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September 2005

Dear GSPP Friend:

This eDigest includes upcoming events and recent examples of GSPP alumni, faculty and students in the news. Summaries of the articles follow a quick reference list.

We are always delighted to receive your material for inclusion in the Digest. Please email the editor at wong23@berkeley.edu.

eDIGEST FEATURES

- Upcoming Events
- Quick Reference List
- Alumni and Student Newsmakers
- Faculty & Goldman Event Speaker in the News
- Recent Faculty Speaking Engagements
- Videos & Webcasts

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. 7th ANNUAL ALUMNI RECOGNITION DINNER
Alumnus of the Year, JULIA LOPEZ (MPP 1980)
Reunion Classes '70, '75, '80, '85, '90, '95 & '00
October 21, 2005, 5:30 p.m. cocktails, 7:00 p.m. dinner/program
Berkeley City Club
Register online at: http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~gspp/alumni/hc_registration.htm

2. 2006 AARON WILDAVSKY FORUM FOR PUBLIC POLICY
Professor John Dilulio, Jr.
"Faith-Based Initiatives and Public Policy"
April 6, 2006 (evening time TBA). Discussion session the following morning.

John Dilulio is Professor of Politics, Religion, and Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2001 Prof. Dilulio served in the Bush White House as the Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Groups. He is also a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, senior counsel to Public/Private Ventures, and founding director of the Center for Public Management at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

QUICK REFERENCE LIST

In addition to the print media referenced below, broadcast media coverage includes numerous interviews with DEAN NACHT by KRON TV, KGO TV and KTVU, among others.

ALUMNI AND STUDENT NEWSMAKERS

1. "Influx of New Venues Enlivens Downtown New Theater, Jazz Club For Downtown" (Daily Californian, September 1, 2005); story citing FRANCISCO DEVRIES (MPP 2000); <http://www.dailycal.org/article.php?id=19287>
2. "Leader leaves Delta group. Bill Jennings says he's looking for other ways to defend environment" (Sacramento Bee [*requires registration, August 31, 2005); story citing RANDY KANOUSE (MPP 1978); http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/local_government/story/13498318p-14338921c.html
3. "Minimum wage bill would boost wages of 2.35 million state workers, study says" (UC Berkeley Media Relations, August 30, 2005; story citing studies by GINA VICKERY (MPP cand. 2006) and AMY VASSALOTTI (MPP 2005); http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/08/30_wage.shtml
4. "Winning Workplaces and FSB: FORTUNE Small Business Name 2005 'Best Bosses' Finalists" (Winning Workplaces, August 24, 2005); story citing PAMELA DAVIS (MPP 1987); <http://www.winningworkplaces.org/services/award/bestbossesevent.php>
5. "Analyst shares fears of readers" (Dayton Daily News [*requires registration], August 16, 2005; Letter to the Editor by ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <http://www.daytondailynews.com/search/content/opinion/daily/0816letters.html>
6. "Drug Loophole in Workers' Comp. Doctors are allowed to sell medications at huge markups. And that is costing employers and insurers \$250 million a year, a study says" (Los Angeles Times, August 14, 2005); story citing FRANK NEUHAUSER (MPP 1993); <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-comp14aug14,1,4246178,print.story>
7. "Soaring gasoline prices have driven some -- but not all -- to seek cars that get better mileage" (Daily Record [*requires registration], August 10, 2005); story citing report by ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <http://www.dailyrecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/frontpage>
8. "Brain Stent Is Cleared to Treat Strokes" (The Wall Street Journal [*requires registration], August 10, 2005); story citing DANIEL TUDEN (MPP 1988, PhD 1995); <http://online.wsj.com/public/us>
9. "Company A Comes Home. The Iraq battlefield behind them, a wounded California National Guard company struggles to adapt to civilian life" (Los Angeles Times, August 7, 2005); story citing CHRISTINE PRINCE (MPP 2005); <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/iraq/complete/la-tm-homecoming32aug07,1,2948291,print.story>
10. "Exemption gives BART better chance of obtaining federal funding" (Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News - Gilroy Dispatch, August 6, 2005); story citing STUART COHEN (MPP 1997); <http://www.gilroydispatch.com/news/contentview.asp?c=165771>
11. "BART-to-S.J. hurdle removed - Silicon Valley Extension Expected To Get Exemption" (San Jose Mercury News, August 5, 2005); story citing STUART COHEN (MPP 1997); <http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/local/12309417.htm>
12. "Public Agencies Face Healthcare-Cost Crisis. The bill is just starting to come due on medical coverage promised to retirees during an era of lower expenses" (Los Angeles Times, August 5, 2005); story citing ELIZABETH HILL (MPP 1975); <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-benefits5aug05,1,6286950.story>
13. "Rohnert Park casino flap depicted in festival film" (San Francisco Chronicle, August 5, 2005); story about documentary by GARANCE BURKE (MPP 2005); <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/08/05/NBGREE1FI41.DTL&type=printable>
14. "Wedding Gift Registry: Charity" (Early Show, CBS-TV, August 5, 2005); story featuring BETHANY ROBERTSON (MPP 2001); video clip available at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/08/04/earlyshow/contributors/lauriehibberd/main759243.shtml>
15. "House OKs water project study. Funds to find site for desalination plant" (San Francisco Chronicle, July 16, 2005); story citing RANDY KANOUSE (MPP 1978); <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/07/16/BAGB4DOT6V1.DTL&hw=kanouse&sn=001&sc=1000>
16. "Classroom 'clickers' let teachers gauge comprehension, get students involved" (Ventura County Star, May 16, 2005); story citing ROSS CHEIT (MPP 1980, PhD 1987).
17. "Unmentioned Energy Fix: A 55 M.P.H. Speed Limit" (New York Times [*requires registration], May 1, 2005); story citing ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <http://www.nytimes.com/>

18. "Greens pitch business case for hybrids" (Automotive News [*requires registration], March 21, 2005); story citing ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <https://www.autonews.com/buyArchives.cms?articleId=52204>
19. "Student use of WebCT can be monitored by Brown U. instructors" (Brown Daily Herald, March 10, 2005); story citing ROSS CHEIT (MPP 1980, PhD 1987).
20. "Governor appoints two to state Ethics Commission" (The Associated Press State & Local Wire, December 20, 2004); story citing ROSS CHEIT (MPP 1980, PhD 1987).

FACULTY & BOARD MEMBER IN THE NEWS

1. "Nuclear Fallout. Berkeley team thinks beyond the unthinkable" (Cal Monthly, September 2005, Cover Story - Berkeley's Big Bang Project); story about report co-authored by HAROLD SMITH & MICHAEL NACHT; http://www.alumni.berkeley.edu/Alumni/Cal_Monthly/September_2005/COVER_STORY-_Berkeleys_Big_Bang_Project_.asp
2. "The Case for Affirmative Action in University Admissions" (C-Span 2 TV, August 27, 2005); talk citing ROBERT REICH; <http://www.booktv.org/General/index.asp?segID=5653&schedID=371>
3. "'A beacon for other businesses': Berkeley alum Daryl Ross takes budget organic mainstream" (UC Berkeley NewsCenter, August 23, 2005; story citing Board Member STEVE SILBERSTEIN; http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/08/24_ross.shtml
4. "Marin median home price slips to \$910,000" (Marin Independent Journal, August 18, 2005); story citing JOHN QUIGLEY; http://www.marinij.com/marin/ci_2952272
5. "Solar power tower? NASA Proposal Would Prevent Demolition of Moffett Field Landmark" (Mercury News, August 16, 2005); story citing DAN KAMMEN; <http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/living/health/12394590.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>
6. "Coverage of Big Awards for Plaintiffs Helps Distort View of Legal System. In most such cases, the verdicts are either later rejected or the amounts are severely lowered" (Los Angeles Times, August 15, 2005); story citing study by ROBERT MACCOUN; <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-tortmedia15aug15,1,66782.story?coll=la-headlines-business>
7. "Governor caught in spending trap. He promised cuts but approved increases after planned service reductions drew fire" (Sacramento Bee, August 14, 2005); story citing JOHN ELLWOOD; <http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/v-print/story/13412464p-14253736c.html>
8. "Op-Ed: Watching the bubble. How China can burst U.S. housing bubble" (San Francisco Chronicle, August 14, 2005); op-ed by ROBERT REICH; <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/08/14/INGN3E5T5D1.DTL&type=printable>
9. "Commentary: ROBERT REICH on John Roberts" (Marketplace, American Public Media, August 10, 2005); listen to this commentary at: <http://marketplace.publicradio.org/shows/2005/08/10/PM200508102.html>
10. "Church, State and a Court Nominee" (New York Times, July 16, 2005); Letter to the Editor by JACK GLASER; <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9806E3DD1F3DF935A25754C0A9639C8B63>

