THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2005 Volume 5, Issue 40

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO
3 4 20 39 40
Meganumber: 3
Jackpot: $48 Million

FANTASY 5
4 24 34 36 37

DAILY 3
Daytime: 4 3 7
Evening: 6 0 7

DAILY DERBY
1st: 06 Whirl Win
2nd: 02 Lucky Star
3rd: 05 California Classic

RACE TIME: 1:44.05

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



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ The Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam, Netherlands, announced recently that retail studies student Wendy Rameckers had designed a wall with rows of silicon breasts in various shapes, primarily, she said, to help male shoppers decide what size bra to buy for their women. And prominent British futurist Ian Pearson of BT Laboratories told reporters in October that he could see the day when breast implants housed MP3 players (sending signals to a woman's headphones), to give the implants some actual functionality.

■ The gigantic hit TV series "Frasier" grossed $1.5 billion during its 11-year run, but according to the show's executives (responding to a recent lawsuit by the program's creators for a greater share of the "profits"), the traditional Hollywood accounting methods reveal that the show earned no profit over its lifetime but actually lost $200 million.

■ Large Rubber Exercise Balls (Christopher Bjerkness, 27, pleaded guilty in August in Duluth, Minn., to slashing almost 100 exercise balls at fitness centers because of what he told police was a sexual urge).

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Frisbeetarianism is the belief that when you die, your soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck."

GEORGE CARLIN
US COMEDIAN AND ACTOR

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The keys to packing it in



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Lucy Siam, 77, a tenant of Lincoln Place since 1974, stands in front of a new art piece titled, 'The Tree of 180 Keys' at Lincoln Place. The keys were made from packing materials and hang on a 24-foot-tall 'Holiday Tree' at the make-shift Lincoln Place tent city in Venice. The number of keys represents the number of families who were evicted to make way for a condominium development. On Dec. 6, 58 families at Lincoln Place were locked out of their homes — the largest single day eviction in the history of Los Angeles, tenants said. In March, the remaining 86 households, which have extensions due to disability and advanced age, will be locked out as well.

117th Rose Parade rolls on Monday

BY SANDY COHEN
AP Entertainment Writer

PASADENA, Calif. — In the land of perennial youth and movie star beauty, most centenarians just can't compete.

That's why the Rose Parade is getting a major makeover — for the first time in 117 years.

With CBS having quietly decided after 45 years to drop its coverage, parade organizers, hoping to keep TV viewers and the remaining broadcasting outlets happy, have ratcheted up the rolling flowerfest's entertainment quotient.

So, the annual Tournament of Roses on Monday — a day later than usual because of a "never on Sunday" policy — will kick off with a splashy performance by Grammy-winning singer LeAnn Rimes — complete with dancers and aerial performers.

The extravaganza will be jazzed up further by mid-parade performances — yes, the whole parade will roll to a pause — by singer Toni Braxton and magician Lance Burton.

The fans along the parade route, however, aren't likely to see the entertaining new additions, which have been designed primarily for the TV audience.

"We look at it as we're putting on a parade for television," said Caryn Eaves, spokeswoman for the Tournament of Roses Association. "There are a million people on the parade route every year. Really, we don't need any more."

What the parade does need is television exposure. Broadcast coverage is a longtime tradition and a means of massive international outreach, said Bill Flinn, chief operating officer of the Tournament of Roses Association.

"TV is the way of taking this small-town festival in California and sharing it with the world," he said, noting the "tremendous marketing opportunities" associated with the parade, which, even without CBS' participation, will be broadcast to 120 countries. In the U.S., where it will be seen on ABC, NBC and a slew of other

See ROSE PARADE, page 7

Overlay is on its way soon

New dialing procedure to kick in next year

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE — Time is running out for Santa Monicans to make local calls that won't require having to dial an area code.

A circular has recently shown up in local mailboxes sent by phone carriers which explains to Santa Monicans the new dialing procedures that will begin in the city and surrounding areas starting Saturday, Dec. 31.

But fear not — phone customers will have nearly seven months before they're required to dial 11 digits.

The new dialing procedures are the result of an overlay of the existing 310 area code that was approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in August.

The overlay does not require customers to change their existing area code. However, new telephone numbers added in the communities surrounding Malibu to Ranchos

See OVERLAY, page 5

STATE

Jury duty a deed to be done online

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Jurors have it easier in Los Angeles.

Jurors can now reschedule their service and retrieve reporting information from the Superior Court's Web site at www.lasuperiorcourt.org/jury.

Jury services administrator Frances G. Johnson said surveys showed jurors wanted the courts to have a better Web site.

"As you can imagine, sometimes the telephone lines get busy or there's not enough staff to answer all the calls," Johnson said.

Eventually, the Web site will allow jurors to make requests to be excused, transfer their service to other courthouses and ask customer service agents questions, court spokesman Allan Parachini said in a statement.

"Using the court's Web site gives jurors the flexibility they want for scheduling and performing their jury service," Presiding Judge William A. MacLaughlin said.

The Riverside Superior Court has a similar program where jurors can check in over the Internet.

Those who skip jury duty can be fined between $250 and $1,500.



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HOROSCOPE

Early to bed, Cancer

Santa Monica Daily Press



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)
★★★★★ A morning thought or dream could point you in a successful and rewarding direction. A conversation or an excursion to get more information adds dynamite to your ideas. Don't hesitate to rearrange your plans. Tonight: Opt for something different.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Somehow you understand a partner better. Perhaps he or she is more willing to express what is on his or her mind. A conversation could revitalize a bond. Don't hold back — not now. This talk is only the beginning. Tonight: Hang out with just one person.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Though you wake up full of ideas and creative thoughts, others might be less inspired. Remember, you cannot change anyone. Don't get into an "I am right, you are wrong" situation. Tonight: A talk heals if you are willing not to judge.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Take it easy, as you have a tendency to put too much on your plate. Others will pitch in gladly if you just ask, regarding work or personal projects. Make an appointment for a checkup with the doc or dentist in the near future. Tonight: Early to bed.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Your mischievousness wears someone out. Together, or even with many others, you could have an unusually creative and fun day. Depending on what is on your agenda, let go. If working, plan a special get-together for after work. Tonight: Be more kidlike.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ You are unusually clear. As a result, a conversation carries a lot of punch. You might have a lot more going on with you than you know. If you're not happy with an aspect of your life, discuss different possibilities. Tonight: Remember that nothing is impossible.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Finally, you are not talking to thin air. Someone gets your message. Lighten up and be willing to change your plans or your perspective and to adapt to others. A new heartthrob or child could be knocking on your door. Tonight: Breeze around with a friend or loved one.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Now you can take charge and organize your bills. Perhaps you need to make a purchase for a tax deduction. Do it before it is too late. Add to the quality of your life. What would that item be? Tonight: Revise your budget.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ You wake up feeling different than you have in a long time. Either a dream or a strong sixth sense directs your communications, possibly to make a call or buy a new computer. You get information that might cause you to think through a problem. Tonight: Open your eyes and see who and what surrounds you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Take your time with an expenditure. You are probably right-on about a money matter, but do some checking. Seek out experts or someone who knows more than you. Still, you might want to go ahead, no matter what you hear. Tonight: Be unavailable — for the most part.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ You usually don't see eye to eye with a friend, but right now you can talk turkey with this person. As a result, you might change your mind or decide to distance yourself from him or her. You also might not be seeing the big picture. Tonight: Among friends.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ You might be picking up where someone else left off. Make it your pleasure. In the long run, your diligence and adaptability make you a sure winner. Don't hesitate to put in an extra hour or two on a project. Tonight: Forget about getting extra sleep.

CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL AUDIT PENDING

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LOCAL

When push comes to shove



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Wayne Dickens, a cart valet at the Santa Monica Pier, pushes a cart one recent morning. He takes eight carts out in the morning and brings them back in the evening.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Shelter from the storm

By Daily Press staff

A local group of volunteers are offering a warm shelter for those living on the streets during the winter months.

Volunteers of America Los Angeles announced that for the second consecutive year, it is providing shelter services for homeless men and women during the coldest months of 2006. The winter shelters offer a warm, supportive environment seven days a week from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. Winter shelter guests are given a hot meal in the evening and breakfast each morning. Hygiene and toiletry essentials are provided along with a cot and warm bedding.

"What makes Volunteers of America's winter shelter program so unique is that we provide more than just a warm place to sleep at night. We work closely with our guests, taking an interest in their personal progress," says James Howat, director of adult services for the organization. "These are men and women who are experiencing a crisis in their lives and we believe that everyone, given a chance, has the ability to guide their lives and improve their situation. We treat our winter shelter guests with dignity and respect and offer case management and referral services that promote self-reliance."

Volunteers of America Los Angeles is operating three winter shelter programs located in Culver City, West Los Angeles and Sylmar. Over 450 homeless men and women are served each night.

CORRECTION — In the Wednesday, Dec. 28 issue of the Santa Monica Daily Press, there was a correction regarding the statements made by sources in the Tuesday Dec. 27 article, "Alleged misconduct at Woodlawn."

Irma Rodriguez-Moisa of Liebert, Cassidy and Whitmore was a speaker quoted. Rodriguez-Moisa represents City Hall in the case. Her role is to advocate City Hall's position to the personnel board.

