

FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Gang activity on east side escalates

Two men shot Tuesday in troubled Pico neighborhood

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

Two men were shot Tuesday night in a Santa Monica east side neighborhood — the second gang-related incident in less than a week.

The victims were standing amongst a group of people on the cul-de-sac of 21st Street near the Santa Monica Freeway in the Pico neighborhood, when a lone suspect approached them about 9 p.m. and fired multiple rounds into the crowd, police said.

One victim was hit in the chest and the other was shot in the stomach. Both men were treated at the scene by Santa Monica Fire Department paramedics and taken to a local hospital where they remain in stable condition.

Police said the suspect ran West toward the Santa Monica Freeway but evaded police officers, who responded

within a minute of the incident.

Officers patrolling the area as part of a planned increased police presence in the neighborhood responded after hearing gun shots. When officers arrived on scene, they found the two victims standing in the street, police said.

"Officers had stopped to speak to the crowd 20 to 30 minutes before the incident," said police department spokesman Lt. Frank Fabrega. "They stopped to talk to them as a part of their patrol, and as part of reaching out to residents in the community."

Police sealed off the area where the incident occurred and searched for the suspect, who they described as a male wearing black clothing. Nobody fitting that description was found.

Witnesses said the shooter got out of a car and approached the small crowd on foot, but police could not confirm whether a car was involved.

"The only information we have is that the subject was on foot," Fabrega said. "No vehicle was seen or heard, as far as we have been told."

See GANGS, page 3

Henna gets backing from city arts commission

But city-wide ban most likely will remain

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

Henna artists have convinced the city's arts commission they shouldn't be banned from performing their work and they shouldn't be treated like criminals when they do.

The Santa Monica Arts Commission drafted a letter at its Monday meeting urging city council members to reconsider their decision last year to ban Henna artists from performing in the city.

"We value this ancient art form and feel it only broadens the cultural and artistic experience of both Santa Monica residents and tourists visiting our fine city," the commission's letter reads. "We encourage the city to find a regulated way for Henna artists to have a continued

presence in our public life."

The Santa Monica City Council voted 4-3 in October to ban Henna artists from the Third Street Promenade and the pier, saying some of artists are posing a public safety risk. The ban took effect Jan. 1.

Some council members think the temporary tattooing is not a performance, but a form of cosmetology and if Henna is on the mall, hair braiding may be next.

Henna is a non-permanent dye used in tattooing. However, some artists use dangerous toxic chemicals that have given the 5,000-year-old art form a bad rap in Santa Monica.

Skin rashes and other complications are caused by "black Henna" or phenylenediamine, a hair dye. The black Henna is cheaper than traditional Henna dye, which is red and has been used for skin decorations and body art for thousands of years.

See HENNA, page 3



Andrew H. Fixmer/Daily Press

Authorities investigate the scene of where a body was found at the Santa Monica Recycling Center Wednesday morning.

Body of dead man dumped from city recycling truck

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

A dead body was found Wednesday by city workers who were unloading a truck full of recycling material.

Santa Monica police officers were called to the Santa Monica Recycling Center at 25th Street and Michigan Avenue at 11:24 a.m.

Officers found no pulse on the victim's arm, which was the only part of the body that was exposed.

"Workers were unloading a truck full of recycling material when one of the employees saw what appeared to be a body part," said police department spokesman Lt. Frank Fabrega. "Upon taking a closer look, employees saw what

they believed to be a dead body."

Besides being male, police officers could not verify the race or the approximate age of the victim.

"It's hard to tell the race of a dead body," Fabrega said. "(Bodies) tend to turn different colors when they die which makes it tough to tell."

Police would not speculate if the dead man was homeless. Fabrega said investigators removed personal items from the dead man's pockets, adding he was wearing slacks and a sweater.

"I can't remember the last time we had something like this," Fabrega said.

The dead man, who had a medium build, displayed no visible signs of trauma,

See BODY, page 3

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Santa Monica's Daily Calendar



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The Leadership Series presents Santa Monica Fire Department and Police Department staff in a discussion of preparedness in a post-September 11 environment, with a special presentation on lessons learned for California from the World Trade Center tragedy. This session will take place from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Ken Edwards Center, 1527 Fourth Street. To register please call (310) 458-8301

Big Event!

Santa Monica School's Music Program presents Stairway of the Stars. Tonight at 7:30 p.m. Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. 1855 Main Street. For information: (310) 450-8338

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Build and work with the unexpected. A meeting proves to be far more fruitful than you anticipated, in an odd way. Your sense of direction might hit a boulder when dealing with a family member, a piece of property or an investment. Tonight: Mosey on home.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Return calls, especially if they are work-related. A boss does the unexpected. Stay even and steady when dealing with those around you. If you flow with the opportunities that come up, you'll find that everything becomes much easier. Tonight: Share munchies.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You see events from a totally different perspective than another. What might be acceptable to you could be a problem for someone else. Be more understanding of those around you. Flexibility is your strong suit. Discussions revolve around finances. Tonight: Enjoy yourself.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ A partner has a way of sending jolts down his or her path. Loosen up with this person. Don't take matters so personally. Sometimes you might be confused about your choices. Schedule an important chat in the late afternoon. Tonight: Check out various trip options.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ Do your best with associates. Meetings take strange turns because of others' behavior. What you can count on is that nothing runs the course you anticipate. Slow down in the afternoon to regroup and rethink plans. Return key e-mail. Tonight: Take some time off.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Handle responsibilities with an eye to change and flexibility. Do needed research. Don't settle for another's say-so. Get information and find experts. Your ability to move past a problem catches an associate's attention. Keep up the good work. Tonight: Out to play.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You have unlimited resources. Use your abilities to create much more of what you want, be it in your personal or professional life. Don't settle for anything less than what you want. Someone's unanticipated actions work in your favor. Tonight: Burn the candle at both ends.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Recognize a partner for what he or she offers you. You might have to break out of the mold and head in another direction. Unanticipated action helps to loosen you up. Don't get uptight if pressure builds around work. Detach from problems. Tonight: Listen to music. Relax your mind.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Others dominate. You want to lie back and see what develops at this point. Others might be touchier than you realize. Carefully consider options that surround others. Express your self-confidence by trusting others. Tonight: Accept an invitation.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You manage to pull another rabbit out of a black hat. Financial creativity allows many more options than you originally anticipated. Don't make a big deal out of a change of pace or a new development. Accept an invitation, even if you would rather not. Tonight: Go along with others.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Your playfulness forces others to think outside of the box. What might not be comfortable right now could change radically over the next few days. Work with the information you have, even if you suspect that you don't have the whole story. Tonight: Get as much work done as possible.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ How another acts reveals much more than you previously knew about this person. You could be jolted. Just be careful how much you depend on this individual. Call someone you can brainstorm with, and get to the bottom of the problem. Tonight: Start the weekend early!



