FREE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2001 Volume 1, Issue 1

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Jet disintegrates, crashes into neighborhood



John-Marshall Mantel/Associated Press

Firefighters hose down debris that landed in the backyard of a house at the scene of an American Airlines jetliner crash en route to the Dominican Republic.

Officials uncertain if tragedy is accidental or terrorism-linked

BY DIEGO IBARGUEN
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — A jetliner en route to the Dominican Republic broke apart minutes after take-off and crashed in a waterfront neighborhood Monday, engulfing homes in flames and sowing initial fears of a new terrorist atrocity. At least 265 people were killed, police said.

"Everything points to an accident," said Marion Blakey, chairwoman of the National Transportation Safety Board. "The communications from the cockpit were normal up until the last few seconds before the crash."

If there was an explosion on the plane — and many witnesses heard one — it was probably caused by a mechanical failure, investigators said.

American Airlines said 260 people were aboard the jetliner and authorities said none survived.

Deputy Police Commissioner Joseph Dunne said 265 bodies had been recovered, but didn't provide details on how many people might have died on the ground. He said six to nine people in the neighborhood were missing.

As night fell, several hundred people working under the glare of klieg lights formed bucket brigades and separated debris into gruesome piles of luggage, plane parts and human remains. Police said the bodies were being recovered "relatively intact" — including a man found clutching a baby.

American Airlines Flight 587, a European-made Airbus A300, left Kennedy Airport at 9:14 a.m., 74 minutes late because of security checks put in place after the World Trade Center attack, according to American Airlines chairman Don Carty. It took off into a clear blue sky.

Three minutes later, it spiraled nose-first into the Rockaway Beach section of Queens — a middle-class neighborhood, 15 miles from Manhattan, that lost scores of its people, including firefighters and financial workers, in the Trade Center catastrophe just two months ago.

"I just thought, 'Oh, no, not again,'" said Milena Owens, who was putting up Thanksgiving decorations when she heard an explosion.

Furious orange flames towered above the treetops, and a plume of thick, black smoke could be seen miles away.

Investigators recovered the cockpit voice recorder, one of the two "black boxes" from the twin-engine jet. George Black of the NTSB said the quality of the recording was good, and that the co-pilot was at the controls, which was not unusual.

Blakey said an initial listen to the machine found nothing "to indicate a problem that is not associated with an accident."

The search continued for the flight data recorder.

American Airlines said there were 251 passengers including five infants sitting on their parents' laps — and nine crew members.

"I don't believe there are any survivors," Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said.

Authorities requested DNA from families to help with identification.

Witnesses reported hearing an explosion and seeing an engine, a large chunk of a wing and other debris falling off the plane as it came down.

See CRASH, page 3

New paper hits Santa Monica streets

By Daily Press Staff

Santa Monica has been without a daily newspaper for nearly four years.

Until today.

The copy of the Santa Monica Daily Press you're holding in your hands is our debut edition. With only eight pages, we know it's not much — yet.

But it will keep coming at you, hopefully for years to come.

We call it a "micro daily," meaning it's tabloid-sized, local and free.

It's this last thing — the "free" bit that sets us apart from most dailies in the country. We are one of a small number of micro dailies that have begun publishing in the U.S. during the last 20 years.

We will apply this "micro" approach to covering Santa Monica, too.

Hard, local news and sports will be our focus, supplemented by state, national and international coverage from the Associated Press.

It takes a reader only a few minutes of reading the letters in any local media to understand Santa Monica's belief that it is unique — as a debating community, as a vital place to live, vacation, work and — yes, eat and go out. It is also a business center, with all the business issues and controversies that surround it.

When the Santa Monica Outlook published its final edition March 14, 1998, dozens of citizens and policy makers publicly lamented the loss of a daily newspaper. The failure of the Outlook seemed an embarrassment to Santa Monica, but in reality it was more of an embarrassment for Copley, the corporation that bought it and folded much of its operations into the Daily Breeze in Torrance. We don't believe that Santa Monica can't support its own daily.

And that's why you're reading this newspaper today.

Traditional paid dailies have been unable to successfully start in the U.S. since World War II, with some corporate or one-town-over exceptions. That's largely due to the growth of radio and television, which is free to consumers.

The founders of this paper, Dave Danforth, Ross Furukawa, and Carolyn Sackariason, have worked together before at the Aspen Daily News, a paper Danforth founded as a college dropout in 1978. In the ensuing years, Danforth, wondering whether the "micro daily" model was just an accident in a resort town or something worth pursuing, helped found other daily papers in Conway, New Hampshire and Berlin, New

See NEW PAPER, page 4

Council concerned about lack of outdoor dining on Promenade

By Daily Press Staff

The Santa Monica City Council wants you to eat outside.

But because recent market trends affecting the Third Street Promenade have favored retail stores over restaurants, that's not as easy as it once was.