Irma Rodriguez-Vargas is the chair of the personnel board, which is hearing the case.

Deputy City Attorney Carol Kurtz's role at the hearing, and the role of the city attorney's office at such hearings, is to advise the personnel board.

SNOW AND SURF REPORTS

CONDITIONS

DATA PROVIDED BY ONTHESNOW.COM

BEAR MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:00am - 4:00pm	8	9/12

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed, Hard Packed, Thin Cover

JUNE MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	36" - 36"	8:30am - 4:00pm	35	6/6

CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder, Machine Groomed, Obstacles

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	84" - 96"	8:30 am - 4 pm	150	10/26

CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

MOUNTAIN HIGH

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	8"-10"	8:00 am - 10:00 pm	9	8/16

CONDITIONS: Hard Packed, Frozen Granular, Thin Cover

MT. BALDY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	0"-1"	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	0	0

CONDITIONS: N/A

SNOW SUMMIT

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:00 am - 6:00 pm	8	8/13

CONDITIONS: Machine Groomed, Hard Packed, Thin Cover

SNOW VALLEY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:00 am - 9:00 pm	5	5/11

CONDITIONS: Machine Made, Machine Groomed

CONDITIONS WATER TEMP: 59°

DATA PROVIDED BY WETSAND.COM

SWELL FORECAST (8-14 FT)

Today this system should peak with size in the DOH zone for standouts, 2-3 feet overhead consistently at most all west-facing breaks as a minimum. Note also that standouts could see set waves with faces as high as 14-feet at times; although, these will be rare. Having such long periods though, this swell will inevitably hit west facing breaks with varying size depending on the bathymetry of each surf spot, and its corresponding shoaling and refraction properties.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

Significant NW swell hits New Years Day, and builds on 2nd...

TIDE FORECAST FOR SANTA MONICA

SATURDAY				
LOW TIDE:	11:03PM	2.0FT	9:38PM	1.7FT
HIGH TIDE:	4:15AM	4.4FT	4:06PM	3.0FT
SUNDAY				
LOW TIDE:	11:56PM	1.3FT	10:23PM	2.0FT
HIGH TIDE:	4:45AM	4.8FT	5:38PM	3.0FT
MONDAY				
LOW TIDE:	12:39PM	0.5FT	11:08PM	2.2FT
HIGH TIDE:	5:17AM	5.2FT	6:48PM	3.1FT
TUESDAY				
LOW TIDE:	1:17PM	-0.1FT	11:53PM	2.3FT
HIGHTIDE:	5:50AM	5.7FT	7:42PM	3.3FT
WEDNESDAY				
LOW TIDE:	12:56PM	-0.7FT	N/A	N/A
HIGH TIDE:	6:27AM	6.1FT	8:28PM	3.5FT
THURSDAY				
LOW TIDE:	12:38AM	2.3FT	2:36PM	-1.2FT
HIGH TIDE:	7:07AM	6.5FT	9:11PM	3.6FT
FRIDAY				
LOW TIDE:	1:02AM	1.7FT	3:04PM	-0.9FT
HIGH TIDE:	7:39AM	5.9FT	9:40PM	3.1FT

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The Q Line

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There's a lot of issues facing Santa Monica and 2006 is shaping up to be a big year of changes. New leadership in the City Manager's office, a new homeless czar and a new president at SMC will all happen in January, as well as a major revamp on a citywide plan that will shape development for the next 20 years here.

So this week Q-Line asks **"What should the City Council's resolutions be for 2006?"**

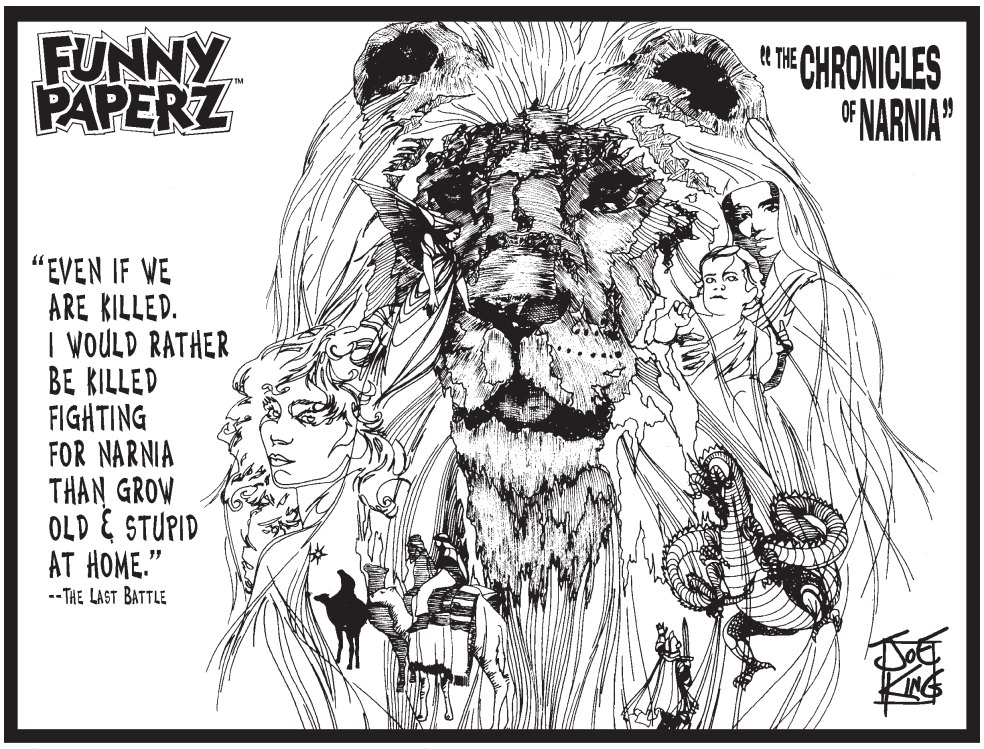
Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your responses in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Affordable housing is beneficial

Editor:

Clean, centrally located and affordable housing benefits all of us on a social, as well as economic level. I believe this is the reasoning behind rent control. Affordable housing is too important a task to be left to individual landlords who often are unwilling or unable to maintain their buildings to the standards we would all hope for. I suggest the city of Santa Monica initiate a general tax that would be used to subsidize individual landlords and to offer incentives to developers to build more affordable housing. Only when the entire community participates in the solution will we see a real and lasting improvement in the quality of life for renters.

Jack L. Allen
Santa Monica

Driving on the phone is deadly

Editor:

This is an open letter to the California legislature to enact a state-wide ban on the use of cell phones while driving. Two weeks ago my fiancé was in a head-on collision auto accident. The driver of the other car was talking on his cell phone, while also looking for papers in his car. He swerved to avoid one car, gambling that he would not hit oncoming traffic. The result was my fiancé was hit, his BMW completely totaled. God must have been watching because he survived with only a chest wall injury. He could have died. Many states have enacted a law against using a cell phone while driving. California should join this number.

Sunny Kreis
Santa Monica

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 editor@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.

Bitch! Whine! Complain!
Check Out the Question of the Week on Page 3 and let us hear what you have to say
The Q Line

GUEST COMMENTARY **BY KEITH LOCKITCH**

'Intelligent Design' is inherently religious

A judge in Dover, Penn., has ruled that "it is unconstitutional to teach intelligent design as an alternative to evolution in a public school science classroom" — on the grounds that "intelligent design is a religious view." Advocates of "intelligent design" are outraged; the Discovery Institute, the leading organization promoting the theory, calls it an "attempt to censor science education." But "intelligent design" can play no part in a proper science education, because it is an inherently unscientific theory.

Proponents of "intelligent design" aggressively market their viewpoint as real science, insisting it is not religiously based. Writes one leading advocate, Michael Behe: "The conclusion of intelligent design flows naturally from the data itself — not from sacred books or sectarian beliefs."

Proponents of "intelligent design" claim that Darwinian evolution is a fundamentally flawed theory — that there are certain complex features of living organisms evolution simply cannot explain, but which can be explained as the handiwork of an "intelligent designer."

Their viewpoint is not religiously based, they insist, because it does not require that the "intelligent designer" be God. "Design," writes another leading proponent, William Dembski, "requires neither magic nor miracles nor a creator."

Indeed, "design" apparently requires surprisingly little of the "designer's" identity: "Inferences to design," contends Behe, "do not require that we have a candidate for the role of designer." According to its advocates, the "designer" responsible for "intelligent design" in biology could be any sort of "creative intelligence" capable of engineering the basic elements of life. Some have even seriously nominated advanced space aliens for the role.

Their premise seems to be that as long as they don't explicitly name the "designer" — as long as they allow that the "designer" could be a naturally existing being, a being accessible to scientific study — that this somehow saves their viewpoint from the charge of being inherently religious in character.

But does it?

Imagine we discovered an alien on Mars with a penchant for bio-engineering. Could such a natural being fulfill the requirements of an "intelligent designer?"

It could not. Such a being would not actually account for the complexity that "design" proponents seek to explain. Any natural being capable of "designing" the complex features of earthly life would, on their premises, require its own "designer." If "design" can be inferred merely from observed complexity, then our purported Martian "designer" would be just another complex being in nature that supposedly cannot be explained without positing another "designer." One does not explain complexity by dreaming up a new complexity as its cause.

