

FREE

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2002

Volume 1, Issue 133

Santa Monica Daily Press

Picked fresh daily. 100% organic news.

Boathouse owner locked out of restaurant

Longtime Santa Monica Pier eatery closed to make way for corporate chain

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

A 50-year-old bastion of the Santa Monica Pier was shuttered Monday morning when city officials locked Boathouse owner Naia Sheffield out of the restaurant her grandfather founded.

As part of a court-ordered eviction levied by the city, Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies changed the locks on Sheffield's family restaurant early Monday. Sheffield was allowed into the restaurant to take whatever items she needed before the city took possession permanently.

"All of her possessions and the commercial equipment belongs to the Boathouse and she will be able to remove it," said deputy city attorney Tony Serritella.

A shell-shocked Sheffield stood in her office on the beach level of the restaurant

Monday, fighting back tears and trying to decide what she should take with her immediately before the city locked the building again.

She'll have to make an appointment in the next 15 days with the city's pier leasing agent, Elana Buegoff, to remove all items from the building her grandfather, Ben DeSimone, built more than four decades ago.

Behind the restaurant, Buegoff told Sheffield while she was loading up her pick-up truck that the city attorney's office wanted to make the transition "as smooth and as easy" as possible for her.

City officials spent the morning in the restaurant taking inventory of its contents by taking photographs and filming video footage.

The city ended its month-to-month lease with the Boathouse last July to make way for movie-themed chain restaurant, Bubba Gump Shrimp.

But Sheffield refused to leave.

She claimed the Pier Restoration Corporation, which oversees the pier, offered the Boathouse a long-term lease more than three years ago, then reneged on the deal.

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Photos by Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Boathouse owner Naia Sheffield, above, leans against her office door before being evicted from her family's 50-year-old restaurant on the Santa Monica Pier Monday. Below, Sheffield prepares to haul her possessions out of the restaurant.



City board volunteers to be briefed on rules, behavior

Council to focus on open meetings law, conflicts of interest, closed sessions

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Daily Press Staff Writer

Santa Monica's 16 boards and commissions are about to get a lesson in ethics and the law.

The Santa Monica City Council called a special meeting for tonight at 5:30 p.m. to discuss what it's various boards and commissions

should be doing, the best ways to work with city staff and how the all-volunteer members should behave.

At the meeting, which is mandatory for the chairs of every commission and board, city attorney Marsha Moutrie will give instructions about the specifics of California's open public meetings laws, when closed sessions can be held, and what members should do if there is a conflict of interest.

Issues of closed meetings and conflicts of interest have been closely scrutinized by mem-

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District debates Internet classes

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Daily Press Staff Writer

A few parents of Santa Monica High School students are asking the city's school district to count the classes their children took over the Internet toward graduation.

Santa Monica-Malibu United School Board Member Michael Jordan brought up the issue during a school board discussion last week because several parents had asked him about the Web-based classes.

Jordan said offering classes through the

Internet has been hotly debated at Pepperdine University, where he is a professor of journalism. He said he is staunchly against the practice.

"I strongly believe in the value of having personal contact with a teacher," Jordan said. "Classroom experience is a rich component of the whole learning process, and there is no substitute for that."

Other school board members, along with Superintendent John Deasy, also said they do not support accepting credits from Internet classes, even if they are taught from well-known universities.

Parents, however, said Internet courses are easy for their children to take and fit into sometimes hectic schedules.

They want their children to be

able to use the classes to fulfill requirements for advanced math or science courses, as well as for mandatory summer courses and lan-

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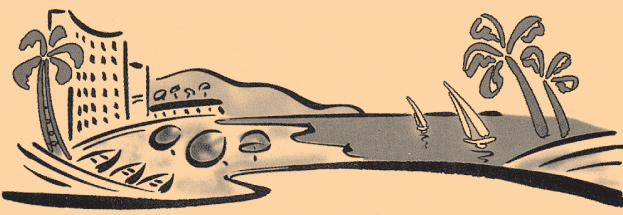
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★★-So-so ★-Difficult

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Carry some of your innate enthusiasm about life into your work and communication. A friend helps you build the feeling that anything is possible. Be sure to convey your seriousness during a conversation. Discuss boundaries with a frivolous associate. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ A discussion occurs with a boss or respected associate. Talking about the here and now will help you find answers. Together, this team could be unbeatable. Don't commit to anything you're not comfortable with financially. Tonight: Your treat.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You're empowered right now. Stop. Think. What could make a difference to you? Move that project or item further along while the planets give you the green light. Focus on what you want. Keep your perspective in any case. Tonight: Anything is possible.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Slow down. You're able to make a difference when it counts. Use your instincts with a money matter. Don't listen to someone who might be airy-fairy. Still, you could be tired and dragging. Take some time to yourself to refresh. Tonight: Take your time.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ You will not let go right now. You might be a little like a dog with a bone. You know what you want, and you're determined to get it. Others learn from your creativity and determination. Still, look around. Gain a new perspective. Be sure that you have a complete perspective. Tonight: Keep that focus.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Stand up and make your position known. You often push yourself beyond your limits. Think in terms of responsibility. If you're unhappy with the direction in which your career is going, think about taking a seminar or class to develop your skills. Tonight: A must appearance.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Reach out for someone at a distance. Consider signing up for a course or scheduling a vacation. You could be closer to burning out than you realize. Relax by spreading your wings some. New perspectives help invigorate you. Tonight: Hop on your computer.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Carefully listen to someone who often has a lot to share. You might look at this person as if he or she rains on your parade. In any case, there might be a grain of truth in what this person says. Be realistic before you get into trouble! Tonight: Work on your finances.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ You have a way of picking and choosing your words. Conceptualize an idea for others who might not be as visual as you. Others could be difficult and testy. You know how to cruise right over their moods and still gain through your interactions. Tonight: Out to dinner.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Understand that your fatigue could be playing into your work and attitude. Some Goats might be not be tired, but experiencing burnout. Be careful with financial decisions, as you could think one thing and discover another. Tonight: Clear out of work. Do something totally different.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You might be more serious about an emotional matter than another realizes. Also, your imagination could be creating a problem where there might not be one. Lighten up, but definitely schedule an important talk. Tonight: Time for a one-on-one talk.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Deal with a domestic matter head-on. You might want to forget it or, being the typical Fish, turn the other direction. Trust your astrologer. You cannot keep avoiding this issue. How you bring it to the table can make all the difference in another's responses. Tonight: A quiet evening.

