

# Santa Monica Daily Press

*A newspaper with issues*



## NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

A sophisticated fake-report-card scheme was busted when several students insisted on boosting their D's all the way up to A's, provoking their parents to call the principal to see why their kids weren't on the honor roll (Salem, N.H.). A 43-year-old man said he'd plead guilty in December to his fourth shoplifting conviction in two years, each one involving grocery store pork products (East St. Louis, Ill.). A bank robber who had forgotten to cut eye holes in his mask (and who kept lifting it to peek out) nonetheless escaped with his loot but not before banging into a steel door frame on his way out (Modesto, Calif.).



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside."

— Mark Twain



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## On the second day of Christmas ...



John Wood/Daily Press

A discarded tree sits in an alley north of Wilshire Boulevard. Many residents tossed out their Christmas trees on Friday, the second of 12 days of Christmas. Tree recycling areas, like Christine Emerson Reed Park at Lincoln Boulevard and California Avenue, were also seeing activity.

## Santa Monica man must pay partners \$900K

*Jury finds 'Surf Channel' founder defrauded his partners*

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

**SM COURTHOUSE** — A Santa Monica businessman must pay his former partners nearly \$900,000 after being found liable for fraud by a jury here.

C.V., 39, a founder of Surf Channel, which made extreme-sport television shows in the late 1990s, defrauded a woman who helped him create the shows and a man who did video editing on all of the programs, jurors decided on Christmas Eve.

Keline Howard, 73, of West Hollywood, said she was promised one third of company shares when the two friends, both natives of France, first worked on the shows. But later, when paperwork was delivered, Howard's shares dwindled to 10 percent.

**"Greed is the word. Greed."**

— KELINE HOWARD  
Plaintiff

he creative brains of the project, told Howard the bulk of her shares were being used to raise more capital and she would still see her portion of profits, Howard testified. But he then went on to forge a partnership with a new group that pumped \$5 million into Surf Channel. A short time later, he cashed out of the company for \$2.2 million.

Despite Howard's contract, which entitled her to 10 percent of the company, she was given nothing. The same went for video editor Phillippe Ney, 43, of West

See FRAUD, page 5

## Construction to begin on chimp retirement home

BY DOUG SIMPSON

Associated Press Writer

**SHREVEPORT, La.** — Over-the-hill chimpanzees will soon spend their retirement years in a Louisiana old folks home.

Construction has begun on Chimp Haven, planned as the country's only preserve dedicated to chimps who have been retired as entertainers or as subjects of laboratory research. Up to 300 chimps will find themselves on 200 acres of grass and woods for foraging, climbing and monkeying around.

**"A lot of young adult chimpanzees have been born in captivity, and a huge number have never walked on grass, climbed a tree or poked a stick in the mud."**

— LINDA BRENT  
President, Chimp Haven

"A lot of young adult chimpanzees have been born in captivity, and a huge number have never walked on grass, climbed a tree or

poked a stick in the mud," said Linda Brent, a behavioral primatologist and Chimp Haven's president. "They haven't had the stimu-

lation they need to grow socially, and that will be part of what they'll need to learn at Chimp Haven."

About 1,600 chimps now live in the United States, most in drug and infectious disease research labs, but they lost their research value. Once the tests are done, a chimp's lab career is usually over.

Animal experts say it's only right to provide the primates — whose genetic makeup varies less than 1 percent from man's — with

See CHIMPS, page 6

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# HOROSCOPE

## Go out cruising Capricorn

**JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS**

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

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

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**  
★★★ Out of the ether comes the message: Slow down. Follow that exact message, please. Conversations are best held in private. You might need to discuss an older relative or family member, or spend more time with him or her. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**  
★★★★★ Aim for more of what you want. You find that others will respond, especially if you open up talks. What is key is to detach from your feelings and not get caught up in them. Others respond well to that approach. Tonight: Where your friends are.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**  
★★★★★ For whatever reason, you will have to slow down today, whether to help someone close to you or to take care of a problem. Your sense of balance could be off with your ruler in retrograde. Count on suggestions from others. Tonight: A must appearance.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**  
★★★★★ Your vision of what would be a perfect day plays out as long as you manifest flexibility and are willing to adapt. The Moon Child can be quite good at this. Use these skills when dealing with others and help them get into the moment. Tonight: Relax to music or a movie. Just don't be active.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**  
★★★★★ A partner plays a bigger role in a decision than you might have anticipated. Working as a team might be more positive than you thought; in fact, you'll have a great time. Chipping in together bonds you even more. Tonight: Togetherness reigns.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**  
★★★★★ Reach out for others in your immediate surroundings, if someone doesn't find you sooner. Let your creativity flow and mix with fun. Inevitably, surprises will follow. Your popularity soars. Stay in the moment. Tonight: Run with plans.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**  
★★★★★ You might have a project cooking. Why not get into a conversation while enjoying a preferred pastime? It might be a great time to share more with a family member in this relaxed atmosphere. Slow down from the holidays. Tonight: Easy does it.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**  
★★★★★ Your creativity and energetic thought process take you in a new direction. Lead others down a special path through dynamic conversations. Others like the sharing process. Brainstorming could be a source of many ideas. Tonight: Have a great time.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**  
★★★★★ You are coming from a logical point of view, but don't anticipate that others will agree. People make demands of you left and right. You will meet your responsibilities, and with that extra flourish as well. Tonight: At home.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**  
★★★★★ Investigate possibilities with a smile. You have a way of helping others feel at home. Express yourself in a meaningful way that helps others understand you. Talk, laugh and enjoy. Think "New Year's resolutions." Tonight: Go out cruising.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**  
★★★★★ Expenses might be out of whack. Aim for more of what you want from a child or loved one. Friendship plays an enormous role in what happens. Your instincts help you with a money matter. By all means, follow them. Tonight: Your treat.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**  
★★★★★ You feel rejuvenated now that the holiday is past. What you might want to do is find your friends and get together. Perhaps you would like to swap holiday stories. Others look to you, as you are the party. Tonight: Help others enjoy themselves.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## LOCAL



## Clean-up duty



After heavy rain and winds on Thursday, palm fronds were scattered on roadways and sidewalks throughout Santa Monica. By midday Friday, with clear blue skies overhead, most of the debris had been gathered into piles along the side of the road.

John Wood/Daily Press

## Fourth annual 'Pillow Theatre' at Disney Hall

By Daily Press staff

The Music Center Education Division continues its fourth annual Pillow Theatre series in the new Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles with performances for children.

The series is designed to introduce young children, ages three to six, to the theater arts. Each performance will be followed by a free outdoor workshop in the Walt Disney Concert Hall Blue Ribbon Garden to further children's interest and knowledge of the theater.

The first show in the series, "Show and Tell Mime," will be performed on Saturday,

Jan. 10. During the show the Chameleons Mime Team featuring Keith Berger and Sharon Diskin will, "reveal to the audience what's not there, transporting even the youngest child to a world of funny circuses, amazing elevators, ridiculously high ladders and hilarious characters."

The second show, "Butterfly Kleenex and Other Stories," will be performed on Saturday, Feb. 7 and features Angela Lloyd who will create a patchwork quilt of spoken word and music blending story, poetry and song to delight her young audiences and their families.

"Poetry Jam" with David Prather will be

the third in the series and performed on Saturday, Mar. 6. During this performance, Summer Sounds at the Hollywood Bowl's "Cap'n Dave" (Prather) will use jump rope jingles, Winnie the Pooh, Mother Goose and contemporary voices to excite children with the power of poetry. Scooters, sandwich boards, flying TVs and tumbling boxes all play a part in the production.

The last show of the series will be "Jungle of Sound," performed on Saturday, Apr. 10. A duo called "Zun Zun" will celebrate the sights and sounds of America's jungles bringing children into the action to sing songs in English, Spanish and Portuguese about many happy critters while learning to create their own tropical rainstorm.

