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Merry Christmas!

DAILY Marianas Variety News & Views

Micronesia's Leading Newspaper Since 1972

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For one year period:

NMI spends nearly $1-M for legal help

By Jojo Dass
Variety News Staff

GOVERNMENT has spent nearly $1 million this year for lawyers' services in resolving various litigation and legal questions, including those involving housing for citizens of Freely Associated States, to submerged ancestral lands and telecommunications.

Highest paid, according to records from the Division of Procurement and Supply, is a Massachusetts-based law firm, Macmeekin and Woodword, which got $312,000 for representing CNMI in an ongoing U.S. mainland litigation on local claims to ancestral submerged lands.

A local law firm, Eason & Halsell was paid $253,000 for providing legal services to the CNMI Civil Service Commission (CSC), pending approval by Budget and Finance Special Assistant Michael Sablan of a CSC request for an in-house lawyer.

David A. Wiseman ranked third, getting $125,000 or $165 an hour excluding expenses, to represent the commonwealth in a U.S District Court case involving the U.S. Department of Housing Urban Planning, the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. (NMHC) and some 20 FAS citizens.

The case stemmed from a suit recently filed in connection with the implementation of a federal law prohibiting extension of federal housing benefits to non-U.S. citizens.

Wiseman, the same records showed, is also involved in about six other pending litigation related to NMHC and two projects — the Koblerville expansion and the sale of some 52 housing units at the Sugar King subdivision in Garapan.

U.S.-based lawyer Thomas K. Crowe got $100,000 in retainer's fee to provide legal services for the government's telecommunications program this year. He is getting another $100,000 next year.

A Virginia-based law firm, the DiMuro, Ginsberg & Lieberman got $50,000 to argue a $1-million lawsuit filed against CNMI in the

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Teno Administration to extend PR contract

Lynn Knight

By Jojo Dass
Variety News Staff

GOVERNOR Pedro P. Tenorio contracted the services of a local public relations firm to boost his administration's image, records obtained through a Freedom of Information request showed.

The documents, prepared by the Department of Procurement and Supply (DPS) revealed that Sunset Advertising Group President Lynn Knight was hired to do promotional work for three months beginning Sept. 24 for $4,500.

The contract which expires today, Dec. 24th, has been renewed for the another three months, officials said.

According to the documents, SAG's job involves, among others, preparing press releases and related work -- tasks allegedly duplicating the governor's public information office.

Knight is among a handful of Tenorio's documented consultants.

The others are Mike Sablan, special adviser for finance management, whose contract was again extended up to March 2000 at $48,000.

Education consultant Daniel H. Nielsen, husband of Finance Secretary Lucy DLG. Nielsen, also got a new contract at

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Tobacco firms to do some evidence gathering in NMI

By Ferdie de la Torre
Variety News Staff

SOME U.S. tobacco companies facing a $700-million lawsuit in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) want to gather evidence from a private accounting firm on Saipan to prepare for their defense at trial.

According to court papers, Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corp., Philip Morris Inc., and R.J. Reynold Tobacco Co., sought federal court's order permitting them to take the testimony of and obtain documents from Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (Deloitte) and its employee Christopher Woseley.

The applicants (firms), through counsel Robert J. O'Connor, said the testimony and documents that they are seeking to obtain from Deloitte and Woseley are for use in the "American Tobacco" lawsuit pending in RMI.

In court papers filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court for the NMI, O'Connor said the applicants have secured from the RMI High Court an order authorizing them to get evidence in the U.S.

"Applicants do not ask this Court (federal) to adopt elaborate special procedures for taking testimony and obtaining

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One-year-old Ricardo Diaz cries while sitting on the lap of Santa Claus. The entire Christian world celebrates Christmas this weekend. AP

Gov't agencies seeking Y2K reimbursement

By Haidee V. Eugenio
Variety News Staff

AT LEAST three government agencies and programs are seeking reimbursement for Year 2000 (Y2K) compliance of computers and embedded systems not funded under the U.S. Department of Interior's Y2K budget.

Bob Webb, the governor's special assistant for telecommunications and chairman of the CNMI Y2K Task Force, said the Emergency Management Office (EMO), the NMI Retirement Fund and the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) have a total of $82,000 in reimbursement requests from the government.

"We have other agencies trying to request reimbursement for what they spent on making their systems Y2K compliant; we're trying to help them," said Webb.

The NMIRF, for example, was able to make its systems Y2K compliant way ahead of schedule, spending about $38,000.

The U.S. Interior Department recently appropriated $1.3 million for the CNMI to help fund its Y2K program, but with certain limitations.

The millennium bug or Y2K bug threatens systems run by old computer programs which will

Continued on page 42

IG audit finds Marshalls misused $17M US funds

By Giff Johnson
For the Variety

MAJURO — The Marshall Islands Development Bank violated the Compact of Free Association, U.S. federal and Marshall Islands laws, and its own policies in the use of $17.5 million in U.S. funds, said a just-released audit by the U.S. Interior Department's Inspector General's office.

The scathing U.S. review of the Majuro-based bank's lending policies said that political influence from and directives of the Marshall Islands Cabinet in the late 1980s through the mid-1990s caused the bank to issue numerous loans that could not be collected. The audit is one of a series that the U.S. is conducting on Marshall Islands

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PAC NEWSPAPER STACKS

Ferry sinks in Philippines

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The MV Asia South Korea left central Cebu City for Iloilo City late Wednesday and sank near Bantayan island early yesterday off the northern tip of central Cebu island, said Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado.

Jonji Gonzales, a spokesman for Trans-Asia Shipping Lines, which owns the ferry, said it carried 606 passengers, many heading home for the holidays. Mercado said the ferry had 52 crew members.

The John Dexter crew radioed that they saw the ferry listing on its left side with no lights minutes before it disappeared into the water. Crew members said they were hesitant to get closer to the ferry for fear of being smashed into it by large waves, Regoya said.

Reports from Bantayan indicated strong winds and fog in the area, 300 miles southeast of Manila.

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A Nepalese student, Gurung Sundip, said 12 of his classmates at the Cebu Doctors College boarded the ferry, and there was no word about them. The group, eight women and four men, were planning to vacation in the island resort of Boracay, north of Iloilo.

The local Coast Guard chief, Commander Franklin Llanto, said the ferry's departure was delayed three hours after inspectors found it carried 80 passengers more than its allowed maximum capacity of 614.

Gonzales confirmed the delay but declined to comment on whether the ship had been overloaded, insisting the ferry carried less than its maximum capacity when it left.

"We will never sail if we are overloaded," Gonzales said.

Mercado said at least three Philippine navy ships were helping in the search and rescue.

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They are advancing this thesis as airport security is being tightened and officials are admonishing Americans at home and abroad to be on the lookout for anything suspicious in the waning days of 1999. Officials believe suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden, a Saudi exile who is wanted for the bombings at two U.S. embassies in East Africa last year, may be preparing to strike.

Ivan Eland, a defense specialist at the libertarian Cato Institute, says the unprecedented concern among Americans about terrorism is the result of the "profligate U.S. interference in the business of other nations and groups."

"What does the average American get from U.S. meddling in far-flung corners of the world that do not remotely affect U.S. vital interests?" Eland asks. "A much lighter wallet and an increasing uneasiness when traveling abroad or even when participating in large public celebrations at home."

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Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and the majority of the foreign policy establishment believe that the United States must not shrink from the use of force to protect what they perceive as the national interest.

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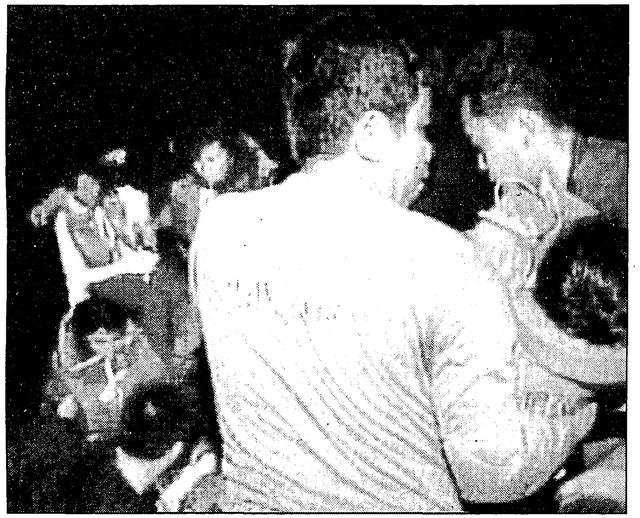

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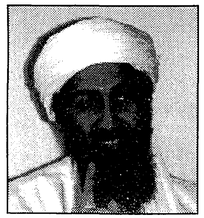

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'Gang-rape' trial begins

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THE JURY trial began yesterday against two of four men charged in connection with the kidnapping and raping of two Chinese women at the Suicide Cliff.

After the opening arguments of both prosecution and defense, a police officer who was among those who immediately responded to the crime scene took the witness stand in the trial against Hadley F. Renguul and Jose O. Rabauliman.

Police Officer Mettao said he noticed that defendant Renguul's T-shirt was torn when he was arrested.

Mettao identified the shirt which was one of the government's exhibit as the one Renguul allegedly wearing at the time of the arrest.

The officer said Renguul admitted he was the driver of the vehicle and made a comment that he did not do anything against the two Chinese ladies.

Mettao also testified that the two Chinese women ran towards the police vehicles when the police officers arrived.

According to court records, responding police officers pursued the suspects' van, which ran off the roadway and struck a telephone pole.

Police arrested then 21-year-old Renguul who jumped from the van and ran into the woods. During follow-up operations, Yano and Ito were arrested while Rabauliman reportedly surrendered.

At his opening arguments, Assistant Attorney General James Benedetto described the two ladies as "disposable victims" of the defendants because they were "Chinese women."

Benedetto narrated how Renguul, Rabauliman and co-defendants Jake Amalei Ito and Sheldon R. Yano snatched the victims near Horiguchi Building in the early morning of March 28, 1998..

The prosecutor said one of the victims even lost her shoe in front of Horiguchi when the suspects grabbed them.

The victims, Benedetto said, were driven to the Cliff where they were raped and forced to perform oral copulation.

Rabauliman also beat one of the girls, the lawyer added.

Rabauliman and Renguul maintained that the group talked with the victims for sex in exchange for money.

Saipan youth pleads innocent in Guam case

By Eric F. Say
Variety News Staff

HAGATÑA–A Saipan man being held on $100,000 cash bail has pleaded not guilty to burglary, assault and drug possession charges.

James Charles Concepcion allegedly tried to get into Felicita Pablo's Agat home through a bathroom window and forced himself upon her.

Earlier this month, Concepcion appeared before Superior Court Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood with bandages on his hands and fingers from bite marks sustained in the incident.

He told the court he was from Saipan and had only been on Guam a few months.

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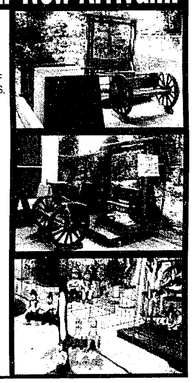

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Molly Shannon — Comedy
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Robin Williams — Comedy
POKEMON — G
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The World is not Enough — R
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Pierce Brosnan — Drama
Elmo In Grouchland — G
Fri. 2:15 • 4:15
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Mon/Tues. 2:15 • 4:15
Asin At Paminta — R
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Mon/Tues. 4:30 • 7:30 • 11:..0
Eddie Garcia/Blakdyak Ruffae Mae — Comedy

EMO, DPH ready for holiday emergencies

By Haidee V. Eugenio
Variety News Staff

MISSION-critical government agencies like the Emergency Management Office (EMO) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) yesterday assured the community of enough number of manpower to be mobilized in case emergency situations arise during the holiday season.

While other government offices are closed, EMO and DPH will be having 24-hour work shifts and will be able to mobilize enough on-island personnel if some things go wrong, officials said.

EMO Director Gregorio A. Deleon Guerrero said the agency's "operations center" will be open daily as a policy not only during the Christmas holiday but throughout the year. He, however, said this time of the year when most offices are closed, entails extra vigilance on the part of mission-critical government agencies.

"We have enough duty operators and 24-hour standby personnel who will be called up if anything happens. Our operations center is prepared for anything" said Guerrero.

Joseph Kevin Villagomez

Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez, for his part, said as early as August, DPH's mission-critical staff like doctors and nurses had been informed their requests for "leave" during the holiday season will not be approved.

"We are running on full staff on those days, especially the weekend of the rollover. We have informed (them) since August we will not approve any leave for all the critical staff . . . Even when they are not working, we want them on-island, we need their assistance; they are on call to ensure safety for everybody," Villagomez said in a separate interview.

The health secretary also pointed out that not only medical staff will be on-site during the rollover on Dec. 31, but also the technical crew. They will be allowed to leave the work premises on Jan. 1, 2000 at around 10 am.

"Everybody will be here to ensure everything is operating well . . . We do not foresee any problems at all. We are geared up and ready to address the needs of the community but we hope they don't need to access our help.

"But in the event they do need our help we will be more than ready, willing and able. We hope a safe holiday for everybody," he said.

At the same time, DPH issued a warning against 'too much' improper food intake during the holidays, including alcohol consumption.

Guam airport on heightened alert

By Jay Pascua
Variety News Staff

THE GUAM International Airport Authority said security is on a general alert for terrorist activities - security level 3. The security level was not put in place to follow other airports across the country or a recent Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) alert to travelling Americans to avoid large holiday gatherings or millennial celebrations.

Airport Director Gerry Yingling said the airport has been operating at level 3 for about a year after Osama bin Laden allegedly bombed two U.S. embassies in Africa.

The recent FAA warning is also associated with the terrorist attack in Africa. The warning was issued after Jordanian authorities arrested 13 people suspected of being members of the bin Laden organization planning attacks against Americans and Israelis.

Acting Chief of Airport Police Pete Daga said level 4 is the highest level of alert.

He said level 4 would be initiated after intelligence revealed a direct threat to the airport. Daga added that, as of yesterday, the FAA did not issue another official alert or directive to heighten security at the airport.

Daga said he did receive a press release from Guam's FAA field agent indicating several of the nation's airports are heightening its security.

However, Yingling said the airport would be extra vigilant during the holidays especially before and after Jan.1.

Yingling said the airport authority is asking for the public's cooperation during this obviously

"We [the airport authority] just want people to know we are not a bunch of grinches. We just want people follow the rules and we will try to execute our duties as pleasantly as possible," Yingling said.

Navy Lt. Monica Richardson said the Navy remains at Threat-Con level Alpha. She said the level is a step up above "normal" but she said the Navy has been at the level for about a year.

Richardson said the military has four levels of threat conditions Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta. Alpha is the lowest threat condition level.

Despite the warning from the federal government as of yesterday Richardson said the Navy base here has not been directed to increase its threat condition above the Alpha level.

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EDITORIAL

Give peace a chance

DECEMBER 25. It is a day when everyone wishes everybody well. A time when feuding friends and family cross paths for the biggest barbecue of the year, the most joyous of all get-togethers. A when former enemies set aside grudges.

In the face of the never-ending difficulties, the people of the CNMI have reason to remain optimistic—they see the end of a trying century and the dawn of a new millennium.

The promise of a better life beckons. The path ahead, however, is no doubt difficult.

Problems continue to confront us. We see meager tourist arrivals and less revenues. Government continues to be bugged by a burgeoning deficit, and ever-rising expenditures.

Businesses no longer see the kind of profits they saw in the boom of the early 90s. Everyone continues to feel the pinch brought about by the regional economic turmoil. People who used to benefit from the fruits of a booming economy now find themselves jobless and helpless.

With most of us frustrated with the way life in the Marianas is becoming, we tend to blame each other for the problems we are faced with.

The rat race intensifies. More conflicts arise and divisions among people get wider.

Much of the hostility can be reflected in the way our leaders have engaged temselves in their own conflicts, political or otherwise. There is so much bickering in government and this has taken focus away from the real problems of the people—including the continuing decline in the standard of living for the average Chamolinian.

Life is becoming harder and harder, and if our leaders' focus continue to be politics instead of livelihood programs for the people, the quality of life would continue to deteriorate and the pursuit of prosperity would become more daunting.

The more elected leaders continue to put their strength and attention to their fight for turf and power, the more Tan Maria and Tan Pedro's needs inevitably get cast aside. The more leaders look after their own vested interests, the more they overlook concerns about health care and education, federal relations and the level of social services. The people's longing for better government continues and what better time to knock on our leaders' hearts and senses than now.

As Christmas dawns upon us, we yearn for the silencing of political cannons, for our leaders to set aside their differences and promote peace and goodwill.

Even for just this single day, let us all reflect on how we can improve ourselves for others, instead of trying to out-smart and outperform one another.

Let us all reach out for one another's hand in friendship, regardless of political affiliation. It is time for enemies to become friends and for friends and family to become closer.

Only if we let peace reign in our hearts this Christmas can we see hope for a more peaceful, more united and stronger NMI community, for the new millennium.

Happy holidays.

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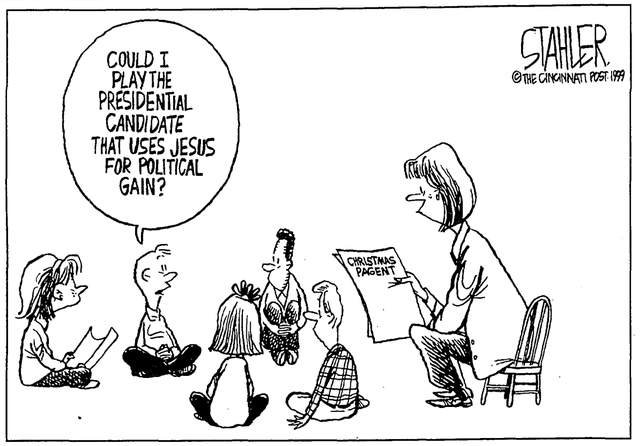

Zaldy Dandan

• Variations

Of men and women

I DON'T like to shop, even during this holiday season. Not only because I've to pay with my own money, but because the experience bores me. Don't get me wrong. I also dislike shoplifting; spending time in jail may be less dull, but it could be too much of an excitement, particularly if another prison riot occurs.

At the risk of having someone send this column to Gloria Steinem and the NOW, I should admit that I think it's a man thing, this attitude I have vis a vis shopping. I base this observation on the several informal interviews I've had with women, some of whom swear that shopping could even be therapeutic. But that's probably because they're using their husband's American Express.

In any case, I've seen how a woman would go to a boutique in a mall, try on an entire inventory of, say, shoes, ponder, ask for the price, ponder again and wear every single pair again—a process she will repeat in all the shoe stores within a 4-mile radius. At the end of the day, she might end up buying a pair.

In contrast, I usually try a pair or two of, say, Nike running shoes, pay for the one I chose and leave. I use, more or less, the same "method" when buying shirts, pants and groceries. Which, of course, appalls the women in our family. They describe my "shopping habits" with terms used by Imperial China when speaking about Europeans, who were called "barbarians."

I've been doing some research regarding this issue, which led to my discovery of the following other "differences" between men and women as compiled by the New York Times News Service:

Laundry. Women do it every other day. Men, every eight years. Men expect to meet beautiful women at the laundromat. This is a myth.