QUOTE of the DAY

**If Today Was A Fish,
I'd Throw It Back In.**
— Song title

Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday
Phone: 310.458.PRESS(7737) • Fax: 310.576.9913
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LOCAL



Tax slackers



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press
There was a steady stream of procrastinators coming through the doors of the Santa Monica Library on Sixth Street on Monday as people picked up IRS forms to beat the tax deadline, which ended Monday at midnight.

Bubba Gump rent expected to be double that of Boathouse

BOATHOUSE, from page 1

Sheffield is still pursuing her lawsuit against the city in U.S. District Court, claiming breach of contract, violation of her right to due process and unlawful takings. She also claims the PRC violated the state's open meeting laws and that the city intentionally misrepresented the lease agreement.

"I have to still believe in what is right and I would love to bring this in front of a jury," said Kelly Bixby, the Boathouse's attorney.

Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Diana Wheatley ruled in the city's favor last month, evicting the Boathouse so Bubba Gump can begin renovating the building, which is expected to cost \$3 million.

Bubba Gump's 25-year lease with the city was supposed to begin on Oct. 1, 2001. Officials say the city has been harmed financially because Bubba Gump's plans to open in the spring of 2003 have been delayed.

However, the city should be able to recoup its losses quickly because Bubba Gump's rent will be almost double what the Boathouse paid.

Bubba Gump is expected to pay \$10,417 a month, plus \$1,889 annually for common maintenance and 2.5 percent of the restaurant's food, beverage and retail gross sales. The Boathouse paid \$5,429 a month, as well as \$168 for annual promotional fees and 8 percent of its gross revenues in excess of \$688,088 in annualized sales.

When Sheffield's long-term lease ended, the PRC solicited bids from other restaurants — a process she claims she was unfairly left out of. In an attempt to be part of the selection process, Sheffield provided a proposal that included a \$2 million renovation to the restaurant which would have had a theme of the famous Route 66 transna-

tional highway, which used to end at the pier.

But the PRC frowned upon aspects of Sheffield's theme — specifically the historical perspective of the American Indian motorcycle, similar to what is on display at the Guggenheim Museum today.

PRC Chairman Michael Klein said the city commission wanted a "family oriented" restaurant and the motorcycle theme could attract an undesirable clientele.

Klein said Sheffield was treated fairly, but her proposal wasn't as good as the others.

"I think it would have been great that the best proposal came from Naia and that she inherited the best restaurant genes and was a good operator," Klein said. "I would have loved to have seen it. But we did the best we could when faced with the decision."

"We are not heartless and we are not jerks. There is no great joy in this and we aren't gloating. We think Bubba Gump will be good for the community."

The PRC has been long criticized by many, including Mayor Mike Feinstein, for engaging in behind-the-scenes political maneuvering.

Several members were on the board since the 1980s, until they were finally replaced last summer. But they were kept on long enough by some elected officials to ink the Bubba Gump deal and give the Boathouse the boot.

"It is a very sad situation," said City Councilman Kevin McKeown. "I argued along with Mike (Feinstein) to keep the restaurant there."

"People appointed to the (PRC) in the 1980s shouldn't be making 21st Century decisions. The PRC now would not have voted that way."

And while McKeown doesn't support corporate chains replacing longtime businesses in Santa Monica, it's become a reality.

Concerns raised over possible conflicts of interest

VOLUNTEERS, from page 1

bers of the public recently in regard to meetings held by some commissions, including the Landmarks Commission and the Pier Restoration Corporation.

"People are beginning to become concerned about some boards and commissions," said Councilman Herb Katz. "Some citizens are concerned that some chairs aren't exactly doing what they should."

Holding meetings with the cast of every board and commission are rare, council members said, but necessary at this time.

"We need to connect with all the commissions and boards on how they can get information and advice to the city council," said Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McKeown.

McKeown said concerns had been raised over local architects on volunteer commissions ruling on each other's work. Those decisions could prove profitable to their peers and could be considered a conflict of interest.

"But that's the nature of having volunteers make important decisions about what happens in your community," he said. "If you are a part of a community and you serve on one of these commissions you're bound to have a conflict at sometime."

**"Some citizens are concerned
that some chairs aren't exactly
doing what they should."**

— HERB KATZ
Santa Monica City Councilman

Katz, a local architect, said that when such conflicts arise, there is one thing to do.

"You leave the room," he said. "It's just that simple."

Another concern is the role of council members serving as liaisons to the boards and commissions.

While McKeown said council members attending meetings of boards and commissions should be there to offer advice and information only, some chairs have accused a few council members of actively participating in discussions and debate.

"They should just be there for informational purposes and in a completely advisory in nature," said Planning Board Chair Kelly Olsen.

However, chairs of commissions that are less judicial in nature and rarely make decisions on public policy said they are looking forward to learning more about their roles.

"I'm viewing it as an educational opportunity to find out what the chairs, vice-chairs and reps are supposed to be doing," said Todd Cleary, airport commission chair. "For me it's an informational item really."

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Internet classes could be banned in school district

CLASSES, from page 1

guage classes not offered at the high school.

When Andrea Stein's 16 year-old daughter wanted to fit more extracurricular activities into her schedule at Santa Monica High School, she signed up for an Internet class offered by a university that taught a high school-level world history course.

The class required a text book and frequent exams. The successful completion of a midterm and a final exam were required for a passing grade.

Not only could the work be completed on her daughter's time frame, but it was much cheaper than sending her to summer school or a nearby private school, Stein said.

The school district and her daughter's high school counselors worked closely with her on making the course work count toward graduation, she said. In addition, her daughter provided the district with the course outline, copies of the exams and a copy of her grades in the class.

"It would be backwards to take it away because of what's happening with the Internet today," Stein said. "They may have to set some rules up but I think given their lack of resources and financing they should take advantage of this."

Many universities and colleges across the country have begun offering courses over the Internet.

At Santa Monica College, the practice began almost four years ago with one

course and today has grown to over a hundred courses in 22 different subjects.

Santa Monica College is working with a high school in the San Fernando Valley on using the service to offer students there more variety in the courses available to them. Online classes have also been used to save space in crowded classrooms and to let more students take popular classes.

The college has even developed chemistry courses where all laboratory work is done in person, but the course work is completed through the Internet.

"Instead of trying to recreate something (like a classroom setting) artificially, we're trying to make the most of the medium available to us," said Randal Lawson, Santa Monica College vice-president of academic affairs.

Lawson said though a small number of high school students from the school district are currently taking the college's Internet courses, it might not be appropriate for every student. He urged the school board to carefully debate the issue because Internet classes are rapidly expanding and becoming more universal.