All the shows will be performed twice on their given dates — at 10:30 a.m. and 11:45

a.m. Ticket packages for all four shows cost \$28 per person; individual tickets are \$10 each. For information and ticket availability, call (213) 972-8000. Series and single tickets are also on sale at the concert hall box office, Tuesday through Sunday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. The order form is available on the Music Center's website at [www.music-center.org](http://www.music-center.org). Ticketmaster will also have the tickets available by calling (323) 850-2000 or at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

The Walt Disney Concert Hall is located at 111 South Grand Ave. at the south end of the Music Center Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. Parking is available in the WDC garage, entrance on Hope Street, for \$8.

Pillow Theatre is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Weingart Foundation with additional support from Bank of the West.

## surf report

The NW ground swell will be turning to a more northerly angle today as the wind swell gradually backs down through the afternoon. For the better exposed winter breaks that means surf in the waist- to chest-high range.

OUTLOOK: Look for smaller surf on Sunday, with a new WNW/storm swell mix building on Monday. Forecast charts show a deepening low approaching the coast on Sunday afternoon that could bring wind and rain by Monday and a round of short-medium period NW swell by Monday afternoon and into Tuesday.

Write us at [wood@smdp.com](mailto:wood@smdp.com) and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.

Today the water is:

**58°**

Sunrise: 7:05 a.m.  
Sunset: 5:01 p.m.

|           | LOW TIDE |        |         |        | HIGH TIDE |        |         |        |
|-----------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|
|           | Morning  | Height | Evening | Height | Morning   | Height | Evening | Height |
| SATURDAY  | 5:35     | 2.6    | 6:55    | -0.4   | 12:59     | 4.0    | (11:32) | 5.5    |
| SUNDAY    | 6:54     | 2.7    | 7:46    | 0.2    | 1:57      | 4.2    | 12:32   | 4.7    |
| MONDAY    | 8:31     | 2.6    | 8:38    | 0.7    | 2:54      | 4.4    | 1:46    | 4.0    |
| TUESDAY   | 10:08    | 2.1    | 9:30    | 1.2    | 3:46      | 4.6    | 3:19    | 3.4    |
| WEDNESDAY | 11:24    | 1.6    | 10:19   | 1.7    | 4:31      | 4.8    | 4:56    | 3.2    |

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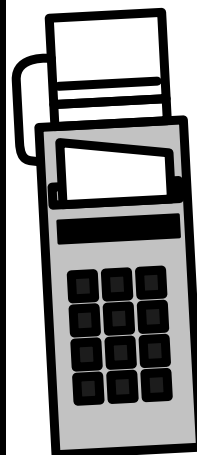
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## LETTERS

## Keep the kids healthy

## Editor:

The Schwarzenegger administration states that enrollment in the state's health insurance programs — such as Healthy Families, Medi-Cal and California Children's Services — must be capped if the programs are to be saved. For example, placing 159,000 children on a waiting list for health care by 2004-2005 will presumably be saving Healthy Families from bankruptcy, according to the administration's reasoning.

However, the facts do not bear out these claims. At roughly \$30 per child per month in state dollars, the Healthy Families program is a smart investment in children's healthy development. Children with health insurance get needed and timely health care, allowing them to stay in school and avoiding severe and costly health conditions. Healthy Families is also a great deal for California — for every dollar our state spends on Healthy Families, the federal government gives the state \$2. Already, California severely underspends its federal allocation for this program. An enrollment cap would result in over \$60 million in additional federal dollars going unspent.

There are other choices for getting our fiscal house in order. When families need to balance their own budget, they do not cut off their child's asthma medication in order to avoid going bankrupt. Instead, they may work extra hours or get a second job. Similarly, in these tough times California should take every opportunity to maximize revenue.

Kristen Testa

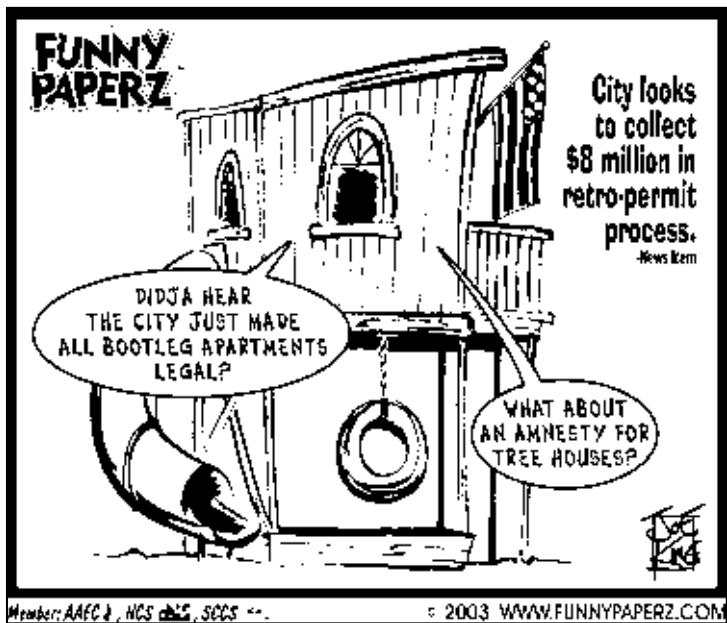
The Children's Partnership

Catherine Teare

Children Now

Deena Lahn

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## Do not be bowled over by bowl games next year



## MODERN TIMES

By Lloyd Garver

'Tis the season to dull all your senses by watching football bowl games. In the past, there were only a few ways to know if you've been watching too many games and should turn off the television: Either you realize that your last three meals have consisted of food you've found between the cushions of the couch, the phone rings and you answer it, "defense wins ball-games," or you suddenly notice that the rest of your family packed up and moved out of the house about a day and a half ago. However, there is finally a way to know that you've had too much football before it's too late. It's called the LGBS — the Lloyd Garver Bowl System.

All you have to do is cut out the following list of football clichés, attempts at cleverness, and "obviousisms." Then check them off as you hear each of them. When you have heard them all, it's time to quit. Obviously, a second party who doesn't want to lose a loved one to an overdose of bowl games can also do the checking.

□ If we can just take their minds off the danger and seriousness of what they are pursuing, even for a few hours, then we have done our job.

□ This might not be the Sugar Bowl, but to these kids, this is the biggest game of the year.

□ Today we're going to see just how smart those computers are.

□ He's listed at 320, but that's before breakfast.

□ It's a pretty simple game. All you have to do is score more points than the other guys.

□ There are only five minutes left, but in football, five minutes is a lifetime.

□ He's not just fast, he's quick.

□ Considering what this young man has been through in his short lifetime, he is truly an inspiration.

□ I don't think we'll ever see a playoff system in college football.

□ We'll be seeing a playoff system in college football before too long.

□ There are only three minutes left, but in football, three minutes is a lifetime.

□ The officials take a lot of criticism, but they usually get it right.

□ Momentum has definitely shifted.

□ It all comes down to which team wants to win it more.

□ He has great speed and strength, but more importantly, he has something great right behind the ribs.

□ Let's hope his legal problems are behind him.

□ There's no quit in this team.

□ I would have gone for the field goal, but maybe that's why I'm up here and the coaches are down there.

□ His biggest cheerleader is that little kid in the hospital, and he is that little kid's biggest cheerleader.

□ I know it's a felony, but I think of it more as just boys being boys.

□ It's a shame somebody has to lose this game.

□ You gotta go home with who brung you to the dance.

□ They're no longer playing to win. Now they're playing not to lose.

□ There are only two minutes left, but in football, two minutes is a lifetime.

□ This might be a mismatch on paper, but they don't play the game on paper.

□ It's only a yard, but it's a long yard.

□ If this game goes into overtime, either team could win.

OK, if you have checked all of the above statements, turn off the television immediately — even if you're in the middle of an exciting game. Well, I guess you could just watch the end of that one game. After all, "there is no tomorrow."