By the very nature of its approach, "intelligent design" cannot be satisfied with a "designer" who is part of the natural world. Such a "designer" would not answer the basic question its advocates raise: it would not explain biological complexity as such. The only "designer" that would stop their quest for a "design" explanation of complexity is a "designer" about whom one cannot ask any questions or who cannot be subjected to any kind of scientific study — a "designer" that "transcends" nature and its laws — a "designer" not susceptible of rational explanation — in short: a supernatural "designer."

Its advertising to the contrary notwithstanding, "intelligent design" is inherently a quest for the supernatural. Only one "candidate for the role of designer" need apply. Dembski himself — even while trying to deny this implication — concedes that "if there is design in biology and cosmology, then that design could not be the work of an evolved intelligence." It must, he admits, be that of a "transcendent intelligence" to whom he euphemistically refers as "the big G."

The supposedly nonreligious theory of "intelligent design" is nothing more than a crusade to peddle religion by giving it the veneer of science — to pretend, as one commentator put it, that "faith in God is something that holds up under the microscope."

The insistence of "intelligent design" advocates that they are "agnostic regarding the source of design" is a bait-and-switch. They dangle out the groundless possibility of a "designer" who is susceptible of scientific study — in order to hide their real agenda of promoting faith in the supernatural. Their scientifically accessible "designer" is nothing more than a gateway god — metaphysical marijuana intended to draw students away from natural, scientific explanations and get them hooked on the supernatural.

No matter how fervently its salesmen wish "intelligent design" to be viewed as cutting-edge science, there is no disguising its true character. It is nothing more than a religiously motivated attack on science, and should be rejected as such.

(Keith Lockitch, Ph.D. in physics, is a fellow at the Ayn Rand Institute in Irvine. The Institute promotes the ideas of Ayn Rand, best-selling author of "Atlas Shrugged" and "The Fountainhead.")

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LOCAL

Santa Monicans get grace period in westside overlay

OVERLAY, from page 1

Palos Verdes, and some inland areas beyond Interstate 405, will be assigned the separate area code of 424. The new area code also will include some of those requesting new lines being added to existing ones.

Beginning on Dec. 31, customers canbegin to familiarize themselves with the new system, phone carriers said.

All land line calls within the 310 area code that are currently dialed with seven digits will need to be dialed using a 1, plus area code, plus telephone number, phone carriers said.

To complete local calls, users may dial the area code, plus the telephone number or dial 1, plus area code, plus the telephone number.

According to phone carriers, Dec. 31 through July 26 will be a grace period during which calls not made with the new procedure will still go through.

By July 26, callers must use the new dialing procedure to complete calls.

By Aug. 26, phone carriers will begin to hand out 424 numbers, according to the CPUC.

The price of a call, coverage area or other rates will not change due to the overlay, phone carriers said. What is a local call now will remain a local call regardless of the number of digits dialed.

Phone customers can still dial three digits to reach 911 emergency services, as well as 211, 311, 411, 511, 611 and 711.

In approving the overlay, the CPUC rescinded the previously adopted plan for a geographic split of the 310 area code, which the CPUC leaned toward in 2000. The split would have created a new 424 area code south of the Imperial Highway, leaving the rest of the 310 region untouched.

The overlay, the change preferred by the major telephone companies, will create new 424 lines within the same region as existing 310 lines — a change that will result in residents having to dial 11 digits to call even a next-door neighbor.

Opponents of the overlay worked to block the efforts of T-Mobile, Nextel of California, Verizon Wireless, Sprint, SBC and other major phone companies.

While the overlay will force Westside residents to dial an area code when making local calls, it will allow existing business owners to avoid reprinting office stationery and business cards, the CPUC pointed out. Because a split would not have affected local businesses, the Santa Monica City Council had passed a resolution against the proposed overlay.

As of August, there were an estimated 381,000 available phone numbers remaining with the 310 area code, according to the CPUC.

The new 424 area code debate was born in 1999 when the CPUC considered an overlay to meet rapidly growing demand. Talk of overlay soon triggered a public outcry, which swayed the commission to instead implement number-conservation measures.

While the CPUC's efforts served as a temporary remedy, growing demand in the 310 area returned the issue to the forefront.

One conservation method used was "pooling," which allowed telephone companies to obtain only 1,000 phone numbers at a time rather than the usual 10,000, according to the CPUC.

Before "pooling" was used, carriers often bought out large blocks of numbers, without having enough customers, leaving some numbers to go unused for a length of time.







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STATE

STATE BRIEFS

Bite by bite: Mission chapel does battle with termites

By The Associated Press

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. — Termites have been feasting on the 229-year-old Mission San Juan Capistrano.

The mission chapel and four other mission buildings were tented by exterminators and a fumigation fog was released Tuesday in the structure's first massive pest eradication operation since the mission was founded on Nov. 1, 1776.

"We wanted to reinforce wood beams and other wood structures in the Serra Chapel when we realized the damage was considerable," the mission's executive director Mechelle Lawrence said.

The work was expected to take all week. The chapel and other buildings will be closed until Friday, but the mission's Soldier's Barracks, Great Stone Church and outdoor areas, which are not being fumigated, are open.

Drivers no longer in a rut

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa symbolically filled a rut in the street and proclaimed victory in Operation Pothole, which he launched in September to smooth the ride through the nation's second-largest city.

Villaraigosa kicked off the program with a promise to fill 35,000 potholes, but street repair crews eventually filled in 80,173 ruts in city streets.

"When we started this, we were looking to fill 35,000 potholes and I said that wasn't good enough," Villaraigosa said. "That's when I said we would do 50,000. Well, we did better than that. We did more than 80,000."

Villaraigosa has made transportation one of his top priorities, setting aside $11 million in gas-tax revenues from Proposition 42 funding for street improvements. Potholes became an issue during Villaraigosa's successful campaign against former Mayor James Hahn this year.

The thieves that stole Jesus

By The Associated Press

ONTARIO, Calif. — Police and others are seeking Jesus.

A 6-foot papier-mache Jesus statue was stolen from one of the 12 Nativity Scene displays along Euclid Avenue sometime Monday night.

"They really mean a lot to the community, so it really bothers me to see this happening," said Tom Burciaga, who coordinates assembly of the Nativity Scenes for the Chamber of Commerce.

Police were notified of the theft about 8:30 a.m. Tuesday after a worker noticed the statue was missing. A broadcast was put out to officers on patrol and other law enforcement agencies to be on the lookout for the statue, which is worth up to $8,000.

The Nativity figures were handmade by the late sculptor Rudolph Vargas, who also sculpted figures for Disneyland's Pirates of the Caribbean, Haunted Mansion and It's a Small World attractions.

Police said more than one culprit was likely responsible for the theft.

"It usually takes about two to three people to set up due to the weight," Officer Maria Paredes said.

Mayor seeks recall petitions due to language barrier

By The Associated Press

ROSEMEAD, Calif. — Mayor Jay Imperial filed suit against the city claiming recall petitions seeking his ouster should have been in multiple languages.

The successful petition drive triggered a Feb. 7 recall vote. The petitions were in English.

"Today I requested that the federal court review the petitions used in the Rosemead recall effort to determine their compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act," Imperial wrote in a statement presented Tuesday night to the City Council.

Imperial said non-English speakers in the city were duped into signing the petitions.

"My council colleagues chose not to seek such a review, and by their action put the validity of the Feb. 7 election in real jeopardy," Imperial continued. "They also invited anyone who disagreed with them to file an action seeking a judicial review of the petitions. I have taken that action."

The U.S. District Court lawsuit was filed Tuesday.

Save Our Community member Julie Wang said Imperial's suit is an effort to undermine the rights of the residents who signed the petition, largely to oppose his support of a Wal-Mart Supercenter.

Imperial and Councilman Gary Taylor are the targets of a recall vote on Feb. 7. Residents angry with Imperial's and Taylor's support of Wal-Mart started the recall drive earlier this year.

No more freaking going on at high school

By The Associated Press

ARCADIA, Calif. — Freaking, a teen dance craze condemned by school administrators because pelvic grinding allegedly simulates sex, is now forbidden at Arcadia High School.

Freaking has been around for at least five years, but things got wild at the school's recent homecoming dance. School officials put their foot down: no more freaking.

"It's been around for a while. I think we've seen kind of an escalation in it over the past few years," assistant principal John Tipton said.

Students must now agree to a standard of decency at school dances.

STATE

CBS's pullout of parade a 'business decision'

ROSE PARADE, from page 1

outlets, it is expected to be viewed in some part by about 50 million viewers.

"These are all audiences that companies want to reach (by joining the parade), and reach in a festive manner like this," Flinn said.

When companies such as Ivory and American Honda pay $6,250 to enter their flower-covered creations in the annual procession, they're guaranteed worldwide exposure.

Not that CBS' absence won't be felt.

Wayne Curley, a technician who has coordinated television transmission of the Rose Parade for 25 years, said the CBS pullout is the "biggest change" he's seen in his time with the parade.

As other outlets came and went, "you could just about count on CBS" to provide coverage, he said.

"This was strictly a business decision," said CBS spokesman Chris Ender. "With so many outlets covering it, we weren't giving the viewers anything unique."

The network's ratings for Rose Parade programming have steadily declined since 1988. Instead of showing the parade on Jan. 2, CBS will air its regular morning news program, "The Early Show," followed by "a soap opera or 'The Price is Right,' depending on the market," Ender said.

