features

Iraq: 62 Weeks And Counting
The war that won't end. JUDITH LEWIS tells the sometimes-invisible strength of the peace movement.
MATTHEW CRAFT, reporting on a
case of an anti-war protest in Egypt, reveals a surprisingly zealous
determination for Bush's Middle East policy.
IAN WILLIAMS examines the renewed role for the U.S. HOWARD BLUME papers
through the Iraqi Constitution in pursuit of liberty. And CHRISTINE PELISEK's war list: casualties, costs and the extent of Haliburton fraud.

Aces and Addicts
Today's problem gambler is likely to be a 34-year-old woman with two kids, at least two years of college, and a video-game addiction. MARC COOPER finds some comfort in that statistic — his game is low-stakes blackjack — but in his exploration of modern American gambling and the culture of the machine, Cooper wonders if he has more in common with the problem gamblers he discovers in Las Vegas than he'd like to admit.
Excerpted from his new book, The
Largest Hazard in America: Gambling and Perdition in the New Las Vegas.

¡Arriba, Chalino Sánchez!
The famed Mexican/L.A.
reconocimiento singer's son is moving on.
By BEER QUIRINOES. Plus, SAM QUIRINOES on Los Chalinos and the next generation of reconocimiento singers.

news

Spain Files Off W.: The world stage is shrinking for one George Bush.
BY DOUG GREENE

Art in Germany: 'The very existence of L.A.'s Cultural Affairs Department is threatened, and the picture is not a pretty one for Mayor Hahn.' BY ROBERT GREENE

Patricia Surtue V. The World: A victim of police brutality in Inglewood is finding out just how lonely the pursuit of justice can be. BY JEFFREY ANDERSON

The hydrogenic! Way of Dying: JUDITH LEWIS checks in at Dr. Grab and Weather policy and can

Russian Around
A tale of two countries
by Steven Leigh Morris

At parties attended by theater folk, you mention the name Anton Chekhov and the mood turns thick with piety. To lift an image from Janet Malcolm's book Reading Chekhov, it's as though a small deer has just come into the room.

Why is it most American
productions of Chekhov spray-
paint Chekhovian irony onto the
stage so thickly that the actors stick to the samovar? (Women sitting languidly on white wicker chairs twirling linen parasols; men in cream-colored suits gazing wistfully at the horizon — and this from a playwright who arrived at the theater from vaudeville.) The answer provides a kind of window onto who we are as Americans — the way we see shapes from abroad, feelings that we think we recognize, and how we instantly attach them to a template of our making. And because the larger, general shapes of Russian culture lock so American on the surface, there's a mutual attraction.

Both cultures share emotiveness, a sometimes rabid patriotism, a distrust of strangers, affections for both authority and conformity that battle with opposing affections for independence and eccentricity. Americans and Russians also share a brand of arrogance that overcompensates for an awkwardness lurking within. It's not just us. You can always tell when an Aeroflot flight has just arrived from Moscow by the emergence of swaggering, bejeweled Russians dressed in cowboy hats and leather jackets, struttin' out of LAX's Tom Bradley Terminal and dragging their suitcases into the American wilderness.

The problem is that these superficial similarities blind us to the traits that make us opposites in just as many ways. This is where things go awry on stages both political and theatrical. Americans generally abide by written contracts whereas Russian contracts are mostly unenforceable. (The theme of debt collection is driven