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's opinion page and can be reached at [smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.com](mailto:smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.com).)

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](mailto: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 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

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## LOCAL



# Jury: SM man defrauded partners, owes \$900K

FRAUD, from page 1

Hollywood, who said he was verbally promised 8 percent of the company by him, but given nothing.

Surf Channel, a program for cable channels, specialized in board sports like surfing, snowboarding, windsurfing and skateboarding, among others.

After a little more than a day of deliberations, a visibly frustrated jury — that had to return to the courthouse Dec. 24 to finish deliberations after misreading their instructions the evening before — found both Surf Channel and the man liable for fraud and breach of contract.

They awarded Ney \$84,000 and Howard \$200,000 on those actions. After hearing further testimony based on how much money the man and Surf Channel were worth, the jury awarded another \$300,000 to each plaintiff in punitive damages. Owner and Surf Channel are equally responsible for those payments.

Howard, through her attorney, at one point suggested to jurors she could be owed as much as \$1.67 million — one-third of the \$5 million representing the total investment. And that was without punitive damages factored in.

"He couldn't really remember anything and his testimony was, oftentimes, in contradiction," said juror Ralyn O'Quinn, a human resources worker from

**"He couldn't really remember anything and his testimony was, oftentimes, in contradiction."**

— RALYN O'QUINN  
Juror

West Los Angeles.

The week-long trial was heard in the courtroom of Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Lorna Parnell.

After jurors delivered their verdict, he lingered in the hallway out front, speaking in French to the plaintiffs and debating with jurors the facts of the case, demanding how they could award such a high sum to people he said only worked on the project for four months.

Asked how he felt about the jury's finding, the man said, "It's difficult to consider. It's very difficult because I saw so many jurors, they didn't like me at all."

Howard, on the other hand, was visibly pleased by the verdict — leaning over and smiling at Blaha shortly after it was read. Asked why she thinks he didn't share the profits, Howard, who maintained she wasn't given any explanation, said, "Greed is the word. Greed."

Jay Woollacott, his attorney, argued that Howard's work for Surf Channel was simply in return for favors

supplied earlier by him and said Howard was reimbursed for her expenses. As to Ney, Woollacott said he had already been paid for his work. What's more, Woollacott argued neither Howard nor Ney could be given a percentage of shares because company officials had never voted on the matter.

If they were to find that a breach of contract or fraud had occurred, jurors should find against Surf Channel, a limited liability corporation, and not against him personally, Woollacott argued. And, under that scenario, jurors should award the plaintiffs little or nothing because the alleged fraud and breach of

contract occurred before the company was worth anything, he added.

"Let's be real," he said in his closing argument. "The company at that point had burned up the \$200,000 (investor Jean Pierre) Murray had put in. ...

"The assets of Surf Channel were not much, if anything," he added, saying the \$5 million later invested was simply a nest egg for future growth. "Surf Channel had debts."

After Woollacott finished his closing arguments, Michael Blaha, the plaintiffs' attorney, countered that the labor Ney and Howard put into the project made it valuable to the new investors. He also said that although Ney received some payments, they only offset the cost of the equipment Ney used to edit the programs — and didn't compensate him for his time.

In an impassioned plea to jurors, Blaha said, "I am just amazed that the fraud continues into this afternoon. ... We were outsiders in this transaction and that's why we didn't get included ..."

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## Scientists now monitoring 'body burden' toxins

By The Associated Press

**SAN FRANCISCO** — Davis Baltz shops for organic food and otherwise tries to live as healthy as he can.

So he was shocked to learn that the pollutants collecting inside his body sounded much like a Superfund cleanup site: pesticides, flame retardants and other nasty, man-made chemicals turned up in a recent test.

"What that told me is that no matter what I tried to do, the plumes of chemicals that we are passing in and out of everyday give us exposure," said Baltz, who works for Commonweal, an environmental group in Bolinas, Calif. Commonweal and the Washington-based Environmental Working Group funded tests for Baltz and eight others at \$5,000 apiece.

For decades, researchers have sampled

the air, land and sea to measure pollution from power plants, factories and automobiles. More recently, they have expressed concern about mounting "e-waste" — discarded tech gadgets that contain flame retardants, lead and other toxins.

But there's been trouble determining precisely how much pollution gets absorbed by humans.

Now, in a process called biomonitoring, scientists are sampling urine, blood and mother's milk to catalogue the pollutants accumulating in humans. They call the results "body burden."

Though the tests are yielding scary lists of contaminants found in the body, their links to disease are less clear. Nonetheless, proponents say such testing will help researchers learn what role the environment plays in causing disease and how to treat it.

## Chimp Haven: A palatial pad for aging Primates

CHIMPS, from page 1

spacious grounds that have facilities to accommodate their high intelligence levels.

"These animals are powerful, intelligent, resourceful and long-lived, and that all adds up to an animal that requires special accommodations," said Dan Maloney, general curator at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, who also worked with chimps at the Philadelphia Zoo. "I applaud any facility that's going to take this on and do it in a responsible way."

At the labs, chimps are injected with drugs being tested or are infected with a disease. A career in the lab can be brief — as short as three years. A chimp is rarely useful to scientists if it's already undergone medical tests or been injected with a disease or drug. Chimps can live into their 60s; those who outlive their research value typically spend the rest of their lives in small lab enclosures.

At least 260 of the chimps to be retired at Chimp Haven are the result of a breeding program in the 1980s that produced far more of the primates than researchers needed, Brent said.

Linda Koebner, Chimp Haven's executive director, led one of the first "chimp rescues" in 1974, when a research lab gave her permission to take 10 of its chimps to live on an island in a Loxahatchee, Fla., preserve.

While a number of preserves exist for exotic animals, Chimp Haven was founded in 1995 as a nonprofit with the goal of creating a preserve devoted to chimps. Its board of directors now includes primatologists, experimental scientists and veterinarians who care for chimps in research labs.

Funding for Chimp Haven comes from private donations and from a federal contract after Congress passed the 1991 "Chimp Act," which dedicated up to \$30 million to care for chimps that were owned by the federal government or involved in federal research labs.

The government of Caddo Parish, in northwest Louisiana, donated land for a facility that will eventually include indoor areas for the chimps and an education center for visitors. Last month, workers

began pulling down trees to begin construction of the walls and moats that will surround the preserve.

After lifetimes spent inside laboratories, some chimps might have difficulty adjusting to life at Chimp Haven, even though the north Louisiana climate and landscape are similar to chimps' native areas of Africa.

**"A lot of the old timers, who were born wild, actually know how to be chimpanzees. Guys who were born in the lab don't have a clue."**

— LINDA KOEBNER

Chimp Haven's executive director

"A lot of the old timers, who were born wild, actually know how to be chimpanzees," said Koebner, who has a background in behavioral primatology. "Guys who were born in the lab don't have a clue."

Because of sketchy record keeping, some of the chimps' histories are a mystery.

One is Janice, a female now about 40 years old, who has spent most of her life in breeding and biomedical research programs, and a number of years confined alone.

Janice used to be feisty, moving and thinking quickly. After years of captivity, she's now slow-witted and slow on her feet, Brent said.

"She's beaten down a little bit. She's not the same animal she used to be," said Brent, who works with the chimp at a lab in San Antonio.

He's confident that living in the outdoors at Chimp Haven will transform Janice back into her former self. "I have no doubt that at Chimp Haven, she'll become a very dominant, capable individual."

## STATE

# Mudslide: Four dead, up to 12 missing in San Bernardino

BY ALEX VEIGA

Associated Press Writer

**SAN BERNARDINO** — Searchers found four people dead and were searching for as many as 12 others believed missing in a mudslide that swept through foothills recently scorched by wildfire.

Several empty vehicles were also found in the area, so it wasn't known if the bodies were people missing from the camp or if there were hikers or other people also caught in the sliding debris, authorities said.

