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The Queen of Hearts Therapeutic Riding Center, a Mira Loma nonprofit, will be celebrating a decade of providing services to disabled people. **C4**

# NATION & WORLD

## Governor races are threat to Obama

BY CHARLES BABINGTON  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Republicans are poised to topple at least a dozen Democratic governors next month, and that could cause President Barack Obama and his party major headaches far beyond this year's elections.

A cadre of new GOP governors, including some in battleground states that Obama won two years ago, could complicate his efforts to deliver benefits to voters and campaign effectively in 2012. They could also help create Republican-friendly House seats in next year's once-a-decade redistricting process.

In the final weeks of this year's contest, Obama is campaigning hard for Democrats coast to coast, well aware of the worrisome signs for the future. So far, his results seem mixed, and some candidates seem wary of him.

Democrats are at risk of surrendering governorships in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Oregon, New Mexico and Maine, among others. Obama carried all those states under Democratic governors in 2008. And all will be competitive in a 2012 re-election contest except, presumably, his home state of Illinois.

Republican governors already have replaced Democrats in New Jersey and Virginia, states that Obama also carried two years ago.

Elsewhere, Democrats are struggling to win a once-promising gubernatorial race in Florida, another swing state that has proven crucial in presidential races. Democrats might replace GOP governors in California — where Meg Whitman is facing former Gov. Jerry Brown — as well as Hawaii and a few others states this fall. But Minnesota is the only state in that category that seems likely to be seriously contested in the 2012 presidential race.

As Obama tries to help Democratic congressional and gubernatorial candidates, he often visits states that will be vital to his re-election hopes. This year he has traveled four times each to Florida, Michigan and Wisconsin, five times to Pennsylvania, and six times to Ohio, where he plans to campaign again this weekend in Cleveland and Columbus.

The president's schedule "is driven entirely by how to best help Democrats in 2010," said White House communications director Dan Pfeiffer. He said it's not surprising that competitive states this year will also be competitive in 2012.

Next month's governors' races also have big implications for U.S. House elections from 2012 through 2020. The House's 435 seats are reapportioned every decade, after each census. States will redraw their districts next year in a process that often is intensely political, with borders crafted to help or hurt a party, or even a particular politician.

Most governors have extensive power to influence the process, including the right to veto plans they dislike. That means Obama could face a more Republican-leaning House in 2013 if he wins re-election.

# Health revamp faces trial

**JUDGE:** He says decisions are needed on penalizing those who don't buy insurance, and requiring states to expand Medicaid.

BY MELISSA NELSON  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PENSACOLA, Fla. — Crucial pieces of a lawsuit challenging the Obama administration's health care overhaul can go to trial, with a judge ruling Thursday he wants to hear more arguments over whether it's constitutional to force citizens to buy health insurance.

In a written ruling, U.S. District Judge Roger

Vinson said it also needs to be decided whether it's constitutional to penalize people who do not buy insurance with taxes and to require states to expand their Medicaid programs. Another federal judge in Michigan threw out a similar lawsuit last week.

Vinson set a hearing for Dec. 16. The lawsuits will likely wind up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In his 65-page ruling, Vinson largely agreed with the 20 states, saying Congress was intentionally unclear when it created penalties in the legislation. The states have argued that Congress is overstepping its constitutional

authority by penalizing people for not doing something — not buying health insurance.

The penalties for those who do not buy insurance are never referred to as taxes in the 2,700-page act, Vinson wrote. Attorneys for the Obama administration argued at a September hearing that the penalties should be considered a tax levied by Congress — as allowed by its constitutional power to regulate interstate commerce.

"One could reasonably infer that Congress proceeded as it did specifically because it did not want the penalty to be 'scrutinized' as a

SEE HEALTH/C2



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The 35.4-mile Gotthard Base rail tunnel, a \$10 billion project, was OK'd two decades ago and is still several years from opening for traffic.

## Swiss build world's longest tunnel

**RAIL PROJECT:** The goal is to ease the damage caused by heavy trucks hauling loads through the pristine Alps.

BY FRANK JORDANS  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — A massive drilling machine called Sissi is about to chew through the last few inches of rock standing in the way of the creation of the world's longest tunnel.

The expected completion today of the 35.4-mile Gotthard Base rail tunnel is being hailed as an environmental triumph as much

as an unprecedented engineering feat.

The \$10 billion tube bores through the Gotthard massif, including the 8,200-foot Piz Vatgira, along the route to Italy. It's part of a larger project to shift the haulage of goods from roads to rails, spurred mainly by a concern that heavy trucks were destroying Switzerland's pristine Alpine landscape.

Swiss voters, who are paying over \$1,300 each to fund the project, approved its construction in a series of referendums almost 20 years ago and will have to wait several more before it is

ready for rail traffic.

Conservationists say the money was worth spending even if after 23 years of construction it will only shave one hour off the time trains travel between northern Europe and Italy.

"The Swiss love their mountains," said Thomas Brolli. The former journalist is a campaigner with the group Alpen-Initiative, which claimed a surprise victory in 1994 with a referendum to limit the number of heavy goods trucks allowed to cross the Alps each year to 650,000 — halving the current load — within two years of the tunnel's opening.

"Every Swiss has a link to the Alps, whether they were born there or go there on holiday," said Brolli.

Some 1.2 million trucks currently thunder through Switzerland's mountainous countryside every year, harming rare plants and animals while adding to the erosion that is the Alps' worst enemy.

