

FREE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2002

Volume 1, Issue 152

Santa Monica Daily Press

Picked fresh daily. 100% organic news.

Local man is said to confess murder, police say

Court proceedings reveal the confession by accused

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Daily Press Staff Writer

A Santa Monica Police officer testified in court Tuesday that a local man accused of beating his father to death confessed to the crime.

When officer Ken Sempko responded to a 911 call made by Albert Victor White, 46, from his Santa Monica apartment on Feb. 5, White admitted to killing his elderly father, Pranas "Frank" Brazinskas.

Sempko testified in Santa Monica Superior Court that when he arrived on scene, he ordered White to come out of his apartment with his hands in the air.

"As he was walking toward me I asked him 'what's going on here,'" he said. "And (White) responded, 'It's bad, it's real bad. I killed my dad.'"

White appeared before Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Bernard J. Kamins Tuesday to hear the state's evidence against him. His next court appearance is scheduled for May 21 at the courthouse near the airport. White, who worked locally as an accountant, appeared calm and motionless throughout the day-long proceedings.

"As he was walking toward me I asked him 'what's going on here.' And (White) responded, 'It's bad, it's real bad. I killed my dad.'"

— KEN SEMPKO
Santa Monica Police officer

White, who 32 years ago helped his father hijack a Soviet commercial jetliner to escape cold war-era

Lithuania, is facing murder charges for allegedly bludgeoning his 77-year-old father to death during a struggle at the pair's 21st Street apartment.

But defense attorney Jack Alex said White was acting in self defense. He argued Brazinskas had pointed a loaded handgun at White and threatened to shoot him. No shots were fired.

Alex said officers discovered a bag in the apartment that contained a 30 caliber revolver, a 38 caliber semi-automatic pistol, a nine millimeter semi-automatic handgun and a 45 millimeter Uzi, or Tech-9 assault rifle.

All the weapons were later found to be loaded and cocked.

"The bag was open and I could see inside it with my flashlight — there were many guns and an assault rifle," said SMPD officer Candice Cobarrubias, who first discovered Brazinskas' body. "Some were in the ready to fire position ... I could see the hammers were pulled back."

See MURDER, page 5



Litter can go a long way

Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press
Ricardo Perez cleans out a dirty storm drain on Ocean Avenue Tuesday. Perez and his partner, Jose Villasenor, remove trash and debris from about 30 drains each day. This drain was particularly bad, netting three garbage bags full of trash that would have otherwise gone into the Pacific Ocean. The Santa Monica Bay continues to be one of the most polluted areas along the state's coastline. Although the drains have devices to catch debris, some will inevitably end up in the water as people continue to litter the streets of Santa Monica.



Man loses case against real estate agent

Man buys apartment complex; rent control violation alleged

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

The owner of a Santa Monica apartment complex lost his lawsuit last week against a real estate agent who he claims was in "cahoots" with the building's seller by allowing a tenant to sublet a rent controlled apartment.

Giulio Della Rocca sued Coldwell Banker real estate broker Christine Taylor in Santa Monica Small Claims Court, arguing that the rent control violation was a breach of his agreement when he negotiated the purchase of the four-unit building at 2218 20th St. last year.

But Judge Pro Tem Craig Mordoh ruled against Della Rocca's \$5,000 claim. Mordoh said Della Rocca sued the wrong person — he should have instead sued the seller of the building, Richard Arlem, a senior citizen who lives in Mammoth Lakes.

"I'm not sure you have any damages," Mordoh said.

"But you may have a claim against the former owner."

Taylor represented Arlem in the sale. She said she wasn't aware that one of the building's tenants was subleasing his rent-controlled apartment to another man.

It wasn't until Della Rocca was closing escrow early last year that he learned of the alleged rent control infraction. Within days of learning the building was up for sale, the official tenant, Kent Wagerman, allegedly moved back into his apartment and the sub-leaser moved out.

See SUIT, page 3

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Santa Monica's Daily Calendar

GET OUT!

City Speakers Toastmasters, RAND hosts a Toastmasters club that meets from Noon to 1 p.m., on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Meetings are held at RAND, 1700 Main Street, Conference Room 1734. Call Penny (310) 393-0411, ext. 7159.

Community Yoga Classes offered to students of all levels. \$6, Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. Saturday 2 p.m., Santa Monica Yoga, 1640 Ocean Park Blvd., (310) 396-4040.

Puppetolio! hosted by Santa Monica Puppet & Magic Center will be held today at 1:00 p.m. Shows are always

followed by a demonstration, Q & A, and a tour of the Puppet Museum and workshop. The program is for all ages, 3 and up. All seats: \$6.50. The Center is located at 1255 2nd Street in Santa Monica, adjacent to the Third Street Promenade. Reservations/Information: (310) 656-0483 or www.puppetmagic.com.

Want to be part of the A-List?
Send your calendar items to:
Santa Monica Daily Press
P.O. Box 1380 Santa Monica, CA 90406
Attn: Angela angela@smdp.com
Fax: 310.576.9913

Today at the Movies!

LAEMMLE'S MONICA 4 PLEX
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 1:10 - 4:05 - 7:00 - 9:45

RAIN
 1:00 - 3:20 - 5:40 - 8:00 - 10:15

DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS
 12:15 - 2:40 - 5:05 - 7:30 - 9:55

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The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