QUOTE of the DAY

"It's better to be a coward for a minute than be dead for the rest of your life."

— Irish proverb

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LOCAL



Gang-related shootings hammer Pico neighborhood

GANGS, from page 1

Two rival gang members exchanged gunfire early Saturday morning on the corner of 16th Street and Delaware Avenue. They led Santa Monica police officers on a high-speed pursuit through residential side streets before ditching their car and evading police in Venice Beach. No one was injured.

There have been six shootings since January in the Pico neighborhood, which runs south from the Santa Monica

Freeway to Ocean Park Boulevard and east from Lincoln Boulevard to Centinela Avenue.

The neighborhood has been engulfed in a turf war between two rival gangs — the Graveyard Crips and the Santa Monica 17th Street gang — for years. The tension appears to be not only racially motivated between the two groups — one black, the other Latino — but also territorial.

In response to the recent spate of shootings, the Santa Monica Police Department has formed a Pico Neighborhood

Taskforce which will provide a higher level of police presence in the area.

On March 11 officers responded to a shooting at the 1800 block of 19th Street. When they arrived they found two vehicles had been hit by bullets.

A day earlier, four Hispanic men driving a dark-colored sport utility vehicle shot a black male in the stomach who was riding a bike along the 1900 block of Delaware Avenue.

A teenager was shot twice in the head on Feb. 11 on Virginia Avenue, near the

Edison Elementary School located between Virginia Avenue and Kansas Avenue. The boy, whose identity is being withheld, survived the incident.

On Jan. 25 police locked down a portion of the neighborhood after a driver tried to evade police when officers tried to pull the vehicle over on a traffic stop. Officers stationed at 18th Street and Delaware reported being fired upon — the bullet hit a patrol car. No one was injured, and police arrested two suspects thought to be connected to the incident.

Artists fight for their right to express themselves

HENNA, from page 1

The three councilmen that voted to keep Henna in the city agree that it's an art form and should be included under the city's street performer ordinance — just like a clown who does face painting. Councilmen Kevin McKeown, Richard Bloom and Mayor Mike Feinstein lost to the majority vote. Feinstein vowed to bring back the issue again when a new council is sworn in next year.

Proponents of Henna argue that the artists are just another causality in a war between community leaders who have intensely different visions of what the

future of the city's commercial core should be. Public safety is just an excuse to get rid of Henna, they have said.

"Supporters of Henna Artists' Right to Express," has been actively campaigning the city to lift the ban since January by gathering petition signatures and now has the backing from the arts commission.

But the commission's support may not be enough to convince any of the four council members who voted for the ban to change their minds. Council members Bob Holbrook, Ken Genser, Herb Katz and Pam O'Connor have all said they won't back down on their positions.

O'Connor said she had agreed to meet

with the artists to hear their side, but then changed her mind when one of them threatened to sue the city at the commission's meeting.

"I wasn't poised to change my mind," she said. "If they are threatening to sue I'm not talking to anyone."

"With a threat, it brings it to another level of discussion," she added.

Artists like Luke Chanthadara continue to perform on the outdoor mall and continue to receive citations for operating without a city permit.

The artists say the city has inaccurately stated the ancient Mehndi art form is a tattoo. They argue it's a safe art form and is part of their right to express themselves under the Constitution. They have just as much right to perform on the mall as do the creative portrait artists, balloon clowns and artistic flower makers, they argue.



File photo

Henna artist Luke Chanthadara gives former Mamas and Papas Michelle Phillips a tattoo on the Promenade after he was banned by city officials from performing his art.

Court praises comedian's probation behavior

By The Associated Press

A Santa Monica judge praised comedian Paula Poundstone on Wednesday for following terms of her probation in a child-endangerment case.

Superior Court Judge Bernard J. Kamins said Poundstone, 42, has been meeting court-ordered requirements to attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and regular counseling sessions.

"I'd say this woman is trying real hard to get her children back," said Kamins, who also gave Poundstone high marks during a progress report hearing in February.

Outside court, Poundstone joked that she was "a leader among felons."

Poundstone lost custody of her three adopted children after pleading no con-

test last year to a felony count of child endangerment. The charge involved driving while drunk with children in her car.

She also pleaded no contest to one misdemeanor count of inflicting injury to a 12-year-old.

The children were placed with a friend of Poundstone's who is a court-approved foster parent. Under terms of her probation, the comedian is allowed monitored daytime visits.

Kamins refused to change the visitation rules and also turned down a request that Poundstone be allowed to leave town for more than five days at a time.

"I need to work to make money so that I can pay for therapy and my attorney," Poundstone said outside court.

Poundstone must return to court June 5 for another probation review.

Homeless often sleep in garbage bins to keep warm at night

BODY, from page 1

Fabrega said.

Los Angeles County coroners and the Los Angeles County Criminal Investigation unit declined to comment.

A full coroner's report determining the cause of death will not be ready for four to six weeks, officials said.

The body did not appear to have been dead very long because investigators and police officers were not wearing masks to cover their mouths and noses.

Workers at the recycling center said the truck had just returned from emptying recycling bins, the majority of which were along Colorado Boulevard. They said often times homeless people crawl into the con-

tainers at night to keep warm while they sleep — especially in the coastal zone.

When trucks pick up recycling dumpsters in the morning, workers hit the containers to wake up any people that may be inside.

"When we pull up at 6 a.m. we rattle the cage and they usually just jump out," said Jose Cadena, a recycling center employee. "This guy probably got drunk, fell asleep and didn't crawl out in the morning."

But Cadena said he believes the man must have been dead before the dumpster was emptied.