ALUMNI AND STUDENT NEWSMAKERS

1. "Influx of New Venues Enlivens Downtown New Theater, Jazz Club For Downtown" (Daily Californian, September 1, 2005); story citing FRANCISCO DEVRIES (MPP 2000); <http://www.dailycal.org/article.php?id=19287>

By Bonnie Ho And Bryan Thomas

Nights will be livelier in downtown Berkeley with the promise of a new theater and a jazz nightclub in the downtown Berkeley arts district, among other current development projects.

Businesses have pushed for a more vibrant downtown arts culture for more than a decade, as a growing number of entertainment venues have replaced once-empty spaces. The Marsh theater has moved into the ground floor of the Gaia Building and jazz club Kimball's East plans to replace the former UC Theater on University Avenue.

"An important component of redeveloping downtowns is developing the arts and entertainment," said CISCO DEVRIES, CHIEF OF STAFF TO MAYOR TOM BATES. "We're seeing that coming to fruition in Berkeley." ...

2. "Leader leaves Delta group. Bill Jennings says he's looking for other ways to defend environment" (Sacramento Bee [*requires registration, August 31, 2005]; story citing RANDY KANOUSE (MPP 1978); http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/local_government/story/13498318p-14338921c.html)

By Matt Weiser, Bee Staff Writer

The most ardent and charismatic defender of Central Valley water quality is resigning from the DeltaKeeper organization he launched a decade ago.

Bill Jennings is probably the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's most recognizable figure. His jolly appearance often contrasted with his tenacious work on behalf of fish and rivers, but it made him a perfect icon for the oft-misunderstood region.

As DeltaKeeper's boss, he created a powerful grass-roots coalition that tested farm and industry runoff and won dozens of battles to improve water quality. ...

Jennings and others formed Committee to Save the Mokelumne and began challenging water interests on the river. A series of legal challenges led to the closure and containment of an abandoned mine that was leaching toxins into the river.

The group also forced the East Bay Municipal Utility District to increase river flows from its waterworks on the Mokelumne. ...

"He looks like Santa Claus, and yet I learned while watching him that this was a Santa Claus on a mission," said RANDY KANOUSE, LOBBYIST FOR THE EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT.

"I admired his commitment to protecting the Mokelumne River, and the ferocity with which he pursued that goal. That's one Santa Claus you want to have in your corner."

3. "Minimum wage bill would boost wages of 2.35 million state workers, study says" (UC Berkeley Media Relations, August 30, 2005; story citing studies by GINA VICKERY (MPP cand. 2006) and AMY VASSALOTTI (MPP 2005); http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/08/30_wage.shtml)

By Kathleen Maclay

Berkeley -- Proposed legislation to raise California's minimum wage would boost the pay of 2.35 million workers in the state -- most of them Latino and many of them female -- with minimal costs to businesses and \$2 billion in taxpayer savings, according to a new study by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley's Institute of Industrial Relations.

Assembly Bill 48 would increase the state's minimum wage from \$6.75 an hour to \$7.25 an hour, starting Jan. 1, 2006, marking the first increase in four years. It would then increase the minimum wage in January 2007 to \$7.75 per hour, and require annual adjustments for inflation beginning in 2008. The bill is authored by Assemblywoman Sally Lieber, D-Mountain View, who also is chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Ending Poverty in California.

Some 1.65 million workers in California's private sector would immediately see their wages increase, and the researchers estimate another 700,000 workers would benefit from a "ripple effect." ...

Institute Director Michael Reich, research economist Arindrajit Dube and GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHER GINA VICKERY note in their study that the minimum wage, when adjusted for inflation, has dropped by more than 30 percent since 1968 and is approaching historic lows when measured by that gauge. California's minimum wage, they said, is 32 percent of the average wage in the state and is the lowest of any state on the West Coast.

"This bill would go a long way toward helping the lowest-paid workers to recover the cost of increased gas prices in the past year," said Reich. "Helping the lowest-paid workers to improve their purchasing power and reduce their need for public assistance is both fair and makes economic sense. It would widen the basis for California's continuing recovery." ...

The UC Berkeley researchers calculate the higher state minimum wage would add approximately 0.7 percent to the operating costs of the average business for a total increase of \$2.45 billion a year. About three-fourths of California's businesses would see operating cost increases of no more than 1 percent, according to the UC Berkeley study. ...

In addition, the study said that during the past two decades, increases in California's minimum wage have not led to job losses and that employment in the restaurant industry, the sector most affected by minimum pay hikes, has grown by 8.9 percent since the last minimum wage boost on Jan. 1, 2002.

Among those to benefit from increasing the minimum wage to \$7.75 an hour would be taxpayers footing the bill for public assistance programs such as food stamps, child care assistance and Medi-Cal. Participation in such public assistance programs drops as wages go up, the researchers said.

[Read the full policy brief "Minimum Wages and the California Economy" at: <http://iir.berkeley.edu/research/ab48.pdf>]

Michael Reich is Director of the Institute of Industrial Relations and Professor of Economics at UC Berkeley. Arindrajit Dube is a Research Economist at IIR. GINA VICKERY is a graduate student researcher at IIR and a MASTER'S STUDENT AT THE GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AT UC BERKELEY.

This policy brief is based upon research conducted at IIR by Reich, Dube and AMY VASSALOTTI.

References:

VASSALOTTI, AMY 2005. "How Will an Increase from \$6.75 to \$7.75 in the California Minimum Wage Impact the California Economy." Advanced Policy Analysis. GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UC Berkeley.

4. "Winning Workplaces and FSB: FORTUNE Small Business Name 2005 'Best Bosses' Finalists" (Winning Workplaces, August 24, 2005); story citing PAMELA DAVIS (MPP 1987); <http://www.winningworkplaces.org/services/award/bestbossesevent.php>

Evanston, IL - Winning Workplaces and FSB: FORTUNE Small Business magazine have selected PAMELA DAVIS, OF THE NONPROFITS INSURANCE ALLIANCE GROUP, based in Santa Cruz, California, as one of 26 finalists in their third annual "Best Bosses" competition - business leaders who have demonstrated resiliency and innovation in generating high-performance workplaces. The winners will be announced at a conference and celebration (hosted by Scott Simon of NPR's Weekend Edition Saturday) in Chicago on Sept. 20 and will be profiled in the October 2005 issue of FSB: FORTUNE Small Business.

The finalists represent a cross section of industries and company size, selected from a list of nominees and screened by a panel of Winning Workplaces' board members, FSB editors, academic and advisory leaders in entrepreneurship and previous Best Bosses winners. Winning Workplaces and FSB were looking for leaders who've created dynamic, flexible and highly productive workplaces using interesting, even controversial, approaches.

5. "Analyst shares fears of readers" (Dayton Daily News [*requires registration], August 16, 2005; Letter to the Editor by ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <http://www.daytondailynews.com/search/content/opinion/daily/0816letters.html>

To the Editor:

Re "GM Moraine article brings strong reaction," July 31 and the concerns raised by readers in your follow-up to our report outlining serious risks to automotive jobs in the Dayton area and across the Midwest due to rising oil prices: These are precisely the concerns that prompted our research.