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

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)
 ★★★★★ Your high energy and mental astuteness make a big difference at work, at home and in relating to the outside world. You could get frazzled if you're pulled in too many directions. Detach and remember your priorities and who you are. Tonight: It's your call.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
 ★★★ Listen to your intuition, especially regarding your finances. You could find yourself in a real push-and-pull situation without any warning. The War of the Roses surrounds an emotional and/or financial issue. Remain upbeat in your dealings, please. Tonight: Take a break from it all.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
 ★★★ Where you might want to be is with your friends. Before you decide that today is a piece of cake, make sure the day is over. A power play between you and another could be a disaster, if you let it happen. Walk away from another's volatile behavior. Tonight: Go where the crowds are.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)
 ★★★ Be sensitive to your own fatigue. You might be more irritable than you have been in the recent past. Think in terms of success and heading in a new direction. How you view a situation changes with a chat with a loved one later in the day. Tonight: Togetherness works.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
 ★★★ Just when you feel as if you're about to lasso in something you want, it could backfire. Listen to what another shares and be sure you can hear the other perspective. People seem to be on edge. Decide not to be part of the group! Tonight: Listen to a favorite CD. Hop on the Net.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
 ★★★ You might want to listen to and follow an associate's lead. Problems ensue between your public and private lives. Others don't hesitate to make demands, which, for some reason, you feel the need to fulfill. Willingly say "no," if you must. Be your own person. Tonight: Listen to your best friend.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
 ★★★★★ You need to be careful when dealing with others. You could hit obstacles and misunderstandings where you least expect it. Loosen up and lighten up about what is going on, because you certainly cannot change it. Think in terms of making peace. Tonight: Defer to another.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
 ★★ Walk on eggshells, especially with your funds, as well as the funds of others. Problems develop where you least expect it. You might feel inspired by those around you. Put in that extra effort at work, especially where you're not dealing with funds. Tonight: Soak away stress.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
 ★★★ Sometimes you get your ire up, and it's hard for you to back off. Don't be surprised if someone suddenly blows his or her fuse. You're in some way tied to his or her reaction. Try to figure out what is happening and how you can reverse the trend. Tonight: Have fun and lighten up.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 ★★★ Realize what is happening between you and a co-worker. Tempers could flare, taking you in a new direction. Don't push so hard to have things your way. Understand that your demons might be manifesting themselves. Do something ultimately relaxing. Tonight: Treat yourself.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 ★★★★★ You might not be as sure as you would like to be about your choices. Choose to be an observer, as opposed to a player right now. Others throw tantrums about this and that. Be creative, imaginative and, certainly, manifest your universal friendship. Tonight: Swap war stories with a pal.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
 ★★★ Use special care with those in charge. Think in terms of your long-term plans for yourself. What goes on around you could be disconcerting. Learn not to be a player in an emotional situation. In fact, stand still emotionally and financially, if possible. Tonight: Pay bills.

QUOTE of the DAY

"If you have never been hated by your child,
you have never been a parent."

— Betty Davis

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LOCAL



Rent control infractions common in Santa Monica

SUIT, from page 1

Della Rocca said the purchase agreement specifies that he be notified of any changes to the building or its tenants before the sale is final. He argued that the change in tenancy was a violation of the agreement.

Della Rocca didn't intend to rent out any of the apartments. Under the state's Ellis Act, Della Rocca is allowed to evict the tenants if he uses the entire building as his own home. But the law requires that tenants who fall under rent control be paid a relocation fee if they are "Ellised" out of the building and their annual income is less than \$24,900.

The "Ellis Act" is a state law which says that landlords have the unconditional right to "go out of business." For an Ellis eviction, the landlord must remove all of the units in the building from the rental market and convert them into condominiums.

Della Rocca argues he shouldn't have to pay Wagerman's relocation fee of \$4,200 because Wagerman was allegedly illegally renting the \$486-a-month apartment.

"He should have been evicted," Della Rocca said. "Because (Taylor) wanted to close the deal and she was told that there was a sub-leaser but she didn't do anything."

Della Rocca hasn't paid Wagerman, which prompted Wagerman to sue Della Rocca in another small claims case. The

matter was heard about a month ago and a small claims judge ruled against Della Rocca. Della Rocca is appealing the judge's decision. The case will be heard on Friday.

"It's not easy to buy an apartment in Santa Monica because buyers don't understand how complicated the laws are."

— ROSSARIO PERRY
Local attorney

Wagerman was unavailable for comment.

Della Rocca argued real estate agent Taylor knew about Wagerman's deal with the sub-leaser because another renter in the building told her about it during the purchase negotiations.

"We didn't particularly like what Kent did," the witness said. "We told her it was going on for a year and once it was up for

A hard night's sleep



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Sleeping on the sidewalk is against the law, according to the city's municipal code. However, it's difficult for police to enforce the law. One reason may be that there are more people without homes in Santa Monica than there are police.

sale, Kent moved back in."

Taylor said she and her client, Arlem, weren't aware that someone other than Wagerman was living in the unit. And once the complex went up for sale, Arlem registered the building with the state, with the help of local attorney Rossario Perry.

Taylor said she didn't do anything wrong and Della Rocca's suit against her was nothing more than an attempt to recoup the money for Wagerman's relocation.

She added that Arlem had eight offers on the building but he chose Della Rocca over other buyers because he was a small investor who intended on keeping the renters there.

"I did everything right and he thought I

was in cahoots with the owner," she said. "But he told us that he wasn't going to Ellis the building and (Arlem) wanted to keep the tenants in there."

Perry said the case is a classic one for many investors in Santa Monica who don't realize how complicated it can be to purchase an apartment building in the city because of its rent control laws.

"Personally, I think the buyer has to pay the relocation fee but no one is happy about it," Perry said. "It's not easy to buy an apartment in Santa Monica because buyers don't understand how complicated the laws are."

"There is a lot of subletting going on without the owners knowing."



Tuesday's southwest swell and northwest wind swell stand fast, so expect LA County surf to remain waist to chest high under fair conditions. Northern spots with southwest exposures like County Line and Malibu will build from inconsistent two- to three-foot morning waves to inconsistent three- to four-foot later on. Watch the best sets at El Porto for rarefied five-footers when winds kick up. Shadowed spots average two to three feet.

Thursday promises weak leftover swell and dwindling onshore winds. Expect inconsistent, knee to waist high waves under good conditions.

(Information compiled by Jesse Haley.)

