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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2009

Volume 9 Issue 40



POSING A MORE SERIOUS THREAT
SEE PAGE 4

Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

THE STUPID VANDALS ISSUE

Police using Crime Stoppers

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY Witnesses to a crime who are too scared to come forward can now do so without fear by making an anonymous tip.

The Santa Monica Police Department has joined with 24 other local law enforcement agencies in Los Angeles County to participate in Crime Stoppers, a program in which witnesses can provide information on crimes they may have seen or have knowledge of without giving personal information.

Crime Stoppers, which is run by a nonprofit of the same name, helps law enforcement agencies investigate crimes by sharing information across jurisdictions, creating a strong network that enables a virtual free flow of information, all while maintaining a witness' anonymity.

Tipsters may be eligible for cash rewards for information leading to an arrest.

The SMPD also uses We-Tip, a similar hotline that allows witnesses to leave tips anonymously. We-Tip can be reached at (800)78-CRIME (800-78-27463).

Crime Stoppers can be reached at (800) 222-TIPS. People can leave text messages also, or can visit the Crime Stoppers Web site at www.lacrimestoppers.com.

news@smdp.com

Obama vows to thwart terrorists

PHILIP ELLIOTT
Associated Press Writer

HONOLULU President Barack Obama on Monday vowed to use "every element of our national power" to keep Americans safe and said the failed Christmas Day plot to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner was "a serious reminder" of the need to continually adapt security measures against changing terrorist threats.

But even as Obama spoke, came word that a State Department warning had failed

SEE TERROR PAGE 9



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

WHAT A WASTE OF PAINT: **Ray Nelson wipes off graffiti from his 1979 Chevrolet truck on the corner of Pier Avenue and 18th Street on Monday morning. Several cars were hit by vandals, who are believed to be from a Venice gang, police said.**

Gang graffiti stuns quiet neighborhood

BY NICK TABOREK
Daily Press Staff Writer

SUNSET PARK Residents of a quiet block here were shocked Monday morning to discover 11 vehicles and several fences and signs covered with graffiti that police said was likely the work of a Venice gang.

The vandals apparently targeted the 1700 block of Pier Avenue, leaving police and residents of the normally peaceful neighborhood confused about a possible motive.

The vandals burglarized one car and attempted to burglarize another during the incident, which occurred late Sunday night or early Monday, police said. There were no witnesses to the crimes and no one has been arrested.

"It's the first time anything like this has happened around here," said Daren Hiltunen, who on Monday was trying to paint over the name of a gang that had been scrawled on his property's fence.

"If it's gang related it's stupid because nobody in this neighborhood or street is in a gang," said a woman who lives on Pier Avenue and who asked not to be named because her property was vandalized.

Another resident, who also asked to remain anonymous, said: "It's a nice, nice neighborhood, really quiet."

Members of the Santa Monica Police Department's graffiti abatement team were sent to document the vandalism on Monday but police did not release an estimate of the total damages. Several residents, though, said they were able clean the paint off their cars at an auto detailing business.

"The biggest thing is trying to figure why that block," said Sgt. Jay Trisler, an SMPD spokesman. "It's common for gang members or crews to tag areas but this one I can't put my finger on."

While it appeared the car burglary was related to the vandalism, Trisler said the extent of graffiti on the block showed burglary was not the only motive.

"This is something different. This is something malicious," Trisler said.

He said the investigation is ongoing and will involve cooperation with the Los Angeles Police Department. He said nothing so far indicates that a gang member has moved into the Sunset Park neighborhood or that the incident was targeted at a single person or residence on the block.

Police did not say what had been taken from the burglarized car.

SEE VANDALISM PAGE 8

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Write away
Fairview Branch Library
2101 Ocean Park Blvd., Noon — 3 p.m.
Published and closet writers are welcome to seek inspiration, guidance and support at this weekly writers' group.
Call (310) 899-0361 for more information.

Thoughts on the nativity
Palisades Park
4 p.m. — 5 p.m.
Visit the annual Santa Monica Nativity Scenes from now until New Year's Day. On Sundays, narration of the Christmas story and holiday music will take place near Arizona Avenue at 4 p.m.
For more information call (310) 577-2586.

Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2009

Ballroom by the bay
Santa Monica Bay Women's Club
1210 Fourth Street., 7 p.m. — 11 p.m.
Enjoy free dance lessons, followed by dancing on the club's 3,000-square-foot floor. Waltz, foxtrot, swing, hustle and more — no partner necessary. Admission is $10.
Call (310) 487-0911 for more information.

Heal yourself
Kathmandu Boutique
1844 Lincoln Blvd., 5 p.m. — 6 p.m.
Come and experience peace and wellness while Pranic healing cleanses and energizes your body. Master Choa Kok Sui's Pranic healing has worked successfully with ailments ranging from asthma, arthritis and cancer to addictions, depression and phobias. It is an effective no-touch healing technique that increases the body's own ability to heal itself. This service is free and everyone is welcome.
Call (310) 883-8371 for more information.

The art of skateboarding
California Heritage Museum
2612 Main St., 11 a.m. — 4 p.m.
Take a history lesson on the art of skateboarding during the California Heritage Museum's presentation, "SKATEBOARD: Evolution and Art in California." Listen to guest curator legendary Z-boy Nathan Pratt along with museum staff curator Michael Trotter and an expert advisory committee that includes original Z-Boy and Zephyr members. The exhibit showcases the development of boards pre-1950 to today as well as features information on the artists, riders, designers, and manufactures that helped spread skateboarding's appeal across California and the world.

Balancing your checkbook
YWCA
2019 14th St., 6:30 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.
This five-week workshop series is designed to help women who are concerned about their finances empower themselves by developing strategies for financial well-being and wealth building in this tumultuous economy. Investments, portfolios, tax strategies and more will be covered. Sponsored by Libbie Agran Financial Literacy Center and moderated by Hollis Harman. For more information, call (310) 452-3881. Cost: $45 (includes dinner and materials).

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



BACK TO NORMAL

Fabian Lewkowicz *FabianLewkowicz.com*

Visitors to the Santa Monica Pier on Monday found plenty of room to park now that Cirque du Soleil has left town after a successful run. The lot, which has hosted many events over the years, will be the site for two rallies for this weekend's Rose Bowl game.

LA woman apparently using charcoal for heat dies

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES A woman died Monday in a house fire that may have been caused by burning charcoal briquettes for heat, firefighters said.

The fire was confined to one bedroom in an 87-year-old, 1,309-square-foot home in South Los Angeles, Fire Department spokesman Brian Humphrey said.

The woman was found on the floor of the locked bedroom and declared dead at the scene.

Investigators "surmise that an improper heating device, possibly using charcoal briquettes, may have not only sparked the blaze but introduced deadly carbon monoxide fumes," Humphrey said.

Fire Capt. Steve Ruda showed reporters the device — a shallow metal pan.

Temperatures dropped to the low 50s during the night, the National Weather Service reported.

It appeared gas to the home had been shut off, but Southern California Gas Co. spokeswoman April Bolduc said the utility could not release information about customer accounts.

The victim's identity, along with the cause, time and manner of death, will be determined by the coroner, Humphrey said.

The house had security doors and the bedroom was locked, but there were no bars on the windows or other factors like pack-rat conditions that would have kept a person from getting out of the home, he said.

The home also had no fire, smoke or carbon monoxide detectors, Humphrey said.

The fire, which was put out less than 12 minutes after the initial 911 call, caused an estimated $15,000 damage to the wood frame and stucco home and its contents, Humphrey said.

Times Square shredder offers good riddance to a harsh 2009

KAREN MATTHEWS
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK Want to forget 2009? Shred it.

Scores of New Yorkers and tourists seeking a fresh start in 2010 came to Times Square on Monday to put their bad memories through the shredder at the third annual Good Riddance Day.

Ben Winnick of Simsbury, Conn., shredded a newspaper story about the New York Giants' 41-9 loss Sunday to the Carolina Panthers, which ended the Giants' playoff hopes.

"Hopefully, next season will be better," he said.

Roxanne Rodriguez of Manhattan shredded a piece of paper with "Writer's block" written on it. She intends to buckle down and write a musical.

"This is going to be the year I'm going to be dedicated and focused, and I will get something down on the page every day," she promised.

The winner of a $250 prize for most creative item shredded was 12-year-old Alissa Yankelevits of Los Angeles, who is visiting her grandparents in New York. She shredded the memory of a counselor on a school trip who was later featured on the TV show "America's Most Wanted."

"I just spent a week with him," Alissa said. "It was really terrifying because I just found that out."

Good Riddance Day was organized by the Times Square Alliance as part of the buildup to Thursday's ball-drop celebration.