"Don't automatically dismiss it, but really discuss it," Lawson said.

Thomas Pratt, a school board member, said he would consider allowing students to receive credit for Internet courses from accredited universities as long as students have to take exams and can show proof of their work.

Pratt said the goal should be to prevent students from buying credits from ficti-

tious Internet companies.

"Basically some Internet companies start up their own universities and just sell degrees and diplomas," he said. "We just don't want every fly-by-night Internet company offering some class to count."

School Board President Julia Brownley agreed that accepting Internet

courses could be done on a case-by-case basis, but she said most likely she would vote against a policy allowing the classes.

"Maybe, I'm old-fashioned," she said, "but I think learning should take place in the classroom."

The board asked it's staff to make a recommendation on accepting Internet classes at it's April 25 meeting.

Striking bus drivers reject contract, continue walkout

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Striking school bus drivers rejected a contract offer from a private bus company by a vote of 412-to-2 Monday as their walkout entered a third week.

The vote came amid conflicting statements from union and company officials about resumption of talks on health care issues.

The strike that began April 2 involves 876 Teamsters Union members employed by Laidlaw Education Services, which has a contract with the Los Angeles Unified School District to transport 18,000 students, mostly in special education and magnet schools.

Teamsters Local 572 officials said improved health care provisions could be the basis of negotiations by midweek, and a membership vote would be possible by Friday or Saturday.

But a spokesman for the bus company said after the union vote that he had no knowledge of any alternate proposal to switch health care coverage to a Teamsters Union plan.

"I have no idea what the union people are talking about," said Jim Ferraro, vice president of Laidlaw Education Services. He said information on Laidlaw's health care costs for the drivers was given to the

union back in February.

The union said the new direction for health care in a possible revised contract offer, came up at the end of a 13-hour session of renewed negotiations Friday and early Saturday involving Teamsters Local 572 Principal Officer Rick Middleton, Laidlaw's chief negotiator Ron English and federal mediator Linda Gonzalez, Middleton said.

"We hope to meet with Laidlaw and the mediator and come up with another company offer by Wednesday or Thursday," Middleton added.

The union said the proposal rejected Monday, described by Laidlaw as its "last, best and final" offer, was the same one turned down on Feb. 14, when contract talks broke down.

The drivers have been seeking a 5 percent wage boost each year of a three-year contract plus improved health and other benefits.

Ferraro said last week that meeting those terms would cost the company an additional \$21 million over three years. He said the rejected contract would allow drivers to climb to the top of the pay scale a year earlier and provide raises averaging about 4.7 percent per year. The union disagreed, saying the offer averaged only 1.8 percent pay boosts per year.

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Murder-suicide shooting at clinic kills 3, injures 1

BY PAUL CHAVEZ

Associated Press Writer

COMMERCE — Two women and a man were shot to death Monday in an apparent murder-suicide at a medical clinic and another woman was hospitalized in grave condition.

The wounded victim was not expected to survive, Los Angeles County sheriff's Deputy Rick Varela said.

Homicide investigators released few details of the 1:20 p.m. shooting at the Superior Medical Clinic, but authorities said the gunman was believed to have worked there.

"It's now listed as a murder-suicide by homicide detectives," Varela said. "Two female adults were found dead as well as one male adult who they believe to be the shooter."

Sheriff's investigators released no identifications, but a statement issued by the city said one of the slain women was a doctor and the other two women were also believed to be employees. The statement said the man was a nurse who also worked there.

A man whose mother was in the clinic

at the time told KCAL-TV that she made a hysterical call to him on her cell phone.

"She said that one of the nurses got a gun and shot the doctor and then turned the gun on himself," David Guerrero said.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the victims," Mayor Rosalina Lopez said.

Deputies sealed off a wide area of Olympic Boulevard around the clinic, where a baby bottle had been dropped just outside the door.

People who believed a relative was among the shooting victims gathered outside police lines hours after the killings, waiting for information from investigators.

The clinic has been in the working-class community southeast of Los Angeles for seven years.

Located in a strip mall with a Chinese food restaurant and a Domino's Pizza, the clinic is a general family practice with a specialty in prenatal care.

Irene Villapana, who works in business development at Beverly Hospital in Montebello, came to the scene after hearing of the shootings. She said the clinic has referred pregnant patients to Beverly for delivery.

STATE



Bill allowing consumers a free credit report approved

By The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — California consumers could get free copies of their credit ratings once a year under a bill approved Monday by the state Senate.

Supporters said the measure by Sen. Liz Figueroa, D-Fremont, would make it easier for consumers to make sure that information collected about them by credit reporting agencies is accurate.

"If you believe as I do that our modern economy is based largely on the reliability of these credit reports, then each individual should have the ability to obtain their own information," said Figueroa.

She said several other states — Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey and Vermont — have similar laws.

But Sen. Ray Haynes, R-Riverside, said the bill would result in higher consumer

loan fees because credit agencies will make up for the cost of the free reports by raising the fees they charge banks for information about potential borrowers.

"The danger of this bill is not huge," he said. "We're only talking about an \$8 item. But after a while \$8 here and \$8 there starts to add up a little bit. It means banks will have to pay more for this information and they have to charge more for the loans we're going to get."

Sen. Jackie Speier, D-Daly City, said the cost to credit agencies would be minimal because the bill only covers consumers who actually request copies of their credit ratings.

"It does not mean every credit bureau has to send out free reports to every consumer every year," she said.

A 21-12 vote sent the bill to the Assembly.

'Davy Crockett' actor throws his pooch a party

By The Associated Press

LOS OLIVOS — Tuxedo, in top hat and tail, was surrounded by pals when Fess and Marcy Parker threw the poodle a party to celebrate his 10th birthday.

Four-legged guests were served meals of "pawticular poochie delights," such as doggone good meatballs and collie flower chowder on china plates.

The developer and wine maker best known as television's "Davy Crockett" and "Daniel Boone" toasted Tuxedo and his friends in the garden of Parker's Wine Country Inn and Spa.

"We just thought it would be fun," said Marcy Parker as Tuxedo greeted his two-legged and four-legged guests Sunday.

"Did you see the table decorations? It's little dog bones. I think it's hilarious," said "Daniel Boone" co-star Ed Ames.

"You want to be doggie analyzed?" actress Cheryl Ladd asked her poodle Marley before leading him into a tent where holistic veterinarian Joy Craft provided psychic readings.

During the party, the Parkers also raised money for needy pooches, donating \$2,000 to the Santa Barbara Humane Society.