Location	Wednesday	Thursday	Water Quality
County Line	2-4'/Fair	2-3'/Fair-good	A+
Zuma	3-4'/Fair-good	2-3'/Good	A+
Surfrider	2-3'/Good	1-2'/Good	B
Topanga	2-3'/Poor	1-2'/Fair	B
Breakwater	2-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	A+
El Porto	2-4'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	A+



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OPINION

LETTERS

Law needs changing, or spam will continue

Editor:

Unfortunately your article ("Telemarketer Triumphant in Santa Monica Court,") by A. Fixmer, May 6, 2002) did not fully explain small claims judge Shcolnek's reasons for ruling in favor of the telemarketer in this case.

The implied fact that the telemarketer was not actually telemarketing, but only offering a "free financial analysis" does not appear to be relevant in case the telemarketer used a pre-recorded voice, as the plaintiff claimed.

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act, dating back to 1991, prohibits the use of "artificial or pre-recorded" voices, except in certain cases. It also requires companies to stop calling a number if the called party requests to be placed on a "do-not-call" list.

However, telemarketers are now using various schemes to circumvent the act, and they are fully aware that many of them are operating in gray areas of the law. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act is hopelessly outdated, too cumbersome to enforce, and it has failed to do its intended purpose. It was poorly drafted to begin with, and it certainly did not keep up with progress in computer technology and changes in the telecommunications industry.

Unless we adopt better legislation, our answering machines will soon be bursting with junk messages as much as our e-mail boxes bursting with spam today.

I recently wrote a detailed letter to Congressman Waxman on this issue. Anyone who is interested can read my letter at: http://www.reinhardkargl.com/correspondence/to_waxman.html, http://www.reinhardkargl.com/correspondence/to_waxman.html

Reinhard Kargl
Santa Monica

Clergy should focus on God

Editor:

On Tuesday, April 23rd, I was stunned to see all these clergy members from all these different denominations of religion in one place, tolerating each other, even talking to one another. After all these years and centuries of churches fighting each other, I had a perfect picture of unity and solidarity — unfortunately it was for the wrong cause.

This was bought with dirty money. Money from workers' sweat and hard work who paid their union dues for these clergy members and other bored activists to come and disrupt someone's business.

They made a mess at my station with all their stickers and their instruction notes on how to organize their disruption.

If I had known their plan and what they were here for, I would have not served them. It took me double the work to clean up after them and reset my station back, and I would never take their dirty money.

I ask you: Is this their way of helping me? If it is, I do not need their help.

Money talks, money buys anything these days — even the churches and its clergy. Unions, with their dirty money, bought themselves most of the churches. I am sick and tired of hearing about unions, and their stuff, if I would ever consider joining one before, I wouldn't now just because of their harassment and their low and dirty tactics.

In my opinion, the union or the clergy (same thing) could have used the money that they spent disrupting our business for a much better cause.

They could have used their energy, their time and that money for a good cause like visiting sick people in hospitals, buying toys for abused kids, buying food for the homeless (and God knows there are plenty in this city), or they could visit shelters — things closer to what their religion is actually about.

I have not read anything in the Bible that says join this union; I am also positive that the other holy books do not say that either.

I would also like to say to these clergy, on Sundays preach about the Bible, the word of God and not about how badly the workers are treated here and bashing the hotel out loud. The sermon should be God is love, not hate the Doubletree.

Stop the hypocrisy and put the money aside, you will all have to answer to one God. I wish to see the same unity of churches and their clergy under a holier situation.

Martha Reyes
Doubletree Guest Suites Hotel employee

(Editors Note: The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees local 814 has been waging a public campaign to unionize the Doubletree hotel. On April 23, many local clergy members staged a sit-in prayer session in the hotel's restaurant to support some workers' intention to unionize.)

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to sack@smdp.com. All letters must include the author's name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 530 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

LOCAL



Courtesy of www.patriotas.lt

This 1971 photo was taken before Algirdas Brazinkas (left) and his father, Pranas Brazinkas (right), were put on trial in Turkey for hijacking a Soviet commercial jetliner. Algirdas, also known as Albert Victor White, stands accused of killing his father. Both lived in Santa Monica on 21st Street.

Police find bag full of guns in SM apartment

MURDER, from page 1

Los Angeles Deputy District attorney Ann Rundle described Brazinkas as a frail, helpless elderly man who was brutally bludgeoned to death by his son.

Stephen Scholtz, a Los Angeles County Coroner's forensic pathologist, testified that there were seven blows to Brazinkas' head made by a blunt object. The severest blow — dubbed the "death blow" — was made above Brazinkas' left ear, which crushed part of his skull.

Scholtz said the blow, which caused bruising of the brain, could not have been made with a fist and was likely inflicted with a heavy object.

Detectives have not produced a murder weapon and White has not said what he used to allegedly kill his father.

Scholtz also testified that Brazinkas had an enlarged heart that was in the advanced stages of coronary heart disease, which would have limited his movements and made him extraordinarily weak.

"(The condition) would have compromised his vitality substantially," he said. "He would have been quite limited in terms of being physically active."

In 1970, prosecutors say Brazinkas and his then 13-year old son, White — also known as Algirdas Brazinkas — hijacked an Aeroflot jetliner and directed the flight to Turkey.

During the flight, Soviet guards on board opened fire. Caught in the crossfire, a female steward was killed and the pilot and co-pilot were wounded. After the soldiers were subdued, the flight crew was still able to successfully fly the hijackers to Turkey.

There, the father and son were arrested, convicted of murder and sentenced to prison. But in 1974 they were released, only to be placed under house arrest.

The pair managed to escape custody and fled to the closest American embassy in Ankara to plea for political asylum. Although they were refused asylum in the United States, they have lived in the U.S. since 1976 without entry visas.

After a few years living in Queens, NY, the father and son moved to Santa Monica to live among the city's large Lithuanian community. Since their dramatic escape from their home country, the pair has become heroes among Lithuanian expatriates living in America.

