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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Soviet hijacker charged with murder of father

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

A 46-year-old Santa Monica man accused of killing his father on Tuesday has been identified as the Lithuanian who hijacked a commercial airliner in 1970.

Albert Victor White, also known as Algirdas Brazinskas, was charged Friday with one count of murder in the Feb. 5 death of his father, 77-year-old Pranas Brazinskas, the Los Angeles District Attorney's office said.

In 1970, the father and son hijacked a domestic Soviet jetliner to Turkey, fatally shooting an Aeroflot flight attendant and wounding other crew members. A Turkish court sentenced Brazinskas to eight years in prison and White to two years. But they were released during an uprising in 1974. Although they were refused political asylum in the United States, they have lived in this country since 1976 without entry visas.

White is scheduled to be arraigned in Santa Monica Superior Court Department S at 8:30 a.m. Monday. He is being held in the Santa Monica Jail on a $1 million bail and faces 26 years to life in prison if convicted.

Brazinskas and White apparently were involved in a struggle, during which Brazinskas suffered several blows to the head with an unknown object, Santa Monica Police said.

White called 9-1-1 shortly before 8 p.m. Tuesday, then hung up the phone. Once police arrived at the 900 block of 21st Street, between California and Washington Avenues, White met officers at the door and led them to his father's body.

Brazinskas' cause of death will be determined by an autopsy from the Los Angeles County Coroner's office.

Early Valentine



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Santa Monica Oceanaires Barbershop Chorus (from left to right) John Smarda, Steve Demmer, Carl Rogers and Bruce Schroffel, serenade Lucy Mazes at the Newsroom Cafe on Wilshire Boulevard Friday. The Oceanaires are Santa Monica's "singing Valentines" who offer two classic sweetheart songs sung in four-part barbershop harmony for special delivery on Valentines Day.

American way shows Olympic Games greed

By The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — If you're going to the Winter Olympics, bring a warm coat — preferably with deep pockets.

With the games opening Friday, prices in downtown Salt Lake City are soaring like an Olympian off the 90-meter ski jump.

A pint of beer almost doubled to $6.25 at the Port 'O Call restaurant. A downtown parking garage is boosting its day rate to $30, from $5. And dinner specials at the Metropolitan are $95 a person — triple what its most expensive entree used to cost.

"It's called Olympic greed," said Michael Taylor, who runs the garage, located two blocks from the Salt Lake Ice Center. "It's all about making money."

While Olympic organizers have discouraged price gouging, Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce President Larry Mankin makes no apology for the dramatic markups.

"Free enterprise is a wonderful thing," said Mankin. "You can charge what the market will pay. Isn't this a great country?"

Santa Monicans offer a 'blind date' with the world

Global scavenger hunt is a race against time

BY TIM MURPHY
Special to the Daily Press

In April, 50 passengers will board a 747 from Los Angeles International Airport with no idea of where they are going or where they'll end up.

The group — split into 25 groups of two each — will be part of the Great*Escape*2002 — a three-week scavenger hunt that will take teams across four continents and to at least 10 countries. It's being organized by two Santa Monicans, and the winner gets a $100,000 cash prize.

Once the plane crosses the international dateline, the teams will open sealed envelopes that contain airline tickets, hotel vouchers and a list of riddles, clues and cryptic passages that will lead to the most exotic and out-of-the-way places on Earth.

"They will be going from Los Angeles to New York, the long way," said Pamela Finmark, a co-founder of Great*Escape*2002. The entry fee is $9,900 per person and well worth it, said Santa Monica resident Bill Chalmers, the brainchild of the event.

From April 12 to May 5, the teams will dash from place to place, overcoming language barriers, cultural differences, transportation snafus, couple dynamics and team competition in the effort to get back to New York with the most assignments completed.

The first place team receives the "The World's Greatest Travelers" crown and $50,000 in prize money; $25,000 to second place, and $15,000 to third place, plus bonus prizes.

Participants will have between 48 and 80 hours in each destination to complete as many "scavenges" as possible. One assignment may read something like this: "In Egypt ride a four-legged beast around the Pyramids wearing a traditional Arab galabyia and headdress purchased in Khan al-Khalili. (Grand Bazaar). Or, in Thailand locate the eatery in the Night Bazaar that specializes in insect entrees and sample two house specials."

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See HUNT, page 3

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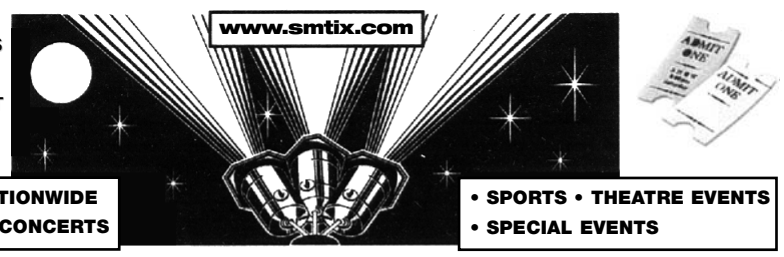
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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

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★★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★-Positive ★★★-Average ★★-So-so ★-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Stay in touch with older relatives, even if you feel as if it's a drag sometimes. You gain unusual insight from those who have been around longer than you. Catch up on your news with someone. Think in terms of re-establishing a tie. Tonight: A force to behold.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Reach out for someone at a distance. Even better, head out the door and find your friends. An excursion into the country might be right up your alley. Enjoy a leisurely meal at an inn or another quaint spot. You could be amazed by how good you feel when out of the groove. Tonight: Keep trying new.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ A partner discusses his or her feelings. You might not be ready to deal with someone's anger. Nevertheless, you get it full force. Lighten up and make conversations easier. You actually feel better once you clear the air. Start the weekend with a new beginning. Tonight: Accept someone's invitation.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ You think everything is going fine. You're more than ready to deal with someone head-on. A problem lurks on the horizon. Where you thought you had done an excellent job, a supervisor lets you know otherwise. You might have to work late. Tonight: Do what you must. Curb your temper.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Focus on work and day-to-day matters. You might want to consider a change in plans or a change in how you organize your daily life. Unexpected news comes your way. Consider what is going on with someone. This person has a harsh way of expressing his or her dissatisfaction. Tonight: Easy does it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Note how much better you feel. Don't push someone too far right now, especially involving money or feelings. This person could rear up and have a strong reaction. Relating heats up before you know it. Keep at it. Don't lose your cool, even when someone else does. Tonight: Flirt and play the night away.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Your family continues to hang you up. Someone still might be out of skew. Talk about what you want from a child or loved one. Add more flirtation and caring to your life. If you are attached, see what this attitude will do for your relationship. Tonight: Spend quality time with someone.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Speak to someone clearly. Finally, you see eye to eye. Understand what is going on with a loved one. This person might need more support from you. Family matters keep you busy. Still, return calls and catch up on work. A boss or associate is unusually verbal. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Your spending can easily go overboard. Speak your mind loud and clear. Discussions come from a point of security. You could make a big difference if you choose the most clear and cogent form of communication possible. Don't lose your temper. Tonight: Go overboard, but not with finances!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Listen to someone carefully, especially as information involves finances. You could skip through a slew of problems if you use your charisma and sense of humor. Make it a point to make your life easier. Tonight: Do your thing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ Curb a tendency to overthink and go through the same problem over and over. Choose something ultimately relaxing to do, and make it OK to do it by yourself. You really need to recharge your batteries and relax your mind. Do what you love. Tonight: Another low-key night.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Aim to get more out of your life. Get together with friends and enjoy yourself. When a heavy conversation starts up, don't back off. Carefully listen to someone who really cares and gives you important feedback. Tonight: Chat the night away.