"To be honest, if he was alive when we picked up the bin he would have jumped out," he said. "Or we would have heard him yelling or moving around."

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If you are interested in becoming a distribution point (it's free and gives your customers just one more reason to come in), please call 310-458-PRESS (7737) x 104



STATE

Hells Angels leader strikes plea bargain with county

By The Associated Press

VENTURA — Hells Angels leader George Christie Jr. pleaded guilty to conspiring to sell drugs and no contest to filing a false tax return, which could result in a seven-year prison sentence.

Christie, 54, his ex-wife and 25-year-old son all entered pleas Tuesday in Superior Court after striking deals with prosecutors and ending one of the longest criminal cases in Ventura County history.

Christie was among 28 people indicted by a county grand jury and accused of stealing drugs from an Air Force base and selling them to school-age children. He was charged with various felony charges but the plea bargain eliminated most of them.

Cheryl Christie, 55, pleaded guilty to one count of accessory to grand theft. George Christie III, also a Hells Angel, pleaded no contest to two counts of possession of drugs for sale.

Sixteen defendants have now pleaded guilty or no contest to reduced charges,

and most have been released from custody.

Christie will be sentenced April 17 and faces up to seven years in prison. However, because of the plea agreement and time previously served in jail awaiting trial, Christie may not spend any more time behind bars.

Christie was jailed last year, and spent 11 months behind bars before being released under house arrest last month on a \$2 million bond.

Under the plea agreement, the government will keep nearly \$150,000 seized in raids of defendants' homes and properties and will return about \$60,000 to Christie that was confiscated during the investigation.

Prosecutors said the plea bargain was reached with the Christie family partially because a Santa Barbara County judge ruled last month that the Ventura County grand jury, which indicted 28 members of the motorcycle gang and their associates, was male-dominated and needed more women.

Dog dragged by pickup; reward for driver's arrest

By The Associated Press

AUBURN — A dog dragged behind a pickup truck along a country road is winning the hearts of Placer County residents, and has inspired a \$5,000 award for its assailants' arrest.

County officials say the young male Australian shepherd crossbreed, which nearly choked to death with a cord tied around his neck, is recovering at the county's animal services facility.

The dog, dubbed "Raspberry" for his numerous scrapes, has prompted several offers of adoption, as well as reward donations of \$2,500 from the Humane Society of the United States and \$1,000 from Crimestoppers.

Facility manager Richard Ward said area residents have also donated amounts from \$50 to \$200 to the reward fund. One woman offered to pay the dog's veterinary bill, he said.

"If you met this animal and had a few

minutes with it, you would say it's the sweetest little thing," Ward said.

Shannon Gaffaney, a Loomis veterinarian who treated the dog for broken teeth, cuts, bruises and a nose burn, said, "He was pretty lucky, and he'll make some family happy." Ward said the dog lost several teeth and must eat soft food.

Sheriff's deputies, meanwhile, continued their search for the pickup's driver, described as a man in his late teens to early 20s with short brown hair. Witnesses said a passenger in the back of the beige Toyota pickup wore a thick beige hunting jacket with blue jeans.

"The poor dog could stand but he was very wobbly," said Placer County Sheriff's Deputy Mike Bell, who found the dog bleeding, but alive, late last Thursday near Lincoln.

"Despite what happened to him, he was wagging his tail as if to say, 'Thank you for caring for me,'" Bell said.

Body discovery reveals mafia roots go deep in state

BY PAUL WILBORN

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Five bodies pulled from a deep reservoir 40 miles west of Stockton are the latest evidence of Russian organized crime activity on the West Coast, authorities said Wednesday.

Until police pulled the bodies of Meyer Muscatel and four other people from the waters in the Sierra foothills, the Russian mob in California was better known to federal and local authorities for Medicare and gas tax fraud, car theft and petty shakedowns.

However, FBI spokesman Nick Rossi said the murders were the work of the Russian mafia, and that the investigation

started in Los Angeles.

Muscatel, a Sherman Oaks businessman and homebuilder, had been trying to empty his bank account when he disappeared and told his bankers he was in danger.

His body was pulled from the reservoir in October. The other four bodies were found this week.

Business success could have been what drew Russian organized crime figures to Muscatel.

"If he's wealthy that's probably a red flag," said Larry Langford, who headed an FBI organized crime squad specializing in Russian mob activities in Los Angeles until his retirement two years ago.

Kidnapping and extortion are both popular crimes in the countries of the

See MAFIA on next page

STATE



Seized up



Associated Press
FBI Special Agent Richard T. Garcia holds a confiscated AK-47 rifle and a Tech-9 gun as he stands in front of seized marijuana in Los Angeles. The marijuana was seized from several "stash houses" in the Los Angeles area, most of it from the garage of a home in Downey, Calif., said Cheryl Mimura, a spokeswoman for the FBI's Los Angeles bureau.

Gore speech mixes humor with serious remarks

By The Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS — Al Gore mixed self-deprecating humor with a serious call for peace in the Middle East during a keynote speech delivered during a fundraiser for The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.

Gore, who is steadily moving back into politics, told the crowd of about 950 Tuesday night that leaders in the Middle East must step up to end 18 months of Palestinian-Israeli violence.

He said the cycle of violence began when Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat rejected an "extremely generous" peace settlement offered by then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak during the Clinton administration.

"We must and will stand by the people of Israel," Gore said. "We must and will play a constructive role in trying to make it possible for the parties to find a solution."

He urged Saudia Arabia to play a

proactive role during the upcoming Arab summit in Beirut.

"What the world needs is another Sadat, another King Hussein, another statesman who will take this search for a viable future in our world to another level," Gore said, referring to the Israeli peace agreements reached by the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and King Hussein of Jordan who died in 1999.

Gore's speech was delivered during the 54th annual dinner sponsored by the legal division of The Jewish Federation of L.A. The \$200-a-plate fund-raiser was dedicated to the memory of Bruce Hochman, a philanthropist and prominent Beverly Hills tax lawyer. The fund-raiser also was attended by Gov. Gray Davis, a friend of the Hochman family, and hundreds of lawyers and judges who support the non-profit organization and its social work.