The pair's history will play heavily in the trial, Alex said. He plans to call witnesses who will testify that Brazinkas was a violent man who ran a black-market gun business in Lithuania.

White remains in the Los Angeles County Jail on \$1.2 million bail. He faces 26 years to life in prison, if convicted.

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CrimeWatch

Transient arrested for threatening officers

A transient was arrested last month after threatening police when they tried to help him.

At about 10 a.m. on Monday, April 22, Los Angeles Lifeguards called Santa Monica Police to the 1600 block of Ocean Front Walk. Police arrived to find lifeguards treating a man with an injured nose. Police asked the man what happened and he responded with a barrage of profanities. The man then told police he can get a 9 mm gun and kill them.

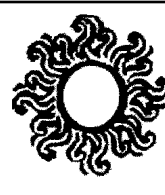
An ambulance took the man to a hospital where he was treated. Police then arrested him for making criminal threats and having five Santa Monica warrants totaling \$12,500.

The man was described as a transient.

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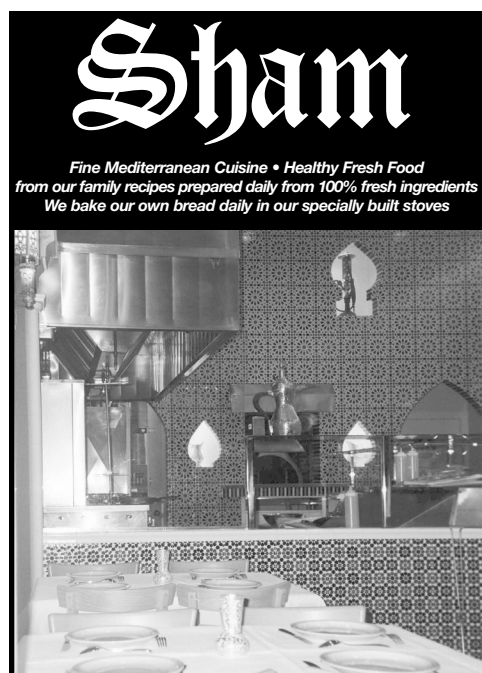
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STATE □ NATIONAL

Memo: Enron manipulated power prices in California

BY MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Bush expects vigorous pursuit of an investigation that prompted Enron Corp. to acknowledge it drove up electricity prices during California's energy crisis, a White House spokesman said Tuesday.

Bush has faced criticism in recent months for his close ties to the collapsed energy giant, which has been the single biggest financial supporter of his political career.

But Tuesday, the administration was eager to take credit for a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission probe that demanded the company turn over documents revealing its practices during California's crisis.

The revelation is a development "the president has noted, and he expects the investigation will be vigorously pursued wherever it may go," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

He used the disclosures to renew the White House call for tougher penalties for violations of the Federal Power Act.

But Fleischer declined to say whether Bush backs a call from Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., that the Justice Department open a criminal investigation into Enron's possible manipulation of the state's electricity market.

A memorandum, written by Enron lawyers in December 2000, outlined practices similar to those described by California officials who allege the energy trading company created phantom congestion on electricity transmission lines and engaged in sham sales among its affiliates to increase electricity prices.

Describing one such strategy called "Death Star," the lawyers wrote: "The net effect of these transactions is that Enron gets paid for moving energy to relieve

congestion without actually moving any energy or relieving any congestion."

Another practice, called "Ricochet," allowed Enron to send power out of California and then resell it back into the state to avoid price caps that applied to transactions solely within California.

Enron turned over the documents to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which made them public Monday.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has been investigating whether Enron either took advantage of or helped spark the crisis in California's newly deregulated power markets, in which wholesale power rates jumped tenfold, three investor-owned utilities faced financial ruin and Californians experienced rolling power blackouts. Enron has denied any role in the crisis.

The company provided the memo to the commission along with a later, undated report from other Enron lawyers that took issue with the first memo. FERC posted the memos on its Web site, along with a letter to Enron seeking more information about the company's electricity and natural gas trades in California and other Western states.

Robert Bennett, a Washington attorney representing Enron, said the memos became known 10 days ago and could easily have been kept confidential. The reports were addressed to Richard Sanders, Enron's vice president and assistant general counsel, to prepare for investigations and lawsuits resulting from the California situation.

Questionable accounting practices helped drive the company into bankruptcy last year and resulted in the sale of the energy trading unit at the center of the California allegations. "It's virtually impossible for us to determine the accuracy or inaccuracy of these memoranda," Bennett said.

One-fourth of organic produce contains pesticides, study finds

BY PHILIP BRASHER
AP Farm Writer

WASHINGTON — Think organic fruits and vegetables are free of pesticides? Think again.

Almost one-fourth of the organic produce in grocery stores could contain traces of pesticides, including long-banned chemicals like DDT, scientists say.

A Consumers Union-led study of government-collected data found pesticide residue on 23 percent of organic fruits and vegetables and on nearly 75 percent of conventionally grown produce.

The findings don't mean that any of the produce is unsafe. The residues are seldom even close to the limits set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Much of the residues found in organic crops were of organochlorine pesticides, chemicals including DDT and chlordane that plants can soak up from the soil decades after the products were used. Other chemicals could have been applied to the crops improperly or drifted onto the organic fields from adjacent farms, the scientists said.

One sample of organic peaches contained 3.3 parts per million of the pesticide

phosmet, suggesting the crop was sprayed shortly before harvest, the study said.

Although organic crops account for just 2 percent of U.S. fruit and vegetable acreage, the industry has been growing rapidly. Sales of organic foods reached \$7.8 billion in 2000, a 20 percent increase from the year earlier, according to Packaged Facts, a market research firm.

The study was based on sampling by the Agriculture Department and the state of California as well as by the scientists themselves. It did not take into account the many special pesticides that are approved for organic crops, including sulfur and bacteria sprays.