WEATHER

Today ...	Sunny/Windy	High—73°F	Low—47°F
Tomorrow ...	Sunny	High—72°F	Low—46°F
Monday ...	Partly Cloudy	High—72°F	Low—46°F

QUOTE of the DAY

"The future is much like the present, only longer."
— Don Quisenberry

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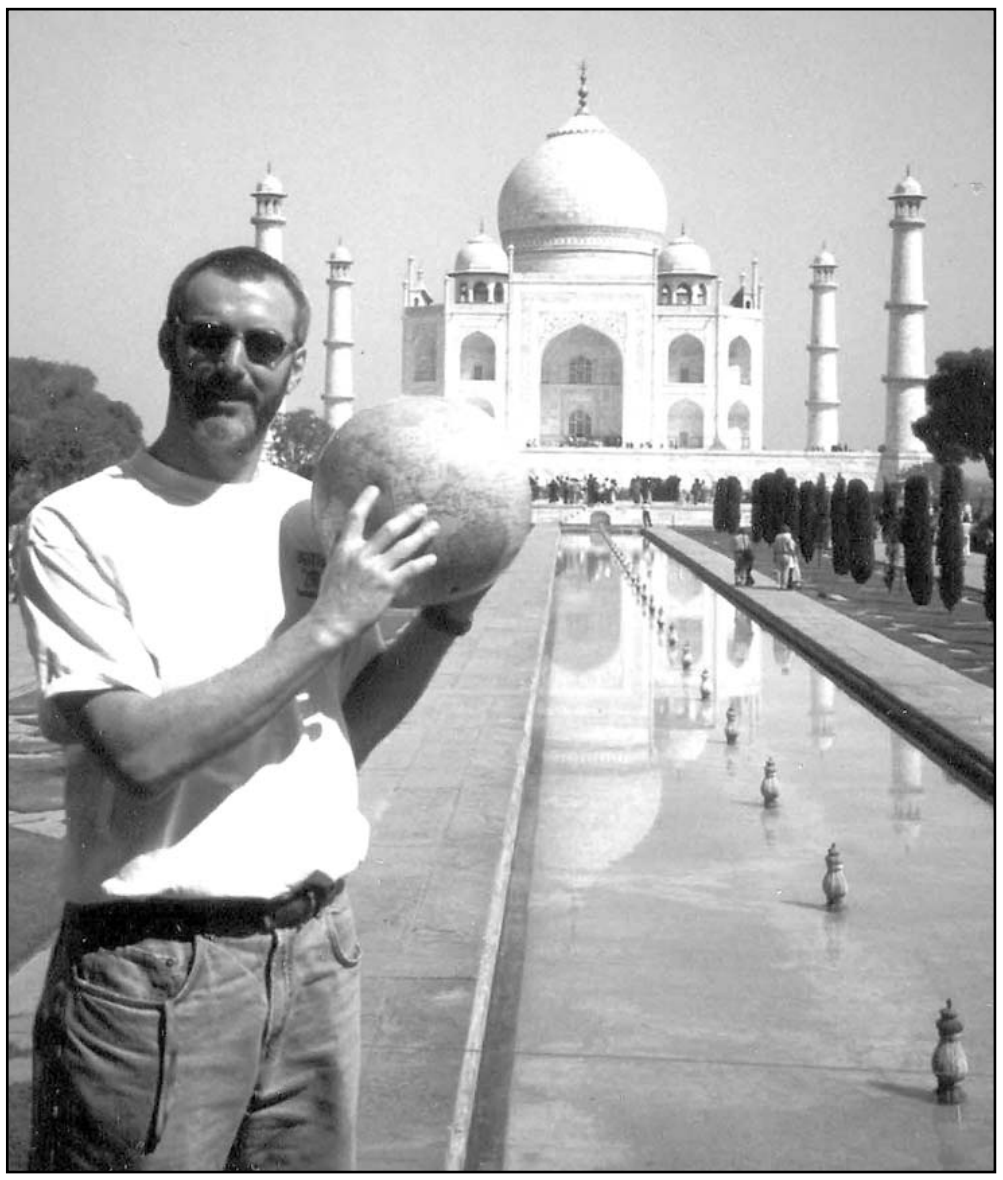
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LOCAL

Worldly race will raise $1M for non-profit organizations



Courtesy photo

Bill Chalmers stands in front of the Taj Mahal during one of his many travels around the world. The Santa Monica resident is organizing a global scavenger hunt this spring.

HUNT, from page 1

$430 a day," Chalmers said. "And if you win, fame and fortune await you."

"... I still want the competition aspect of an international event, I want people to be able to slow down and appreciate the beauty of some of the Shangri-La spots we'll be visiting and talk to the locals. I also want to emphasize that Indiana spirit of adventure and fun to our contestants who'll be forced to use their wits and resourcefulness."

— BILL CHALMERS
Great*Escape*2002 organizer

The event also will raise $1 million for various goodwill organizations like the Nobel Peace Prize winning Doctors without Borders, UNICEF, CARE, the International Special Olympics, MERCY Corps and the World Monuments Fund. Some of the money also will go to the families affected by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The GreatEscape Foundation, a non-profit organization, aims to raise $1 million a year for relief organizations in a pledge-per-mile fashion like walk-a-thons and the LA AIDS ride events, with teams obtaining pledges.

"It's our goal that each team be sponsored at one dollar per mile for the 40,000 mile trip," Finmark said. "Forty thousand times 25 teams is $1 million."

Chalmers came up with the idea of the Great*Escape*2002 after he won the 1989 HumanRace — an international travel adventure race around-the-world using public transportation. But Chalmers wanted to create an event that challenges travelers to immerse themselves in a variety of cultures in a short time.

"I've already circled the globe in less than 17 days on public transportation. It was fun, but I missed a lot," he said. "So, while I still want the competition aspect of an international event, I want people to be able to slow down and appreciate the beauty of some of the Shangri-La spots we'll be visiting and talk to the locals. I also want to emphasize that Indiana spirit of adventure and fun to our contestants who'll be forced to use their wits and resourcefulness."

Global teams have already applied from Sweden, South Africa, Japan, Canada, Ireland, Austria and the United States. The cut-off is March 7, There are still openings for individuals and teams to participate in Great*Escape*2002. For more information call GreatEscape at 310-281-7809.

LETTERS

Council meetings an issue of balance

Editor:

I'm glad councilmen Bob Hollbrook and Herb Katz have dropped their threat to sue the city over council meetings that run well past midnight. But cooperation and meditative win-win solutions are a much better approach than divisive lawsuits or threats of lawsuits especially on this sensitive issue.

I want to clarify a partially inaccurate segment of your Feb. 7 article "Lawsuit Threat Against City Dropped" that pertained to me, but I also want to point out what I feel was the most important aspect of my suggestions to the council that were not included in your timely article.