"I haven't seen so many lawyers in one place since the last day of the campaign in the year 2000," Gore said during the humor-filled first half of his speech.

Russian mafia visible in LA

MAFIA, from previous page

former Soviet Union, Langford said.

But Russian mobsters are better known in California for intricate frauds, like a 1993 Medicare scam in Los Angeles that netted two Russian immigrants \$1 billion. Another scheme discovered in 1996 in San Francisco involved \$180 million in gold and diamonds allegedly stolen from the Russian government.

The FBI started tracking Russian organized crime activities in Los Angeles in the early 1990s. The LAPD and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department have organized crime units focused on Russian-speaking criminals in West Hollywood, Hollywood,

Glendale and Burbank.

Russian organized crime elements — most visible in Los Angeles, New York City and Miami — are also active in Toronto, Seattle and Portland. Their activities mirror the old Cosa Nostra in use of violence, but the organizational structures are different, experts say.

"They can be very violent and often use violence for control of territory, intimidation and extortion," said Louise Shelley, an international organized crime expert at American University in Washington, D.C.

"They kill people just to prove a point or teach someone a lesson," said former federal prosecutor William Callahan, who now heads an international security company in New York.

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NATIONAL

Rains slam South; residents forced out

BY ROGER ALFORD

Associated Press Writer

OLIVE HILL, Ky. — Another round of rain hit the hills of Appalachia on Wednesday, pushing the flooding north into more towns as even some of the tiniest creeks and streams turned into torrents.

Kentucky and West Virginia got the brunt of the latest storms.

A steady pounding in this northeastern Kentucky town produced 4 inches of rainfall by early Wednesday, sending the usually placid Tygart Creek over its banks.

Authorities began evacuating residents from homes by daybreak. An entire housing complex for the elderly had to be emptied when murky water rose. A nearby daycare center also was also evacuated.

"The water came up so fast," said Karen Epling, assistant director of ABC Child Care. "We had 14 children. We loaded up on the bus and got out of here."

Up to 70 percent of the homes and businesses in downtown Olive Hill were damaged and floodwaters even got into the fire station, which was built above the 100-year flood plain.

"I guess that means this was a 100-year flood," said Fire Chief Rod Stephens.

Rain had stopped in much of the region by late Wednesday afternoon, leaving a toll since the weekend of seven deaths and hundreds of damaged or destroyed homes. Authorities in southwestern Virginia suspended the search for a 75-year-old woman who was believed to have been swept away by floodwaters Monday.

National Guard troops were helping people evacuate in parts of Kentucky, where Gov. Paul Patton declared 12 counties emergencies and asked for federal help.

Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner made a similar disaster assistance request for southwestern Virginia after weekend rains caused severe flooding that swept away bridges and temporarily displaced more than a thousand people. He estimated the floods damaged more than 400 homes in his state.

In West Virginia, which had largely been spared in earlier storms, more than 3 inches of rain had fallen in Huntington by early Wednesday and totals were up to 2 inches in other parts of the state.



The Associated Press

Volunteer fireman Rodney Thomas, bottom right, tosses a rope to fireman Scott Smith, left, during a rescue in the flooded waters of Williams Creek at Rush, Ky., as fireman Harold Holley, top right, paddles to steer the boat out of the swift current. The boat had missed its target on shore, forcing Thomas to run along the bank for a place to wade to them. The fireman rescued Sue Justice, second left, her 5-year old daughter, Teresa, and their pets.

No injuries were reported, but about 100 residents in Cabell, Wayne and Roane counties left their homes as streams overflowed their banks and swamped neighborhoods. High water also closed more than 50 roads in 12 counties.

James Griffith of Rowlesburg watched the fast-mov-

ing water from his trailer porch 100 yards from the Cheat River. He took Wednesday off to stay with his 67-year-old mother, Dolly, in case they needed to evacuate.

"She said when it starts coming in the park, she'll pack her clothes. We're not worried yet, we'll worry when it starts coming across the road," he said.

'9-11' seems to stick in the minds of the nation

BY ERIN MCCLAM

Associated Press Writer

ATLANTA — There has always been a shorthand for American disaster: Three Mile Island. Oklahoma City. Pearl Harbor.

Now the nation appears to be settling on "9-11" — pronounced "nine-eleven," not "nine-one-one" — for the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

"9-11 is easy to say," English professor Wayne Glowka says. "It means the date, but it means a whole complex of things — how we think, how we act, how we feel. There's a whole 9-11 attitude."

Language experts say the term offers clues to how the country is coping with the disaster.

Placing a sort of slang on the destruction wrought by the hijackers is one way of putting the tragedy in perspective and moving on, says Geoffrey Nunberg, a Stanford University linguist.

"There's a need to package things, to label them, to get a handle on them," he says.

The disaster produced all sorts of options for historical reference — "the terrorist attacks," "September 11th," even "911," evoking the emergency phone number. But "9-11" appears to be sticking.

In a prime-time news conference just a month after the attacks, President Bush referred eight times to "September 11th." But earlier this month, he said: "Our economy was hurt by the attacks on 9-11."

The American Dialect Society, which monitors changes in the English language, declared "9-11" its word of the year for 2001.

"There's just no better way to refer to it. To call it 'the terrorist attacks' — that falls flat for some reason. It's too vague, I guess. There have been other terrorist attacks, but certainly none so memorable," says Glowka, a professor at Georgia College & State University who is also

chairman of the society's new words committee.

The names used for disasters are often dictated by geography: Waco, Three Mile Island, Oklahoma City. But in the case of Sept. 11, "there's no place you can pin

"9-11 is easy to say. It means the date, but it means a whole complex of things — how we think, how we act, how we feel. There's a whole 9-11 attitude."

— **WAYNE GLOWKA**
English professor

this to," Nunberg says. "If you just pick out the World Trade Center, that's not sufficient because it happened in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C."

Language experts say there is no way to trace exactly who is responsible for the term. Some point to the president, others to the teen-agers who often shape American slang. The cable news networks might have played a role, too. On the "crawls" that began appearing on TV screens after the attacks, "9/11" takes up precious little space.

Labels for landmark events have a way of taking on a broader meaning, says Carolyn Adger, director of language in society at the Center for Applied Linguistics. So "post-9-11" can refer to the war on terrorism, the anthrax letters, even the surge of patriotism that followed the attacks.