Facts show the future of this American industry is on the line. Management of the Big Three U.S. car companies cannot keep depending on incentive programs to offset their overdependence on fuel-thirsty vehicles.

The problem is already sapping profits and jobs.

Unfortunately, too many leaders of these companies have their heads in the sand.

While it is conceivable oil prices could ease somewhat, most experts aren't betting on it. And it is possible that even minor events could send them rocketing even higher.

This is the same scenario that wiped out more than 300,000 automotive jobs in the early 1980s.

Volatile oil prices -- as well as brutal quarterly losses on plummeting sales of large SUVs -- suggest another huge hit could be waiting.

We want our projections to be wrong. But we don't think that will happen unless management starts taking the bottom-line risk of high oil prices seriously. Their customers, employees and the communities depend on it.

ROLAND HWANG
San Francisco

MR. HWANG IS CHIEF AUTO ANALYST FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL.

6. "Drug Loophole in Workers' Comp. Doctors are allowed to sell medications at huge markups. And that is costing employers and insurers \$250 million a year, a study says" (Los Angeles Times, August 14, 2005); story citing FRANK NEUHAUSER (MPP 1993); <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-comp14aug14,1,4246178,print.story>

By Marc Lifsher, Times Staff Writer

Sacramento -- The campaign to cut workers' compensation costs in California is being hampered by some doctors who are exploiting a legal loophole that allows them to sell prescription drugs directly to patients at markups that can surpass \$500 on a single bottle of medication.

The practice is costing employers and insurers more than \$250 million a year, according to a preliminary UC BERKELEY study, at a time when most other areas of the state's program for providing benefits to victims of workplace injuries are showing significant cost savings and premiums paid by California businesses are falling.

Those savings stemmed from a recent overhaul of the workers' comp system that, among other cost-cutting measures, put tight limits on prescription drug prices. But the price caps apply only to drugs sold through pharmacies, leaving physicians and clinics free to continue selling so-called repackaged drugs directly to their patients, potentially pocketing big profits....

It's not clear how many of the doctors in California who handle workers' comp cases dispense drugs directly to patients, or whether all of them charge markups as high as those listed by DispenseXpress. But BERKELEY RESEARCHER FRANK NEUHAUSER estimates that at least 40% of the \$660 million spent each year on workers' comp prescriptions could be linked to sales by doctors at premium prices....

7. "Soaring gasoline prices have driven some -- but not all -- to seek cars that get better mileage" (Daily Record [*requires registration], August 10, 2005); story citing report by ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <http://www.dailyrecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/frontpage>

By Sarah N. Lynch

An odd thing happened to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's energy report on its way to publication.

A few days before Congress was to vote on the Bush administration's energy bill, the EPA suddenly announced that it would delay releasing a report detailing the auto industry's progress on developing more fuel-efficient cars. Coincidence?

The EPA denied to The New York Times that the energy bill and the report had anything to do with one another.

But an advanced copy was forwarded to the Times just before the decision to delay making the report public, and the Times published it.

The findings in this report -- especially during a time when gas prices have hit an all-time high -- caught the Road Crew's attention. It may be a good time to resurrect the fuel economy debate.

According to the report, in a little over a decade, the auto industry as a whole has made virtually no improvement on fuel economy....

A 2001 report released by the Natural Resources Defense Council [co-authored by ROLAND HWANG] showed that raising standards to 40 mpg would save car owners between \$3,000 to \$5,000 more at the pump over the life of the car.

So what does the bill do, exactly? One thing it does is provide billions of dollars in tax incentives to oil and gas companies that are already burdening us with their gas prices.

"...We are headed in the wrong path in terms of reducing our oil dependency and it's highly disappointing the energy bill did not address this issue of reducing oil dependency at all," said ROLAND HWANG, THE VEHICLES POLICY DIRECTOR FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL. "The two provisions that would have done something -- either raising fuel economy standards or requiring a one million barrel-per-day oil savings --neither of those provisions is in the final energy bill, so it will do nothing to reduce our oil dependency."...

[The report by ROLAND HWANG, "Clean Getaway: Toward Safe and Efficient Vehicles," can be accessed at: <http://www.nrdc.org/media/pressreleases/010730.asp>]

8. "Brain Stent Is Cleared to Treat Strokes" (The Wall Street Journal [*requires registration], August 10, 2005); story citing DANIEL TUDEN (MPP 1988, PhD 1995); <http://online.wsj.com/public/us>

By Sylvia Pagan Westphal - Staff Reporter

Boston Scientific Corp. received expedited approval from the Food and Drug Administration to sell a stroke treatment that employs a stent to open up clogged arteries in the brain....

Boston Scientific's new Wingspan stent system is aimed at patients who have had a stroke because of clogged brain arteries and haven't responded to current therapies such as aspirin or blood thinners. Stents are thin, wire-mesh tubes used to prop open arteries, most commonly those near the heart.

According to the American Stroke Association, there are about 700,000 stroke cases each year. Studies have found that about 10% of strokes are due to problems with clogged brain arteries. Stroke victims with clogged arteries who don't respond to medication have a 50% chance of having another stroke within a year, said Adnan I. Qureshi, director of the cerebrovascular program at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

In Boston Scientific's small clinical trial of 45 patients in this high-risk category, only 7% died or suffered from another stroke six months after having a stent placed in a clogged brain artery. Dr. Qureshi, who wasn't involved in the study and who has no financial ties to the company, called this rate "very encouraging," saying it appears "better than what we would have expected ... with just medical treatment alone."

The study, which is the basis for the FDA's humanitarian exemption, lacked the usual controls of larger clinical trials, so no conclusions were made regarding effectiveness. DAN TUDEN, a Boston Scientific official who deals with stroke treatments, said the results are a step in the right direction and "we expect to conduct other studies to demonstrate" effectiveness "in a controlled fashion."

Cardiac stents are used for stroke treatments in brain vessels, although unapproved by the FDA for this use. DR. TUDEN says doctors are likely to move to the Wingspan stents because they are designed specifically for the more fragile vessels in the brain. Unlike cardiac stents, which need a balloon to deploy them in place, the Wingspan is self-expanding, so as a protective sheath comes off, it pops open inside the vessel. "It's less traumatic" to the artery, DR. TUDEN said....

Boston Scientific's humanitarian exemption requires any doctor considering use of the stent to get approval from his hospital's institutional-review board, which oversees experimental treatments. The company hopes to get European approval for the stent -- which wouldn't involve similar restrictions-within the "next month or so," according to DR. TUDEN.

[DR. DANIEL TUDEN was also quoted in stories reported in Bloomberg News, UPI, St. Paul Pioneer Press, and Deseret News.]

9. "Company A Comes Home. The Iraq battlefield behind them, a wounded California National Guard company struggles to adapt to civilian life" (Los Angeles Times, August 7, 2005); story citing CHRISTINE PRINCE (MPP 2005); <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/iraq/complete/la-tm-homecoming32aug07,1,2948291,print.story>

By Durrell Dawson, Felicia Mello, Jeff Nachtigal, Melissa Nix, Rebecca Ruiz, Sandhya Somashekhar and Shlomi Simhi

[This article is part of an ongoing project by the Los Angeles Times and the UC Berkeley Graduate School Of Journalism under the supervision of Times California correspondent Rone Tempest. Dawson, Mello, Nachtigal, Nix, Ruiz, Somashekhar and Simhi were the writers; Jakob Schiller and Tristan Spinski the photographers. Also contributing was CHRISTINE PRINCE, A STUDENT IN THE GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY.]

After a yearlong deployment, Petaluma-based Company A of the 579th Engineer Battalion (featured in a Jan. 30, 2005, cover story in this magazine) limped back, one of the most bloodied National Guard units in the war, with three dead and 17 wounded among its 100 soldiers. Their assignment: patrolling the dangerous perimeter of the main U.S. military base about 50 miles north of Baghdad.