Rattlers venturing farther from wilderness for water

By The Associated Press

VENTURA — Rattlesnakes are on the move and Southern Californians are being warned the venomous vipers are venturing farther from the wilderness after a dry winter.

"They are looking for water and they are looking for cool places," county Fire Department spokeswoman Sandi Wells said as authorities warned hikers, spring cleaners and pet owners that rattlers are rising from hibernation.

"You just don't want to startle them. That could cause them to strike. Be respectful of the fact that there is a probability they are there," Wells said.

The lack of rainfall throughout the region — about a third of the normal amount — means snakes will move out of the wild and into populated areas in search of water.

"We have been seeing them in Ojai for the last month or so," said Kathy Jenks, director of the Ventura County Department of Animal Regulation.

Ideally, the return of the snakes from hibernation would only be bad news for

rats and gophers, said Patrick Musone, a senior field officer for the Department of Animal Regulation. But miles of hiking trails and homes edging into wildland areas mean trouble for humans, too.

Last year, a Thousand Oaks man was bitten after grabbing a rattler on a neighbor's driveway and trying to fling it away and a 9-year-old Westlake Village boy was bitten while retrieving a ball from the brush. There haven't been any snake bite reports yet this year.

Musone said hikers should be cautious, but he said they needn't be afraid of rattlers.

"If they are out there, then avoid them," Musone said. "But you need to know you will most likely see them, and they are very important to the environment."

Pacific rattlesnakes are the chief predators of small rodents and experts say they won't strike unless provoked. To avoid attracting the rattlers to buildings, homeowners should repair leaky outdoor faucets that attract thirsty snakes and store trash under tight-fitting lids, experts said.

"Don't touch (the snake) or go after it," Wells said. "Call us or call the animal regulation department."

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NATIONAL

New York Times finds two errors in wider probe of free-lance author's stories

BY SARA KUGLER

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Two factual errors were found during an investigation into articles written for The New York Times Magazine by a free-lance author who previously acknowledged creating a composite character in a story last year.

An editors' note in Sunday's magazine said the Times' re-reported by telephone and made several site visits to probe six of Michael Finkel's articles published during the past two years.

The inquiry found that in a Dec. 16 piece called "Naji's Taliban Phase," about two Afghan men who communicated across partisan lines, the number of letters the men exchanged was incorrect. The article said there were 20; the men say the number was seven.

In a Dec. 24, 2000, article about Palestinian youths called "Playing War," the town Hamama was referred to as Hamman.

Finkel, 33, who has been banned from writing for the Times, said Monday he cooperated with the inquiry and felt "fully vindicated."

"I was 100 percent sure the stories were clean, but it's never comfortable to have someone picking through your work," Finkel said from his home in Bozeman, Mont.

Times spokesman Toby Usnik said Monday the newspaper has no plans to

publish any of Finkel's stories.

The inquiry followed Finkel's admission that he misrepresented the experiences of the title character in a Nov. 18 magazine piece called "Is Youssef Male a Slave?" But he maintained his report accurately reflected the lives of thousands of West African youths who sell themselves into service on Ivory Coast cocoa plantations.

Times editors had questioned the veracity of that story after the author notified the newspaper in February that a photograph he had taken of a boy, published without a caption, was not a picture of Male.

A human rights organization cited in the story as helping the boy return home had contacted Finkel, saying it had located the boy in the photo and identified him as Madou Traore, the newspaper said.

Further investigation of Finkel's notes showed the article's description of Male's return home was actually Traore's experience, the Times said.

Finkel said the problems with the story "were the result of an isolated error in judgment."

Finkel, 33, won a Livingston Award for international reporting for a June 2000 Times Magazine piece, "Desperate Passage," which recounted the story of Haitian emigrants from their perspective.

Charles Eisendrath, director of the awards program, said Finkel's entry was reviewed and no errors were found.

Cockpit tape of United flight ready to be heard by 9-11 victims' families

BY JEFF LINKOUS

Associated Press Writer

TRENTON, N.J. — Listening to the cockpit tape of United Airlines Flight 93 from Sept. 11 will reopen an emotional wound for Patrick Welsh, whose wife was aboard the doomed flight. But it will give him something he can call the truth.

"The tough thing is, you don't want to hear what happens," Welsh said Monday from his home in New York.

In a one-time event closed to the public, relatives of the 40 passengers and crew aboard Flight 93 will listen to the recording Thursday at a Princeton hotel. The unusual action was personally approved by FBI Director Robert Mueller.

"Some of my in-laws will be there to help me, and I'll be there to help them," Welsh said. "It will be an emotional day."

His wife, Deborah Welsh, was the lead flight attendant aboard the airliner, which left Newark, N.J., bound for San Francisco. It turned during its flight and apparently was headed toward Washington when it crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pa., with four hijackers aboard. A second hijacked plane struck the Pentagon and two others hit the World Trade Center in New York.

Passengers aboard Flight 93 apparent-

ly rushed the hijackers with the cry "Let's roll!" and Welsh believes his wife died trying to keep the hijackers out of the cockpit.

Those aboard were praised as heroes by Attorney General John Ashcroft, who called their actions "the most dramatic of the heroic acts" of Sept. 11 and its aftermath.

Much of that praise has been focused on four men: Todd Beamer of Cranbury, Jeremy Glick of West Milford, Tom Burnett of San Ramon, Calif., and Mark Bingham of San Francisco. During phone conversations from the plane, the men talked of plans to take on the hijackers.

Glick's wife, Lyz, said she plans to listen to the recording but "it's too personal to speak about."

For Deena Burnett, hearing the tape will fulfill a goal she adopted the day of the crash: "I turned to the FBI agents in my living room that day, and said I wanted to hear the tapes."

She plans to attend the session with her husband's parents and two sisters.

"I'm not nervous," she said. "I'm trying to lower my expectations as to having all my questions answered. But I don't want to rely on someone else's version of what happened. Let me hear for myself."

NATIONAL



Raise your glass to the Congressional Wine Caucus

BY MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Labels are everything when this group of lawmakers gets together. Not conservative and liberal, but cabernet, chardonnay and merlot.

The Congressional Wine Caucus, which numbers 206 representatives and senators, is among the largest in the Capitol. Well-known wine-producing states such as California, New York, Oregon and Washington are, of course, well represented. But so are Michigan, Vermont and Alaska.

Alaska? Sure. The 49th state produces wines from berries, rhubarb and vegetables.

In fact, every state has at least one winery among the roughly 2,000 in the United States, says Bill Nelson, vice president of the American Vintners Association.