City staff believe this lack of outdoor dining could change the character of the Promenade, as well as undermine its long-term success, according to a staff memo. Six restaurants with outdoor dining have left during the last two years, while just one has opened.

Retailers are willing to pay more rent than restaurants, staff said. The difference is "varying, but substantial," according to the memo.

However, city officials believe they can regulate the market through a series of measures scheduled for consideration at tonight's council meeting.

These measures include possible lower rents for

See DINING, page 4

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LOCAL

Local police investigate three Venice shootings

By the Associated Press

VENICE — Police are investing three shootings in Venice on Sunday that left two people dead and a third injured.

John Lovejoy, 26, was shot about 1:30 a.m. after coming out of a supermarket, said Los Angeles Police Lt. Steven Nielson. The shooting followed a confrontation with two other men, he said.

A 20-year-old cyclist, who was not identified, was gunned down about 4 a.m. The man was riding his bicycle on the sidewalk when a black vehicle pulled up to the curb. There was an argument and the driver shot and killed the cyclist, Nielson said.

The third shooting in Venice occurred about 1:30 p.m. The unidentified victim was listed in stable condition at UCLA Medical Center.

It was not clear whether the shootings were connected.

Public invited to discuss new $45 million Santa Monica library

By Daily Press Staff

The Santa Monica City Council and the library board will hold a special joint meeting to discuss the new main library tonight.

The public is invited for the presentation and to discuss the initial conceptual plans with Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners and with Library and City staff.

Moore Ruble Yudell was selected to design the new main library in 2000 following passage of Proposition L by Santa Monica voters in 1998.

The Santa Monica-based firm has built, expanded, and renovated several libraries, including the Powell Library and the Hugh and Hazel Darling Law Library at the University of California, Los Angeles campus; the Fairchild Engineering and Applied Science Library at the California Institute of Technology; and the Humboldt Library in Berlin, Germany.

The Santa Monica library plan being proposed would be 104,000 square feet and is expected to cost $49.5 million. About $45 million of that are included in the city's capital improvements program, with the remaining funds to be appropriated in next year's budget.

The meeting begins at 6:45 p.m. in council chambers at Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main Street.

WEATHER

Today ... Pretty much the same as yesterday. Possibly drier. Chance of showers, coastal fog and sunshine in late afternoon may occur. Temperatures vary, depending on your location.

Wednesday ... Temperatures remain variable. Chance of intermitent fog, sunshine and showers likely.

Extended ... Variable throughout the week.

QUOTE of the DAY

"Newspapers are the first rough draft in history"
— Anonymous

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NATIONAL ▫ STATE

More than 250 dead in New York plane crash



John-Marshall Mantel/Associated Press

Firefighters search through debris at the scene of the American Airlines Flight 587 crash.

CRASH, from page 1

"I saw pieces falling out of the sky," said Jennifer Rivara, who watched through a window at her home about five blocks away. "And then I looked over to my left and I saw this huge fireball, and the next thing I know, I hear this big rumbling sound. I ran to the door and all I saw was big, black smoke."

One smoking engine was found intact in a parking lot at a Texaco station two blocks from the crash site, where it had missed the gas pumps by no more than 6 feet; neighbors ran to the scene with garden hoses to help put out the fire. Part of the second engine was found another block away, in Kevin McKeon's back yard after it crashed through his kitchen.

"The next thing we knew, the walls were blowing off," said McKeon, who was knocked into the yard by the impact, along with his daughter.

The vertical stabilizer — the tail fin — was pulled from Jamaica Bay, just offshore, Giuliani said.

At least six houses were destroyed, and several others were seriously damaged — in some cases, the siding was melted off the homes by intense heat. Forty-one people were treated and released for minor injuries.

Roberto Valentin, a Dominican ambassador at large, spoke through tears when he said he believed 90 percent of the passengers were Dominican. New York City has 455,000 Dominicans.

Relatives of passengers crowded Santo Domingo's airport, sobbing and grasping each other after hearing about the crash.

"Oh my God!" said Miriam Fajardo, crying after being told that her sister and three nephews were aboard. "I hadn't seen them in eight years. Now they're gone."

The rectory of St. Francis de Sales, a block from the crash site, was used as an emergency command center. Its pastor, Monsignor Martin Geraghty, was called away to bless bodies.

Firefighter Joe O'Brien accompanied the priest. The monsignor blessed about 20 bodies, which were being laid out on the street right in front of the crash site, O'Brien said.

"Right now they're just recovering bodies. The FBI is looking for evidence," he said. "And the priests are down there consoling firemen."

At a candlelight vigil Monday night in Manhattan's Washington Heights, heavily populated with Dominicans, Gov. George Pataki and Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg offered words of encouragement.

"We are New Yorkers. We are a strong people. A free people. A people committed to each other," the governor said. "However long the sorrow might continue, we will prevail."