Firstly, I was given two minutes to speak when I had checked the three minute box. But more importantly my suggestion is as follows: Instead of starting the regular public comment time period as "three minutes," begin at "two minutes" across the board. Then if there are more than say a dozen speakers on any single agenda item go to "one and a half minutes," then if there are say over 25 speakers go to "one minute." The article gave the appearance that I felt "one minute" was the across the board limit.

But I feel the most important thing the council could do to shorten the meetings is to hold their closed session on another separate day. This would enable the meetings to begin at 5:30 p.m. or no later than 6 p.m. with the council fresh and not already overtaxed from a cramped and possibly hurried pre-council meeting closed session.

This issue is a matter of balance — the council taking steps to start the meeting a bit earlier, uninterrupted and in its entirety, (including the consent calendar items which almost always take no longer than 15 minutes to complete) and the public being willing to sacrifice a bit of their time for the general collective cause.

It might encourage the public to solidify their thoughts more compactly and actually say much more in less time.

In any case, I want to applaud all the council members for their long hard hours. Much more than usual is happening in our vibrant Santa Monica so I guess it's not surprising we're having longer meetings.

Jerry Rubin
Santa Monica

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STATE

'Runaway production' stirs it up on both sides of border

BY GARY GENTILE
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman stood last week near where Canada's largest film and television production lot will be built and fired a financial shot across the border.

"We're Hollywood North. There's no two ways about it," he told reporters.

That's exactly what labor unions, actors and small business in the United States fear. Advocacy groups and some elected officials have said the same globalization trend that has sent steel, lumber and textile jobs overseas will hurt the motion picture industry unless swift action is taken.

The exodus of film and television production to countries outside the United States is referred to as "runaway production," a phrase first used in the 1980s to describe the flight of film and television jobs from California to North Carolina, Florida and other states that offered tax incentives and cheaper labor.

In the 1990s, countries such as Australia, Great Britain and, most notably, Canada, offered their own tax breaks and encouraged the training of local crews and the construction of sound stages and backlots.

The trend has sent billions of dollars worth of production and thousands of jobs outside the United States and has stirred passions on both sides of the border.

Labor and industry groups have backed an effort by California Gov. Gray Davis to enact wage-based tax credits to keep production in the state. Congress is considering similar national tax credits.

Canada has offered national tax credits since 1997. Combined with credits offered by some provinces, the weaker Canadian dollar and lower wages, that can shave 25 percent or more off the cost of production.

"I guess one day we woke up and discovered that almost every single movie one year was being shot north of the border," producer Lynda Obst said during a recent forum hosted by The Creative Coalition, a nonprofit group of artists active on this issue.

"Producers found it harder to make arguments to keep movies in town because it became so financially competitive to make them out of town."

Nearly 26 percent of theatrical films released in 2000 and filmed in North America were shot in Canada, up from 13 percent in 1999, according to a report prepared last year by the newly formed Center for Entertainment Industry Data and Research.

A report prepared for the Screen Actors Guild and the Directors Guild of America in 1999 concluded that filming in other countries cost the U.S. economy $2.8 billion.

The report said the ripple effect, including money that would have been spent at local dry cleaners, restaurants, hotels and other businesses, plus the tax revenue that would have generated, brought the cost of lost production to $10.3 billion.

The direct effect of this trend on U.S. workers is hard to assess.

Complicating matters is a six-month strike in 2000 of U.S. commercial actors that brought filming of television commercials to a halt. Much of that production went to Canada, Romania, Czechoslovakia and other countries and has not returned.

In 2001, the threat of strikes by actors and writers forced major studios to accelerate production of feature films. The strikes did not happen, but the subsequent lull put a lot of cameramen, electricians, prop houses and others temporarily out of work.

"We had to give up our studio," said Jennifer McManus, co-owner of Sticks and Stones Studio, a special effects makeup and costume design shop in North Hollywood.

She cited runaway production, strikes and computerized special effects with hurting her business.

"We work out of our home right now, trying to make ends meet," she said.

Los Angeles and other major production areas have not been hit as hard as other states that developed thriving production businesses just as the Canadian tax credits took hold.

In Los Angeles, runaway production's impact is harder to quantify, partly because most crew members are independent contractors rather than studio employees.

In some respects, it appears to be having little effect. Motion picture and television employment in Los Angeles has risen from 76,300 in 1992 to about 134,900 in 2001, according to the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. That number is expected to rise to 143,000 this year.

Canadian officials defend their incentives, saying that while they might be claiming a larger piece of the production pie, the pie itself is growing.

"The numbers show that one of the fastest-growing industries in America, in fact the world, is the entertainment business," Canadian Consul General Colin Robertson said at the Creative Coalition forum. "There is more employment than there ever has been — not only in Canada, but here in Los Angeles."

U.S. film industry advocates said the government must level the playing field by at least matching the tax incentives offered by other countries.

"The pie is getting bigger, but Canada's piece of the pie is getting bigger disproportionally," said Kathy Garmezy, director of government affairs for the Directors Guild of America.

Congress is considering passing a 25 percent tax credit on the first $25,000 paid to film workers. California Gov. Gray Davis has proposed a wage-based credit that would start in 2004. Other states are considering similar incentives.

"The bottom line is, it's a business, and why aren't we modeling ourselves after the guys who are getting the production?" actress Helen Hunt said during The Creative Coalition forum.

A Hollywood-based trade group backed by the Screen Actors Guild wants a federal investigation into whether the Canadian incentives violate trade agreements. The group is calling for tariffs against Canadian films if the tax breaks are found to be illegal.

BUSINESS

Credit card lenders raise rates on consumers

BY MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — While millions of borrowers are basking in low interest rates, refinancing their mortgages and buying new cars, other consumers are watching their credit card rates climb further into the stratosphere — to 30 percent and beyond.

Providian Financial Corp. recently raised the rate on its high-risk accounts from 23.9 percent to 29.9 percent, a move that threatens to drain thousands of dollars from financially strapped households during the next few years.

The strategy is part of the credit card industry's attempt to boost profits in a sagging economy. Lenders believe they can offset some losses by collecting more from borrowers who have been flagged as the most likely to miss payments.

The new rate at Providian, which is nursing an ailing loan portfolio, affects about $5 billion in outstanding loans nationwide. The San Francisco-based company said the 29.9 percent rate will apply to 3.3 million of the 18.5 million accountholders on its books as of Sept. 30.

"There are two ways of looking at this practice," said Robert McKinley, president of CardWeb.com, a Frederick, Md., research firm that tracks industry trends. "Lenders are either getting compensated for the risks they are taking or they are beating up on disadvantaged consumers in an effort to make more money."

Some of the consumers grappling with higher credit card rates are college students who got carried away with their first credit cards. Some are immigrants who haven't established credit records to qualify for the best rates. Others are trying to re-establish good credit after a past bankruptcy, or people who stopped paying bills after losing jobs in the recession.

"Lenders are either getting compensated for the risks they are taking or they are beating up on disadvantaged consumers in an effort to make more money."

— ROBERT McKINLEY
CardWeb.com, president

Providian's higher rates have infuriated many customers, but the lender believes the risks posed by the affected customers justifies the move, said Konrad Alt, Providian's chief public policy officer.