But the lure of the caucus is often simpler than that.

"How many people do you know that don't like wine?" asked Rep. George Radanovich, R-Calif, a vineyard owner who is caucus co-chairman.

Every special interest group on Capitol Hill has its

receptions and many feature educational trips to warm-weather spots. But in the Wine Caucus, tasting the subject matter evidently is the best way to get to know it.

"Remember, anything in moderation," advised Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., the other co-chairman whose Northern California district includes many vineyards.

At a recent Wine Caucus event, the aphorisms and biblical quotes about wine were as plentiful as the product: Drink wine for what ails you. The waters of the world separate us, but the wines of the world bring us together.

Radanovich and Thompson reconstituted the Wine Caucus in 1999 to lobby colleagues on wine-related issues — against limits on Internet and mail-order sales, for more money to fight diseases that attack vines and market U.S. wines abroad.

An earlier, smaller version of the caucus existed in the 1980s, when it was led by then-Sen. Pete Wilson, R-Calif. But it faded away in the 1990s.

Membership climbed quickly from 75 three years ago because of the proliferation of wineries across the country, Nelson said.

The wine itself may be a friendly way to get someone's

attention, but the topic is serious business in California, where \$33 billion a year and 145,000 jobs flow from wine production, according to the Wine Institute, the California wine industry's advocacy organization.

Radanovich and Thompson will travel next month to Brussels, Belgium, and London at taxpayer expense to meet with counterparts in the European Parliament and discuss the United States' new wine-based alliance with Australia, Canada, Chile and New Zealand.

But any reason will do to join the Wine Caucus, which receives no government money and also sponsors fundraising dinners for the Children's Hospital in Washington.

Thompson is two states shy — Idaho and Nebraska — of his goal of having all 50 states in the caucus. He persuaded the most recent addition, Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., by emphasizing that Vermont has wine lovers and good restaurants that serve fine wines, even if wine production is not important to the state.

Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, belongs to the caucus because of his long-standing opposition to taxes on alcohol and tobacco, press secretary Amy Inaba said.

Researchers find 3,600-mile ant supercolony in Europe

BY RANDOLPH E. SCHMID

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A supercolony of ants has been discovered stretching thousands of miles from the Italian Riviera along the coastline to northwest Spain.

It's the largest cooperative unit ever recorded, according to Swiss, French and Danish scientists, whose findings appear in Tuesday's issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

The colony consists of billions of Argentine ants living in millions of nests

that cooperate with one another.

Normally, ants from different nests fight. But the researchers concluded that ants in the supercolony were all close enough genetically to recognize one another, despite being from different nests with different queens.

Cooperating allows the colonies to develop at much higher densities than normally would occur, eliminating some 90 percent of other types of ants that live near them, said Laurent Keller of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

The Argentine ants were accidentally

introduced to Europe around 1920, probably in ships carrying plants, Keller said in an interview via electronic mail.

Richard D. Fell, an entomologist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, said Argentine ants have been known to form large colonies — the size of several city blocks, for example — but he had not heard of any as large as that cited in the new report.

The European researchers said that in addition to the main supercolony of ants they found a second, smaller but also

large colony of Argentine ants in Spain's Catalonia region.

When ants of the two supercolonies were placed together they invariably fought to the death, while ants from different nests of the same supercolony showed no aggression to one another.

"It is interesting to see that introduction in a new habitat can change social organization," Keller said of the behavior of Argentine ants that had been relocated to Europe. "In this case, this leads to the greatest cooperative unit ever discovered."

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NATIONAL

First space railroad jumps track on inaugural run

BY MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Astronauts sent the international space station's new railcar rolling slowly down a short stretch of track Monday, but it quickly hit a snag that interrupted the inaugural run of the first permanent railroad in orbit.

NASA blamed it on weightlessness.

Engineers suspect the 1-ton car floated ever so slightly off the rail, causing the magnetic sensors on the bottom of the car to lose contact with a pair of iron strips in the aluminum tracks.

The railcar will eventually be used during the next stages of the space station's construction. The track runs along a 44-foot girder that space shuttle Atlantis' astronauts delivered and bolted to the orbiting outpost last week.

The problem cropped up after the empty flatcar moved down 17 feet of track at a snail's pace of less than a half-inch per second. Right on cue, the car stopped at a work station and was automatically latching itself down when everything came to a halt.

Ground controllers took over manual control and, a few hours later, were able to latch the railcar to the track.

Space station astronaut Carl Walz sent another computer command from inside to get the railcar moving again. The railcar smoothly rolled 26 feet to a second work station, where the same thing happened. Again, ground controllers had to take over manual control to secure the car.

Later Monday, Walz commanded the railcar to move for the third and final time, back down the same 26 feet of track. "The train's leaving the station," he called out. It got to where it was going, but the automatic latching

system shut down again and ground controllers had to step in as before.

"I think what we're finding out as we go through this is how the mobile transporter works in zero-g," said Ben Sellari, a NASA manager.

Engineers may adjust the computer software sometime if it becomes more of a nuisance, he said.

In any event, there is no danger of the \$190 million railcar rolling off the track because of rings on both ends of the 44-foot girder, Sellari said.

He said engineers tested the entire railroad system on the ground the best they could, but "we had to take it to space in order to see that phenomena."

The first use of the railcar is set for late summer. The railcar is needed to transport the space station's 58-foot robot arm from one end of the outpost to the other, as more girders are installed.

Commonly used pesticide blamed for frog mutations

BY RANDOLPH E. SCHMID
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Male frogs exposed to even very low doses of a common weed killer can develop multiple sex organs — sometimes both male and female — researchers in California have discovered.

"I was very much surprised," at the impact of atrazine on developing frogs, said Tyrone B. Hayes of the University of California at Berkeley.

Atrazine is the most commonly used weed killer in North America, he said, and can be found in rainwater, snow runoff and ground water.

"There is virtually no atrazine-free environment," Hayes said.

The Environmental Protection Agency permits up to 3 parts per billion of atrazine in drinking water.

But Hayes' team found it affected frogs at doses as small as 0.1 part per billion. As the amount of atrazine increased, as many as 20 percent of frogs exposed during their early development produced multiple sex organs or had both male and female organs. Many had small, feminized larynxes.

Hayes' research team concluded that the effect on the frogs results from atrazine causing cells to produce the enzyme aromatase, which is present in vertebrates and converts the male hormone testosterone to the female hormone estrogen.

The effects on frogs in Hayes' study occurred at exposure levels more than 600 times lower than the dose that has been seen to induce aromatase production in human cells.