Participants lined up near the booth where discount theater tickets are sold and pitched their bad memories into an industrial-sized shredder. A Dumpster and a sledgehammer were available for items that couldn't be shredded, which included an old computer and a tin of fattening office snacks.

Some shredded reams of bills and correspondence while others sought to banish the memory of former boyfriends and girlfriends.

Gillian Lyons broke up with a man she calls "the Beastmaster" and said she's been waiting for him to return her possessions for two years. "He won't give me back the TV I paid for," she complained.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Enough is enough

Editor:

Regarding: "City Council to consider SMO emission levels," Dec. 23, 2009.

With more scientific evidence in support of our community concerns, the city of Santa Monica seems to finally recognize that air pollution from their airport (SMO) might be a problem.

However, the bone that they are throwing our way has no meat on it. They are still not taking the first step by collecting needed data on the ground operations of jets at SMO.

What they propose would, at best, be a delay to addressing critically needed changes.

They propose to discuss, at their City Council meeting, writing to state and federal officials, requesting that studies be funded to establish ultrafine particle toxicity levels. To put it another way, they are asking for a state and/or federal agency with over a million dollars to spend to perform a study that would determine acceptable exposure levels of toxic particles; a process that would take many years.

Surely, the community is not interested in more delays to addressing critically needed changes. Do they really expect us to sit around and continue to breathe these toxic fumes?

This environmental crime has gone on for more than 20 years. Enough is enough!

Martin Rubin
Director of Concerned Residents Against Airport Pollution

Protect the polar bears

Editor:

I was very disappointed to hear through the Sierra Club's recent publication that Shell Oil can now begin drilling in Alaska's Beaufort Sea off the coast of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, despite a lack of fundamental information about the impacts of development on the Arctic environment.

It is my understanding, based on this publication, that Shell's drilling would take place smack dab in the middle of habitat that was just proposed as critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act for the threatened polar bear. I understand that this activity also is along a key migratory route for the endangered bowhead whale that the Inupiat people depend on for their way of life. Accordingly, a Shell survey showed an estimated 40 percent of the entire bowhead population swimming in waters proposed for drilling.

As many already know, climate change and habitat destruction are already ravaging this region. It is difficult to understand how the federal government can protect endangered species in a stressed environment and allow this sort of oil and gas development. Preserving the polar bears' critical habitats is crucial to their survival and these recent drilling decisions appear to be starkly contradictory to this effort.

Please consider publicizing the negative impact of these drilling decisions and further educating the public as to the importance of preserving the polar bears' habitats. It is very important to me that my children and their children know that these special creatures were not extinct due to our actions or inaction.

J'lene Mortimer
Santa Monica

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Back to Nature

Reese Halter — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Tiny and deadly: the mosquito

OF THE CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF 10 million species on planet Earth, there currently exist 2,500 different kinds of mosquitoes. Yet despite being the size and weight of a grape seed, these are deadly and fearsome creatures. Mosquitoes are benefiting from global warming, meaning once near-decimated strains of diseases like malaria are on the rise again. So how has something so tiny, yet so deadly, been able to successfully inhabit our planet for the past 80 million years?

It's all in the size and, in this case, it matters to be small! Mosquitoes are adapted to every terrestrial ecosystem from the top of mountains to valley bottoms, from the Arctic Circle to the Sahara desert, and everything in between. They have thrived and adapted with the spread of human beings. In 300 years, the common house mosquito which started in Africa is now global.

The mosquito is a self-serving creature. She's not an aerator of soil like ants or worms, nor a pollinator like bees or moths, and not an essential food source for a particular species. Her goal is to feed and breed. Mosquitoes and the pathogens that they carry are extremely hardy. They are clever and relentless critters. Our troubles with mosquitoes are getting worse as they infect and kill millions of people each year, despite all out war by modern science.

Within 15 minutes a female can lay about 250 eggs. One by one, they are symmetrically orientated head-first and placed in water into a craft that has a pointy bow. All 250 float together in a war canoe formation. Incubation takes about two days and then the larvae hatch. Much longer, segmented, wriggly, whiskered, with specialized air tubes for breathing, they are set to grow and move into their next stage of development. Under magnification, they are as gruesome as any sci-fi monster! About 14 days after birth, they possess wings for moving, jaws for chewing, large compound eyes for finding their victims, a long spear-like drill for cutting through skin and sucking blood, and fuzzy antennae for smelling victims or sensing mates.

Its wings beat at about 250 to 500 strokes a second and it can attain and maintain speeds of 3 mph and, rather clumsily, hover.

Like humans, their appetite for sex is insatiable, so two days after they become adult they search for a mate. The process begins at dusk or dawn when hundreds or perhaps thousands of males form a dancing swarm in the air near a landmark like a chimney or a church steeple. Males smell the females, lock together and copulate. In many cases the fit is so tight that the male has some difficulties escaping and an unfortunate few manage to get away only by leaving their sex organs behind.

The female mosquito needs just one other ingredient to nourish her eggs — blood. Mosquitoes sense with their antennae carbon dioxide and lactic acid as we exhale and other chemicals from our bodies. This usually occurs at ground level because our scent plume is heavier than air and sinks to ankle level. Next, their compound eyes, similar to a house fly, locate the unsuspecting victim. Lastly, the heat from our muscles guide them to the most radiant spot on our bodies — that bit of flesh not covered by clothing. She lands softly, probes skin up to 20 times with her long snake-like apparatus called a proboscis. Her salivary tube will deliver a chemical that inhibits the body's ability to stop any bleeding that might begin. Ninety seconds later, her body weight is three times that before feeding, and in an aeronautical feat, she just manages to sputter away.

In one of nature's most remarkable processes, within 45 minutes, she digests the blood by separating the water from the proteins and urinates pink droplets from her anus. The light solids are stored for creating future offspring. What she leaves behind from saliva will either irritate the skin or kill you! An old female mosquito may live for about five months.

Yellow fever, malaria, dengue, encephalitis and West Nile diseases have all, at one time or another, penetrated southern United States. Each pathogen carried by loathsome species of mosquitoes is excruciatingly painful and, in most cases, lethal. Malaria kills millions of people each year. DDT, although toxic to our environment, is still the only known effective mass antidote to curtail the spread of malaria.

West Nile disease, carried by the common house mosquito, has a relatively short history, first appearing in Israel in the 1950s. It appears to follow flyways of migratory birds as vectors of the disease. Crows, ravens, jays and other Corvids are particularly susceptible to West Nile.

The Rocky Mountains in their entirety and parts of British Columbia are the only regions in North America not yet permeated by this disease. The chemical DEET appears to be an effective insecticide to ward off mosquitoes as does the natural chemical citronella, but it must be frequently reapplied.

Instead of destroying this enemy, modern science is trying to genetically convert her. The race to find the genes to prevent pathogens from developing in mosquitoes is on. But in the meantime, human beings are perishing by the millions as mosquito diseases expand worldwide at an alarming rate.

DR. REESE HALTER is a public speaker, conservation biologist and founder of the international conservation institute Global Forest Science. His most recent book is "The Incomparable Honeybee and the Economics of Pollination," Rocky Mountain Books. Contact him through www.DrReese.com

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What's the Point?

David Pisarra
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Good riddance to 2009

THIS WEEK WE GET TO START OVER WITH the coming of a New Year. Many of my friends have had a rough year, and lots of my clients have also. But before we make grand pronouncements on what a horrible year it has been, I offer the following:

There is a Chinese story of an old farmer who had an old horse for tilling his fields. One day the horse escaped into the hills and, when all the farmer's neighbors sympathized with the old man over his bad luck, the farmer replied, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?"

A week later the horse returned with a herd of wild horses from the hills and this time the neighbors congratulated the farmer on his good luck. His reply was, "Good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?"

Then, when the farmer's son attempted to tame one of the wild horses, he fell off its back and broke his leg. Everyone thought this was very bad luck. Not the farmer, whose only reaction was, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?"

Some weeks later the army marched into the village and conscripted every able-bodied youth they found there. When they saw the farmer's son with his broken leg, they let him off. Now was that good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?

I copied that story from a Web site. It's one of my favorite parables. I grew up with it as a way to look at life. Events in life take on a hue and meaning only in retrospect.

This past year has been one of the most trying years ever for many people across this country, and across this city. Personally I have had a rough year in many ways. Business has been very unpredictable and unstable. We've had very slow months, and then all of a sudden I was in court a lot fighting for a father's right to see his son, and negotiating settlements in divorces for couples that didn't survive the emotional and financial turmoil of this year.

For many people this is the time of year that they are considering seriously if they want to spend another holiday season with their spouse. The stress of the financial strains has certainly pushed some people over the edge and they are done with their marriage. Is that a bad thing? Or a good thing? I don't know.