Glowka says he has even heard people accused of being "so Sept. 10."

"Sept. 10 means someone who's disconnected, living in La-La Land, someone who is naive and is still being superficial, self-absorbed," he says. "Sept. 11 has become such a signal date."

Large asteroid passes near Earth

By The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Fla. — An asteroid large enough to demolish a city the size of Orlando passed within 288,000 miles of Earth without being noticed by astronomers until four days later.

The asteroid, about 165 feet across, came from the direction of the sun, making it difficult for astronomers to spot. It passed by Earth on March 8, but wasn't seen until March 12 as it hurtled away.

Gareth Williams of the International Astronomical

Union's Minor Planet Center in Cambridge, Mass., helped spot the asteroid after it passed by. It was a close call in space terms. The moon is only 250,000 miles away.

"The key is to detect these objects before they come out of the (sun's direction)," Williams said.

That way, astronomers can quickly determine an asteroid's orbit and predict whether it will hit the Earth.

A similar-sized object flattened a 20-mile-wide patch of Siberian forest in 1908.

NATIONAL



ODDS & ENDS

No more stealing shopping carts

By The Associated Press

MIAMI — The freewheeling days of the stolen shopping cart may be over.

Some supermarkets in Florida are putting the brakes on cartnapping by using an electrical gizmo that stops the rolling baskets in their tracks.

Nationally, a grocery cart vanishes every 90 seconds, according to industry estimates. At \$100 per cart, the thefts cost the supermarket industry millions of dollars a year.

Carts frequently end up as suitcases for vagabonds, go-carts for kids, cookout grills for beachgoers or artificial reefs in lakes and canals.

The new anti-theft contraption uses an underground cable surrounding the perimeter of a supermarket's property. When a cart comes within two feet of the boundary, a sensor triggers the right front wheel to lock. Only a special gadget can release the hold on the wheel.

"It has helped us tremendously," said Publix Super Markets spokesman Lee Brunson. Publix is using the device at five stores after successfully testing it at a Miami Beach location that once lost 100 carts a month.

Winn-Dixie is testing the device in a few Orlando-area locations.

The systems costs from \$8,000 to \$30,000, depending on store size, says the manufacturer, Gatekeeper Systems of Irvine, Calif.

Cutting the cheese in Wisconsin

By The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Pop open a box of crackers and a bottle of wine, because a whole lot of cheese just came to town.

The World Championship Cheese Contest, a

Wisconsin tradition since 1957, began on Tuesday with a record 1,132 entries from 19 nations.

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, the event began as a cheddar contest, but it's now grown to 28 classes of cow milk cheeses, five classes of sheep and goat cheese and three butter classes. There's also a retail packaging category.

Judges work silently in teams of two to pick the top three entries in each class, which get gold, silver or bronze medals. The champion cheese maker earns \$1,000.

Judges in the contest, which ends Friday, deduct points if they find defects. Criteria include taste, texture, aroma and appearance.

Chief Judge Bill Schlinsog of Middleton, Wis., said a cheese rarely gets a perfect score.

"We usually let them have some room for improvement," he said.

Mailed letter found 50 years later

By The Associated Press

PETOSKEY, Mich. — Martha Croft recently got an unusually special delivery: a 50-year-old letter from her grandmother.

Martha Croft, 69, was a student at Central Michigan University in 1952 when her grandmother, Marie Hill, sent her the letter.

Addressed to Croft's maiden name, Miller, the letter was found during recent renovations of the university's Sloan Hall, a women's dormitory from 1941 to 1963. Croft once lived in the building, which now houses the psychology department.

"I was just shocked, really shocked," Croft told the Petoskey News-Review.

The postage on the letter, postmarked Feb. 29, 1952, from Panama City, Fla., was three cents.

The letter was found behind woodwork on the first floor of the hall, said Timothy Hartshorne, psychology department chair. He alerted school officials, who tracked down Croft and had the letter delivered.

Remnants of dried flower petals and leaves were inside the envelope along with a handwritten note. Hill told her granddaughter that she was excited about a visit she was planning with one of her college friends.

Croft said she was thrilled to have her hands on the letter.

"I am going to keep this one. It's something to remember her by," she said. "I've got another nice memory now."

Supermarket stench not funny

By The Associated Press

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP, N.J. — Two men have been convicted of creating a big stink last year inside a supermarket.

Geremino T. Ranallo, 65, of Washington Township, and Warren G. Jacoby, 50, of Mansfield, were convicted Tuesday of disorderly conduct for spraying a noxious gas at a ShopRite in Washington.

Central Warren Municipal Court Judge Joseph W. Steinhardt gave the two men one month to decide if they want to serve 30 days in jail or perform 90 days of community service.

Authorities said Ranallo and Jacoby used a gag spray can filled with gas designed to mimic the odor of flatulence on May 26. The resulting stench forced dozens of customers to flee the store, and one employee became sick after smelling the fumes.

Ranallo said he was unhappy with the verdict.

"I don't want to be known as the fart guy," he told The Express-Times of Easton, Pa., for Wednesday's editions.

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INTERNATIONAL

U.S. warns Al-Qaida and Taliban forces are regrouping

BY PAUL HAVEN

Associated Press Writer

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — The Operation Anaconda commander warned on Wednesday that al-Qaida fighters are an “adaptable enemy” already drawing on a fresh flow of cash to rebuild forces in eastern Paktia province. Just 40 miles to the east, U.S. and Afghan troops came under fire, and one American was wounded.

Intelligence data showed that well-outfitted fighters already were moving to regroup, Maj. Gen. Frank Hagenbeck said just two days after completion of the largest U.S. offensive in the Afghan war. He predicted increased activity as the weather improves.

“I can tell you there are al-Qaida operatives in Paktia right now who are going to great lengths to try to regroup or regenerate,” Hagenbeck said in an interview with three news organizations in his office at Bagram air base. “They are also spending a lot of money to regroup.”

He declined to elaborate on what measures al-Qaida operatives were taking. But he said it was a rich organization able to count on backing from the people in the region near the Pakistani border.

“They are a very adaptable enemy,” he said.