Their research is reported in Tuesday's issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

Asked if atrazine might also be a threat to people at low levels, Hayes said he did not know, adding that, unlike frogs, "we're not in the water all the time."

"I'm not saying it's safe for humans. I'm not saying it's unsafe for humans. All I'm saying is it that it makes hermaphrodites of frogs," he said.

Stanley I. Dodson of the University

of Wisconsin at Madison called the work "the most important paper in environmental toxicology in decades."

"It shows the effect of the most commonly used herbicide on amphibians in environmentally relevant concentrations," he said.

Asked if people should be worried, he also said: "We don't know."

"It's like a canary in the mine shaft sort of thing," Dodson said, referring to the former practice of miners of bringing canaries with them as warnings of dangerous gases. The birds are very sensitive to gases and would die before the concentration of the gas was enough to harm the miners.

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INTERNATIONAL



Scores survive fiery South Korean plane crash

BY SANG-HUN CHOE

Associated Press Writer

KIMHAE, South Korea — Its passengers screaming in terror, a Chinese jet plowed into a fog-shrouded mountain in South Korea on Monday, killing at least 118 people. The plane caught fire and skidded 100 yards but somehow 39 of those aboard survived.

The Air China Boeing 767-200, on a nonstop flight from Beijing, was approaching Kimhae Airport outside Busan, South Korea's second largest city, when it hit a 1,000-foot mountain near a residential area, police said. There were no casualties on the ground.

Survivors said Flight CA-129 crashed shortly after passengers were told to buckle their seat belts and prepare for landing.

"The plane suddenly dipped, then rose and then went down again. Seconds later, there was a big bang and I was knocked unconscious," said Jin Wenxue, a 35-year-old Korean-Chinese man from China's Jilin province.

The plane hit one side of the mountain and then plowed toward the peak, catching fire and cutting a trail of fallen trees 100 yards long and 30 yards wide.

"Bodies were burning in the mud. Survivors were crying in pain," said Bae Han-sol, 15, who rushed to the site after the plane skimmed over his village with a roar.

"We seldom see planes flying over our village, so I thought it was strange that the plane, trembling, flew toward the mountain in fog," Bae said.

Dozens of people were rescued alive, but several died in hospitals. Police said

118 people were confirmed dead, nine missing and 39 alive. Most of the passengers were South Koreans.

Aviation officials said many of the survivors were in the front part of the aircraft, indicating the jet's tail and fuselage hit the ground first. They also said the plane slowed as it skidded through the trees.

A South Korean travel agency executive said he received a call around the time of the crash from a passenger aboard the plane who said it appeared to be in trouble.

"The caller said, 'The plane seems to have problems, maybe, an accident,'" Kim Yu-seok said. "After a brief silence, I heard people screaming over the phone."

"Then the phone got disconnected," Kim said. He said the call lasted 15 to 20 seconds and that he at first dismissed it as a prank, but then realized the caller was Lee Kang-dae, an adviser to his company who was on the flight from Beijing. He said Lee was among the survivors.

Kimhae Airport is used for both civilian and military planes, and air force personnel staff the control tower. Air force Col. Kim Sung-hwi said the plane was given permission to land because weather conditions were good enough.

Police said light rain, low clouds and dense fog reduced visibility at the time of the crash.

Aviation officials said controllers had asked the pilot to change direction before landing due to a strong headwind, and that it hit the mountain while circling around to other side of the airport.

Kim Jong-hwi, a Transportation Ministry official, said it flew 1.6 miles beyond a designated point to change its direction.



Kyungsang News Daily/Associated Press

South Korean military soldiers remove the remains of an Air China Boeing 767 airplane that crashed into a mountain around Kimhae Airport near Busan, South Korea's second largest city, 200 miles southeast of Seoul on Monday.

"The pilot appears to have made a wrong reading of the terrain," Kim said on South Korea's YTN television.

Ham Dae-young, a South Korean air traffic official, also said the cause appeared to be pilot error.

"We believe this is a classic case of CFIT (controlled flight into terrain)," Ham said, suggesting the pilot flew into the mountainside by mistake. He said the pilot is to blame in 95 percent of such crashes.

The plane's wreckage looked like shredded pieces of paper. Burned plane parts were scattered for 300 yards in all directions, and the broken tail and nose rested near the mountaintop. The air

reeked of burning oil.

After the crash, hundreds of police, military and civilian workers combed through smoking wreckage, using shovels and electric torches, but their work was hampered by rain. Bad roads also slowed rescue efforts.

Quoting survivors, police said there was no explosion on the plane before the crash, an indication that it was an accident, not an act of terrorism.

The plane was carrying 11 Chinese crew members, 135 Koreans, 19 Chinese and one Uzbek passenger, Air China's Seoul office said. It said the pilot, Wu Xing Lu, survived.

Pope summons U.S. cardinals to talk about sex scandal

BY CANDICE HUGHES

Associated Press Writer

ROME — Pope John Paul II has summoned American cardinals to the Vatican for an extraordinary meeting to talk about sex abuse scandals in the U.S. church.

The talks will take place early next week, a senior Vatican official said Monday. The official said the cardinals would meet with some Vatican officials as well as the pope.

A spokesman for the Baltimore archdiocese said the meeting was scheduled for April 23-24.

The Vatican official said only the eight American cardinals in charge of an archdiocese will be involved in next week's talks. They are Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore, Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, Cardinal Adam Maida of Detroit, Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, Cardinal Edward Egan of New York, Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua of Philadelphia and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington.

The offices of Keeler, Maida, Mahony and Egan confirmed their planned attendance.

But a spokeswoman for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Sister Mary Ann Walsh, said the conference's top two officials — Bishop Wilton Gregory, the president, and Bishop William Skylstad, the vice president — also will attend.

Besides the eight cardinals leading U.S. archdioceses, there are five other American cardinals: James Hickey, retired archbishop of Washington; Fordham University theologian Avery Dulles; and Vatican officials William Baum, Francis Stafford and Edmund Szoka.

Cardinals are second in the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy only to the pope himself. They usually are summoned to Rome only when new cardinals are named or for a conclave when a pope dies.

A special meeting of cardinals from just one country is extraordinary. Only one similar meeting has been held before, said the Rev. Thomas Reese, editor of the Catholic magazine "America."

In 1989, the pope summoned all the American archbishops to discuss tensions between U.S. Catholics and

the Vatican over issues such as remarriage for divorced Catholics and disregard for the church ban on artificial birth control.

The Roman Catholic Church in the United States and elsewhere is under fire for its handling of a series of allegations of sex abuse by priests.

