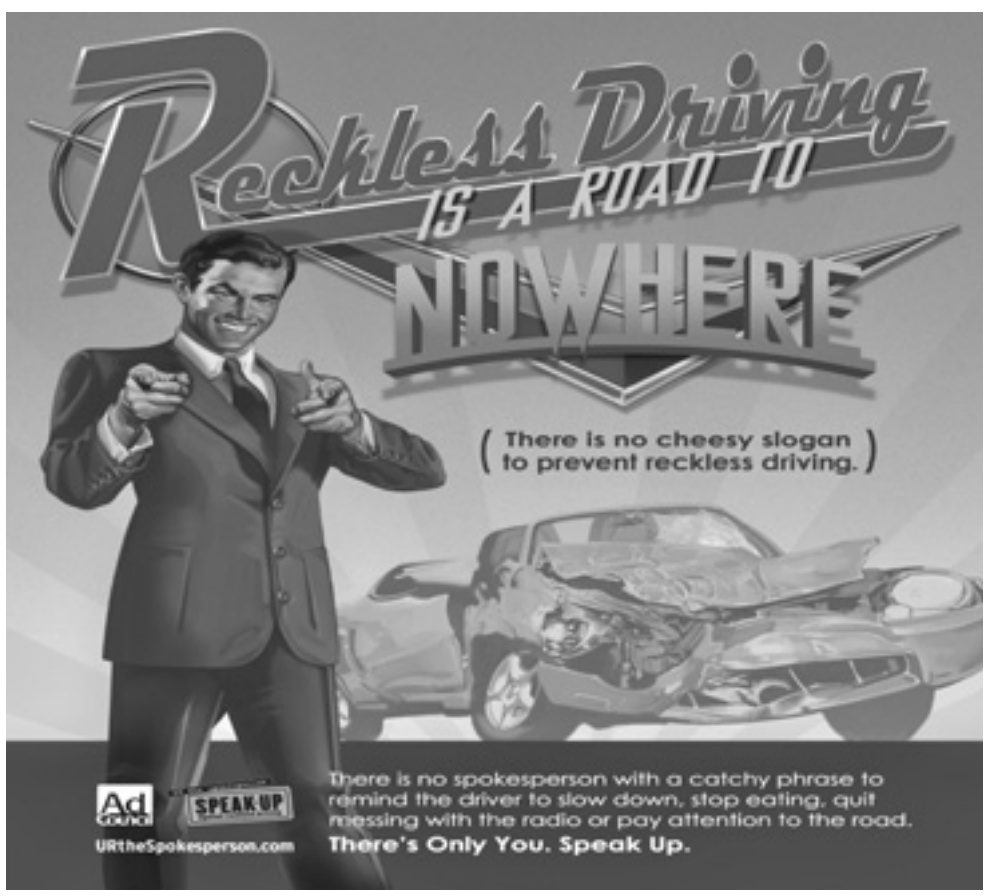
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Online shopping grows, with some growing pains

BY MAE ANDERSON & SCOTT MAYEROWITZ
AP Business Writers

Americans waited until the last minute to buy holiday gifts, but retailers weren't prepared for the spike.

Heavy spending in the final days of the mostly lackluster season sent sales up 3.5 percent between Nov. 1 and Tuesday, according to MasterCard Advisors SpendingPulse, which tracks payments but doesn't give dollar figures.

Online shopping led the uptick, with spending up 10 percent to $38. 91 billion between Nov. 2 and Sunday, research firm comScore said.

"We always have last-minute Charlies, but this year even people who normally complete shopping earlier completed shopping later," said Marshal Cohen, chief retail analyst at market research firm NPD Group.

The late surge caught companies off guard. UPS and FedEx failed to deliver some packages by Christmas due to a combination of poor weather and overloaded systems, leaving some unhappy holiday shoppers.

Justin Londagin and his wife ordered their 7-year-old son a jersey of Russell Wilson of the Seattle Seahawks from NFL's web site on Dec. 19. They paid $12.95 extra for two-day shipping to get it to their Augusta, Kan., home before Christmas, but it didn't arrive in time.

"We had to get creative and wrote him a note from Santa to tell him that the jersey fell out of the sleigh and Santa will get it to him as soon as he could," he said.

Amazon is offering customers with delayed shipments a refund on their shipping charges and $20 toward a future purchase. And other retailers such as Macy's said they are looking into the situation.

The last-minute surge this year solidifies the increasing popularity of online shopping, which accounts for about 10 percent of sales during the last three months of the year. It also underscores the challenges that companies face delivering on the experience, particularly during the holiday shopping season that runs from the beginning of November through December.

Analysts say FedEx and UPS typically work closely with big retailers to get a sense of the volume of packages they'll handle during peak times like the holiday season. Extra flights, trucks and seasonal workers can be added if the projections are large.

But this year, David Vernon, a senior research analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein, said weather played a role. The early December ice storms in Dallas could have hurt operations, he said, and packages can start to accumulate. And that got compounded by a late surge in shipments, he said.

"Clearly, as a group, (they) underestimated the demand for Internet retailing during the holidays," Vernon said.

Another problem was the growing popularity of retailers offering free shipping. Amazon, for one, has a two-day free shipping offer that comes with its $79 annual Prime membership. The company said in the third week of December alone, more than 1 million people signed up for the membership.

"Frankly the right hand wasn't talking to the left," said Forrester analyst Sucharita Mulpuru. "The marketing teams of a lot of web retailers (offering free shipping) were not talking to the operations and supply chain teams."

The resulting delayed shipments could be a problem for shippers. UPS and FedEx did not quantify how many packages were affected but said they were just a small fraction of total holiday deliveries.

"The central pillar of their business is a perception of reliability with their customers," said Jeremy Robinson-Leon, CEO of Group Gordon, a corporate and crisis PR firm. This year's snafus "just really erodes trust among customers."

Still, analysts say people will still shop online. "Consumers tend to have a short memory, especially if you fast forward to another year," said Andrew Lipsman, vice president of industry analysis for comScore.

Indeed, some shoppers are taking the delays in stride. Traci Arbios, who lives in Clovis, Calif., did about 90 percent of her shopping online. Most items included free shipping and everything arrived on time except one package she ordered from a seller on eBay that was sent first class by the U.S. Postal Service on Dec. 12. It still had not arrived on Thursday.

"Everything arrived on time except this one item," she said. "It's not going to stop me from shopping online."



ATTENDANCE
FROM PAGE 1

five years.

Council member Kevin McKeown made it to all but two meetings this year and has missed only 14 meetings in the past five years.

"In a representative democracy, constituents' voices are heard through the people who've earned their votes, so I schedule my personal time around council meetings," he said in an e-mail. "Being on council is not a full-time job, and I make my living in our public schools, so I must vacation during class breaks. That's meant that my absences, while few, are predictable."

Attendance came up at a council retreat in October during a discussion about agenda setting.

City Manager Rod Gould works with O'Connor and O'Day to set the agendas for every meeting. In the past, an informal practice allowed people to request specific meetings for their proposals to be heard. This, in theory, could allow developers to pick meetings during which slow-growth council members might be absent. Council voted to stop that policy.

