

FREE

# Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

## LOTTO

### SUPER LOTTO PLUS

47-20-26-11-14

Meganumber: 26

Jackpot: \$7 million

### FANTASY 5

26, 8, 20, 13, 39

### DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 9, 5, 0

Evening picks: 7, 5, 1

### DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 9, Winning Spirit

2nd Place: 12, Lucky Charms

3rd Place: 8, Gorgeous George

Race Time: 1:43.79



## NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

■ A woman was summonsed for dangerous driving after she tied the child's seat carrying her 20-month-old infant to a backseat door to keep it from swinging open (Perth, Australia).

■ About 50 inmates at a Portuguese prison refused to eat special Christmas lunches because the bread, usually freshly baked, was not, due to bakeries having closed early the day before (Belas, Portugal).

■ Police said a 29-year-old woman ordered her 11-year-old daughter to help her shoplift clothing, including some items the woman later returned to the girl as Christmas presents (Fort Myers, Fla.).

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If women didn't exist, all the money in the world would have no meaning."  
— Aristotle Onassis

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## Crunch time for City Hall, public programs

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

City Hall's economic forecast is not as bleak as it was a year ago, but dark clouds are still on the horizon.

While last year's \$16 million budget shortfall may appear to dwarf this year's \$4 million deficit, economic uncertainty will remain a lingering problem for city officials in the foreseeable future.

"We are still not out of the woods," said Steve Stark, the city's finance director, during the City Council's mid-term budget review on Tuesday. "We continue to have challenges with state funding for local communities."

**"We continue to have challenges with state funding for local communities."**

— STEVE STARK  
Finance director,  
City of Santa Monica

The City Council succeeded in closing its deficit last year by cutting \$8 million in expenditures and finding another \$8 million worth of revenue, which came in the form of increased parking fines and business license fees, among others.

"Those were hard decisions to make, but it

created a much improved picture," Stark told the council. "That picture would have been much more bleak had you not made those policy decisions."

But because of the state's ongoing budget problems, Santa Monica will be forced to deal with a loss of revenue stemming from sources like the Vehicle License Fee. Stark predicts Santa Monica's budget deficit for 2005-2006 will swell to \$5.6 million if no corrective measures are taken.

While current estimates indicate that the gap is narrowing, it is believed that the shortfall will extend several years beyond the original estimate of three years.

See CITY BUDGET, page 7

## Council displays a fear of commitment

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

Facing its own economic uncertainties, the City Council on Tuesday decided against committing extra funding to the school district.

The consequences of the council's inaction could be felt soon, as a large, powerful group of school supporters intend to move forward with its plans to force a measure onto November's ballot that, if passed, would require City Hall to pay a minimum of \$6 million a

year to the school district.

School supporters waited anxiously in Council Chambers at City Hall on Tuesday to hear elected officials' response to their plan. When it was finally discussed around midnight, City Council members agreed they can't commit to anything more than the \$3 million City Hall currently contributes. They said they hoped they could give another \$2.25 million in one-time funds, as they've done in the past, but given an anticipated \$4 million budget

shortfall this year, council members are hesitant to commit.

"The \$2.25 million doesn't exist in the real world right now," said Councilman Mike Feinstein. "We've been there for the school district because we have managed our money well and we have gone over and above that stability unlike any other city has done, with the exception of Beverly Hills."

The goal of school supporters is to provide a stable and predictable source of funding to the district. And while the City Council agrees education is a top priority in Santa Monica, it's too soon to predict whether City Hall will have enough cash to hand over without

See SCHOOLS, page 5

## School activists ready to tackle homework

BY MICHAEL TITTINGER

Daily Press Staff Writer

Frustrated with City Hall's reluctance to substantially increase funding to its schools on a permanent basis, a group of school supporters are taking their case to the people.

Residents of Santa Monica will be hearing a lot about the "Community for Excellent Public Schools" in the weeks and months to come, as volunteers of the school-funding activist group

See ACTIVISTS, page 7

## A scholarly site



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

Workers make progress on the new multi-million dollar library on Sixth Street, which will take at least three years to complete. The library will have an underground parking garage and plenty of new amenities.

## Ante up: Living wage activists deal new hand

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

Despite several failed attempts in the past, the movement to pass a living wage in Santa Monica is once again underway.

Under a proposal unveiled on Tuesday, all city workers and employees employed by private companies on contracts with City Hall of \$25,000 or more would get paid a minimum of \$11.51 an hour and receive upgraded health benefits.

The proposal was one of the last issues discussed by the City Council at its marathon meeting on Tuesday. The plan was introduced at 12:50 a.m. by Vivian Rothstein,

**"Workers who work full-time shouldn't have to rely on public assistance."**

— VIVIAN ROTHSTEIN  
Santa Monicans Allied for  
Responsible Tourism

director Santa Monicans Allied for Responsible Tourism, who has been a key player in several other living wage proposals.

For nearly five years, SMART has pushed for a "living wage" —

See LIVING WAGE, page 6

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