I know that studies have shown that for most people, a year after their divorce they are quantifiably happier than they were previously. I know in my own life that taking action, any action, is better than doing nothing. The mere fact that I make changes in my life causes me to be happier.

Perhaps it is simply our natural survival skills to recast the past and find the silver lining so that the memories are made valuable to us. If that is the case, if we just rely on a revisionist view to color our past, then perhaps in a few years we'll see the benefits of this past year.

My immediate emotional response is to say, "Good riddance." It's been a year of anxiety, stress, doubt, and weight gain as I find my solace in a good plate of pasta at Fritto Misto, or Bravo Cucina. I've had my share of pad thai at T's Thai on Fourth and Bowling Alley breakfast burritos.

BUT AS WE WRAP UP THIS YEAR, I CAN SEE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. AND THIS TIME, IT'S NOT AN ONCOMING TRAIN.

This year has been one of the most stressful, not from the actual work that was required, but from the anxiety of not knowing if there would be work. The fear of the bogeyman under the bed is the fear of what might happen, not what is happening. Living in uncertainty was the source of most of my stress this year.

But as we wrap up this year, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. And this time, it's not an oncoming train. The economy has stabilized. My client load is coming up again, and that is an indicator that people are getting on with their lives, homes are being sold, and the credit markets are freeing up a bit.

This year was rough, but I don't know yet if that was a good thing or a bad thing. The lessons that many of us learned this year will likely carry over into the future and provide benefits for one and all. If we learn from the difficulties, then they have served a purpose, and cannot be all bad.

DAVID PISARRA is a family law attorney focusing on father's rights and men's Issues in the Santa Monica firm of Pisarra & Grist. He can be reached at dpisarra@pisarra.com or (310) 664-9969.

The Q Line

Making a change

The new year is upon us and people are making pledges to lose weight, save money or be nicer to people.

So, this week's Q-Line question asks:

What should Santa Monica's New Year's resolution be?

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press.

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Photography by www.nkpix.com

Green Brooms Music Academy would like to congratulate its students who performed at the 2009 Winter Recital, which was held at the Santa Monica Public Library Auditorium on Sunday, December 6th. Our recital featured 45 performances from 32 different student performers, many of whom had never participated in a recital before. In lieu of charging admission, Green Brooms family and friends were asked to bring non-perishable food items which were donated to Santa Monica's Westside Food Bank. Thank you to our community of music lovers for supporting our students and attending this joyous event.

Green Brooms santa monica MUSIC ACADEMY

www.greenbrooms.com

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1513 6th Street, Suite 203, Santa Monica, CA 90401



The Quackers
Phyllis Chavez
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Planting seeds of sustainability

Editor's Note: The Quackers are three awesome ducks – Rusty, Richard and Sydney – from the canals of Venice who are on a mission to educate the community about the dangers of global warming and the importance of practicing sustainability, all while surfing the most gnarly waves possible.

It was still very early when a delightful aroma drifted into our bedrooms and our dreams. I popped my head out of the bedroom and saw Rusty doing the same. If we were still dreaming at least we seemed to be having the same one.

We wandered toward the kitchen, still rubbing the sleep from our eyes. There was Richard buttering a tall stack of fluffy, golden-brown pancakes. Funny, we thought, it wasn't Sunday. Humming, Richard poured three steaming mugs of thick hot chocolate and topped them all off with tons of mini marshmallows. When he asked if we would like our maple syrup warmed or at room temperature we lost the ability to reason and speak.

"Warmed it is then", he said. We grabbed our knives and forks.

While we ate pancakes dripping with buttery syrup and sipped sweet, creamy hot chocolate it was easy to ignore that little voice in the back of our minds that kept repeating over and over, "Pancakes on a weekday?"

As our bellies filled the voice got louder. What was Richard up to? Was he angling for us to rake leaves for the compost bin? Nah, that wouldn't rate this breakfast. Did he want to borrow money? What had he done? These thoughts and more raced through our minds.

We stared expectantly at Richard hoping for an explanation. He seemed oblivious to us. He just continued humming a little tune and reading the Santa Monica Daily Press.

All of the sudden Rusty blurted out, "OK, OK! We'll rake the leaves for you!"

Startled, Richard looked up from the paper, "What are you talking about? I didn't ask you to rake any leaves."

Rusty squinted trying to read Richard's face and said, "Then why did you make us pancakes on a weekday?"

Richard answered, "Can't a brother just be nice? Let's go surfing."

I couldn't stop thinking about it. Richard is a nice guy but I was sure there was more than brotherly love behind that delicious breakfast. It had to be something terrible. Maybe that was his strategy. If we imagined the worst and he told us something not half as bad we might forget to be upset with him.

Some situations call for diplomacy and a subtle approach. I decided this was not one of them. Walking home from the beach I exploded, "It's driving me crazy Richard. What did you do? Did you blow up my computer? What?"

He had no idea it bothered me so much. "Sidney, I'll come clean if you just calm down. I volunteered the three of us for eight straight weekends of carbon farming."

His strategy did not work. Rusty and I fumed. Eight weeks doing something we never even heard of. He kept saying, "It is for a great cause. Calm down. Just let me explain."

We said, "Talk fast!"

Richard, always on the lookout for new ways to combat global warming and help wildlife, had found a project called Green Trees. It pays farmers across the lower Mississippi River Valley to convert their croplands to woodlands. Instead of soy beans or corn they would "farm" a new crop, carbon dioxide.

The goal is to restore a large swath of the vast bottomland hardwood forest that once stretched from Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico. Right now only 20 percent of this critical wildlife habitat remains. The rest has been cleared for agriculture. The growing global market for carbon credits, where individuals or businesses buy credits to offset greenhouse gas emissions, presented an opportunity that will help the program raise a billion dollars to replant one million acres. The restoration will improve farmers' financial stability, help global warming by sequestering and storing carbon dioxide, restore wildlife habitat and keep soil from being washed into the Gulf of Mexico.

RICHARD, ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEW WAYS TO COMBAT GLOBAL WARMING AND HELP WILDLIFE, HAD FOUND A PROJECT CALLED GREEN TREES. IT PAYS FARMERS ACROSS THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER VALLEY TO CONVERT THEIR CROPLANDS TO WOODLANDS.

We were softening.

Still talking fast, he told us of another similar project that The Trust for Public Lands had taken on along the Tensas River in Louisiana. They are planting 11,000 acres of trees. This will not only add to the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, it will also sequester three million tons of carbon over the next 100 years, create a continuous forested corridor for the threatened Louisiana black bears and provide habitat for other wildlife.

Luckily, we did not have to travel out of state for the next eight weekends. Richard found us something closer to home. We would be volunteering in Northern California's Mendocino County on a conservation fund effort called the Garcia River Project. It is helping safeguard more than 330,000 acres including 40,000 of watershed and forestlands that are invaluable to the current climate crisis.

OK, Richard was right. They were all important projects and the Garcia River project sounds like a good choice for us. I guess the Quackers are taking up carbon farming.

I still think he should have asked first.

PHYLLIS and the Quackers can be reached at phyllis@phyllischavez.com. The Quackers have a new, amazing Web site! Stories, pictures and a blog at www.thequackers.com.

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Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

HATE CRIME? **Charlie the Gnome, a creation of Atheists United, was recently the victim of vandalism. The gnome, which is supposed to look like Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, was placed in Palisades Park near the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes display. It was hit some time last week.**

Atheists vow to report crimes of intimidation

FROM **VANDALISM** PAGE 1

GNOME BASHING SPURS VANDALISM REPORT

In a separate incident, vandals allegedly damaged a paper mache gnome that an atheist group set up in Palisades Park as a counterpoint to numerous religious themed dioramas on display there for the holidays.

Created by a member of Los Angeles-based Atheists United and dubbed "Charlie the Gnome" after Charles Darwin, the sculpture was intended to be a playful way to celebrate the season, said Bobbie Kirkhart, the atheist group's president. The gnome was fashioned to look like Darwin and has its own Facebook page.

The gnome was damaged sometime before Dec. 23 and has since been repaired.

Vandalism, Kirkhart said, is "something that unfortunately atheists have come to accept."

Last December the atheists put up a sign in Palisades Park that read: "Reason's Greetings." It was promptly stolen despite being anchored in concrete. This year's gnome also bore that slogan, as well as the group's name.

"There are a lot of people who are otherwise good and law abiding who believe they're doing a good thing when they commit a crime against us," Kirkhart said.

While she said Atheists United usually doesn't report such relatively minor acts of vandalism, this year the group decided to file a report with the SMPD.