The pace and amount of both commercial and residential development has been a hotly-debated issue in Santa Monica as residents raise concerns about height, density and traffic impacts.

"The council direction is to bring agenda items as soon as they are ready, while balancing meetings as much as possible," Gould said in an e-mailed response to this article. "Council attendance does not factor into these decisions."

Later in that meeting, council discussed the second reading of ordinances, which generally affirm decisions made previously by the council.

The hotly-debated ordinance that regulates fitness trainers in public parks was momentarily overturned earlier this year during its second reading. O'Day, who had supported the ordinance during the initial meeting, was not present to support it during the second reading (later in the meeting, council voted again, affirming the initial vote).

At the retreat, council members discussed the purpose of the second reading. O'Day posited that it was meant to affirm the will of the council. He said that all council members should support the results of the initial vote.

Councilmember Tony Vazquez, who missed three meetings this year and helped vote down the second reading of the trainers ordinance, disagreed.

"I didn't feel like I was derailing it," he said at the retreat. "I felt more like the person that was missing was derailing the process. I think it's really more the responsibility of somebody not here who voted for it to skip the next meeting and expect me now to change my vote to protect somebody that missed a meeting."

In 2011 there were 32 total absences in 33 meetings, the highest percentage and total of the past five years. Bobby Shriver led that year, as he did many of his years on the dais, with nine absences.

McKeown said that attendance is key to good debate.

"Having a full council always helps me feel that all points of view have been heard," he said. "Sometimes a short count means a short meeting, but I'd trade an extra hour for the knowledge that all seven of us tried our hardest for the best solution."

Council members Gleam Davis, Bob Holbrook, and Ted Winterer each missed only two meetings this year.

dave@smdp.com

TRANSFERS
FROM PAGE 1

BBB officials have gotten a couple complaints since they started publicizing the fare change more heavily over the past few weeks.

"It's a very personal thing," Lowenthal said. "To the person who is using the local transfers, if they are only making one round trip a day, that's an impact of a dollar round trip. For that person, it's a big deal. Again we know percentage-wise it's not a large percentage of the ridership that it impacts."

For the commuter making one local transfer to and from work, it's an annual increase of about $250.

BBB hopes that riders will start buying the $4 day pass. Day passes can be purchased on the bus.

The discounted day pass costs only $1.50, so the transfer fare increase (from 25 to 50 cents) has no impact on round-trip fares. Only 12 percent of all transfers are made by riders eligible for discounted fares, Lowenthal said.

Some riders will likely make changes to their routes, she said, finding ways to avoid making transfers.

All the extra cash will be put into boosting service on other lines, she said. Line 7, Line 3, and routes to Santa Monica College are at the top of the list for improved service.

BBB service is highly subsidized. Finding the balance between affordable and quality service is the challenge, Lowenthal said.

"We want to maintain the dollar fare right now," she said. "It becomes difficult to do when it's heavily subsidized in that way, when we have state-of-the-art vehicles that are required to have state-of-the-art fuel efficiency capabilities and all those things end up making it more and more difficult to continue to give services away."

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File photo

NO MORE: Big Blue Bus is eliminating transfers from one bus to another. Transfers to Culver City or Metro buses will still be sold after Jan. 1, 2014.

FILMS
FROM PAGE 3

nomenon came earlier this month when James Cameron announced plans to shoot and produce the next three "Avatar" sequels largely in New Zealand. What Cameron gets out of the deal is a 25 percent rebate on production costs, as long as his company spends at least $413 million on the three films.

"There's no place in the world that we could make these sequels more cost effectively," says producer Jon Landau. It is neither the archipelago's volcanoes nor its glaciers that are attractive, because the "Avatar" movies will be shot indoors. Sure, Peter Jackson's award-winning special effects infrastructure is there, but the deciding factor was the money. "We looked at other places," says Landau. But in the end, "it was this rebate."

In exchange, the local economy will benefit hugely, Landau says, comparing the ripple effect to the boost that comes from new home construction. "We're doing lumber, we're catering for hundreds of people a day. We're housing people in hotels. We're going to a stationery store and tripling their business in a year."

The deal was "the best Christmas present we could have possibly hoped for," says Alex Lee, an Auckland, New Zealand-based entertainment lawyer. The news is especially welcome because the local screen industry is facing a potential drought: The Starz pay TV series "Spartacus" finished this year and Peter Jackson's "The Hobbit" trilogy is set to wrap next year. Thanks to the "Avatar" sequels, the 1,100 workers at Weta Digital Ltd., the ground-breaking digital effects house Jackson co-founded in 1993, can keep plugging away through 2018.

"It would have been a real shame if we had lost any of that talent and they had to move to follow the films," says Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown.

Driving the trend are powerful global forces squeezing the entertainment industry. Falling DVD sales are putting pressure on movie-making budgets, while the demand for ever-more-amazing special effects grows. The spread of technology and skills around the world is creating a huge number of special effects suppliers — some using cheaper labor than can be found in Hollywood.

Government largesse has helped create mini-moguldoms in Vancouver, Montreal, London, New York and Wellington, all of which are aggressively one-upping each other to become the next new hotbed of activity. As the work spreads, branch offices of visual effects companies have opened up in new locations. Even though digital work is borderless, workers must live and be paid locally to generate the income taxes and spending that governments seek.

The tax incentives race is destined to accelerate next year. State incentives in California — home to "Star Wars" pioneer Industrial Light & Magic — are too small to accommodate big-budget movies. Democratic Assembly member Raul Bocanegra is preparing a bill to expand their scope, but it could take months to get through committees, says his chief of staff, Ben Golombek.

And the U.S. federal incentive, an arguably difficult-to-use tax deduction of up to $20 million per film or TV episode, is set to expire at the end of 2013.

"Once our federal incentive ends in two weeks, you're going to have a lot of people who are going to go elsewhere," says Hal "Corky" Kessler, a tax incentives lawyer with Chicago-based Deutsch, Levy & Engel.

Industry business leaders say they're simply following the money.

"This is no different than any other multinational business," says Sir William Sargent, co-founder and CEO of Framestore, a London-based special effects business that worked on likely Oscar-contender, "Gravity," and has offices in Montreal, New York and Los Angeles. "We're just going to where our customers are."

Even if the U.S. moves to counteract growing incentives overseas, the efforts won't prevent another jurisdiction from offering a bigger break.

Joseph Chianese, executive vice president at consulting company EP Financial Solutions, says the competition to offer attractive incentives is intense. More than 30 countries and 44 U.S. states now offer tax breaks to filmmakers.

The mix "changes daily, but it's not going away," Chianese says. "We have now trained a generation of filmmakers and TV makers that production doesn't have to happen here anymore."

BALL
FROM PAGE 3

formed by a crew from Landmark Signs and Electric, a company that also maintains the dazzling electronic billboards in Times Square.

Two employees, Nick Bonavita and Nick Russomanno, screwed in the final panels as photographers watched Friday.