"If people don't like it, they can try to find a better deal someplace else," Alt said. "People always have the option of paying off their balance and closing their accounts."

Providian isn't the only lender imposing hefty finance charges at a time when many short-term interest rates are falling to their lowest levels in decades.

Atlanta-based CompuCredit Corp. charges 35 percent for an Aspire credit card issued to its high-risk customers. The 35 percent rate applies to about 12 percent of CompuCredit's loan portfolio, which stood at $1.8 billion as of Sept. 30, said Nancy King, director of investor relations.

Despite such increases, the average credit card interest rate nationwide stood at 14.41 percent in November, down from 16.57 percent at the start of 2001, according to CardWeb. That drop reflects the overall decline in interest rates, and credit card companies' efforts to increase business from their best customers by offering rates in the very low single digits.

After CompuCredit and Providian, CardWeb.com identified the next highest Visa and Mastercard rates as: 23.9 percent from Direct Merchants Bank; 22.9 percent from NextCard; and 22.9 percent from Sears. Other lenders might charge similar or even higher rates for certain high-risk customers.

"It's really getting crazy out there. It's almost starting to border on loan sharking," said Jack Jones, a specialist for Consumer Credit Counseling Service of San Francisco, which advises overextended borrowers.

SEC and FBI investigating Global Crossing Ltd.

BY SIMON AVERY
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — Global Crossing Ltd., the fiber optics network firm that filed for bankruptcy protection this week, said Friday the Securities and Exchange Commission is investigating a former executive's charges of accounting irregularities.

FBI investigators, who focus strictly on criminal matters, have also begun looking at the situation, although their inquiries fall far short of a formal investigation, U.S. law enforcement sources said.

Tisha Kresler, a spokeswoman, said the SEC subpoenaed company documents this week. They included e-mails, contracts and correspondence. But she would neither confirm nor deny that the FBI had become involved.

"Global Crossing was giving the impression that it was generating cash revenues ... these transactions did not increase the cash position of the company in any material sense."

— BRIAN LYSAGHT
Olofson lawyer

The SEC investigation is an expansion of earlier requests for information from the SEC, with which the company said it had cooperated.

The SEC investigation focuses on allegations made by Roy Olofson, vice president of finance until last November, that the company misstated revenue and expenses.

Global Crossing officials have repeatedly said the charges are without merit. The company said it is cooperating with SEC investigators.

Olofson made his allegations last August in a letter to the firm's top lawyer, advising him that the company was inflating revenue and cash flow to enhance the appearance of results.

Olofson claimed that the company boosted sales in the last few days of some quarters by "roundtripping," that is booking a sale of capacity to a customer and then purchasing a similar amount of capacity back from the client. In the second quarter of 2001, Global Crossing did approximately 13 roundtrip transactions, he said.

"Global Crossing was giving the impression that it was generating cash revenues when, in actuality, these transactions did not increase the cash position of the company in any material sense," Olofson's lawyer Brian Lysaght said in a statement this week.

Global Crossing spent billions of dollars over the last five years building a global fiber optics network. When the Bermuda-based firm, which has executive offices in Beverly Hills, filed for bankruptcy protection Jan. 28 it listed $12.3 billion of debt and $22.4 billion of assets — making it the largest telecom bankruptcy case in U.S. history.

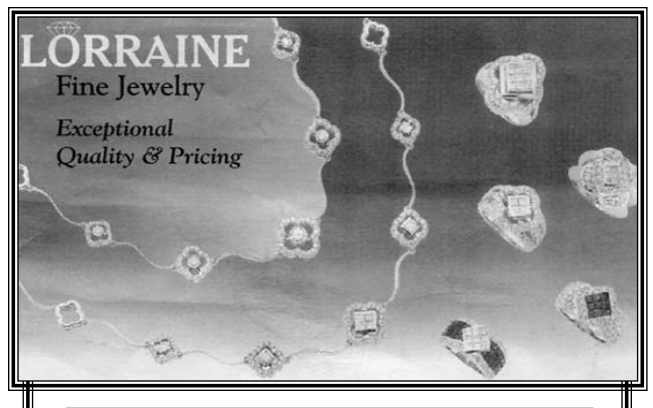
Olofson also charged that seven months before the company filed for bankruptcy protection, the company's chief financial officer wanted to warn investors that sales were slowing, but felt he couldn't because the chairman had just dumped nearly $124 million worth of stock, Lysaght said.

Global Crossing chairman and founder Gary Winnick sold nearly 10 million shares on May 23. In all, he sold about $735 million of stock before bankruptcy filings, according to a review of regulatory filings by Thomson Financial/Lancer Analytics, which tracks insider data.

Global Crossing said it investigated all of Olofson's claims and found them without merit. The firm also said his motives are "questionable" as he is seeking a multi-million-dollar settlement following his termination in November.

Paul Murphy, one of Olofson's lawyers, said Global Crossing is engaging in a "carefully orchestrated smear campaign" against his client.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Appearance seems to preoccupy television world

BY DAVID BAUDER
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — You've come a long way on television news, baby. Or have you?

While admittedly amusing, all the attention paid recently to Greta Van Susteren's eyes and Paula Zahn's sex appeal is a depressing reminder of how often journalism comes second to appearance on television news.

Fox News Channel personality Van Susteren couldn't stop talking last week about the cosmetic eye surgery that rendered her almost unrecognizable. Last month, Zahn was featured in a CNN promotion that described her as "just a little bit sexy."

Veteran "60 Minutes" correspondent Lesley Stahl remembers being depressed when she would break a story and get five letters from viewers in response complaining that her skirt was too short — or a call from her mother saying she needed a haircut.

Now she just accepts it.

"It's the way it's always been," Stahl said. "The one big difference since I've been around, and I was hired by CBS in 1972, is that whatever the women have to put up with, the men do, too."

Anyone who thinks otherwise probably believes Bill Hemmer is a weekday anchor on CNN strictly on his journalistic credentials.

"The men feel just as much pressure as the women to keep up," Stahl said. "We may even be a little luckier. The stigma for a woman to wear a lot of makeup and get her hair done three times a day doesn't exist. For a man, it's still a little embarrassing. But they're doing it."

Geraldo Rivera — to no one's great surprise — was a pioneer in public cosmetic surgery for men. Twice he went under the knife on his syndicated talk show. In 1992, he had fat removed from his buttocks and injected into his forehead. Four years later, he got an eye job.

Television consultant Al Primo, creator of the local "Eyewitness News" format, remembers his shock in the early 1960s when the male anchor at a local station where he worked got an eye job.

Now he wouldn't turn his head.

"Our whole industry has become a part of show business," he said. "We are an industry that uses the same tools they use to make a movie or a comedy show — lights, cameras, an actor and a script."

It isn't exactly a secret that sex appeal is considered a winning trait for a news anchor. Why else would there be a popular Web site that features attractive actors reading the news while they methodically undress until totally nude?

Zahn's "sexy" ad ran briefly one weekend on CNN before it was yanked by embarrassed executives. It drew plenty of knowing chuckles in newsrooms across the country.

"The focus on appearance has always been part of the talk behind the scenes of journalism," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. "What happened to Paula Zahn is, it leaked to the public."