Added Bloomberg: "All one can say to those left behind is, you have memories, you have children, you have parents that can remember those we lost."

The city, which was already on high alert because of the Trade Center catastrophe in lower Manhattan, reacted immediately. Fighter jets patrolled the skies; bridges, tunnels and all three major airports were closed for a time; the Empire State Building was evacuated.

"People should remain calm," Giuliani said. "We're just being tested one more time, and we're going to pass this test, too."

In Washington, President Bush met with advisers, seeking details of the crash. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said there were no "unusual communications" from the cockpit, and a senior administration official said that no threats against airplanes had been received.

The NTSB was designated the lead agency in the investigation, signaling that authorities have no information other than that a mechanical malfunction — and not a terrorist attack — brought down the plane.

Flames were seen shooting out of the left engine and witnesses said the plane had difficulty climbing and was banking to the left. The plane was given a routine maintenance check Sunday night, and investigators were checking who had access to the plane during those hours.

The Airbus had two CF6-80C2 engines made by General Electric. In March, the FAA directed airlines to inspect such engines for possible cracks in turbine rotor discs. The cracks could cause the discs to fly apart and prompt engine failure, the FAA said. The alert was issued after the FAA received a report of an engine failure during a maintenance run on the ground.

Ann Mollica, an aerospace engineer with the FAA in Burlington, Mass., said she was unable to say whether the problem was related to the crash. The FAA last month said its study of problems with the type of engines indicate a need for tougher, mandatory inspections of possibly worn parts. The agency called the current risk an "unsafe condition" that could damage an airplane.

The NTSB said the engines and associated maintenance would be examined.

Jet engines have been known to break up catastrophically, hurling shrapnel. In 1989, for example, a United Airlines DC-10 with GE-built engines crashed in Sioux City, Iowa, killing 112 people, after the metal hub that held the engine's fan blades shattered and ruptured the jet's hydraulic lines.

Giuliani said his first thought upon hearing about the crash was "'Oh, my God.' I just passed the church in which I've been to, I think, 10 funerals here. Rockaway was particularly hard hit" in theTrade Center disaster, he said.

The Trade Center was destroyed by two Boeing 767s hijacked out of Boston's Logan Airport. One of the planes was operated by American, the other by United. Another American jet crashed into the Pentagon that day.

Airplane crash adds to travelers' jangled nerves

BY CHELSEA J. CARTER
Associated Press Writer

News of an airplane crash jangled the nerves of travelers in California, many already on edge since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

More than 255 people were killed Monday when an American Airlines jetliner en route to the Dominican Republic broke apart and crashed after takeoff from New York's Kennedy Airport.

Federal investigators do not believe the crash was the work of terrorists, but that did little to calm nerves.

Daniel Rothmuller, 58, was waiting at Los Angeles International Airport for an American Airlines flight to New York when he heard about the crash.

"First of all, I was horrified that there was an airplane crash," he said. "Then I thought, oh my God, it's another terrorist attack."

American Airlines flight attendant Sherri Grossman of Princeton, N.J., was returning home with her husband and three children after a Disneyland trip. She was so shaken after Sept. 11, she took a leave of absence and still hasn't decided if she will return to work in December.

She lost friends on Sept. 11 and Monday, she said. ``I knew the captain on the plane that went down," said Grossman, who has been a flight attendant for 23 years.

In the minutes following the crash, law enforcement and airport officials stepped up security efforts throughout the state.

An undetermined number of flights from California airports to New York airports were delayed by a ground-stop order issued at 6:30 a.m., said LAX spokeswoman Nancy Castles.

The planes returned to the air nearly four hours later when the group-stop was lifted, she said.

Travel agents said they braced for calls from nervous travelers, but did not receive many.

"One of my agents had someone who had to go to New York today or tomorrow cancel," said Jerry Greenberg, owner of Baldwin Travel Bureau in Los Angeles. "But we've had a few bookings, too. People are nervous to begin with and this doesn't help."

At Seaside Travel House Inc. in Long Beach, owner Ada Brown said it was "strangely quiet."

"Sometimes when that happens, it's because people are waiting to see what happens," she said.

After hearing more news about the crash, Rothmuller, of Los Angeles, said he felt better, "if you can feel better about that sort of thing."

He and others resigned themselves to continue flying despite their concerns.

"I'm scared to fly because we don't know what happened and in light of what happened before, it's scary to go before you have all the facts. But I'm going to go because I have to go for work," Camille Tragos said at Los Angeles International Airport.

"If God wants me to make it home, then I'll make it home, and if he wants to take me, he's gonna take me," said Margie Schnitzer, a New Jersey legal secretary whose morning flight to New York was canceled

Nervousness extended beyond airports. Along San Francisco's famed Market Street, tourists slowly digested news of the crash but pushed on with their plans.