Their hands were red from the cold. The crystal wedges, fitted in their metal frames, looked heavy. But Bonavita, who has worked on the ball every year since 2009, said they haven't dropped one yet.

"We have a perfect record so far," he said.

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Tour De Feast

Michael Ryan
Send comments to editor@smdp.com



BOWLED OVER

Michael Ryan *michael@smdp.com*

ShopHouse recently opened on the Third Street Promenade, offering Southeast Asia's version of fast food by cranking out fresh rice and noodle bowls laced with spicy sauces, marinated meats and herbs and vegetables

Second helping of Santa Monica's new eateries

NOW THAT THE YEAR IS ALL BUT OVER, an obligatory "best of" article seems fitting. Santa Monica certainly has had its fair share of notable restaurant openings, so here's a brief rundown of my top new spots of 2013.

• Pono Burger: Chef Makani's philosophy is simple; use organic and farm-fresh ingredients for a handcrafted burger made with integrity that, above all, tastes great. Brioche buns fresh out of the oven, wood burning grills and organic everything are all hallmarks of Pono Burger. However, it's Chef Makani's seasonal creations like a burger topped with cheddar, wood-smoked onions, and caramelized strawberry jam that make Pono Burger stand-out over a handful of other burger joints that have opened locally this year. Located in the World War II-era Quonset hut on Broadway just off Lincoln Boulevard. The lightweight huts made of galvanized steel were mass-produced during the war and erected quickly to serve a variety of purposes, including housing and offices.

• Rita's Italian Ice: On the East Coast Rita's is commonplace, but here in Santa Monica it's a real treat. Situated alongside the other small businesses on Main Street, Rita's offers more than a few sweet snacks, including Italian Ice, frozen custard, and ice cream. The Gelati (Rita's top seller) combines Italian Ice with the creamy custard. Blending that together with a choice of candy (M&M's, Snickers, etc.) yields the Blendini. The possibilities are endless. Rita's is a welcome addition to town, especially if you're bored with frozen yogurt. That was so 2011!

• Water Grill: The Water Grill is bringing sexy back to Ocean Avenue! Iron and reclaimed wooden decor open up to excellent views of the ocean and the Santa Monica Pier. It has quickly become one of the premier seafood restaurants in town. Enjoy a bottle of Muscadet and kumamoto at their beautifully displayed seafood bar. Or find a seat bar-side and people watch with a craft cocktail and the best shrimp Louie salad in town.

• ShopHouse Southeast Asian Kitchen: Chipotle diehards rejoice! With similar prices, the same assembly line service, and fresh ingredients made fast, ShopHouse is, simply said, a Southeast Asian version of Chipotle. Located in the heart of the Third Street Promenade, ShopHouse offers a perfect lunch on the fly. All lunches are bowl based and flash-fried in hot woks and topped with fresh veggies, an aroma of Thai herbs, and assertive spices. If Chipotle and Sriracha had a baby it would be ShopHouse. Odd but true.

• Tacos Punta Cabras: If someone asks where to find the best fish tacos in town, without any hesitation you should send them to Tacos Punta Cabras. The atmosphere is laid back, the service is friendly, and the menu is simple. Tacos, tostadas, and cocetel (ceviche in a tomato broth) make up the menu. Choose amongst shrimp, scallops, fish, and tofu. Fresh seafood, topped with crunchy slaw and a homemade pineapple habanero slaw, makes for one of my best bites of the year. Despite long lines during the lunch rush and cash only, Tacos Punta Cabras is worth these obstacles for any seafood taco aficionado.

That's a short but not definitive list of some of the best new places of 2013. But for every new restaurant another one fades away. In memoriam: The Shack, Renee's, South, Omelette Parlor.

SEE **GRUB** PAGE 9

GRUB
FROM PAGE 8

IF YOU GO

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Michael can be seen riding around town on his bike burning calories so he can eat more food. He can be reached at michael@smdp.com. Follow him on Twitter at https://twitter.com/greaseweek

SoCal cracks down on fraud at farmers markets

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DOWNTOWN Ever wonder if something's rotten at your farmers market?

Maybe those pricey "locally grown" mangos are actually commercial imports from South America.

Southern California officials have cracked down this past year on vendors who violate state law by selling fruits and vegetables they don't produce. Violators can be fined up to $1,000 for each offense and banned from the markets for up to 18 months.

This year, 20 vendors were fined in Los Angeles County. San Diego County sanctioned five, the Los Angeles Times reported.

"The whole point of farmers markets is that you know who you're buying from, and what their practices are," said Robin Holding, a regular shopper at the Santa Monica market who bought a suspicious mango. "It was not inexpensive, and of awful quality. I was really turned off."

Inspectors are trained to recognize tipoffs such as fruit with a commercial appearance — waxed or of uniform size — or that is out of season in a particular growing area. They also look out for sales volume that exceeds a grower's capacity, although some farmers have tried to fool inspectors by planting dummy crops.

"They never harvest, they're just for us to see," said Korinne Bell, who supervises farmers markets for the Ventura County agricultural commissioner.

Fighting market fraud is a costly proposition, though. Los Angeles County, which has 153 farmers markets, spent $243,000 during the fiscal year that ended June 30. That's three times what the county made on market fees.

But violators also are hit in the pocketbook.

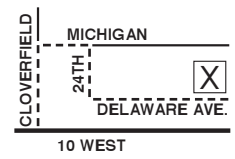
Victor Gonzalez of Atkins Nursery in Fallbrook was among the farmers sanctioned in San Diego County. He acknowledged that on three occasions, his vendors sold produce his farm didn't produce. He was banned from farmers markets for six months and the penalty was upheld Tuesday by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Gonzalez told the Times on Thursday that some of his workers mistakenly placed fruit from another farm on his vending tables.

"I fired those people, and I'll pay the fine, but please let me work, or I'm dead," he said.

Stopping cheaters is crucial, said Laura Avery, supervisor of the Santa Monica market. "For farmers markets to continue to prosper, it is crucial that consumers have confidence that vendors really grow what they sell."




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Hospital says it will help move brain-dead girl

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND, Calif. A Northern California hospital where a girl has been declared brain-dead after experiencing complications from a tonsillectomy said Friday that it is now willing to facilitate her transfer to a long-term nursing home, but only under certain conditions.

A lawyer for Children's Hospital Oakland said in a letter made public that before the hospital will comply with Jahi McMath's family's request to move her, it needs to speak directly with officials at the nursing home to make sure they understand her condition, "including the fact that Jahi is brain dead" — and to discuss needed preparations.

Lawyer Douglas Straus also said the Alameda County coroner needs to sign off on the move "since we are dealing with the body of a person who has been declared legally dead."

"Children's Hospital will of course continue to do everything legally and ethically permissible to support the family of Jahi McMath. In that regard, Children's will allow a lawful transfer of Jahi's body in its current state to another location if the family can arrange such a transfer and Children's can legally do so," Straus wrote in the letter.