CNN's new "star power" strategy has left it vulnerable to criticism. Last year, CNN Headline News hired former "NYPD Blue" actress Andrea Thompson as a newsreader, despite limited experience, then kept a stiff upper lip when nude pictures of her turned up on the Internet.

MSNBC's Ashleigh Banfield has drawn more public attention for her hairstyles and eyewear than her journalism. She's expressed frustration about it, but the distinctive look has helped send her on a fast path to stardom.

Zahn, 45, expressed horror at the CNN promotion and has tried to put the story behind her ever since. Van Susteren, 47, hasn't shied away from the attention.

Her eye job became a story because the first post-surgery pictures of her that appeared on Fox showed such a dramatic change, and because the brainy lawyer had always seemed a refreshing counterpoint to the obsession with looks.

"Did you know that I'm the only one who's ever had this done?" she said sarcastically to Comedy Central's Jon Stewart, part of a media tour that included "Good Morning America," "The O'Reilly Factor" and a People magazine cover.

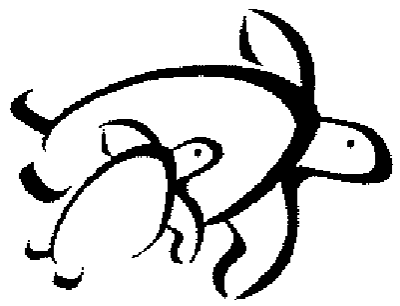
"It was either the eye surgery or get picked up for shoplifting to get PR for the show," she said to Stewart.

Guess what? It worked. An estimated 1.6 million viewers watched her premiere on Fox, nearly double the crowd tuning in to CNN at the time and also about twice what Fox averaged in the time slot in January.

There are some positive signs lost in the lip gloss and unlined skin. There's a far greater range of looks and ages among women on the air than back in 1983, when 36-year-old Christine Craft sued a Kansas City station for firing her as a news anchor because she was too old and too ugly.

Suggest that she tart herself up, and CNN's Christiane Amanpour is likely to smack you.

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ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

'Zoolander' banned over controversial content

By The Associated Press

SINGAPORE — Censors on Friday banned the movie "Zoolander," an American comedy about a self-absorbed male model who's brainwashed into assassinating the prime minister of Malaysia.

The action comedy, which comedian Ben Stiller stars in, directed and co-wrote, was banned for "controversial elements," Singapore's Board of Film Censors said in a news release.

In the film, which opened in the United States in September and was scheduled to open here next week, vapid male model Derek Zoolander is brainwashed into killing the prime minister of Malaysia for threatening the fashion industry with a plan to raise the minimum wage for labor in his country.

The decision to block the film's release was made in view of "controversial elements gathered from feedback," the news release said without elaborating. The board revoked the film's certificate for release it had issued earlier.

In neighboring Malaysia, no theater has even attempted to bring in "Zoolander," so there's been no need for a censors' review. But a bootleg version of the film is available there, and a junior party in the governing coalition has urged police to crack down and seize all copies.

Producer honored from Sept. 11 telethon

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The producer of last fall's star-studded telethon to benefit Sept. 11 victims will be honored at the Producers Guild of America awards March 3.

The guild announced Thursday it will present its Visionary Award to Joel Gallen, who oversaw "America: A Tribute to Heroes" on Sept. 21, the telethon that featured Julia Roberts, Tom Hanks, George Clooney, Muhammad Ali and dozens more celebrities. The award goes to producers whose work demonstrates a "unique or uplifting quality."

The event was the "most important, exhilarating and exhausting producing experience of my career," Gallen said. "It was also the ultimate in teamwork from the talent to the crew to the networks involved."

Gallen is a past vice president of production for MTV and made his directing debut last year with "Not Another Teen Movie."



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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Sammy Sosa and brother leave $20,000 behind at hotel

By The Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Chicago Cubs outfielder Sammy Sosa was robbed of $20,000 that he and his brother left on a desk in a Caracas hotel lobby, a newspaper reported Friday.

Sosa and his brother, Jose Antonio, had the cash in a plastic bag wrapped inside a towel as they sat talking in the lobby of the Caracas Hilton last Saturday, El Universal said, citing unidentified police sources.

The brothers forgot the bag when they left to eat at a hotel restaurant. Remembering it, they rushed back to the lobby but the cash was gone, the newspaper said.

Hotel management refused to comment on the report Friday. Caracas city police in charge of the district where the hotel is situated said they had no information and could not comment.

El Universal said Sosa reported the robbery to police and asked hotel management to review hotel security camera videotapes. Management told him the cameras weren't working, the paper said.

The robbery occurred after Sosa attended a Dominican Republic-Puerto Rico Caribbean Series game, El Universal said.

NEW YORK — Actress Angie Harmon, in a sleek, tiered brown leather skirt, tan turtleneck sweater and stiletto-heel boots, looked the part of fashion ambassador as she helped open New York Fashion Week on Friday.

Did she put a lot of thought into her outfit?

"Of course," she told The Associated Press. "I chose this last night after I tried on a million different things."

Harmon and her husband, New York Giants cornerback Jason Sehorn, stood with Mayor Michael Bloomberg and dozens of fashion designers at Bryant Park, which becomes Fashion Central for eight days as fall collections are previewed for editors and retail buyers.

Unlike previous seasons where most shows were staged at Bryant Park inside giant tents, only about half of the 100 men's and women's collections will be shown there this time around. The rest have gone to smaller sites throughout the city.

Spring previews were cut short after Sept. 11, causing a financial blow to the industry.

"The best memorial to those we lost is to go forward," Bloomberg said.

The mayor, dressed in a gray suit, pink shirt and blue tie, said Fashion Week is when all the top designers and models are in the city — "which is just another day in New York."

This year, sponsor Mercedes-Benz added a philanthropic element to benefit the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. Designers and celebrities decorated miniature cars to be auctioned on eBay.

Harmon and Sehorn's car has a football theme. But pointing to the red heart painted on the trunk with "J+A" written on top, Harmon said "it was a team effort."

GARY, Ind. — Deion Sanders has made the transition from football to baseball to CBS sports analyst. Now, "Prime Time" moves into prime time as host of the Miss USA pageant.

Pageants officials said Thursday that the flamboyant and outspoken Sanders will be the host of the March 1 show. CBS will broadcast the event from Gary's Genesis Convention Center.

Donald Thompson, pageant coordinator for Gary, said he hopes Sanders will help boost ticket sales. Already, sales for pageant events, including the presentation show, coronation ball and the pageant finals, have equaled last year's total, when William Shatner was the host.

Sanders, whose nickname is "Prime Time," spent 13 seasons in the NFL and played briefly for the Cincinnati Reds. He won Super Bowl titles with the San Francisco 49ers in 1994 and the Dallas Cowboys a year later.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — A judge put jailed actor Brad Renfro into a three-month substance abuse treatment program and told him he faces a nine-month sentence if he fails it.

The 19-year-old, who starred in the 1994 film "The Client," was jailed Jan. 31 for violating his probation for trying to steal a yacht. He violated probation when he was arrested Jan. 14 and charged with driving without a license and public intoxication near his hometown of Knoxville, Tenn.

"I'm going to put you into this program, which I think will have some reasonable probability of success," Circuit Judge Ronald Rothschild told Renfro on Thursday. "I'm going to ask you to put some energy into this."