Still, there'll be no shortage of cameras along the parade route. Despite the declining ratings, nine cable and network channels will offer live parade coverage, starting at 11 a.m. EST.

"The (ratings) numbers have gone down, primarily because the number of outlets covering it have increased," said Curt Sharp, NBC's vice president of alternative programs and specials. "It will be interesting to see if having fewer broadcasters in the space increases our rating." NBC has televised the parade annually since 1954.

The tournament does not charge TV outlets for the right to televise the event, but each pays a fee to a local property owner for camera positions.

Tournament of Roses President Libby Evans Wright insists that plans to include entertainment elements in the 2006 parade were in place before CBS opted out. The additions were based on years of market research that found viewers wanting more entertainment from the petal-pumped procession, Wright said.

"When you're looking at yourself as a brand or a product or a business, you always want to keep renewing yourself," she said. "You want to keep yourself vibrant and interesting to your market."

The parade's new opening and other featured performances will be held at the intersection of Orange Grove and Colorado boulevards, known as "TV corner," Wright said. Fans situated there can behold the performances live. Others will have to catch them on TV.

Parade regulars don't seem to mind. Star power isn't what brings them to the event.

"People come to see it live so they can smell the flowers," said annual attendee Harvey Carey, 56. "It's the sense of being here; that's the attraction of the Rose Parade."

Albert Lee, who works at a restaurant along the parade route, said sidewalk watchers are "hardcore fans" who focus on the floats.

"I don't think they care if they see celebrities," he said. "They're here for the free show."

It's still smart for the Tournament of Roses to freshen up the festivities with made-for-TV elements, said NBC's Sharp.

"They need to continue to make it entertaining and relevant to today's audiences," he said.

The Tournament plans to explore Internet and telephone broadcast opportunities in the future, Flinn said.

Cheryl Ceccetto, producer of this year's Academy Awards Governors Ball and other Hollywood events, is behind the 2 1/2 minute opening. She was invited to "give the parade a kick-start and take it to a new level," she said.

"The parade is always fantastic," she said. "But jewels on any outfit always add."

The jewels might need an umbrella, however. On Wednesday, weather forecasters predicted a 50 percent chance of precipitation Monday. If they're correct, it'll be the first rain on parade day in 51 years.

No matter: Rain or shine, the parade will go on, Tournament of Roses officials said.

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Business

Simple tips for building your nest egg



MARKET MATTERS
BY BRIAN HEPP

If you've been paying attention to national news headlines, you're probably familiar with the fact that Americans are not doing a very good job of saving money. It used to be that everyday people would regularly put away money for the fabled "rainy day," socking away more than 10 percent of their income two decades ago. Unfortunately, that percentage has actually turned negative in recent years, meaning we are spending more, saving less, and even going into debt.

To highlight the current state of savings habits, A.G. Edwards recently released the results of a study known as the "Nest Egg Index," which ranked the top 200 communities across the country, and the 50 states, based on residents' personal savings and investing behavior. Some areas of the country are doing better than others. California, for example, finished 32nd in the rankings.

So what should we take away from these results? For one thing, saving doesn't have to be a long, complicated process — it can actually be broken down into several simple steps. In the first of this two-part series, we'll discuss the first half of a dozen simple tips:

■ Start early. Time is your biggest ally in building a nest egg. Whether you're teaching your children the value of saving at an early age, or even if you use a major life event such as a job change to kick-start your own savings plan, time works to your advantage — typically in the form of compounding interest or dividends on your savings.

■ Stop procrastinating. Some people suffer an early defeat simply because the task may seem daunting. The first step is to sit down and make a plan, setting long-term savings goals first. From there, you can fill in any short- and medium-term objectives, and calculate what you'll need to set aside from each paycheck to meet all your goals. The important thing is to just get started, and you can keep the momentum going by making savings an activity that continues even after you've achieved your shorter-term objectives.

■ Prioritize your long-term nest egg needs. Some goals are best met using savings versus debt, but you need to distinguish the two. For example, if saving for both college and retirement proves to be too much, you're probably better off taking out loans for college than trying to borrow to pay post-retirement living expenses. You need to set savings priorities and then find ways to address them.

■ Pay yourself first. You've probably heard this one before, and it truly is one of the keys to savings success. Saving should be just as routine as paying the bills. Take advantage of tools such as direct deposit to divert even a small amount of each paycheck into a savings or investment account. By putting it away first, you're less likely to spend on impulse items or other things that don't fit with your long-term plans.

■ Participate in employer-sponsored savings and retirement plans. Making pre-tax contributions to your employer's 401(k) plan — or other similar savings vehicles — can help you build your long-term savings more quickly. In addition, your employer may even offer some form of a matching contribution, which would essentially mean you'd be getting paid to save. There are several other advantages to these types of plans, so you'll definitely want to explore your options if you're not already participating.

■ Diversify. Spread your savings out across a variety of investments, such as stocks and bonds in a number of different industries and market segments. Proper allocation helps avoid unnecessary risks, and adds balance to your savings portfolio.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. Check back on Jan. 12 for the second half of our list of savings tips.

(Brian Hepp is a financial consultant for Santa Monica-based A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc. Member SIPC. He can be reached at (310) 453-0077 or at brian.hepp@agedwards.com. A.G. Edwards is a full-service retail brokerage firm that offers a complete spectrum of financial products and services, including stocks, bonds and mutual funds, financial retirement planning and tax-advantage investments.)

Former Qwest executive Marc Weisberg admits to fraud

BY JON SARCHE
Associated Press Writer

DENVER — Former Qwest Communications executive Marc Weisberg pleaded guilty Wednesday to wire fraud and agreed to cooperate with federal prosecutors trying to convict former Chief Executive Joseph Nacchio of illegally dumping more than $100 million in stock.

Weisberg, a former senior vice president who oversaw investments, mergers and acquisitions for Denver-based Qwest Communications International Inc., pleaded guilty to a single count of fraud. He had faced eight counts of wire fraud and three counts of money laundering.

The plea came a week after Nacchio was indicted on 42 counts of insider trading and on the same day that Enron's former top accountant, Richard Causey, pleaded guilty to securities fraud and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors investigating the Houston company.

"In today's atmosphere, there is simply too great a risk that a jury may be persuaded to paint Mr. Weisberg with the broad brush of alleged impropriety at Qwest," defense attorneys Stephen Peters and Gary Lozow said in a statement.

Prosecutors declined comment. They have said their investigation of Qwest is substantially complete with Nacchio's indictment.

Weisberg, who is free on $1 million unsecured bond, faces a March 3 sentencing hearing.

Prosecutors have said Weisberg's case was not directly connected to the accounting scandal that forced Qwest to restate billions in revenue. Instead, they accused Weisberg of improperly earning $2.9 million for himself, family members and friends from 1999 to 2001 by demanding that vendors offer them shares in other companies in return for doing business

See QWEST, page 9



Qwest will settle $400M in shareholder claims

QWEST, from page 8

with Qwest, the telephone provider for 14 mostly Western states.

In a plea agreement filed with a federal judge, Weisberg admitted to buying stock in a California company in March 2000 and failing to report the deal to Qwest. He sold the stock in 2001 at a loss of about $529,000, the document said.

Prosecutors said they will seek 60 days of in-home detention, two years of probation and a $250,000 fine against Weisberg, 48. He had faced decades in prison, huge fines and forfeiture of $2.9 million if convicted of the original charges.

Weisberg joins former Qwest Chief Financial Officer Robin Szeliga as a potential witness in future cases. She pleaded guilty in July to one count of insider trading and agreed to cooperate with investigators. In addition, former Qwest President Afshin Mohebbi has been granted immunity and is expected to testify.

The plea deal could mean prosecutors are concerned about their case against Nacchio — or it could mean Weisberg can provide important testimony, said Jacob Frenkel, a former federal prosecutor and former lawyer for the Securities and Exchange Commission.

"The government would certainly love to be able to expand its indictment against Mr. Nacchio," he said. "The government wants to have cooperating senior executives in the fold as cooperating witnesses because corporate fraud cases are difficult cases to prove and they almost always turn on the help of senior insiders. (Prosecutors) need to know who was saying what to whom."

The charges against Nacchio and the deal with Weisberg come three years after the government trumpeted the first indictments in the Qwest investigation as an example of the crackdown on white-collar crime.

Nacchio is accused of illegally selling off $101 million in stock over five months in 2001 after learning the company might not meet its financial goals and keeping that information from stockholders. Prosecutors have refused to discuss who allegedly warned Nacchio about revenue problems at Qwest.

The government has said Qwest and some of its former executives participated in a massive fraud between April 1999 and March 2002 by falsely reporting one-time sales or trades of capacity on its fiber-optic cables as recurring revenue.

The fraud allowed Qwest to improperly book approximately $3 billion in revenue that eased its 2000 merger with U S West Inc. and helped various executives to reap millions in "ill-gotten" profits, the government has said. Qwest later restated earnings from 2000 and 2001 to erase about $2.2 billion in revenue.

Two former mid-level executives were acquitted of wire fraud and conspiracy charges in 2004. Two others later pleaded guilty to reduced charges and agreed to cooperate with investigators.