As they reconnect with their families and resume their civilian careers, they're finding the effects of Iraq hard to shake. Palm Desert Sgt. Swami Jeetan has an emotional breakdown on the firing range at the prison where he works as a correctional officer; Durham farmer Spc. Sean Farley returns to find his father preparing to leave for Kuwait later this month with another Guard unit; Capt. William C. Turner goes home to his job as a mechanical engineer in Mountain View, where he constantly revisits decisions he made in Iraq, wondering "What if we had done this? What if we had done that?"

In a conflict that has asked more of America's "citizen soldiers" than any since the Korean War, more than 10,000 California National Guard soldiers either have served or are currently serving in Iraq. The assignment produced both pride and frustration among the soldiers and families of Company A. Sitting at the bedside of his injured son, Sgt. Conan Nunley, at Travis Air Force Base military hospital, 63-year-old Allen Nunley reacts angrily to the guard's changing role: "They should be over here patrolling riots and stuff. That's why they call them National Guard, not International Guard."...

10. "Exemption gives BART better chance of obtaining federal funding" (Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News - Gilroy Dispatch, August 6, 2005); story citing STUART COHEN (MPP 1997); <http://www.gilroydispatch.com/news/contentview.asp?c=165771>

By Matt King

Gilroy -- Proponents of BART to San Jose got an unexpected gift in the \$ 286 billion federal transportation bill that's about to become law. Buried among hundreds of road construction projects is a provision that will exempt the \$ 5-billion project from federal cost-efficiency rules that had jeopardized BART's funding....

Now the VTA can qualify for those funds without proving the cost-effectiveness of the project. STUART COHEN, a public transit advocate who is against bringing BART to San Jose, said the decision means that South County projects are now in grave danger because the VTA's resources will be poured into BART.

"It's proof that BART to San Jose doesn't make any financial sense," said COHEN, DIRECTOR OF THE TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE COMMITTEE, in Oakland. "Worst of all, for folks in south Santa Clara County, it means that every other project will be delayed or even canceled."

11. "BART-to-S.J. hurdle removed - Silicon Valley Extension Expected To Get Exemption" (San Jose Mercury News, August 5, 2005); story citing STUART COHEN (MPP 1997); <http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/local/12309417.htm>

By Barry Witt, Mercury News

A few key words inserted into the massive transportation bill approved by Congress last week have removed a potentially insurmountable hurdle for the planned \$4.2 billion BART extension to Silicon Valley. The bill, expected to be signed by President Bush soon, exempts the 16.3-mile BART extension and three other projects nationwide from new cost-effectiveness standards issued by the Federal Transit Administration earlier this year.

The BART extension and the other three projects all were likely to flunk the FTA evaluation, which compares travel-time benefits for transit users against the overall cost of a project. The FTA had said any project that failed to score a "medium" cost-effectiveness rating in its evaluation would not be recommended for funding, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority officials acknowledged there was no way the BART project could reach that threshold.

The exemption does not guarantee federal money for the BART project, but it at least means "it doesn't get derailed," said Jay Staunton, a spokesman for Rep. Mike Honda, D-Campbell, who worked to get the language inserted in the bill....

Opponents of the BART plan were dismayed by the congressional action.

"By exempting this, Honda has basically admitted this project will never fare well compared to other projects and the only way to get it done is through pure political power and not through any objective, rational transportation planning process," said STUART COHEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF OAKLAND-BASED TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE COALITION.

12. "Public Agencies Face Healthcare-Cost Crisis. The bill is just starting to come due on medical coverage promised to retirees during an era of lower expenses" (Los Angeles Times, August 5, 2005); story citing ELIZABETH HILL (MPP 1975); <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-benefits5aug05,1,6286950.story>

By Jeffrey L. Rabin; Times Staff Writer, Metro Desk

Cities, counties, school districts and state agencies across California face rapidly growing bills for retiree health benefits, but most have done little to get ready to pay them.

The future costs, which run into the tens of billions of dollars, are equivalent to a massive mortgage that taxpayers have taken on with little public notice. The required payments threaten to put heavy financial pressure on governments that granted generous benefits in the past and now are beginning to see the bills come due.

"It is a ticking time bomb for many California institutions," state Supt. of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell said. "It's clearly a problem."...

The numbers are sobering.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the state's largest school system, will need to set aside \$357 million every year for the next 30 years -- about 6% of its annual budget -- to meet the estimated \$4.9-billion cost of retiree benefits over that period, according to a preliminary estimate. District officials say even that figure may be too low and the true cost may be twice as high....

The Los Angeles district is not the worst off in the state. ELIZABETH HILL, THE STATE'S LEGISLATIVE ANALYST, warned earlier this year that some school districts face bills that may become "so large they potentially threaten the district's ability to operate in the future."

For example, Fresno's financially troubled school district faces a long-term bill that is more than twice its annual budget. The district and its teachers union recently agreed to drop lifetime health benefits for new hires. The Fresno Teachers Assn. also agreed to participate in a joint committee to manage healthcare costs.

HILL warned that financially stressed school districts may eventually seek bailouts from the state. But the state government faces its own heavy costs for retiree benefits. So far, state agencies have barely begun to figure out how expensive retiree healthcare will be....

13. "Rohnert Park casino flap depicted in festival film" (San Francisco Chronicle, August 5, 2005); story about documentary by GARANCE BURKE (MPP 2005); <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/08/05/NBGREE1FI41.DTL&type=printable>

By Alex Horvath, Special to The Chronicle

When Rohnert Park citizens came out to speak up about a possible casino being planned in their backyard, it's unlikely that anyone considered their appearance might one day be shown at a local film festival. But that's exactly what happened with the production of "The Rules of the Game," a documentary by San Francisco journalists GARANCE BURKE and Monica Lam, who covered the issue as part of their course work while GRADUATE STUDENTS AT UC BERKELEY....

The film poses the questions: Will casinos pave the way to a better future for American Indians? And can communities make room for neighbors they once pushed out? ...

"It was a powerful, emotional topic in Rohnert Park," BURKE said. "It was the kind of thing where one day we would be doing a sit-down interview in a backyard with someone whose concerns were about traffic, the environmental impact and other concerns, and the next day we would be talking with a tribal leader about the history of their tribe in the area, and about the tribe's right to regain their land."

BURKE's background in reporting had been primarily in print for the Boston Globe, the Sacramento Bee and The Chronicle. She now works for the Associated Press and recently covered indigenous rights in Mexico for Frontline/WORLD. Lam is an independent filmmaker who focuses on issues in the United States and Asia. She recently completed a documentary about Muslims in China for Frontline/WORLD, and has produced documentaries for PBS.

Though the casino issue has died down temporarily while groups explore environmental impact reports, BURKE said the

film is timely since Gov. Schwarzenegger has used what happened in Rohnert Park (with memorandums of understanding) as a model for other communities dealing with the complex issue of Indian gaming.

The film has been well-received at local high schools and colleges, and is being used as curriculum material at UC Santa Barbara and UC Davis. In addition to its screening at the film festival, "The Rules of the Game" has aired on Rohnert Park's PBS affiliate, KRCB, and will be shown on KQED as part of the station's Native American Heritage month in November.

"We really tried to represent both sides of the issue," BURKE said. "We wanted to be part of the larger discussion in classrooms and in Native American communities that all of us are going to need to be having about race, equity and access to the American dream."

14. "Wedding Gift Registry: Charity" (Early Show, CBS-TV, August 5, 2005); story featuring BETHANY ROBERTSON (MPP 2001); video clip available at:
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/08/04/earlyshow/contributors/lauriehibberd/main759243.shtml>

New York (CBS) - The latest request at many weddings these days hasn't been for presents at all.

With the average ages of brides and grooms today at 27 and 29 respectively, many have all the dishes and bedding they need. So instead of asking for china and crystal, The Early Show contributor Laurie Hibberd reports, they're asking their guests to donate to charity.