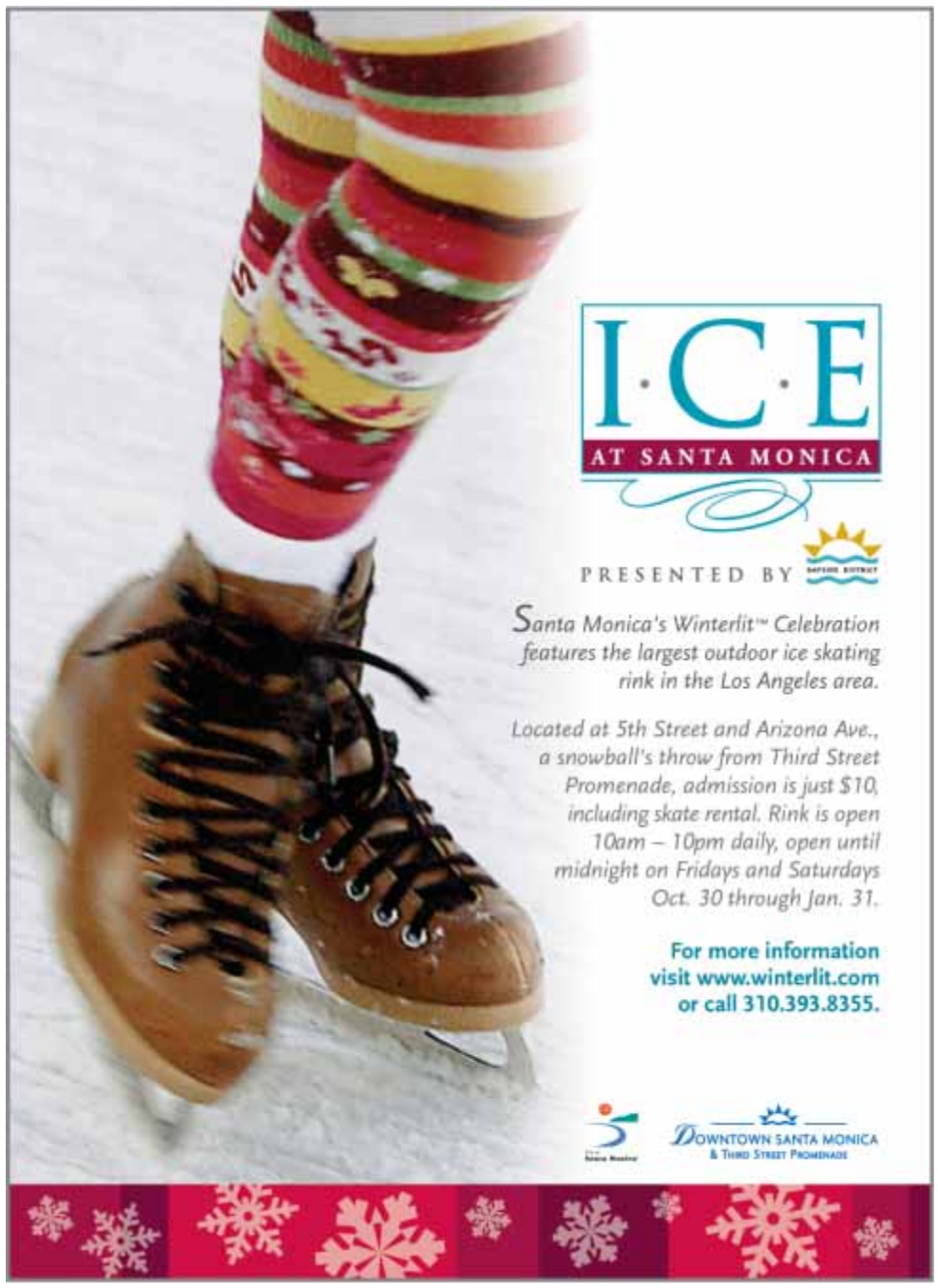
She said she recently became troubled that many acts of intimidation against atheists aren't tallied as hate crimes while similar acts against religious groups get more attention. She said she hopes by reporting crimes against atheists more people will make a point of rejecting acts of intolerance against people who don't believe in God.

"I think that most people are as upset as I am when they realize what this is an attack on is the First Amendment. This is an attack on the right to free expression," she said.

While Trisler acknowledged the incident had been recorded as an act of vandalism he said a complete crime report had not been generated and the incident would not be recorded as a hate crime.

News of the attack was shared among attendees at Atheists United's Winter Solstice celebration over the weekend, where most considered it an "ordinary irritation," Kirkhart said.

nict@smdp.com







GOP criticizes response

FROM **TERROR** PAGE 1

to trigger an effort to revoke the alleged attacker's visa. And officials in Yemen confirmed that the would-be bomber had been living in that country, where terrorist elements quickly sought to take credit for his actions.

The incident prompted stiffer airport boarding measures and authorities warned holiday travelers to expect extra delays as they return home this week and beyond.

Abdulmutallab, charged with trying to destroy an aircraft, is being held at the federal prison in Milan, Mich. A court hearing that had been scheduled for Monday to determine whether the government can get DNA from him was postponed until Jan. 8. No reason was given.

Calling Abdulmutallab's action an "attempted act of terrorism" Obama vowed to "do everything that we can to keep America safe" and declared: "The United States will more than simply strengthen our defenses. We will continue to use every element of our national power to disrupt, to dismantle and defeat the violent extremists who threaten us."

Members of Congress, meanwhile, questioned how a man flagged as a possible terrorist managed to board a commercial flight into the United States carrying powerful explosives and nearly bring down the jetliner. Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., said Monday that the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee that he chairs would hold hearings in January.

Meanwhile, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula claimed responsibility for the thwarted attack as retaliation for a U.S. operation against the group in Yemen. Yemeni forces, helped by U.S. intelligence, carried out two airstrikes against al-Qaida operatives this month in the lawless country that is fast becoming a key front in the war on terror. The second one was a day before 23-year-old Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to bring down a Northwest Airlines flight as it prepared to land in Detroit.

Yemen has long been an al-Qaida stomping ground. But officials fear that deepening instability in the Middle Eastern nation may be giving new opportunity for the terror group to establish a base to train and plan for attacks on the West.

A statement posted on the Internet by al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula said Abdulmutallab coordinated with members of the group and used explosives manufactured by al-Qaida members.

Solving one mystery of Abdulmutallab's pre-Detroit path, the Yemeni Foreign Ministry said Monday that he was in Yemen from August until early December. He had received a visa to study Arabic in a school in San'a. Citing immigration authorities, the statement said Abdulmutallab had previously studied at the school, indicating it was not his first trip to Yemen.

Obama, on vacation in his birthplace of Hawaii, acknowledged the attack showed the need to increase the United States' defenses. He detailed the pair of reviews that he has ordered to determine whether changes are needed in either the watchlist system or airport screening procedures.

"This was a serious reminder of the dangers that we face," he said. "It's absolutely critical that we learn from this incident."

Obama's remarks Monday were the first heard from him on the Christmas Day scare three days earlier.

Officials said that was deliberate — an effort by the White House to balance the need for the president to show concern but also to not unduly elevate a botched incident and thereby encourage other would-be attackers.

Back in Washington, federal officials met to review their layered system of watchlists and other procedures to examine how to avoid the type of lapses that led to the attack.

Abdulmutallab's family in Nigeria released a statement that that his father had reached out to Nigerian security agencies two months ago. The statement says the father then approached foreign security agencies for "their assistance to find and return him home."

U.S. officials say that is how Abdulmutallab came to the attention of American intelligence, just last month, when the father, prominent Nigerian banker Alhaji Umar Mutallab, reported his concerns to the American Embassy in Abuja. A senior U.S. official said the father was worried that his son was in Yemen and "had fallen under the influence of religious extremists." The father did not mention any specific threat.

These concerns landed him among the about 550,000 names in the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment database, known as TIDE, which is maintained by the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center. Other, smaller lists trigger additional airport screening or other restrictions, but intelligence officials said there wasn't enough information to move him into those categories.

Another apparent lapse concerns Abdulmutallab's visa.

Britain had refused to grant him a student visa in May, but there was no apparent effort to revoke his U.S. tourist visa, issued in June 2008 and good for multiple entries over two years.