Just 40 miles east of the main battlefield in Operation Anaconda, gunmen launched an attack on U.S. and Afghan troops with machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars, touching off a firefight Tuesday night near the town of Khost. One American soldier was wounded.

The soldier, with the 101st Airborne Division, was shot in the arm, but the injury was not considered life-threatening, said Commander Frank Merriman, a spokesman for U.S. Central Command.

At the same time, three U.S.-allied Afghan fighters were killed in a raid on a checkpoint near the Khost airport, Afghan officials said.

U.S. troops and their Afghan allies called in support from an AC-130 gunship and a B-1 bomber, which illuminated the area with flares, Central Command said.

At the Pentagon, Brig. Gen. John Rosa said the AC-130 targeted a former prison that was the source of some of the fire. Ground forces who searched the area later found bullet casings and blood but no bodies, he said.

“The enemy fire seemed to be trying to harass our troops, or trying to inflict quick casualties, as opposed to conducting a more sustained attack,” he said. “I would expect to see more of this. We knew as we break these folks down into pockets we can expect this.”

For several hours Wednesday, the Pentagon thought it had found a clear link between Somalia and al-Qaida — a handheld navigation device with the name “G. Gordon” on it. Rosa said officials believed it once belonged to Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon, an Army Ranger killed in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, in October 1993. Rosa said the find “could obviously tie al-Qaida to Somalia.”

Hours later, officials announced a different conclusion; the device belonged to a U.S. soldier who fought against the al-Qaida at the outset of Operation Anaconda. The name “G. Gordon” was written on it because the soldier uses that as his nickname because people say he resembles G. Gordon Liddy, the Watergate figure.

It was not clear whether the actual

owner of the “G. Gordon” GSP device also was killed.

Tensions have been running high for months in Khost, near the Pakistani border and along one potential route into Pakistan for fleeing fighters. U.S. special forces, who have been operating in the town for some time, came under fire at the Khost airport at the beginning of Operation Anaconda, but there were no injuries.

A contingent of up to 1,700 British soldiers is on its way to Afghanistan to join the fight against al-Qaida and will begin arriving at Bagram in coming days. Hagenbeck said the force will give the coalition more options.

“It will allow us to conduct more simultaneous missions, because we’ll have more troops here than in the past,” he said.

Hagenbeck also said two U.S. 10th Mountain Division battalions — the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry and the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry — are set to return to Fort Drum, N.Y., by mid-April. They will be replaced by more troops from the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division, he said.

Members of the 10th Mountain Division were the first conventional U.S. ground troops dispatched to Central Asia as a part of the American war on terrorism. They were first sent to Uzbekistan last fall, providing security for U.S. aircraft at an air base in Termez on the Afghan border.

The division moved into Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban.

Hagenbeck dismissed claims by local Afghan commanders that many al-Qaida fighters managed to escape during Operation Anaconda.

He said commanders used Predator remote-controlled spy planes to watch as hundreds of al-Qaida and Taliban fighters moved into the Shah-e-Kot valley early in the offensive — even as the area was under the U.S.-led attack.

“They were trying to push through, and we allowed them to come in. They were coming in very small groups — three, four, five at a time, using a trail network, and they flowed into the valley over a 48-hour period,” he said. Hagenbeck said that

even as the U.S. began to rout the enemy forces with heavy bombing and ground combat, the fighters continued to enter the valley.

Based on monitoring of al-Qaida communications, Hagenbeck said it appeared al-Qaida leaders were unable to warn their fighters to turn back.

He said the influx of fighters was the reason for widely varying estimates of the number of enemy troops. U.S. officials initially estimated there were 150 to 200 fighters in the Shah-e-Kot Valley, but estimates later rose to nearly 1,000.

Only a few dozen corpses have been recovered from the area, but Hagenbeck said that was because the bodies had been blown to bits by U.S. bombs.

“A number of times, more than I can tell you, we watched from the aerial platforms guys being destroyed,” he said. In one attack, “we had been watching an area with 40 plus people in it. They called in the aerial strike. We watched the explosion and all we saw afterward was nothing but dirt and mud.”

Bus suicide



Ronen Lidor/Associated Press

An Israeli border police officer passes the scene where a suicide bomber blew himself up on a commuter bus during rush hour near the Arab town of Um Al Fahem, in northern Israel on Wednesday. The suicide bomber killed four soldiers and three other passengers on the packed bus Wednesday — an attack that failed to derail weeklong U.S. truce efforts.

Police search French home of Osama bin Laden’s half brother, officials say

BY PIERRE-ANTOINE SOUCHARD

Associated Press Writer

PARIS — Police searched the Riviera villa of Osama bin Laden’s half brother on Wednesday as part of a money-laundering investigation, judicial officials said.

The Paris prosecutors office began the probe in December following allegations of money laundering raised by a division of the French Finance Ministry, according to French judicial officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

LCI television showed footage of police carrying bags full of documents from the luxurious stone residence of Yeslam

Binladin, a Swiss citizen.

Binladin intentionally spells his name differently than his half brother, Osama, the prime suspect in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

In an October interview with Swiss television, Binladin denied allegations that his Geneva-based financial company, Sico, handled terrorist money.

At the time, Binladin said that none of his family members had had any contact with Osama bin Laden and that “he was condemned by the family for his acts and his convictions.”

“We are not a family of terrorists,” Bin ladin said.

INTERNATIONAL



R.E.M. guitarist says he has no recollection of flight chaos

BY ED JOHNSON
Associated Press Writer

LONDON — R.E.M. guitarist Peter Buck told a jury Wednesday he had no recollection of his alleged drunken behavior during a trans-Atlantic flight. Prosecutors said he overturned a breakfast cart and scuffled with crew members.

Buck, 45, said one of his last memories of the British Airways flight from Seattle to London last April was downing a sleeping pill with a glass of wine.

"I recall ... there were bright lights overhead," said Buck, as he described waking up in a police cell at London's Heathrow Airport.

"I wasn't really awake. I had this fear I had had a heart attack and was in a weird hospital in Disneyland. I don't mean I was seeing characters or anything like that. I was just struggling to get conscious," he added.

Buck, who lives in Seattle, denies charges of being drunk on an aircraft, assault and damaging British Airways crockery. He is being tried at Isleworth Crown Court in west London.

