

WALKOUT: Labor officials call plan for temporary shutdown a scare tactic.

By Dakota Smith Staff Writer

With disgruntled workers at three supermarket chains set to strike as early as Sunday night, Ralphs stores are preparing to shut down in the event of a walkout, a spokesperson said Friday.

Relations between management and the unions representing 62,000 workers from Vons,

Albertsons and Ralphs stores in Southern California have been strained for months due to contract negotiations, but fractured again this week over the topic of health care benefits.

On Thursday night, unions issued a 72-hour strike notice, giving them the ability to walk out from hundreds of stores around the region.

Rick Icaza, president of the grocery workers union Local 770, said his group faced "stone-walling from the supermarket corporations" over negotia-

GROCCERS A6



Jason Redmond The Associated Press

Picket signs are ready for members of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 770 to hoist on Sunday night if no progress is made in contract talks with area grocers.

30-mile dive aims to bring ocean issues to the surface

SAN PEDRO: Record-seeker will journey from Catalina to Cabrillo Beach and focus on the depleted shark population.

By Samantha Troisi Staff Writer

Scott Cassell is a man of action. Swimming through what should be shark-infested waters is a risk he's willing to take to save the ocean.

At 4 a.m. today, the world-renowned diver and environmental activist was

expected to leave Catalina Island for a record-breaking, nonstop, 30-mile dive to Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro. In doing so, he hopes to bring awareness to the depleting shark population and current state of the ocean.

"I've dedicated my life to ocean conservation," Cassell said. "I've done everything from filming poachers for prosecution to talking to congressmen. I act, I don't talk."

Cassell said he's noticed a significant drop in the shark population. He once would swim with up to 60 to 100 sharks at any given time, but said he'll be lucky to see even a couple during his weekend dive,

mostly due to poaching. Cassell will use an acoustic shark attractor to demonstrate the lack of sharks left along the Catalina Channel.

"Sharks actually help the ecosystem, and watching them decline is like watching human extinction," Cassell said. "They swim out of protected waters and are killed."

Sharks as well as other predatory populations help to keep the ecosystem in order, Cassell said. Without them, species such as Humboldt squid begin to overpop-

DIVER A18

Beach's ordinance violated the workers' free speech rights and was so broad that it also made it illegal for children to shout "car wash" to passing drivers.

Smith said the ordinance "regulates significantly more speech than is necessary to achieve the city's purpose of improving traffic safety and traffic flow at two major Redondo Beach intersections, and the city could have achieved these goals through less restrictive measures, such as the enforcement of existing traffic laws."

City Councilman Matt Kilroy, who represents the council district where day

laborers congregate on Manhattan Beach Boulevard, called the court's ruling "amazing."

"This is not a day laborer law," Kilroy said. "This is a public-safety law that has to do with soliciting vehicles from the sidewalk from public areas and the traffic hazards it causes."

Redondo Beach City Attorney Michael Webb said he would consult with

LABORERS A15

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INSIDE

Ask Us A5
Business A14

Classifieds C3
Comics D3-4
Crosswords C4, C11, D3
Faith A17

Horoscope D3
Lottery A2
Nation/World A8
Obituaries A6

Police Log A7
Ship Arrivals C9
Sudoku D3
Television D5

Lic # 194130

DB 924933 0503

SUAREZ

FROM PAGE A3

Suarez performed twice in San Pedro after the album was released (it's available at www.billsuarez.com). It was the first time he had performed publicly since quitting the group the Young Americans to look after his ill mother in the late 1960s.

"I decided I had to do something with my life," he told the Daily Breeze in March about his motivation for resuming his singing career.

"I'm standing in the kitchen at 3 in the morning," he added. "I don't have a wife, I don't have any kids. I felt I had to do something and one of them was to sing."

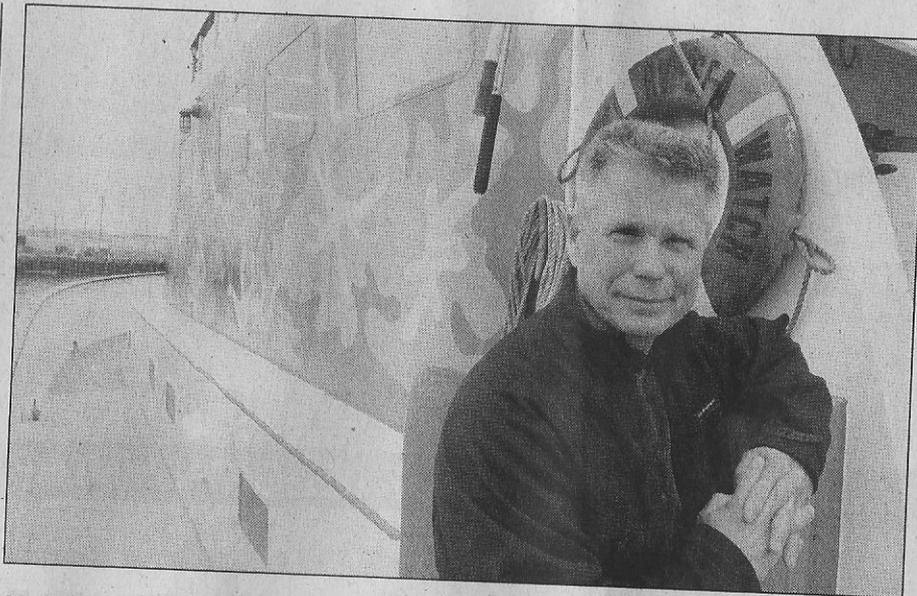
Though just 4-foot-10, he was a determined athlete who led San Pedro to the Western Boys Baseball Association title in 1962 and also participated in baseball, football and track at San Pedro High School.