The letter was sent to the family's lawyer, Christopher Dolan, after he said he was preparing a federal civil rights lawsuit to force the hospital to outfit Jahi with breathing and feeding tubes — surgical procedures Dolan said she would need to breathe and be fed at the new facility but which the nursing home is not equipped to insert.

The girl's relatives announced on Thursday that they had found a nursing home in the San Francisco Bay Area that was willing to care for the girl if she had the tubes. Within hours, the hospital's chief of pediatrics issued a statement saying Children's would not cooperate because it "does not believe that performing surgical procedures on the body of a deceased person is an appropriate medical practice."

Dolan told The Associated Press earlier Friday that he was drafting a civil rights lawsuit alleging that the hospital's refusal to cooperate violated her family's religious, due process rights and privacy rights.

A compromise between the two sides needs to be reached quickly. A state court judge this week gave Jahi's mother, Nailah Winkfield, until 5 p.m. Monday to appeal his decision to allow the hospital to take her daughter off life support.

Jahi underwent tonsil surgery at Children's Hospital on Dec. 9 to treat sleep apnea. After she awoke from the operation, her family said, she started bleeding heavily from her mouth and went into cardiac arrest.

California man pleads guilty to assisting al-Qaida

BY LINDA DEUTSCH
AP Special Correspondent

LOS ANGELES A California man who used the Internet and Facebook to connect with al-Qaida pleaded guilty Friday to a federal terrorism charge after admitting he attempted to assist al-Qaida by providing weapons training, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Sinh Vinh Ngo Nguyen, 24, of Garden Grove unexpectedly entered the plea before U.S. District Court Judge John F. Walter, who scheduled sentencing for March 21, prosecutors said in a statement. Reporters were not notified of his court appearance and were not present.

Nguyen faces a maximum of 15 years in federal prison.

Nguyen's lawyer, Yasmin Cader, refused to comment on his decision, quickly hanging up the phone on a reporter, and U.S. Attorney's spokesman Thom Mrozek said prosecutors also would have no comment.

The judge who accepted the plea previously had expressed skepticism about whether Nguyen had any special skills to offer al-Qaida.

Nguyen had confessed to federal agents after he was unmasked by an undercover FBI agent posing as a recruiter for the terrorist group.

He said that he planned to offer himself as a trainer of some 30 al-Qaida forces to ambush troops in Syria, where he had already spent five months fighting with rebels, Assistant U.S. Attorney Judith Heinz said after his arrest in October. She said he underwent 50 hours of interrogation during which he confessed to his plan.

Nguyen's admission was contained in a plea agreement filed in federal court, according to a U.S. attorney's press release issued after the plea was entered and accepted.

"Nguyen admitted that approximately one year ago he traveled to Syria where he joined opposition forces," the statement said. "Using a social network site during a four-month period he was in Syria, Nguyen told people that he was fighting against the Assad regime and that he had had a 'confirmed kill.'"

Nguyen returned to the U.S., where he told associates that he had offered to train al-Qaida forces in Syria but was turned down, the U.S. attorney's office said.

At a hearing last fall, Judge Walter asked Heinz what Nguyen had to offer the terrorist group and she said, "He was providing himself."

The judge noted that Nguyen was never a member of the U.S. armed forces, having been rejected because of a hearing problem.

"I don't see evidence that this defendant had any particular skill in firearms," he said, "or that he had the ability to procure or deliver weapons. ... This is the part of the case that escapes me."

It was not immediately known what changed his mind between then and the entry of the plea.

Prosecutors said that between Aug. 3 and Oct. 11 Nguyen met with a man he thought was an al-Qaida recruiter but who actually was working for the FBI, telling him about what he'd done in Syria and saying he wanted to return to jihad.

On Oct. 1, Nguyen purchased a ticket for travel from Mexico to Pakistan and he was arrested by FBI agents on Oct. 11 as he was about to board a bus from Santa Ana, Calif., to Mexico. He had been told he would be meeting "his sheik" in Peshawar, the prosecutor had said.

When he was arrested, authorities said he exclaimed, "How did you guys find out?"

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1.3 million losing federal unemployment benefits

BY BRADLEY KLAPPER,
Associated Press

WASHINGTON More than 1 million Americans are bracing for a harrowing, post-Christmas jolt as extended federal unemployment benefits come to a sudden halt this weekend, with potentially significant implications for the recovering U.S. economy. A tense political battle likely looms when Congress reconvenes in the new, midterm election year.

Nudging Congress along, a vacationing President Barack Obama called two senators proposing an extension to offer his support. From Hawaii, Obama pledged Friday to push Congress to move quickly next year to address the "urgent economic priority," the White House said.

For families dependent on cash assistance, the end of the federal government's "emergency unemployment compensation" will mean some difficult belt-tightening as enrollees lose their average monthly stipend of $1,166.

Jobless rates could drop, but analysts say the economy may suffer with less money for consumers to spend on everything from clothes to cars. Having let the "emergency" program expire as part of a budget deal, it's unclear if Congress has the appetite to start it anew.

An estimated 1.3 million people will be cut off when the federally funded unemployment payments end Saturday.

Some 214,000 Californians will lose their payments, a figure expected to rise to more than a half-million by June, the Labor Department said. In the last 12 months, Californians received $4.5 billion in federal jobless benefits, much if plowed back into the local economy.

More than 127,000 New Yorkers also will be cut off this weekend. In New Jersey, 11th among states in population, 90,000 people will immediately lose out.

Started under President George W. Bush, the benefits were designed as a cushion for the millions of U.S. citizens who lost their jobs in a recession and failed to find new ones while receiving state jobless benefits, which in most states expire after six months. Another 1.9 million people across the country are expected to exhaust their state benefits before the end of June.

But Obama has no quick fix. He hailed this month's two-year budget agreement as a breakthrough of bipartisan cooperation while his administration works with Democratic allies in the House and Senate to revive an extension of jobless benefits for those unemployed more than six months.

The Obama administration says those payments have kept 11.4 million people out of poverty and benefited almost 17 million children. The cost of them since 2008 has totaled $225 billion.

At the depth of the recession, laid off workers could qualify for up to 99 weeks of benefits, including the initial 26 weeks provided by states. The most recent extension allowed a total of up to 73 weeks, depending on the state.

Restoring up to 47 extra weeks of benefits through 2014 would cost $19 billion, according to the Congressional Budget office.

House Democrats led by Reps. Sander Levin of Michigan and Chris Van Hollen of Maryland sought to include an extension through March by offsetting the costs with potential farm bill savings. They were rebuffed.

Senate Democrats and some Republicans plan another push in 2014. Sens. Jack Reed, D-R.I., and Dean Heller, R-Nev., have introduced a bill offering a similar three-month extension, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., has promised to bring it up. But as with much in Congress, an extension is no sure thing.

In phone calls on Friday, Obama told Reed and Heller he was glad they were working together to address the problem. "It defies economic sense, precedent and our values," Obama economic adviser Gene Sperling said in a statement.