Prosecutors say Buck, who had been traveling to Britain to promote the Georgia band's album, "Reveal," drank about 15 glasses of wine in the first three hours of the flight. They say he became increasingly unruly, staggered up the aisle of the Boeing 747 and at one point got

stuck between two seats.

As his behavior worsened, prosecutors say Buck mistook a service cart for a CD player and tussled with crew members, covering them with yogurt.

"I wasn't really awake. I had this fear I had had a heart attack and was in a weird hospital in Disneyland. I don't mean I was seeing characters or anything like that. I was just struggling to get conscious."

— PETER BUCK
Guitarist for R.E.M.

The guitarist, who insists he only had three glasses of wine, told the court he was horrified when he realized he was in custody.

"It was like something out of a novel. I can't begin to

describe the feelings I had," he added.

Buck said although he could not remember having his fingerprints taken, he could recall looking at the inked tips afterward and experiencing a sense of "terror."

He said he was overcome with shame when he was told of his alleged actions. "To me it was just incomprehensible. ... I have never been in trouble before. ... I will go miles away to avoid confrontation. I really don't like it," he told the jury.

Capt. Tom Payne said he was so concerned by the rock star's conduct he called a flight deck crisis meeting to discuss what to do.

"I had a conversation with the crew to decide the best course of events at that time, taking into account where we were over the ocean and how long we had to fly," Payne said.

"We could divert to the nearest airport, drop him off or press on and call the police. I decided to press on."

As the guitarist's behavior deteriorated, Payne said he was forced to present Buck with a so-called "yellow card," a written warning to behave.

"But when I served the document, he took it, tore it into pieces and dropped them on the floor," he said.

Payne said he had not been able to understand a word of the star's "slurred" speech.

The trial continues Thursday.

Mexico authorities eagerly await spring breakers

BY BEN FOX
Associated Press Writer

TIJUANA, Mexico — After enduring a six-month decline in tourism, Mexican authorities are eager for the arrival of thousands of college students on spring break.

In the final two weeks of March, some 200,000 people are expected to visit the major tourist spots in Baja California, the tourism secretary for the border state said Wednesday.

The number of visitors, mostly students from Nevada, Arizona and Southern California, is only about 3,000 higher than the same period last year, but it marks the end of a sharp downturn in tourism that hit the region after Sept. 11, Alejandro Moreno said.

"We're confident that we are out of the slump," Moreno said at a news conference in the border city of Tijuana. "Tourism is back."

Hotel occupancy is expected to average above 90 percent in cities such as San Felipe and Ensenada, compared to 40 percent and lower in the weeks after the terrorist attacks, when Americans avoided long waits to cross the border caused by extra security.

Security remains tight, but the wait times to cross are close to what they were before Sept. 11.

Many hotels are booked solid for the rest of March. All 2,000 rooms in Rosarito, 20 miles south of the border, are rented, said

Arnoldo Fitch, the director of the convention and visitors bureau.

For much of the year, Baja California is a quiet weekend getaway. Visitors come to surf, fish, ride off-road vehicles, or visit the wineries or low-cost lobster restaurants.

The region is heavily dependent on U.S. tourists, but the number of Mexican families who visit the region also spikes upward in the final week of March

"Everyone is welcome. As long as they don't behave too crazy."

— ARNOLDO FITCH
Director of the convention and visitors bureau

as much of the country takes a vacation for Semana Santa, or Holy Week.

With the arrival of the U.S. spring break crowds, the atmosphere can become

raucous. Thousands of young Americans visit the Baja peninsula to take advantage of a drinking age of 18 and bars that stay open all night.

Playboy magazine in 1999 labeled Rosarito as the "Superhot Spot" for U.S. college kids on spring break — a distinction Fitch said is good for the city of 100,000.

"Everyone is welcome," Fitch said. "As long as they don't behave too

crazy."

To make sure people don't get out of hand, Baja California authorities will have extra police, soldiers and emergency medical personnel on duty, Moreno said. They have also created a special emergency tourist assistance line, which can be reached by dialing 0-6-6. For now, it is only available in Tijuana and Mexicali, but the state hopes to expand it to other cities in the future.

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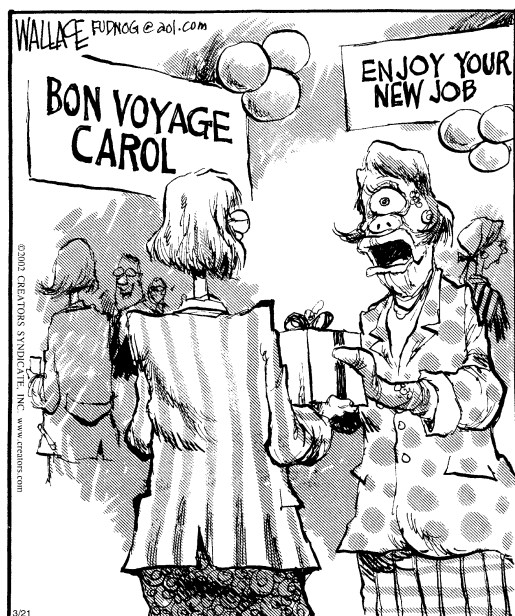


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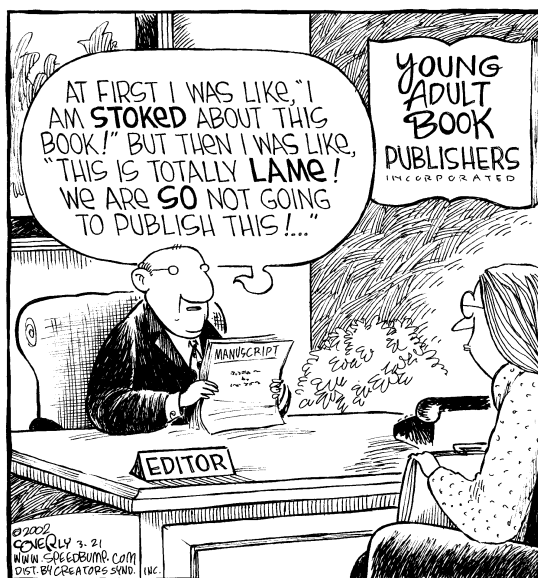
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 - Squad car fixture
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 - Correct
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 - Snapshot
 - Fishing aid
 - Film computer
 - Friend of Porthos
 - Dull fellow
 - Library fixture
 - Some linemen
 - Moolah
 - Bro's counter-part
 - Millinery buy
 - Alley denizen
 - Spanish coin
 - Photo collection
 - 1984 movie
 - American crop
 - Actress Mac-Dowell
 - Climber's spike
 - Nebula makeup
- DOWN**
- Bear's kin
 - Parrot
 - Some souvenirs
 - Rare bird
 - Mocking
 - Deception
 - Bedside item
 - Keats creation
 - Sermon subject
 - Lawn makeup
 - Spanish inns
 - Shows nervous-ness
 - Tabriz native
 - Poker holdings