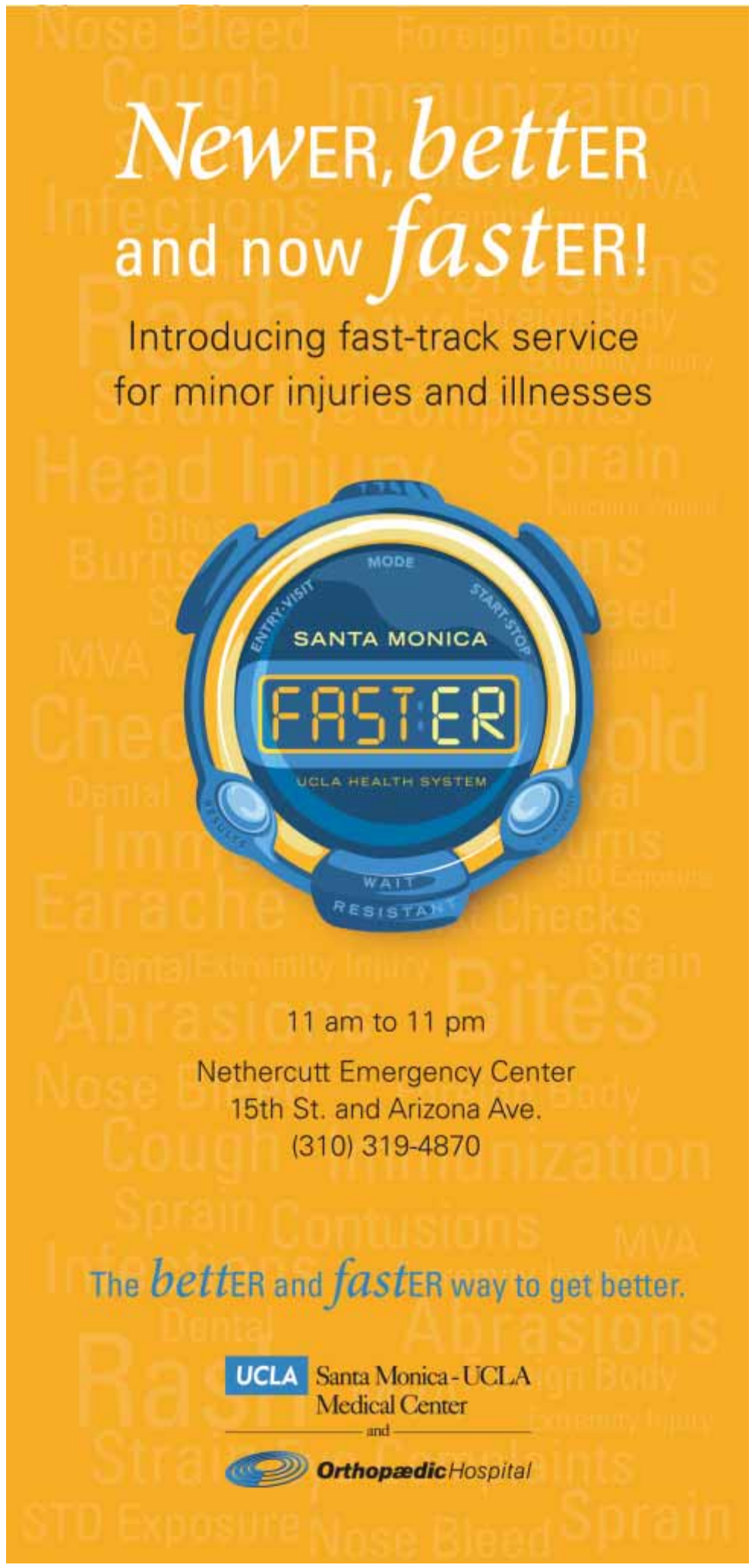
The embassy visit by Abdulmatallab's father triggered a Nov. 20 State Department cable from Lagos to all U.S. diplomatic missions and department headquarters in Washington. It was also shared with the interagency National Counter Terrorism Center, said State Department spokesman Ian Kelly.

The NCTC, which has responsibility if any visas are to be pulled over terrorism concerns, then reviewed the information and found it was "insufficient to determine whether his visa should be revoked," Kelly said.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano conceded Monday that the aviation security system failed, backtracking from a statement Sunday in which she said it worked.

Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., joined the GOP critics of that statement. "They just don't get it," said Hoekstra, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee. "The system didn't 'work' here." Hoekstra, who is running to become his state's governor, included his criticism in a campaign e-mail that asked supporters for donations.







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Academy library hosts new members of movie history

SANDY COHEN
AP Entertainment Writer

Editor's Note: This is the first story in this season's Oscar Insider series, a behind-the-scenes look at the Academy Awards.

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. For 81 years, she has amassed movie memorabilia. Her collection now includes more than 10 million photographs, 80,000 screenplays and 35,000 movie posters dating back to when the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was founded in 1927.

So it's fitting that the Margaret Herrick Library played host to the future of the film industry when it welcomed this year's crop of Oscar voters at a private reception honoring the newest members of the academy.

Surrounded by movie history, these new members celebrated becoming part of it.

"This organization first handed out awards in 1929 and I'm connected to that," said David Kaminow, who just joined the public relations branch. "It's having an attachment to the history of movies."

"We're part of the fabric of this industry," added fellow new member Sal Ladestro, who said his mother cried when he told her he was becoming an academy member "because it's that kind of important."

The library was the ideal setting for celebrating new members of the academy, said president Tom Sherak.

"The foundation for this organization is the history of movies, and when you become a member, you become part of that history," he said.

And that includes academy members influencing history by determining who will win Academy Awards — a process that began for the 82nd time on Monday when Oscar ballots went out to 5,777 academy members — including the 133 newest voters — who will collectively select the year's Oscar nominees and eventual winners.

Sherak gave the voting rookies some simple advice on how to handle the responsibility: Be conscientious.

"This is something we do that the whole world pays attention to and we need to take it very seriously," he said.

Each of the academy's 15 branches is responsible for nominating those in their field — so actors nominate actors and sound engineers nominate sound engineers — based on the year's eligible films. (There were 274 in 2009.) The entire voting membership submits their picks for best picture.

Sherak reminded them that the category is now twice the size it used to be: 10 nominees instead of five.

"You've joined in a tough year, because we've made it twice as hard to fill out the ballot," he said.

Ballots are due to PricewaterhouseCoopers on Jan. 23, 2010. Nominations will be announced Feb. 2 and the Academy Awards will be presented March 7.

Voting on the Oscars will be exciting, said Oscar-winning documentarian Megan Mylan. But being officially connected to the history of film as a member of the academy is even more profound.

"It's cool that they have all of this archival stuff because it does make you have an elevated level of respect for the work you're doing," she said. "I can see that there's something that I have in common with these grand storytellers... To sit here and read these names — and to think anything you do might have something to do with that — it's very heady to think about."







AP:Ponzi collapses rise in '09

CURT ANDERSON
AP Legal Affairs Writer

MIAMI It was a rough year for Ponzi schemes. In 2009, the recession unraveled nearly four times as many of the investment scams as fell apart in 2008, with "Ponzi" becoming a buzzword again thanks to the collapse of Bernard Madoff's $50 billion plot.

Tens of thousands of investors, some of them losing their life's savings, watched more than $16.5 billion disappear like smoke in 2009, according to an Associated Press analysis of scams in all 50 states.

While the dollar figure was lower than in 2008, that's only because Madoff — who pleaded guilty earlier this year and is serving a 150-year prison sentence — was arrested in December 2008 and didn't count toward this year's total.

In all, more than 150 Ponzi schemes collapsed in 2009, compared to about 40 in 2008, according to the AP's examination of criminal cases at all U.S. attorneys' offices and the FBI, as well as criminal and civil actions taken by state prosecutors and regulators at both the federal and state levels.

The 2009 scams ranged in size from a few hundred thousand dollars to the $7 billion bogus international banking empire authorities say jailed financier Allen Stanford orchestrated, as well as the $1.2 billion scheme they say was operated by disbarred Florida lawyer Scott Rothstein. Both have pleaded not guilty.

While enforcement efforts have ramped up — in large part because of the discovery of Madoff's fraud, estimated at $21 billion to $50 billion — the main reason so many Ponzi schemes have come to light is clear.

"The financial meltdown has resulted in the exposure of numerous fraudulent schemes that otherwise might have gone undetected for a longer period of time," said Lanny Breuer, assistant attorney general for the U.S. Justice Department's criminal division.

A Ponzi scheme depends on a constant infusion of new investors to pay older ones and furnish the cash for the scammers' lavish lifestyles. This year, when the pool of people willing to become new investors shrank and existing investors clamored to withdraw money, scams collapsed across the country.

"Some portion of the investors in the Ponzi scheme always get the short end of the stick and do not get paid," said Elizabeth Nowicki, a former Securities and Exchange Commission attorney who now teaches law at Boston University.

Even those who say they did their homework before investing ended up losing everything.

A retired Air Force sergeant, Tom Annis searched the Internet for red flags like complaints or lawsuits involving Minneapolis-based host Patrick Kiley after hearing about his investment on a weekly Christian radio show called "Follow The Money."