Renfro's aunt, Julie Pyshzka, whispered to him across the courtroom and said afterward, "He says it'll be very good for him." She said his problem was running with the "wrong crowd" and having "too much, too soon."

Renfro's credits include "Bully," "Ghost World," "Sleepers" and "Telling Lies in America."

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Bomb scare



Michael Macor/San Francisco Chronicle

San Francisco Police officer Dino Zagrofos gets help with his bomb suit as he prepares to enter the parking lot of the lower parking area at the San Francisco Federal Building after a suspicious package was discovered. The suspicious package that closed off streets for hours and set off a partial evacuation of San Francisco's federal building turned out to contain bottles of water.

Oil prices likely to drift until recovery picks up in second half of year

BY BRUCE STANLEY
AP Business Writer

LONDON — Soft demand and a mild winter in major oil markets have offset the impact of cuts in crude production and kept prices for oil and refined products from rising, a respected survey said Friday.

Due to conflicting market forces, pressure for a substantial increase in crude prices probably won't build until an incipient economic recovery picks up during the second half of the year, the International Energy Agency said.

In fact, prices might fall before then. IEA statistics suggest that Russia, the world's second-biggest oil producer, isn't cooperating with OPEC's strategy to squeeze crude supplies, and an OPEC official expressed fears Friday of a possible rupture in relations between Russia and the producers' cartel.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity from OPEC's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, said he didn't expect Russia's cooperation, such as it is, to last beyond March. OPEC is therefore likely to face a severe test this spring in trying to avoid a supply glut and even a damaging price war, he said.

Global demand for oil fell to 76.3 million barrels a day during the last quarter of 2001, down half a million barrels a day compared to the same three months of the previous year. Average demand growth for the full year was the lowest since 1985, the agency said in its monthly oil market report.

The global economic slowdown was largely to blame, together with unseasonably warm weather in North America and parts of Europe.

Members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries have tried to shore up weak crude prices by coordinating output cuts together with Russia and four other non-OPEC producers.

The cuts took effect Jan. 1 and shaved 510,000 barrels a day from world oil production, which slipped to 76.3 million barrels a day in January, the report said.

Although prices firmed up somewhat late last month, they stayed within the same broad range seen since November. The IEA said it doesn't foresee a major change in oil markets until a widely expected economic recovery picks up in the third quarter.

The Paris-based IEA is the energy watchdog for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a group of rich oil-importing nations.

Peter Gignoux, head of the petroleum desk at Salomon Smith Barney in London, agreed with the IEA that oil prices should remain relatively stable until demand recovers.

"I think prices are caught in a vice-like range ... This is an aggressive act by OPEC. They're cutting their own revenues."

— PETER GIGNOUX
Salomon Smith Barney, head of petroleum

"I think prices are caught in a vice-like range," of $18-$22 a barrel for U.S. light, sweet crude, he said.

Crude oil for March delivery rose 54 cents to $20.18 in afternoon trading Friday on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

The report noted that nine of the 10 OPEC countries that agreed to cut their oil production on Jan. 1 actually did so. However, even after reducing output, OPEC members still were pumping 6 percent, or 1.3 million barrels a day, above their new quotas.

The OPEC official in Vienna challenged the IEA's statistics but conceded that if they are correct, then OPEC is doing a disastrous job at managing its own production.

Gignoux argued that OPEC's limited success in decreasing output last month is impressive nonetheless. In a series of incremental cuts, the cartel has pared back its production by more than 3 million barrels a day since January 2001.

"This is an aggressive act by OPEC," Gignoux said. "They're cutting their own revenues."

State employee admits selling bogus driver's licenses to Iraqi men

By The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — A fired Pennsylvania driver's license examiner pleaded guilty Friday to selling 20 Iraqi men bogus commercial licenses that authorized most of them to haul hazardous materials.

Robert A. Ferrari, 57, could get up to two years in federal prison under a plea bargain that also requires him to admit to related state charges.

Based on information provided by Ferrari, 20 Iraqi men were arrested in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas and Washington state in late September amid fears that terrorists might be planning attacks using trucks hauling hazardous materials. Federal authorities have since determined those men had no terrorist ties.

U.S. District Judge Robert Cindrich said that between the Sept. 11 attacks and Ferrari's first interview with the FBI on Sept. 23, Ferrari must have been worried that he had sold licenses to terrorists.

"To me, that would be like being in the lowest circle of hell for 12 days," the judge said.

Three men who bought the licenses have pleaded guilty.

Ferrari admitted responsibility for 20 bogus licenses. Eighteen of them were for hauling hazardous materials.

Authorities said the men paid up to $1,000 for their licenses, or agreed to buy things for a middleman. Ferrari's cut was as little as $50 or $100 for some licenses, prosecutors said.

Ferrari faces state charges of tampering with public records and unlawful use of a computer for selling 56 additional licenses.

Developments in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks

By The Associated Press

Developments Friday related to the Sept. 11 attacks:

— Speaking in Pakistan, where the issue arouses emotion, Afghan leader Hamid Karzai said his government intends to free all detainees who present no danger. More than 1,000 Pakistanis who fought with the Taliban are imprisoned in one northern Afghan prison alone.

— Dozens of U.S. troops reached a mountain site in Afghanistan to determine whether senior al-Qaida figures were among those killed in a missile strike by a CIA-operated drone aircraft.

— An Indonesian man said he financed bombings that killed 22 people in Manila in December 2000 with money from an Islamic militant group thought linked to Osama bin Laden's terror network, according to affidavits given to prosecutors.

— President Bush, casting the Olympic Games as a patriotic tribute to U.S. virtues, said the competition in Salt Lake City will help America recover from the Sept. 11 attacks.

— New York City's official count of those killed at the World Trade Center is leveling off at around 2,800 after months of work by investigators to find errors and duplicated names in the lists of the missing.

NATIONAL



Andrew Medichini/Associated Press

Two U.S. National Guardsmen inspect the Soldier Hollow venue for nordic events at the Winter Olympics on Friday in Midway, Utah.

Bush: Olympics will help U.S. overcome Sept. 11 attacks

BY RON FOURNIER
AP White House Correspondent

SALT LAKE CITY — President Bush, linking patriotic and Olympic virtues at the Winter Games, said Friday the competition will produce "lasting memories of laughter and triumph" that will help America and the world overcome the Sept. 11 attacks.

"The world is united in Utah," the president declared at an Olympic reception before formally opening the 17-day competition in ceremonies.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir set the tone for Bush's emotional visit, filling the steps of a marble staircase at the state Capitol building and singing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." The same hymn was sung at the National Cathedral in Washington days after the attacks, as Bush and his advisers gathered in prayer.

On Friday, the president bobbed his head and shot a quick thumbs-up to the choir.

Standing beneath the cavernous glass ceiling of the Capitol Rotunda, Bush said the Winter Games are a celebration of freedom and liberty, concepts shared by a world grappling with the spread of terrorism.

"The world has shed many tears — tears of sorrow over the past five months," Bush said. "It now gives the people of the United States and the state of Utah great pride to host these games, which will provide lasting memories of laughter and triumph for people of every nation."