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Yesterday's answer

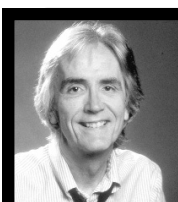
- Bouquet
- On the up-and-up
- AMA members
- Outlaw
- Carryall's kin
- Macho group
- "The Godfather" author
- Fey of SNL
- Band aid
- Film composer Francis
- Took the bait
- Game piece
- Agreeable answer

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3-21

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Man shows being hard headed has its advantages

A 50-year-old construction worker in Knoxville, Tenn., survived his Jan. 14 impalement by a 3-foot-long, 3-inch-thick metal rod that fell off of a bridge and which went point-first through the man's skull and neck, coursed down his trunk, and stopped only when completely embedded in his body. He was semiconscious at the scene but talkative later at the University of Tennessee Medical Center. The man was not wearing the required hard hat.



NATIONAL NEWS DATELINE-HOUSTON

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BACK PAGE

Contestants get ready for annual rotten sneaker contest

BY KRISTA LARSON

Associated Press Writer

MONTPELIER, Vt. — They've worn their sneakers while mowing the lawn. They've left them outside in the rain, and they've dragged them through the mud.

And on Tuesday, contestants from as far away as Alaska attempted to overwhelm judges with their foul-smelling sneakers in the annual rotten sneaker contest.

One child even sang a rap song about the shoes his father makes him keep on the fire escape.

But in the end it was 9-year-old Danny Denault of New Milford, Conn., who won the respect of the panel's sniffers and the top prize, a \$500 savings bond.

A previous winner wore the same pair of socks for three months in an attempt to take top honors.

Denault's secret to victory?

"The cow pies," said Denault, who helps out on his baby-sitter's dairy farm. "They're just hard to avoid. They're everywhere."

Leading the panel of sniffers was George Aldrich, who has conducted more than 700 smell tests for NASA space shuttle missions. Contestants also were evaluated by judges in categories ranging from "tongues and toes" to "overall condition and soles."

The rotten sneaker contest began more than 25 years ago. Odor-Eaters later decided to sponsor the event, crowning Montpelier "the rotten sneaker capital of the world."

"We've worked hard to earn that distinction," said Mayor Chuck Karparis, a contest judge who himself once competed.

Local winner Sam Kessler, 10, devoted months to preparing for the contest. "He's worked really hard on these shoes," said his mother, Tess. "He wears them constantly."

Sam's advice to future contestants: "Just wear them a lot. And drag them when you ride bikes."

Still, there are limits to what contestants can do to try to win. The judges said they still remember the contestant who later confessed to storing her sneakers with "beaver guts." She was disqualified.

"It's supposed to be 'raw talent,'" Aldrich explained.

Court considers if inmate can mail sperm to impregnate wife

BY DAVID KRAVETS

Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Inmate William Gerber wants to impregnate his wife, Evelyn, and he wants to do it through the mail.

Gerber is a 42-year-old lifer housed in a California prison, and is fighting to send his sperm to his 46-year-old wife in Southern California.

But prison officials stand in his way. And during oral arguments in his case here Wednesday before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the judges also appeared ready to foil the Gerbers' plans to pass out cigars.

The legal question is whether inmates in nine western states have a right to procreate. The answer, at least according to some of the 11 judges' comments on Wednesday, is no.

"Why isn't this a reasonable restriction?" asked Judge Pamela Rymer. Judge Alex Kozinski stated: "The very purpose

of punishment is to take away a very fundamental right." Judge Ronald M. Gould said, "It's not clear to me there is a fundamental right to procreate in prison."

The U.S. Supreme Court has said prisoners have a right to marry and be free from forced sterilization. But neither the high court nor any lower court has resolved circumstances presented in the Gerber case.

The case arose after the California Department of Corrections balked at the inmate's proposal. The department said that — while some California inmates, but not Gerber — are allowed conjugal visits, there's no fundamental right allowing prisoners to mail their bodily fluids to procreate.

The department also said that, unless Gerber could procreate the old-fashioned way, he's out of luck.

A federal court agreed and Gerber appealed.

"All we're asking is for Mr. Gerber to collect his sperm and somehow get it out of prison," argued his attorney, Teresa Zuber.

The judges' comments from the bench swirled from the serious to the humorous. They even discussed the procedure the inmate's attorneys have proposed for getting the sperm to his wife.

It wasn't the first time the San Francisco-based court had taken up Gerber's case. In September, a three-judge panel of the court made national headlines when it ruled that Gerber and inmates in the West have a right to procreate, even if they're not allowed conjugal visits.

California grants conjugal visits for prisoners who are not serving life terms. No other state in the circuit's reach allows inmates to have sexual contact with their loved ones, said Gregory Walston, deputy attorney general for California.

The circuit's original September deci-

sion, which the court has set aside pending the outcome of Wednesday's arguments, affected prisoners in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

If the court upholds its earlier decision, male inmates could sue prisons for the right to procreate via the mail or through other medical means. A ruling favoring Gerber could also open the legal door for women prisoners to assert that they, too, have a right to mail their eggs so another woman could have their baby.

A dissenting voice on the original three-judge panel in September quipped that the decision was "ill conceived" and said the majority "does not accept the fact that there are certain downsides to being confined in prison."

The court did not indicate when it would rule. But the circuit often reverses itself when it rehears a three-judge panel's decision with 11 judges.

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