The Agriculture Department data that were examined in the Consumers Union study showed residues on seven of 30 samples of organic fruit, and 22 of 97 samples of organic vegetables, or 23 percent of the total organic produce tested. Nine of 19 samples of organic spinach had pesticide traces, and four of 18 carrot samples.

By comparison, pesticides were found on 73 percent of the 26,571 samples of conventional foods that were tested.

When the organochlorine chemicals were excluded from the analysis of organic foods, 13 percent showed positive for conventional pesticides.



Federal Reserve leaves key interest rate unchanged

BY JEANNINE AVERSA

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve left a key interest rate unchanged Tuesday, allowing Americans to continue to take advantage of some of the lowest borrowing costs in four decades.

That would give consumers an incentive to keep on spending, and businesses might be motivated to step up investment in new equipment and plants. Both are crucial ingredients to help along the budding economic recovery.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and his colleagues held the federal funds rate — the interest that banks charge each other on overnight loans — at 1.75 percent, the lowest level in 40 years. It marked the third consecutive Fed meeting this year that policy-makers decided to hold

rates steady.

The decision means the prime lending rate — a benchmark for many consumer and business loans — will remain at 4.75 percent, the lowest level since November 1965.

Stocks held on to their gains after the Fed's announcement, rebounding from Monday's sell-off. A quarter-hour after the Fed decision was announced, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 71 points and the Nasdaq index was up 5 points.

Economic growth has been receiving a "considerable upward impetus" from slower inventory liquidation by businesses, the Fed said.

However, the degree of the strengthening in demand by businesses and consumers in the coming quarters "is still uncertain," the Fed said in a statement explaining its decision.

The Fed's decision to leave rates alone

comes as the economic recovery, which started out at a sprinter's pace, appears to be slowing to a jog.

The economy broke out of the doldrums in the first quarter, growing at an annual rate of 5.8 percent, its strongest performance in more than two years and confirmation that last year's recession is history. Much of that growth reflected slower inventory liquidation by businesses.

However, many economists believe the economy is growing at a more moderate rate of 3 percent to 3.5 percent in the current quarter. Recent economic reports that showed a slower growth in manufacturing, weaker home sales and construction activity and higher unemployment are consistent with that forecast.

Even with the rebound slowing, economists said they weren't worried that the economy might backslide into a downturn, a "double-dip" recession.

Since the recovery has been spotty and inflation remains under control except for a burst of recent energy price increases, economists expect the Fed to wait at least until August or September to begin raising interest rates.

Just two months ago, many economists, buoyed by forecasts of a sizzling first-quarter growth, were predicting the

Fed's first rate increase could come as early as May.

Greenspan recently indicated that the Fed is in no rush to raise interest rates. That means borrowers will have more time to take advantage of low-cost financing, but savers will have to continue to deal with measly returns.

Even though the economy is on the mend, the healing process can be painful.

The nation's unemployment rate shot up to a nearly eight-year high of 6 percent in April and is expected to climb to as high as 6.5 percent.

Making sure that the American shopper, whose spending accounts for two-thirds of all economic activity in the United States, doesn't get spooked by rising unemployment is a key worry. Low interest rates may be the tonic, even if a psychological one, to persuade consumers to keep their pocketbooks and wallets open, analysts said.

Companies whose battered revenues and profits still suffer lingering effects from last year's recession are worried about the recovery's staying power and are reluctant to hire workers back, crank up spending and make other big commitments until they are convinced the turnaround is for real.

Student charged in mailbox bombings after Nevada arrest

BY SCOTT SONNER

Associated Press Writer

RENO, Nev. — A 21-year-old college student was charged Tuesday in connection with the five-state string of mailbox pipe bombs after he was arrested on a windswept highway following a manhunt that stretched across half the country.

Luke J. Helder of Pine Island, Minn., was captured after dropping a gun out his car window, the FBI said. A bomb squad was called to check the vehicle for explosives.

Helder was stopped more than 1,500 miles from the Illinois communities where some of the first bombs and their telltale anti-government notes were found. The terrorism spree alarmed thousands of rural Americans and raised fresh concern about the safety of the mail in the wake of last fall's deadly anthrax outbreak.

Residents in several states were asked to leave open their roadside mailboxes to give nervous letter carriers a clear look inside.

After Helder's license plate and car description were broadcast nationwide Tuesday, a motorist on Interstate 80 spotted Helder's westbound vehicle and tipped off authorities. He was pulled over after a 40-mile chase that reached 100 mph.

"The FBI contacted him on his cell phone and started negotiations with him, and asked us to back off," said Major Rick Bradley of the Nevada Highway Patrol. "Then he slowed down."

FBI agent Terry Hulse said Helder telephoned his parents during the chase and was patched through to an FBI negotiator. He said Helder stayed on the phone with the FBI after pulling over and volunteered to surrender if he was not harmed.

"He requested not to be tackled," Trooper Alan Davidson said. "He surrendered the gun and was taken into custody without incident."

Helder, who was expected to be jailed in Reno, was charged by federal prosecutors in Iowa with using an explosive to maliciously destroy property affecting interstate commerce and using a destructive device to commit a crime of violence. The charges carry penalties of up to life in prison and fines of \$250,000.

Specifically, U.S. Attorney Charles W. Larson said Helder was responsible for the cuts and shrapnel wounds suffered Friday by Delores Werling, 70, of Tipton, Iowa. Other charges were expected.

The capture came just eight hours after



Bill Ross/The Denver Post

A member of a bomb disposal team, left, holds a plastic bag with the remains of a pipebomb after it was disarmed on Tuesday in Salida, Colo. The bomb had been discovered Monday in a resident's mailbox in Salida, according to authorities.

the FBI issued an all-points bulletin for Helder and said it wanted to question him about the 18 pipe bombs found since Friday. His father, at the family's home in Minnesota, also pleaded with Helder: "Please don't hurt anyone else. ... You have the attention you wanted."

Six people — four letter carriers and two residents — were wounded by bombs left in mailboxes in Illinois and Iowa. Twelve other bombs found in Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado and Texas did not explode.