Last month, Qwest said it would pay $400 million to settle the claims of tens of thousands of shareholders who purchased Qwest securities. The company earlier agreed to pay $250 million to settle Securities and Exchange Commission charges of fraud without admitting wrongdoing.

Timeline of Qwest woes

By The Associated Press

Chronology of accounting practices and federal investigations of Qwest Communications International Inc.:

2001:

■ June 20: Morgan Stanley downgrades Qwest stock after analyst questions accounting practices. Qwest Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Nacchio later disputes the claim.

2002:

■ Feb. 11: Qwest cooperates with government subpoena concerning its swap of fiber-optic network capacity with Global Crossing Ltd.

■ April 4: Qwest says SEC has begun formal inquiry into its accounting practices.

■ June 16: Nacchio resigns as chairman and CEO.

■ July 10: Justice Department confirms criminal investigation of Qwest.

■ July 29: Qwest says it will restate 2000 and 2001 earnings.

■ Aug. 20: Qwest avoids bankruptcy with sale of its yellow pages business for more than $7 billion.

■ Sept. 22: Qwest reverses $950 million in revenue from fiber-optic capacity swaps.

■ Oct. 29: Qwest says it will restate $531 million in improperly recognized revenue and take nearly $11 billion in charges for reduced value of telephone and fiber-optic networks.

■ Nov. 15: Qwest says it will erase $358 million in earnings for 2000 and 2001.

2003:

■ Feb. 11: Qwest lowers 2000 and 2001 revenue by $2.2 billion, and later reports a $35.9 billion loss for 2002.

■ Feb. 25: Four former Qwest executives indicted on conspiracy and securities fraud charges.

■ Aug. 28: Chief Financial Officer Robin Szeliga leaves the company.

■ Oct. 16: Qwest files restated earnings for 2000 and 2001; total revenue erased is $2.54 billion.

2004:

■ Feb. 23: Trial begins of former executives Grant Graham, Thomas Hall, John Walker and Bryan Treadway on securities fraud, wire fraud and other charges tied to a Qwest contract to provide Internet services to Arizona schools.

■ April 16: Walker and Treadway cleared on all charges. Jury acquits Graham on three charges, deadlocks on remaining eight. Deadlocks on all 11 charges against Hall.

■ May 28: Graham pleads guilty to felony accessory after the fact to wire fraud and agrees to help prosecutors.

■ Sept. 17: Hall agrees to plead guilty to single misdemeanor count of falsifying documents.

2005:

■ Feb. 18: Marc Weisberg, a former senior vice president, indicted on wire fraud and money laundering charges.

■ March 15: SEC charges Nacchio, Szeliga, former CFO Robert Woodruff and four other former executives with orchestrating a massive financial fraud between 1999 and 2002.

■ June 2: Justice Department charges Szeliga with insider trading. She reaches a plea agreement and will cooperate with prosecutors.

■ June 3: Szeliga reaches agreement to settle civil fraud charges filed by the SEC. Terms were not disclosed.

■ July 14: Szeliga pleads guilty to a single count of insider trading and agrees to cooperate with prosecutors and the SEC.

■ July 27: A magistrate delays the evidence exchange process in the SEC's civil case against former Qwest executives to give the government more time for its criminal investigation.

■ Sept. 7: A federal judge approves a $2.1 million civil settlement for former Qwest executive Gregory Casey who was charged with participating in a conspiracy. He did not admit wrongdoing and agreed to cooperate with federal investigators. He was the first defendant to reach a final settlement in the SEC case.

■ Nov. 1: Qwest announces a tentative $400 million settlement of shareholder lawsuits stemming from the accounting scandal. It would resolve claims against the company, some former executives and its board of directors ■ but not Nacchio and Woodruff.

■ Dec. 20: Federal grand jury indicts Nacchio on 42 counts of insider trading. He pleads not guilty.

■ Dec. 28: Weisberg pleads guilty to single count of wire fraud, agrees to cooperate with prosecutors.

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STATE

Many methamphetamine users turn to identity theft

BY GREG RISLING
Associated Press Writer

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — Stealing mail. Digging through trash. Days spent in front of a computer trying to unlock financial information.

All to score methamphetamine.

Authorities are discovering that more and more desperate users of the drug are turning to identity theft to pay for their habit, creating a criminal nexus costing Americans millions of dollars.

The trend is sweeping the West and spreading to other parts of the country, with one hub of activity in the garages and trailer parks of Riverside and San Bernardino counties on the fringe of suburban Los Angeles.

The region was the site of a third of California's nearly 500 meth lab busts in 2004 and is home to the second-highest number of identity theft victims in the nation.

"It's been said the two crimes go together like rats and garbage," said Jack Lucky, a Riverside County prosecutor who nearly became a victim of ID theft himself before his personal information was found at a meth lab.

The connection is posing a major challenge for authorities, who until recently tended to overlook or neglect identity theft evidence at meth labs in favor of pursuing drug charges that are easier to prove and carry stiffer penalties.

"We weren't educated or sophisticated enough to spot what they were doing," said Riverside County sheriff's Sgt. Steve Koller, a narcotics task force member. "It's taken us a while to catch up."

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., has called on the Department of Justice to study the link further and recommend tougher penalties for those convicted of both crimes.

"What we are probably going to find is that there is a stronger connection than we know right now," she said.

No figures were available on just how much the link is costing consumers. Separately, however, meth use and identity theft have each taken their toll.

Nearly 10 million Americans fell victim last year to identity theft, costing $5 billion. Meanwhile, the popularity of methamphetamine has grown, with an estimated 12 million people trying it at least once.

Police said meth users — known as "cranksters" — are drawn to identity theft because they can stay up for days scanning computer records or go "Dumpster diving" for discarded financial information.

A drug dealer recently provided fake identities to a woman in Phoenix who allegedly used them to buy cell phones. She was paid with methamphetamine, and the phones were later used by some of the dealer's associates, authorities said.

Last summer, Georgia authorities tracked at least 20 thieves — known as the "Mailbox Meth Gang" — who cruised housing subdivisions looking for raised flags on mailboxes that could yield checks and bank statements to exchange for meth. Investigators found 14,000 credit card numbers in a laptop computer seized from the gang.

Police said the thieves typically do not target one spot too long and often divide tasks, with different persons stealing the identity, converting it and then using it.

Alameda police Sgt. Anthony Munoz said as many as 85 percent of the identity theft cases he investigates have a connection to methamphetamine use. In one, a defendant pleaded guilty to 56 counts of identity theft and was sentenced to just one year in county jail, he said.

"Those are the type of sentences you get," said Munoz, who backs sentencing enhancements for people convicted of both crimes.

Penalties for identity theft vary from state to state. In California, where legislators are trying to strengthen the laws, identity thieves can face up to three years in prison and a fine up to $10,000.

"We don't have the significant sentences right now that would deter some of these individuals," Riverside County District Attorney Grover Trask said. "It's easy money."

In Arizona, the connection is so prevalent that Attorney General Terry Goddard now sends an investigator with identity theft expertise to meth lab busts.

Lucky, the Riverside County prosecutor, didn't realize personal information had been stolen from his mailbox until a caller said there had been fraudulent activity linked to his credit card.

He got suspicious when the caller requested his Social Security number. When he asked for a supervisor, he was given a toll-free number that was no longer in service.

Identity thieves later applied for credit in his name and the prosecutor didn't discover where his identity ended up until he got a call from a sheriff's deputy.

"I guess we weren't really surprised they found it at a meth lab," Lucky said.



San Francisco, NRA reach tentative handgun agreement

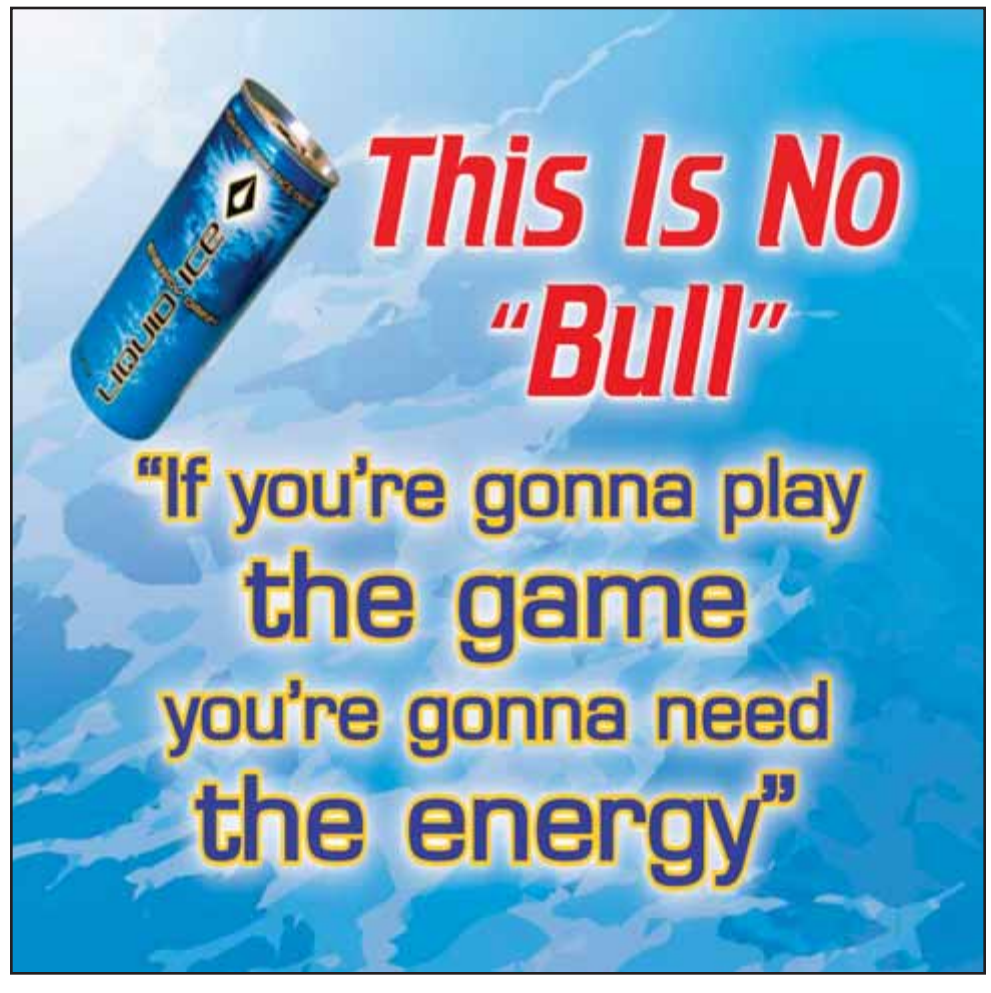
By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The city of San Francisco and the National Rifle Association agreed Wednesday to a tentative deal under which city officials will temporarily delay enforcing part of a voter-approved handgun ban.

