

Los Angeles Times

9:44 AM PST, Wednesday, November 28, 2007

SEARCH

Hello Visitor [Register](#) [Sign-In](#)



News

- California | Local
- National
- World
- Entertainment
- Business
- Sports
- Politics
- Science
- Environment
- Opinion
- Columnists
- Print Edition

- Calendarlive
- The Envelope
- Travel
- Magazine
- Home & Garden
- Health
- Food
- Autos
- Books
- Image
- Arts & Culture
- Photography
- The Holidays
- Blogs
- Obituaries
- Crossword, Sudoku
- All Sections
- Corrections

Buy, Sell & More

- Jobs
- Cars
- Real Estate
- Apartments
- Personals
- Deals at Local Stores
- Coupons
- Newspaper Ads

Place an Ad

In the Newspaper
Online

Settings & Services

- Sign In
- Register
- Personalized News
- E-Mail Newsletters
- RSS Feeds
- Help
- Contact Us
- L.A. Times Archives
- Reprint Requests

Home Delivery

- Customer Support
- Subscribe

Musharraf steps down as Pakistan's military chief

By Laura King
As president he still holds significant power because of his declaration of emergency rule. **Video**

- For many, a state of economic emergency

Hint of Fed action spurs Wall St.

By Walter Hamilton | 9:31 a.m.
Financial shares continue a rally into a second day after a Fed official raises hopes of a rate cut. The Dow leaps 200.

O.J. in court for arraignment

From the Associated Press | 9:35 a.m.
Simpson will enter his plea and have a trial date set at 10 a.m. **Live video**

Books go high tech
Amazon unveils the Kindle, a hand-held device that can store hundreds of books, papers and magazines.



(Gary Friedman / Los Angeles Times)

Out on a limb over fine

By Steve Lopez
COLUMN: The Glendale Fire Dept. ordered the Collards to trim foliage. They did. Then the city fined them \$347,600. **Discuss**

- Detectives probe past of slain NFL star
- FCC chief makes new Tribune proposal
- New French riots speak volumes
- U.S. criticizes China for ship snub
- Local morning update: **Video**

SPORTS »



Lakers end 3-game losing streak

By Mike Bresnahan
Four players in double figures, led by Kobe Bryant's 35, lift Los Angeles over Seattle. **Photos | Report | Blog**

New home for the Trojans?

By Sam Farmer
Frustrated over stalled lease talks with the Coliseum, USC negotiates to bring its football games to Pasadena. **Discuss**

- **USC VS. UCLA:** Complete coverage
- **DODGERS:** Interest in Japanese pitcher
- **NFL:** Clues sought in Taylor's death

“ Here's the single most fascinating piece of awards trivia that I know. Only once in modern history...have all of the top Hollywood awards agreed on a choice for best picture. ”
--Tom O'Neil

Gold Derby | [More Blogs >](#)

Los Angeles Times
latimes.com skip this ad

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS »

Friends puzzle over death of Quiet Riot singer
"He was just normal Kevin," said one.
Kevin DuBrow: 1955 - 2007

More: 'DWTS' finale; Usher's a dad; Will strike delay debate?; 'Shrek the Halls'; 'Movies Rock'

CALENDARLIVE »	THE ENVELOPE »
Hidden: three kitchens too many?	Gotham Awards Winners Photos Blog

the perfect gift
Find just the thing for everyone on your list.
Check out the catalog
See our podcast
the magic of **macy's**

MOST VIEWED MOST E-MAILED

- Out on a limb over trimming fiasco
- U.S. criticizes China for ship snub
- USC might play in the Rose Bowl -- permanently
- Investigators search for clues in Sean Taylor's death
- Lakers get boos and a victory

[All most viewed >](#)

QUICK LINKS

- Sudoku
- Lottery
- Horoscopes
- Crosswords
- TV Listings

CLASSIFIEDS

Buy, Sell & More

- Pets
- Merchandise
- Business Opps
- Personals
- Businesses
- Coupons
- Print Ads
- All Classifieds

JOBS

AUTOS

REAL ESTATE

OPINION »

Venezuela knows what it's doing

Op-Ed: Critics of proposed reforms are arguing against peaceful, democratic change.

[EDITORIALS](#) | [OP-ED](#) | [LETTERS](#)

BLOGS »

UCLA: WHAT'S BRUIN



Party Planner: UCLA at USC
Blue & Gold fever hits Westwood

USC: ALL THINGS TROJAN

Ghosts of the Coliseum

SHOW TRACKER

'Dancing With the Stars': Mel + Maks 4-Ever

• **BABYLON & BEYOND:** Ahmadinejad the



FOOD »

If you want a brilliant drink in a civilized bar, you can't stand up, drop names or wear a hat.



AUTOS »

If large SUVs could be green, the Mercedes-Benz GL320 CDI would be too. **Photos**



LIVE TRAFFIC MAPS

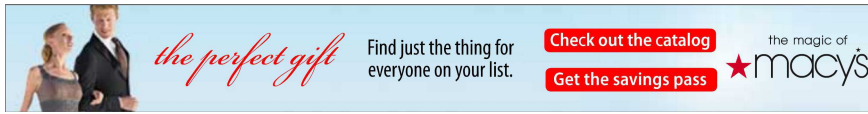


Orange Co.
Greater L.A.
Inland Empire
Ventura Co.
San Diego Co.

