

The Desert Sun

50¢

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WEDNESDAY
May 7, 2008



SAC's CONCRETE SALE!
760/568-3799

Good Morning!
TODAY'S VALLEY HIGH, LOW

90° 62°

Cup or cone?



Robbins
**BASKIN-ROBBINS
CO-FOUNDER DIES**

Irvine Robbins, who as co-founder of Baskin-Robbins brought Rocky Road, Pralines 'n Cream and other exotic ice cream concoctions to every corner of America, died Monday in Rancho Mirage. **B1**

Lakers' Kobe is MVP

Always a top player, but never the MVP — until now. The NBA has awarded Kobe Bryant his first MVP award. **C1**

TODAY'S NEWS

International aid reaches Myanmar

Hampered by travel and visa obstacles, international aid started to reach Myanmar where at least 22,000 people were killed when a cyclone hit the weekend. **A3**

DAILY LIFE

A special meal just for mom

Mother's Day Brunch is an age-old tradition. But when did it start? And what are some of the Coachella Valley's restaurants going to make to make the day special? **D1**

Britney gets more time

A three-month period of relative calm and stability has resulted in more time with her two kids for Britney Spears. **D2**

IN TODAY'S PAPER

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Novelty lighters draw fire

Cathedral City fire officials want toy-like devices banned

By RAÑEKA J. CLAXTON
THE DESERT SUN
CATHEDRAL CITY — Some look like dragons, cats, motorcycles or green frogs that make sounds. Toys, right? Not exactly. Novelty lighters, often displayed in clear view of young children at convenience stores, can be

dangerous attractions that lead to fires. Cathedral City fire officials plan to ask their City Council to ban selling novelty lighters at stores in the city. If passed, Cathedral City would be the first in the Coachella Valley to have such a ban, said Deputy Chief Mike Hatfield. "A lighter is a tool," said Cathed-

ral City Fire Chief Bill Soqui. "It shouldn't look like a toy. We want to eliminate the possibility of (fatalities and injuries) happening." Six other cities in California and two states have already passed bans on the devices. According to the National Fire Protection Association, about **Please see LIGHTERS, A4**



Cathedral City firefighter Chris Duensing, 33, with a sampling of novelty lighters that city fire officials want banned because they look like toys to children.

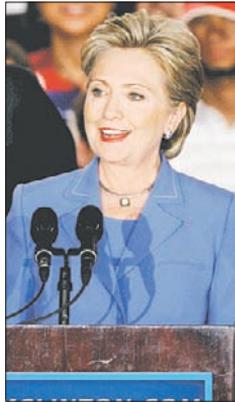
RICHARD LUI
THE DESERT SUN

ELECTION 2008

Obama, Clinton split victories



CHUCK BURTON, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., speaks in Raleigh, N.C., after winning the North Carolina Democratic primary.



DAWSON GUMMINS, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., addresses her supporters during her Indiana Primary night rally Tuesday.

Obama needs 184.5 delegates to secure nomination

By DAVID ESPO
AND LIZ SIDOTT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS — Barack Obama swept to a convincing victory in the North Carolina primary Tuesday night and declared he was closing in on the Democratic presidential nomination. Hillary Rodham Clinton eked out a win in Indiana as she struggled to halt her rival's march into history. "Tonight we stand less than 20 delegates away from securing the Democratic nomination for president of the United States," Obama told a raucous rally in Raleigh, N.C. — and left no doubt he intended to claim the prize. Clinton stepped before her own supporters not long afterward in Indianapolis. "Thanks to you, it's full speed on to the White House," she said, signaling

DELEGATE COUNT

OBAMA: 1,840.5
CLINTON: 1,684
Total needed: 2,025

There are 217 delegates at stake in the final six contests — West Virginia, Kentucky, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Montana and South Dakota. Clinton leads in superdelegate endorsements, 270.5 to 256 with About 270 yet to be claimed. SOURCE: The Associated Press