House Speaker John Boehner spoke with Obama about an extension earlier this month. Boehner and said his caucus would consider the possibility "as long as it's paid for and as long as there are other efforts that will help get our economy moving once again." He said White House has yet to introduce a plan that meets his standards.

For other Republicans, the bar is higher. Many of them look at signs of economic growth and an unemployment rate now down to 7 percent and expected to drop further as evidence the additional weeks of benefits are no longer necessary.

The effect of jobless benefits on the unemployment rates has been fiercely debated for decades. To qualify, people have to be seeking work. Tea partiers such as Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky argue that the payments aggravate rather than relieve unemployment.

The benefits allow some jobseekers to hold out for higher wages. Without the benefits, they might accept lower-paying jobs, reducing the unemployment rate. Others may be looking for work only to keep the benefits flowing and will drop out of the job market entirely once the checks stop. In theory, that also would push the unemployment rate lower.

The flip side is that the benefits — in addition to alleviating suffering — get spent on consumer goods, stimulating the economy and creating jobs.

Extended unemployment insurance "is really a lifeline to help pay the bills, put food on the table, and put gas in the tank so people can look for work," argued Maurice Emsellem, policy co-director at the left-leaning National Employment Law Project.

Michael Feroli, an analyst at JPMorgan Chase, said ending the extended benefits will lower the unemployment rate by half a percentage point as the long-term unemployed leave the labor force. While that statistical change may look good on the surface, Feroli cautioned the drop could be accompanied by a similar decrease in consumer spending. That would also hurt clothing retailers, car dealers and other Main Street businesses.

Extending the program, on the other hand, would boost GDP growth by some 0.2 percent and increase full-time employment by 200,000 next year, the Congressional Budget Office estimated, but at the price of increasing the government's debt.

Advocates of extended benefits say communities hardest hit by the recession will feel the sudden loss of cash in circulation the most.

They cite a set of their own troublesome figures: three jobseekers still competing for each opening; some 4 million people in the ranks of long-term unemployed; unemployment lasting on average 37 weeks, two months longer than most states provide insurance.



SURF REPORT



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Surf Forecasts

Water Temp: **59.8°**

SATURDAY – **POOR TO FAIR** – SURF: **1-2 ft** knee to thigh high
Minimal new WNW swell. Best for standout spots which are up to waist high on the sets late.

SUNDAY – **POOR** – SURF: **1-2 ft** knee to thigh high
Minimal WNW swell eases. Mostly shows for standout spots with 1-3' surf there

MONDAY – **POOR** – SURF: **1-2 ft** knee to thigh high
Minimal WNW swell eases. Mostly shows for standout spots with 1-3' surf there

TUESDAY – **POOR** – SURF: **1-2 ft** knee to thigh high
Minimal WNW swell eases. Mostly shows for standout spots with 1-3' surf there

BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous 30 days up to the ending date of **December 11, 2013**

HEAL THE BAY - 1444 9th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401 - beachreportcard.org - brc@healthebay.org - 800 HEAL BAY

QUICK STATS (for the last 30 days)
- Number of sewage spills -- 0
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 13
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 31 / 32
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 7 / 9

The Beach Report Card is made possible by: simplehuman, LAcarGUY, SIMA, and Swain Barber Foundation

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

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth.	A+	A+
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth.	A+	A+
El Pescador State Beach, between Lechusa and Las Alisa creeks.		
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach.	A+	A+
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth.	A+	A
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth.	A	A
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private).	A+	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth.	C	C
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach.	A+	F
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth.	B	A
Solstice Canyon at Dan Blocker County Beach.	A+	A+
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth.	B	A+
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd..	A	A+
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence.	A+	A+
Surfrider Beach (breach location)- daily.	A	C
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east.	B	A+
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon.	A+	A+
Los Flores State Beach at Los Flores Creek (point zero).	A+	B
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs.	B	A+
Pena Creek at Los Tunas County Beach.	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon.	A+	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth.	B	A
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	ns	ns
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	B	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain).	A+	A+

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua).	F	D
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain.	A+	A+
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain.	F	B
Santa Monica Municipal Pier.	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain.	C	C
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms).	B	B
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain.	A	A
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain.	A	A+
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain.	B	B
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain.	A+	A+
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south.	A+	A+
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St..	A+	F
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower.	F	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth.	A	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain.	A	A+
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach.	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of DBW jetty).	A+	A
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain.	F	A+
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's Beach Report Card™ is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A-F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

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

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean. We use science, education, community action and advocacy to pursue our mission.

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U.S. boy, 9, is youngest to reach Aconcagua summit

BY MICHAEL WARREN
Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina A 9-year-old boy from Southern California has become the youngest person in recorded history to reach the summit of Argentina's Aconcagua mountain, which at 22,841 feet (6,962 meters) is the tallest peak in the Western and Southern hemispheres.

Tyler Armstrong of Yorba Linda reached the summit on Christmas Eve with his father Kevin and a Tibetan sherpa, Lhawang Dhondup, who has climbed Mt. Everest multiple times. They were in fine spirits Friday as they left Aconcagua, whose sheer precipices and bitter cold have claimed more than 100 climbers' lives.

"You can really see the world's atmosphere up there. All the clouds are under you, and it's really cold," Tyler said, describing the summit to The Associated Press. "It doesn't look anything like a kid's drawing of a mountain. It's probably as big as a house at the summit, and then it's a sheer drop."

Only 30 percent of the 7,000 people who obtain permits to climb Aconcagua each year make the summit, said Nicolas Garcia, who handled their logistics from down below. No one under 14 is usually allowed, so the family had to persuade an Argentine judge that Tyler could safely accomplish the feat. In their case, they took the "Polish Glacier" route, which doesn't require climbing, and roped themselves together only when crossing steep ice-covered slopes.

"Any kid can really do this, all they have to do is try. And set their mind to the goal," said Tyler, who worked out twice a day for a year and a half to prepare for the climb. He also held fundraisers, not only to defray the cost but to raise money for CureDuchenne, which funds muscular dystrophy research.

"I think Tyler's record speaks for itself and because I think he's doing it for a good cause, he's doing it to help other people, I think the judge recognized that," said his father, an emergency medical technician. Tyler's mother is a pediatric neuropsychologist, and they also have another son, Tyler's younger brother Dylan.

"Most people think we as parents are pushing Tyler to do this, when it's completely the opposite. I wouldn't climb it if I didn't have to, but my wife makes me do it to keep watch on him," he said.

"He's a great dad," Tyler said. "At 20,000 feet, he wanted to turn around but I kept him going. And the day we were getting off the mountain, he had a blister and it popped ... He made it to the summit and everything but that dang blister made him ride a mule."

Aconcagua's previous record-holder was Matthew Moniz of Boulder, Colorado, who was 10 when he reached the summit in 2008.

There was one younger boy who climbed the lower slopes of Aconcagua, Garcia noted: An Inca boy was sacrificed some 500 years ago at 16,400 feet (5,300 meters) on Piramide, one of the mountain's lower peaks. Scientific tests on the mummy, recovered in 1985, put his age at about 7.