Finding none, the 63-year-old from Jacksonville, Fla., invested his $270,000 nest egg — money that has since evaporated after federal regulators shut down what they've called an elaborate, $190 million Ponzi scheme.

"I tried to do my level of due diligence," Annis said. "How could I be duped like this after years of investing?"

Ponzi schemes, named for infamous swindler Charles Ponzi, are extremely simple: Investors attracted by promises of high profits are paid with money from an ever-increasing pool of new investors, with the scammer skimming off the top. Sometimes the investments are at least partially legitimate but more often are completely fictional. There's no reserve fund for lean times, or for when droves of investors start demanding their money.

Ponzi himself was an Italian immigrant who concocted a scheme in 1919 involving bogus investments in postal currency. He cheated thousands of people out of $10 million, eventually going to jail for wire fraud before being deported back to Italy in 1934.

Eighty years after his scheme, federal statistics paint the picture of a Ponzi nation:

• The FBI opened more than 2,100 securities fraud investigations in 2009, up from 1,750 in 2008. The FBI also had 651 agents working in 2009 on high-yield investment fraud cases, which include Ponzis, compared with 429 last year.

• The SEC this year issued 82 percent more restraining orders against Ponzi schemes and other securities fraud cases this year than in 2008, and it opened about 6 percent more investigations. Ponzi scheme investigations now make up 21 percent of the SEC's enforcement workload, compared with 17 percent in 2008 and 9 percent in 2005.

• The Commodity Futures Trading Commission filed 31 civil actions in Ponzi cases this year, more than twice the 2008 amount.

Many of the 2009 cases have yet to head to trial. In its tally, the AP counted schemes in which prosecutions were initiated or in which regulators filed civil cases in 2008 and 2009.

The Justice Department does not have totals of how many people were convicted in Ponzi schemes for either year, or for previous years.

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SURF REPORT

Surf Conditions **Water Temp:** 56°

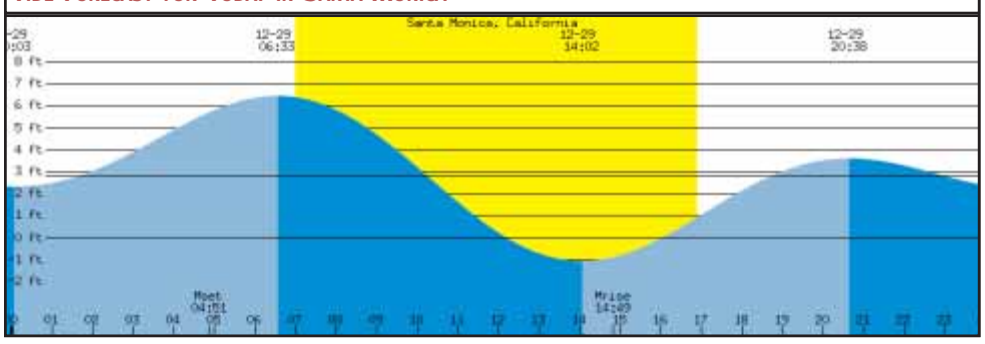
Swell Forecast

Swell should start backing down, perhaps head high+ (max 1-3 feet overhead) at west facing breaks.

Long Range Synopsis

We may see another burst of WNW swell, but so far, this is looking like a chest high day max for west facing breaks.

Tide Forecast for Today in Santa Monica



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 21, 2009**

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

QUICK STATS (for last 28 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 1
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 9
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 35 / 16
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 6 / 19

The Beach Report Card is made possible by: The Diller – von Furstenberg Family Foundation; simplehuman; SIMA

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

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

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence.	B	B
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).	B	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain.	A+	D
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain.	A+	F
Santa Monica Municipal Pier.	F	B
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain.	A	F
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms).	A+	D
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain.	A+	B
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain.	B	A
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain.	B	F
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain.	A+	F
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south.	A+	D
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St..	A+	D
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower.	A	B
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth.	A	B
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain.	A+	B
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach.	A+	B
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty).	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain.	A+	B
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant.	B	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain.	A+	B

LEGEND

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

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

Heal the Bay

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

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

NCAA FOOTBALL

College coaches stressed

RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press Writer

Early in Houston Nutt's 28-year coaching career, he stayed at the office until the wee hours, rarely pulling himself away from a busy schedule.

These days the Mississippi coach makes a point of taking a break and requires his assistants to get a physical before every season.

"I try to leave the building for 45 minutes during the day," the 52-year-old Nutt said in a telephone interview. "I either go home and see my wife or get some fresh air and grab a sandwich. I don't stay up there 'til 1 o'clock (in the morning) anymore like in my younger days.

"I try to work smart, eat healthy, work out."

Florida coach Urban Meyer's career flip-flop over the weekend, brought on by chest pains and stress, have focused attention on a rarely discussed part of football — the physical toll that high-profile, high-paid, high-pressure coaching jobs exact on the people who run major college programs.

Interviews with athletic directors around the country the past few days indicate that coaches usually are not required by universities to take physicals before being handed contracts that often pay millions of dollars and demand huge hours.

A spokesman for the American Football Coaches Association says that even though the pressure on big-time football coaches has risen along with salaries over the last two decades, coaches are generally taking better care of themselves.

"This is a much healthier profession than it was 25 years ago," AFCA spokesman Todd Bell said. "The demands of the job almost force you to be in better shape. You are constantly on the go. You constantly have to be on, to be at your best."

Yet that lifestyle is exactly what makes being a football coach at a major university such a stressful job, according to Dr. James O'Keefe.

O'Keefe, the head of preventive cardiology at Mid America Heart Institute in Kansas City, Mo., said big demands on a person's time causes job stress. The other major factor in creating stress at work is control — or lack thereof.

Rare is the football coach who is not at least a bit of a control freak. But while they think they can control everything around them, O'Keefe said, ultimately their success is determined by the players.

O'Keefe said stress alone can cause an otherwise healthy person to have heart problems. Unlike many risk factors for heart disease, there's no good medication to treat stress.

"There are lots of unhealthy coping mechanisms for stress that people get into," O'Keefe said, mentioning drugs such as Valium and alcohol.

Xanax is a popular prescription drug used by people who are stressed out, but O'Keefe said that's not a good option either "because it dulls down your performance and makes you less energetic, less creative."

O'Keefe said the keys to treating stress are relatively simple: Get plenty of sleep, regular exercise and lead a balanced life, with time set aside for family, friends and fun.

New Years Eve is right around the corner!

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AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (PG) 1hr 28min
10:10 a.m., 11:40 a.m., 12:40, 2:05, 3:05, 4:30, 5:30, 7:00, 8:00, 9:20, 10:20

Sherlock Holmes (PG-13) 2hrs 14min
12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30

Up in the Air (R) 1hr 49min
11:05am, 1:50, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

AMC 7 Santa Monica
1310 Third St.
(310) 289-4262

Avatar 3D (PG-13) 2hr 40 min
10:40am, 11:30am, 2:15, 3:15, 6:00, 7:00, 9:45, 10:45

Princess and the Frog (G) 1hr 35min
11:15am, 1:50, 4:25, 7:05, 9:40

Up in the Air (R) 1hr 49min
12:00, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15, 10:55

It's Complicated (R) 1hr 54min
10:15am, 10:55am, 1:10, 2:00, 4:10, 5:00, 7:10, 8:00, 10:05, 11:00

Sherlock Holmes (PG-13) 2hrs 14min
10:30am, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

Laemmle's Monica Fourplex
1332 Second St.
(310) 394-9741

Precious (R) 1hr 59min
1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:00

An Education (PG13) 1hr 55min
1:55, 4:40, 7:30, 10:00

Police, Adjective (Politist, adj.) (NR) 1hr 55min
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 9:55

Young Victoria (PG) 1hr 44min
1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:40

Mann's Criterion Theatre
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

Nine (PG-13) 1hr 50min
11:30am, 12:20, 2:00, 3:00, 4:40, 5:40, 7:30, 8:30, 10:10

The Blind Side (PG-13) 2hrs 6min
12:40, 3:40, 6:40, 9:40

Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG-13) 1hr 43min
12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:30

The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG-13) 2hrs 10min
12:30, 6:30