At least 24 people had been at Saint Sophia Camp celebrating the holidays when mud and water rushed through their cabins Christmas Day, relatives and authorities said.

Fourteen people from the camp were rescued Thursday, some pulled from the mud and from beneath fallen trees. One man said he grabbed his young daughter but watched helplessly as his wife and other child were swept away. Another was found trapped beneath a fallen tree that authorities had to cut apart to free him.

The mudslide washed out roads and bridges, forcing searchers to hike over the rough terrain to resume the search at the camp in Waterman Canyon Friday morning. Rivers of mud were 12- to 15-feet deep in places as sheriff's deputies and firefighters worked their way through the debris and helicopters searched for signs of survivors from overhead.

"We aren't going up there to locate dead bodies, we're going up there to find the folks that survived this horrible incident," said county Fire Department spokesman Tracey Martinez.

Six to 12 people were still believed to be missing in the canyon Friday afternoon, said Chip Patterson, spokesman for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

The youth camp's caretaker, George Monzon, was among those unaccounted for, said the Rev. John Bakas, who helps lead the Greek Orthodox camp. He said there was no organized events there Christmas Day and he did not know who the others may have been.

**"We aren't going up there to locate dead bodies, we're going up there to find the folks that survived this horrible incident."**

— **TRACEY MARTINEZ**  
Fire Department spokesman

Mildred Najara identified two others missing as her 40-year-old sister, Rosa, and 7-year-old niece, Katrine. Her brother-in-law, Gilberto Juarez, had been able to save the couple's 3-year-old daughter, Stephanie, she said.

"He said he helped the little girl up and when he turned they were gone, the water had risen too much and had swept the cabin away," Najara said. "They became separated when the water rushed in."

Juarez was among 10 people treated for minor injuries, including a man was found buried waist-deep in mud and debris and trapped beneath a log. Rescue crews were able to cut the log free and carried the man across a creek to safety, San Bernardino County Fire Capt. Rick McClintock said.

Patterson said others missing ranged in age from 6 months to 45 years.

The storm dumped more than 3 1/2 inches of rain on areas heavily scarred by

wildfires this fall, flooding streets in San Bernardino and elsewhere, cutting power to more than 67,000 customers and causing mudslides. The blazes in October and November, the most severe in state history, burned off vegetation that normally would help shore up the steep terrain, leaving the ground prone to mudslides.

Much of Waterman Canyon had been scorched by a wildfire that burned more than 91,000 acres, destroyed 993 homes and killed four people.

On Thursday, authorities evacuated residents who live in the canyon and closed off the road leading there. A surging stream of mud and water rushed through the canyon, which looked like a sea of gray mud.

County Fire Marshal Peter Brierty said rescuers faced "incredibly mushy, muddy, slippery" conditions, with some slipping into the mud up to their hips as they tried

to navigate the canyon.

The debris flows, some 12 feet high, contained logs and branches, making them especially dangerous.

"Even a foot or 2 feet of this will knock you down," Brierty said.

Elsewhere in the county, a mudslide triggered by the heavy rain damaged and toppled trailers at a campground in Devore. Sheriff's spokeswoman Cindy Beavers said 30 to 50 people suffered minor injuries. Several people were unaccounted for, but authorities said they were not believed to be in danger. In Lytle Creek Canyon, a 4-foot-high mud flow crossed a road, trapping a car. The driver wasn't hurt.

Emergency crews spent much of Christmas Day setting sand bags outside homes and along waterways to contain flood water and diverting traffic from washed out roads.

The Pacific storm began moving into Southern California on Wednesday evening, bringing Los Angeles its first rainy Christmas Day in two decades.

Strong wind gusts downed power lines in parts of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, and in downtown Los Angeles, wind blew eight stories of scaffolding onto parked cars, damaging the vehicles but causing no injuries.

## Federal agents target James Paul Lewis Jr.

By The Associated Press

**SACRAMENTO** — More than 5,200 clients across America trusted James Paul Lewis Jr. with their life savings, pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into his Southern California investment funds on the word of a few friends.

Many heard about Financial Advisory Consultants through fellow churchgoers, although professional athletes and at least one movie actor are said to be investors.

As their own retirement accounts sagged with the stock market, they marveled at Lewis' reports of consistently returning upward of 40 percent from one fund and 20 percent from another, year in and year out for two decades.

They scrambled to give him money, any caution or doubts pushed aside as they saw their fellow investors periodically

withdraw as much as \$250,000.

Their financial future came crashing down this week, when a federal judge froze the company's assets and the FBI carted away documents and computers from Lewis' three-room Orange County office suite.

No charges have been filed, but the FBI alleges Lewis was operating a "Ponzi scheme," in which early investors are paid with money from later investors. The federal Securities and Exchange Commission says the "fraudulent scheme" involved \$813 million from more than 5,200 investors.

"It's a house of cards," said Barry Minkow, himself once imprisoned for seven years for defrauding investors through his ZZZZ Best carpet cleaning company. "It will go down as the longest-running Ponzi scheme in history, and the mutual fund that didn't exist."

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## NATIONAL

# Holiday gift plants: Will they bloom again?

BY DEAN FOSDICK  
Associated Press Writer

**NEW MARKET, Va.** — So there you are, waving a fond farewell from the front door as your friend departs after delivering a poinsettia, a leaf cutting from her grandmother's favorite Christmas cactus or an amaryllis bulb.

Thoughtful gifts and traditional holiday plants all. But now what?

Since so many holiday plants have tropical origins, a good first step is to bring it in from the cold and then shield it from drafts or temperature extremes, like those radiating from wood stoves or frosty windowpanes.

They've been stressed enough already. This also is a good time to decide if you'll be keeping the gift plant to bloom again another year or if you'll be tossing it with the mangled Christmas wrap once the celebrating is over.

"Some plants make better gifts than others," says Carolyn Wilson, a master gardener from Mount Jackson, Va., who specializes in houseplants.

"Poinsettias are cheap and easy and readily available, so they wouldn't be my first choice. That would be an amaryllis," Wilson says. "They can bloom within six weeks. Most are sold in boxes and already in potting soil."

"Unlike poinsettias, they can go on for years and years and years."

Wilson believes there is strength in numbers when nurturing plants indoors.

"No plant likes to be an orphan," she says. "They do best in large groupings, increasing the humidity around them naturally."

But be prepared to shift your tender new plants around. Holiday plants need bright natural light, but not necessarily direct sunlight, she says.

Study the Christmas plants featured in decorating magazines, Wilson says.

"They look great when placed in entries, on dining room tables or lining mantles. But that can give people the wrong impression because those often aren't the best locations. They only get a limited amount of room light."

"It's important to know how much light each plant needs," she says. "They shouldn't get any direct sun when they're in full bloom. And try keeping your holiday plants on the cool side of the neutral

range — say around 60 to 65 degrees.

"I generally rotate poinsettias in and out of my sun room every few days."

Keep your holiday plants damp, but not overly so. That's easier to control if you use loose, well-drained soil.

Most Christmas plants should be allowed to go dormant if you want them to bloom again.

Rest Christmas cactus in a cool site for a month or so. Monitor the temperature and what horticulturists call "photoperiod control."

Energize the cactus by exposing it to bright light. Add water and an all-purpose plant fertilizer. Gradually reduce the amount of light the cactus gets each day beginning a month or two before the desired budding period. That mimics the darkening days of autumn and prompts blossoms to reappear.

If you're tending amaryllis bulbs, cut the flowers after they fade, retaining the stems and fleshy leaves. That keeps your plants growing until they're placed in a cool, dry room in the waning days of summer. Ignore them for several months.

When you're ready to get the cycle going again, replace the top inch of soil with a fresh layer. Soak the plants, place them in bright locations and watch the blooms reappear.