Tyler had already climbed the 19,341-foot (5,895-meter) Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania at the age of 8, and with Aconcagua conquered, is determined to reach all "seven summits," the highest mountains on each of the seven continents.

Luckily for Kevin Armstrong, who also coaches his kids in soccer, his younger son prefers a more earthly sport.

"I was not a climber. He got me doing this because he wanted to, and I wanted to experience it with him," Armstrong said.

Financially, these mountaineering expeditions have been difficult, Armstrong said.

"My wife and I have just kind of scraped everything we can together and put off family vacations and everything else so that Tyler can do this," he said. "I've had to charge half of this on my credit card. But he did what he needed to do, so I felt I needed to support him."

Asked to describe his most memorable moment of the climb, Tyler didn't hesitate: "Seeing my dad reach the summit."

"Tyler is a really happy kid, very open. And he's prepared for these climbs very carefully," Garcia said. "Neither he nor his father are in for 'adventure.' Their project is pretty conservative, with a guide who is very experienced, so from my perspective, their climb wasn't imprudent."

His mother Priscilla Armstrong, back home in Southern California, was apparently worried nonetheless.

"Didn't sleep a wink thinking about you honey. Praying for you guys! Good luck and can't wait to hear from you!" she posted on his Facebook page while they were climbing down.

Next on Tyler's list is Mt. McKinley in Alaska, North America's tallest peak.

"I do want to be the youngest for that, but we don't have the money," Tyler said. "If we get a sponsor, we can do it. If not, we can't, because we're broke."



The LATCH system makes it easier to be sure your child's car seat is installed correctly every time. Just clip it to the lower anchors, attach the top tether, and pull the straps tight. To find out more, **visit safercar.gov**.

LATCH

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U.S. Department of Transportation

MOVIE TIMES

Aero Theatre
1328 Montana Ave.
(310) 260-1528

Saturday, Dec. 28
His Girl Friday (NR) 1hr 32min

The Major and the Minor (NR) 1hr 40min
7:30pm

Sunday, Dec. 29
Ball of Fire (NR) 1hr 51min

Bluebeard's Eighth Wife (NR) 1hr 25min
7:30pm

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade
(310) 458-3924

47 Ronin (PG-13) 2hrs 07min
10:45am, 4:05pm, 11:00pm

Walking With Dinosaurs 3D (PG) 1hr 20min
4:40pm

Hunger Games: Catching Fire (PG-13) 2hrs 26min
10:10pm

Grudge Match (PG-13) 1hr 53min
11:00am, 2:00pm, 5:00pm, 8:00pm, 10:50pm

Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom (PG-13) 2hrs 19min
10:15am, 1:00pm, 4:25pm, 7:50pm, 9:45pm

47 Ronin 3D (PG-13) 2hrs 07min
1:30pm, 7:15pm

Walking With Dinosaurs (PG) 1hr 20min
10:30am, 1:45pm, 7:00pm

AMC 7 Santa Monica
1310 Third St.
(310) 451-9440

Frozen (PG) 1hr 25min
9:45am, 12:45pm, 5:30pm, 8:00pm

Hunger Games: Catching Fire (PG-13) 2hrs 26min
10:55pm

Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues (NR) 1hr 59min
10:45am, 1:50pm, 4:50pm, 8:30pm, 11:35pm

Secret Life of Walter Mitty (PG) 2hrs 05min
10:10am, 1:05pm, 4:05pm, 8:45pm, 11:40pm

Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (PG-13) 2hrs 41min
9:30am, 4:45pm, 11:00pm

Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug in 3D (PG-13) 2hrs 41min
1:00pm, 7:10pm

Saving Mr. Banks (PG-13) 2hrs 00min
10:00am, 1:05pm, 5:00pm, 8:15pm, 11:30pm

Wolf of Wall Street (R) 2hrs 45min
9:30am, 1:30pm, 3:45pm, 7:50pm, 11:00pm

American Hustle (R) 2hrs 09min
10:15am, 1:40pm, 4:15pm, 7:35pm, 11:45pm

Laemmle's Monica Fourplex
1332 Second St.
(310) 478-3836

Act of Killing (NR) 1hr 55min
10:30am

Inside Llewyn Davis (R) 1hr 45min
1:30pm, 4:20pm, 7:10pm, 9:45pm

Nebraska (R) 1hr 50min
1:50pm, 4:30pm, 7:20pm, 10:00pm

Great Beauty (La Grande Bellezza) (NR) 2hrs 30min
11:00am

Philomena (R) 1hr 34min
1:40pm, 7:30pm

Her (R)
10:45am, 1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm

12 Years a Slave (R) 2hrs 13min
4:10pm, 9:55pm

For more information, e-mail **editor@smdp.com**

MEET FRIENDS TONIGHT, AQUARIUS

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Spend your day with a loved one. It is inevitable that you will have a conversation about a touchy matter. You tend to express optimism, and others could find that attitude to be contagious. Discussions revolve around a public commitment. Tonight: Be a duo.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Defer to someone else, and allow him or her to get past any negativity or fear. Your positive attitude goes far to loosen up a key person in your life. Tonight: Discuss a change on the homefront.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ It is time to get through a project. Make a point not to be too upset about what you might be missing in the meantime. You could feel tense, until you see the way through this stage of the project. You might decide to take a nap instead. Tonight: Relax at home.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Take time to play and enjoy yourself with a child or loved one. You might be determined to carry the fun spirit of Christmas through the weekend. A new friend might have difficulty expressing his or her feelings. Tonight: Make a gesture, and someone will open up.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Staying close to home will suit you perfectly. You might want to handle a personal matter or have an important one-on-one talk with a friend. Be positive about what you want to do. Discuss a domestic change, which could involve moving furniture. Tonight: Stay anchored.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Consider getting something off your chest in order to get past a problem. The other party will listen, but only to a certain point. Try to be open; otherwise, the listener could completely close down. Make fun plans with a child or loved one in the late afternoon. Tonight: Hang out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Be sensitive to a family member and his or her needs. Don't risk having to deal with this person's defiance. You will want to rein in your spending and start budgeting again. Bills will start coming in soon. Tonight: Fun does not have to cost much.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ You will want to make an effort to express yourself more fully. You might be tense most of the time, which holds you back. You need to choose a relaxing pastime to share with a friend or loved one that will open you up. Tonight: The night is yours.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Take off and go do what you want. You can head out alone or invite a like-minded person to join you. The sense of relaxation you experience as a result of this venture will help you return to your normal life feeling refreshed. Tonight: Use your free time well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Calls come in and invitations will be extended. You might want to get out and forget the holidays by joining your contemporaries. Opt to do what you enjoy most, but remember to put the company you choose as a higher priority. Tonight: Go to a spontaneous party.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Take charge, but also listen to someone who has been in a similar position. Perhaps you can delegate part of what falls on you to this person. Still, realize that the buck stops with you. Tonight: Meet friends.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Understanding evolves in a discussion; you will be able to walk in someone else's shoes as a result. You could gain an understanding because of your willingness to be open. Tonight: Go along with an imaginative idea.