When Christina Giallourakis and Aakash Thakkar got married this spring, they were actually excited that half of their wedding guests did not buy them gifts....

Instead, this Washington, D.C., couple asked their friends and family to help start a scholarship fund at Thakkar's high school alma mater.

He says, "The thought was to start a scholarship that would be perpetual, and would allow a disadvantaged child in the Washington, D.C., area to be able to go to St. John's College High School."

And they're not the only ones to forgo presents for charity. The trend has grown in the last few years, with a number of high-profile celebrity couples, including Billy Joel and his wife, Katie, setting the example.

"I don't think we ever considered asking our friends to buy us gifts," Katie Joel says. "My husband and I were really on the same page when it came to this issue. We wanted to have charity donations for the wedding from the beginning. I got a lot of feedback from different friends saying, 'It's great that you chose to give to charities, instead of asking for gifts. We don't want to buy you a coffee pot.'..."

BETHANY ROBERTSON IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE I DO FOUNDATION, a non-profit organization that helps couples incorporate charity into their big day.

ROBERTSON says, "We have seen a phenomenal increase in the number of couples who are participating. In 2004, we had about 20,000 couples in the program. And this year, we're on track to have over 200,000 couples choose a charity through either the I Do Foundation or one of our partners. This is money that did not currently or before exists in the charitable pipeline. This is money that was being spent on cake toppers and garter belts. Now, it's being used for children's health or for community development, things like that. I kind of think of it as icing on the cake, really."

Experts say it makes sense that this trend is on the rise with couples waiting longer - and until they're older - before walking down the aisle....

For couples like Christina Giallourakis and Aakash Thakkar, who are tying charitable giving into the day they tie the knot, they say it makes all the difference.

"I think it made our wedding better," Giallourakis says. "There was that much more interaction with all of our guests before the wedding. It wasn't they just went to a Web site and bought a gift and that was it. It was: How's the fund doing? Where are you up to now?"

And ROBERTSON is hoping that more and more people think of those less fortunate while planning for their own futures.

She says, "The I Do Foundation's vision is really that in 10 years, when someone comes back from a wedding, people will say, 'What did the bridesmaids' dresses look like? Who was the best man? And what was the couple's charity?'"...

15. "House OKs water project study. Funds to find site for desalination plant" (San Francisco Chronicle, July 16, 2005); story citing RANDY KANOUSE (MPP 1978); <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/07/16/BAGB4DOT6V1.DTL&hw=kanouse&sn=001&sc=1000>

By Patrick Hoge, Edward Epstein; Chronicle Staff Writers

Prospects for a Bay Area desalination plant that would produce drinking water for the region received a boost this week when the House of Representatives approved legislation to help identify the best site for such a facility.

The measure, included in an \$11 billion water projects bill, would give \$4 million to study a location for the plant, which would serve four water agencies serving East Bay, Peninsula and San Francisco customers.

The East Bay Municipal Utility District is a partner in the desalination effort with the Contra Costa Water District, Santa Clara Valley Water District and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which together serve 5.4 million people a day. Last week, the Marin Municipal Water District opened its own pilot desalination plant in San Rafael. ...

"This may be our best hope for providing increased water supplies and reliable water supplies," said EBMUD SPOKESMAN RANDY KANOUSE.

The Senate is considering its own \$11.7 billion water projects bill, which does not include a similar appropriation, but the Bay Area agencies hope a final bill will retain funding for the desalination project, KANOUSE said.

If the \$4 million is not allocated, the site studies would probably be delayed by a year, he said. The money was requested by Democratic Reps. George Miller of Martinez and Ellen Tauscher of Walnut Creek. ...

16. "Classroom 'clickers' let teachers gauge comprehension, get students involved" (Ventura County Star, May 16, 2005); story citing ROSS CHEIT (MPP 1980, PhD 1987).

By Elizabeth Zuckerman, The Associated Press

Providence, R.I. -- PROFESSOR ROSS CHEIT put it to the students in his "Ethics and Public Policy" class at Brown University: Are you morally obliged to report cheating if you know about it?

The room began to hum, but no one so much as raised a hand.

Still, within 90 seconds, CHEIT had roughly 150 student responses displayed on an overhead screen, plotted as a multicolored bar graph -- 64 percent said yes, 35 percent, no.

Several times each class, CHEIT's students answer his questions using handheld wireless devices that resemble television remote controls.

The devices, which the students call "clickers," are being used on hundreds of college campuses and are even finding their way into grade schools.

They alter classroom dynamics, engaging students in large, impersonal lecture halls with the power of mass feedback. "Clickers" ease fears of giving a wrong answer in front of peers, or of expressing unpopular opinions.

"I use it to take their pulse," CHEIT said. "I've often found in that setting, you find yourself thinking, 'Well, what are they thinking?'"

In hard science classes, the clickers -- most of which allow several possible responses -- are often used to gauge student comprehension of course material. CHEIT tends to use them to solicit students' opinions....

"It forces you to be active in the discussion because you are forced to make a decision right off the bat," said Jonathan Magaziner, a sophomore in CHEIT's class.

CHEIT prepares most questions in advance but can add questions on the fly if need be. His setup processes student responses through infrared receivers that are connected to a laptop computer....

At the college level, the devices originally took hold in science classes, but they are finding their way into the social

sciences and humanities, where the anonymity they offer may be an advantage.

CHEIT said that's especially true when it comes to sensitive topics, such as affirmative action.

"People that are against it will click," CHEIT said, "But they might not raise their hand and say it."

17. "Unmentioned Energy Fix: A 55 M.P.H. Speed Limit" (New York Times [*requires registration], May 1, 2005); story citing ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <http://www.nytimes.com/>

By Jad Mouawad and Simon Romero

President Bush made it clear last week that he sees no quick fixes to the nation's energy woes. The problem has been long in coming, the argument goes, and so will the solutions. But if history is any guide, there is one thing he could do immediately: bring back the 55 miles-per-hour speed limit.

It has been done before. Along with record oil and gasoline prices, improvements in fuel efficiency and a lasting economic recession, speed limits helped curb fuel consumption for the first time in American postwar history between 1974 and 1984.

Of course, energy eventually became cheap again, the economy expanded and Americans became complacent and unwilling to make more sacrifices.

Instead of opting for small fuel-efficient cars, people switched to large sport utility vehicles and larger pickups. As drivers groaned and states fought for their right to speed, the limit was raised.

While oil consumption in most industrialized nations has either leveled off or declined, in the United States, oil demand has soared 38 percent since the first oil shock of 1973.

The Bush administration's focus over the last four years has been to increase the supply of oil and natural gas, which are also priorities for the energy industry, instead of finding ways to cut back on energy demand, which until very recently has been left out of the picture. ...

The 55 miles-per-hour speed limit came as a result of the 1973 Arab oil embargo. The Nixon administration ordered states to lower their maximum limit to save fuel at a time when the first oil shock threatened to bring the economy to a standstill.

After steadily rising each year, gasoline demand suddenly stopped growing in 1974 and remained nearly flat for the next decade, keeping oil consumption in check.

ROLAND HWANG, THE VEHICLES POLICY DIRECTOR AT THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL in San Francisco, estimated the savings of the speed limit in 1983 at 2.5 billion gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel, or 2.2 percent of the total use for these types of fuels.

But as gas lines faded from people's memories and energy prices went down, the federal speed limit was relaxed in 1987, allowing states to set higher caps of 65 miles an hour. Once more, gasoline consumption surged.

Smaller efforts today could make a difference. For example, driving at 10 miles an hour above the 65 miles-per-hour limit increases fuel consumption by 15 percent; inflating tires properly cuts gasoline use by 2 percent; keeping engines idle while in line wastes millions of gallons.

The trouble is that few drivers bother with these suggestions, MR. HWANG said. "People are basically too lazy to pump their tires up."