Plants. A woman asks a man to water her plants while she is on vacation. The man waters the plants everyday. The woman comes home to an apartment full of dead plants. No one knows why this happens.

Cheerleaders. Female cheerleaders are sexy, cute, fresh. Male cheerleaders are scary.

Sex. Women prefer 30 to 45 minutes of foreplay. Men prefer 30 to 45 seconds. Men consider driving back to her place as part of foreplay.

Telephone. Men use the phone to communicate short messages to other people. A woman can visit an old friend for two weeks, come home, call the same friend that night and talk for three hours.

Handwriting. Men chicken-scratch. Women use scented, colored stationery and they dot their i's with circles and hearts. It is a royal pain to read a note from a woman. Even when she is dumping you, she'll put a smiley face at the end of the note.

Admitting mistakes. Women will sometimes admit a mistake. Men—well, not even Custer admitted he was wrong.

Mustaches. Some men look good in it. A woman with a mustache is a man.

***

Speaking of a woman who is a man, there was this anxious husband from Bountiful, Utah who filed a missing-person report only to learn from the police that the "wife" was a man, and that "she" was in jail for using 33 credit cards fraudulently obtained.

In a July 1995 report, the Washington Post said the husband would not believe the police until he was shown, uh, damaging evidence. It turned out that the husband never saw his "wife" naked during their 3 1/2-year marriage. "I feel pretty stupid," the stupid man told the Ogden Standard Examiner.

Ever helpful, the Post came up with the following tips on how to tell whether your wife is a man:

10. The toilet seat is always up.
9. She tapes "Baywatch."
8. She can recite the infield fly rule. But what's really suspicious is that when she doubles to left she always adjusts her cup.
7. After sex, she immediately falls asleep.
6. She doesn't bitch when you give her a drill press for her birthday.
5. You realize you've never had control of the remote.
4. She blows her nose in the shower.
3. She feels sorry for President Clinton.
2. You can never open the ketchup bottle after she closes it.
1. When you say: "I just can't decide whether the valances should be the same shade as the curtains or a sort of teal—which would you choose?" She answers: "Sure honey."

Letters to the editor

LETTERS to the editor must carry the full name of the writer and signature, with a telephone number (in case of faxed or mailed letters) for verification. Letters addressed to other publications or to third parties and those endorsing particular political candidates are discouraged. All letters are subject to editing. The Variety reserves the right to reject any letters. Name withheld and unsigned letters will not see print.

Propaganda

AS SOME of the Variety's own articles have reflected over a number of years, an intensive public relations effort was and still is being waged against the CNMI.

It is unfortunate that some stateside media several years ago referred to the CNMI as "islands of slaves," and that various media have depicted the CNMI as the "land of sweatshops and imported slaves." Saying things like that doesn't make them true though, even if some official can be quoted in connection with them.

Do our garment factories actually keep slaves? The Variety has never reported any such thing, but it is always quick to reprint any such assertions from any quarter, however old, even if they know from their own personal experience that they aren't true.

The fact of the matter is that most of the hysterical coverage has died away as more parties have learned about the reality of the CNMI and the Office of Insular Affairs shut down its "blame the CNMI bureau." A number of the allegations that led to the "slavery" statements in the first place were proven false, and reforms that were already well underway by the time those statements were made have undermined any basis for their continued recycling in the media.

Garment firms are by far the biggest sector of employment in the CNMI, but they never generated the gross complaints referred to in the media compared to say, the security guard business. I really don't see why the Variety would want to keep alive the worst unproven allegations and propaganda—nearly all directed toward our industry—that have done significant damage to the CNMI. The Variety has reported the many reform efforts initiated by the Saipan garment industry. More to the point, the problems drawing the attention of Washington and the media were never much concerned with the garment industry abuse of personnel and human rights, but on the complaints about "unfair" competition, as amplified by Congressman Miller and the U.S. labor unions.

"Sweatshops" to a lot of U.S. media personnel apparently defines nearly any factory operation these days, making this a fairly meaningless statement, although the Department of Labor which inspects our factories actually has a well-established definition. DOL has described nearly two-thirds of the Los Angeles garment industry as sweatshop riddled.

A recent communication we received from a stateside attorney, not involved in any of our current litigation said this, "We know the Saipan garment industry isn't perfect, but the fact is that you are making a more concentrated effort to address labor standards issues than any producers' organization in the world. You'll be interested to know, by the way, that several people at the San Francisco conference told me that they thought Saipan may be the cleanest place in the world right now, from a labor standards perspective. I wouldn't testify to that in a court of law, but this is the reaction of people who are actually doing the monitoring."

Unlike recent letters to the editor writers who were treated so badly, the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association isn't asking to be included on your staff's "Thanksgiving" list. We believe, however, that those who follow the flow of government revenue through your articles will find some reason to appreciate our industry and its contributions to the CNMI through tough economic times.

RICHARD A. PIERCE
Executive Director
Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association

The Variety replies:

Finally, someone from the industry who doesn't want to be on the list that includes siopao, siomai and pampers.

Mr. Pierce, in any case, was apparently referring to the "unproven allegations" and "propaganda" published or aired by national media outfits—which includes his favorite U.S. newspaper, the Washington Times—whose journalism standards are so exacting they tend to exasperate their own reporters. No, Mr. Pierce, we simply cannot just ignore and not report these news articles and broadcasts that could affect the lives of the people of these islands, who are our readers. Incidentally, our not reporting them would not make them go away.

The garment industry is making significant contributions to the CNMI government coffers through these tough economic times? The same government that allows the industry to ship duty-free garment products to the U.S. valued at $1 billion by Washington, D.C.?—eds.

Politics and the garment industry

LET ME see if I got this right: When David North gave public information about the Saipan visits of pro-garment U.S. Republican congressmen and their staff to their U.S. Democratic opponents, our CNMI leaders howled! One lawmaker even said he was going to conduct a witch hunt for "local" connections. Now we see people directly or indirectly representing garment U.S. Rep. Tom Delay actually interfering with the CNMI House's selection of its speaker and the only one who seems to be howling is our present speaker!

What is more harmful to the CNMI—disseminating public information or interfering in local politics at the House of Representative level?

The garment industry is safe with any of our elected representatives as speaker. We are not going to see the minimum wage raised or a tax raise for the garment industry during the 12th Legislature. Heinz Hofschneider is not going to lead the charge for a federal takeover.

Not one person running for office—Republican, Democrat or Reform—criticized the garment industry for its influence on local politics. Not one. Most accepted every contribution from the garment industry given directly or indirectly through their respective parties. No questions were asked.

Frankly, I don't understand why our speaker is so indignant. Everyone knows the garment industry took control of our politics while the 9th, 10th and 11th Legislatures stood by cheering and paying for lobbyists. Why shouldn't it select the next speaker?

Next month when the 12th opens, let's check out the Legislature's parking lot for new cars. Perhaps we'll learn that it's not only some voters who expect to get paid for their votes, but some of our elected representatives, too!

KENNETH L. GOVENDO
Dandan, Saipan

Blood, water and the next House speaker

THIS is regarding the Variety's Dec. 15 report that Speaker Diego T. Benavente might send the House sergeant-at-arms and the police force to look for Rep. Alejo M. Mendiola, who had been absent during the previous sessions.

Why can't we realize that Mr. Mendiola may have valid reasons for his absence, like availability of transportation, health or family matters?

Why pick on Mr. Mendiola and House Minority Leader Dino Jones?

It would just embolden them to rebel.

Anyway, capital improvement projects (CIPs) should not be rushed and not considered overnight.

I cannot say who Mr. Mendiola will support for speaker, but I know he knows what is best for Rota.

Nevertheless, I can say that the way Rep. Heinz Hofschneider treated then Northern Marianas College President Agnes Manglona McPhetres may affect this issue.

Nothing came out of the oversight hearings, just heartaches for Mrs. McPhetres who built and guided the college to prosperity.

Mrs. McPhetres is related to Reps. Alejo Manglona Mendiola and Oscar Manglona Babauta.

Blood is thicker than water.

JESUS M. TAISACAN
Rota

Confused over oversight hearing

WILL someone kindly explain to me the result of the oversight investigation on Mrs. Agnes McPhetres conducted by Rep. Heinz Hofschneider? I am so confused.

I had been following this case and was looking forward for her prosecution only to learn that she has been receiving all sorts of awards. Is there a cover-up because of her affiliation and or relations with the authorities and members of the Senate? If that is the case, then it's sad to know that people like myself are the only ones who are vulnerable to the eyes of justice.

Otherwise, Mrs. McPhetres is entitled to an apology from Mr. Hofschneider and the public should get a report on the matter. After all, public funds have been spent and wasted.

On another matter, is it not true that capital improvement projects are matched through local revenues? If this is the case, are Rota and Tinian generating enough funds to match all those projects that they want to place on their islands? Or, are we here on Saipan subsidizing them? If so, don't you think the lawmakers are breaking the law? Helloooooo?

EDWARDO K. PETER JR.
Garapan, Saipan

A Christmas message

AS THE birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ draws near, I strongly feel to share this Christmas message to the world.

It does not matter where we came from or what we, struggling Christians, profess to believe about the very purpose of Christ's birth and public ministry. What matter is how we give utmost value to his teachings about peace, forgiveness and charity and how we live with it. When we tend to meditate more and more about our Lord's first coming to earth, it benefit us in many ways.

His teachings help us strengthen our faith in him so we can build a very strong character that will help us be happy and approach perfection. Are we not called the most blessed generation of sons and daughters of God as we truly incorporate the purpose of Christ's birth and his teachings into our daily life?

In the book of Matthew, chapter 5 verses 1-12, we will find the basic guide on how to be real forgiving Christian. It teach us the "beatitudes" that come from a Latin word meaning "to be happy" or "to be blessed."

Regarding the so-called "Second Coming to Earth," I firmly believe that people should not be afraid about it. All Jesus Christ asks us to do is to be more peaceful, forgiving and charitable no matter what the consequences may be.

PAT MAURICIO
San Antonio, Saipan

Manglona issues restitution ruling

By Ferdie de la Torre
Variety News Staff

SUPERIOR Court Associate Judge John A. Manglona yesterday ruled that a statute does not require a defendant to make a restitution to a third party, other than a victim of crime.

Manglona resolved the issue on restitution in connection with a traffic case against Stewart Saburo that happened during Christmas Day of 1998.

Manglona ordered that Saburo shall not be compelled to make restitution to the victim's employer for medical expenses paid.

In Saburo's case, the judge pointed out, defendant was adjudged guilty of offenses under Title 9, which sets forth the penalties for vehicle code violations.

Title 9, Manglona said, has no similar provision authorizing restitution to third parties.

Court records showed that while Saburo was driving his Izuzu pick up on Middle Road he struck Gui Hua Luo who crossed the road

Judge John A. Manglona

with a companion near the Chalan Lau Lau area in the early morning hours on Christmas Day of 1998.

The court found Saburo guilty for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and the Open Container Act. He was sentenced to 90 days imprisonment, all suspended, for a period of one year and was also ordered to pay a fine.

Defendant was placed on probation for one year and was ordered to pay restitution.

The government, through the Attorney General's Office, submitted the following amounts to be paid: $102.18 for lost wages and overtime and $438.81 for medical expenses.

Luo's employer paid the medical expenses incurred as a result of Luo's injuries.

Saburo, through counsel Assistant Public Defender Robert T. Torres, objected to the restitution to Luo's employer, contending that the defendant was not required under NMI Constitution to make restitution to a third party.

Torres asserted that the Constitution limits restitution only to those amounts actually paid by the victim.

Because the victim's employer paid the medical expenses, Torres contended, Saburo is not required to make restitution to the employer.

Article I, Section II of the NMI Constitution states: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, and belongings against crime shall be recognized at sentencing. Restitution to the crime victim shall be a condition of probation and parole except upon a showing of compelling interest."

Manglona said the plain meaning of the statute clearly indicates that a crime victim has a constitutional right to restitution from a defendant.

Manglona said the question then turns to whether the term "crime victim" encompasses both direct and indirect victims of crime.

Citing the legislative history on such statute for guidance, Manglona said, in sum the committee on personal rights and natural resources substantial changes to the original delegate proposals and the Second Constitutional Convention's further amendments suggest that the statute requires restitution only to direct victims for the costs that they have incurred and paid as a result of crime.

Manglona said the Supreme Court in CNMI vs Mitchell 1995 case, addressed a similar issue in an assault and battery criminal prosecution.

The high tribunal's analysis, the judge pointed out, indicates that the right to restitution under the law applies only to victims of crime.

Manglona said the Supreme Court, however, acknowledged that a statute enacted in 1983 that pre-dates Article I Section II, extends restitution orders to any injured person caused by the acts of a defendant.

Clinic: Medicines came in before ban took effect

By Haldee V. Eugenio
Variety News Staff

THE OWNER of one of the two Garapan-based acupuncture clinics raided and closed down early last week disclosed yesterday the violations stemmed from selling antibiotics and Chinese herbal medicines, but most of them were brought in before the passage of Public Law 11-40 late last year.

Xia Fugang, owner and acupuncturist of the Chinese Acupuncture Clinic, also admitted it violated the law by performing non-acupuncture related services, including minor surgeries.

The businessman said all the antibiotics and some of the herbal medicine entered the CNMI last year, before the passage of the said law, otherwise known as the Pure Food, Drug, Cosmetic and Device Act.

He pointed out that while the clinic did not try to smuggle the prohibited medicine, some of them were able to pass through inspections at the airport. He said he last brought in herbal medicine from China on Nov. 10.

Despite a knowledge of the prohibitions early this year, Fugang said he continued to sell antibiotics and herbal medicine because of the patients' demand.

"I feel sorry for my patients now that they closed my clinic. But I cooperate with the government, with DPH," Fugang said in an interview. He added that since the opening of the clinic in 1991, patients visited his clinics some 20,000 times.

The CNMI Medical Profession Licensing Board is reportedly not renewing the said clinic's license to operate as an acupuncture firm. The license expires on Feb. 2000.

Operatives from the Department of Public Health, Customs Division, Department of Public Safety and Department of Labor and Immigration raided and closed down the said clinic on Dec. 14.

Authorities said the closure of the two clinics were due to alleged repeated selling of prohibited prescription and over-the-counter medicine, including birth control pills, antibiotics, anti-aging tablets and vitamin syrup despite early warnings. The establishments are the first ones to be closed down since the passage of the law.

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No conflict for Arriola in poll suit

By Ferdie de la Torre
Variety News Staff

THE SUPERIOR Court yesterday junked the argument of Assistant Attorney General Robert Goldberg that Saipan lawyer Joseph A. Arriola should be disqualified for conflict of interest in the lawsuit against the Board of Elections.

Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama said although the record establishes that Arriola has an attorney-client relationship with the Senate, it however, does not show that his representation of plaintiff Juanita M. Taisacan against the Board is directly

Juan T. Lizama

adverse to the Senate.

"There has been no showing of pending legislation before the Senate concerning the Board of Elections that would create a conflict between Arriola's clients and further, there has been no showing that either of the parties in this case are members of the Senate," Lizama said.

Thus, Arriola is not representing a client in direct conflict with another client, said the judge, adding that there has been no showing of an apparent conflict between the lawyer's respective clients.

Taisacan, a write-in candidate, challenged the Board's final results for the Board of Education

Joseph A. Arriola

Rota representative race during the November polls.

Goldberg, on behalf of the Board of Elections, said a recent court decision ruled that Arriola's representation of the Senate creates an actual conflict in his representation of private clients against the government.

Goldberg in the motion to disqualify Arriola argued that in the Taisacan case, plaintiff is suing the government considering that the Board is a government entity of the CNMI.

Lizama in his order said the language of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct sets forth the factors to be considered when determining whether there is a conflict of interest involved in an attorney's representation of a particular client.

Applying the language to this case, Lizama pointed out, Arriola does not have a conflict of interest in representing Taisacan in the matter.

Noting that the Senate remains silent, the judge said, the court cannot disqualify Arriola at this time for any potential future conflicts that may arise from his representing private clients against other entities of the government.

"The solution to the problems and conflicts that may arise from this practice lies with the Commonwealth Senate, Arriola's employer," Lizama said.

Study: Parents, teachers satisfied with education NMI provides kids

By Marian A. Maraya
Variety News Staff

A RECENTLY completed study commissioned by the CNMI Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC) reveals that both parents and teachers are satisfied with education activities being provided for students in the CNMI.

Such was the conclusion reached by Barbra LeRoy who did a study for the Development Disabilities Institute, Wayne University in Michigan, and who conducted a local parent and educator survey on the perception of inclusive education in the CNMI.

The study was designed to gather information and data from parents of children with disabilities attending school (elementary and high school) in the Public School System (PSS).

The survey also involved the participation of regular and special education teachers (elem. and high school) who are also under PSS.

Across all measures, parents of elementary children expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school climate, school programs, and their partnerships with teachers and administrators, the study showed.

Further, teachers rated supports as effective and rated themselves as component in all collaborative and promising practices.

In general, all teachers found support providers — Principal, Special Education (SE) administrator, SE building staff, paraprofessional, parents — to be effective.

As a group, special education teachers also found their supports to be most effective.

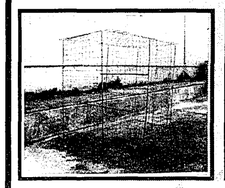
Secondary teachers were least satisfied with their supports.

The study, however, showed that less than 50 percent of teachers engage in collaborative activities in a regular basis.

The collaborative activities being described include student planning, materials development, Co-teaching, student evaluation, behavior management, curriculum accom. , instructional formats, and partnership development.

Only in terms of percentage of teachers who were engaged in collaborative activities were the ratings relatively low, survey re-

Continued on page 37



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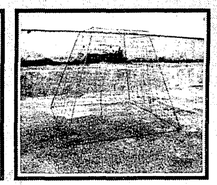

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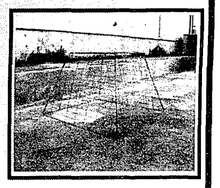

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Joeten launches search for Year 2000 baby

J.C. TENORIO Enterprises, Inc. (Joeten) is launching its search for Joeten's Year 2000 Baby, a promotion to greet the New Year with a bang.

The Joeten Year 2000 Baby, is the first baby born on January 1, 2000 between 12 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Saipan.

He or she will be getting over $2,000 worth of baby products from Micronesian Brokers, Nestle, Bristol Myers, and D&O.

The list of prizes include:

•One year supply of Similac and a case of assorted Gerber baby products (juices, vegetables and fruits); Johnson and Johnson baby shampoo, powder, lotion and oil from Micronesian Brokers.

•Tempra drops, Enfamil formulas, Ammens powder, and lots more from Bristol Myers.

•One year supply of Luvs Diapers from D&Q.

•Carnation Good Start, Follow-Up, or Al soy products from Nestle.

"We want to kick off the new millennium in an exciting way and we thought that this promotion would be one way of doing it," Joeten said in a press release.

"We give thanks to our main sponsors for joining us in this effort."