To make poinsettias recycle, cut them back sometime in early spring. Repeat the manicure in July.

That stimulates the plants into making new blooms, says Mike King, marketing coordinator at the Paul Ecke (ECK'-ee) Ranch, in Encinitas, Calif., where an estimated 70 percent of the world's flowering poinsettias get their start.

Around Oct. 1, place the poinsettia plants in total darkness for all but six hours a day, when they should be exposed to direct sunlight. After a couple months of that light-dark cycle, they should bud again, just in time for your Thanksgiving gathering.

"Poinsettias are relatively inexpensive and easy to replace," King says. "Of course, we're selling them, so we don't mind seeing people throw away their gift plants."

"But they don't require a lot of work if you want to bring them back again. Some, like those with variegated leaves, make good houseplants even when they aren't blooming."

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## NATIONAL



# Gas treasure or pristine haven? Plateau under scrutiny

*(Editor's note: Soaring demand for natural gas and a Bush administration push to speed production are creating a new energy boom in the Rocky Mountain West — an area the industry sees as "America's Middle East." In the second installment of a five-part series, The Associated Press takes a deeper look at Colorado's Roan Plateau, one of the key areas in the government's push).*

BY JUDITH KOHLER  
Associated Press Writer

**PARACHUTE, Colo.** — From the ground, the Roan Plateau is a craggy mass of tree-dotted rock that rises a half mile out of the high desert of western Colorado.

From the air, however, it is 54,000 acres of green, rolling hills and valleys that are home to wildlife such as elk, deer, mountain lions, peregrine falcons and bears. Rain that falls on the 9,000-foot plateau nurtures patches of aspen and Douglas fir, intermingled with scrub oak and sagebrush.

On a cold December day, pilot Bruce Gordon dips a wing of his Cessna 210 to angle around and give his passengers a good view of a 200-foot frozen waterfall.

"People should be aware of these areas, these special places," said Gordon, a pilot who works with conservation groups in the West.

With the Roan Plateau, it's all about perspective. To energy companies and the Bush administration, it is a key plank in the drive for U.S. energy independence because it sits atop a mother lode of clean-burning natural gas.

To others, the plateau is a haven for wildlife and the cornerstone of the region's \$3.8 million-a-year hunting industry. They fear the plateau is being sacrificed in a mad dash to develop rather than conserve energy.

Bob Elderkin of Silt has roamed the plateau for years, in his work for the Bureau of Land Management and as an avid hunter. Elderkin, who retired from the BLM in 2000, said he doesn't oppose drilling on the plateau because the country needs the fuel.

But he said the area appears to be on a fast track for development, and only the most rigorous restrictions will protect the area.

"If you go about it the right way, you can have multiple use," Elderkin said. "But the way they're going about it right now, it's just going to be mineral use."

**"They'd like to make this ground zero. The issue is, are they going to be able to drill every last squirt."**

— PETE KOLBENSCHLAG  
Colorado Environmental Coalition

Four years ago, the BLM said 22,000 acres of the plateau have characteristics of wilderness, a designation that would bar development. Such protection seems increasingly unlikely.

The BLM is considering a plan that could add 800 to 1,600 gas wells on 73,600 acres of federal land near and on top of the plateau. A draft plan is expected to be issued in January.

The BLM dropped an option, backed by the city governments in surrounding Garfield County, that would have banned drilling on top of the plateau.

Dan Richardson, a Glenwood Springs city councilman who led the no-drilling campaign, said he believes the high-profile fight to develop Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has distracted the public from places like the Roan Plateau.

"I kind of see the Roan Plateau as our ANWR," Richardson said.

Officials with Williams of Tulsa, Okla., which has 800

gas wells in Garfield County, said advanced technology and careful attention will allow drilling on the plateau without harm.

Williams and EnCana Oil and Gas USA, whose headquarters are in Alberta, Calgary, operate most of the 1,800 wells in the county. About 350 new wells were drilled in the county this year and 550 more are expected to be dropped soon.

"The need for natural gas and the energy and electricity supplied by it have grown exponentially, but exploration has gone down in other areas. That's why we need to explore for it here," said Kathy Hall of the Colorado Oil & Gas Association, a trade group.

Energy development is no stranger to the area. An oil field in neighboring Rio Blanco County was once the largest in the Rockies. Part of the Roan Plateau was known as the Naval Oil Shale Reserve until the government halted efforts to mine oil thought to be in the shale, causing a bust that crippled the region's economy for years.

The Energy Department handed over responsibility for the plateau to the BLM in 1997 with the idea that the natural resources would be developed, Hall said.

Environmentalists believe what happens in the gas-rich Uinta-Piceance Basin, which includes the plateau, could influence decisions about other Western public land under scrutiny by energy companies and the Bush administration.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the basin holds 21 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas. The Roan Plateau alone contains at least 5 trillion cubic feet — enough to heat 75 million homes for a year.

About half the private and public land in the area is already under lease or available for drilling, said Pete Kolbenschlager, the western Colorado representative for the Colorado Environmental Coalition.

"They'd like to make this ground zero," he said. "The issue is, are they going to be able to drill every last squirt."

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## NATIONAL

# Working together to save endangered species

By The Associated Press

Some recent cooperative efforts under the Endangered Species Act:

■ **Arizona:** The Malpai Borderlands Group, ranchers in southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, propose a Safe Harbor Agreement to introduce the endangered Chiricahua leopard frog into stock ponds.

■ **California:** The Robert Mondavi Co. becomes the first winemaker to sign a Safe Harbor Agreement to restore wetlands on its Cuesta Ridge Vineyard in San Luis Obispo County for the threatened red-legged frog and two endangered birds, the least Bell's vireo and the Southwestern willow flycatcher.

■ **Florida:** Cheeca Lodge, on Florida's Maticumbe Key, plants wild lime and torchwood trees on its nine-hole golf course under a Safe Harbor Agreement to help the endangered Schaus swallowtail butterfly.

■ **Georgia:** More than 100,000 acres of private forest land has been enrolled in Safe Harbor agreements for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. The International Paper Co. set up a first-of-its-kind 5,000-acre conservation bank for the woodpecker near Bainbridge, where the population has since increased from three to 42 birds. The company can use "credits" from its work there to offset woodpecker habitat losses elsewhere.

■ **Hawaii:** Umikoa Ranch signed a Safe Harbor Agreement to add ponds and improve habitat for the endangered Hawaiian duck or "koloa" and the Hawaiian goose or "nene." Two pairs of koloa subsequently produced broods on the ranch.

■ **Idaho:** Third-generation rancher Margaret Soulen Hinson and her husband sign a Candidate Conservation Agreement to move 200 rare southern Idaho ground squirrels to their sheep and cattle ranch. In 2000, Bob and Peggy Mack of Price Valley sign the state's first Safe Harbor Agreement to improve habitat for the endangered northern Idaho ground squirrel on their 15-acre property.

■ **Nebraska:** The blowout penste-

mon, thought to be extinct 50 years ago and rediscovered in 1968, now numbers more than 15,000 plants through a cooperative effort between University of Nebraska professor Jim Stubbendieck and cattle ranchers in the Nebraska Sandhills area.

■ **New Jersey:** Livestock once kept in check the woody vegetation that can overgrow wetlands where the threatened bog turtle lives. Landowners cooperating with the Department of Environmental Protection bring back grazing animals for brief periods to protect or restore the fens.

■ **North Carolina:** Pinehurst Resort and Country Club is home to the first-ever Safe Harbor Agreement, to restore red-cockaded woodpecker habitat. Also participating are nearly 80 other landowners.

■ **Oregon:** Robert Russell signed a 2001 Safe Harbor Agreement to host the endangered Oregon chub in a pond on his property as a safeguard against the loss of natural populations in Willamette River backwaters.