18. "Greens pitch business case for hybrids" (Automotive News [*requires registration], March 21, 2005); story citing ROLAND HWANG (MPP 1992); <https://www.autonews.com/buyArchives.cms?articleId=52204>

By Mark Rechtin

Los Angeles -- Some environmentalists are employing pragmatism to push hybrids.

A TV commercial produced by the Natural Resources Defense Council avoids simple altruism.

Instead, it pitches a business case for the gasoline-saving vehicles.

"Do it for jobs ... lead the industry ... put American know-how to work," the commercial says. It was shown on local cable TV in the Detroit area during the North American International Auto Show in January.

ROLAND HWANG, THE COUNCIL'S VEHICLES POLICY DIRECTOR, says it is time for activists to stop being shrill. So the council is asking Congress to grant tax credits to Detroit automakers who convert obsolete factories to build hybrids.

The liberal lobbying group is even meeting with right-wing groups who want to increase national security by reducing dependence on foreign oil. The strange bedfellows can gain by pooling their resources for the common goal of fuel economy.

"This is not just coming from the left," HWANG says.

HWANG still can't resist a jab at the automakers. "I will praise Toyota for its hybrid technology," he says. "But it is using it in a way that enhances performance at the expense of fuel savings. It calls into question whether they are really walking the walk."...

19. "Student use of WebCT can be monitored by Brown U. instructors" (Brown Daily Herald, March 10, 2005); story citing ROSS CHEIT (MPP 1980, PhD 1987).

By Ari Rockland-Miller

Providence, R.I. -- A tracking feature built into WebCT allows instructors to monitor student use of their course's page, unbeknownst to many students and even some professors. With the introduction of an updated version of WebCT at Brown University next year, instructors' capabilities for surveillance will become even more extensive.

Of the professors and teaching assistants who take advantage of this tracking feature, the majority uses it simply to assess WebCT as a teaching tool. However, a small minority of instructors has used WebCT to evaluate their students' level of commitment and class participation. On rare occasions, professors have even used WebCT tracking to help determine a student's grade....

ROSS CHEIT, AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND RECENT RECIPIENT OF BROWN'S "BEST OF WEBCT 2004" AWARD, does use WebCT's tracking feature, and in rare cases has used the feature to help determine a student's class participation grade. "I know there is some concern about this feature," CHEIT said, stressing that he only uses it in moderation.

In Fall 2004, CHEIT's first semester using WebCT as a teaching aid, he monitored whether or not students viewed the "Question of the Day" he asked them to ponder before class. He did this primarily to assess WebCT as a teaching aid, but admits that he also looked at each student's aggregate number of hits when assessing class participation. However, this figure rarely made or broke a student's grade, as "it only came into play for those with unusually low usage," CHEIT said.

This semester, CHEIT is using WebCT to conduct virtual sections. "I have told the class quite explicitly that I can and will look at how many times they posted, and that I will look at that when grading them for participation," CHEIT said. However, he will only mark down those who did not meet the minimal standards, which are clearly described on the site....

20. "Governor appoints two to state Ethics Commission" (The Associated Press State & Local Wire, December 20, 2004); story citing ROSS CHEIT (MPP 1980, PhD 1987).

Providence, R.I. -- The governor has appointed two new members of the state Ethics Commission.

Joining the commission are Barbara Binder of Providence and ROSS CHEIT of Barrington. ...

CHEIT is an associate professor of political science and public policy at Brown University. He has also practiced law at firms in California and Oregon. ...

"ROSS CHEIT is one of New England's premier scholars in the field of ethics," said Gov. Don Carcieri. ...

CHEIT was chosen from a list of candidates submitted by Senate Minority Leader Dennis Algieri, R-Westerly.

[ROSS CHEIT will serve on the commission through 2009.]

FACULTY & BOARD MEMBER IN THE NEWS

1. "Nuclear Fallout. Berkeley team thinks beyond the unthinkable" (Cal Monthly, September 2005, Cover Story - Berkeley's Big Bang Project); story about report co-authored by HAROLD SMITH & MICHAEL NACHT; http://www.alumni.berkeley.edu/Alumni/Cal_Monthly/September_2005/COVER_STORY-_Berkeley's_Big_Bang_Project_.asp

By Mark Dowie

In the minutes between noon and 1:00 p.m. on May 17, 2009, a 10-kiloton nuclear weapon explodes in the back of a small truck parked against one of the walls surrounding Red Square in the heart of Moscow. Nearly 150,000 people die instantly; between 50,000 and 100,000 more will die within hours. The Kremlin, almost every major Russian ministry, and the nation's military headquarters are vaporized.

The United States Embassy is severely damaged, with survivors unlikely. A large, powerful, but marginally stable nation has been decapitated. Before sunset, the entire world is in shock. But the following chain of events can determine the survival or destruction of the globe. Tallying the prospects or consequences are what thermonuclear game-planner Herman Kahn called "thinking about the unthinkable."

During the first 100 days following the attack, Russia and the rest of the world suffer extreme to moderate anxiety as a culprit is sought through the arcane and highly secretive science of nuclear forensics. Conspiracy theories swirl through mass media. Nearly every existing international relationship is tested. Old grudges are revisited and new ones arise. Awareness seeps into human consciousness that the nuclear taboo has been broken. And stateless terrorists possibly possess the wherewithal to detonate another bomb at will, almost anywhere they choose.

Experts give this scenario at least an even chance of coming true within the next five to ten years. For the past year, a Berkeley interdisciplinary team, in consultation with outside nuclear physicists, political scientists, military planners, and prominent Russian citizens, has spun the scenario up into a detailed thousand day aftermath. Their final report, entitled International Ramifications of Nuclear Terrorism, the first of its kind by a U.S. civilian scientific team, anticipates various national and international responses, describes the gut-wrenching decisions that will face world leaders, and offers some post-attack opportunities, while laying bare a host of best- and worst-case outcomes. The report was done under a contract with the Department of Defense and sent to the DOD this summer. It proposes steps that should be taken immediately to reduce negative consequences to global security in the wake of this increasingly probable event.

The "Big Bang Project" (BBP) is the brainchild of former Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, HAROLD SMITH, who named it as he did to draw attention to a situation he believes to be "highly lethal and impossible to deter." With a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering from MIT, SMITH began his career at Berkeley in 1960 as a hopeful proponent of the peaceful atom. During five years with the Pentagon (1993-98), he worked in Washington, D.C. and Sergeev Posad, a small town north of Moscow, overseeing nuclear disarmament and anti-proliferation programs. He is back at Berkeley, as a DISTINGUISHED VISITING SCHOLAR AT THE GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY. A 2003 SMITH project at Berkeley produced a candid assessment of nuclear threat reduction in Russia. The findings were not encouraging. The nuclear detritus of the Cold War remains scattered about the country in poorly guarded military bases, and U.S.-Russian collaborative attempts to secure it have had limited success. So the BBP was a natural follow-up....

Al-Qaeda is the wild card of any after-math and is extensively considered in the BBP report. Al-Qaeda members have proven themselves to be disciplined communicators and deft at exploiting terrorist aggression whether they initiated it or not. But the question posed by the Berkeley team is how much credit al-Qaeda would take for an attack on Moscow. They might say they inspired the explosion, even claim to have been privy to its planning. The bigger question the team asked was whether al-Qaeda will boast of having more weapons and threaten repeat performances, an announcement that could set off worldwide panic and mass evacuations from major cities.

But, if they were bluffing, and no attacks followed, al-Qaeda would gradually lose credibility and respect in the Muslim world. Perhaps, as MICHAEL NACHT, DEAN OF THE GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY and a member of the Big Bang Project team, suggests, they would "make predictions of Western retaliation and use any fulfillment of those predictions to rally support to their cause."...

The Berkeley interdisciplinary team drew from the GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY; the Haas School of Business; Departments of Political Science, Sociology, Slavic and Eastern European Studies; and the Institute of

International Studies. The team produced 16 white papers proposing steps that should be taken immediately by the United States to minimize damage to national security.