"We are sure that the mother-to-be is going to be elated and ecstatic with all the assistance we will be providing during the first year of our millennium baby."

NMC puts Hinalom Tunadan Marianas collection for sale

NORTHERN Marianas College is releasing for sale to the public a collection of specially arranged and produced musical collection of Marianas Rhapsody called Hinalom Tunadan Marianas.

The collection contains "musical influences" of several nations who came and colonized the Northern Mariana Islands.

However, the most significant aspect of the collection is that it traces its history and origin to ancient Chamorros who "had a distinctive musical style called Chamorrita."

"Only recently it has been discovered that these ancient Chamorros used Jaza intervals (fourth intervals) in these short melodies, which are sung in the form of dialogue, generally between men and women," NMC said in a press release.

"These energetic melodies were used to convey messages of some type: love, dreams, hopes, fictional stories, or simply for entertainment.

"The most extraordinary is the first arrangement: Hago I Ininan I Langit. From careful analysis of this Chamorrita, it appears that the pre-Spanish Chamorros were using Jazz intervals (fourth intervals) centuries ago. It is commonly believed that Jazz did not come into existence until sometime in the 1800s!"

Maestro Bruno Dalla Pozza, a vintage classical pianist, arranged and produced the Marianas Rhapsody collection, Hinalom Tunadan Marianas.

His vast musical interest led Bruno on a search for the roots of Chamorro music. He has since put the songs into musical notation to be preserved for posterity.

The collection includes the following originals (Chamorrita) and musical influences by Spanish, German, Japanese and American:

•Original Chamorrita - Hago I Ininan I Langit

•Original Chamorrita - I Tano Mami

•Original Chamorrita - Gi Todu I Lugat

•Spanish Influence - O Petlas I Pacifiko

•German Influence - Papa I Kandit

•Japanese Influence - Machimo Akarimo

•American Influence - Triste Yu

•Marianas Rhapsody - Gi Talo Gi Halom Taxi/Palasyon Riko

•We Anka (Carolinian) - Patgon Neni

•Nobia - Lahi

•Basta Taotao

•Gi Todu I Lugat - Gi Talo Gi Halom Tasi

The Marianas Rhapsody: Hinalom Tunadan Marianas in CD is available for sale at the NMC Bookstore, Saipan campus for $18. All proceeds go to NMC.

Rev & Tax to distribute W-2CM forms

THE Division of Revenue and Taxation informs all employers of the CNMI that the 1999 W-2CM Forms and Instructions distribution will commence on Thursday, December 30 from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Rev&Tax office location in the Joeten DanDan Commercial Center.

All businesses and employers are kindly asked, to please pick up the forms during regular business hours beginning on December 30.

Please be reminded that the deadline for filing of the 1999 W-2CM form is Monday, January 31, 2000 at 4:30 p.m.

SNISWCD meet

THE Saipan and Northern Islands Soil and Water Conservation District informs the general public that there will be a district meeting on January 4, 2000 at 2 p.m. at the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Garapan and Saipan Interagency Watershed meeting on January 12, 2000 at 9:30 a.m. at the Department of Public Works.

For more information contact our office at 233-3415/0650.

DPS checkpoint

THE Department of Public Safety will be conducting DUI sobriety checkpoints this coming weekend.

The purpose of the checkpoint is to deter and detect violators of the CNMI traffic laws, DPS said in a notice.

For more information, please contact the DPS traffic office at 664-9084/5/6.

HSBC donates to CDAC

By Marian A. Maraya
Variety News Staff

FOR 18 years now, the Children's Development Assistance Center (CDAC) has been known to provide efficient child referral services in the CNMI and all these efforts would not have been possible had it not been for the untiring support of the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the local community, said CDAC Administrator Jack Taitano yesterday.

CDAC received a $500-check from the Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) yesterday for the center's operational costs.

This is the third consecutive year that CDAC has been recipient to HSBC's holiday season donation, according to Taitano.

This year, CDAC intends to use the money specifically to acquire assistive devices for the children at the center, expressed Taitano.

"We will be using this to buy things like car seats for infants and toddlers, nebulizers, and etc.," he said.

The Saipan Unity Lions Club headed by Christine Pangelinan have also recently shared with the center toys for the children in light of the Christmas season, said Taitano.

He reiterated that the community's support partnered with Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez's valuable assistance, are the main elements which keep the center afloat.

"This year, we've boosted up child referrals. In the coming year, we plan to maintain this standing and strive for more public awareness," he said.

"We are concentrating on newborns at the hospital. As a matter of fact, we have tripled the number of referrals we've had compared the past year's. But these referrals do not mean everyone is eligible, they have to be screened and tested first. Other kids turn out to be normal," Taitano added.

The administrator expressed further pride in having a capable team aboard to run the center.

"We have special education teachers, a physical occupational therapist, speech therapist, cardiologist and other specialists like dieticians, nurses, etc. which we were promised to be readily available to us when necessary, according to the Secretary," said Taitano.

"Through the DPH and the Public School System's Special education program, we work hard in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of children who reach our care.

"But we are limited to take in kids from birth until three years old only," he said.

The center is able to assist close to 1,500 kids (average) in an annual basis, Taitano revealed.

"In March next year, we are going to do another open house where we will make available different services so people would be aware of them.

"Again our efforts would not be successful without help from DPH, the secretary of Health and the whole community and institutions like HSBC," said Taitano.

Anna Concepcion, who recently released her latest CD, "Christmas Wishes," presents a check for $330 to the Filipino Christian Church of Guam. From left: Emilio Uy, Lorna Freitas, FCCG treasurer, Anna Concepcion, and Lt. Gov. Bordallo.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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26 CHAMPAGNE SUNDAY BRUNCH from 11:00AM - 2:00PM Adult: $20.00 Child: $10.00 DINNER A 'LA CARTE'	27 STEAK & LOBSTER NIGHT from 6:30PM-9:30PM CAB Steak & Lobster priced by ounces and includes; Salad Bar with your choice of Dressings and Tempting Desserts.	28 ITALIAN NIGHT DINNER BUFFET from 6:30pm - 9:30 pm ADULT: $22.00 CHILD: $11.00	29 CHAMORRO FIESTA DINNER BUFFET from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. ADULT: $22.00 CHILD: $11.00	30 SOUTH OF THE BORDER (MEXICAN STYLE) DINNER BUFFET from 6:30pm to 9:30pm Adult: $22.00 Child: $11.00	31 NEW YEARS EVE GALA DINNER at Raraina Restaurant Adult: $65.00 / Kids: $35.00 From 6:00PM - 10:00PM NEW YEARS EVE GALA DINNER AT THE POOLSIDE Adult: $70.00 / Kids: $35.00 from 6:30PM - 1:00AM Happy New Year	1 HANG-OVER BRUNCH at the Costa and Raraina Restaurant from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ADULT: $22.00 CHILD: $11.00 STEAK & LOBSTER NIGHT from 6:30PM-9:30PM CAB Steak & Lobster priced by ounces and includes: Salad Bar with your choice of Dressings and Tempting Desserts.

Parents urged to keep an eye on toy safety

WITH the holidays fast approaching and a lot of new toys being purchased, an optometrist at Saipan's Seventh-day Adventist Clinic is offering advice to parents.

"Safety should be the first thing a parent thinks about when selecting a toy," says Dr. David G. Hardt of the Seventh-day Adventist Clinic.

"We recently saw a 9-year old Chamorro boy who had his eye seriously injured by a toy rocket. We're thankful that he appears to be making full recovery, but the injury certainly could have been prevented."

In a press release, Hardt noted that last year in the United States, there were nearly 24,000 serious eye injuries to children 14 and under associated with toys and sporting equipment.

He said 90% of these injuries could have been prevented.

Dr. Hardt recommends a few simple guidelines for parents that will help ensure a safe holiday season:

•Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off. Slingshots and water guns are dangerous, because they invite children to target others. BB guns should never be considered toys.

•Inspect toys for sound construction. Toys should be made of durable materials, have no sharpedges or points, and should withstand impact.

•Read instructions carefully and follow suggested age levels. Age labeling is provided for developmental and safety reasons.

•Avoid giving toys with small parts to young children. Youngsters tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking.

•Look for the letters 'ASTM'. These letters indicate the product meets the national safety standards set by the American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM).

•Explain to your child how to use a toy.

•Repair or remove damaged toys.

•Prevent young children from using toys that are appropriate for older ones.

Dr. Hardt is a graduate of the University of California at Berkley and has been living and working on Saipan for seven years.

Before moving to the CNMI, he was a full-time faculty member at Loma Linda University School of Medicine. He is a member of the California Optometric Association and a 17-year member of the American Optometric Association. He invites anyone with questions about eye injuries or other eye problems to contact him at his office at the Seventh-day Adventist Clinic on Quartermaster Road, Saipan at 234-6323.

In addition to eye care, the clinic also offers a full range of dental services in state-of-the-art facilities.

GES Students of the Week

Alvin Ganiban, *fourth grade from Ms. Ruchaber's class is our student of the week for room E-4. He is likable and lovable and goes the extra mile. He also has a sense of humor that makes all smile.*

Amy Jo Kisa, *sixth grade from Mrs. Herrera's class tends to illuminate the room with her sparkling smile and energetic spirit. She has made remarkable strides in taking an active role in class discussions, skits, and projects.*

Charmaine Cuengco, *third grade from Mr. Basa's class is a student who practices positive attitude everyday. Charmaine is always prepared for work and accomplishes them on time without any problem. She is very focused and motivated.*

Goldie A. Aque, *first grade from Mrs. Castro's class is one of our great achievers. She is an exceptional student who is inspired to come to school everyday. Goldie's unique characteristics reflect her being an "A" honor roll student for 1st and 2nd quarter.*

Christine Kaipat, *fifth grade from Mr. Pinkerton's class: The old saying, "Great things come in small packages" is true for our student of the week. She is a true Mallard exhibiting all the Mega Skills that are needed to be a top-notch student.*

Lora N. Yosino, *kindergarten (p.m.) from Mrs. Ngewakl's class was chosen to be the student of the week because of her excellent behavior in class. She makes good use of her extra time in class. She always helps her teacher in the classroom.*

Mariefe Carreon, *second grade from Mr. Conlon's class is a great student who always does her work. She is a leader in our class. She is very helpful to her classmates. Mariefe is a hard-working student and is very polite as well.*

Viana Tudela, *kindergarten (a.m.) from Mrs. Ngewakl's class is an excellent student. She comes to school everyday with a smile. She shows interest in school. Viana also gets along well with her classmates, and is very patient with everything that she does.*

HUGE Christmas SALE

ALL BRAND ITEMS ARE NEW ARRIVALS IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS.

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Americopters take over Macaw

UNDER the banner of "Americopters," several helicopter operators have teamed up to form is dubbed as the largest commercial helicopter network in the Pacific.

Saipan will see the change, as Americopters is expected to take over Macaw Helicopters' operations within the next several weeks.

Americopters has also been active in Guam, the company said in a press release. Combined with Guam's Hansen Helicopters, a member of the Americopters network, it boasts a fleet of six airplanes and over 50 helicopters now available for the use of the companies.

"This is the largest commercial helicopter fleet in the entire Pacific region," said the company.

A statement issued by Americopters said "Forming this large network provides the benefits of fleet flexibility.

"Having a coordinated presence in a number of locations will facilitate moving resources between areas depending on where the best opportunities are."

The network utilizes its "Caribou" cargo plane to transport helicopters and support equipment anywhere in the world.

Mike Cunningham, president of Macaw Helicopters, said Americopters had been planning to enter the CNMI market for "about a year."

He said "it looks like they're ready to make that move now, and they'll be taking over Macaw's operations."

He said he does not know what developments Macaw's staff can expect once Americopters takes the reins of the operation.

"That decision will be made by Americopters' Guam office," he said. "But one thing's for sure: It's been exciting to be part of this transition, which is one of the biggest events in the Pacific region's helicopter industry."

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For illegal fishing off Kosrae:

FSM, Marshalls arrest boat

By Giff Johnson
For the Variety

MAJURO — The Marshall Islands Sea Force's patrol vessel "Lomor" helped the Federated States of Micronesia to arrest a Chinese longline vessel that was fishing illegally in waters off Kosrae, Sea Force officials reported in Majuro yesterday.

This joint fisheries surveillance work between the Marshall Islands and FSM heralds a new era of Micronesian law enforcement cooperation and has already yielded tangible results, Marshalls Police Commissioner George Lanwi said in Majuro Wednesday.

Following completion of a $1 million refit in Australia, the Lomor was patrolling waters near Kosrae in the FSM on its return voyage to Majuro earlier this week.

Australian maritime surveillance adviser Cdr. Mike Cordner, who is based in Majuro, said that Lomor's state-of-the-art radar and satellite navigation systems discovered the Chinese longline vessel and pinpointed its location inside Kosrae's 12 mile limit, a zone that is off-limits for foreign fishermen. "It had it's fishing lines in the water when Lomor approached," Cordner said. After detecting the Chinese vessel fishing illegally, Lomor alerted FSM fisheries authorities in Kosrae, who sent a patrol vessel out to board and arrest the longliner, according to Cordner. The vessel is currently under arrest in Kosrae.

Sea Force officers may return to Kosrae next year to provide evidence in court against the vessel, Cordner said.

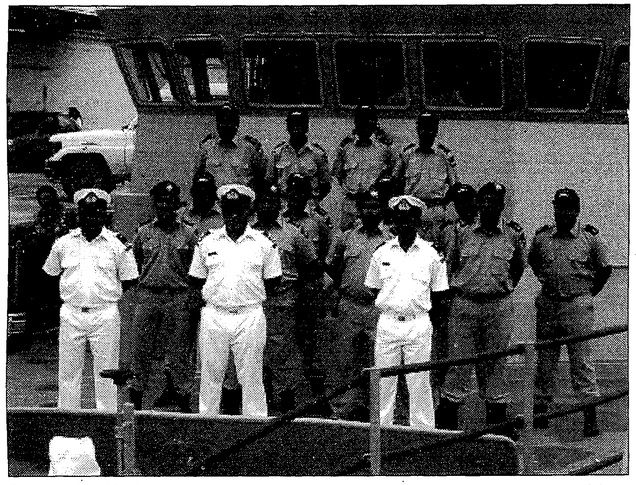
Both the FSM and the Marshalls agreed recently to cooperate in fisheries surveillance. But while the FSM has signed off on a surveillance agreement, the Marshall Islands hasn't yet formally signed the document, so the crew of the Lomor didn't have authority to actually board and arrest the Chinese vessel which is why they called in their Kosrae counterparts, Cordner said.

Cordner said this surveillance cooperation — the first of its kind in the Pacific region — should send a message to foreign fishing fleets that illegal fishing activities will now be spotted more readily. He said that when the Lomor spotted the Chinese longliner fishing illegally earlier this week in Kosrae waters, all three of the FSM's patrol boats were in port at Pohnpei, the FSM capital island, about 200 miles away.

"That may be why the fishing boat was fishing so close to Kosrae — because it knew the FSM patrol boats were in Pohnpei," Cordner said.

"Foreign fishermen communicate among each other all the time."

The Marshalls and FSM patrol boats are part of a broader Australian-aid program which has provided boats to nearly every country in the Pacific.



The crew of the Marshalls patrol vessel "Lomor" on their return to Majuro earlier this week after helping to arrest a Chinese longliner fishing illegally in Kosrae. Photo by Giff Johnson

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Nakamura concludes Japan visit

SUVA (Pacnews) — The Chairman of the South Pacific Forum (SPF), President Kuniwo Nakamura of Palau has just concluded a successful visit to Japan with an agreement that the second Forum-Japan Summit will be held in April 2000.

Every year the Japanese Government invites the SPF Chairman to visit Japan to discuss issues.of common interest and to agree on ways of promoting better relations between Japan and members of SPF.

President Nakamura had an audience with His Majesty Emperor Akihito and met with Prime Minister Obuchi.

The President also met with the Foreign Affairs Minister, Kono and the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Tamazawa. He also met parliamentarians and leaders from the private sector and key statutory bodies.

The main issue discussed during President Nakamura's visit was the proposed Second Summit between the Leaders of Japan and the South Pacific Forum.

The first summit was held in 1997 and the Forum at its last meeting in Palau had responded positively to a suggestion of a second summit to be held in 2000.

The meeting between President Nakamura and Prime Minister Obuchi concluded with the announcement that the Summit will be held on April 22 next year in the Miyazaki Prefecture.

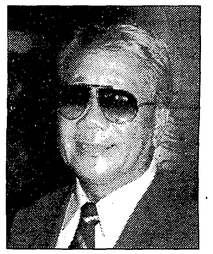
It is expected that Prime Minister Obuchi will chair the Summit which will be officially called the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 2000).

Issues that are expected to be on the Summit agenda include the sustainable development of the Pacific Islands, common concerns in the global and regional arena, and future partnerships between Japan and the SPF.

President Nakamura will be consulting other SPF Leaders further to brief them on the outcomes of his visit and to ensure a successful Summit.

The Forum Secretariat will be liasing closely with the Chairman, SPF members and the Japanese government on Summit arrangements.

"The Summit, coming in the first year of the new millennium," said President Nakamura, "offers a marvelous opportunity for the SPF and Japan to revitalise old friendships and to foster new partnerships that can assist us, in the South Pacific Forum, to deal with the challenges of living as small and vulnerable states in this age of rapid global changes".



Kuniwo Nakamura

The SPF Chairman said he wants to ensure the Summit results in higher levels of cooperation between Japan and SPF members.

Other issues discussed during President Nakamura's visit included common interests in fisheries and trade and investment and tourism.

The Forum's position on issues such as climate change and sea-level rise, environment protection, and security concerns including the transportation of nuclear materials were also raised.

"In my discussions," said President Nakamura, "I stressed that Japan had a real interest in the Pacific Islands, in fisheries, trade and investment and tourism, and environment, and that we should work together to ensure that these were pursued in ways that were beneficial to both sides".

The President also said that it is important for partners like Japan who are also big players in the global arena to appreciate that while small and vulnerable island states can do much to improve their own lot, they will continue to need special and differential treatment if they are to have a fair chance of surviving the "uneven playing fields" of the new global economy.

"We want to foster partnerships that are based on shared interests and a sense of fair play", said the President.

The Chairman was accompanied in his visit by the Acting Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat, Iosefa Maiava.

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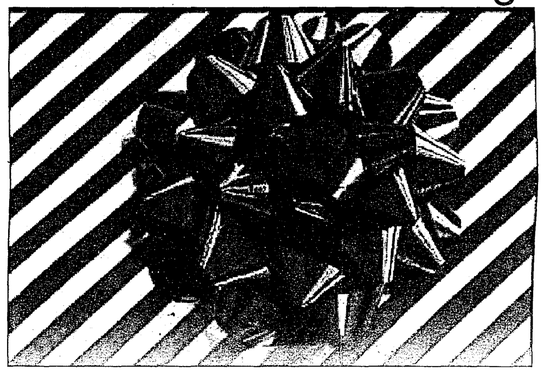

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$1.2M needed for fruit flies plan

By Eileen O. Tabaranza
For the Variety

KOROR (Palau Horizon) — The agricultural taskforce has urged President Kuniwo Nakamura to seek financial and technical assistance to eradicate fruit flies on Palau.