Invictus (PG-13) 2hrs 12min
1:20, 3:30, 4:20, 7:20, 9:30, 10:20

For more information, e-mail news@smdp.com

Stay close to home, Pisces

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ The time has come to clear the air with a partner. You might have some trepidation, but you also know that it is more than necessary. Your words fall on another's ears perhaps differently from how you intended them to. Be ready to revamp your communication. Tonight: Find a friend to hang out with.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Stay sensitive to expenditures, whether you want to or not. You are at a point where a lot could happen quickly, especially involving your day-to-day life. You have an unusual capacity to understand more than many think. Tonight: Buy a New Year's item for yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You are all smiles and ready for a different or more dynamic approach. How you handle a situation and what evolves could transform radically. Your personality can change how you approach matters, veering from a classic fashion. Tonight: Wish-upon-a-star time.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Know when to pull back and keep your own counsel. You could be out of sorts. Stay mum for a while, knowing that there are other solutions. Don't show your hand or say something you could regret later. Tonight: Squeeze in as much R and R as possible.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ You might want to rethink a situation that emerges out of the blue. Your way or style is very different from how it has been in the past. Others might need to pull back some. You certainly get your message through. Tonight: Where the action is.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Through accepting more responsibility, you'll gain an even stronger foothold in a professional and/or emotional situation. Through asking more questions, you'll see and understand someone's fiscal response. Tonight: A must appearance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Keep reaching out and attempting to get the big picture. You might be trying too hard to make what is necessary happen. Let go, and you could be delighted by what comes in. At this present point, you could be more uptight than in the past. Tonight: Go for a drive to relax. Try a movie if you want.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Relate to others individually, and you'll make headway in a key relationship. Sometimes you doubt yourself or don't believe in the innate power that draws many close to you. Talk through a problem. Tonight: Togetherness is the theme.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ You want to do something very differently from in the past. Avoid getting stuck. You need to trust your instincts more, understanding which way to go. Listen to what is being shared by a partner or dear friend. Tonight: Express what you want.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Focus on getting the job done. You could be overly tired and worn out by recent events. Listen more to what is being shared. Not everything is as you would like it to be or how you see it right now. Tonight: Do something just for yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Your creativity easily gets stirred up. You might wonder what your limits really are under the circumstances. Loosen up and realize that very few people can even understand how you think, much less go along with it. Tonight: Laugh and enjoy the one you are with.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Sometimes too much is going on for your taste. Loosen up and relax. You don't need to carry others' responsibilities or worries, at least for now. Be open to a family member who cares a lot. Tonight: Happy close to home.

Happy birthday

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

This year, others find you to be unusually mercurial and changeable. You do accomplish more, as you are lighter, easier to communicate with and don't need the same answers and commitments as others. You could feel as if you have too many responsibilities. That might be true, but you handle them well. In the near future, a pay raise or promotion could be possible because of your hard work this year. If you are single, you often feel at odds with your responsibilities and what you would like to do. Become more playful. If you are attached, the two of you simply need to lighten up and enjoy more. A relative could be demanding of both of you. SAGITTARIUS reads you cold.

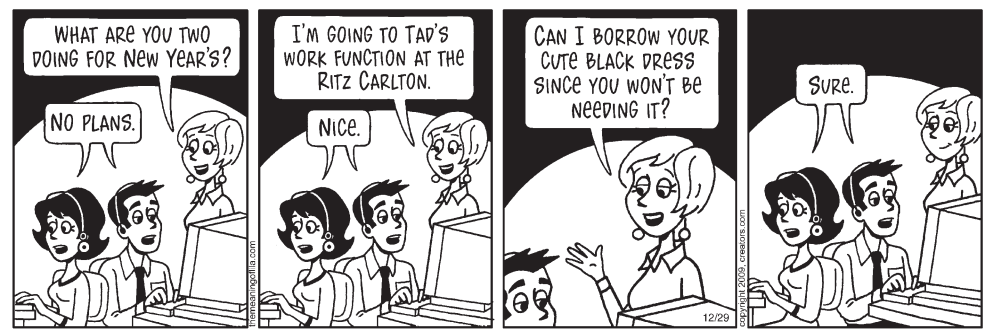
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



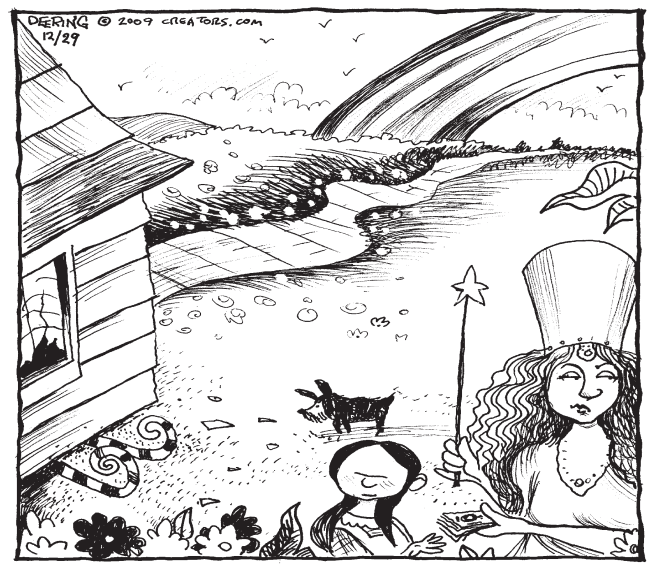
Garfield

By Jim Davis



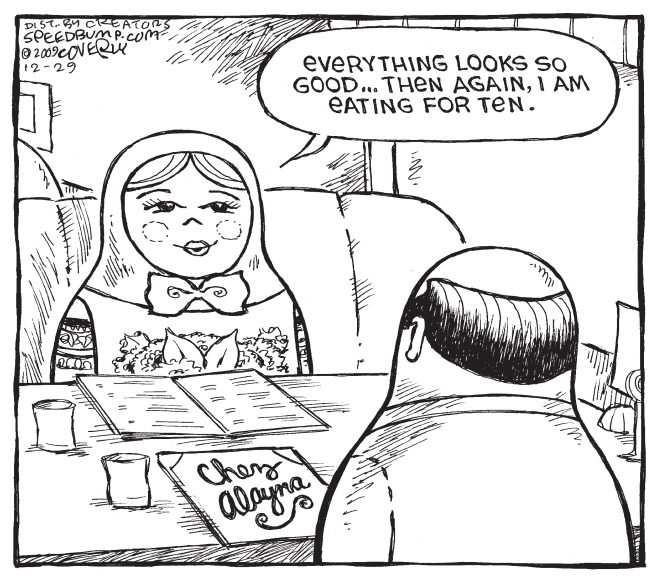
Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



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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 ★★

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

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

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

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MYSTERY REVEALED

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

Nadine VanSlyke correctly identified this photo of a stained glass window at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, where she worked for 40 years. She will receive two VIP passes to Pacific Park. Check out tomorrow's paper for another chance to play.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Online icon
7 Island east of Java
11 Deli buy
12 Hymn ender
13 Response provoker
15 Mosque faith
16 Satisfactory
18 "Dog-gone!"
21 Drawn out
22 Seattle cagers
24 Paintings and prints
25 Family
26 Bill stamp
27 Cruise accountant
29 Red-ink amount
30 With 31-Across, Louvre painting
31 See 30-Across
32 Polygon corner
34 Legal condition
40 Pageantry
41 Hilary Swank movie
42 Not at home
43 In a sinister manner

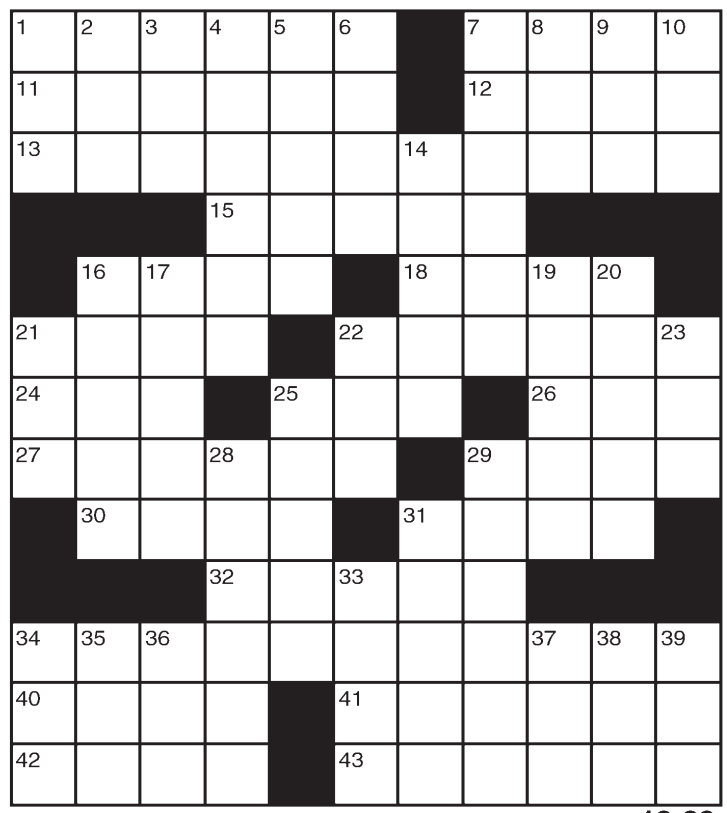
DOWN

1 Burro
2 Big tub
3 Boxing great
4 Job for Petruchio
5 Entertain
6 Small stream
7 Gotham City hero
8 French friend
9 Summer zodiac sign
10 Road-house
14 Singer Neville
16 Open discussion
17 Prologue
19 Ocean motions
20 Cousteau's gear
21 Napkin site
22 Knight title
23 Fixed
25 Reeves of "The Matrix"
28 Neat
29 Would-be loser
31 Andes beast
33 Delighted
34 Massage setting
35 Pull along
36 "— Believer"
37 Sort
38 Gusher's gush
39 Yea opposer