■ **South Carolina:** Norfolk Southern Corp. is one of 75 forest landowners who have entered into Safe Harbor agreements, though the rail transportation company already was managing its 16,000-acre Brosnan Forest to benefit the red-cockaded woodpecker. Also participating is the Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist monastery near Charleston.

■ **Tennessee:** Rural landowners in Coffee County cooperate to protect the endangered Barrens topminnow by safeguarding and restoring springs where the colorful fish lives. At least six area landowners are allowing the fish to be stocked on their property.

■ **Texas:** Ranchers participating in Safe Harbor agreements allow the reintroduction of the northern aplomado falcon, the rarest falcon in North America, on more than 1.5 million acres.

■ **Virginia:** International Paper Co. became the first landowner to participate in a Safe Harbor Agreement for the red-cockaded woodpecker in the southeastern part of the state.

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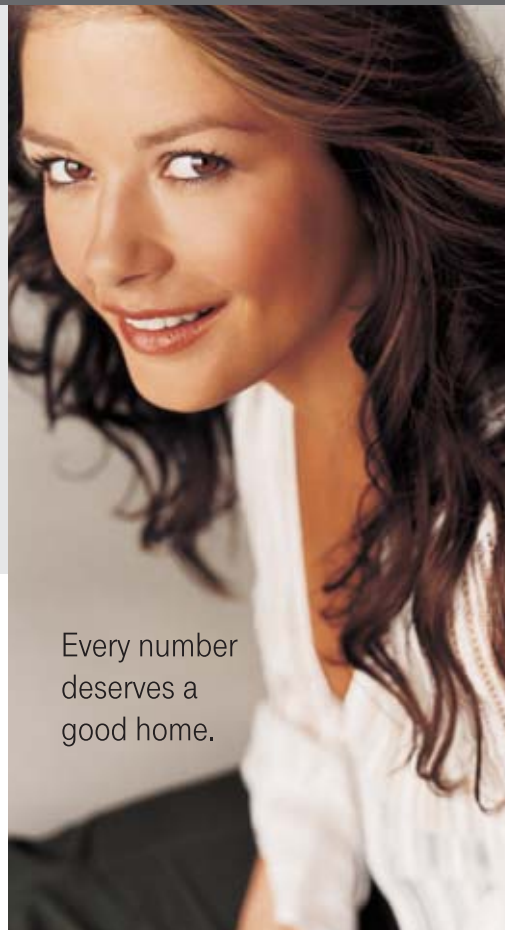
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## NATIONAL

# Buckeye Egg Farm's bidder promises to rebuild

ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS

Associated Press Writer

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** — The company planning to buy Buckeye Egg Farm's largest operation has promised the state it would rebuild all 64 egg-laying barns over the next three years to prevent fly infestations and manure stench.

The Department of Agriculture this week issued final installation and operating permits to Ohio Fresh Eggs for Buckeye Egg's Croton facility in central Ohio, stopping a state shutdown order for that site.

Buckeye Egg has a long history of environmental violations, including air and water pollution, and neighbors have complained for years about odor, fly and rodent infestations.

Agriculture Director Fred Dailey in October ordered the state's largest egg farm to begin closing barns. Buckeye Egg began the shutdown of its Marseilles farm in northwest Ohio on Nov. 20 and must empty two barns a week through Oct. 22.

Ohio Fresh Eggs has separate pending applications to take over that farm and Buckeye Egg operations in

**"We're pleased that the Department of Agriculture found what we knew to be true all along — that we have the people and the experience to operate the farm as it should be operated."**

— **DON HERSHEY**  
President, Ohio Fresh Eggs

Mount Victory and Goshen. The department is taking public comment through Jan. 21; decisions typically follow within two weeks.

Buckeye Egg would have started closing barns at the Croton site in about a month if the permits had been denied, said Deb Abbott, an Agriculture Department spokeswoman.

Ohio Fresh Eggs will invest more than \$60 million in

upgrades to reduce manure dust and odor, president Don Hershey said.

The permits call for renovating all 64 barns with egg-laying hens so their manure falls on conveyor belts and is moved to separate buildings for drying, instead of piling up on the floor below. So far, six barns have the conveyor belt system.

Two manure storage buildings with 10-foot-high concrete walls are to be built at each of the four main laying sites.

The permits issued Tuesday also allow the company to operate 21 barns containing pullets, or young chickens, and seven barns at a hatchery.

Dailey said that while Ohio Fresh Eggs doesn't have a perfect history of complying with environmental law, its past conduct showed a willingness to act responsibly.

"I expect their future operation to do the same," he said.

Ohio Fresh Eggs planned to buy the site within a week, Hershey said.

"We're pleased that the Department of Agriculture found what we knew to be true all along — that we have the people and the experience to operate the farm as it should be operated," Hershey said in a statement.

Concerned Citizens of Central Ohio, a group of neighbors of the farms, oppose the sale. They say Hershey's past relationship with Buckeye Egg owner Anton Pohlmann jeopardizes the company's ability to run the farm properly.

"They'll say anything when they have permits pending before the state and it means little the following month," Richard Sahli, an environmental lawyer who represents the Concerned Citizens group, said Tuesday.

Hershey has said his only relationship with Pohlmann was that he rented land in Licking County from Pohlmann when he built the first barns of what became Buckeye Egg.

Concerned Citizens have asked Gov. Bob Taft to tell the Agriculture Department to deny Ohio Fresh Eggs' permits, based on Hershey's association with Pohlmann.

Dailey disputed criticism that Hershey and Pohlmann's former business relationship means nothing will change. "There is no credible evidence to support this," Dailey said.

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## NATIONAL



# Mad cow disease may have been passed to calves

MARK SHERMAN  
Associated Press Writer

**WASHINGTON** — U.S. officials said Friday they have quarantined two calves from the Washington cow with mad cow disease, even though transmission of the disease from mother to calf is considered unlikely.

One calf is at the same dairy near Mabton, Wash., that was the final home of the stricken Holstein cow, said Dr. Ronald DeHaven, the Agriculture Department's chief veterinarian. The other calf is at a bull calf feeding operation in Sunnyside, Wash., DeHaven said.

"The reason for concern with these calves is that even though it is an unlikely means of spreading the disease, there is the potential that the infected cow could pass the disease onto its calves," he said.

Asked about the safety of the beef supply, White House spokesman Scott McClellan said President Bush will continue to eat beef.

"His focus is on the public health aspect of this, and making sure that we should always be working to make sure we're doing everything we can to protect the food supply," McClellan said. "And that includes looking at whether or not there are any additional safeguards that there need to be in addition to the strong safeguards we have in place."

DeHaven said the emphasis of the widening investigation is on finding the birth herd of the slaughtered cow, since it likely was infected several years ago from eating contaminated feed.

He said tracing the source of the infected cow could take days or weeks, noting that it took Canadian officials several weeks to locate the birth herd of a diseased cow earlier this year.

"If we're lucky, we could know something in a matter of a day or two," he said.

Confirmation that a Holstein cow in Washington state had the deadly disease came Thursday from the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in Weybridge, England. British researchers agreed with the reading of U.S. tests on the stricken cow that showed it had the brain-wasting disease.

"We are considering this confirmation," said USDA spokeswoman Alisa Harrison, adding that the English lab still would conduct its own test using another sample from the cow's brain. Final test results on the cow from Washington state are expected soon, officials said.

But importers of U.S. beef already have slapped a ban on the product. A U.S. delegation will leave Saturday for Japan and possibly other Asian countries in an effort to minimize the impact on American beef producers, DeHaven said.

Japan, which formalized its ban after the confirmation

from the English lab, bought \$1.03 billion worth of U.S. beef in 2002, about a third of exports, according to Keith Collins, USDA's chief economist.

Federal officials were trying to find the herd the cow was raised with, since the cow likely was sickened several years ago. The disease is spread by eating feed that includes parts from an infected cow. The incubation period in cattle is four to five years, said Dr. Stephen Sundlof of the Food and Drug Administration.