At the same time, President Nakamura is also urged to look into other management options which are environmentally friendly and economically more applicable to other species of fruit fly.

In a report prepared by the National Taskforce on Agriculture Development (NTFAD), the group is pushing the President to explore post harvest treatments, biological control and physical carrier as a means to destroy fruit flies on Palau.

Fruit flies play a very significant role in causing high levels of loss to fruits and vegetables.

The NTFAD headed by Senator Roman Yano, who is also Senate committee on resources and development chairman, said the government needs at least $1.2 million to totally eradicate the four species of fruit flies on Palau.

The taskforce has found out that four species of fruit flies are now exist on Palau, of which the oriental fruit fly is the major pest, while caroline fruit is also a serious pest among the remaining three.

The prospect of conducting an eradication program based on male annihilation, according to the taskforce, is reasonably good if supplemented with the application of protein bait sprays in "hot spots."

The taskforce pointed out that insufficient and unreliable data on the distribution of the oriental fruit fly and its host render it impossible at this time to assess the damage. It is, however, possible at this time to estimate the cost and feasibility of eradication of fruit fly population on Palau.

The group continued to press the president to direct the minister of resources and development to find ways and means and build a well equipped central market for agriculture and aquaculture products.

The NTFAD noted that there are several locations in Koror, Airai and other states that are used as outlets for agriculture products, but most of these are not fully equipped to properly store products for sale.

Most of the local growers utilize retail stores and public places to sell their agriculture products. There is no set schedule and proper storage equipment to keep produce fresh and clean for public sale, the taskforce said.

The group also pointed out that growers spend so much and effort to bring produce to various locations and this also contribute to higher price for local produce.

Due to lack of proper storage equipment, the taskforce added that unsold products are sold below cost or thrown away.

In lieu of this, Nakamura is urged to direct the Division of Agriculture and Marine Resources to assist in the operation and setting of schedule of collection, transportation and sale of products at the soon-to-be built central market.

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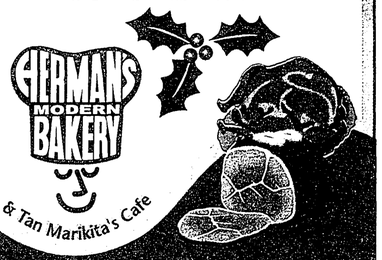

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Mediation seen to ease backlog of land cases

By Eileen O. Tabaranza
For the Variety

KOROR (Palau Horizon) — The Land Court can now be able to speed up the resolutions of approximately 8,000 backlog of land disputes pending for many years now through the mediation process.

Senior Land Court Judge Daniel Cadra said the 45 mediators who have sworn in Friday would play a major role in resolving many land disputes.

Each mediator has completed 24 hours of "very detailed and demanding educational training," Cadra said.

"For newly-sworn in mediators, you will undertake a very important task to assist claimants reach a resolution of their disputes which is agreeable to all involved," he added.

Without a doubt, Cadra said they will take the role as neutral mediator very challenging and hopefully professionally satisfying.

The role of the Land Court, he added, would take the land dispute to the court if it does not reach a resolution at the mediation level.

Mediation of land court cases will be especially beneficial to the parties and to the public because if successful, it will avoid the inevitable conflict in delay inherent in a court proceeding and it may serve to preserve traditional and personal relationships between the claimants, Cadra said.

He also pointed out that land cases often involved long standing problems between claimants and family members or between other members of society which may benefit more of a negotiated settlement rather than court imposed judgment.

"Mediation also allows maximum flexibility in the ultimate and final resolutions of the issues raised in the land court cases because the parties themselves will play an active role in the decision making process," Cadra said.

He further explained that claimants would have the opportunity to resolve the case on their own terms. The whole point of mediation is to allow the claimants themselves to reach an agreement regarding their disputes which is acceptable to everybody.

"Ultimately the success of the program will depend not only on the mediators, but also on the claimants themselves," he said.

Cadra added that successful mediation will also result in saving the hamlet and the court both time and money instead of litigating it through a multi-tiered court system.

He said successful mediation will result in a prompt and final resolution of land claims to the satisfaction of the claimants.

Cadra said he also believed that mediation will provide land claimants with a non-adversarial method of resolving disputes for the land rights while preserving traditional values and relationships.

"The contested cases will be referred to mediation and successful mediation will depend to a large extent on the claimants," he said.

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Mr. & Mrs. Jeanette & Edgar Cabillion

Palau tourism slump drags

By Eileen O. Tabaranza
For the Variety

KOROR (Palau Horizon) — Disappointing arrivals from Taiwan continued to depress the local tourism industry, further dragging down the overall performance of the sector.

The Taiwan market, which became significant as the Japan market last year, continued to dwindle this year as a result largely of the earthquake that hit Taipei, its capital.

Coming from a high of 31,246 in 1997, arrivals from Taiwan could hit its lowest year-on-year figures this year at around 11,000 since 1995.

The Taiwan market performed very strongly over the past three years, eating up the chunk of Palau's tourism pie at around 30-42 percent. However, Taiwan's share to the overall market at the start of the year drastically reduced to around 10-20 percent.

In the first 11 months of 1999, the number of Taiwanese tourists who flocked to the island contracted by 43 percent to hit only 10,266 as compared to 17,864 recorded in the same period last year.

As can be gleaned from the PVA October flight data, Far East Air Transportation, which is doing twice a week charter flights from Taipei to Koror, boarded very minimal number of Taiwanese tourists, with the highest number recorded in its Oct. 9 flight of 104. It even flew with 15 Taiwanese passengers in its Oct. 2 flight.

Data released by the Palau Visitors Authority showed that Taiwan's total market share to the overall traffic of 60,401 in January to November this year went down to 10 percent. Overall, visitor arrivals dwindled by 11 percent from 68,050 recorded in the first 11 months in 1998.

Guam and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Island markets also turned in a dismal performance during the period with a 11.4 percent and 35 percent drop, respectively over the 11-month period last year.

Traffic from the mainland United States, including Hawaii and Alaska was generally down, posting a 8.8 percent drop to reach only 5,285 this year from 5,795 last year.

Arrivals from the Federated States of Micronesia also contracted by 35 percent, while the number of Hong Kong travelers went down by 16 percent.

Gains from Japan, Palau's single largest market source, were not enough to offset the losses from the two significant markets— the U.S. and Taiwan.

Japan, which contributed the largest traffic to Palau, posted a seven percent increase in arrivals, from 19,333 in the first nine months of 1998 to 20,696 in the same period this year.

European markets such as France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (UK) showed strong growth during the 11-month period, of which the most significant increase was posted by UK.

On a monthly basis, overall visitor traffic in November this year seemed to be gaining ground with a five percent growth. Total arrivals, excluding returning residents, numbered 4,380 in November this year as compared to 4,187 recorded in the same period last year.

Japanese travelers accounted for the bulk, or 1,696 of the total visitor arrivals for the month of November this year.

By purpose of trip, bulk of the total arrivals came in as tourists at 3,469. Data showed that those who came for business purposes stood at 391.

More than 370 of the total traffic came for employment, while crews, students, religion and dependents who flocked to the island numbered 148.

WHO proposes surveillance of non-communicable disease

SUVA (Pacnews) — A recent meeting of the World Health Organisation (WHO) has come up with proposed guidelines for the surveillance of communicable diseases in the Pacific with a special focus on HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STI's).

WHO's Regional Director for the Western Pacific, Doctor Shigeru Omi said, "the world really is a small place, not only for people, but for our disease adversaries - and we have the rise of AIDS, dengue, Ebola haemorrhage fever and many other diseases as proof."

"We must therefore link ourselves together, develop and nurture communication networks and personal ties, collaborate, co-operate and communicate as never before," Dr Omi said.

A meeting in Nadi, Fiji, attended by 30 health professionals shared their experiences of epidemiological surveillance.

The participants represented Ministries and Departments of Health in the Pacific, international and bilateral agencies, health and training institutions and health associations.

"As we close one millennium and start another, we are all aware that we face great challenges in public health", said Dr Shichuo Li, WHO Representative for the South Pacific.

"Throughout the 20th century, progress has been made in improving people's health and reducing infectious diseases, with widespread adoption of routine vaccinations, improvements in sanitation and hygiene, the global eradication of smallpox and other factors.

"Also, in the Pacific, poliomyelitis, measles and certain other infectious diseases have nearly been eliminated or eradicated. Yet ases, such as HIV/AIDS have emerged while dengue, tuberculosis and other diseases have re-emerged or have remained at high levels with epidemic potential," Dr Li concluded as he underscored the importance of addressing these diseases and the need to develop and implement appropriate preventive measures.

He said effective public health surveillance is a key preventive measure.

It must be strengthened in all Pacific Island countries.

During the meeting, participants drafted proposals for common guidelines on communicable diseases to improve surveillance activities at all levels. Discussions especially focused on surveillance systems for HIV/AIDS, STI and behavioural risk factors for which epidemiological data remain inadequate in the Pacific.

Surveillance of other conditions with outbreak potential, such as dengue, diarrhoeal diseases and measles were also examined by the participants.

These guidelines will be proposed as models for Pacific island countries.

In addition, participants discussed the importance of forging and strengthening regional networks among health professionals in the Pacific as a key strategy to improve communicable disease surveillance and control. In this regard, the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) and its focal point, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) plays an important role.

Shmull to appeal case

By Eileen O. Tabaranza
For the Variety

KOROR (Palau Horizon) — Following the dismissal of the case against the Special Prosecutor, Presidential Chief of Staff Temmy Shmull disclosed that he will "exhaust every appeal at his disposal to redress the miscarriage of justice."

Associate Justice Barrie Michelsen has dismissed the complaint lodged by Shmull accusing Special Prosecutor Michael Rosenthal of civil and criminal violations of law concerning the hiring of Gary Soberay as Assistant Special Prosecutor.

Michelsen dismissed the complaint on the basis that statute does not limit the Special Prosecutor to hiring only investigators and scriveners.

He said the complaint is "groundless, frivolous and brought in bad faith." Thus, Rosenthal was given 45 days to submit costs to the court if he wants to pursue an award of attorney's fees.

Shmull believed that the decision of the court has not addressed his constitutional and statutory claims. Instead, he said that as the order reflects, the court only addresses a claim that the Special Prosecutor cannot hire attorneys.

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Dope smuggling suspect being held on $50,000 bail

PAGO PAGO (Pacnews) — A man suspected of smuggling marijuana in packages of Samoan cocoa has landed himself in jail on a US$50,000 bail.

Selesitila Sape is charged with one count of marijuana possession, as the result of a search by customs agents when he arrived at Pago Pago International Airport on December 12, that produced nearly 3 pounds of the illegal substance.

Most of the marijuana was hidden in packages of Samoan cocoa while the rest was found in Sape's trousers.

Prosecutors contend that the defendant owned all of the marijuana that was found in the customs search and he planned to sell it.

However, Sape has not been charged with intent to distribute.

If convicted, Sape faces a jail term of 5-10 years and/or a fine of US$5,000-US$20,000.

American Samoa harbor to close 24 hours due to Y2K

PAGO PAGO (Pacnews) — The United States Coast Guard has ordered the closure of Pago Pago Harbour in American Samoa for 24 hours on the last day of the year to eliminate any potential Y2K problems.

The order given by Captain G.J. Kanazawa, Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Honolulu, is to safeguard against any problems vessels and dock users may encounter because of the Y2K bug.

The Harbour will be closed from 11pm on December 30 and will reopen at 6am on January 1 2000, in time for the cruise liner Silver Wind to dock in the territory with 1,000 passengers and crew as part of its "Millennium Sail".

The Coast Guard order bans transfer operations, vessel movements within the port, arrivals and departures. Refuelling of vessels will also be prohibited. The closure will not affect recreational boating.

Local shipping agents say the closure will not effect their daily operations as they are not expecting any vessels to call in port during the closure period.

Airport operations will continue as normal. Both inter island airlines, Polynesian and Samoa Air, have scheduled flights to Apia and Manu'a, at the time the much publicised Y2K bug is expected to strike.

Japan assists Vanuatu islands hit by earthquake

PORT VILA (Pacnews) — Japan has confirmed its assistance for the three islands affected by a devastating earthquake and Tsunami last month.

Japan's offer was discussed at a meeting in Port Vila yesterday between Japan's Ambassador to Vanuatu, based in Fiji, Hisato Murayama and Vanuatu's Prime minister, Barak Tame Sope.

Government's spokesman, Jeoffrey Lauha said Japan's assistance would depend on the cost of damage to be submitted later by the government of Vanuatu to the Japanese embassy in Suva.

The donation will help restore lives of the people of Pentecost, Ambrym and Paama who were badly hit by the recent disaster.

Murayama came to Vanuatu to attend the opening of Lenakel wharf on Tanna last week.

Meanwhile, concerns have been raised over the current condition of the Epi Wharf, which was damaged in the earthquake.

Manager of the Paradise Sunset Bungalow on Lamen Bay, Epi, Tasso Welawo said the damage has affected tourism on the island, especially the visits by the cruise liner, Fair Princess.

He said a report has been submitted to the National Disaster Management office.

Tonga's CPI increases

NUKU'ALOFA (Pacnews) — Tonga's Consumer Price Index (CPI) for November recorded a 0.2 percent increase over October with an inflation rate of 4.6 percent for November.

This is a rise of one per cent from the same period of last year.

Local index showed an annual inflation rate of .3 percent while imported index was 9 percent.

While prices for local food such as root crops dropped, the prices for imported food items increased.

On food items, higher prices were recorded for corn, beans, and milk powder and similar imported food products while root crops and vegetables prices were lower.

Marginal increases were recorded for housing, household operations, clothing and footwear, transportation, tobacco, alcohol and kava groups.

Prime minister of PNG announces cabinet reshuffle

PORT MORESBY (Pacnews) — Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta has announced a cabinet reshuffle of his six-month-old Government.

The reshuffle follows the shock resignation of the Agriculture Minister, Ted Diro from Government.

He has been replaced by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mao Zeming. The reshuffle also follows the sacking of Deputy Prime Minister, John Pundari earlier this month.

The new ministers are Muki Taranupi, the Defence Minister, Ludger Mond, Health Minister, and Daniel Kapi, Minister for Prisons.

Another six ministers have been moved to new portfolios including Sir John Kaputin to Foreign Affairs, replacing Sir Michael Somare.

Sir John will also be responsible for the Gazelle Restoration Authority.

Sir Michael Somare has been moved to the Mining portfolio but retains the Ministry of Bougainville Affairs.

The former Defence Minister, Alfred Pogo has been moved to Works and Implementation, Mathias Karani has been made Police Minister and Herowa Agiwa, the Minister for Environment.

Sir Mekere says the reshuffle was necessary to ensure his Government is stable in order to make major legislative changes through Parliament, and to implement social and economic reforms smoothly.

He also warned that he will not hesitate to take action against any party or minister who tries to destabilise his Government in the future.

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In Philippines

Use of contraceptives rising among women

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — More Filipino women are using contraceptives and most of them obtain supplies from government hospitals and health centers, the National Statistics Office said Wednesday.

A survey this year showed that contraceptive use rose to 49.3 percent among married women aged 15 to 49, up from 46.5 percent in 1998.

More couples were using the pill and condom, rising from 28.2 percent in 1998 to 32.4 percent in 1999.

The use of traditional methods, such as rhythm and abstinence, decreased slightly from 18.3 percent last year to 16.9 percent.

The survey, which covered 26,000 respondents nationwide in April, indicates that Filipinos generally ignore opposition by the influential Roman Catholic church to artificial contraceptives.

The survey showed that women, regardless of age, preferred the pill and condom over the traditional methods. Women with more education were more likely to use contraceptives, it said.

More poor women in the 20-24 age bracket, about 66 percent, use the pill, but the highest number of pill users in the 15-19 age group belong to the "non-poor," the survey said.

It said three out of four women obtain contraceptives from public sources, and government hospitals, rural and urban health centers, and village health stations were the most important suppliers.

In July, President Joseph Estrada said he will create a committee to recommend new population policies that would be acceptable to the vocal Catholic church.

Estrada said the Philippines' 2.3 percent annual population growth rate is "becoming a problem" because it undermines his administration's agricultural production program.

The Philippine population is estimated at 74.7 million and its growth rate is one of the highest in Southeast Asia.

Estrada initially opposed family planning, saying that as an eighth child he would not have been born had his parents practiced birth control.

He has since begun advocating birth control, saying the Philippines must limit its rapid population growth to raise living standards for its people, many of whom live in poverty.

Bishops urge Estrada to abandon charter change

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Fearing discord among the people, Philippine Catholic bishops urged President Joseph Estrada Tuesday to abandon his plans to amend the constitution to allow more foreign investment.

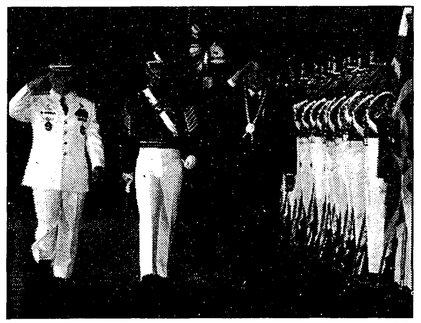
In a statement, Bishop Antonio Quevedo, said Estrada, a former movie actor, should instead use his popularity among the masses "to fulfill his many promises about eradicating cronyism, crime and corruption."

"He should build a business environment more conducive to foreign investment, such as a better communications system, better traffic system, cleaner air and better infrastructure," Quevedo said.

On Monday, a government commission created by Estrada recommended changes to the Philippine constitution to allow foreigners to own land and invest in key industries to reinvigorate the Philippine economy.

The recommendations submitted by the 24-member commission to President Joseph Estrada drew protest from left-wing groups, which described the proposed changes as a "sell-out."

Critics, including the leaders of the influential Roman Catholic Church, fear that amending the constitution, which was enacted a year after the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, could endanger its democratic principles.



President Joseph Estrada troops the line during a parade on the 64th anniversary of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Tuesday. AP

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

December 24, 1999

Governor Pedro P. Tenorio and Lt. Governor Jesus R. Sablan, through the CJPA Supervisory Council for the Improvement of the Criminal Justice System, will be holding public hearings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota for matters concerning the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islandsí (CNMI) criminal justice system. The hearings will give the community an opportunity to offer comments and suggestions on the types of education, prevention, treatment, and interdiction programs needed in the CNMI. Information will be solicited, documented, and analyzed for the CNMIís Three-Year Comprehensive State-wide Plans for federal grants under the Edward Byrne Memorial Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program, and STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program from the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

The schedule of the Public Hearings is as follows:

Island	Date	Time	Location
Saipan	December 27, 1999	6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	Hopwood Junior High School
Saipan	December 28, 1999	6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	Tanapag Elementary School
Rota	January 5, 2000	TBA	TBA
Tinian	January 6, 2000	TBA	TBA

All questions concerning the Public Hearings shall be directed to Mr. Harry C. Blanco, Criminal Justice Planning Agency, at 664-4550 ~ 4557.

