Central Valley's selenium-fouled water may not be pumped into the ocean near Cayucos after all.

**Deal could keep tainted water from coast**

By Dana Warren

WASHINGTON — A deal between federal water officials and several irrigation districts in the Central Valley may keep selenium-tainted water from being pumped through a pipeline and into the ocean near Cayucos.

The Federal Bureau of Reclamation has worked for years to determine how to dispose of billions of gallons of water with high levels of the naturally occurring mineral. One proposal that took hold in 2002 and was reinvigorated last year called for the water to be dumped in the ocean near San Luis Obispo County.

But federal transfer of a big piece of the Central Valley Project to irrigators so they can pay for disposing the drain water in their area, and not the coast, was floated on Capitol Hill on Thursday. Initial reactions ranged from skepticism to outright praise.

The collaboration involving the federal Bureau of Reclamation and 19 irrigation districts led by the Kingsburg Westlands Water District would transfer, at no cost, the federal portion of the CVPI's San Luis Unit — otherwise, pumping plants, about 1.5 billion gallons of drain water a year — to a state provider that irrigators would support to pay for cleaning up the drain water.

The San Luis Unit is in the west San Joaquin Valley.

*Please see SLO SUNDRIES, Back Page.*

**Cold snap aside, January was world's hottest ever**

By Seth Borenstein

WASHINGTON — It may be cold coast during a Feb. 15 cold front, but last month was by far the hottest January ever.

The temperature of the world's land areas were 3.4 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than normal for the month, breaking the old record by about three-quarters of a degree. Ocean temperatures alone didn't set a record.

The temperature of the world's land and water combined — the so-called global average — was 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than normal, breaking the old record by more than one-quarter of a degree. Ocean temperatures alone didn't set a record.

The temperature of the world's land areas were 4.1 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than normal, breaking the old record by more than one-quarter of a degree. Ocean temperatures alone didn't set a record. The temperature of the world's land and water combined — the so-called global average — was 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than normal, breaking the old record by more than one-quarter of a degree. Ocean temperatures alone didn't set a record.

**Mardi Gras**

*No parade, no ball — only a crawfish boil*

Local krewes are celebrating quietly amid a crackdown on rowdy revelers.

*By Sally Connolly*

Mardi Gras in San Luis Obispo has not picked a king and queen this year, and there will be no masked ball of costumed revelers.

In fact, organizers report, the only public gathering where regular folk can rob shoulders with Mark Greys' krewes members at a crawfish boil Sunday at Frog & Peach Pub in San Luis Obispo.

This year, the folks at SLO Mardi Gras have been partying — buttered and all — but in a much lower key.

The three major krewes, the Krewe of Syreteres, the Krewe of Bolita and the Krewe of Bon Temps, have thrown themed parties and thrown Mardi Gras-themed parties and thrown Mardi Gras-themed parties.

*Please see MARKS GRAS, Back Page.*

**Panel wants to discuss shorebird safety at Dunes**

The state Coastal Commission wants to meet with state park officials to talk about how to better protect threatened and endangered species at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area.

The commission is not satisfied with the current protection of young shorebirds amid a crackdown on rowdy revelers.

*For more on how Coastal Commission staff will proceed with the panel's wishes, see Page B1.*

**Electricity filled the air at the gymnasium at Centennial Park in Paso Robles on Thursday morning as demonstrations of a Tesla coil, a high-frequency transformer, excited high school and middle school students. The equipment and presentation by Terry Schwalk of the Santa Cruz Institute of Particle Physics was the second annual Teisl event in Paso Robles. High school teachers Ralph Lewis, shown here, and Mark Fairbairn explained the basics of static electricity from the students after dozens of metal balls and putting themselves in contact with the 1 million volts of electricity emitted from the coil.**

*STAN LUISOBIOS.com*