He performed with such talents as Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Perry Como and Carol Burnett while in The Young Americans.

A 25-year member of the Elks, he twice held the position of exalted ruler at Elks Lodge 1919 in Gardena.

A funeral is set for 2 p.m. Thursday at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes.

nick.green@dailybreeze.com



Chuck Bennett Staff Photographer

Scott Cassell, a world-renowned diver and environmentalist activist, will be attempting to set a dive record by traveling 30 miles underwater from Catalina to San Pedro.

DIVER

FROM PAGE A1

ulate the ocean, eating everything in their path.

Cassell is appreciative of both the local and international groups joining his efforts to raise awareness. Global Reef will film a 3-D documentary about the dive and Luminox will give a portion of the sales of Cassell's limited-edition dive watch collection to Sea Wolves Unlimited and the Project Voyager Foundation.

"There will be 34 people in five boats helping," Cassell said. "These people were courageous enough to step forward, they're the real deal."

He will wear more than 100 pounds of gear, use state-of-the-art equipment such as a computer-controlled mixed gas rebreather, and a dry suit filled with argon gas to keep his body

warm. He also plans to use what he calls one of the oldest tricks in the book.

"I'll be using fins that were made two years after I was born," Cassell said. "And some of the other gear has the same technology that keeps astronauts alive in orbit."

Want to go?

What: Scott Cassell hopes to complete his record-breaking dive.

Where: Near the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, 3720 Stephen M. White Drive, San Pedro.

When: Finish expected at 5-7 p.m.

Info: www.underseavoyagerproject.org

Cassell also will utilize a 2,000-pound diving bell, or underwater habitat, that traps an air pocket, allowing him to take off his helmet to eat and rest during the record-breaking dive. It will be launched from the Sea Watch, a 70-foot-long research ship.

"It's a great research vessel and it's the biggest in the fleet," said Chris Wade, captain of the Sea Watch. "I think it's a worthy cause to donate the use of my boat and time to."

Cassell expects to finish his dive between 5 and 7 p.m. today, and then have a post-dive discussion of his accomplishments and findings.

"I think it's critical to get the message out there," he said. "The fix is as simple as not eating sharks and wild fish. We need to give the ocean the ability to recover, we have to give it the chance."

samantha.troisi@dailybreeze.com

JOBS

FROM PAGE A3

300 newly employed residents.

However, that improvement is misleading, Sidhu said.

Local employment numbers improved because they were not seasonally adjusted, unlike the figures for the entire state and Los Angeles County, she said.

In general, August is a better month for employment than July.

"That's why I'm fairly cautious in treating a change of 0.1 or 0.2 of a percentage point as significant," Sidhu said. "I call it wiggling. Some months, they wiggle up and some months they wiggle down. I'm trying to see if we're in a different world, and we're not there yet."

August's unemployment rate was a slight improvement from a year ago, when it was 12.4 percent. During the 12-month period that ended in August, California gained 171,000 jobs, even as nearly 2.2 million residents remained jobless.

Two factors are contributing

to the slow recovery, said Brad Kemp, director of regional research with Beacon Economics in Los Angeles. First, employers began adding jobs last year when it looked as if the economy was rebounding. With uncertainty prevailing, they are absorbing those jobs before hiring again. Also, any growth in private industry jobs is being offset by public sector layoffs, as state and local governments adjust to less revenue.

The state reported that six categories lost 17,500 jobs in August: construction; information; financial activities; educational and health services; other services; and government.

Five categories added 9,100 jobs last month: mining and logging; manufacturing; trade, transportation and utilities; professional and business services; and leisure and hospitality.

It's unclear when the jobs picture will start to improve.

"There is no magic bullet and it's going to take more time and I think it's going to need to take more cumulative growth," Sidhu said.

muhammed.el-hasan@dailybreeze.com

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

Local unemployment figures

Percentage of unemployed in South Bay, August 2011.

Alondra Park*	13.6%	Lomita	9.2%
Carson	12.8%	Los Angeles	13.9%
Del Aire*	7.0%	Manhattan Beach	4.5%
El Segundo	6.3%	Palos Verdes Estates	2.0%
Gardena	11.9%	Rancho Palos Verdes	4.4%
Hawthorne	16.4%	Redondo Beach	6.8%
Hermosa Beach	5.7%	Rolling Hills	2.2%
Inglewood	15.7%	Rolling Hills Estates	3.8%
Lawndale	12.6%	Torrance	6.4%
Lennox*	16.7%	West Carson*	9.9%

*Unincorporated areas

Source: Employment Development Department

Paul Penzella Staff Artist