/s/ EDWARD MANIBUSAN
Chairman, Supervisory Council

/s/ HARRY C. BLANCO
Executive Director, CJPA

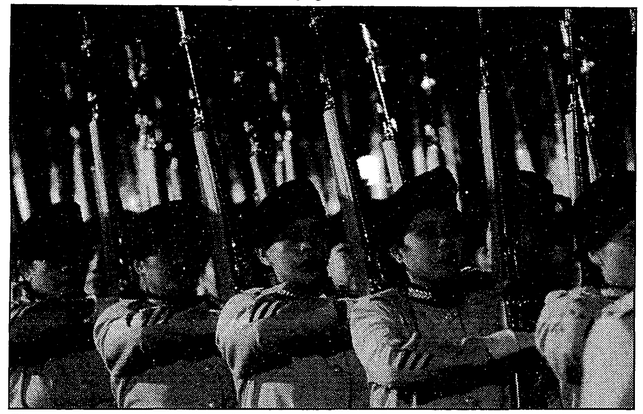
$50B in fake dollars seized

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — More than $50 billion worth of fake U.S. dollars and treasury notes were seized in a raid in the southern Philippines, police said Wednesday.

Police and U.S. Secret Service agents raided the home of a suspected counterfeiter late Monday in Malaybalay, on the southern island of Mindanao, national police official Lucas Managuelod said. Arrested in the raid was Jacobo Colegio, the suspected leader of a ring of counterfeiters distributing fake dollars in Mindanao.

Authorities recovered counterfeit $100 and $50 bills worth about $193,000, U.S. treasury certificates valued at about $49.23 billion and Japanese "liberty bonds" worth about $320.6 million, Managuelod said. Police also seized negative films of the counterfeit notes, 25 bottles of ink and a pistol.

Managuelod quoted U.S. experts as saying the fake notes looked almost genuine. U.S. Embassy officials were unavailable for comment.



Filipino soldiers of the Women's Auxiliary Corps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines march during the AFP's 64th founding anniversary at the Manila military camp Tuesday. REUTERS

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UN asks for RP general's promotion

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The United Nations has requested the Philippine government to promote a two-star general one rank higher prior to his appointment as commander of the U.N. forces in East Timor, Philippine Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado said Tuesday.

"We have said as far as we see it, it is possible on the basis that it be a temporary promotion," Mercado told reporters.

Local newspapers reported last week that Maj. Gen. Jaime delos Santos, superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy, will be appointed head of the U.N. forces in charge of security for East Timor.

Mercado, however, said a Philippine law limits the number of three-star generals in active service to just six. The six Filipino lieutenant generals now include the chiefs of the army, navy and air force.

He said the United Nations made the request since delos Santos' would-be deputy is also a major general from Australia, creating a possible "uncomfortable" situation in which the commander has the same rank as his second-in-command.

Mercado said he will recommend the temporary promotion of delos Santos to three-star rank to Philippine President Joseph Estrada.

Delos Santos, however, may "revert" back to two-star rank after his stint in East Timor, Mercado added.

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Bush tests new ad strategy

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Republican presidential front-runner Gov. George W. Bush is testing a new advertising strategy in New Hampshire that will try to air television commercials the same day they are produced, his campaign says.

The concept, called "crash ads," is being tested in the state that holds the nation's first primary on Feb. 1, and where the Texas governor has slipped to second place behind Arizona Sen. John McCain in the most recent polls.

Mark McKinnon, creator of the ad campaign, said it was designed to show Bush was aggressively campaigning in the state "voter to voter, the New Hampshire way."

"We wanted to figure out a way to communicate the immediacy of the campaign, that the governor was on the ground working hard and earning every vote" he said.

McKinnon said he knows of no campaign that has sought to get same-day ads on the air. Bush also is running more traditional television commercials that are filmed in advance and are generally appropriate for use in any state.

The first "crash ad," filmed Monday at a Manchester, N.H., high school, showed Bush talking about leadership and his tax-cut plan. The goal was to get the 30-second ad on the air around Monday evening newscasts, but it didn't air until Tuesday, McKinnon said.

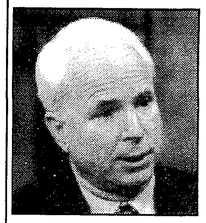
Each ad will have a shelf-life of two to three days, and will run around newscasts using prepaid time slots, he said Wednesday.

"It's long been a philosophy of mine that voters want real documentary-looking information," McKinnon said. "I think when most people see political ads these days they think someone is going to lie to them. The more immediate and authentic it is the more credible and believable it is."

The ads, which show Bush "warts and all," will be filmed at events in New Hampshire and rushed to air the same day or shortly thereafter, with the next ad scheduled to run on or around Jan. 4, McKinnon said.

Republican presidential candidate Texas Gov. George W. Bush (right) greets Amy Wiggin of Manchester, N.H., during a campaign stop at the Manchester West High School, Monday. AP

McCain urges library limits for the internet



John McCain

GREENVILLE, S.C. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate John McCain says the lack of limits on access to the Internet at the Greenville Public Library is an example of why computers in schools and libraries should block sexually explicit sites.

The nine public computers in the reference room at the library are routinely used by adults, including a convicted sex offender, to view sexually explicit material. There is nothing to stop children from seeing what's on the screens or using the computers themselves.

"I'm very disturbed that a public library receiving public funds is providing children with unlimited, unfettered access to pornographic material on the Internet," McCain said Wednesday.

He learned about the situation during a visit to the area on Tuesday.

It is not the library staff's responsibility to monitor the activities of children, librarian Phillip Ritter said.

"The parent is the one responsible for the child," he said. "The parent is the one who is the ultimate judge and guide for what they have access to."

McCain called Ritter's argument "absurd."

"In fact, most parents are not able to supervise their children outside the home and rely on the sound judgment of others," the Arizona senator said.

The library will buy equipment to make the computers harder to see except to the authorized users, Ritter said.

While the Spartanburg County Library uses a filtering system that blocks some objectionable material, Greenville's does not.

The library is caught in a legal dilemma, Trustee Vanessa Hartman said. The current policy was adopted because trustees feared a lawsuit for free-speech violations if they restricted Internet access, said Hartman, a lawyer. However, the library also fears a lawsuit if parents think are children emotionally damaged by exposure to sexually explicit material, she said.

McCain has proposed a law that would require schools and libraries to buy technology to block access to sexually explicit sites.

"Every school and library should be required to buy filters - they are only $25 - to keep out materials that are not suitable for children the same way in which the library board filters printed materials for the library," McCain said.

Officials of the American Civil Liberties Union, who oppose using filters, say libraries could use state obscenity laws to prosecute people who misuse the computers.

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Bradley seeks Iowa surprise

SIOUX CITY, Iowa (AP) — Bill Bradley plans an intense January of campaigning in Iowa in hopes of springing a surprise on Vice President Al Gore and giving himself a boost for New Hampshire and beyond.

By all accounts, including his own, Bradley needs a fast start when the Democratic presidential caucuses and primaries get under way at the end of next month.

Even if he gets that quick burst, he'll face major challenges in his fight to wrest the nomination from front-runner Gore. For example, the vice president has already wrapped up hundreds of the members of Congress and party officials who will be convention "super-delegates."

And if Bradley should get on a roll in the early primaries, Gore has solid support for California's 367-delegate primary the first week in March - a "fire wall" in the words of one consultant.

Bradley thinks he can overcome those hurdles. But first, Iowa.

The former New Jersey senator is scheduled to spend some 20 days in Iowa in January - compared with just six in New Hampshire - in an indication of the importance he is putting on a good showing in the Jan. 24 caucuses.

"We have to do better than expected in both Iowa and New Hampshire," the candidate said.

The caucus system in Iowa gives party regulars control, and Gore has a clear edge there. Polling has shown him with a 20-point lead, and he has a better organization.

Bradley has hovered within competitive range, however, and his commitment of January time shows the importance he is putting on making a good showing.

"I think it's tough for him to beat Gore, but he can come close," said Michael Gronstal, a Council Bluffs Democrat who is undecided.

"I think he can win," said Nate Parker, a Sioux City activist as he mulled his choice. "I've been going around town to meetings and restaurants and his name keeps popping up."

Getting close in Iowa could be crucial for building momentum heading into New Hampshire, where topping expectations won't be easy. Polls there have been showing Bradley even or slightly ahead.

On the Republican side, Arizona Sen. John McCain also is hoping to pull a bit of a surprise in Iowa in his effort to overtake front-runner George W. Bush.

Unlike Bradley, McCain isn't campaigning in the state, focusing instead on New Hampshire and later states. But he did take part in a mid-December debate in Des Moines and is appealing to "a hardy band" of supporters to come out for him on caucus night.

For the Democrats, Bradley needs to score early because he's starting off well behind. And he's competing under rules written by a party establishment overwhelmingly backing Gore.

The Democratic primary season is all about collecting the 2,169 delegates that will be needed to get the party's nomination at next summer's convention. Of the more than 4,300 delegates, nearly 800 will be "super-delegates," who are members of Congress, members of the Democratic National Committee and other party elite.

"Gore starts with a very substantial edge in delegates because of the commitments he's gotten," said Norm Ornstein, of the American Enterprise Institute. "It's like trying to win a 100-yard dash when your opponent starts at the 20 yard line."

Bradley says the party faithful will get the message when he begins winning.

"Super-delegates tend to be very good politicians and they pay attention to what the people say and I think if I do well in the primaries, I'll do all right in super-delegates," said Bradley.

Others aren't so sure.

Bill Carrick, a California-based Democratic consultant who isn't aligned with a candidate, said those practicing politicians are all familiar with the ebb and flow of campaigns and, lacking a compelling reason, aren't likely to switch.

"He has got to really be able to demonstrate he's a better candidate than Gore," said Carrick. "Otherwise the super-delegates are just going to fasten their seat belts and hang in there with Gore."

After Iowa and New Hampshire on Jan. 24 and Feb. 1, there's a pause. The rivals will pick and choose their targets before March 7, when voters in 15 states and American Samoa pick 1,315 delegates. By March 14, voters in 30 states will have spoken.

"There's no question that I have to dominate in that period in order to be the candidate," Bradley said.

Dominating won't be easy.

The richest prize is California, with 367 delegates at stake. Polls show Gore with a solid - if somewhat reduced - lead. He has made dozens of trips to the state and has the backing of Gov. Gray Davis.

"Gore has all the unions, he has the minority community, he's in pretty good shape here," said Carrick. "There is a fire wall here."

New York's 243 delegates are also at stake that day, but that's considered Bradley's backyard and anything less than a convincing win would be considered a setback.

Poll watch

(AP) — How the Democratic candidates for president stand nationally and in the key early states of Iowa, New Hampshire, New York and California.

NATIONAL

Gore 54 percent, Bradley 39 percent. CNN-USA Today-Gallup in early December. (Was 58-33 in early November.)

Gore 64 percent, Bradley 31 percent. ABC-Washington Post in early December. (Was 56-33 in mid-October.)

Gore 54 percent, Bradley 32 percent. NBC-Wall Street Journal in December. (Was 53-32 in September.)

IOWA

Gore 54 percent, Bradley 32 percent. The Iowa Poll in November. (Was 64-24 in June.)

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Bradley 44 percent, Gore 40 percent. American Research Group in December. (Was 46-29 in Gore's favor in August.)

Bradley 42 percent, Gore 39 percent. CNN-Time in December. (Was 44-41 in September.)

Gore 44 percent, Bradley 41 percent. Quinnipiac Poll in November. (Was 47-39 in favor of Bradley in October.)

NEW YORK

Gore 42 percent, Bradley 39 percent. Quinnipiac Poll in December. (Was 47-38 Bradley in November.)

CALIFORNIA

Gore 44 percent, Bradley 17 percent. Field Poll in December. (Was 45-17 in October.)

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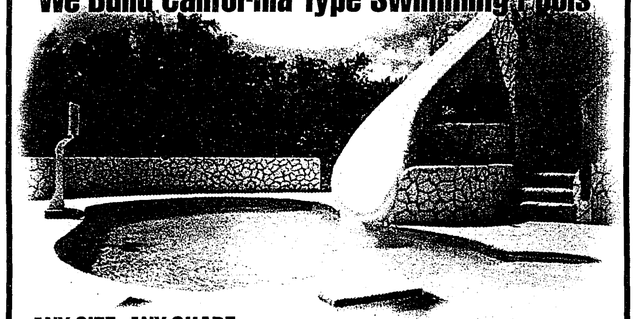

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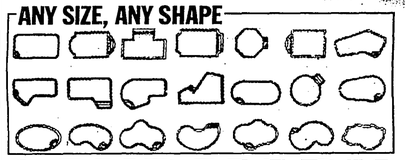

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Gore pitches preschool plan

AMES, Iowa (AP) — Vice President Al Gore offered new details for his $50 billion preschool proposal Wednesday while dismissing rival Bill Bradley as content to "nibble around the edges" on education, farming and other issues.

Setting the stage for a one-man "debate" on farm policy at Iowa State University, Gore argued that Bradley had fought key farm proposals for years in the Senate, converting only when he decided to run for president.

Bradley retorted quickly on the farm issue, an important one in this agriculture-dependent state that holds the first nominating caucuses on Jan. 24. As the Clinton administration's No. 2 man, he said, Gore must shoulder some of the blame for the current stagnant farm economy.

"After seven years, the vice president has offered nothing more than negative attacks and distortions," Bradley said. "They have not put forward a comprehensive approach to farm policy, nor have they articulated a vision for rural America."

Bradley declined an invitation to debate Gore on farm issues Wednesday, but Gore was going ahead anyway.

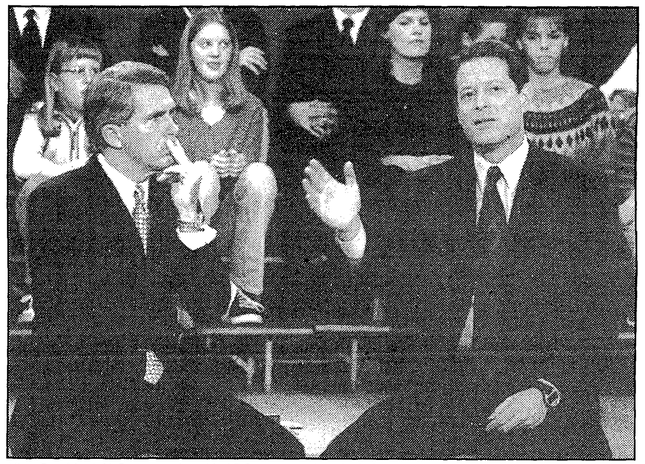
Gore went to an elementary school to talk about his plan, to be phased in over 10 years, to make preschool programs available to all 4-year-olds. States would get grants of roughly $2,700 per student for guaranteeing preschool programs would be available.

It is part of a $115 billion plan on education Gore has proposed that would also give $5,000 raises to most teachers in poor and rural areas, mandate testing of new teachers and seek to establish more charter schools.

The money would come from the nation's budget surplus, Gore said.

"If kids get off to a great start before they ever get to kindergarten, the chances for them to succeed in life, to have good jobs, to lead fulfilling lives is greatly enhanced," he said.

In an interview, he said that Bradley "continues to be fascinated" with school vouchers, which Gore said would drain money from public schools. And he said the former New Jersey senator has not offered sweeping proposals on schools.



Vice President Al Gore speaks with ABC news anchor Jack Ford (left) while taping a segment for "Good Morning America" Wednesday at Jefferson Traditional School in Des Moines, Iowa. AP

"I think it's important to have a bold plan, and I don't think you can nibble around the edges," Gore said. "I think it's the No. 1 one investment priority."

Gore rejected any suggestion that he was resorting to attack politics. "When I point out these shortcomings, I think that's what democracy ought to be all about," he said.

In addition, Gore was seeking contrast with Bradley on farm issues. Liberal farm groups had invited both Democratic candidates to the Wednesday night debate. Bradley declined, and Gore set the one-sided debate to make the argument that Bradley isn't solid on farm issues.

"I know farmers are paying attention," Gore said. "Many of them are feeling desperate."

He criticized Bradley's opposition to federal subsidies for ethanol, and he said the former senator had a poor record on other farm issues.

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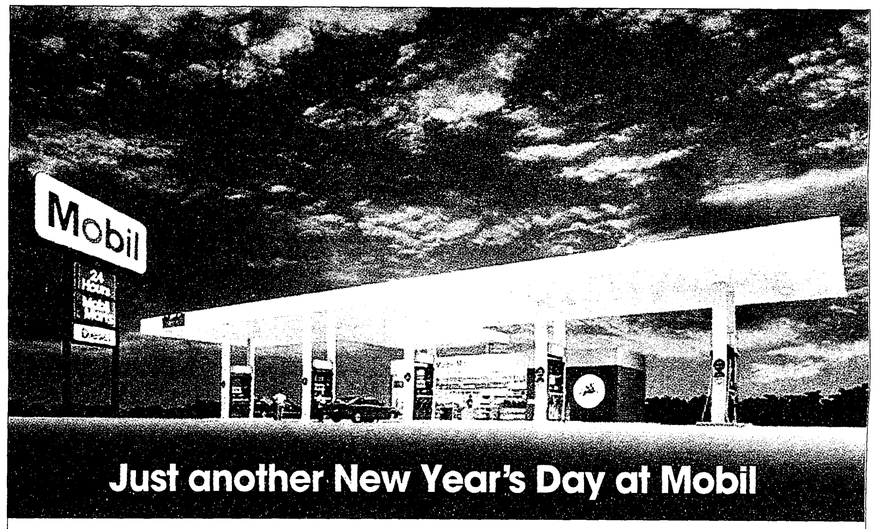

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Baptist offended by Clinton's remarks

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The president of the Southern Baptist Convention said President Clinton "has very few convictions" and accused his administration of distorting Christian evangelism as religious hatred, the denomination's newspaper reported Wednesday.

Paige Patterson, the leader of the 15.8 million-member denomination that includes Clinton as a member, said he was offended by White House spokesman Joe Lockhart's comments during a Dec. 16 press briefing.

According to The Baptist Press, Lockhart was asked about a Baptist campaign to pray for and share the Gospel with Hindus, Jews and Muslims.

"I think the president has made very clear ... his views on religious tolerance, and how one of the greatest challenges going into the next century is dealing with intolerance, dealing with ethnic and religious hatred, and coming to grips with the long-held resentments between religions," Lockhart said.

"So I think he's been very clear in his opposition to whatever organization, including the Southern Baptist, that perpetuate ancient religious hatred."

Patterson said the Clinton administration was trying to bully Southern Baptists for upholding beliefs about sharing the Christian faith with people of other religions or no religion.

"Apparently, because the president has very few convictions, he harbors deep resentment against those who do," Patterson told The Baptist Press in an article posted on the Internet.

"I would say that the president or his press secretary or both have once again demonstrated that the one thing for which they have no regard is truth," said Patterson, also president of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Richard Land, president of the Baptists' Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, called Lockhart's comments "outrageous, inflammatory and erroneous."