With their beloved mountains crumbling, the Swiss decided that instead of simply stopping foreign trucks from passing through the country they would put their tunnel-building exper-

SEE TUNNEL/C3

## Assault on bus called hate crime

BY ZACHARY R. DOWDY  
NEWSDAY

MELVILLE, N.Y. — Nassau teens face hate-crime charges after a 14-year-old's daily school bus ride escalated from a commute filled with anti-gay taunts to a ride of terror, with the teens assaulting him two days in a row and calling him an anti-gay slur, Nassau police said Thursday.

The name-calling during the attacks this week as well as the teens' "ongoing course of conduct" over several weeks or months prompted officers to charge the teens with hate crimes, police said in a news conference.

David Spencer, 18, and Chase Morrison, 16, were arrested and scheduled to be arraigned in court

in Hempstead.

Spencer and Morrison were each charged with third-degree assault, a misdemeanor, and second-degree aggravated harassment, a felony. A third teen, Roy Wilson, 16, was charged with third-degree assault, police said.

The bias crime distinction upgrades the charges one degree, making the defendants eligible for stiffer penalties.

"We felt this was bias-related," detective Lt. John MacEwen said at a news conference with Nassau Police Commissioner Lawrence Mulvey at police headquarters.

Police said on Tuesday at 2:15 p.m., the suspects "stomped and kicked" the victim on the arms, legs, stomach and thighs on a bus

leaving Hicksville, and Spencer and Morrison taunted him about what they believed was his sexual orientation.

Then, on Wednesday police said Spencer and Morrison slapped the victim on the head and in the face on a bus and again made remarks about sexual orientation.

The victim reported the incidents to school authorities Wednesday afternoon. Police arrested the suspects Wednesday night.

The victim, whose name police are withholding, suffered bruises and "substantial pain throughout his body." Police said they were trying to determine whether the bus driver knew of the attacks or tried to stop or report them.

### INSIDE



### STEP up

About 3,500 Inland students attended the two-day Science and Technology Education Partnership, designed to inspire them to pursue careers in math, technology and science. **C5**

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STAN LIM/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Students from Columbia Elementary School in Perris play with a plasma ball while attending the 11th annual Science and Technology Education Partnership, or STEP, event at the Riverside Convention Center on Thursday.

# Event gives science a lift

**RIVERSIDE:** A former UCR chancellor highlights the need for private and public partnerships.

BY JENNIFER DEAN  
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Former UC Riverside chancellor Raymond Orbach was honored at the STEP 11 luncheon at the Riverside Convention Center on Wednesday.

STEP, or Science and Technology Education Partnership, holds a conference each year designed to inspire students to pursue careers in mathematics, technology and science. The nonprofit corporation was founded by Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Corona.

This year's 11th annual two-day conference saw about 3,500 students from schools in Riverside and San Bernardino counties, an educators program led by Pamela Clute, executive director of UCR's ALPHA Center, and a luncheon for sponsors, technology partners, and community and business leaders.

Shay Edwards, a former STEP student and current UCR bioengineering major, was the master of ceremonies at the luncheon.

"I'm standing here today as an example of one of



Students appear in front of an infrared camera from NAVSEA Corona Surface Warfare Center Division.

these students now in college for a science and technology degree," he said. "I want to thank all of you for helping students like me."

At a STEP luncheon two years ago, Edwards was given a full scholarship by UCR Chancellor Timothy White.

Edwards introduced Calvert, who thanked all of the educators, volunteers and supporters who work together for the STEP conference each year. He then presented Clute with an award for the "countless hours she has spent inspiring teachers."

White talked about the importance of programs such as STEP to the nation's global economy.

"Programs like this are



Raymond Orbach

and science education to our young students," he said. "But also to provide a forum for us to all work together — students, teachers, school administrators, community and business leaders, and high technology companies."

"These groups must work together, he said, toward the common goal of ensuring the next generation fulfills their potential in math, technology and scientific discovery.

"This is why we are here, to stimulate in our youth the search for exploring mathematics, technology and science," Orbach said. "If we are successful, our children and our country will prosper economically and intellectually. This is the future for which you are laying the foundation through STEP."

Reach Jennifer Dean at 951-368-9336, jdean@PE.com or <http://blogs.inlandsocal.com/moms>.

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**MY PHOTO**  
MAYE SPURBECK | RIVERSIDE

Maye Spurbeck, of Riverside, sent in this photo taken in 1999 of her cat Tiger playing with the computer mouse. Well of course! What else would a cat play with? Check out more about pets of all kinds on [inlandsocal.com/pets/](http://inlandsocal.com/pets/). And share all your other photos at [PE.com](http://PE.com), too!

## Teen leads walk team in diabetes fundraiser

BY JENNIFER WHITAKER  
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Riverside resident Kyla Clark, a 13-year-old Amelia Earhart Middle School student, is team captain for the Carb Busters, a team participating in the American Diabetes Association's Step Out: Walk to Fight Diabetes Saturday.

The Carb Busters have so far raised more than \$2,400 for the cause and are the top earning family/friend team for the walk.

Kyla was diagnosed at age 8 with type 1 diabetes and is



Kyla Clark

the ADA youth ambassador for the area.

The walk is at White Park, on the corner of Market and Ninth streets in Riverside. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. and the walk starts at 9 a.m.

Information: 1-888-342-2383, ext 7432, or [www.diabetes.org/stepout](http://www.diabetes.org/stepout).

Reach Jennifer Whitaker at 951-368-9282 or [jwhitaker@PE.com](mailto:jwhitaker@PE.com)

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