Most of the bombs were accompanied by anti-government propaganda warning that more "attention getters" were on the way.

FBI agent Jim Bogner in Omaha, where the investigation is centered, refused to say how Helder had become part of the case.

But Tuesday, a college newspaper in Wisconsin said it gave the FBI a seven-page letter that was received over the weekend and signed with Helder's name. The letter was postmarked in Omaha on Friday — the day the first eight bombs were found, in Iowa and Illinois, and a day before eight more bombs turned up in Nebraska.

The letter's first page is identical to the anti-government notes found with the bombs. The letter also said, in part: "I will die/change in the end for this, but that's ok, hahaha paradise awaits!"

"I'm dismissing a few individuals from reality, to change all of you for the better, surely you can understand my logic. See you all in 2011 (or sooner). Now go find your

Discarded cell phones pose threat of pollution

BY H. JOSEF HEBERT

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A new kind of cell phone pollution — and this one is silent.

Within three years, Americans will discard about 130 million cellular telephones a year, and that means 65,000 tons of trash, including toxic metals and other health hazards, a study says.

"Because these devices are so small, their environmental impacts might appear to be minimal," says Bette Fishbein, a researcher at Inform, an environmental research organization, who wrote the report.

But, she says, the growth in cell phone use has been so rapid and enormous "that the environmental and public health impacts of the waste they create are a significant concern."

There are more than 135 million people now registered as users of cell phones and the number is growing, according to the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association, the industry's trade group.

The study by Inform said that on average a cellular telephone is kept only 18 months and in many cases thrown into a closet or drawer and finally discarded with the household garbage.

By 2005, there will be at least 200 million cell phones in use across the country and another 500 million older

phones may be stockpiled in drawers, closets and elsewhere, waiting to be thrown away, the report estimates, based on expected market growth and cell phone purchases in recent years.

Cell phones, along with other "wireless waste" from increasingly popular pagers, pocket PCs and music players, pose special problems at landfills or when they're burned in municipal waste incinerators because they have toxic chemicals in batteries and other components, said the report.

These include persistent toxins that accumulate in the environment, including arsenic, antimony, beryllium, cadmium, copper, lead, nickel and zinc, said the report. These toxins have been associated with cancer and neurological disorders, especially in children.

The report urges the industry to take measures to reduce the amount of cell phones that are thrown away by developing "take-back" programs so phones and batteries can be recycled and adopt industrywide technical and design standards so phones are not thrown away after a user switches services.

The report said a number of states including California, Massachusetts and Minnesota are considering legislation that would make manufacturers pay the cost of managing the waste from electronic products, including cell phones.

higher selves!"

At Helder's family home an hour's drive southeast of Minneapolis, his father, Cameron, read a statement urging his son to call home.

"I really want you to know that Luke is not a dangerous person," he said. "I think he's just trying to make a statement about the way our govern-

ment is run. I think Luke wants people to listen to his ideas, and not enough people are hearing him, and he thinks this may help."

He added: "Luke, you need to talk to someone. Please don't hurt anyone else. It's time to talk. You have the attention you wanted. Luke, we love you very much. We want you home safe."



Detained



Gadi Kabalo/Associated Press

Israeli soldiers detain an alleged member of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement near Gush Katif, an Israeli settlement in the Gaza strip on Tuesday. Israeli forces arrested two Palestinians they say are responsible for attacks against the settlement.

British monarch greeted by male streaker in Newcastle

By The Associated Press

LONDON — One of Queen Elizabeth II's subjects greeted her in the nude Tuesday, streaking past the royal car during the monarch's Golden Jubilee tour.

The young man bared all to the queen and her husband, Prince Philip, as they drove through the northern England town of Newcastle in their Rolls Royce.

The streaker appeared to pose for photographers before he was pounced on by at least four police officers who forced him to lie face down on the ground before covering him in coats.

Northumbria police later said the 27-year-old streaker, whom they identified only as an area resident, had been arrested for allegedly outraging public decency.

The queen, who is on a 15-week Golden Jubilee tour of Britain to mark her 50 years on the throne, was on her way to unveil a statue of the late Cardinal Basil Hume, a native of Newcastle.

Nepal scraps old rules, reduces fees for Himalayan climbers

By The Associated Press

KATMANDU, Nepal — Nepal is slashing prices at Mount Everest to draw more climbers.

A solo climber will now pay \$25,000 to scale the world's highest peak. That's \$45,000 off the earlier expedition fee, \$70,000.

"We have to compete with Tibet, China, India and Pakistan to attract climbers," Shankar Koirala, a senior tourism official, said Tuesday.

A two-member team can climb the 29,035-foot peak by doling out \$40,000. The fee increases to \$48,000 for a team of three, \$56,000 for four and \$60,000 for five.

A seven-member expedition pays \$70,000 on the normal route; any additional member will pay another \$10,000, the tourism and civil aviation ministry said.

For the first time, the Himalayan kingdom is allowing expeditions year-round. Earlier climbers were limited to eight months of the year.

But the government says it will also charge climbers a clean-up fee ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. Some climbers have complained about the litter their precursors leave behind.

Expeditions will be charged a five percent advance fee for obtaining permits in the case of Everest and 10 percent on other peaks.

"Previously, some would take permits and not show up, thus blocking others," said Shyam Kuinkel, a mountaineering official.

"We have to compete with Tibet, China, India and Pakistan to attract climbers."

— SHANKAR KOIRALA
Tourism official

A climbing permit would be valid for 75 days only on Everest.

The new rules ban anyone below 16 years of age from climbing Mt. Everest. The ban came after two boys, Temba Chhiri Sherpa and Arabind Timilsina, failed to climb Everest. Sherpa lost his finger in the attempt.

Nepal accounts for eight of 14 Himalayan peaks, all of them higher than 26,000 feet.

