



mydesert.com/news updated throughout the day

SAC'S CONCRETE
CONCRETE SALE!
760/568-3799

Good Morning!
TODAY'S VALLEY HIGH, LOW

62° 39°
Sunny

Abortion rates still dropping

The abortion rate in the United States fell to its lowest point in more than 30 years, and the actual number of abortions also continues a steady decline, according to the first new comprehensive data in five years. **Story on A3**

TODAY'S NEWS

Fed: Economy lagging

Retailers, home builders and manufacturers should brace for more rough times, a somber Federal Reserve survey suggests amid growing recession fears. **E4**

DAILY LIFE

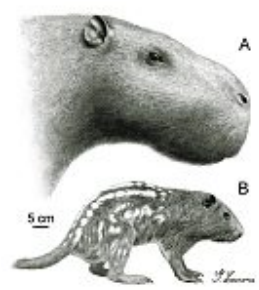
Conscience calling

Chapman
At the height of the Vietnam war, a dedicated group of Catholic anti-war activists destroyed the draft information of 378 young men. The "Catonsville 9" were heroes to some; anarchists to others. Desert Hot Springs resident and soap star Judith Chapman presents two performances of "The Trial of the Catonsville 9" at the Palm Canyon Theatre in Palm Springs. **D1**

Best of the Fest

The Palm Springs International Film Festival has announced 22 audience favorite films in the categories of Best Narrative and Best Documentary features. **D3**

Fortunately, this giant rat is already extinct



The head of a Josephoartigasia monesi, a newly discovered extinct species of rodent, is compared to a large living rodent, a Pakarana. Uruguayan scientists say they have unearthed fossil evidence of a giant new species of rodent, by far the largest ever discovered. Scientists say it shows that South America was once home to a frightening variety of mouse that could grow bigger than modern-day bulls. **A3**

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

Call 322-5555 or (800) 834-6052
subscribe@thedesertsun.com

IN TODAY'S PAPER

Advice **D2** Movies **D2**
Classified **H1-8** Obituaries **B5, 7, 9**
Comics **D4** Opinion **B10-11**
Entertainer **D3** Stocks **E3-4**
Horoscope **H3** Television **D5**
Lottery **B5** Weather **E6**



Man shot at casino identified

Banning man killed by police had lengthy record; probe under way

BY LORRAINE WHETSTONE AND KATIE RUARK
THE DESERT SUN

The man who was shot dead Tuesday outside a Palm Springs casino was a 24-year-old from Banning with a record of drug and firearm convictions.

Nino Joseph Garcia Jr. was shot to death about 6 p.m. after he led five officers on a brief chase, then pulled a handgun on them in the courtyard of Spa Resort Casino, 401 E. Amado Road, police said.

He had a string of felony con-

victions dating back to 2002, according to Riverside County Superior Court records, including possession of controlled substances for sale and carrying a loaded firearm in a vehicle or public place.

A task force of officers from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and the state Department of Justice had Garcia under surveillance at the casino and were waiting until he came out-



Garcia

side to arrest him on a felony warrant. Garcia and an unidentified woman ran to Brandon Williams' cab and asked to go to the mall when they saw the officers outside. "I heard them yell 'Freeze! Don't move!' and he took off," Williams said.

The woman was handcuffed in front of his cab.

"I looked back and he was gone. That's when I heard all the firecrackers.

"It was God intervening," said Williams, a father of four who has driven a Classic Cab for about a month. "If I didn't trust and believe in God then, I do now."

The slot attendant who suffered a leg wound after he was struck by

Please see SHOOTING, A8

BOB HOPE CHRYSLER CLASSIC



Samuel L. Jackson and Cheech Marin hang out Wednesday, the first day of the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic in La Quinta, before teeing off at the 10th hole of SilverRock Resort.

Someone for everyone

Golfers, celebrities make entertaining mix at Hope

BY ANGELA FRANZER
THE DESERT SUN

LA QUINTA — For some, it's the golf. For others, the celebrities.

"I figure it's about half and half," said Julio Gonzalez, a staff member for the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic on what attracts people to the tournament that kicked off Wednesday at four Coachella Valley golf courses.

By day's end, five golfers shared the lead with rounds of 65, or seven under par. Tim Petrovic, Joe Durant, Omar Uresti, Shigeki Maruyama and Mathew Goggin all performed well under the partly sunny skies and relatively calm conditions at Classic Club, La Quinta Country Club, PGA West and SilverRock.

Wednesday marked SilverRock's debut at the event. The course has a 10-year contract with the tournament.