"I think you're always going to have plane accidents, and whether it's related to Sept. 11 or not, I'm not going to alter my plans. I'm just a bit weary," said Brian Kilham, who was visiting from Nottingham, England.

"It doesn't worry me one bit. These things happen, don't they? You could die in a car accident," said Michael Thompson, a tourist from Newcastle, England. He's been visiting San Francisco for the past couple of days. He planned a trip to Las Vegas later in the week and didn't plan to change it.

Joe Santulli, 36, of Pompton Lake, N.J., said despite the crash and the prior terror attacks, he will continue to fly out of necessity.

"You stop flying, you stop living your life," he said.

Santulli, who was in Los Angeles on business, knows first hand about the death and destruction of terrorist attacks. His sister-in-law, Catherine A. Nardella, was killed in the World Trade Center.

"It was difficult," he said of getting over his sister-in-law's death. "And once we get some closure, this happens."

— Associated Press reporters Gary Gentile, Ritu Bhatnagar and Raul Mora contributed to this report.

LOCAL

Santa Monica Daily Press makes debut today

NEW PAPER, from page 1

Hampshire (Daily Sun), and in the Bay Area communities of Palo Alto (Daily News), Berkeley (Daily Planet), and San Mateo (Daily Journal). They are still here.

We may eventually flop one day, but not in Santa Monica.

Sackariason, the editor, and Danforth are both journalists by background. Sackariason, from Minneapolis, worked most recently as publisher of the Snowmass Sun, a small weekly near Aspen.

Furukawa, the publisher of the Daily Press, is a native of San Diego and an entrepreneur who has taken part in ventures from water purification to business enterprise software.

Danforth is a New Englander with a background in both broadcast and print journalism. We haven't figured out how to title him, but at one of his other papers, he's listed as "staff mascot." You can recognize him easily, still wedded to his Red Sox hat.

We will not be the only source of local news for Santa Monicans. There are four weekly papers here, and two of them — the Mirror and Observer — are home grown, both rising out of the ashes of the fallen Outlook. Two other news authorities, the Lookout and Ocean Park Gazette, appear on the web, enabling them to focus on news coverage. It's our experience that the appearance of a daily in the midst of such vitality does not diminish them. Usually, the competition raises the visibility of local news and advertising for most readers and businesses. What other community has four weeklies and two independent web sites serving it?

For the moment, we are distributing 4,000 copies throughout the city. Look for us in local restaurants and businesses. Hopefully we'll be able to print more copies for you in the near future. It may take a while for the Santa Monica Daily Press to be everything you want us to be, but it will not be for lack of your help, encouragement, derision, and goading. Please feel free to do any of these. We're downtown, at 530 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 200. Or reach us with tips, letters, advertising — or just to see if we're still here — at (310)-458-PRESS (7737).

Outdoor dining, 'Superblock' head council agenda

DINING, from page 1

restaurants with outdoor dining, encouraging more outdoor kiosks and vending carts and expanding outdoor dining to include space in front of adjacent retail stores.

Also at issue tonight is the future of Santa Monica Place.

Santa Monica's only shopping mall could be transformed into public space as part of the city's $120 million civic center redevelopment plan.

The council is scheduled to discuss the possibilities of connecting Santa Monica Place to the main civic center area, located on Main Street between Colorado Avenue and Pico Boulevard.

The council will decide if $150,000 should be allocated to provide "master planning services" by ROMA Design Group for the Santa Monica Place property as part of the Civic Center Specific Plan. The city's cost for the services will be paid by the Macerich Co., which owns and operates Santa Monica Place. Macerich recently approached the city about the possibility of redeveloping the enclosed shopping mall, located at the south end of the Third Street Promenade and Colorado Avenue.

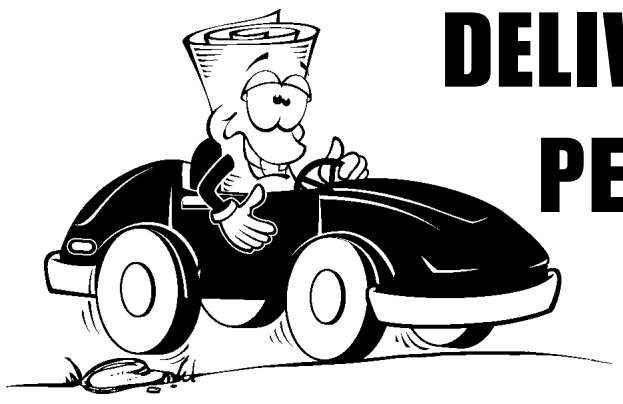
According to a city staff memo, the Santa Monica Place "superblock" presents a critical link to the civic center area and it should be considered if the mall ever redevelops.

One way to do that is to build a new freeway overpass to physically connect the two areas while encouraging reuse of the Sears sites for mixed-use, transit-based residential development to create activity linkages between the two areas.