"To assert that practicing obedience to one's faith by witnessing to those of other faiths is intolerance is either stupefyingly ignorant or malicious misrepresentation," Land said.

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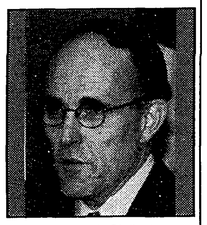
Hillary: New York City mayor is 'often angry'

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton said Wednesday that Rudolph Giuliani "gets angry very often," raising the issue of the New York City mayor's temperament for the first time in their expected Senate campaign.

Hillary Rodham Clinton


Rudolph Giuliani

"I can't be responding every time the mayor gets angry about something because that's all I would do," she said after visiting a Salvation Army food distribution center.

"I don't see the point in getting angry all the time and expending all the energy when we could be figuring out a better way to take care of people," the first lady said.

Giuliani campaign chief Bruce Teitelbaum dismissed her comments, saying that "in this campaign there's only one person who as an elected official has worked with other elected officials from another political party and done so very effectively."

Teitelbaum also said Clinton's campaign "should be more concerned about the abuse of the campaign finance law and the use of soft money" on her behalf.

That was a reference to a New York Times report Wednesday that the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee had set up "victory funds" to channel unlimited campaign donations into states with competitive Senate races, such as New York.

Mrs. Clinton defended the funds during her Syracuse stop, saying she understood that they are "perfectly legal and have been used by the Republicans."

Her comments about Giuliani's temperament came a day after federal Housing Secretary Andrew Cuomo, one of her supporters, said he was taking control of money for homeless services away from New York City.

Cuomo, citing a court ruling against Giuliani's administration, said the Republican mayor unfairly kept money from going to providers who had been critical of him.

Giuliani accused Cuomo of playing politics, and noted that Cuomo's chief New York deputy recently signed on as Mrs. Clinton's campaign manager.

Aides to the first lady encouraged reporters to ask her about the controversy.

"I know it made the mayor angry, but the mayor always gets angry about things," she quickly answered when asked the housing funds.

Mrs. Clinton ducked questions about whether she believed Giuliani's personality made him unsuitable for the Senate.

"I can only talk about what I would do in the Senate and that would be to work with people on a daily basis, some of whom I will disagree with rather significantly," she said.

"When you go to the United States Senate, you're one of a hundred. If they don't vote for the position you want them to vote for, you can't fire them ... You have to work with people," Mrs. Clinton said.

Neither Mrs. Clinton nor Giuliani are official Senate candidates, though the first lady has said she will announce her candidacy early next year.

On the campaign finance issues, Mrs. Clinton said that while she would like to see unlimited "soft money" donations banned from political campaigns, she would not forgo it "unilaterally." The Democratic Senate Campaign Committee already has spent several hundred thousand dollars on TV ads promoting her in upstate New York.

"I would certainly entertain a complete agreement on the part of any opponent in my race that everyone would avoid the use of soft money and not permit any independent expenditures on a candidate's behalf," Mrs. Clinton added.

On other issues, she said:

• She had no idea about the source of reports that she and President Clinton may seek reimbursement for millions in legal fees owed from special counsel investigations. "I haven't even thought about it. It's not been discussed, with me or my husband."

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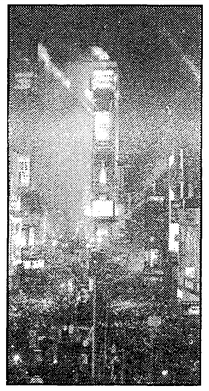
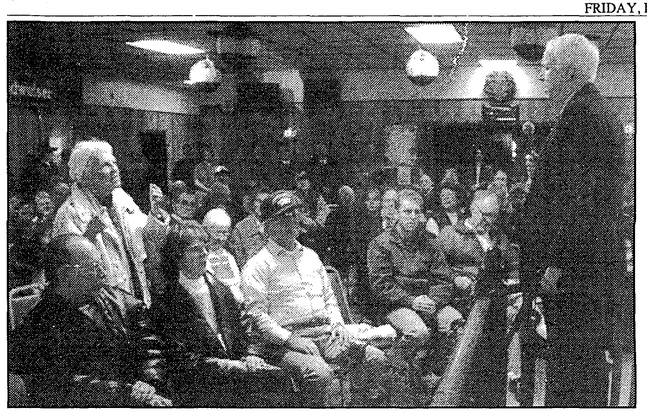

Confetti flies in New York's Times Square early Jan. 1, 1999, in this file photo. Responding to questions on CBS' "The Early Show" on Tuesday about the threat of terrorism on New Year's Eve, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said almost the entire police department will be fielded that night. AP


Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain listens as Margaret Hill explains how she likes a candidate with a short temper, and after a round of applause, during a stop in Berlin, N.H. Monday. AP

McCain sues to get on New York ballot

NEW YORK (AP) — Sen. John McCain filed a lawsuit Wednesday in an effort to force the state Republican Party to list him on New York's presidential primary ballot.

McCain wants to get on the ballot as a challenger to Texas Gov. George W Bush, the party favorite and front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination.

"John McCain deserves to be on the ballot here in New York and the scores of New Yorkers who support him deserve the opportunity to vote for him," said Staten Island Borough President Guy Molinari, who is heading McCain's state campaign. "That's what this suit is about. It's that simple."

McCain, R-Ariz., wants to get on the ballot as an alternate to Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the party favorite and front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination. The New York presidential primary is March 7.

The lawsuit challenges state GOP rules that require candidates to collect signatures from 1,000 or 0.5 percent of party members - whichever is less - in any of the 31 congressional districts where they want to put delegate slates into competition.

As a result, candidates must set up 31 separate petition drives, and that can be especially challenging in parts of the state with few registered Republicans, such as New York City. The Democratic primary process also operates under the same rules.

Since legal challenges to the petitions are common, candidates attempting to meet the requirements typically try to collect three times the minimum number of signatures to make sure their final list will pass muster.

"Governor Bush is very proud to have grassroots support in New York. Today's action is indicative that Senator McCain lacks grassroots support in New York," said Bush campaign spokesman Ari Fleischer.

Molinari insisted that McCain is popular here, and criticized the process.

"There isn't a state in the entire union that has laws that are so onerous as New York state laws. And never before in New York state history has that become clearer than this year," Molinari said.

A state GOP spokesman did not immediately return a phone call for comment.

The lawsuit was filed in federal court in Brooklyn by McCain, Molinari and political activist Larry Rockefeller. It was prepared by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law and the same legal team that litigated a similar case in 1996 on behalf of Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes.

Forbes, who also is seeking the GOP presidential nomination next year, made claims similar to McCain's in the 1996 lawsuit and persuaded a federal court to place his name on the Republican ballot that year.

Separately on Wednesday, McCain criticized the lack of limits on access to the Internet at the Greenville (S.C.) Public Library is an example of why computers in schools and libraries should block sexually explicit sites.

McCain, who has sponsored a Senate bill to require schools and libraries to buy technology to block access to such sites, said he was "disturbed that a public library receiving public funds is providing children with unlimited, unfettered access to pornographic material on the Internet.

A library official said it was not the responsibility of staff to monitor the activities of children.

Firefighters battle Calif. wildfires

OJAI, Calif. (AP) — Wildfires that forced hundreds of residents from their homes and burned two houses eased Wednesday as the fierce wind that had fueled the flames quieted.

Gusts of up to 60 mph Tuesday and early Wednesday steered 50-foot flames toward homes. More than 4,000 acres have burned in three blazes in Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Air tankers helped douse an 800-acre blaze at dawn Wednesday in the La Canada Flintridge area 10 miles north of downtown Los Angeles.

But 80 miles north in Ventura County, a 3,000-acre blaze destroyed two homes and a separate 300-acre blaze 10 miles away raged untamed. Up to 200 people fled the wind-whipped flames after the fire began Tuesday night.

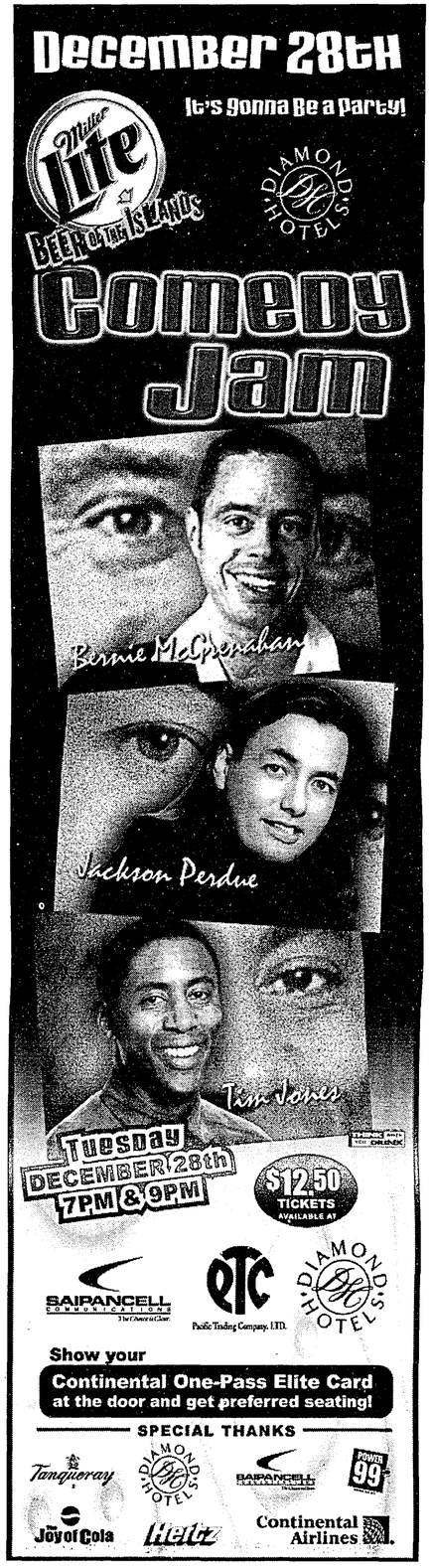
"The winds are dying down and the fire appears to be confined to a canyon right now," said Kathy Sigafoos, a Ventura County fire spokeswoman. It wasn't known when the fire would be contained or surrounded.

Another blaze in Ventura County erupted in mountain brush and quickly blackened 300 acres. No structures were threatened.

The La Canada Flintridge fire started Tuesday evening, casting an orange glow in the sky. Ash was carried on the region's Santa Ana winds for miles and the stench could be smelled in Hollywood, 10 miles away.

Selma Lloyd, 85, was already in bed when a neighbor knocked on her door and told her to get out of her La Canada Flintridge home.

Mrs. Lloyd didn't bother with belongings.



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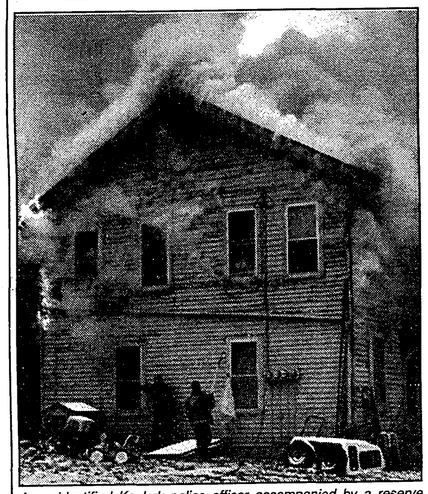
Six die in Iowa apartment fire



An unidentified Keokuk police officer accompanied by a reserve officer break windows to vent a deadly fire in Keokuk, Iowa Wednesday. The fire killed three young children and three local firefighters. AP

KEOKUK, Iowa (AP) — Fire broke out in a duplex apartment on Wednesday, killing three children and three firefighters and spreading grief throughout this small Mississippi River town.

It was the first time firefighters from Keokuk, population 12,500, had died in the line of duty. There are 19 full-time firefighters in Keokuk.

Killed were a 7-year-old girl, and 1-year-old twins whose gender was not available. Their names were not released. The firemen killed were assistant fire chief Dave McNally, 48; Jason Bitting, 29; and Nate Tuck, 39.

"They gave their lives to attempt to rescue these people," an emotional Fire Chief Mark Wessel said at a news conference. "In terms of bravery, I think that speaks for itself."

Wessel would not speculate about the fire's cause.

Andrea Glasscock, who lives down the street, said her son went outside to shovel snow and came racing back in the house shortly after 8 a.m.

"He said, 'Mom there's a lady on her porch on the corner and she's screaming that she can't find her kids and there's a fire,' Glasscock said.

Glasscock said she found the woman on her roof, with smoke billowing out from behind her, and gave her a snow-soaked shirt so she could cover her face and go inside the duplex after her children.

The mother handed a boy to Glasscock and Robin Korschgen.

"I got him in a blanket and he appeared to be fine, very smoky and stuff," said Korschgen, who lives across the street from the duplex.

The mother and child, Melissa Cooper and Jacob McFarland, were in fair condition at an Iowa City hospital.

The bodies of two of the firefighters were found upstairs, one of them near the 7-year-old. The other fireman was found downstairs.

McNally, a 25-year department veteran, had a wife and three children. Bitting, with the department six years, had a wife and three children. Tuck, a four-year veteran and high school baseball coach, had a wife and two children.

Neighbor Brenda Wetzel-Sage said she was immediately reminded of a fire in Worcester, Mass., on Dec. 3 in which six firefighters were killed.

"I thought of Massachusetts and thought, 'Here it is in our neighborhood," she said. "It says in the Bible, 'In the twinkle of an eye your life is changed forever.'"

Keokuk firefighters Jason Bitting (left) and Dave McNally who both died Wednesday in the Keokuk fire. AP

Fake stock brokers bust coke ring

TUCKER, Ga. (AP) — Investigators posing as stock brokers seized $72 million worth of cocaine - some of which was smuggled in containers of frozen fish - during an elaborate three-year sting operation.

"Operation Juno" also netted more than $10 million in drug dealers' cash that undercover agents pretended to launder through the fake firm they set up in this Atlanta suburb, federal officials said Wednesday.

Five people suspected of being Colombian drug traffickers with links to the Cali drug cartel have been indicted by a federal grand jury on money laundering and drug trafficking charges. Another 47 people have been arrested nationwide.

The Securities and Exchange Commission helped agents set up their phony company, "Airmark," by issuing actual licenses. Agents then rented space in a nondescript office complex, where the alleged smugglers occasionally met with undercover agents.

It was the first time a stock brokerage was used in as a drug sting, said John Andrejko, agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's Atlanta office.

Agents did not make any stock trades, but did actually launder $16.2 million to keep up appearances.

Agents took in the money during 59 pickups in public places such as the streets of Rome, Italy, and New York and mall parking lots in Chicago and Baltimore. The cash was handed to agents in duffel bags filled with $100,000 to $500,000, and then funneled through several accounts.

The sting began in 1996, soon after authorities in Colombia found 386 kilograms of cocaine frozen in a container of unprocessed fish headed for the United States.

Clinton assures vs New Year terror

WASHINGTON (AP) — Persistent fears that terrorists may strike are impelling federal authorities to enhance security even while urging Americans not to panic. "We are doing everything we possibly can," President Clinton told an anxious nation Wednesday.

Federal buildings are getting extra protection and security at airports is being tightened as investigators seek links between an Algerian arrested last week in Washington State to the loosely knit terrorism operation headed by Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

The Algerian, 32-year-old Ahmed Ressam, intercepted Dec. 14 in Port Angeles, Wash., after crossing the Canadian border, was indicted Wednesday by a federal grand jury in Seattle. He was charged last week with using false identification at a border crossing in addition to smuggling nitroglycerin in his car.

FBI counterterrorism chief Dale Watson said U.S. authorities were aware that bin Laden had issued Islamic calls to action - called fatwas in Arabic - against the United States. Bin Laden is a Saudi exile alleged by U.S. officials to have masterminded the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa last year.

And terrorism suspects arrested in Jordan have been linked to bin Laden's network, but U.S. authorities have not yet made such a connection to Ressam, a senior administration official said Wednesday.

"We are taking extraordinary efforts in the government to act based on the incident out in the Pacific Northwest," Clinton said during a visit to a Washington soup kitchen.

He advised Americans to "go about their holidays and enjoy themselves and make the most of it," but at the same time "to just be aware of their circumstances, and if they see anything suspicious to report it immediately."

Officials throughout the government took the cue.

"Panic is not in our vocabulary," said State Department deputy spokesman James B. Foley even as he again cautioned Americans abroad to be vigilant and avoid crowds and said, "We have information that leads us to conclude that terrorists may be planning attacks around the world."

Pressed on whether this meant Americans should call off Christmas, New Year's and millennial celebrations, Foley said the warnings were "a cautionary light, not a red light."

Twiee this month, U.S. citizens worldwide, including diplomats and guards at all American embassies and consulates, were advised to be on the alert.

Michael Sheehan, coordinator of the State Department's office on counterterrorism, said the government was balancing two competing requirements.

Bill Clinton

"One is to share information we have regarding threats in a prudent manner, and the other is not to be overly alarmist so as to unnecessarily frighten the American people, especially those who are traveling abroad," Sheehan told The Associated Press.

Defense Secretary William Cohen said U.S. intelligence agencies were cooperating with their counterparts around the globe.

"There is a sharing of intelligence to make sure that we have the latest possible information to make sure that we can deter and detect and discourage any attempts on American lives anywhere in the world," Cohen said on ABC's "Good Morning America" in an interview from Bosnia.

He warned that "there are some groups out there that seem determined to ruin the holiday if they can and to kill Americans and others if they can."

Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder said the government had no specific information of U.S. sites being targeted. "We're doing everything in our power to prevent any attacks from occurring and to bring to justice those people responsible for planning any such attacks," Holder said.

One example of the heightened security occurred in the Bahamas, where U.S. Customs officials detained an American citizen trying to board a Miami-bound plane because the individual acted suspiciously and was found to be carrying wires, magnet coils and other items, Foley said. However, a thorough search turned up nothing suspicious, he said.

And in the nation's capital, police and federal authorities searched for a blue van with Texas license plates that a citizen reported was acting suspiciously, Watson said.

Manhunts are under way for up to three people suspected of ties to Ressam and for a California man said to have ties to bin Laden.

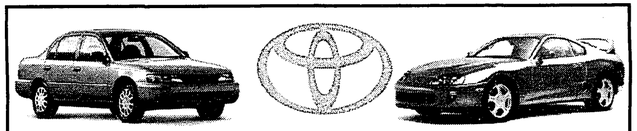
Meanwhile, a U.S. official said the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador, closed last Friday after outsiders were detected doing surveillance, is reopening, with improvements being made in cooperation with Ecuadorian authorities. However, the U.S. consulate in Guayaquil remained closed for security improvements.

At the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, services were reduced and visa operations were suspended, but the embassy remained open.

The Commerce Department posted signs on its door stating there was heightened security at its buildings in downtown Washington.

The Federal Aviation Administration said travelers at U.S. airports should expect tightened security precautions, including stricter enforcement of parking regulations.

