

THE TRIBUNE



50¢
INCLUDES TAX

FOR HOME DELIVERY: 781-7878

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2007

FOOTBALL SCHEDULE UPDATE | IN **SPORTS, D1**

WHO WILL POLY PLAY?

IN TODAY'S **HOME**

Where it's always 1949

Cambria home goes retro



STYLE & TRENDS | IN **LIVING, C8**

BE LIKE EMMITT

SUDDENLY, REGULAR GUYS ARE GIVING DANCE LESSONS A TRY

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 DAVID WHITNEY
dwhitney@mcclatchydc.com

WASHINGTON — A deal between federal water officials and several irrigation districts in the Central Valley may keep selenium-tainted water there instead of allowing it to be 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 surfaced in 2002 and was reinvigorated last year called for the water to be dumped in the ocean off 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 10 irrigation districts (led by kingpin Westlands Water District) would transfer, at no cost, the federal portion of the CVP's San

Luis Unit — reservoirs, pumping plants, about 100 miles of canals and possibly even power plants — to a joint-powers authority that irrigators would create to pay for cleaning up the drainage mess.

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

Please see SELENIUM, Back Page

ELECTRIFYING EDUCATION: KIDS GET A CHARGE OUT OF DEMONSTRATION



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JOE JOHNSTON

Electricity filled the air of 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 Tesla event in Paso Robles. High school teachers Ralph Lewis, shown here, and Mark Fairbank earned applause from the students after donning metal suits and putting themselves in contact with the 1 million volts of electricity emitted from the coil.

MARDI GRAS

No parade, no ball – only a crawfish boil

Local krewes are celebrating quietly amid a crackdown on rowdy revelers

By SALLY CONNELL
sconnell@thetribunenews.com

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

In fact, organizers report, the only public gathering where regular folk can rub shoulders with Mardi Gras krewe members is at a crawfish boil Sunday at Frog & Peach Pub in San Luis Obispo.

It's a far cry from the days when there was a festival, a parade and a ball.

But those festivities stretch back to a time before 2004, when San Luis Obispo's Mardi Gras became synonymous with rowdy, rioting young people and subsequent crackdowns by police.

This year, the folks at SLO Mardi Gras have been partying — feathers and all — but in a much less visible way.

The three major krewes, the Krewe of Sybarites, the Krewe of Beleza Sol and the Krewe of Bon Temps, have thrown themed pri-

Please see MARDI GRAS, Back Page

Cold snap aside, January was world's hottest ever

By SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It may be cold comfort during a frigid February, but last month was by far the hottest January ever.

The broken record was fueled by a waning El Niño and a gradually warming world, according to U.S. scientists who reported the data Thursday. Records on the

planet's temperature have been kept since 1880.

Spurred on by unusually warm Siberia, Canada, northern Asia and Europe, the world's land areas were 3.4 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than a normal January, according to the U.S. National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C. That didn't just nudge past the old record set in 2002 but broke that

mark by 0.81 degrees, which meteorologists said is a lot because such records often are broken by hundredths of a degree at a time.

The temperature of the world's land and water combined — the most effective measurement — was 1.53 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than normal, breaking the old record by more than one-quarter of a degree. Ocean tem-

peratures alone didn't set a record.

In the Northern Hemisphere, land areas were 4.1 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than normal for January, breaking the old record by about three-quarters of a degree.

But the United States was about normal. The nation was 0.94 degrees Fahrenheit above normal for January, ranking only the 49th warmest since 1895.

Panel wants to discuss shorebird safety at Dunes

The state Coastal Commission wants to meet with state parks 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 survival rates of young snowy plovers, one of two rare species of shorebird that nest in the park.

On Thursday, the commission considered protections now in place for threatened and endangered wildlife at the park.

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

TOP LOCAL STORIES

ATASCADERO

Parks panel backs veterans memorial

The city Parks and Recreation Commission votes to support the statue proposed for Atascadero Lake Park

>> ON PAGE B1



Mousetraps that go zoom

>> ON PAGE B1

ARROYO GRANDE

Local woman remembered through dance

High school performance will celebrate the life of a young cancer victim

>> ON PAGE B1

TOP BUSINESS STORIES

Local home sales, median price drop again

ALSO, grape harvest was way down from record 2005

>> ON PAGE C1



TOP NEWS STORIES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Today's vote on Iraq puts Republicans under pressure

>> ON PAGE A3

CALIFORNIA: Two accused of burning woman to death **A4**

FOSSILS: Even 6,100 years ago, people craved chili peppers' sizzle **A7**



7 49377 10100 1

Weather

Mostly sunny skies today around the county. Highs of 69 at the coast, 77 inland and 74 in the North County.

Full forecast, Page D6

Your guide to this newspaper

Business	C1	Calendar	B3	Movies	C4	Sports	D1
Classifieds	E1	Dear Abby	C5	Nation	A5	State	A4
Comics	C6	Horoscope	C5	Obituaries	B2	TV Listings	C5
Crossword	E7	Lottery	A2	Opinion	B4	World	A7

Coming this week in The Tribune

SATURDAY: PEOPLE

Focus on Couric

How Katie Couric is putting her stamp on the 'CBS Evening News'

SUNDAY: SPECIAL SECTION

Guide to the race

Everything you need to know about the Tour of California's visit to SLO

MONDAY: PERSONAL TECH

Kids rejoice!

Why video games could actually be good – and educational – for your kids