Analyzing the results

What do the night's results mean for each of the candidates? **A2**
her determination to fight on in a campaign already waged across more than 16 months and nearly all 50 states. Returns from 99 percent of North Carolina precincts showed Obama winning 56

percent of the vote to 42 percent for Clinton, a triumph that mirrored his earlier wins in Southern states with large black populations. That made Indiana a virtual must-win. Midwest contest for the former first lady, who had hoped to counter Obama's persistent delegate advantage with a strong run through the late primaries. Returns from 99 percent of the precincts showed her with 51 percent to 49 percent for her rival, a margin of little more than 22,000 votes out of more than 1.2 million cast. The outcome wasn't clear for more than six hours after the polls closed, the uncertainty stemming from slow counting in Lake County near Obama's home city of Chicago. Obama won at least 94 delegates and Clinton at least 75 in the two states combined. **Please see ELECTION, A4**

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DENIS POROV, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Guns and drugs seized during the arrest of 96 people on drug charges Tuesday in San Diego. Seventy-five SDSU students were among the arrested.

75 San Diego State students arrested

A five-month investigation focusing on San Diego State University and some of its fraternities has resulted in the arrests of 96 people, 75 of whom are students, authorities say. Among the students arrested were a criminal justice major and one who was about to receive a master's in homeland security. During the investigation a Theta Chi member allegedly sent text messages to customers, offering bulk quantities of cocaine at reduced prices before heading to Las Vegas for a weekend. Read more Tuesday's raid and what sparked the investigation on **A5**

\$4 a gallon gas arrives in the valley

Indio station owner: 'This is the worst time' in 20 years in business

By ANGELA FRANZER
AND DENISE GOOLSBY
THE DESERT SUN

Gas has topped \$4 in the Coachella Valley — at least in one spot in Indio. A gallon of regular unleaded gas costs \$4.06 at the Indio Truck Stop, an independently owned service station that Dipak and Hemleta Patel operate. Dipak Patel, who's owned the station at Indio Boulevard and Avenue 48 for 20 years, said he's frustrated that he has to keep raising the price on his customers. "This is the worst time" in his 20 years in business, he said. Patel said a gallon of gas, including state, federal and environmental taxes, now costs him \$3.91. That's up from the roughly \$3.67 a gallon he paid just two weeks ago. As an independent station owner, he's paying more for gas than the large corporations, he said. Among those visiting his station Tuesday evening was North Shore resident Arturo Chavez, who stopped at the first station he saw to prevent his Honda Accord from running out of gas. Across the street at AM/PM, unleaded regular was selling for \$3.71 a gallon. "I didn't notice it was more expensive," he said, shaking his head while pumping \$12.25 worth of gas. It usually costs him \$60 to fill up, but he only put in enough to get him by for a while on Tuesday. "It's hard," he said. Patel said the skyrocketing price of oil, at nearly \$123 a barrel at one point Tuesday, compared to \$12 a barrel when he first started his business, means less profit. "The lower the price, the better the margin, he said. "The tighter the price, the lower the profit (because you have to compete in the market," said Patel. "If I get the lower price, I'll sell at the lower price." Joe Sparano, president of the Western States Petroleum Association, said "far and away" the main factor driving cost is the price of crude oil. In California,

Unleaded	406¢
Unleaded PLUS	416¢
Super unleaded	426¢
Diesel #2	456¢

WADE BYARS, THE DESERT SUN

Regular gasoline was selling for \$4.06 a gallon at the Indio Truck Stop on Tuesday.

85 percent of the price of gas is set by crude oil and taxes. For the remainder, about 13 percent is from refining and related costs, and 2 percent is for distribution and marketing. The average price per gallon in Riverside County on Tuesday was \$3.91, just slightly higher than on Monday. Automobile Club of Southern California spokesman Jeffrey Spring said. But that may be looking up — or, rather, down. "We have stopped setting records as of Sunday in major metropolitan areas around San Francisco and Redding," AAA spokeswoman Marie Montgomery said. On Tuesday, the average price per gallon hit \$4.02 in San Francisco and \$3.93 in Redding, but Montgomery said "all hope is not lost." Riverside County stopped setting records May 1 and, in the past eight years, officials have seen gas prices peak in May and then decline. "The demand for gas usually rises in the spring, when California is in the process of switching from a winter to a summer blend of fuel, which burns cleaner but is more expensive to produce, Montgomery said. So the tank could be a little easier to fill in about a month.

Desert Sun reporters Xochitl Peña and Erica Soler contributed.

Pamper Her This Mother's Day.

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