Children appeal to U.N. against horrors of war

BY PAUL HAVEN

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS — Wilmot Wungko was 5 when he and his mother fled Liberia as war erupted around them. He saw a man get killed before his eyes. He watched as schools were burned to the ground.

"I was too young at the time to really understand what was happening. I heard the sounds of guns. I saw people running. I saw people shooting," Wungko, now 16, told the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday. "I was later told that a war was going on."

Wungko was one of three children from conflict zones who addressed the powerful council a day before the start of the U.N. children's summit. The summit will bring together leaders and ministers from over 180 countries to set new goals to improve the health, education and security of the world's 2 billion children.

Some 300,000 boys and girls under the age of 18 — many as young as 7 or 8 — are fighting in conflicts in some 30 countries, said Olara A. Otunnu, the U.N. special envoy on children and armed conflict.

Eliza Kantardzic, a 17-year-old from Bosnia and Herzegovina, said war destroyed her childhood.

"Everything that you know falls apart," she said. "The only thing you can see is fear and death."

Kantardzic delivered a message to the council from the 400-strong Children's Forum, a gathering of young people being held ahead of the U.N. summit: The only way to protect children is to stop conflicts before they start.

"War and politics have always been an adults game," said Kantardzic, a delegate to the forum. "But children have always been the losers."

Children are often abducted from their homes and forced to fight, and many girls are forced into sexual slavery.

"We must put an end to this abomination," Otunnu said.

"For far too long, the use of child soldiers has been seen as merely regrettable," U.N. Secretary-General Kofi

Annan told a panel discussion after the council meeting. "We are here to ensure it is recognized as intolerable."

He said the rights of children should be a central concern of peace negotiations and peace building.

"For far too long, the use of child soldiers has been seen as merely regrettable. We are here to ensure it is recognized as intolerable."

— KOFI ANNAN
U.N. Secretary-General

"Children are our future. To accept the use of child soldiers in conflict is to accept the destruction of our future, one child at a time," Annan told the panel on the problem of child soldiers.

The Security Council adopted a statement condemning "the continued targeting and use of children in armed conflicts, including their abduction, compulsory recruitment, mutilation, forced displacement, sexual exploitation and abuse."

It also called for member states to ratify a protocol which bans children under the age of 18 from participating in armed conflicts.

The panel discussion heard comments from a demobilized child soldier named China who spent 11 years fighting in Uganda, and another child named Ishmael who became a soldier in Sierra Leone after his parents were killed.

"Today, I smile because I am afraid to cry. What was done to me could have turned me into a monster," said China, who now lives in Denmark.

She appealed to the world community to protect children from conflict. If not, she said, "there will be so many monsters tomorrow that you'll ask yourselves where they all came from."

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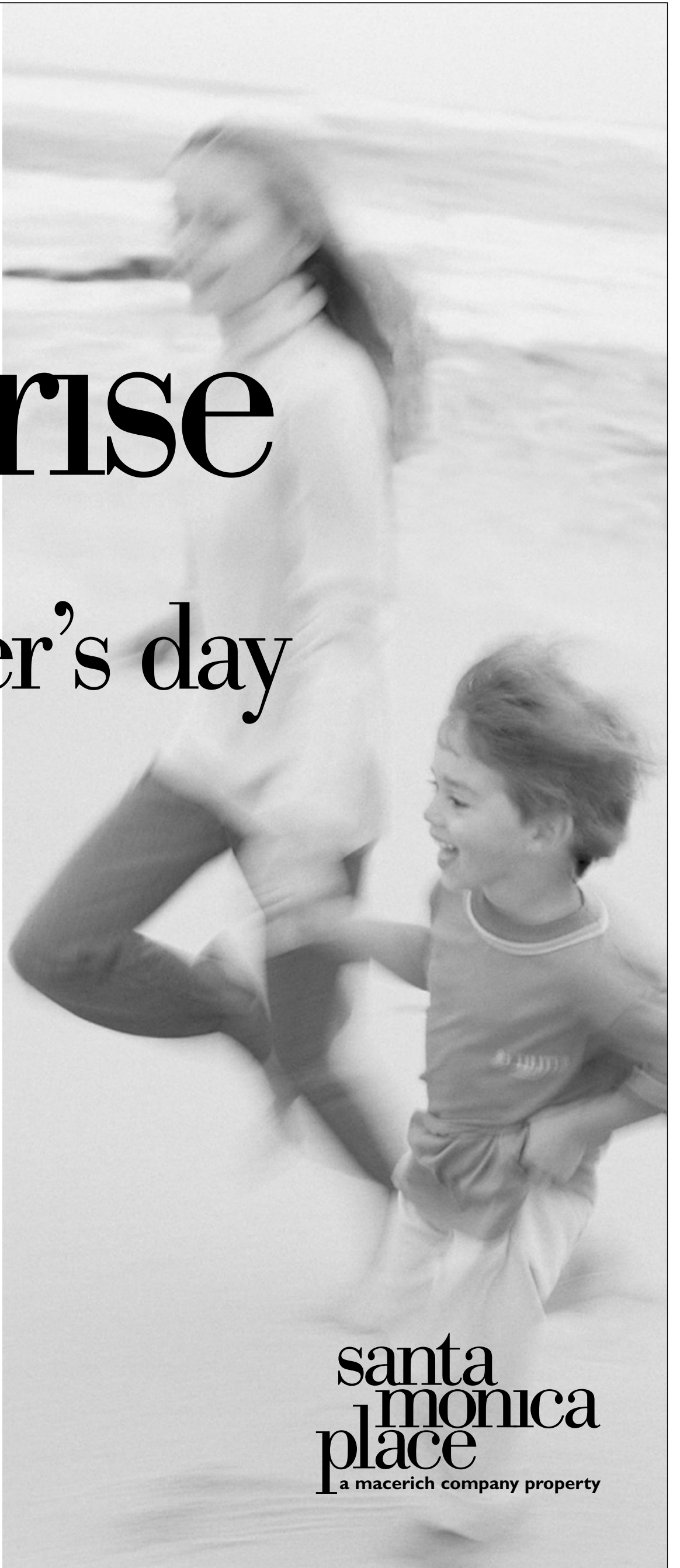
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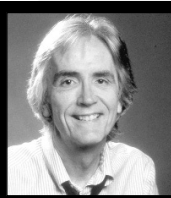
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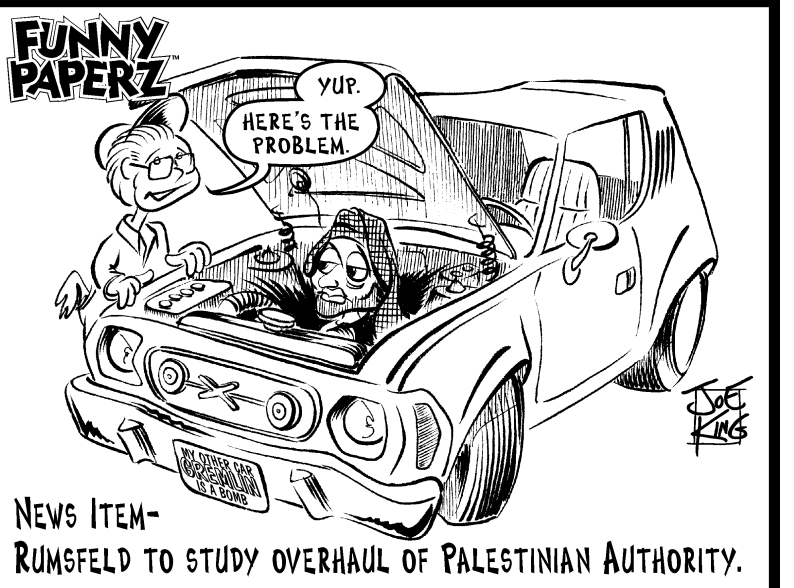


NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Weak performance still gets CEO \$2M bonus

New Management Incentive Structures: Tyson Foods' CEO John Tyson was awarded a \$2.1 million bonus for last year despite a dismal economic performance and a federal indictment for smuggling in illegal aliens to work at 15 plants in nine states; headquarters officials said the alien problem must have been 15 individual managers out of control. And federal government bonuses to its managers increased by 25 percent for the last fiscal year to an average of \$11,000, despite, to put it gently, widely varied agency performances in meeting goals.



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BACK PAGE

Not far from marriage capital, town has divorce title

BY ANGIE WAGNER

Associated Press Writer

BLUE DIAMOND, Nev. — Las Vegas might be the marriage capital of the world, but people in this tiny hamlet a few miles away have a distinction of their own — divorce capital of Nevada.

Blue Diamond — a place where wild burros and horses munch on lawn grass and wander in the streets — has a divorce rate of 35 percent, the highest in the state, according to new 2000 U.S. Census Bureau figures released Tuesday.

The state's divorce rate is 14 percent, same as in Las Vegas. The Reno area, which historically had billed itself as the state's divorce capital, only showed a rate of 15 percent. Nationally the divorce rate is just about 10 percent.

People in Blue Diamond can't seem to make sense of the numbers. Everyone librarian Nina Mata knows is married. She is too, for 16 years no less.

"That seems really high," she says, shaking her head. "If anything it's more of a nurturing community."

Mineral County in west-central Nevada has the highest percentage of divorced people with nearly two of every 10 residents having opted to end their marriages. The divorce rate jumped to 19 percent from 12.4 percent in the past decade, census figures show.

"They're part of the area that's been having a declining economy because of the mining bust," says state demographer Jeff Hardcastle. "That economic pressure tends to put pressure on families and drive people toward splitting up."

At 9 percent, Lincoln County north of Las Vegas has the lowest percentage of divorced people.

The 2000 Census also found that 25 percent of Nevadans have never married, with Clark and Washoe counties home to the highest percentage of never marrieds, each at 26 percent. Percentage wise, Pershing County has the lowest number of people who never married — 15 percent — and also the highest number of mar-

ried people at 66 percent.

Only 266 residents older than age 15 live in Blue

"It's a nice place to live. I could see why divorced people would be attracted to it."

— PAT VANBETTEN
Blue Diamond resident

Diamond, a quiet community about 23 miles southwest of Las Vegas and nestled near the entrance of the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Here in what residents call "the village," the horse droppings are shoveled to the side of the road and the

Beer Garden gets hopping on Saturday nights with live music.

A sign on the way into town announces the city's statistics: "Welcome to Blue Diamond. Population low. Elevation high. Burros?"

"The people that are attracted to that lifestyle, maybe they tend to be people that are divorced and want to just get away from everything," Hardcastle says.

Down at the Village Market, Karen Harrison, 51, is going on her 20th wedding anniversary. She's been divorced once. "The people I know have been married forever!"

Bill Dahlquist, pastor of the Blue Diamond Foursquare Church, thinks he knows the reason so many divorced people call Blue Diamond home. "It's a good hideaway."

Then, he adds, "Most people in the village don't go to church."

Back at the library, Pat VanBetten, married for 42 years, pops in to chat.

"It's a nice place to live," she says. "I could see why divorced people would be attracted to it."

Anheuser-Busch holding angler contest with 'Big Jake' for \$1M grand prize

By The Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Dig out the waders: There's a fish out there worth \$1 million to the angler who reels it in.

In a contest to promote its Busch brand of beer, Anheuser-Busch Inc. has tagged 40 fish and placed one into each of 40 bodies of water around the United States.

A \$1 million grand-prize tag has been attached to one of the fish, named Big Jake. The remaining 39 have

been tagged for secondary prizes of \$1,000.

The second-annual "Catch Big Jake" contest started Saturday and runs through June 4. It is supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a nonprofit organization that was created to help conserve and manage fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats.

An angler who lands a tagged fish will be directed to call a special telephone number and find out whether it's Big Jake.

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