Utah Gov. Michael Leavitt noted that dozens of countries lost citizens in the Sept. 11 strikes. "On this day, the flags of those countries fly together as we collectively defy hatred," the governor said.

"The world is united in Utah."

— PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

Bush, who stopped in Denver for a farm speech before flying to Utah, was opening the Winter Games in ceremonies televised worldwide from the frigid Rice-Eccles Stadium.

Beforehand, he was meeting U.S. athletes in a session also attended by four members of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which lost 37 employees in the World Trade Center collapse.

A tattered American flag found at the World Trade Center was being displayed for Bush in a wooden case during the athletes' meeting. Later, American athletes, joined by an honor guard of New York City police officers and firefighters, were carrying the flag at the opening ceremonies.

Olympics organizers initially balked at allowing the flag to be carried into the stadium because they said the international games should not become overly focused on the U.S. attacks.

Bush called the arrangement a reasonable compromise, and dismissed the potential for controversy.

"I think these events are going to strike a proper balance between the patriotism we all feel here and the international flavor of the games," Bush said after a brief meeting with Gordon B. Hinckley, president of the Mormon Church.

Still, staging the Olympics on home soil will be emotional for all Americans, Bush said. He also said the events will be safe.

"I'm so confident about the security situation that I came," Bush said as he prepared to open the games amid extraordinary security and fears of terrorist strikes.

"The Olympics give the world a chance in the midst of a difficult struggle to celebrate international peace and cooperation," Bush said. He was joined by the U.S. delegation, including Secretary of State Colin Powell and former baseball star Cal Ripkin.

Bush suggested that the athletes at the games reflect the same virtues displayed by firefighters, police and others who dealt with the attacks.

"All people appreciate the discipline that produces excellence, the courage that overcomes difficult odds and the character that creates champions," Bush said.

At the opening ceremonies, Bush planned to be on the field for the singing of the national anthem and was opening the games with remarks traditionally delivered by the host nation's leader. According to the White House, Bush was saying: "I declare open the games of Salt Lake City, celebrating the Winter Olympic Games."

For the bulk of the opening ceremonies, Bush planned to sit in an open-air sky box with political and Olympic officials. Temperatures were expected to be below freezing.

Afterward, he was flying to Jackson, Wyo., to spend a wintry weekend at the home of Roland Betts. Betts and Bush were classmates at Yale University and partners in the Texas Rangers major league baseball team.

A Democrat, Betts was a major donor to Bush's presidential campaign.

Bush planned to discuss health care during a trip Monday to Wisconsin, the White House announced Friday.

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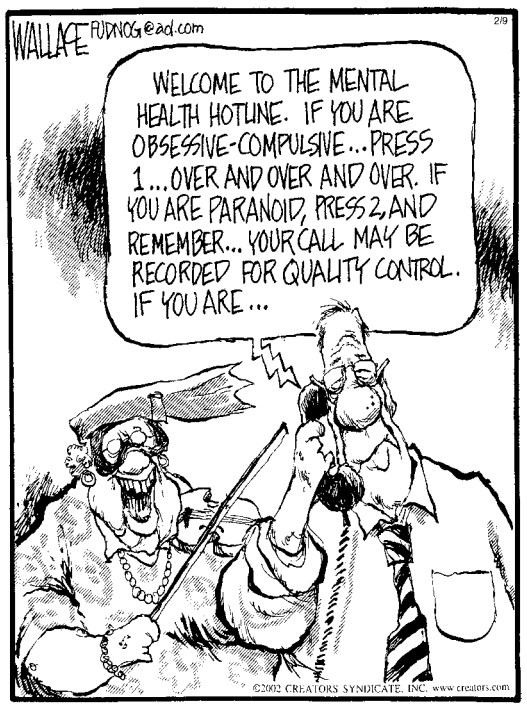
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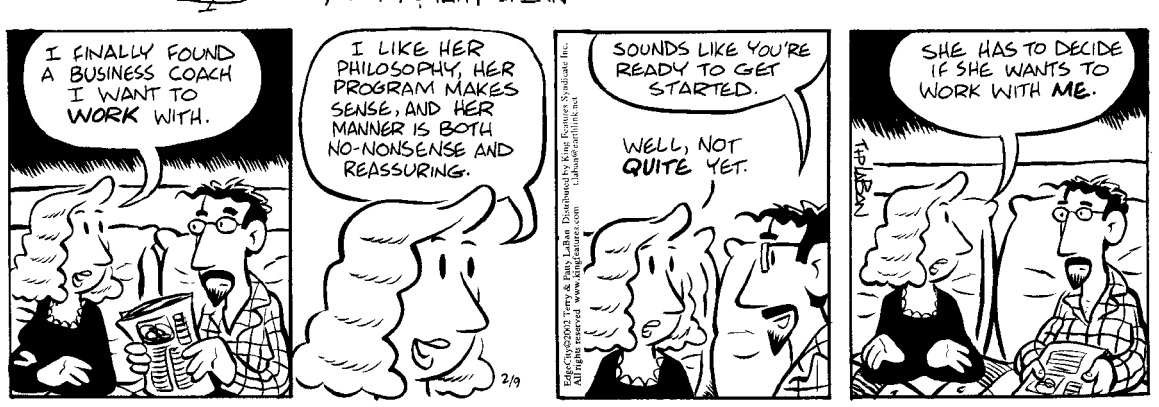
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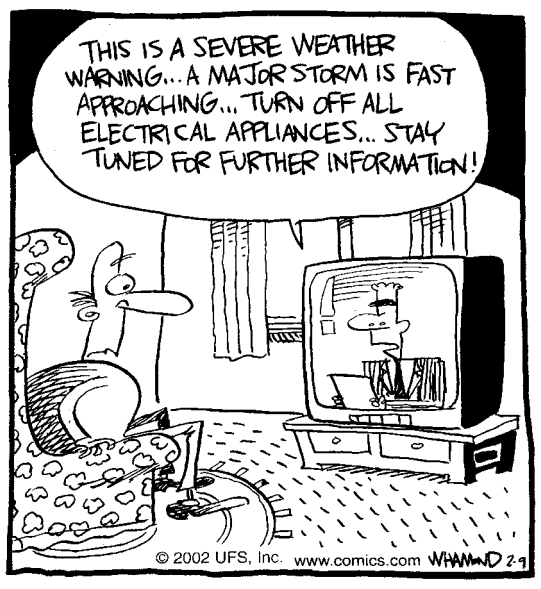
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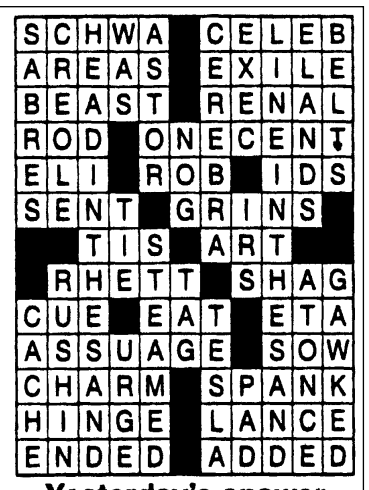
By THOMAS JOSEPH