"We have no evidence of specific threats at this time," Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater said. "Again, we continue to monitor the situation as we would in any instance and we're going to do whatever we can to ensure the safety and security of the traveling public."



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STOCK#	CARS	MODEL	LIC.#	SELL
CARS				
C98-004	1991	BUICK CENTURY	ABA-217	1995
U99-069	1991	BUICK REGAL	AAT-097	2595
U99-075	1991	FORD CROWN VICTORIA	AAV-213	2595
C99-002	1989	BMW	ABO-853	3595
U99-171	1995	TAURUS WAGON	ABC-366	6595
U99-264	1996	CADILLAC FLEETWOOD	ABF-878	9995
TOYOTA SEDANS				
C99-016	1997	CAMRY	ABL-095	13995
U99-191	1996	CAMRY	ABU-852	13995
U99-297	1995	CAMRY	ABC-878	10995
U98-231	1995	CAMRY XLE	ABA-877	12995
U99-268	1994	CAMRY XLE	AAX-869	10495
C99-023	1992	CAMRY XLE	ABL-341	6495
U99-290	1992	CAMRY	ABJ-497	6995
U98-269	1991	CAMRY LE	AAZ-411	2595
U98-155	1991	CAMRY	ABB-471	4495
C98-036	1991	CAMRY	AAW-175	2995
U99-100	1990	CAMRY	TAXI-756	3495
U99-155	1990	CAMRY	TAXI-639	3995
U99-163	1996	CELICA GT 1/B	ABF-248	13495
U99-175	1994	CELICA GT 1/B	ABO-002	10995
C99-001	1996	COROLLA	ACA-232	9995
U99-208	1995	COROLLA	ABU-921	6995
OTHER SEDANS				
U99-192	1991	NISSAN 240SX 2DR COUPE	AAZ-392	4595
U99-281	1991	NISSAN SENTRA	ABD-123	2995
U99-150	1996	ACCORD EX	ABD-747	12995
U99-030	1995	HONDA CIVIC	TAXI-642	[illegible]
U98-270	1993	HONDA ACCORD	ABD-992	[illegible]
U98-205	1992	DIAMANTE	AAX-706	[illegible]
U99-265	1992	DIAMANTE	AAW-358	[illegible]
U99-205	1991	PRELUDE		[illegible]
U99-204	1996	INTREPID	ABW-502	9995
U99-285	1996	SONATA	ABD-517	7995
U99-286	1997	MIRAGE	ACA-651	7995
U99-293	1994	MIRAGE	ABN-691	5995
PICK-UP TRUCKS				
C99-015	1993	[illegible]	ABH-917	[illegible]
U99-202	[illegible]	[illegible]	AAS-327	[illegible]
U99-156	[illegible]	[illegible]	ABC-490	[illegible]
SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLES				
U99-269	1996	RAV-4	ABV-911	11995
U99-266	1996	RAV-4	ABZ-781	10495
U98-094	1990	4-RUNNER	AAM-139	7495
U9-034	1991	4-RUNNER	AAV-815	7495
C98-003	1991	4-RUNNER	AAX-125	7495
U99-133	1992	4-RUNNER	ABH-811	7995
U99-153	1994	4-RUNNER	AB0-382	12495
U98-081	1995	4-RUNNER	ABD-668	13595
U98-090	1994	LANDCRUISER	ABS-471	22995
U98-054	1991	MAZDA MPV	AAV-795	3995
U99-255	1991	MONTERO/ASING	AAV-226	3995
U99-062	1996	CHEROKEE	ABK-150	9295
U99-162	1995	JEEP CHEROKEE	AAX-899	10995
U98-199	1990	JEEP LAREDO	ABL-013	5595
U99-181	1992	TROOPER	ABE-766	9495
U99-093	1992	TROOPER	AAV-690	8495
U99-093	1995	ISUZU RODEO	ABW-161	11495

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Farrakhan preaches unity

Louis Farrakhan and his wife, Khadijah (right) smile as they answer questions during a news conference Wednesday in Chicago. This was Farrakhan's first public appearance in months following prostate cancer treatment in April. AP

CHICAGO (AP) — Saying a near-death experience had left him a changed man, a fit-looking Louis Farrakhan made his first public appearance in months Wednesday and preached a message of unity for all races and religions in the next century.

"Only through our act of atonement can we be forgiven for what we have said or done to injure other human beings - a member of another race or a member of another religious group, another nation or another ethnic group," the 66-year-old Farrakhan told reporters and about 200 supporters who gathered at the Nation of Islam mosque on Chicago's South Side. "We must try to end the cycle of violence and the cycle of hatred."

The Nation of Islam leader has been recovering from prostate cancer and what he called a "near-death experience" in March caused by a radiation-related rectal ulcer that has yet to heal fully.

Farrakhan has been criticized for making anti-white and anti-Semitic remarks in the past. He said his health problems have changed his outlook. He called for all people to unite on Christmas Day to pray for world peace.

Farrakhan, who spoke for more than an hour, said doctors have told him his cancer is in remission. But he said his ulcer is only 85 percent healed and may require surgery before he is "out of the woods."

Farrakhan was surrounded by family members and several other religious leaders.

The Rev. Michael Pfleger, a Roman Catholic priest, held hands with Farrakhan and his wife, Khadijah, as he led the group in prayer.

"I believe he is the man who can bring us together ... as Christians, as Jews and as Muslims," Pfleger said afterward.

Amikham B. Asiel, a rabbi in the Hebrew Israelite community, said he was heartened by the minister's statement that divisions between the Nation of Islam and the Jewish community "must be overcome."

Asiel said he was willing to overlook Farrakhan's past statements.

"I would prefer to take a more positive position and see where we go in the future," he said.

Others who did not attend said they were encouraged but wary.

"His actions and his words in the future would certainly have to demonstrate to us that he has turned away from his message of anti-Semitism and division," said Melissa Schop, associate director of the Anti-Defamation League of Chicago.

Clinton makes recess appointments

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton named Mark Schneider as the new director of the Peace Corps, one of four recess appointments the White House announced Wednesday.

Other recess appointments have prompted Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., to threaten to hold up all judicial nominees when Congress reconvenes, but none of the individuals named Wednesday was expected to generate controversy.

Schneider, of Walnut Creek, Calif., currently is the assistant administrator for U.S. Agency for International Development's Latin American affairs bureau.

The White House also said Clinton would designate Robert Walke as an acting undersecretary at the Veterans' Affairs Department; Luis Lauredo as permanent representative to the Organization of American States; and Gregory Stewart as general counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The Constitution gives the president the right to bypass the Senate confirmation process temporarily by appointing an individual during a congressional recess. The nominee can serve until the end of the following year.

Army raps slaughter claims

WASHINGTON (AP) — A book alleging that white soldiers massacred 1,200 black comrades on a Mississippi army base in 1943 is "a work of fiction," says the Defense Department official who led an Army investigation into the claim.

An Army report to be released Thursday says it is intended "to put to rest any concern that these alleged events were even remotely possible. All of the nearly 4,000 men who were assigned to the 364th Infantry in 1943 have been traced to their separation from military service."

However, NAACP President Kweisi Mfume asked Attorney General Janet Reno on Monday to investigate the Army's findings that there were no such killings at Mississippi's Camp Van Dorn, as claimed by a book titled "The Slaughter: An American Atrocity" by Carroll Case.

Case, a former president of a savings and loan association in Mississippi, could not be reached for comment Wednesday. His book drew considerable attention in the black community when it appeared in 1998 and was discussed on Black Entertainment Television.

"We aren't saying the Army is wrong, but we don't have the personnel here to confirm what they found," NAACP spokesman John C. White said Wednesday. "We are saying we need a third party to offer an objective look at the matter."

"If the Justice Department signs off on the Army report, we will be satisfied," White said.

William E. Leftwich III, deputy assistant secretary of defense for equal opportunity, who has led the Army investigation for more than a year, branded the book "a work of fiction and a marketing grab" and said he is confident the Army report will withstand scrutiny.

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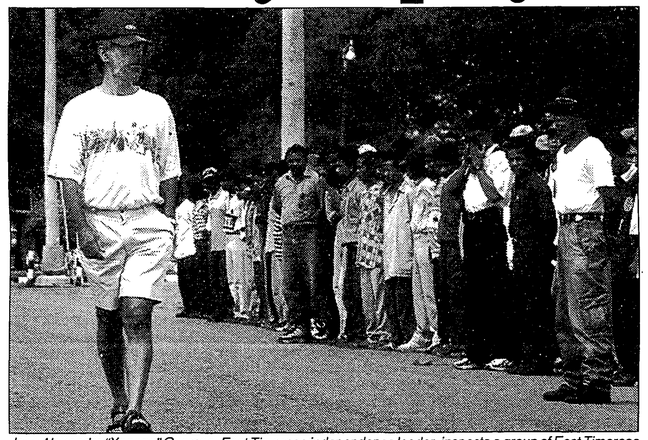
UN may deploy in East Timor



Jose Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmao, East Timorese independence leader, inspects a group of East Timorese as he commands a rehearsal of the honor guard to welcome the Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio Tuesday. AP

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) — The United Nations intends to field its own peacekeeping force for East Timor in February, one district at a time, a senior U.N. official said on Wednesday.

Hedi Annabi, an assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping, told the 15-member Security Council and reporters that more than 8,000 soldiers would be put under U.N. command "between the beginning and end of February."

He said he expected few difficulties because of the military structure established by the Australian-led 11,000 member international force, known as Interfet, that went to East Timor in September to quell violence by armed gangs opposed to independence for the territory.

Many of the Interfet troops will don blue helmets and be under U.N. command, Annabi said. The force is expected to be led by Philippine Maj.-Gen. Jaime de los Santos.

The handover, which had been foreseen during all of January and February, will be condensed into one month and move from east to west with volatile land border to Indonesian-ruled West Timor left for last, Annabi said.

The United Nations is in charge of guiding East Timor, a former Portuguese colony, to independence over the next two to three years following a ballot on August 30 in which 80 percent of the voters rejected autonomy within Indonesia. The civilian and military mission is expected to cost $700 million in 2000.

Some 450,000 people among the territory's population of 800,000 were registered to vote in the poll and the United Nations has the task of discovering where they are. The gangs, supported by Indonesia's army, conducted a killing, looting, burning and forced evacuation operation after the vote.

Since the Jakarta's new government of President Abdurrahman Wahid was sworn in on October 20, the Security Council has downplayed its criticism of Indonesia and its military.

Wahid is scheduled to visit East Timor on January 17 at the invitation of the United Nations.

Several council members said perpetrators of the violence in East Timor had to be held accountable but none followed suggestions from U.N. investigators on Wednesday to set up a U.N. war crimes tribunal. Others said Indonesia still had not moved fast enough in accounting for East Timorese forcibly to flee within two weeks in September.

Annabi said some 120,000 refugees who fled or were driven to West Timor had returned. Some aid groups estimate 100,000 remain. He said those still in East Timor included people opposed to independence or those intimidated by the gangs or those who feared they had no place to live if they returned.

"There has been no increase in the rate of return" of the refugees recently, Annabi said.

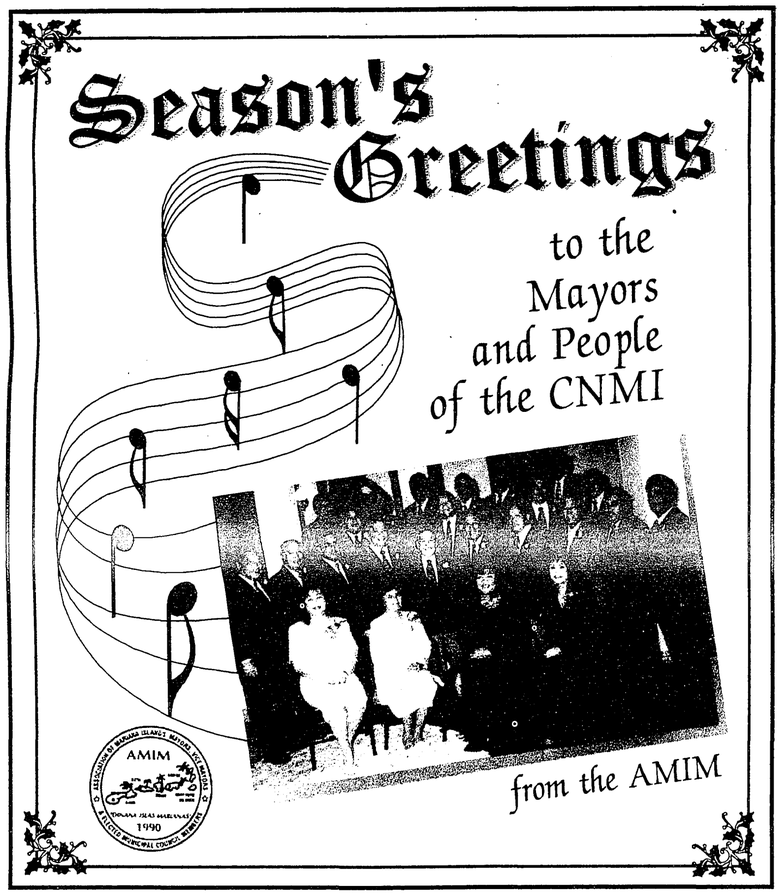
But Netherlands' ambassador Peter van Walsum said the refugee problem could not be reduced to logistics.

"Precisely because the Indonesian government has adopted such a positive attitude, the council should remind it that it continues to be responsible for the safe return of refugees."

"While we speak in positive terms of developments in East Timor, there are thousands of refugees stuck in camps in West Timor," he said.

"Intentional disinformation comes close to intimidation and intimidation comes close to force. We are dealing with an unresolved political problem," Van Walsum said."

Canada's ambassador Robert Fowler agreed and chastised the United Nations for not being able to organize a peacekeeping force sooner that would be paid for by all U.N. members, rather than by troop contributing countries.



Myanmar crash hurts over 30

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — Two passenger trains collided outside Myanmar's capital, knocking carriages off the rails and injuring more than 30 people, officials and witnesses said today.

The Friday accident went unreported in Myanmar's tightly controlled media and the cause and details are unclear. A government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said 10 people were only slightly injured.

But a railways official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said that 33 people were hurt, none fatally. Other witness reports said that five or more passengers died, but they could not be confirmed.

The railways official said the accident happened Friday afternoon at Toegyaung Galay, 7 miles northeast of downtown Yangon.

A local train from Bago, 40 miles northeast of Yangon, rammed at high speed into the overnight express bound from the capital to the northern city of Mandalay, the official said. The government spokesman said the express was waiting for a signal to change when it was rammed from behind, causing several cars to derail.

Local people saw ambulances ferrying injured passengers to the nearby Thingankyun General Hospital, where doctors said seven people were hospitalized after the crash.

A train passenger estimated that around five people had died, while a fireman who helped in the rescue operation put the figure higher. They did not wish to give their names, fearing problems with authorities.

On Tuesday, the official New Light of Myanmar newspaper showed Pan Aung, the railways minister, inspecting Bago train station the day after the crash and "giving instructions." It did not mention the accident.

The military regime severely restricts the free flow of information in Myanmar, also known as Burma. News perceived as negative, such as natural disasters and accidents, is usually suppressed.

Myanmar railways, largely reliant on aging rolling stock running on rails laid during the British colonial era, which ended over 50 years ago, has suffered a number of fatal train accidents in the past.

In December 1994, more than 100 people were killed when a passenger train traveling from extreme northern Kachin State to Mandalay plunged into a ravine after brakes failed.

N. Korean soldier's body washes up on shore

TOKYO (AP) — A body believed to be that of a North Korean soldier has washed up on the shores of central Japan, bringing the number of such corpses found over the past year to seven, police said Wednesday.

The body - a woman apparently in her 20s - was found early Tuesday by a local fisherman, state police in Ishikawa Prefecture said. An autopsy showed she had been dead for about four months.

The woman was found near the village of Totsuka, about 190 miles southwest of Tokyo, wearing a military uniform. She had a notebook that identified her as a member of North Korea's ruling party. Police are investigating the cause of death.

The woman was the latest in a series of North Korean corpses that began last December, when a body was found 370 miles southwest of Tokyo. That same month, three corpses in military uniforms were spotted floating near a beach in Takahama, 265 miles west of Tokyo. In January, two more bodies turned up in Fukui Prefecture and Tottori Prefecture, respectively.

Although officials have offered no explanation for the deaths, speculation here has focused on attempted defection or espionage.

Japan's Crown Princess Masako waves to well-wishers from the balcony of Imperial Palace in Tokyo, celebrating the 66th birthday of Emperor Akihito Thursday. It was her first public appearance after news came out that she might be pregnant. AP

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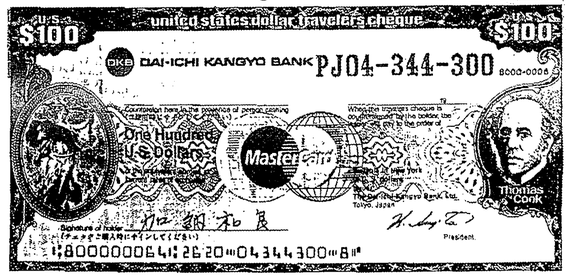

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Singapore retailers cashing in on Y2K

SINGAPORE (AP) — Singapore retailers are cashing in on the millennium fad - even if what they are selling has nothing to do with Y2K.

The new "Y2K Store" in downtown Singapore sells candy, drinks and chips. But the name is catching the attention of passers-by.

"We created this name for the future," sales manager Patrick Teo said Wednesday. "We've still got a thousand years to go."

Teo said he has no fears about a slowdown after the millennium rollover hype has come and gone. The company plans to add five stores next year to its four existing locations.

He said sales were "great," especially in the chain's first store - located in a computer shopping center.

There are fears around the world that old computer programs that use only two digits to mark the year may not be able to distinguish between 1900 and 2000, causing disastrous system shutdowns after midnight on Dec. 31.

The Daimaru Singapore department store, which caters largely to the island republic's Japanese expatriate community, has set up a "Y2K Emergency Corner" selling disaster preparation goods such as instant noodles and batteries.

The word "millennium" also has been good to Singapore retailers.

Larry Jewelry has sold nearly all of its 99 limited edition "Larry's Ideal Millennium" diamonds, priced as high as $26,470, said advertising and promotions supervisor Daniel Ong.

The inscription "Yr 2000" is laser-cut on the surface of each diamond, along with serial numbers. The markings must be magnified 10 times to be readable.

A Singaporean shop assistant retrieves a packet of portable cooking gas cassettes for a customer at the Daimaru shopping center Wednesday in Singapore. The store is offering special deals on items such as corned beef, sardines, water and beer for those worried about supply problems caused by the Y2K bug. AP

Y2K could hobble Asia manufacturers

TOKYO (AP) — Leading manufacturers in Asia express confidence they are prepared for the Year 2000 computer problem. But when asked about their suppliers, they are far less certain.

Corporations otherwise amply prepared could be crippled by Y2K disruptions of their suppliers. It's an unsettling scenario for such technology-dependent nations as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore - and the United States.