The city council is devising a massive redevelopment plan for the entire civic center area, complete with a renovated City Hall, a child development facility, a new civic center auditorium, parking garages and open space for parks. All of this will be on an additional 11 acres, which the city purchased for $53 million from the RAND Corporation, as well as on the property known as the civic center.

The plan could encompass up to 15 acres of open space at six different locations, including a "garden walk" to link the civic center with the pier and Palisades Park; a town square to the West of City Hall and a pedestrian walkway along the north side of a realigned Olympic Drive connecting Fourth Street and Ocean Avenue.

Up to 600 units of housing along Ocean Avenue and Olympic Drive also are under consideration. A renovated civic center auditorium could become a regional performing arts center, a concert venue, a community events center or conference center.



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INTERNATIONAL

Opposition breaks through Taliban lines

BY KATHY GANNON
Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan —Opposition forces broke through Taliban front lines Monday and pushed into the hills above the capital, Kabul, rushing south on a string of stunning victories in northern Afghanistan.

The ruling Islamic militia circled the mile-high city with tanks to defend against an all-out assault.

Shouting "God is great," anti-Taliban troops rolled within 12 miles of Kabul on trucks carrying the green, white and black Afghan flag and displaying pictures of their slain commander, Ahmed Shah Massood.

The anti-Taliban forces, a coalition of factions and ethnic groups, capped their four-day dash across the north by overruning western Afghanistan's biggest city, Herat. Commanders said they were pushing Haron Amin, a Washington-based envoy for the northern alliance, said Monday that the anti-Taliban forces will try to surround Kabul, which sits surrounded by the foothills of the Hindu Kush mountains, to prevent the Taliban from reinforcing or resupplying their troops inside.

"We have no intention of going into Kabul," Amin said. The United Nations must first come up with a plan for dividing power in Afghanistan after the Taliban falls, he said.

At the United Nations, the United States, Russia and six nations that border Afghanistan pledged "to establish a broad-based Afghan administration on an urgent basis."

The aim is to put together a transitional leadership that is broadly acceptable, possibly including Taliban defectors. The United Nations might take interim control of the capital, and Muslim and non-Muslim nations are likely to join with Turkey in providing peacekeepers, U.S. officials said.

Likely participants with Turkey in a combined peacekeeping force from Muslim and non-Muslim countries include Indonesia, Bangladesh and Jordan, U.S. officials said.

The Taliban losses followed an intensive bombing campaign by the United States, and some of the militia's commanders switched sides once the opposition forces gained momentum.

President Bush launched the air campaign on Oct. 7 after the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, prime suspect in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.



Marco Di Lauro/Associated Press

An Afghan Northern Alliance fighter looks at plumes of smoke after a U.S. aircraft bombed a Taliban-controlled village on Monday.

The Taliban admitted their lines had collapsed around Kabul — where the front had been stalemated for years — but said they would fight for the capital.

"We have decided to defend Kabul," the Taliban ambassador to neighboring Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, said in Islamabad. "It is true that the opposition breached our front line near Kabul, but we have erected another one and are strengthening our position."

The opposition claimed Taliban forces were fleeing Kabul. However, according to reporters in the city, there was no sign of any mass exodus, though a few senior Taliban officials appeared to have left.

Gen. Rashid Dostum, a northern alliance commander, said an opposition force of up to 300 fighters was ready to enter Kabul on Tuesday to "maintain order."

Dostum, speaking from the newly captured northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, told Turkey's private NTV television that the main body of opposition forces would hold off from entering the capital.

He said 15,000 former Taliban troops and some Taliban commanders had crossed over to the alliance during recent fighting.

Opposition fighters punched through Taliban defenses about noon Monday after a punishing attack by U.S. B-52 bombers. Taliban positions began to fall one by one along the main road into Kabul.

A senior opposition commander, Bismillah Khan, said his troops had halted their advance at Mir Bacha Kot, about 12 miles north of Kabul, and were awaiting orders.

"We are at the gate of Kabul," Khan declared. The alliance foreign minister, Abdullah, said another column had reached Shakar Dara — southwest of Mir Bacha Kot and closer to the capital.

Shakar Dara "is the last stop," Abdullah, who uses one name, said at Jabal Saraj, 45 miles north of Kabul. "We stopped because we didn't want to advance into Kabul."

Bush has urged the opposition to avoid entering the city until a broad-based government can be organized to replace the Taliban, which has ruled most of Afghanistan since 1996.

However, little progress has been made in bringing together the disparate groups in Afghanistan's fractious, multiethnic society.

And the temptation to grab the capital may simply be too great for the opposition, which in four days has expanded its control from some 10 percent of the country to nearly half.

In Kabul, the Taliban deployed tanks on major routes leading into the city, and camouflaged pickup trucks raced through the streets ferrying armed Taliban.