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5 Mystical cards
10 Second president
12 "My Fair Lady" lady
13 Sum
14 Military award
15 Swiss canton
16 Sen.'s counterpart
18 Tick off
19 Let
21 Black
22 Hallucinate
24 Paris divider
25 Some Homer works
29 Layers of a sort
30 Houston team
32 Colony member
33 High point
34 Balderdash
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37 Mideast native
39 Fuming
40 Spud
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42 Golf goals

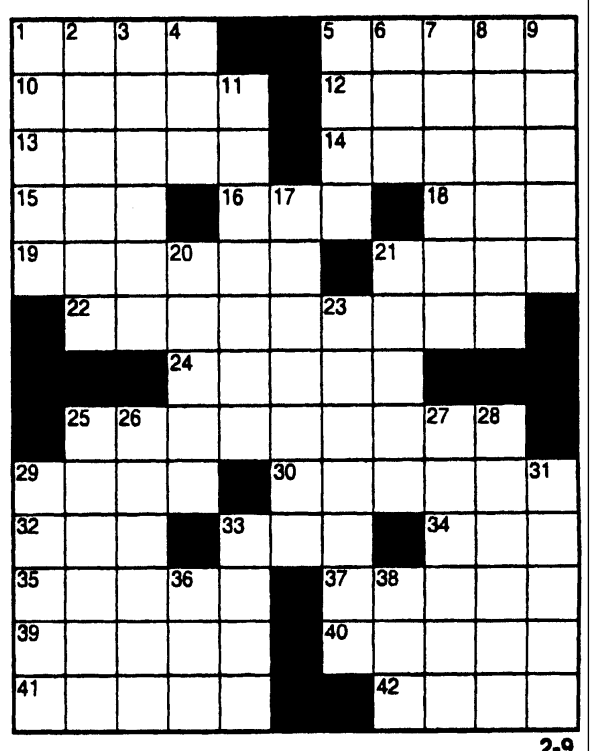
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2 Worships
3 Swift work
4 Flightless bird
5 Office aide
6 Heady brew
7 Taking the bus
8 Arkansas range
9 Loquacious
11 Pixies
17 Moral
20 Buttes' cousins
21 Bumbling
23 Needing help
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26 Catch
27 Print goofs
28 Oklahoma native
29 Custom
31 Agitates
33 Lines of symmetry
36 One-time link
38 Chart



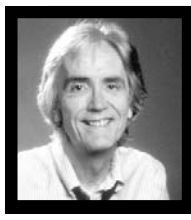
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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Pizza store manager places fake orders to boost sales figures

Kimberly Herricks, 36, a manager for Donato's Pizza, Lakewood, Ohio, was indicted in December for stealing $38,000 from the company, an amount that included the value of 400 decaying pizzas found in her garage. According to police, she had invented big call-in orders at her store for schools, hospitals, etc., just to get her store's sales figures up and her name in the company newsletter. She would then adjust the books to cover the costs and deliver the pizzas, herself, to her own garage. She was busted when she asked her boss (the owner) to help her move to a new house, and he discovered the rotting pizzas.

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BACK PAGE

Man suspected of cannibalism, molestation of three boys

BY TOM LACEKY
Associated Press Writer

GREAT FALLS, Mont. — Only bits of the horror story of Nathaniel Bar-Jonah will come out in the trial that begins next week.

The jurors, who will be chosen starting Tuesday, will hear allegations that he sexually assaulted three boys at his Great Falls home — how he allegedly locked one in a room, handcuffed another to a staircase, and hung a third from the kitchen ceiling with a rope to watch him choke.

All of that pales in comparison to what the jury will not hear.

Prosecutors have agreed not to bring up Bar-Jonah's convictions for kidnapping and molesting other boys in Massachusetts. They will not mention his two years in prison and 11 years in a mental hospital there after one attack, or his coded writings about eating human flesh.

Most of all, there will be no mention of Zachary Ramsay, the 10-year-old Great Falls boy whom Bar-Jonah is accused of kidnapping and murdering in 1996. Prosecutors believe he butchered the boy, cooked up the remains and served them to unsuspecting neighbors.

A different jury in a different city will hear all that in May, when Bar-Jonah is tried in Zach's slaying.

The Butte trial will be limited to the kidnapping and sexual assault charges involving the three boys, ages 6, 9 and 15.

Police investigating those allegations say they found encrypted letters by Bar-Jonah that talked about "little boy stew," "little boy pot pies" and "lunch is served on the patio with roasted child."

Because of the cannibalism allegations, Judge Kenneth Neill ruled that Bar-Jonah, 45, cannot get a fair trial in Great Falls. He moved the sexual assault trial to Butte, 150 miles south of here, and the murder trial to Missoula, 160 miles to the west.

The sex charges could send Bar-Jonah to prison for the rest of his life. The kidnapping and murder charges could send him to death row.

Under a 1991 plea agreement with Massachusetts prosecutors in connection with yet another assault on a boy, Bar-Jonah was allowed to move to Montana with his mother. Authorities in Montana were outraged to learn of the deal after Bar-Jonah's arrest in this state.

1933 gold coin, never circulated, expected to sell for millions

BY ULA ILNYTZKY
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — A 1933 Double Eagle gold coin that never went into circulation is being sold by the federal government at auction this summer, with experts predicting it could fetch millions.

"We expect that this coin may become the most valuable coin in the world," said David Pickens, associate director of the U.S. Mint.

Sotheby's auction house and Stack's, a numismatic firm, are planning a July 30 auction of the coin, believed to be one of only a handful of 1933 Double Eagles to have survived when all 445,000 struck that year were ordered melted down.

Double Eagles were first minted in 1850 with a face value of $20. The ones that were minted in 1933 were never put into circulation because President Franklin Roosevelt decided to take the nation off the gold standard.

Before the coins were melted down, two were handed over to the Smithsonian Institution for historic safekeeping.

But one other somehow survived. It suddenly surfaced in public in 1996.

Henrietta Holsman Fore, director of the U.S. Mint, said the coin "has been at the center of international numismatic intrigue for more than 70 years."

"We expect that this coin may become the most valuable coin in the world."

— DAVID PICKENS
U.S. Mint, associate director

The Double Eagle, its whereabouts unknown for decades, surfaced when British coin dealer Stephen Fenton tried selling it to undercover Secret Service agents at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. Fenton was charged with possession of stolen property because of the coin's status as uncirculated, but the charges were later dismissed.

Barry Berke, who represented Fenton during forfeiture proceedings, said he negotiated a settlement after presenting evidence that Fenton purchased the coin in 1995 from an Egyptian jeweler with ties to an Egyptian military official.

That strengthened the possibility the coin once belonged to Egypt's King Farouk, one of the world's great coin collectors. A 1933 Double Eagle from the collection of the king was offered for sale at a 1954 Cairo auction, but withdrawn at the behest of the U.S. Treasury, according to Sotheby's and the U.S. Mint.

Berke said proceeds from this year's sale will be split between the Treasury Department and Fenton. Sotheby's and Stack's will receive an undisclosed commission.

Ron Gillio, a dealer in Santa Barbara, Calif., said the coin's design makes it stand out. "It's the most beautiful coin ever designed by the U.S. government."

Richard G. Doty, curator of the national numismatic collection at the Smithsonian, authenticated the coin for the government.

"It has a legend surrounding it," Doty said, "and it happened to have survived."

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