The church is accused of covering up misconduct by priests, in some cases by moving known abusers from job to job. It has already paid millions in damages and faces numerous lawsuits from victims.

John Paul has spoken only briefly of the scandals and

some critics have sharply faulted the Vatican for a lack of leadership in a time of deep crisis.

In Mahony's archdiocese, published reports said there have been about eight recent cases of priests ousted for sexual misconduct. The church has paid alleged victims millions of dollars.

"A healthy dialogue with officials in the Vatican is essential to repairing the past damage and to create a more open and honest way of dealing with any kind of misconduct within the Catholic Church for the future," Mahony said.

Soldiers killed



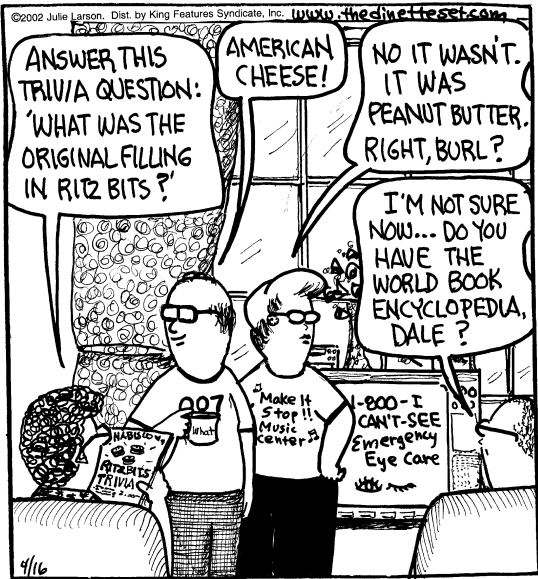
Canadian Press/ Stephen Thorne/Associated Press

Soldiers at the U.S. base in Kandahar, Afghanistan carry the body of one of four American soldiers who were killed Monday in an explosion near Kandahar. The explosion occurred when they were disposing of ordnance, U.S. defense officials said. Several were injured and others were missing.

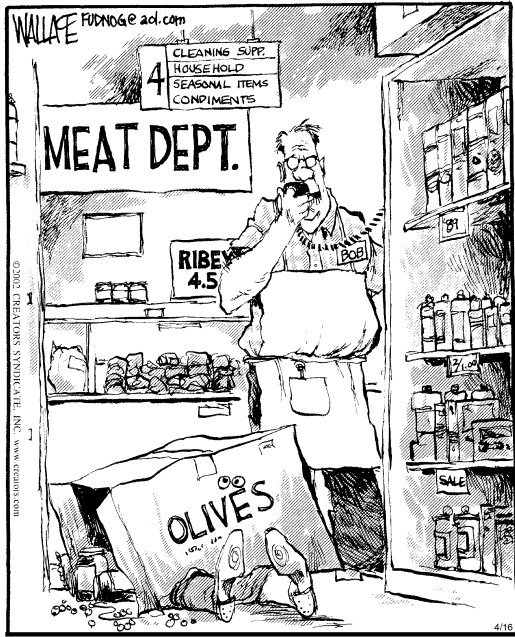


COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



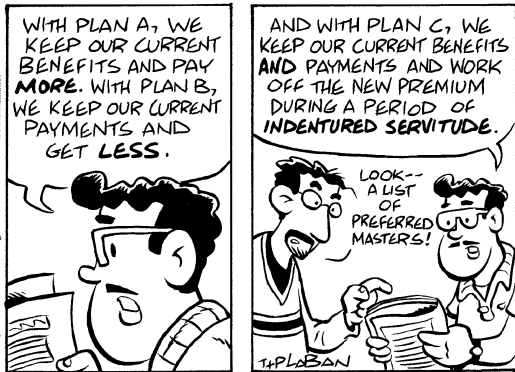
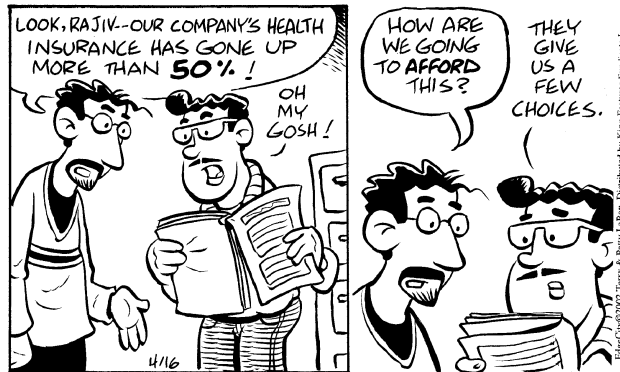
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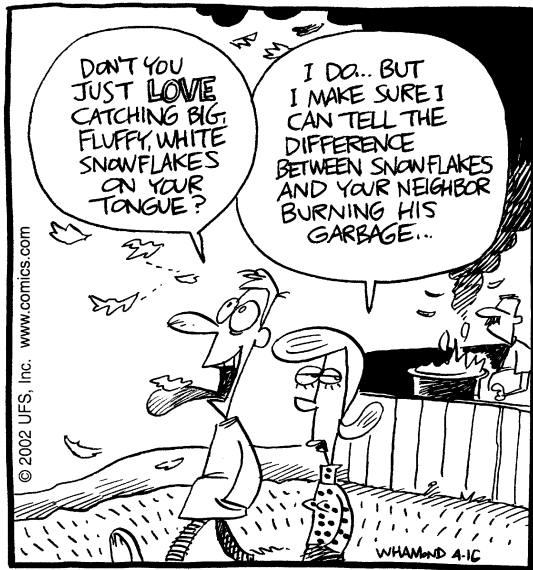
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- ACROSS**
- 1 Cardiff's land
6 — four (small cake)
11 Stand
12 "— Doone"
13 Suffers from down-sizing
15 Count start
16 Film noir classic
17 Formation for geese
18 Tapers
20 Industrious worker
21 Piercing tool
22 Shop grasper
23 Towing need
26 Singer Reddy
27 Grazing group
28 Director Howard
29 "Exodus" hero
30 Like Atlanta's airport
34 Foot division
35 Id —
36 Has permission to
37 Goes to sleep
40 Opposition force
- DOWN**
- 1 Hayride need
2 Sports site
3 Bottle size
4 Lisper's bane
5 Land a chopper
6 Entreaties
7 Dawn goddess
8 Hard labor
9 Fragrant smoke
10 Break
14 Coyote call
19 Foray
22 Start of a Caesar quote
23 English city
24 Jane Eyre, for one
25 Short solo
26 Party thrower
28 Hurry