**"If we're lucky, we could know something in a matter of a day or two."**

— RONALD DeHAVEN  
Agriculture Department's chief veterinarian

Authorities also want to know where the animals were transported and have narrowed their search to two unidentified livestock markets in Washington state, where the sick cow could have been purchased.

The cow had lived since 2001 at the Sunny Dene Ranch in Mabton, a town 40 miles south of Yakima, according to government sources speaking on condition of anonymity. Officials had said a dairy farm near Mabton is under quarantine and that its herd would be slaughtered if the mad cow diagnosis was confirmed. But DeHaven said no decision has been made about the quarantined herds at Mabton and Sunnyside.

Investigators worked through the Christmas holiday to prevent a potential outbreak of the deadly disease and to calm public fears about the food supply, Harrison said.

Government officials insisted there was no threat to the food supply because the cow's brain, the spinal cord and the lower part of the small intestine — where scientists say the disease is found — were removed before it was sent on for processing.

Humans can contract a fatal variant of mad cow disease

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by eating infected beef products, but experts say muscle cuts of beef — including steaks and roasts — are safe.

Still, authorities scrambled to find where the meat cut from the animal was sent. The Agriculture Department already has issued a recall for beef slaughtered along with the infected cow Dec. 9 at a meat company in Moses Lake, Wash.

Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman said the recall was an extra precaution.

But the government came under criticism from John Stauber, the author of "Mad Cow U.S.A." He said the U.S. hasn't done enough to keep BSE out of the country.

Cattle get sick by eating feed that contains tissue from the brain and spine of infected animals. The United States has banned such feed since 1997.

"Here's the problem. The feed ban has been grossly violated by feed mills," Stauber said in a telephone interview from his home in Madison, Wis.

In one such case, X-Cel Feeds Inc. of Tacoma, Wash., admitted in a consent decree in July that it violated FDA regulations designed to prevent the possible spread of the disease.

The Food and Drug Administration says only two companies have serious violations of the 1997 regulations.

Stauber also said he believed the ban has been ineffective because it exempts blood from cattle, which he said could transmit mad-cow type diseases. Government officials and industry executives have said there was no evidence that animals could be infected from the blood of other animals.

BSE is caused by a misshapen protein — a prion — that eats holes in a cow's brain. A total of 153 people worldwide have been reported to have contracted the human form of the illness, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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## INTERNATIONAL

# Earthquake hits southeast Iran, thousands are dead

BY ALI AKBAR DAREINI

Associated Press Writer

**TEHRAN, Iran** — An earthquake devastated the southeastern Iranian city of Bam on Friday, leveling more than half the city's houses and its historic mud-brick fortress. At least 5,000 people were killed and 30,000 injured, the region's governor said.

The 6.7-magnitude earthquake struck at about 5:30 a.m., collapsing buildings, severing power lines and shutting down water service.

"The quake hit the city when most of the people were in bed, raising fears that the death toll may go higher," said legislator Hasan Khoshrou.

Mohammed Ali Karimi, the governor of Kerman province, said preliminary estimates put the death toll at 5,000 to 6,000, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

President Mohammad Khatami urged the entire country to help the victims of the quake, calling it a "national tragedy."

Footage shot from a helicopter and aired on Iranian state television showed widespread devastation in Bam, with rows and rows of collapsed or damaged buildings next to others that appeared to be intact.

Images shot from a moving car, accompanied by somber music, showed some houses had been reduced to nothing more than piles of brick, while men near one building embraced each other, shaking and sobbing. Other footage showed dead and injured being brought into hospitals with crowds of people outside.

**Reports said the earthquake destroyed Bam's medieval fortress, a massive, 2,000-year-old structure that sits on a cliff near the city and attracts thousands of tourists each year. The fortress includes scores of ancient mud huts.**

Reports said the earthquake destroyed Bam's medieval fortress, a massive, 2,000-year-old structure that sits on a cliff near the city and attracts thousands of tourists each year. The fortress includes scores of ancient mud huts.

"The historic quarter of the city has been completely destroyed and caused great human loss," said Mehran Nourbakhsh, chief spokesman for Iran's Red Crescent, the Islamic equivalent of the Red Cross.

The U.S. Geological Survey reported the quake's magnitude was 6.7, capable of causing severe damage. It reported an aftershock of magnitude 5.4 about two hours later.

Authorities in Bam, 630 miles southeast of the capital Tehran, put out a call for blood donations.

"Many people have died," Kerman province Gov. Mohammad Ali Karimi told state media. "Many people are buried under the rubble."

Relief teams set up their headquarters in a public square in Bam because their offices in the governor's building had been ruined, Karimi told state radio.

Karimi said worried relatives from surrounding areas were heading to Bam and

causing massive traffic jams that were slowing rescue efforts. He urged them to stay home and wait until phone service was restored to try to find relatives.

Authorities have sent numerous rescue workers with helicopters to the area, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

"We are doing everything we can to rescue the injured and unearth the dead," television quoted Karimi as saying.

Turkey's NTV television channel said people were streaming out of Bam for the city of Kerman, 120 miles away, and had complained they had not gotten any aid.

About 500 people have been evacuated to hospitals in Kerman, where they are in critical condition, Iranian state television reported, quoting local authorities.

The United Nations disaster management team in Tehran has asked the Iranian government if it needs help and was to meet later Friday to assess the situation, said Elizabeth Byrs, Geneva spokeswoman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

She said there had been no request from Tehran so far.

Roy Probert, spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies, said the umbrella group also has had no requests. Probert said the Iranian Red Crescent is well-prepared for earthquakes.

Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences over the earthquake.

In a telegram to Iranian President Mohamed Khatami, Putin said he was "deeply shocked by an earthquake in Iran that brought numerous victims and destruction" and offered his "sincere condolences to the leadership and people of Iran."

Russian Emergency Situations Ministry spokeswoman Marina Ryklina said that two Il-76 transport aircraft with rescue workers and equipment were to leave for Iran later Friday.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder expressed "deep sorrow" over the disaster and said his country would offer humanitarian assistance. Greece, Italy and other countries put rescue teams on alert for possible deployment to Iran.

Hardly any buildings in Iran are built to withstand earthquakes, although the country sits on several major fault lines and temblors are frequent. An earthquake of magnitude 7.3 to 7.7 killed 50,000 people on June 21, 1990, and most recently, a magnitude 6 quake in June, 2002 killed 500 people.

Also Friday, a magnitude 4 quake rocked the west Iranian town of Masjed Soleiman at 8:10 a.m., but no casualties were immediately reported, state television said. Masjed Soleiman is about 600 miles northwest of Bam.



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## NATIONAL □ INTERNATIONAL

## WORLD BRIEFLY

## Two U.S. soldiers dead

By The Associated Press

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Iraqi insurgents shelled a base northeast of Baghdad, killing two U.S. soldiers on a day of grenade, rocket and mortar attacks on the capital, the military said Friday.

Four other soldiers were wounded when mortars hit the base in Baqouba, 30 miles northeast of Baghdad on Thursday, Maj. Josslyn Aberle of the 4th Infantry Division said Friday.

The Christmas Day rocket and mortar attacks on the capital hit a hotel housing foreigners and targeted two banks, several embassies and a U.S. Army base.

But the strikes had more symbolic than military impact; two civilians — a woman and her daughter sleeping in an apartment — were hurt, and damage was limited.

Late Thursday, several more explosions were heard in central Baghdad, and sirens sounded in the Green Zone, a barricaded area that houses the headquarters of the U.S.-led coalition governing Iraq. A U.S. military spokesman said two rockets hit a car park near the headquarters, but there were no casualties.

Troops in an aircraft located the launch point and soldiers on the ground captured five men suspected of firing those rockets, Capt. Jason Beck said Friday.

