

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

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Daily News

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50 Cents
DESIGNATED AREAS HIGHER

Gambling with kids' health

Toy giant Mattel under congressional scrutiny over tainted products

BY LISA FRIEDMAN
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Southern California toy giant Mattel Inc. was blasted by congressional leaders Wednesday for failing to detect the recent flood of lead-paint contamination in Chinese-made Barbie dolls, Thomas and

Friends train sets and millions of other toys.

And in the first of a two-day hearing on tainted toys, legislators accused Mattel of negligence and obstructing a congressional investigation into how the El Segundo-based company's toys made their way into the hands of U.S. children.

"Mattel chose to gamble with our children's health, apparently for a few extra dollars," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Chicago. The company, she said, "has forfeited the right to expect any parent to trust them."

Added Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, "When you can't trust Thomas the Train and you can't trust a company

like Mattel, it's just staggering that we have to worry about some of these issues."

Since August, Mattel and other companies have recalled millions of toys made in China because of excessive levels of lead and small magnets that

PLEASE SEE **MATTEL / PAGE 11**



Mattel CEO Bob Eckert said he hopes to win back the confidence of parents with new safety measures.

INSIDE



Spector case back to jury

Judge decides not to let the deadlocked panel consider a lesser charge
PAGE 3

O.J. free on bail

Simpson released after judge sets bail at \$125,000; legal experts question strength of case
PAGE 4



Plenty of flu shots promised

Now the push is on to get them all used
PAGE 9

Simi Valley bills church for cops' time at protest

BY BRENT HOPKINS and ANGIE VALENCIA-MARTINEZ
Staff Writers

SIMI VALLEY — In an unusual twist on the national immigration debate, the city of Simi Valley sent a \$40,000 bill Wednesday to a church harboring an undocumented immigrant after a protest there over the weekend prompted a police presence.

The United Church of Christ has played host for several months to a Ventura woman named Liliana, a Mexican citizen seeking sanctuary from immigration laws.

On Sunday, the anti-illegal-immigration group Save Our

PLEASE SEE **CHURCH / PAGE 11**

Roadhouse blues



Cars on the 101 Freeway zoom past Patrick Richardson's house, which sits where its trailer broke down Saturday.

Unique moving project turned out not to be a do-it-yourself snap after all

BY SUE DOYLE
Staff Writer

It's the ultimate freeway debris. For five days, Patrick Richardson's home has sat on the Ventura Freeway, causing thousands of motorists to rubberneck at the sight of the abandoned, green ranch-style house on the shoulder.

And as each day goes by, its splintered roof sags a little more. And elated taggers apply fresh coats of black graffiti to the new northbound-freeway fixture near the Universal Studio exit.

But there's no sign of Richardson, who decided to move his house on his own

from Santa Monica to Santa Clarita with a truck and trailer that broke down over and over along the way in an extreme moving nightmare Saturday that tied up traffic for eight hours.

Patrick, please pick up your house. "Just pay someone to move it, man," said Justin Pearson, a 28-year-old who works at a Studio City garden shop and sees the spectacle grow worse by the day. "Come on. What's he going to do with it now?"

It wasn't supposed to happen like this. The 45-year-old Castaic man did get a

PLEASE SEE **HOUSE / PAGE 11**

Collin Reno, a volunteer from the William Morris Agency, puts a new front wheel on a wheelchair at Wheels for Humanity in North Hollywood.
John McCoy
Staff Photographer



Providing wheels

Volunteers from the William Morris Agency headed to Wheels for Humanity in North Hollywood on Wednesday to help the nonprofit organization assemble wheelchairs. Wheels for Humanity refurbishes nearly 180 wheelchairs a month and gives them to those in need.
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INDEX	
NEWS	2
Business	2
Markets	4
Weather	4
Obituaries	8
Editorials	12
SPORTS	11
Scoreboard	11
LA.COM	12
Comics	12
Crossword	16
CLASSIFIED	16
Crossword 2,3	

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WEATHER
Cloudy early
Highs: 70-74
Lows: 51-55
Air quality: Moderate
For details, see back of Business

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SuperLotto numbers picked last night. More results on Page 4.
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