Voters on Nov. 8 approved a ban on the sale and possession of handguns in the city. Residents still must get rid of their weapons by April 1. But the NRA and city agreed to delay from Jan. 1 to March 1 the deadline for banning the sale of handguns in the city.

In exchange for the postponement, the NRA agreed to abandon its bid for a temporary restraining order and instead have the issue to be litigated in the courts _ a move that will ultimately resolve it more quickly. The NRA sought a restraining order the day after the measure was approved.

Measure H was put on the ballot by the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors, which cited frustration with the high number of gun-related homicides in the city. About 58 percent of voters approved the measure.



NATIONAL

Government's environmental critics still reap federal grants

BY RITA BEAMISH
Associated Press Writer

Environmental groups that frequently spar with the Bush administration over protecting the air, water and human health also have collected millions of dollars in government grants, failing in one recent case to properly account for the money.

More than 2,200 nonprofit groups have received grants from the Environmental Protection Agency over the last decade, including those that lobby and sometimes sue the agency.

One of the most prominent, the Natural Resources Defense Council — headquartered in Santa Monica — was cited in a recent audit for failing to properly document more than a third of the $3.3 million it received in three EPA grants.

NRDC used the money to conduct research and education on storm water pollution, and to develop and encourage energy-efficient technology, according to EPA's inspector general, the agency's internal watchdog.

NRDC acknowledges recordkeeping errors dealing with benefits, timesheets and indirect costs. It cited in part erroneous direction from EPA itself about what was required.

``We're not running away from that and that's why we've offered to pay back the money," amounting to some $75,000, once the documentation was corrected, said NRDC attorney Mitch Bernard. He noted there was no criticism of NRDC's research. The case is not yet finalized.

Groups like NRDC, with their stables of scientists and extensive monitoring of environmental policy, often are seen as barometers that help shape opinion on key issues.

Asked about potential conflicts between their government watchdog role and their financial connections to EPA, the groups say that grants for specific technical, research and education projects don't interfere with their advocacy, which they conduct with separate funds.

``It may be confusing to the public that with the right hand we're accepting government money and with the left hand sometimes we're beating up the government," said Charles Miller, communications director for Environmental Defense, which has received more than $1.8 million from EPA since 1995.

``But the government is a complicated beast. Some of the things they're doing we think are wrong. A lot of the things they're doing we think are right. We're using the grant money to further the environmental cause," Miller said.

Others see such grants posing at least an appearance problem.

``It raises the specter of a conflict of interest. It's an ethical question," said Roberta Baskin, executive director for the nonprofit Center for Public Integrity, an investigative organization that accepts no government, union or corporate money. ``They're supposed to be watchdogs. Does it make you a lap dog if they're funding you? Is your loyalty to — the environment —or is it to the bottom line?"

From another standpoint, the grants have drawn fire in recent years from political conservatives, like Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, who last year called environmental groups ``simply Democrat political machines."

EPA doesn't turn away grantees because of their criticism or lawsuits, said spokesman Bob Zachariasiewicz. A new policy requires competitive bidding for any grant over $15,000 and the money cannot be spent on lobbying, political or litigation work.

NRDC spokesman Jon Coifman said there's been no dilemma for his $65 million a year organization whose government grants were less than 1 percent of its budget — ``far too small to have any effect one way or the other on NRDC's broader policy decisions," he said.

NRDC has sued EPA 35 times the past two years, he said. ``We don't feel that we've given up an inch of our integrity on this," Coifman said.

Other recipients made the same point but acknowledged potential problems in how the situation is perceived.

``It's a legitimate question," said Ben McNitt, spokesman for the National Wildlife Federation, recipient of $292,620 from EPA. He said government grants in 2004 were less than 1 percent of the federation's annual revenues, and the group's lawsuits and vigorous criticism of EPA policies on wetlands, mercury emissions and other issues prove it is not co-opted.

The Pesticide Action Network, which advocates reduced pesticide use, received a $97,000 grant to develop online information on pesticide use and water pollution, co-director Steve Scholl-Buckwald said.

``In every case we're asking the question: Is this money allowing us to do something we want to do and it or is it something someone else wants us to do?"

EPA conducts about half of its work, or $4.3 billion in 2004, through grants, mostly to state, local and tribal governments. Nonprofits account for about 7 percent of the total, including many ordered by Congress. Besides the environmental groups, many recipients are agriculture and industry allies with keen interest in EPA regulatory policies, along with academic, civic and other groups that advocate on health, the elderly and consumer issues.

Overall, the inspector general has cited grant oversight as an EPA weakness. In a September report, it said EPA has improved but still needs to pursue greater accountability from project managers. Zachariasiewicz said that process is ongoing through new performance measurements.

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NATIONAL

Outhouses: Sheds to some, to others, plain masterpieces

BY DEEDEE CORRELL
Associated Press Writer

LAKE GEORGE, Colo. — They're just shacks, tiny, weather-beaten sheds with protruding nails and tilting walls that stubbornly stand along County Road 77 in Park County about six miles northwest of here.

You see a pair of dilapidated outhouses. Jim Fagerstrom sees privies with a proud past — and a promising future.

"They are masterpieces," Fagerstrom said. Then he rapidly ticks off the reasons why:

They were built in 1940 by the Works Progress Administration and are still standing.

They have ventilation systems that pipe out foul odors with such efficiency that Fagerstrom marvels: "There's so much thought put into that."

One even has a latch that holds up the wooden seatcover when a visitor needs it out of the way.

"This is classic," said the gray-bearded, plaid-clad Brooklyn native who moved to Colorado 30 years ago and runs the Ute Trail River Ranch down the road.

Is it any wonder that Fagerstrom has made it his business to preserve these old-time privies and get them back into working order?

Not to his significant other, Debra Baxter, who chuckles and says he's always had a strong interest in historic preservation. Did he mention, she adds, that they have their own outhouse, a two-seater of unknown vintage?

To be sure, the overall job for the county's historic preservation committee to which Fagerstrom belongs is not only to preserve these outhouses but the 84-year-old schoolhouse to which they belong. They're also trying to figure out how the public can best use them, Park County Commissioner Jim Gardner says.

The Tarryall School, with its badly chipped walls, sits empty along the county road; behind it, the two outhouses stand as miniature sentries, neglected and mostly unused since the school closed in 1949.

Driving back and forth, Fagerstrom developed a particular fondness for the property and its potties.

How wonderful, he thought, if they could persuade people to visit this place, indulge in a bit of history. And if the school is worth saving, surely so are its toilets.

"They're as significant as the school itself," Fagerstrom said.

Indeed, a historic assessment found them to be "excellently preserved examples" of the 2.3 million privies built by the WPA in the 1930s.

Regardless of whether the schoolhouse ever opens to visitors, the outhouses should be utilized again, Fagerstrom says.

"It's preservation with purpose," he said.

Fagerstrom would like to see County Road 77 used more — by cyclists, hikers and people just wanting to see more of Park County.

And if people use the road, they ought to have a place to stop, he reasons.

"What if they're coming and nothing's built — there's not even a place to go to the bathroom?" he said.

This year, Fagerstrom persuaded a Buena Vista company, Valley Precast Inc., to donate the construction of a $600, 1,000-gallon concrete vault over which the outhouses could sit.

It was an unusual request, but that comes with the territory, says President Derrick Eggleston.

"I guess we've learned not to find a whole lot of things odd," he said.

Technically, the outhouses are usable now, but the deposits a visitor might make merely fall into the hole and lay there.

In October, Fagerstrom and others lifted one of the outhouses and planted it over the vault.

The other remains in its original spot, the walls listing to one side. Fagerstrom wants to move that one too, then refinish both, replacing loose nails, repainting them and generally getting them into working order by spring.

As for pumping out the tank?

"I'll probably do it," he said.