Weekend Edition, December 28-29, 2013

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

This year you might be more deliberate in your choices than others realize. Follow-through counts. You also might choose to surround yourself with likeminded people. Still, know that you have a lot to gain from others whose minds work differently. If you are single, avoid getting involved with someone substantially older than you. You will have a very difficult time getting away from this person, should you change your mind. If you are attached, the two of you have strong commitments to other activities. Make it a point to get involved in a common interest. You both will enjoy being together more. SCORPIO understands you very well.

INTERESTED IN YOUR DAILY FORECAST?
Check out the HOROSCOPES above!
smdp.com Santa Monica Daily Press office **(310) 458-7737**

Speed Bump
By Dave Coverly



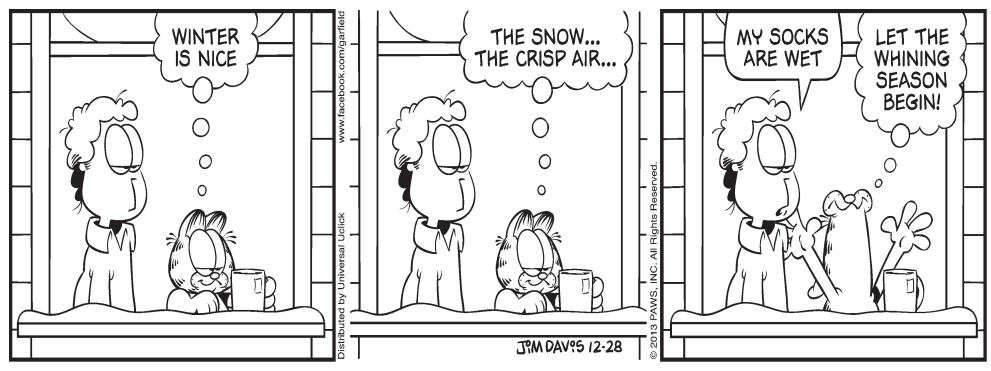
Strange Brew
By John Deering



Dogs of C-Kennel
By Mick and Mason Mastroianni



Garfield
By Jim Davis



The Meaning of Lila
By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



Sudoku

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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

'Tis the Season to
BUY LOCAL

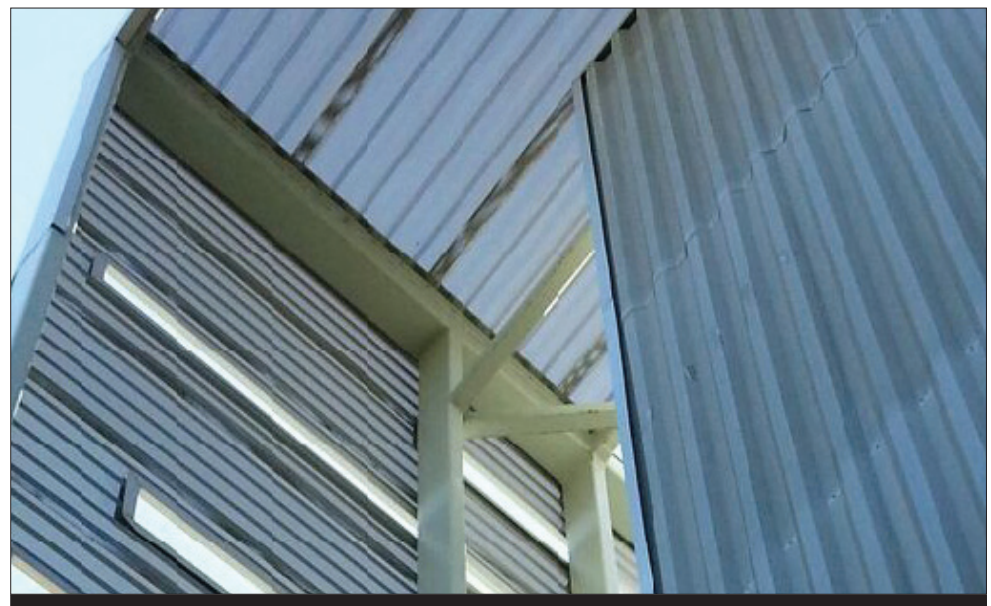


The Perfect Gift Guide 2013

...from stocking stuffers to handmade gems, bicycles to puzzles, party dresses to theater tickets, there's something for everyone! The full list of gift ideas at:

buylocalsantamonica.com/news-spotlights/

EAT LOCAL. PLAY LOCAL. SHOP LOCAL.



MYSTERY PHOTO

Daniel Archuleta *daniela@smdp.com*

The first person who can correctly identify where this image was captured wins a prize from the Santa Monica Daily Press. Send answers to *editor@smdp.com*. Send your mystery photos to *editor@smdp.com* to be used in future issues.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Take turns
5 Run up
10 Wine grape
12 Lightning home
13 Prelude
14 Swirly prints
15 Frat letter
16 Vitality
18 Chaotic spot
19 Rank
21 Sentence subject, usually
22 Ian McEwan book
24 Chopper part
25 Ian McEwan book
29 Fatigue
30 Did salon work
32 Radius' place
33 Sch. supporters
34 One, for Juan
35 Caribou's cousin
37 Eastern monks
39 Spoof
40 Subsequently
41 Puts away
42 Tall tales

DOWN

1 Barbecue rods
2 Candy-filled target
3 Sense
4 Postal oath word
5 Resting on
6 Subway aid
7 Warring woman
8 Fledgling plant
9 Squelched
11 Bun
17 It may start with "E"
20 Like Loki
21 Bookish, perhaps
23 Playthings for Zeus and Hera
25 Ventilate
26 Role for Peter Lorre
27 Homecoming group
28 Threat
29 Packs down
31 Medicine amounts
33 Stock holders
36 Scatter seeds
38 Suffer

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

12-28

NKLA

WE ARE THE BEST FRIENDS OF ANIMALS. WE ARE A MOVEMENT. WE ARE A COALITION OF ORGANIZATIONS AND PASSIONATE INDIVIDUALS DEDICATED TO MAKING LOS ANGELES A NO-KILL CITY. LAST YEAR, MORE THAN 17,000 HEALTHY OR TREATABLE ANIMALS WERE KILLED IN L.A. CITY SHELTERS. EACH ONE AN INDIVIDUAL. EACH ONE A LOVING PET WORTH SAVING. 17,000. THAT NUMBER SHOULD BE ZERO. AND IT CAN BE. THERE IS A SOLUTION, BUT ONLY IF THE PEOPLE WHO CARE WORK TOGETHER. JOIN US AND HELP MAKE L.A. INTO NKLA.