WEATHER

EXTENDED FORECAST

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Partly Cloudy 77° 50°	Partly Cloudy 77° 53°	Partly Cloudy 66° 52°



You are here: [LAT Home](#) > [California](#) | [Local News](#)



California/Local

- » Los Angeles
- » Orange County
- » S.F. Valley
- » Ventura County
- » Inland Empire
- » Crime&Courts
- » Education

Columnists:

- » Steve Lopez
- » Sandy Banks
- » Patt Morrison
- » George Skelton
- » Dana Parsons
- » Steve Harvey

Community Papers:

- » Burbank
- » Newport Beach
- » Laguna Beach
- » Huntington Beach
- » Glendale

News

- California | Local
- National
- World
- Entertainment
- Business
- Sports
- Politics
- Science
- Environment
- Opinion
- Columnists
- Print Edition

Calendarive

- The Envelope
- Travel
- Magazine
- Home & Garden
- Health
- Food
- Autos
- Books
- Image
- Arts & Culture
- Photography
- The Holidays
- Blogs
- Obituaries
- Crossword, Sudoku
- All Sections
- Corrections

Buy, Sell & More

- Jobs
- Cars
- Real Estate
- Apartments
- Personals
- Deals at Local Stores
- Coupons
- Newspaper Ads

Place an Ad

In the Newspaper Online

Settings & Services

- Sign In
- Register
- Personalized News
- E-Mail Newsletters
- RSS Feeds
- Help
- Contact Us



STEVE LOPEZ

Out on a limb over trimming fiasco

November 28, 2007

Everybody's got a horror story about a bureaucratic nightmare, but if you can top this one, call me collect at your earliest convenience.

Ann Collard was seven months pregnant with her third child in June when an abatement notice came from the Glendale Fire Department. She and her husband, Mike, were ordered to clear some foliage and maintain 5 feet of "vertical clearance between roof surfaces and overhanging portions of trees."



The Collards knew their oaks and sycamores needed a trim. And so they talked to neighbors, did a little research and called a recommended tree trimmer based in Orange County.

For \$3,000, the guy said, he'd remove about 15% of the foliage and they'd be in the clear.

The Collards asked if a permit was necessary.

Not at all, said the licensed trimmer, who told the Collards

he'd done lots of work in Glendale.

On the third day of the three-day job, the city's urban forester happened to be in the neighborhood, and noticed the tree trimmer doing his thing.

"She saw what was happening and said, 'Stop! Cease and desist!' " says Mike, a work-at-home software and computer guy.

Glendale has an indigenous tree protection ordinance that dates to the 1980s. It was enacted to discourage developers and homeowners from bulldozing or hacking trees willy-nilly. Earlier this year, because of citizen complaints that native trees were still being ruined, the city approved more restrictions and bigger fines.

None of which the Collards knew about.

They now admit that had they read the Fire Department notice closely, they would have seen in small print that a free permit was required to trim oak and sycamore branches larger than 1 inch in diameter. But it was an understandable oversight.

A week after her first visit, the urban forester was back, telling the Collards an arborist would come by soon to assess the damage. The Collards recall being told they might want to hire an attorney.

"That's when we realized the gravity of the situation," says Ann. "I was pregnant and crying, but it didn't help."

In August, the Collards got a visit from the arborist. She looked at the trees, took measurements and jotted down notes.

How bad could it be? The Collards began to anticipate the possibility of a fine, but it wasn't as if the trees were mauled. They looked pretty good, in fact.

Finally, on Oct. 1, a letter arrived. It was from Glendale's Neighborhood Services administrator.

"Dear Owner," it began. "The city of Glendale is committed to maintaining a community with quality streetscapes that include the care and well-being of protected indigenous trees."

The letter informed them they had improperly pruned 13 trees, some of them on city property because they were near the street, and some on their own property. The fine was listed on Page 2, where the Collards were informed they would be charged "two times the value of the damaged tree(s)."

"Total: \$347,600."

"I about passed out," says Ann.

Email Print Text Single Page



A fine mess click to enlarge

Columnist Biography:

- Steve Lopez

Recent Columns:

- Out on a limb over trimming fiasco November 28, 2007
- A strange trip into the land of \$2,500 sneakers November 25, 2007
- For those who need it, a real break from DWP November 21, 2007
- Recovery in a major key November 14, 2007
- His courage knows no darkness November 11, 2007
- \$3 million doesn't buy what it used to November 7, 2007
- A celebrity imitator finds real inspiration November 4, 2007
- A proposed electricity rate cut for the San Fernando Valley smells fishy October 31, 2007
- A family's resilience withstands the flames October 28, 2007
- Katrina comparisons are a different class of wrong October 26, 2007

Most Viewed Most E-mailed Related News

- Out on a limb over trimming fiasco
- U.S. criticizes China for ship snub
- USC might play in the Rose Bowl -- permanently
- Investigators search for clues in Sean Taylor's death
- Lakers get boos and a victory

All most viewed >



Shop Around the World in Three Days

Friday, Saturday & Sunday
November 30, December 1 & 2

At the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Free Admission & Parking
More >

SINGLE PAGE 1 | 2 >>

POST COMMENT

Name

Enter your comments and post to forum

DISCUSSION

Considering the circumstances, do you think the City of Glendale is being reasonable toward the Collards?