2. "The Case for Affirmative Action in University Admissions" (C-Span 2 TV, August 27, 2005); talk citing ROBERT REICH; <http://www.booktv.org/General/index.asp?segID=5653&schedID=371>

Bob Laird [director of Undergraduate Admissions at UC Berkeley] talks about his book, "The Case for Affirmative Action in University Admissions." The author argues that affirmative action plays a critical role in creating diverse public institutions, and when well-implemented, benefits everyone, not only certain groups or segment in society. In fact, diminishing diversity and representativeness on college campuses through elimination of affirmative action is hastening the trend toward widening inequality in America, a trend the author cites as particularly well expounded in ROBERT REICH's recent talk at UC Berkeley: "How Unequal Can America Get Before We Snap?".

[ROBERT REICH's talk can be viewed at: http://webcast.berkeley.edu/events/details.html?event_id=200]

3. "'A beacon for other businesses': Berkeley alum Daryl Ross takes budget organic mainstream" (UC Berkeley NewsCenter, August 23, 2005; story citing Board Member STEVE SILBERSTEIN; http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/08/24_ross.shtml)

By Bonnie Azab Powell

Berkeley -- Daryl Ross may have completed his bachelor's degree at UC Berkeley in 1985, after the standard four years, but in all the ways that count, he's never left.

Ross operates five eateries on or near campus: the Free Speech Movement Café in Moffitt Library, Boalt Hall's Café Zeb, the Berkeley Art Museum's Café Muse, Caffè Strada just east of BAM on Bancroft Way at College Ave., and Adagia, his first full-service restaurant, which opened next to Strada on Bancroft in February. All are extremely popular with students, faculty and staff for their combination of low-key ambience and carefully prepared, mostly organic food at budget prices....

Ross is quick to note that he considers Chez Panisse an inspiration, not competition. He met Chez Panisse founder and renowned chef Alice Waters in 2002, when he was creating the Free Speech Movement (FSM) Café on campus. Waters, who is also a Berkeley alum, is a friend of STEVE SILBERSTEIN, THE BERKELEY FREE SPEECH MOVEMENT VETERAN WHOSE GIFT TO THE UNIVERSITY FUNDED THE CAFÉ....

4. "Marin median home price slips to \$910,000" (Marin Independent Journal, August 18, 2005); story citing JOHN QUIGLEY; http://www.marinij.com/marin/ci_2952272

By Jim Welte

The torrid rise in Marin home prices slowed last month to its lowest rate in a year, a move economists called a natural return to sanity but not an indication of a real estate bubble about to burst.

Marin's median single-family home price in July was \$910,000, a 1.6 percent decline from June and up 13.6 percent from \$801,000 a year ago, according to La Jolla-based DataQuick Information Systems, a real estate data information service....

"It's evidence that the extraordinary period of higher-than-sustainable price increases is over," said JOHN QUIGLEY, A UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY ECONOMIST who specializes in housing markets. "The rate of appreciation will be reduced and in some metropolitan areas, they will level off."...

Single-family home sales plunged 20.3 percent from July 2004, while condo and townhouse sales dropped 9.2 percent.

That trend - and homes for sale spending more time on the market - could continue, QUIGLEY said....

"The sky is not falling," QUIGLEY said. "This is a natural reaction to an unusual period of unsustainably rapid increases in housing prices. But prices won't decline."...

5. "Solar power tower? NASA Proposal Would Prevent Demolition of Moffett Field Landmark" (Mercury News, August 16, 2005); story citing DAN KAMMEN; <http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/living/health/12394590.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>

By Jessica Portner

NASA has a revolutionary vision for Hangar One, the toxics-coated hulk that once housed a dirigible at Mountain View's Moffett Field: Wrap the 200-foot-high landmark with a solar-paneled skin that pumps out electricity.

The Silicon Valley icon could become the largest solar-powered building in the state by the end of next year, generating enough juice to power 3,000 homes and house a new aerospace museum. That is, if the U.S. Navy -- charged with the toxic cleanup -- doesn't decide to demolish the hangar first.

"Mars rovers have solar panels, and so does the space station. Why not here on Earth?" said Diane Farrar, one of the leaders of the preservation campaign at NASA/Ames Research Center, which owns the building. "We could call this the biggest solar system in California."

The striking gray-and-black structure, so large it could pack three ships the size of the Titanic under its roof, was built in 1932 to house the dirigible USS Macon, a lighter-than-air airship similar to a blimp. The garage was central to the Navy's effort to develop a robust aerospace industry in the region, which evolved into the technology hub that became Silicon Valley. The hangar was sealed three years ago when the Environmental Protection Agency discovered that asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, coated the structure.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's ambitious pitch is the most speculative of about a dozen options for the hangar -- and far from the simplest choice....

DAN KAMMEN, A PROFESSOR OF ENERGY SCIENCE AND POLICY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY, and an expert on alternative energy, envisions that if the hangar does go solar, it could create enough energy to act as a regional power plant.

"Remember blackouts on summer days?" KAMMEN said. "This is a social benefit as well."...

6. "Coverage of Big Awards for Plaintiffs Helps Distort View of Legal System. In most such cases, the verdicts are either later rejected or the amounts are severely lowered" (Los Angeles Times, August 15, 2005); story citing study by ROBERT MACCOUN; <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-tortmedia15aug15,1,66782.story?coll=la-headlines-business>

By Myron Levin, Times Staff Writer

When a jury sticks it to a huge corporation, it's always big news. A crushing verdict of \$4.9 billion against General Motors Corp. in Los Angeles drew massive media coverage, as did a \$5-billion award in the Exxon Valdez oil spill case and a \$144.8-billion thrashing of the tobacco industry in a Florida class action.

Mega-verdicts such as these have helped fuel legislative campaigns to overhaul the legal system by limiting lawsuits and jury awards. Driving the crusade for what business groups call tort reform is the notion that frivolous suits and jackpot judgments are strangling the economy.

While acknowledging that excesses no doubt occur, many legal observers say there is no evidence that people are filing more lawsuits or that juries are getting more generous -- indeed, there is some data to the contrary. And mammoth verdicts, in the rare cases in which they occur, almost always are tossed out or sharply reduced later.

Feeding the perception of a crisis in the legal system, they say, is the way the news media cover the courts.

After the big headlines, critics say, the media often drop the ball, losing interest in what happens later. Published studies of news content and a Times examination of major recent cases show that when the immense verdicts were overturned or dramatically reduced, the news frequently was banished to the inside pages or simply not reported.

Legal experts and media observers say such coverage gives a distorted picture of the civil justice system while lending credence to fears of irrational jury awards. News coverage has reinforced the message "that the system's out of control, and that juries are using the tort system to redistribute wealth in some unjust and unprincipled way," said ROBERT MACCOUN, A PROFESSOR OF LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY AT UC BERKELEY.

The popular view that there are more lawsuits and bigger damage awards than ever before is not supported by available evidence....

Certainly, plaintiffs prevail less often in the real world than they appear to in the news media. Consider:

- A 1996 survey of leading magazines such as Time, Newsweek and Fortune showed that plaintiff verdicts were "considerably overrepresented" in reports on civil litigation. The examination of 249 articles by Daniel S. Bailis and UC BERKELEY'S MACCOUN found that plaintiffs were victorious in 85% of cases cited in the articles, compared with a real-world average of no more than 50%. Damage awards cited in the articles were also several times above the norm, leaving "little doubt that the selective reporting practices ... provide a tremendously distorted picture of the jury award distribution," the study said....

[The Bailis & MACCOUN study is: "Estimating liability risks with the media as your guide: A content analysis of media coverage of civil litigation," Law and Human Behavior, (1996) 20, 419-429. (Abridged version reprinted in Judicature, 1996, 80, 64-67.)]