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Yesterday's answer

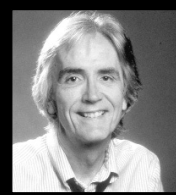
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22 Start of a Caesar quote
23 English city
24 Jane Eyre, for one
25 Short solo
26 Party thrower
28 Hurry
30 Seamstress Ross
31 Modern messages
32 Paris's — Coeur basilica
33 Little kids
38 Use a sofa
39 Health resort

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4-16

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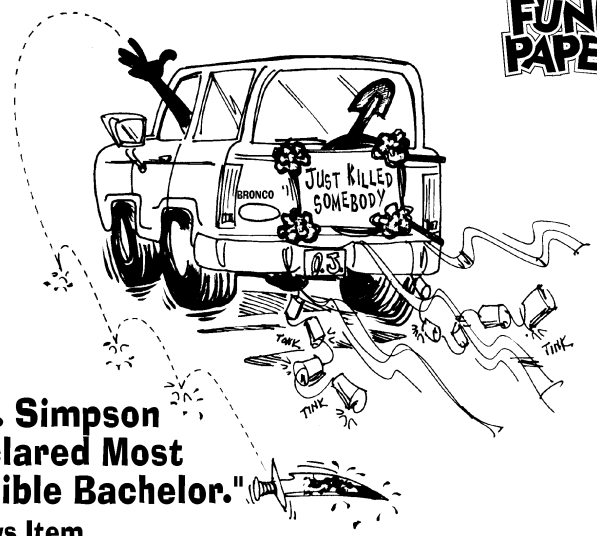


NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Man rejected by AT&T 2,986 times

- A 23-year-old man who was shot in the leg cut the bullet out himself with an X-acto knife and sold it back to the shooter for \$200 to hinder the prosecution's case against him (Bend, Ore.).
- A protesting man shot himself to death after an 18-hostage standoff in the former world headquarters of Philips Electronics because he was upset at misrepresentations about the quality on 16-by-9-inch television screens (Amsterdam).
- A 73-year-old woman was trapped by a spring-loaded newspaper vending machine in a Wal-Mart for 20 minutes until an employee volunteered to put another 50 cents in the machine to free her (Geneseo, Ill.).
- The AT&T Universal credit card company turned down applicant Dallas Hill Jr., accidentally sending him 2,986 rejections by U.S. Mail (Telford, Tenn.).



"O.J. Simpson Declared Most Eligible Bachelor."
- News Item

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BACK PAGE

ODDS & ENDS

Mayor: \$100 to kick my posterior

By The Associated Press

GOSHEN, Ind. — The mayor of this northern Indiana city may let a critic who offered money to kick his posterior take her best shot.

Mayor Allan Kauffman plans to turn his critic's off-hand comment into a benefit for the Goshen Boys & Girls Club later this month.

The critic told a political volunteer for Kauffman that she would happily pay \$100 to kick the mayor's hind quarters, The Goshen News reported Saturday.

Kauffman announced at a Kiwanis meeting on Friday that he would offer himself for the challenge. And the Boys & Girls Club will accept the mayor's generosity, Kevin Deary, club president, said.

Kauffman wrote a letter to his critic inviting her and three mayoral critics to the kicking event. The suggested bidding for one swift kick starts at \$100.

But the mayor said he was interested in establishing safety rules, such as limiting the kicker to the use of the side of the foot.

Judge holds court in jail

By The Associated Press

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. — Judge Michael Conahan decided to cut time and transportation costs by sending himself to jail.

Conahan on Friday held court in the county jail with about 47 inmates on the day's schedule — and less-than-ideal conditions.

Conahan worked at a small table inside the prison's library, surrounded by clerks, a stenographer, court administrators and a sheriff's deputy. Inmates were brought in groups of five.

Still, Conahan plans to try the court-in-jail system

again in two weeks.

Most of the people on the schedule were in prison because they had been picked up on bench warrants. Several were ordered to stay in jail until their cases were called for trial.

Prison Warden Gene Fischl thinks the test program couldn't come at a better time.

"It saves us, it saves the sheriff, a lot of transportation time, cost and manpower," said Fischl, who added that it normally takes about one man-hour to get a single inmate ready and transported to court.

No more doughnuts for highway cops

By The Associated Press

MIAMI — Florida Highway Patrol troopers may have to keep an eye on crime — and their weight — to get a proposed yearly bonus.

Under a plan in next year's unfinished budget, any trooper who is more than 15 pounds above agency weight limits will not be eligible for the \$500 performance bonus.

"The best trooper in the state — the trooper of the year — could be 15 pounds overweight and not get a bonus designed to reward the most productive workers," said Sgt. Jim Rhyne, a trooper union chief who currently is five pounds over eligibility.

Being 15 pounds overweight is flagged as a "needs improvement" on a trooper's annual evaluation. No trooper with a "needs improvement" in any category, such as number of arrests, is eligible for the bonus.

"Hypertension and heart disease are killers," Rhyne said, "so I am not advocating for obesity, or being out of shape. (Our objection to) the bonus plan is a fairness issue."

Seventeen of 236 troopers in Miami-Dade and Broward counties fall into the overweight category,

according to agency figures. Statistics for the 2,042 troopers in other parts of the state are not available.

Agency spokesman Ken Howes said the rules are designed to promote health and better job performance. Studies show police officers suffer from high blood pressure and heart attacks much more often than the general population, he said.

Candidate hands out condoms

By The Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — Paul Pilgrim wanted a campaign gimmick to help people remember his name when they go to the polls to vote for Beaverhead County sheriff.

So he decided to hand voters a key chain attached to a small white plastic box, lettered with the message: "Vote Pilgrim Sheriff — to protect and serve."

That's a pun since inside the box is a condom.

Pilgrim, who runs a dry-cleaning store in the southwestern city of Dillon, said he settled on the novelty item as a campaign tool in order to stand out among the three Republican candidates for sheriff.

"Everybody hands out combs, fingernail files and pencils," he said. "I asked if there's anything people would be more likely to remember."

So he bought 250 of the key chain-condom combinations and began distributing them to voters, who he said have accepted the unusual appeal for votes with good humor. In fact, they have become more popular than some of his other campaign items.

"I gave a lady a pen today and she said, 'Pen, schmen. Where's my key chain?'" he recalled.

One of his opponents in the June 4 GOP primary, Bill Briggs, said he has known Pilgrim all his life and his unique campaign tactic is not surprising.

"He's definitely his own individual," Briggs said last week.

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