Taliban fighters searched cars at major intersections throughout the city. Mobile anti-aircraft guns prowled the streets after sundown, and the roar of U.S. jets headed toward the front could be heard from time to time.

Shortly before sunset, a missile exploded along a residential street in the city's Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood, where several senior Taliban officials as well as Arabs, Chechens and Uzbeks live.

Fishermen survive almost five months adrift on Pacific Ocean

BY EMMA TINKLER
Associated Press Writer

SYDNEY, Australia — Two fishermen survived almost five months adrift on the Pacific Ocean in a small metal boat by catching fish and birds and drinking rainwater, one of the survivors and a doctor said Monday.

Two other men died during the torrid journey, which saw them drift nearly 2,480 miles west from Western Samoa to Papua New Guinea.

Lafaili Tofi, 36, and Telea Pa'a, 27, were extremely lucky to be alive, said Dr. Barry Kirby from Alotau Hospital in eastern Papua New Guinea.

"Basically they survived on the rainwater they got while they were drifting, some small fish which they caught and also some birds which landed on the ... vessel," Kirby said in a telephone interview.

The men were fishing off their native Western Samoa on June 20 when a huge load of fish dragged their 20-foot aluminum boat under water.

"They suffered from exposure and were basically on a starvation diet"

DR. BARRY KIRBY
Alotau Hospital

The men righted the well-built boat by cutting away the fishing lines and two outboard motors but were left powerless as currents pushed them out into open ocean, missing many islands on the journey, Kirby said. Several ships passed by, but none came to their rescue.

The survivors were finally rescued last week by a villager on Normanby Island in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea, who paddled out to them after they fired off their last flare.

"They suffered from exposure and were basically on a starvation diet," he said. "One man is unable to walk, he's a stretcher case. He's very, very wasted and he was probably about a week away from death. The other man was quite strong considering his ordeal."

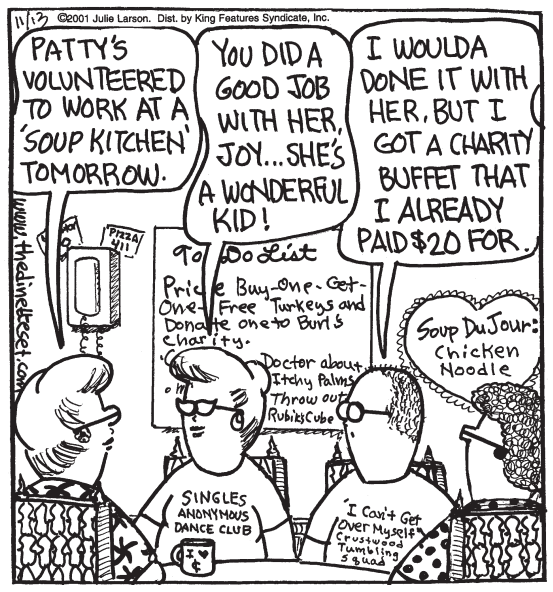
Kirby said both men were stable and recovering well.

In a telephone conversation with the AP from his hospital bed, Tofi said he had been scared and doubted he would survive.

"I am feeling well now," he said.

COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



Natural Selection®

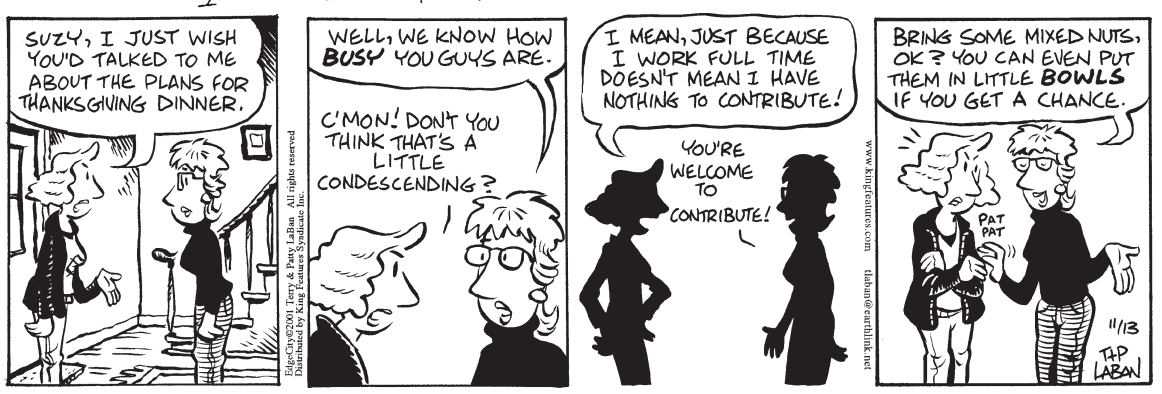
By Russ Wallace



"I don't know, Earl, it came for you today."