A BEST FRIENDS ANIMAL SOCIETY INITIATIVE



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Restaurant Startups: (1) Japan's "cat cafes" allow the pet-starved to relax while dining by caressing house kittens that roam the facilities, but similar eateries have opened recently featuring owls (the Fukurou Sabou in Tokyo, Owl Family in Osaka). (The owls are not caressable and easily spooked by excessive noise.) (2) Liu Pengfei's Five Loaves and Two Fish restaurant in Fuzhou, China, is losing money rapidly despite overflow dining crowds, according to a December China Daily report, because he allows customers to pay only what they wish. (They must also wash out their bowls.) "I want to continue," he said, "as I believe the feeling of trust is contagious." [News Limited (Sydney), 11-5-2013] [China Daily, 12-4-2013]

■ Professor Pietsch may know his anglerfish, but Marlene Zuk of the University of Minnesota knows her insects, including the mating mechanics of damselflies, crickets and cockroaches, which she described for The New York Times in November. The damselfly male's penis is a Swiss Army knife-like contraption (necessary to access the female's well-hidden eggs). The cricket easily produces sperm, but then awaits its draining through a "long stem" "for several minutes" to achieve fertilization. Cockroaches, Professor Zuk wrote, mate by "blind trust" as they hook up back-to-back and, with no neck, cannot even glance over a shoulder to check on their work. [New York Times, 11-30-2013]

TODAY IN HISTORY

2000 – U.S. retail giant Montgomery Ward announces it is going out of business after 128 years.

2008 – War in Somalia: The militaries of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government and Ethiopian troops capture Mogadishu unopposed.

2009 – 43 people die in a suicide bombing in Karachi, Pakistan, where Shia Muslims are observing the Day of Ashura.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Some restrictions may apply.

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*Please call our Classified Sales Manager to reserve your ad space. Specific ad placement not gauranteed on classified ads. Ad must meet deadline requirements. See complete conditions below.

CLASSIFICATIONS:

- Announcements
- Creative
- Employment
- For Sale
- Furniture
- Pets
- Boats
- Jewelry
- Wanted
- Travel
- Vacation Rentals
- Apartments/Condos
- Rent
- Houses for Rent
- Roomates
- Commerical Lease
- Real Estate
- Real Estate Loans
- Storage Space
- Vehicles for Sale
- Massage
- Services
- Computer Services
- Attorney Services
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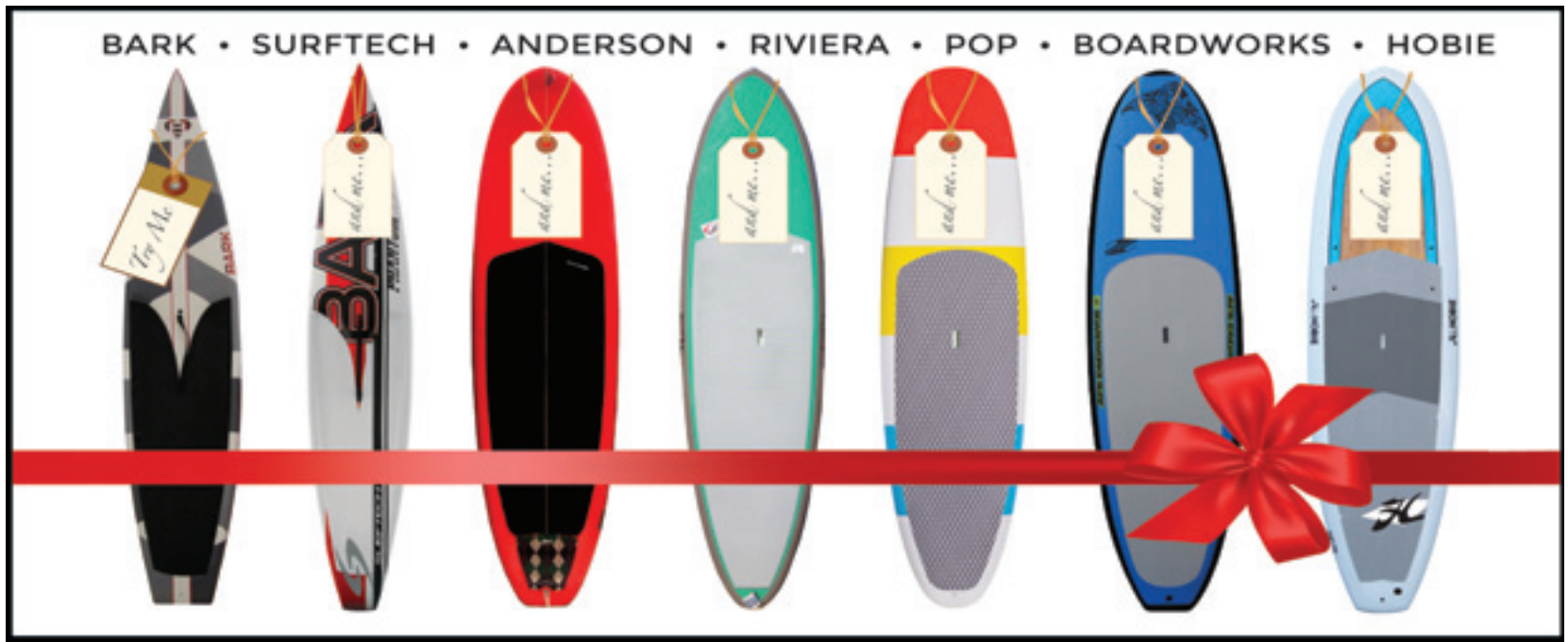
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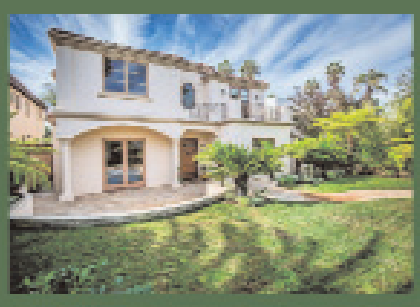
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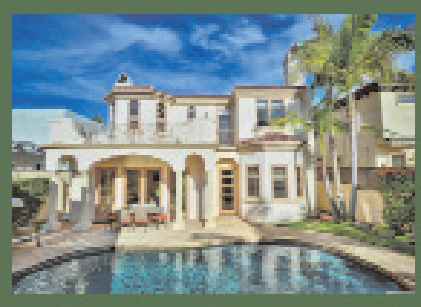
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- 632 16th Street
- $3,999,000
- Built in 2000
- 4 Bedrooms
- 4.5 Bathrooms
- Approximately 4,000 Sq Ft









Average Price of ALL Santa Monica Single Family Homes From ALL agents in ALL companies Listed for Sale as of Late December 2013			
Santa Monica Canyon	–	$	2,049,800
North of Montana	=	$	4,533,176
Between Wilshire & Montana	–	$	2,675,516
South of Wilshire	=	$	874,000
Sunset Park	–	$	1,738,286
Ocean Park	=	$	2,581,000
Statistics updated every Friday			

Buyers' Needs

I am currently working with fully qualified buyers looking for the following:

- Income Property/Teardown - Santa Monica or Brentwood - $1,000,000 - $4,000,000
- Single Family Home - Santa Monica, Brentwood, Palisades, Bel Air, Malibu, Westwood - Minimum 3+1.75 - Pool of Room for a Pool - $1,200,000 - $3,000,000

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