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

Yesterday's answer

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12-29

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SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 8 19 20 21 41
Meganumber: 3
Jackpot: $7M

Fantasy 5: 16 18 25 30 38

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 7 9 6
EVENING: 2 2 2

DAILY DERBY:
1st: 06 Whirl Win
2nd: 05 California Classic
3rd: 08 Gorgeous George
RACE TIME: 1.42.32

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

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ The Wisconsin Department of Corrections decided in October that it (i.e., taxpayers) should fund complex facial reconstruction surgery for inmate Daryl Strenke, who is serving 30 years after pleading guilty to murdering his girlfriend. Strenke had shot himself in the face in apparent remorse for the killing, severely disfiguring his mouth and jaw and making it nearly impossible for him to eat or speak normally.

■ (1) In November, the Solihull Council in Britain's West Midlands county ordered a flooring store to remove the festive balloons it had pinned out front to attract business, calling them hazards. One councilor explained that drivers may be distracted by the colors, and another was concerned that if a balloon came loose, it might possibly float into traffic and lure a child to follow it. (2) In October, Britain's Association of Chief Police Officers prepared a guidebook of instructions for bicycle-duty officers on how to ride a bike. The book was 93 pages long, containing such assistance as a diagram on how to turn left or right ("deployment into a junction"). (Following widespread ridicule, the association decided in November not to release it.)

TODAY IN HISTORY

1934 Japan renounces the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 and the London Naval Treaty of 1930.

1937 The Irish Free State is replaced by a new state called Ireland with the adoption of a new constitution.

1939 First flight of the Consolidated B-24.

1940 World War II: In The Second Great Fire of London, the Luftwaffe firebombs London, killing almost 200 civilians.

1949 KC2XAK of Bridgeport, Connecticut becomes the first Ultra high frequency (UHF) television station to operate a daily schedule.

1972 An Eastern Air Lines Flight 401 (a Lockheed Tristar) crashes on approach to Miami International Airport, Florida, killing 101.

WORD UP!

surreptitious \suhr-uhp-TISH-uhs; suh-rep-\ , adjective;
1. Done, made, or gotten by stealth.

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MAR VISTA, 11621 Braddock Dr. unit 2 2bdrm. 1.5 bath, $1295, townhouse style, stove, carpt, w/d hookup, patio, gated parking, carpet, intercom entry, no pets.$700 off move-in (310)967-4471 www.jkwproperties.com

1244 Euclid 2+1 upper unit #10 stove, fridge, marble bathroom floors, carpets blinds, free standing balcony, parking, pets OK with deposit .$1675/mo (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

1248 11TH st.unit A 2bdrm/1 1/2bath, lower carpet stove, blinds, laundry, vinyl flooring, balcony parking, no pets.on site manager $1625.(310)393-6322 www.jkwproperties.com

12500 CULVER Blvd., near Marina 1+1 $975 Includes parking, laundry , elevator, gated MUST SEE Call Lenny (310)822-7282

2712 ABBOT Kinney, in Venice parking, laundry, gated. All utilities included 1+1 $1150, single $895. Call Doug (310)577-9609

833 5TH St. SM upper unit 206 single $1395 stove, carpet, blinds, swimming pool, laundry, granite countertops, wood/tile floors, intercom entry, gated parking, no pets. (310)393-2547 www.jkwproperties.com

Culver City 4058 LaSalle Unit B lower duplex unit 1bdrm/1bath, hardwood floors, ceiling fan, breakfast nook, washer/dryer stove, fridge, parking, no pets. $1599/mo (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

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Sgl, st, fr, lwr **$875**
1831 Pearl Street, #5
3+1_, st, fr, fp, Berber cpt, carport-1, upr **$2200**

WEST L.A.
1920 Manning Ave #6
2+1_ , st, fr, hdwd **$1500**
3024-C Exposition Blvd
2+1, st, fr, new kitchen & cpt, 1-car gar **$1600**
1657 Federal Ave, #12
Bach, sm, fr, htpl, ldry, separate bath **$775**
1766_ Malcolm Ave
Sgl, st, fr, pkg, cpt, ldry **$800**
1766 Malcolm Ave
2+1, st, fr, cpt, pkg-1, ldry **$1500**
1800 Kelton Ave, #5 & #7
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11321 Massachusetts, #9
1+1, st, fr, pkg **$1100**
11321 Massachusetts, #4
Sgl, st, fr, pkg **$875**

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1037 5th St. #6 North of Wilshire 2+2 Recently refurbished $2395

1214 Idaho Ave. #8, 2+1 1/2 Townhouse, avail Jan 1, $2595

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www.howardmanagement.com
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L.A. 1523 Holt Ave unit 1+1 large lower unit stove, fridge, hardwood, parking, cat OK with deposit, $1125, $500 off move-in (310) 578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA 12450 Culver Blvd. Unit 213, Single stove, fridge, blinds, carpet, tiling, flooring, granite counter tops, with utilities, intercom entry, gated parking, no pets. $895/mo (888)414-7778 www.jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA 12766 Matteson Ave #8 2+2 $1375/mo stove, fridge, tile and vinlyn floors, blinds, parking, laundry, no pets call between 5:30-7:30pm units shown by appt.only $500 off move-in (310) 439-1928 jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA 3976 Inglewood Blvd. , 2+2 lower $1375/Mo stove, fridge, blinds, carpet, laundry, parking, no pets. $500 off move-in (310)578-7512 www.jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA: 11932 Courtleigh Dr. unit 9, $1025/mo. 1+1 stove, fridge, carpet, blinds, carpet, utilities include, intercom entry, laundry, gated, parking, no pets. $500 off move-in (310) 737-7933 jkwproperties.com

MAR VISTA: 12434 CULVER Blvd. unit 1 2+2 stove, fridge, AC, carpets blinds, laundry room, intercom entry, gated parking, no pets.$1375/mo $500 off move-in (888)414-7778 www.jkwproperties.com

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WESTWOOD: 617 1/2 Midvale unit 3 Bachelor, no kitchen, sink, fridge,hot plate, microwave, ceiling fan, carpet, street parking, no pets $795/mo $500 off move-in (310)578-7512 wwwjkwproperties.com

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 20091736624 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as HILL ON BROADWAY, 825 HILL STREET, UNIT A, SANTA MONICA, CA 90405. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : KARIM ABJANI, 825 HILL STREET, UNIT A, SANTA MONICA, CA 90405 This Business is being conducted by, an individual. Signed: The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed on (Date)11/17/2009. */s/:* KARIM ABJANI
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/17/2009. 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 12/15/2009, 12/22/2009, 12/29/2009, 1/5/2010

The 14 users currently in the teen chat room.

good2hug:	14, female, Daytona, FL
joey16:	16, male, Hackensack, NJ
robbieW:	38, male, Daytona, FL
b-ball_tommy:	15, male, Pocatello, ID
tu_tu:	16, female, Burlington, VT
duffme:	44, male, Minneapolis, MN
QTpie:	30, male, Chicago, IL
ty1989:	15, female, Naperville, IL
harrys_grl:	12, female, Appleton, MN
slugger20:	17, male, Jackson, MS
qtrback21:	26, male, Brooklyn, NY
suzie14:	14, female, Portland, OR
hiphopper:	13, female, Plano, TX
paperboy:	41, male, Beaverton, OR

Every day, children are sexually solicited online.

Ad Council
You don't know what your kids are saying online. Or who they are saying it to. A lot of times neither do they. So get involved. To protect your kid's online life or report an incident, call 1-800-THE LOST or visit cybertipline.com. #ODP: help delete online predators
MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN



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Kate Bransfield

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	Single Family Homes	Condos & Townhomes
Santa Monica Canyon	$2,487,000	$4,802,500
North of Montana	$2,795,000	$1,397,500
Between Wilshire & Montana	$1,947,500	$684,500
South of Wilshire	$850,000	$649,000
Sunset Park	$1,249,000	$650,000
Ocean Park	$1,380,000	$714,000

Statistics Updated Every Monday

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