edge City

by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



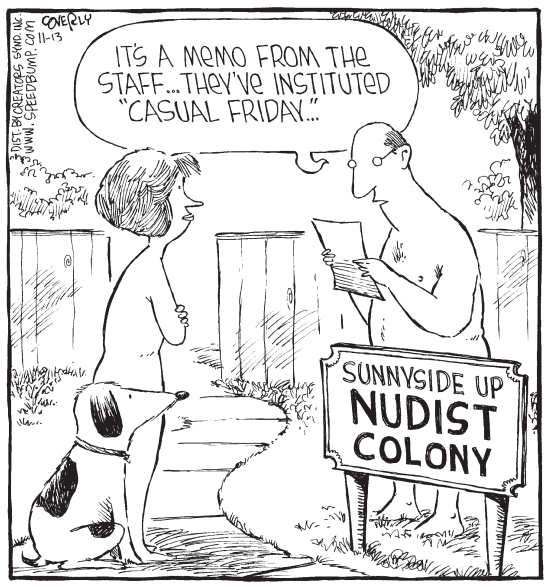
Reality Check®

By Dave Whammond



Speed Bump®

By Peter Waldner



CROSSWORD

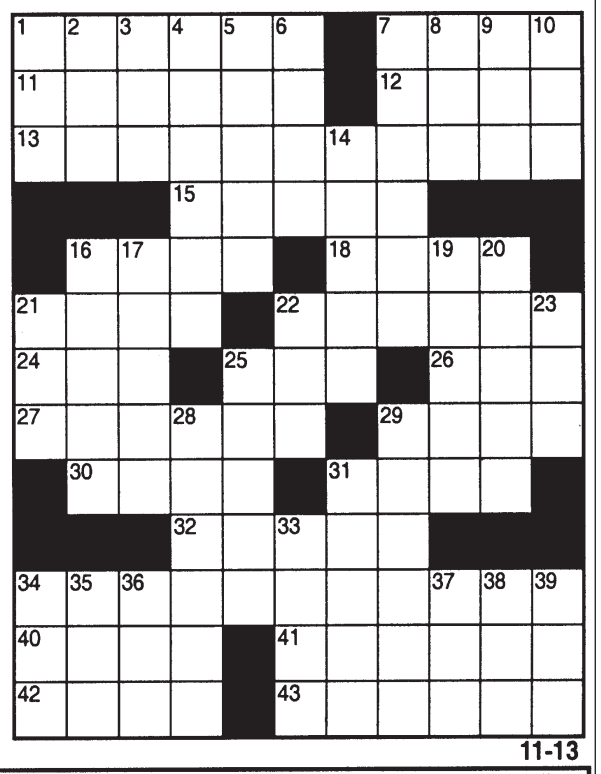
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Cleared (in profit)
7 Fast food quaff
11 Wake up
12 Foray
13 Book cover materials
15 Spiteful
16 Not at home
18 Pinnacles
21 Singer Campbell
22 Disavowal
24 Archaic
25 Mongrel
26 Tall tale
27 Graduate's reward
29 Foot part
30 Call for
31 Goes down
32 College VIPs
34 Homes of some kings
40 Topnotch
41 Occur
42 Mother of Castor and Pollux
43 Unwavering

DOWN
1 Siesta
2 Blunder
3 Boot part
4 Florentine, for example
5 School paper
6 Red-ink amount
7 Coloring tool
8 Rowing need
9 Chapeau
10 Spots on TV
14 Playful mammal
16 "Manhattan" director
17 Cheese buy
19 Cockpit worker
20 Schooner features
21 Deity
22 Payable
23 Grant's opponent
25 Gives over
28 Sight from Arabia
29 Bun seed
31 Nose, in slang
33 Basics
34 Baseball's Ripken
35 Garden tool
36 Finish
37 Stephen of "The Crying Game"
38 Flop
39 Secret agent

L	O	R	D	S	■	W	A	T	E	R
I	D	I	O	T	■	A	B	I	D	E
P	E	G	G	Y	■	L	E	D	G	E
■	■	■	G	L	E	N	■	E	E	L
P	L	A	Y	E	D	U	P	■	■	■
L	A	M	B	■	S	T	U	P	O	R
O	N	E	A	L	■	S	P	A	D	E
D	A	N	G	E	R	■	P	R	O	D
■	■	■	S	H	I	P	Y	A	R	D
A	C	T	■	A	B	E	L	■	■	■
P	A	Y	T	V	■	C	O	M	B	S
E	R	R	O	R	■	A	V	A	I	L
S	T	O	N	E	■	N	E	R	D	Y

Yesterday's answer



11-13

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-454-7377**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.



BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

• More Extremist Muslims: In October, a judge in Sokoto, Nigeria, ordered Ms. Safiya Hassaini, 35, stoned to death for adultery while her probable partner (her cousin, Yahaya Abubakar, 60) had the same charge against him dropped for insufficient evidence. (The evidence against Hassaini was that she is not currently married but had just given birth.) Sokoto is one of the northern Nigerian states that practice Muslim Sharia law, and as with the Afghanistan Taliban, posses of men with clubs roam the country looking for lawbreakers. Another quirk in the law: Though Hassaini is on death row, she was released on bail to care for the kid briefly, after which time she is supposed to report back to court so she can be killed.

• In September, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution profiled desolate Echols County, Georgia (between Valdosta and the Okeefenokee Swamp), well-known to the state's judges because that is where they encourage lawbreakers to go when they really want them to leave the state altogether. The Georgia constitution prohibits banishing people from the state as punishment for crimes, so judges merely banish them from 158 of the state's 159 counties, trusting that they would never voluntarily settle in Echols, anyway, and such strategy seems always to work.

• While most of North America endures a fear-of-anthrax frenzy, the Ontario Health Ministry in October fired its only five biohazard scientists for budgetary reasons, replacing them with three lab technicians with community-college degrees. Liberal Party spokespeople blamed the decision on the health minister's long-standing philosophy of smaller government, irrespective of consequences.

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BACK PAGE

In a city where many have eaten dogs, cremation services in Hong Kong now bring pets to peace

BY MARGARET WONG
Associated Press Writer

HONG KONG — As a child, Wai Ka-wing used to enjoy a meal of dog meat, and it was a luxury — costing twice a much as beef or pork.

Now, he has a pet Shih Tzu that sleeps beside him at night, and his deep affection for Fifi keeps him from even thinking about eating dogs.

"We used to have them in our dishes, but now they are part of our family," the 53-year-old retired firefighter says. "It's so awful to see them die."

When Fifi eventually does die, Wai may take advantage of a growing service in Hong Kong — the cremation of pets whose ashes are stored in urns so they can be remembered like human ancestors.

"This is a good service," says Kwok Siu-cheong, a diamond designer who just cremated Bobby, his dog of 21 years, whose death left Kwok weeping for weeks.

As Hong Kong's people became richer and better educated over recent decades, many former dog eaters have converted to pet lovers, creating a growing business for pet shops and services.

Years ago, pet owners had little option but to put dog and cat carcasses in landfills, still Hong Kong's most common canine and feline resting places, the Environment Protection Department says.

Chan Kwok-kee, 40, suspects the remains of the Persian cats he bred had it even worse.

Chan buried them — illegally — in Hong Kong's countryside in the Sai Kung district before he emigrated to Canada in the early 1990s. He was shocked when he came back later and saw three-story buildings on top of the graves. He suspects the cats were mixed with slurry to become house foundations.

The loss inspired Chan to start cremating animals in 1996. He's now helped hundreds of pet owners bid a more dignified farewell to cats, dogs, hens, tortoises and lizards.

Chan carries a pager to stay on call 24 hours a day and collects animal carcasses immediately when he receives calls from saddened pet owners.

Chan keeps the animals refrigerated until he burns the bodies and any toys, clothes and biscuits the pet had. Crushing it all into ashes and placing them in a silk bag, he then gives the owner an urn labeled with the pet's portrait and name.

Some owners keep the urns in Chan's office, where he has several cabinets full. Others take them home.

"We used to have them in our dishes, but now they are part of our family ... It's so awful to see them die."

WAI KA-WING
Retired firefighter

Business has been growing and Chan says he and several competitors cremate about 400 pets a month.

He says it's something he could not have imagined as a child when Hong Kong Chinese were not so affectionate about dogs and cats.

Although the government banned killing dogs in 1950, many Hong Kong people used to eat dog meat every winter — believing it kept them warm and kept their stomachs healthy.

Meat from a black dog was best of all, tradition holding that it could drive away evil spirits.

Locals raised dogs for meat, but most wouldn't eat their own dog, says Tsui Kwok-wah, 82. They traded dogs with their neighbors and shared the meat among several households.

As dogs have moved closer to the hearts of Hong Kong people, there has been explosive growth in the veterinary industry, from less than 10 practitioners 20 years ago to more than 100 these days, says Dr. David Burrows, senior veterinary officer at the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department.

Realizing the growth in pets will lead to a growth in mourning when they die, the government plans to open a crematorium for animal carcasses by 2004. The Society for the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals plans an animal park with cremation services and a garden for remembrance.

"There is a general awakening toward environmental and humane issues," says Christopher Hanselman, executive director of the society.

That's not the only reason behind the new place for cats and dogs.

"What's significant now is that many couples decide not have children," says Maggie Ng, chief editor of My Pet magazine. "They opt to have pets as children, and to release their parental love, they call them 'son' and 'daughter.'"



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