7. "Governor caught in spending trap. He promised cuts but approved increases after planned service reductions drew fire" (Sacramento Bee, August 14, 2005); story citing JOHN ELLWOOD;
<http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/v-print/story/13412464p-14253736c.html>

By Alexa H. Bluth -- Bee Capitol Bureau

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger frequently attacks legislators as spending addicts. He won his office largely by criticizing former Democratic Gov. Gray Davis for leading the state into the fiscal basement. And he is pushing Proposition 76, which includes restrictions that he says are necessary to rein in government spending.

But the Republican governor also has found that slicing and dicing government spending in California is no easy task.

Each of his first two budgets increased the size of state government, the more recent one boosting spending from the state's main bank account by nearly 13 percent....

The governor blames Democrats' grip on the Legislature and "autopilot" formulas for forcing the budget up. His top finance adviser said this year's spending spike is largely due to repayments on past borrowing....

Budget experts say the governor was faced with the same limits Davis faced: a growing public demand for state services and an unwillingness to raise taxes to pay for them, coupled with a stinging political backlash that comes with the suggestion of cutting funding for schools or social services.

"You cannot control spending in California, or any place else, without causing pain, and neither governor has been willing to cause pain and stick with it," said JOHN ELLWOOD, A PUBLIC POLICY PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY.

When he took office, Schwarzenegger promised to "blow up boxes" by conducting a top-to-bottom review of government to increase efficiency and trim waste. He told business leaders that "cut and cut and cut" summed up his budget philosophy.

But in May 2004, and after feeling the political heat from some very vocal constituencies, the governor backed away from about \$1 billion in cuts he had proposed that January....

He also used better-than-expected revenues to avoid significant new borrowing and to accelerate repayment of some debt the state already owed....

ELLWOOD said that escalated spending to pay back debt still is more public money that must be spent.

"He chose to do the borrowing. He can't have it both ways," he said.

But [ELLWOOD] agreed that the structure of the state budget makes it difficult not only to make meaningful budget cuts, but also simply to slow the rate at which government is growing.

Indeed, voter-approved spending formulas such as Proposition 98's minimum funding guarantee for schools and others built into state law drive a large portion of the budget.

To make cuts in some areas, such as social services or medical programs for the poor, requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. Democrats have refused to accept such cuts recommended by Schwarzenegger and Davis.

"California's problem is that it's a liberal state with a series of institutions that prevent" serious budget cuts, ELLWOOD said. "There are other states that provide many fewer services than California ... , but in those other states there is a

political will to do the cuts, and people can get re-elected after doing them."

[Another story on this topic, also quoting Professor Ellwood, appeared in the Contra Costa Times]

8. "Op-Ed: Watching the bubble. How China can burst U.S. housing bubble" (San Francisco Chronicle, August 14, 2005); op-ed by ROBERT REICH;
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/08/14/INGN3E5T5D1.DTL&type=printable>

ROBERT B. REICH was secretary of labor under President Clinton. He is a faculty member at UC BERKELEY'S GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY. This piece was aired on National Public Radio.

By Robert B. Reich

In the new global economy, almost everything's connected to everything else. Case in point: China will let its currency rise against the dollar and America's housing bubble will burst.

Let me explain. The housing bubble has been pumped up by low mortgage rates which have made it easy for lots of people to buy a house. Or two. Other major investments require more capital up front. But with mortgage rates this low, housing has become the major investment for average Americans who haven't saved much of anything.

Bubbles form when it's easy to get capital to invest in something, and when investors assume that somebody else will come along after them and pay even more for it. As long as mortgage interest rates stay low, the housing bubble is likely to grow. It seems that no matter how much a house costs, buyers assume that a future buyer will come along and pay even more -- because that future buyer can get the money just as easily.

But beware this logic. When mortgage rates rise, the psychology will shift. Buyers can no longer assume that future buyers will pay more, because some future buyers won't be able to. And when the psychology shifts, the bubble bursts....

[A version of this column also appeared as: "Will China Burst the Bubble?", The American Prospect Online, Aug 8, 2005; <http://www.prospect.org/web/page.wv?section=root&name=ViewWeb&articleId=10081>]

9. "Commentary: ROBERT REICH on John Roberts" (Marketplace, American Public Media, August 10, 2005); listen to this commentary at: <http://marketplace.publicradio.org/shows/2005/08/10/PM200508102.html>

Supreme Court nominee John Roberts has been making more rounds on Capitol Hill this week. Yesterday Oregon senator Ron Wyden said he was hopeful Roberts would reject congressional intervention in end-of-life situations; others -- like ROBERT REICH -- wonder whether he'll reject federal intervention in economic decisions, too.

By ROBERT B. REICH

From the perspective of American business, the biggest question about John Roberts is how he's likely to decide on whether the states or the federal government should regulate. Conservative orthodoxy wants the Supreme Court to defer to the states, interpreting the commerce clause narrowly and refusing to require that federal law preempt state law. But that's not what corporate America wants, or should want.

The scale and reach of corporate enterprise require uniformity. It's just too expensive to alter procedures and products to meet the separate demands of legislatures in Albany, Sacramento and Bismarck, North Dakota. And it's far easier and less risky to have lobbyists focus their powerful influence in Washington than set up 50 separate lobbyists all over America and take the chance that a few of them may fail and then end up with laws here and there requiring different things.

But the current Supreme Court is badly split. For example, it struck down a federal law banning firearms near schools, saying this was a matter for states to decide. Then it struck down a state law allowing the dispensing of marijuana for medical purposes, saying this was a matter for the feds.

So, how Roberts views federalism is critically important to American business. In one recent opinion - a dissenting opinion - he argued that the federal government did not have the power to set national environmental rules that would limit real estate development. If that view prevailed on the Supreme Court it would be an open invitation to states to issue more detailed environmental rules and they could be all over the map. My advice to corporate America is this: When the Roberts nomination hearings begin, have your powerful Washington lobbyists make sure he reveals his thinking about federalism

and if he's clearly in favor of state over federal regulation, use your formidable clout in Washington to scuttle the nomination.

10. "Church, State and a Court Nominee" (New York Times, July 16, 2005); Letter to the Editor by JACK GLASER; <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9806E3DD1F3DF935A25754C0A9639C8B63>

To the Editor:

The notion that "the public square shouldn't be walled off from religion, but open to a plurality of viewpoints, secular and religious" suggests that the secular and the religious are competing spheres.

David Brooks cites an example from a legal opinion by Judge Michael W. McConnell in which he suggested that when secular speeches are given, religious speeches should also be allowed.

Secular ideas do not inherently threaten religious ideas, except to religious fundamentalists, who accept Scripture as literal fact and therefore cannot tolerate secular ideas like science and evolution.

JACK GLASER
San Francisco

RECENT FACULTY SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS and EVENTS

June 26, 2005 DAN KAMMEN presented testimony on State Assembly Bill 1365, "Kyoto Protocol Climate Stewardship." Introduced by Ira Ruskin (D-Redwood City).

August 8, 2005 DAN KAMMEN spoke on "Renewable Energy Systems" on Eco-Talk on KZFR Radio (NPR Chico, CA). Interviewed by Jill Paydon.

August 9, 2005 DAN KAMMEN commented on "Gas prices, China, President Bush and the Energy Bill" on CBS-5 news (KPIX-TV), interviewed by Hank Plante.

August 10, 2005 DAN KAMMEN commented on "High Gas Prices Getting Higher" on ABC-7 news (KGO TV).

August 11, 2005 DAN KAMMEN presented testimony before the California Select Committee on Air and Water Quality, "The Climate Change Crisis ... Can California Create a Way Out?", Santa Monica City Hall.

August 18, 2005 DAN KAMMEN was guest on The Gene Burns Program, KGO AM810 (ABC Radio in San Francisco, speaking on "Energy Science and Policy."

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We are always delighted to receive your material for inclusion in the Digest. Please email the editor at wong23@berkeley.edu.

Sincerely,

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(This digest was edited by Theresa Wong)