Fagerstrom always takes the approach of "if you want it done right, you do it yourself," Gardner said. "He's a one-man whirlwind."

It will be worth the work, Fagerstrom said: "I think people will enjoy this."

Ninety-year-old Jack Smith, who once used those very outhouses as a boy attending the Tarryall School, approves of Fagerstrom's goal, although he wonders whether people these days are willing to use an outhouse.

"I don't suppose they do," he said regretfully.



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NATIONAL

BLM begins review of split-estate issues around the Rockies

BY JUDITH KOHLER
Associated Press Writer

DENVER — With natural gas drilling rates at or near record highs in the Rockies, a federal agency is seeking comments on how it manages energy development when the minerals are publicly held and the ground above is privately owned.

The energy bill passed in July directs the Bureau of Land Management to review drilling on land with split ownership, where one party owns the minerals and another owns the surface. The agency is focusing on cases where the minerals are publicly held and the land is private.

Elected officials, landowners and energy companies have wrangled over so-called "split estate" issues from Montana to New Mexico. State and federal agencies encourage companies that own or lease minerals to negotiate the placement of wells, access to the property and possible compensation.

Mineral rights, however, trump surface rights. State and federal laws give mineral rights owners reasonable use of the surface to extract the oil and gas. Companies can post bonds and drill without an agreement with the landowner.

"I applaud the BLM for at least asking for public comment," said Peter Shelton, who owns land in Montrose County 300 miles west of Denver.

His suggestions include notifying people when the minerals under their property are up for auction and requiring that companies have agreements with landowners before drilling can start.

The Colorado BLM postponed a sale of mineral leases in May after landowners complained that they weren't notified. Rep. John Salazar, R-Colo., asked the agency to pull the parcels off the auction block.

The leases were sold in August and included 1,500 acres of minerals where Shelton and five other landowners have property.

"The law is so skewed in favor of the subsurface owners, I just fail to see how the surface owners are going to be placated," Shelton said.

The BLM has a Web site and plans public meetings throughout the region to take comments. The agency is supposed to submit a report to Congress by mid-February that includes a comparison of the differences between rules for coal mining and oil and gas drilling on split estates.

Heather Feeney, a spokeswoman in the BLM office in Washington, said Tuesday that Congress wanted to ensure that oil and gas are developed responsibly. She said the agency might request more time to submit a final report because the public meetings haven't been scheduled yet.

Split ownership occurred across the West when the federal government granted homesteads but retained the mineral rights, or when people sold surface rights but kept the minerals as an investment.

Nationwide, the BLM oversees mineral rights on about 700 million acres of federal land. Of that, 58.4 million acres are underneath privately owned land.

Industry representatives say state and federal law — and court rulings — have given mineral rights precedence over surface rights. They also contend landowners should know whether they own the minerals under their property and what the ramifications are if they don't.

Earlier this year, Wyoming lawmakers approved a bill giving surface owners more protections. The BLM contends it should be exempt from Wyoming's new requirements, though Gov. Dave Freudenthal has said the state will defend the law in court if necessary.

Similar legislation failed in the Colorado, Montana and New Mexico legislatures, but new proposals are expected in the upcoming sessions.

Greg Schnacke, executive vice president of the Colorado Oil and Gas Association industry group, said he thinks compromise is possible.

Bob Gallagher, Schnacke's counterpart in New Mexico, agreed.

"I think the understanding that we have in New Mexico is that we must reach the ability to coexist on public lands without insisting that the mineral owner get a bunch of special privileges or surface owners get a bunch of special privileges," Gallagher said.

Sugar McNall of Aztec, N.M., said something has to give because landowners are seeing their property and livelihoods consumed by the wide-scale gas drilling.

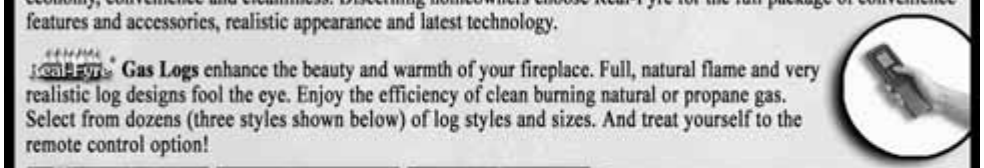
She said her family worked for decades in the oil fields, but she supports more rights for landowners faced with drilling rigs and gas compressors on their property.

"I never thought they would come in and take your land and not pay for it," McNall said. "I have grandchildren I would like to hand a little bit of my land to."

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NATIONAL

It's a bird, it's a flu, it's failing to migrate

BY ANDREW BRIDGES
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Bird flu appears more likely to wing its away around the globe by plane than by migrating birds.

Scientists have been unable to link the spread of the virus to migratory patterns, suggesting that the thousands of wild birds that have died, primarily waterfowl and shore birds, are not primary transmitters of bird flu.

If that holds true, it would suggest that shipments of domestic chickens, ducks and other poultry represents a far greater threat than does the movement of wild birds on the wing.

It also would underscore the need to pursue the virus in poultry farms and markets rather than in wild populations of birds if a possible pandemic is to be checked, U.S. and European experts said.

The H5N1 strain has infected millions of poultry throughout Asia and parts of Europe since 2003. The virus also has killed at least 71 people, many of whom had close contact with poultry.

To date, the virus hasn't been shown to spread from person to person, but many fear that it could mutate into a strain that could, potentially killing millions in a global pandemic.

While the prospect that migrating birds could carry the virus worldwide still worries health authorities, that sort of scenario doesn't appear to be playing out.

"There is more and more evidence building up that wild migratory birds do play some role in spreading the virus, but personally I believe — and others agree — that it's not a major role," said Ward Hagemeijer, a wild bird ecologist with Wetlands International, a conservation group in Wageningen, Netherlands. "If we would assume based on this evidence that wild birds would be a major carrier of the disease we would expect a more dramatic outbreak of the disease all over the world."

Reports this summer and fall of the spread of the H5N1 strain strongly suggested wild birds were carrying the disease outward from Asia as they followed migration patterns that crisscross the Earth. The timing and location of outbreaks in western China, Russia, Romania, Turkey and Croatia seemed to point to wild birds en route to winter grounds.

That put places like Alaska, where birds from the Old and New Worlds gather each summer to create what some call an "international viral transfer center," on alert that the virus could arrive this coming spring. And from there, species like the buff-breasted sandpiper and others that split their time between North and South America could in theory transport the virus farther afield.

Since the early fall, however, there have been only scattered reports of more outbreaks. The disease has been glaringly absent, for example, from western Europe and the Nile delta, where many presumed it would crop up as migrating birds returned to winter roosts.

That suggests the strain has evolved to specifically exploit domestic poultry, whose short lives spent in tight flocks mean a virus has to skip quickly from bird to bird if it is to survive, said Hon Ip, a virologist with the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wis.

That also means that while the virus can pass from domestic to wild birds, the latter may not be suited as transmitters of the strain — at least so far.

"By the timing of the spread and the pattern of outbreaks within a country and between countries, it does not make sense relative to a role for migratory birds as a means of spreading the virus," Ip said.

For example, the virus killed thousands of bar-headed geese in May and June at Lake Qinghai in western China. The deaths raised immediate fears that the virus was on the move, jumping among hosts in the wild. In the Aug. 19 issue of the journal Science, scientists wrote that the virus "has the potential to be a global threat."

But Ip and others suggest the lake is not as remote and pristine as initially portrayed, and that poultry raised in the area could have been the source of the flu strain that killed the geese.

"It is still patchy — the pattern of outbreaks — to really make a very definitive link between migratory birds and the disease," said Marco Barbieri, the scientific and technical officer for the United Nations Environmental Program's convention on migratory species in Bonn, Germany.

Experts caution that wild birds cannot be ruled out as future transmitters of the H5N1 strain, which has yet to be detected in North America. Migratory birds, for example, have been clearly implicated in the spread of West Nile virus, which has killed at least 762 people in the U.S. since 2002.

The H5N1 flu strain already is known to be lethal to nearly 60 species of birds; further mutations of the strain could allow it to infect many more. One of the latest victims is the Asian tree sparrow, according to a study published in the December issue of the Journal of Virology.

"The dogma right now is it is the waterfowl — ducks, sandpipers, gulls, plovers — essentially any bird that is water-associated," said A. Townsend Peterson, a University of Kansas professor and curator of the school's Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Research Center. "I will predict that that dogma will eventually fall by the wayside. I will guess that what we will eventually see is that avian influenza is much more widely distributed among birds and that land birds also play a significant role in the picture."

That has made increasing the understanding of the migratory routes followed by birds more important than ever. It also draws attention to how little is still known about the routes.

The conventional maps that show flyways as fat arrows that can span continents and oceans lack the nuance and detail of how birds really move, including when and in what numbers, experts said. The maps also can gloss over how migratory patterns can vary among subspecies.

Traditional methods like bird watching and banding are helping flesh out the maps. And now tracking by satellite or radio, as well as genetic and isotopic sampling, are playing an increased role in sussing out the finer details of where birds travel and when.

In places like Alaska, where millions of individual birds representing more than 200 species arrive each spring, scientists readily confess the situation isn't all clear.

"Fuzzy would be an operative word. We are in the process of defining the Alaskan migration system, and it is remarkably complex," said Kevin Winker, curator of birds and an associate professor at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

In the United States, the U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Agriculture Department plan next year to step up their surveillance of wild flocks of birds.