Host George Lopez, Michael Bolton, Alice Cooper, Huey Lewis, Jimmy Fallon and Meat Loaf were among the stars who competed on opening day of the 49th annual golf tournament.

"We saw Michael Bolton, George Lopez and Carson Daly," said Keith Kramer, who came to the tournament from Huntington Beach. "I've been at these events for years, so I don't get starstruck, but it's always fun to see them. They're not nearly as stuck up and very down to earth at an event like this."

Sal Gomez, a recent Indio High School graduate, said he came to see Lopez. "He's funny, and we've been listening to his stand-up comedy since he came out."

Others said the real stars are the golfers. "We're out here to see the pros more than the celebs," Ed Gaunt Jr. of Cathedral City said.

INSIDE

After the first day of the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic, there's a logjam at the top, with five players tied for the lead and seven others just one shot behind.

SPECIAL SECTION

ONLINE

Complete coverage at mydesert.com/bobhope

>> Read daily blogs by Larry Bohannon

>> Watch videos of pros and celebrities

2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Americans revved up — and ready to vote

BY SUSAN PAGE AND WILLIAM RISSER
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — American voters, to borrow a candidate's phrase, are fired up and ready to go.

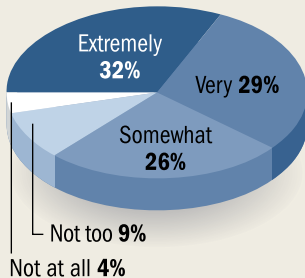
Turnout in the opening Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary this month smashed records. By 2-1, those surveyed in a new USA Today/Gallup Poll say they're more enthusiastic than usual about voting this year. Nine in 10 say it makes a difference to them who is elected president.

With the stakes high and the country's direction up for grabs, voters are poised to continue a rebound in Election Day turnout

that began after dipping to a historic low in 1996, when barely over half of those eligible to vote bothered to go to the polls. High levels of interest are reshaping the races in both parties, boosting candidates who have reached out to new voters at the expense of those who targeted the ranks of the tried-and-true.

"I hate to say it, but (in past elections) I'd vote if I was available or my schedule allowed it or I remembered," says Sara Koscura, 28, a Republican and attorney in upstate Watertown, N.Y., who was among those surveyed. "Voting wasn't a high priority, but this year it is."

USA Today Gallup Poll How enthusiastic respondents said they were about voting for president in this year's election:



SOURCE: USA TODAY/GALLUP POLL OF 2,010 ADULTS FRIDAY-SUNDAY. MARGIN OF ERROR: ±2 PERCENTAGE POINTS.

GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

She supports Arizona Sen. John McCain, who won easily in New Hampshire over the better-funded Mitt Romney after pulling independent voters to the Republican primary. In Iowa, Romney's superior

Please see VOTING, A2

Nordstrom delays its target date for local store

BY DEBRA GRUSZECKI
THE DESERT SUN

Nordstrom has moved its target opening date back to spring 2011 at Westfield Palm Desert.

This marks the second, one-year delay since August.

Nordstrom Inc. spokesman Michael Boyd said Wednesday the Seattle-based retailer remains committed to the valley store. At the same time, he acknowledged, "There's been a lot of moving pieces and parts."

Nordstrom signed a letter of intent in February 2006 to build a two-story, 149,000-square-foot store at the mall's north end.

Those plans have yet to be presented to the public.

Michele Predko, regional marketing director for Westfield, said the revitalization plans are still on tap. "We want to figure out the right plan for the shopping center and for the community, and something that's going to be right — not just for now, but for 10 years from now," she said. "That takes time."

Other possible factors:

■ The disclosure comes days after Nordstrom reported preliminary sales of \$1.22 million for the five-week period that ended Jan. 5, representing a 3.8 percent decrease compared to sales of \$1.27 million for the five-week period that ended Dec. 30, 2006.

Boyd discounted the most recent report as a motive.

Predko also said Westfield, with some retailers noting soft sales, had stores that posted sales increases over 2006. "It varied depending on the category."

■ Plans to build a 1-million-square-foot retail center at Avanterra Palm Desert along Interstate 10. Its targeted opening is 2011.

Richard Oliphant, one of several developers involved in the \$2.5 billion mixed-use development at The Classic Club, where the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic is being played, said Nordstrom's new date is a coincidence.

Boyd said Wednesday that Nordstrom's allegiance is with Westfield Palm Desert.



BMW or HARLEY, or FORD F-150

With Purchase Of Your New Century Vintage Home. Through January 31st!

www.CenturyVintageHomes.com



For The Home Of Your Dreams!
1-800-BUY-CENTURY! For Details.