## Suicide bomber kills four

By The Associated Press

**JERUSALEM** — A suicide bomber killed four Israelis at a bus stop near Tel Aviv minutes after Israel killed an Islamic Jihad commander and four others in a helicopter missile attack in Gaza.

The attacks Thursday ended a lull in violence that lasted more than two months, and Palestinian militants threatened to retaliate, threatening efforts to revive the peace process.

Palestinian officials condemned Thursday's attacks

and called for renewed peace talks. Israeli leaders said the suicide bombing proved why such airstrikes were needed and pledged to continue fighting militants. The United States has criticized the airstrikes in populated areas.

The bomber approached the bus stop outside Tel Aviv during evening rush hour and blew himself up, killing two women and a man, police said. Another woman died later in a hospital. At least 13 people were wounded.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a radical member of the PLO, claimed responsibility in a call to The Associated Press, saying the attack was in retaliation for the killing of two of its members last week.

## Poison gas kills at least 191

By The Associated Press

**CHONGQING, China** — Clouds of poison gas from a burst well left a "death zone" of villages strewn with bodies in China's southwest, with at least 191 people killed and 41,000 forced to flee, news reports said Friday.

Gas spewed from the well in the Chongqing region as technicians prepared an emergency effort to seal it with cement. They were supposed to make the attempt Friday but put it off until Saturday to let rescue officials focus on rushing food and water to the evacuees.

More than 290 people were hospitalized, many of them children, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Newspaper photos showed children with red faces and their eyes inflamed from chemical burns.

The gas well burst Tuesday in the remote mountain town of Gaoqiao, releasing a cloud of natural gas and hydrogen sulfide, according to state media. Xinhua said the disaster occurred when a drilling accident broke open a gas well.

"The poisonous gas hovering in the air made an area of 25 square kilometers (10 square miles) a death zone, as many villagers were intoxicated by the fumes in their sleep," the China Daily newspaper said. Hardest-hit was the village of Xiaoyang, adjacent to the gas field.

## Man kills self, children on Christmas

By The Associated Press

**ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, Fla.** — A man drove his car into his in-laws' house in a fiery Christmas Day crash, killing himself and his two children minutes before he was supposed to turn them over to his estranged wife, according to media reports.

Shahab Behzadpour, his 3-year-old son, Sammi, and 6-year-old daughter, Nikki, died in the crash in Altamonte Springs, a northern Orlando suburb.

Behzadpour, 46, and his wife, Hope Custodio, were undergoing a bitter divorce. Court records show she had accused him of abuse, and on Friday she won a restraining order for him to stay away from her, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

But the couple had shared custody of the children and he was supposed to let them spend Christmas afternoon with his wife, relatives and neighbors told WKMG-TV of Orlando.

Behzadpour's Ford Crown Victoria hit a pillar at the front of Custodio's parents' house, in the gated community of Brantley Estates, and exploded into a fireball.

Custodio's brother Alex Custodio told WFTV-TV of Orlando that he believed his brother-in-law intentionally rammed the house, and that Behzadpour had threatened to harm himself and the children in the past.

## Preparing for biological attacks

By The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** — Homeland Security officials have enhanced their ability to monitor the air for biological warfare agents in 30 cities, one of several ways the government is preparing for possible terrorist strikes during a high, Code Orange alert.

The alert also has activated special disaster response teams, while federal officials have been conferring with foreign governments to prevent terrorists from boarding international flights bound for the United States.

"People have their antennas up," said Brian Roehrkasse, a spokesman for the Homeland Security Department.

President Bush kept abreast of terrorism threats from the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland as he celebrated Christmas Day with his family.

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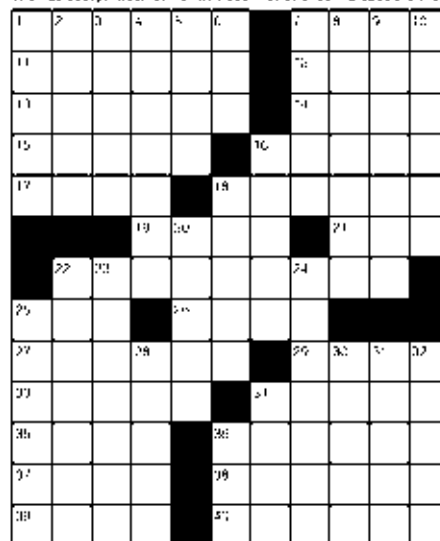
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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

# Mrs. behind Mr. Rogers keeps neighborhood alive

By The Associated Press

■ **PITTSBURGH** — Joanne Rogers, Mrs. to the famed and beloved Mister Rogers, still speaks of the children's television host in the present tense nearly a year after his death.

"I talk about 'our' this and 'our' that, and I talk about him in the present tense an awful lot," said Joanne Rogers, 75. "I haven't been able to get used to the past tense."

Fred Rogers, the host of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," died Feb. 27 of stomach cancer.

Since her husband's death, Joanne Rogers has accepted awards on his behalf and talked to groups about Rogers' lifelong work helping children.

Last month, she spoke at a ceremony inducting Fred Rogers into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame in New York, and was so unsettled by a film clip of her husband she forgot whom to thank.

"They showed the film and I was so undone by it, that I went up, I had the notes right in front of me but I couldn't remember," she told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "It was like everything in my mind had been knocked out."

Rogers said she is learning to cope.

"Sometimes I'm surprised that he doesn't just show up at the door," she said. "But on the other hand, I also know that he's not here and I'm coming to the realization slowly that he's not coming back."

■ **ATLANTA** — "American Idol" runner-up Clay Aiken has granted a fan her Christmas wish.

Jennifer Wilson, a 15-year-old girl with cerebral palsy, was at one of his concerts earlier this month holding a sign for Aiken decorated with holiday lights.

Getting any closer to him was beyond her wildest dreams.

But when her father, Wayne Wilson, lifted her out of her wheelchair for a bathroom break, the two ran into band members of the Black Eyed Peas, who also were performing that night.

They got Wilson backstage.

Aiken, who vaulted from obscurity to pop music stardom, posed for pictures with Jennifer and gave her an autograph.

"Even though Jennifer can be difficult to understand when she speaks, Clay listened intently and understood everything she told him," Wayne Wilson said. "He must have spent 10 or 15 minutes with her."

Wilson said his daughter was overjoyed by the experience.

"I keep asking her what else she wants for Christmas, but she told me she already got everything. This was her one wish in life. I hope Clay knows how much he helped her," he said.

■ **SAN FRANCISCO** — British actor Ben Kingsley stunned his colleagues on the set of "House of Sand and Fog" with how quickly he mastered basic Farsi.

Kingsley, who plays a former Iranian Air Force colonel living in the United States, learned Farsi on the set with help from a Farsi dialect coach as the cameras

were rolling.

"I love doing anything in a different language. I find it very empowering," Kingsley told the San Francisco Chronicle. "I probably learned 50 to 100 percent more (Farsi) than was necessary. There was editing and shrinking down of the Farsi scenes."

Iranian actress Shohreh Aghdashloo, who plays Kingsley's wife in the film, says she was surprised by his ability to learn the language. "He's really good at it," says Aghdashloo, who was born and raised in Iran but now lives in Los Angeles. "He's a great actor."

Kingsley won an Oscar for his portrayal of Mahatma Gandhi in the 1982 film "Gandhi."

■ **LOS ANGELES** — James Garner isn't leaving "8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter" any time soon.

Touchstone TV, the producers of the ABC sitcom, have closed a deal with the veteran actor to continue on the comedy as a regular, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Garner started on the show in November following the sudden death of the sitcom's star, John Ritter, who played a harried dad and newspaper columnist.

Garner plays the father of the columnist's widow, who helps his daughter and three teenage grandchildren as they confront the realities of becoming a single-parent family.

Garner is set to return to "8 Simple Rules" on Jan. 5 after falling on the set last week and bruising his hip.

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