In the past several weeks, scientists have winnowed down their list of birds they want to keep tabs on, said Dirk Derksen, a biologist with the USGS Alaska Science Center in Anchorage. All spend at least part of the year in Asia.

Early detection would buy time in forestalling the further spread of the virus — a situation no one wants.

"Initially, wild birds are primarily victims. Someday they may become vectors. We don't know how that will play out," Ip said. "What I would like to see is the virus stopped before it gets to America so we don't see the last reel of this film played out in North America."

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NATIONAL

EPA planners help McCall prepare for change

BY ANNE WALLACE ALLEN
Associated Press Writer

McCALL, Idaho — This tranquil spot in the mountains can see change coming fast — and it's called in the experts for help.

"We've been discovered," said Roger Millar, the McCall city planner, who invited the Environmental Protection Agency to McCall this autumn to help the city plan for an avalanche of development. "It's a great problem to have."

Rising real estate values are nothing new these days, but the speed of their climb in McCall stands out. Housing prices went up 100 percent last year. The average family income is $50,000 — but it's hard to find a house for less than $200,000.

"We would offer people jobs, they'd meet with a Realtor, and they'd turn us down," said Millar of finding workers.

What's happening in McCall is going on in many places. But here it's happening all at once. Retiring baby boomers are looking for somewhere to build second homes, which already make up 60 percent of the housing in McCall; investors shy of the stock market are putting their money into land. There's a general population shift toward the interior western states; McCall grew 41 percent between 2000 and 2005 to a population of 2,524.

"There is a kind of a continental migration," said Daniel Kemmis, a senior fellow at the Center for the Rocky Mountain West in Missoula, Mont.

Many of the new arrivals have money. Just a few years ago, the arrival of a jet at the McCall Municipal Airport was cause for comment, said Rick Harvey, the airport manager. Nowadays, it's common to see 10 to 15 jets and turboprops land every day in the summer.

"It's been a sudden change in economic culture, I guess you might say," Harvey said.

And then there's the Tamarack Resort, a ski area that went in 15 miles down the road last year. While McCall has long had the low-key Brundage Mountain Resort nearby, Tamarack is new, and it's running glossy enticements in national media.

"Now we're all doing really well because of Tamarack," said Phil Feinberg, a real estate broker who is a member of the city planning and zoning commission.

Millar and other officials applied to the EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program, and McCall was one of five U.S. municipalities chosen this year to have the EPA send a team of experts come in and help McCall plan for traffic control, affordable housing, wastewater treatment, and other urban necessities.

"The town had been overwhelmed; we were reacting to growth," he said.

The EPA consultants held several days of meetings with residents and officials this fall. The pace of development surprised even planners who travel around helping cities and towns set their agendas for growth.

"It was very extreme," said Dena Belzer, an urban economist from Berkeley, Calif., who works for the smart growth program.

The dangers of poorly planned growth can be seen in emptied-out towns and cities all over the United States, where national chain stores drain downtown business, and grocery shopping requires a trip on a clogged road to the mall. That hasn't happened yet in McCall; residents said they noticed things like the sudden arrival of construction equipment and workers, and of course in housing prices.

The construction workers bring a lot of business to town, said Tim Garber, a McCall native who owns a restaurant in town. But "I have employees who have had to leave town to find housing," said Garber.

Police Chief Jerry Summers said crime had picked up, and the 11-officer department will expand.

"We've seen steady growth" in calls to the police, Summers said. "We tend to see some of those issues from the people who are not so much the homeowners, but some of the tradesmen and other people who come up here for employment."

Garber added that the growth makes McCall a more interesting place to live.

"We're getting some nice people — a big influx of good people," Garber said. "Not necessarily just wealthy people but also, we still have a pretty good middle class."

McCall's residents want to keep the charm of their little high-elevation city, where the main street bends sharply at a lake shore and the Payette National Forest stretches out for miles in almost every direction.

Some of the EPA's recommendations are familiar all over the United States: create more opportunities to travel by foot or bicycle; provide affordable housing so the people who work in McCall can live there too; protect the natural resources that attract visitors; and encourage high-density housing and offices near the town center.

Some are specific to resort towns everywhere, such as creating year-round recreation to avoid the economic ebb and flow that discourages the restaurants and retailers from opening.

And some are gleaned from experience with growth in other rural western towns such as Jackson, Wyo. — such as protecting a large pasture to establish a clear edge between town and the wilderness beyond.

"`People that had been here a long time had always thought of that as a pasture, but they knew deep down inside it could someday turn into tract homes," said Millar. "The idea that EPA helped us articulate is that we'd like the town to end, and the country to start, and to have a there, there."

The report recommended McCall spruce up its stores to appeal to more upscale visitors, and add some good restaurants.

"If McCall doesn't improve the quality of its retail, many potential shoppers could choose to spend their time and money at Tamarack, and bypass downtown McCall," the report said.

Even before the EPA visit, McCall was working on plans to limit the number of chain restaurants to 10 percent, hold down building size down to 40,000 square feet, and build affordable housing. McCall adopted a comprehensive plan in 2000 with goals and policy directions, and was working on an update of zoning and subdivision rules when the EPA team visited.

The EPA helped the city test those ordinances with physical plans and drawings of what McCall might look like if the rules were implemented. The team's visit also provided a new forum for citizen involvement, Millar said. About 150 residents attended the meetings held over three and a half days.

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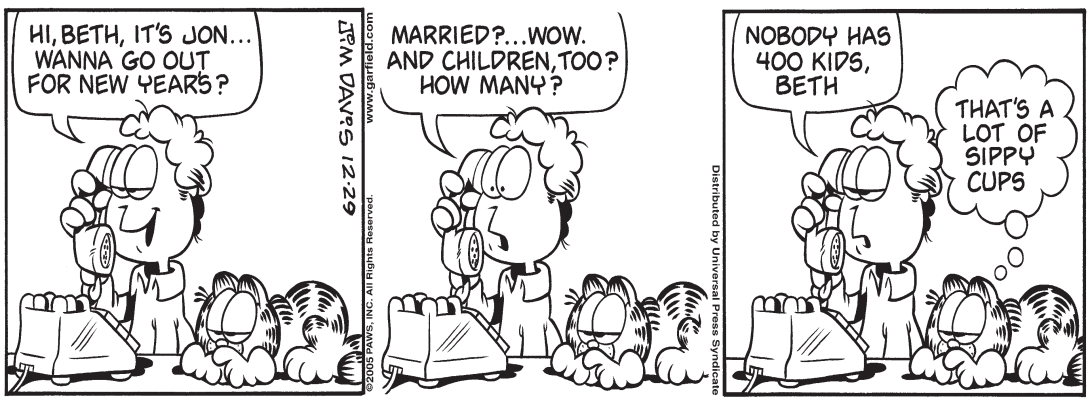
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5 Metallic element
11 Mexican rivers
12 Not tense
13 Fan's favorite
14 Sawbuck
15 Cry during a fight
17 Espy
18 Mediterranean island
22 Nonsense
24 Drink noisily
25 Take the cup
26 Pool need
27 Frequently
30 Velodrome sights
32 Furry wrap
33 Canyon carrier
34 Mozart, for one
38 Want
41 Opposed to
42 Patch type
43 British school
44 Inventor's claim
45 Easy run

DOWN

1 Fortitude
2 Egypt-based opera
3 Investigates
4 In dreamland
5 Inauguration Day event
6 Prepares broccoli
7 Like a brainstorm
8 Golfer Woosnam
9 Employ
10 Body of eau
16 Ball holder
19 Gets serendipitously
20 Loyal
21 Imitates
22 Noah count?
23 Schism
28 Stritch of Broadway
29 Brain bit
30 Diamond need
31 Jordan neighbor
35 Dispatched
36 Resting on
37 Muses count
38 Dance maneuver
39 Memorable time
40 Lush

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1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	9	10
11				■	12					
13				■	14					
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42						■	43			
44						■	45			

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DBAS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 05 2776403 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Phree Ya Mind, Flower Funk, 4126 Jefferson Blvd., Studio A, Los Angeles, CA 90016. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : Patrick Henry Johnson, 4126 Jefferson Blvd., Studio A, Los Angeles, CA 90016, Sherree Lenore Saperstein-Johnson, 4126 Jefferson Blvd., Studio A, Los Angeles, CA 90016 This Business is being conducted by, husband and wife. Signed: Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious name or names listed herein.. /s/: Patrick H. Johnson, Sherree L. Saperstein-Johnson
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/16/05. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 12/15/2005, 12/22/2005, 12/29/2005, 1/5/2006

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 05 2938643 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as First Look Sonogram, AI #/ON 200524210069, 10657 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : Virces, LLC, 10657 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064 This Business is being conducted by, a limited liability. Signed: Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious name or names listed herein.. /s/: Virces, LLC, President, Eumea Yun
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 12/1/2005. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 12/29/2005, 1/5/2006, 1/12/2006, 1/19/2006

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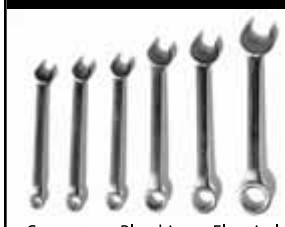
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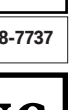
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