For big industries like auto and consumer electronics makers, falling just one part short could shut down entire assembly lines. Especially susceptible are companies with "just-in-time manufacturing" systems, a technique pioneered by the Japanese - and widely used by Detroit - in which parts are obtained only as needed to keep inventories low and profit margins high.

Mindful of Y2K's potential for disruption, many big manufacturers have broken the mold for this one-time event, stockpiling anywhere from a few days to a few weeks' supplies prior to Dec. 31.

But many smaller manufacturers have not.

That means any Y2K problems upstream in the supply chain might not be felt for weeks - but could then cause assembly lines from Osaka to Detroit to grind to a halt.

Worldwide, only 26 percent of all companies have arranged alternate supply or distribution channels. Companies with more than 500 employees are doing somewhat better, with 45 percent having alternate suppliers, according to the Massachusetts-based technology research group International Data Corporation.

The research group forecasts $22.8 billion in losses to businesses worldwide from Y2K-related failures and predicts a ripple effect: for every dollar lost by one company, business partners will suffer 70 cents in losses.

Reflecting a global trend, larger Japanese corporations are better prepared than smaller ones for Y2K, the legacy of a programming flaw in which years were expressed with just two digits, meaning 2000 could be misread as 1900, causing crashes and scrambled data in computers and the microchips prevalent in so many assembly lines.

At the end of October, only 75 percent of small- and medium-sized companies in Japan had completed Y2K repairs - far lower than the nearly 100 percent for banks and 92 percent for companies in general, government studies show.

Kazuo Sato, a Tokyo city official who counsels small and medium-sized companies on Y2K, says many smaller companies couldn't afford to invest in remedies even if they wanted to.

"I'm worried," Sato said. "Fixing a Y2K problem isn't an investment that a business sees as returning a profit anytime soon."

Dennis Grabow, an investment banker with Millennium Investment Corp. in Chicago believes supply-chain disruptions are likely - and capable of setting off recessions in some nations. Suppliers in industries like aviation or computers can't be replaced easily - and stocking up is unrealistic for industries that require thousands of parts, he said in a telephone interview.

The danger could hit practically anywhere.

A power failure could stymie a supplier, even if it had fixed its computers. Or a ship transporting parts could be disabled by Y2K troubles and prevented from making a delivery.

And some suppliers are in nations like Indonesia and China, where the millennium bug is expected to cause at least moderate though unpredictable disruptions.

"There are potential problems at the supply chain that we cannot possibly control," said Peng Naichueh, spokesman for Gigabyte Technology, a major Taiwanese maker of motherboards, the main circuit board on computers.

Peng, whose company's clients include Compaq and Fujitsu, says it is impossible to monitor all the company's more than 100 suppliers.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

AMENDED
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Government for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands ("Government"), through the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, is soliciting competitive proposals from qualified individuals and firms with economic and statistical analysis experience to assist in developing a questionnaire for a wage and hours survey to be conducted by the CNMI Division of Central Statistics in the Northern Mariana Islands and then to prepare a report that will analyze the information gathered to determine the possibilities and impact of a raise in the local minimum wage.

The scope of work for the project may be obtained at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan.

All proposals must be signed. One (1) original and five (5) copies for each proposal must be submitted to the Division of Procurement and Supply in a sealed envelope marked **RFP00-0021** and addressed to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950. The opening will be on January 7, 2000 at 10:30 a.m. at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan. **THIS DEADLINE IS BEING EXTENDED FROM 12/22/99 10:30 A.M. TO 1/07/00 10:30 A.M.** Any proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Selection shall be made in accordance with CNMI Procurement Regulations. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

A. Technical Proposal
- a. 40% Experience in similar or related proejcts
- b. 25% Demonstrated understanding of requirements
- c. 20% Technical expertise of principals and proposed staff
- d. 15% Approach to the project.

B. Cost Proposal
Price is also a factor for consideration and price will be evaluated in comparison with overall merit of proposals. Technical merit is more important than price and the Government reserves the right to award to other than the lower offeror. As proposals become more equal in technical merit, the importance of price will increase.

The CNMI Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to waive any defects, if it is the best interest of the government. All proposals will become the property of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Award of the project is contingent upon final approval of funding.

All inquiries should be directed to *Wil Maui*, the Department of Commerce, Division of Central Statistics at telephone number (670) 664-3034, fax number (670) 664-3066.

/s/ Lee C. Cabrera
Acting Secretary
Department of Commerce

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director
Div. of Procurement & Supply

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Exact Venezuelan death toll unclear

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — With many victims still buried under huge piles of mud, boulders and trees, authorities say the exact death toll in Venezuela's flooding and mudslides may never be known.

Estimates of the number left dead by the worst natural disaster in Venezuela this century now range from 5,000 to 30,000. Initially authorities said the number was in the hundreds, but that was before they had time to reach by helicopter some of the worst-hit areas along Venezuela's northern Caribbean coast that were cut off from land traffic.

Efforts to recover bodies were set back Wednesday when two rescue helicopters crashed, killing at least four people. Officials temporarily suspended flights in the area after the accidents, fearing that pilots were becoming exhausted from days of intense relief efforts.

So far, officials have recovered 1,500 bodies. Venezuelan authorities have asked the United States for 10,000 body bags.

A rescue worker supports a woman and carries her bird cage after being evacuated to Maiquetia, Venezuela Monday. AP

In the affluent Los Corales neighborhood on the Caribbean coast, an avalanche of mud and debris tore a swath 1 1/2 miles long and up to five football fields wide, steamrolling everything in its path.

Extracting victims from the huge pile would be extremely difficult. President Hugo Chavez says he may declare such areas "memorial grounds" where the dead would rest in peace.

Relief teams using search dogs continued to look for trapped survivors Wednesday, but officials said they doubted they would find many. Unlike earthquakes that often leave air pockets where victims can survive for days, mudslides usually smother their victims to death immediately.

Some critics say Venezuela vastly underestimated the number of dead in the first few days after the Dec. 15 disaster, and that may have hurt the country's ability to attract international aid since the world didn't immediately understand the magnitude of the disaster.

In the devastated neighborhood of Blandin in Caracas, for instance, officials initially said one person was killed. However, Associated Press reporters and photographers who were in the area hours after a mudslide struck saw residents carry the corpses of at least seven people down the streets within a couple of hours.

NMI. . .

Continued from page 1

Circuit Court of Newport. The CNMI had to retain a Virginia counsel as the court only allows lawyers admitted in the Virginia bar. The $50,000 does not cover payments beyond Sept. 30 this year.

Local lawyer Brien Sers Nicholas got $25,000 or $175 an hour representing government in a case involving an unspecified report from the Office of the Public Auditor docketed as number 97-00-34.

A San Francisco law firm, Gordon & Rees was paid $25,000 to assist in the filing of a suit before the U.S. Supreme Court involving the CNMI. The same law firm is also assisting the Attorney General's Office in reviewing the Covenant Implementation Act.

The amount altogether totaled some $890,000.

Officials said the amount being spent on lawyers, who mostly are from the U.S. mainland, brings to fore the need for the CNMI to further develop its own pool of attorneys.

Teno. . .

Continued from page 1

$18,000.

Nielsen has been supervising the government's five-year CNMI State Plan on Children and Families and has been coordinating with the Division of Youth Service (DYS).

Tenorio has vouched for him, saying Nielsen has "performed exceptionally well" since he began work for the program in 1996.

The government used to have a full-time staff doing Nielsen's job, but at a higher cost of $37,000 a year. Nielsen, for the past years, was being paid around $26,000 each.

Nielsen is president of the Research Evaluation and Grants Service (REGS) and is "special assistant for educational issues."

Former Revenue & Taxation director Rufin S. Inos, according to the documents, is now working as "special consultant" for the same office.

In vouching for him, Finance Secretary Lucy DLG. Nielsen said Inos has the specialized skills obtained from years' work with R&T.

Inos was paid $99,000 for his last contract which ended in September.

He was renewed at $60,000 from October to September next year.

Tobacco. . .

Continued from page 1

documents in this matter. Rather, applicants request only authorization from the court to take testimony and obtain evidence in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the local rules of this court and the RMI order," said O'Connor.

Court records showed that the RMI government sued several companies and other firms for allegedly engaging in a conspiracy with other entities to sell defective and unreasonable dangerous products (i.e. cigarettes).

RMI's first amended complaint alleged that the defendants simultaneously misrepresenting and concealing both the purported health risks associated with cigarette smoking and the "addictive" nature of cigarettes.

The plaintiff sought to recover compensation for its claimed financial obligations to pay for alleged "smoking-related" illnesses of RMI inhabitants from 1979 onward (including into the future).

The RMI government demanded restitution in an amount equal to the total of all monies spent in the RMI toward the purchase of applicants' cigarettes.

The RMI High Court granted the motions to dismiss of 21 to 26 defendants, but allowed the case to proceed against the remaining five, including applicants and two other entities.

O'Connor said what money (if any) the RMI government expended on health care for RMI inhabitants is at issue in the case, and both Deloitte and Woseley have been directly involved in auditing the RMI government expenditures.

Faced with the potential for such massive liability, O'Connor said, applicants have a fundamental right to defend themselves diligently and vigorously.

The RMI High Court, the lawyer said, issued a discovery schedule and set the case for trial starting Oct. 1, 2000.

The discovery schedule, O'Connor explained, prohibits applicants from obtaining discovery from RMI government until at least Jan. 10, 2000.

"To escape this Catch-22, applicants must focus their efforts on 3rd-party discovery both inside and significantly for the purposes of this motion, outside the RMI, which they can use to prepare their defense," he added.

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Lot No. 005 I 496, containing an area of 745 square meters, *more or less, on which the dwelling is situated.*

The sale will be conducted on **Monday, January 10, 2000 at 10:00 a.m.** at NMHC's Central Office in Garapan. A minimum bid price should not be less than $78,000.00. The purchase price shall be made in cash, certified, cashier's check or partially financed by or through NMHC, depending on the successful bidder's repayment ability. Minimum down payment shall be twenty five percent (25%) of the highest bid amount. Maximum financing term for the balance shall be ten (10) years. All payments must be received within 72 hours after the bid.

Interested individual(s) may contact Thomas C. Duenas, Manager, Mortgage Credit Division, at 234-6866/7689 on or before Monday, January 10, 2000.

NMHC reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands to hold title to real estate in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
For The Preparation of the FY 1999 Traffic and Earnings Report.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed proposals from qualified firms or individuals to prepare its FY 1999 Traffic and Earnings Report in accordance with subsections 6.06 and 6.07 of the Airline Use Agreement (AUA). The purpose of the report is to provide the signatory airlines with an annual rate base determination as measured by the aeronautical and non-aeronautical costs related to Commonwealth airport system. This rate base in compared to the aeronautical and non-aeronautical revenues in order to asses the sufficiency thereof to cover the costs. From the analyses and related report, airline user fees and charges can be judged for the adequacy or used as a basis for future rate adjustment. A review of past reports can be made at the Comptroller's office.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

Interested proposers should submit proposals no later than 4:30 p.m., December 31, 1999. Late proposals will not be entertained.

Send information to: Mr. Carlos H. Salas
Executive Director
Commonwealth Ports Authority
P.O. Box 501055
Saipan, MP 96950

/s/ROMAN S. PALACIOS
Contracting Officer/Board Chairman

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PASSPORT (護 照)
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LI ID (簽 證)
4. 連絡處: SAM MARIANAS, INC. (三 豊)
5. 電 話: 322-3444
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注: 1) TWA : Temporary Work Authorization.
2) LIATWA: Limited Immunity Act TWA.

Russians bomb Grozny

DUBA-YURT, Russia (AP) — Russian forces trying to wipe out rebels entrenched in the ruins of the Chechen capital Grozny intensely bombarded the smoke-enshrouded city on Wednesday.

The rebels, firing from trenches and the hulks of buildings, fought back against heavily armored troops encircling the city.

Meanwhile, a pro-Moscow Chechen militia of about 1,500 fighters has entered Grozny, said a spokeswoman for militia commander Bislan Gantamirov.

"Within seven days, Grozny will come under our control," the spokeswoman, Aizan Sultanova, was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

Chechen troops watch gas from pipes broken in Russian artillery attacks burn, in the Chechen capital of Grozny, in this image from television footage made available in London Wednesday. AP

She claimed that the militia entered the capital alongside federal troops, but Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin denied on Wednesday that there was any fighting inside the city.

Rebels battled Russian paratroopers trying to cut their supply routes south of the capital, in the rugged fogbound mountains bordering Georgia, and claimed to have inflicted heavy losses.

Despite the Russian forces surrounding Grozny, the rebels claim they have always been able to get supplies into the city. Russia's desire to cut those supply routes has prompted the military to send troops into the mountains, even though they are more vulnerable to the Chechens' guerrilla skills there than on flatter terrain.

Russia has taken control of most of Chechnya since sending in ground troops in September to wipe out Islamic militants blamed for bomb blasts across Russia that killed 300 people. But the rebels are strong in Grozny and the mountains - both areas where they severely bloodied Russian forces in the 1994-96 separatist war.

Hoping to avoid a similar debacle, Russia has battered Grozny by warplane and artillery for weeks but has held back from storming the city. The barrage was stepped up on Wednesday.

"Shells were exploding in practically the entire city" during the pre-dawn hours, said Mayor Lecha Dudayev.

Chechen commander Adam Baibulatov said Wednesday that about 1,000 Russian paratroopers had landed three miles from the southern border with Georgia a week ago and were surrounded by rebel forces, taking heavy losses.

"Chechen fighters have established a tight noose" around the paratroopers, Baibulatov said in Duba-Yurt, 20 miles south of Grozny in the mountains' foothills.

Russia has acknowledged dropping paratroopers in the southern mountains, but a Defense Ministry spokesman denied Wednesday that they had been surrounded.

Russian forces also traded fire with rebels Wednesday in the villages of Stare Atari, Atagi and Serzhen-Yurt, the Interfax news agency reported.

Refugees said fighting continued near Alkhan-Yurt, southwest of Grozny, even though Russia claimed control of the city earlier this month. Yesita Jabrila, who fled to the neighboring Russian republic of Ingushetia, said that on the outskirts of Alkhan-Yurt "they were shooting over us. Sometimes they'd take a short break and start again."

Jabrila also said Russian soldiers were pillaging the town. A top Russian commander, Col. Gen. Leonid Ivashov, said Russia has not confirmed reports that soldiers massacred 40 civilians there this month, Interfax reported.

Putin said Wednesday the end of the Russian offensive "is close, but we're not going to create any time limits and we won't time the operation," the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

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Talbott seeks charges to ABM treaty

MOSCOW (AP) — Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott worked Wednesday to persuade Russia to let the United States amend the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, U.S. and Russian officials said.

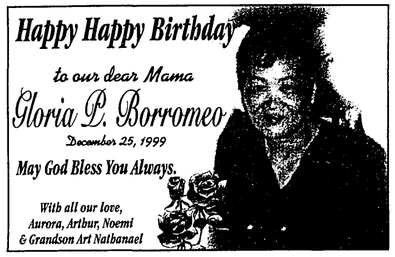
The United States wants to change the 1972 treaty so it can build missile defenses to block possible missile attacks by rogue states such as Iran or North Korea. Russia has said that a U.S. retreat from the treaty would upset the strategic balance and could trigger a new arms race.

Washington has tried to convince Russia that its planned anti-missile system wouldn't be able to counter the kind of massive nuclear attack Russia is capable of launching.

Talbott met Wednesday with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov. A U.S. Embassy official who spoke on condition of anonymity said Talbott urged Russia to allow treaty amendments. But the meeting produced no breakthroughs, the Interfax news agency reported, citing Russians who attended the talks.

Talbott came to Moscow for consultations on a wide range of topics, including the ABM treaty, Russia's campaign in breakaway Chechnya and the START II arms reduction treaty.

START II, which would halve U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals to between 3,000 and 3,500 warheads each, was signed by both sides in 1993. The U.S. Senate ratified it in 1996, but hard-line lawmakers in the Russian parliament have blocked a vote on the pact.



Arafat, Barak make progress

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Disputes over an Israeli troop pullback and the release of Palestinian prisoners are expected to be resolved in the next few days as a result of a secret meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, a senior Palestinian official said today.

With a deadline for a peace treaty framework only 53 days away, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak decided during a meeting late Tuesday in the West Bank town of Ramallah to become more closely involved in the negotiations.

The two leaders plan to hold frequent one-on-one talks, Arafat adviser Nabil Abourdeneh said.

Abourdeneh said he expected disagreements over an Israeli troop withdrawal from 5 percent of the West Bank and the release of Palestinian security prisoners to be resolved in the coming days.

Israel was set to carry out the withdrawal by a Nov. 15 deadline, but the Palestinians objected, saying the areas Israel offered to hand over were too thinly populated and not close enough to those already under Palestinian control.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were to meet again today to try to finalize a deal on a withdrawal and the release of prisoners.

More importantly, Israel and the Palestinians need to agree on the broad outlines of a full peace treaty by Feb. 13. Issues on the table include the final borders of the Palestinian entity, the status of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees and the future of Jewish settlements.

Abourdeneh said that the two leaders will hold frequent meetings after Arafat completes a trip to Washington around Jan. 10.

The two chief negotiators, Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed-Rabbo and Israeli diplomat Oded Eran, have made little progress in their sessions. They did not attend Tuesday's summit meeting, according to a Palestinian official.

Yasser Arafat

Ehud Barak

Abourdeneh said Barak also briefed Arafat on Israel's negotiations with Syria. The Palestinians were caught by surprise by last week's renewal of the Israel-Syria track, frozen almost four years. Israel appears much closer to Syrian territorial demands than to those of the Palestinians. Closing a deal with Syria - and with Lebanon, where Syria calls the shots - would leave Arafat much weaker.

Barak has tried to assure the Palestinians that he is determined to stick to the ambitious timetable on the Palestinian track - a framework agreement by Feb. 13 and a final accord by Sept. 13.

The Palestinians also received encouraging promises from Barak on settlement activities in the West Bank, Palestinian officials said,

Palestinian officials have repeatedly said that settlement expansion in the West Bank is destructive to the peace process, and lately suspended negotiating final status issues until settlement building is frozen.

Today, an Israeli soldier fired rubber-coated steel pellets at Palestinian stone-throwers near the el Arube junction, north of the West Bank town of Hebron, wounding a Palestinian teen-ager riding on a bus that got caught in the fire.

The Israeli army said the soldier violated rules by failing to check if his shooting would endanger the lives of passers-by and would be disciplined.

Also today, Syria welcomed a declaration by Barak on Monday that Israel will have to pull out of Golan Heights territory.

In a front-page article in the government's Al-Thawra newspaper, Fayez Sayegh, head of the official Syrian Arab News Agency, said Barak's "responsible statement runs in harmony with the essence of the peace process."

Sayegh said Israel should "turn theory into future practical plans."

Israel and Syria are to start a second round of talks on Jan. 3 in West Virginia.

Italian PM reshuffles his cabinet

ROME (AP) — A new center-left Cabinet was sworn in Wednesday after Italy's premier pulled together a coalition that he hopes will put a quick end to the country's political crisis.

Premier Massimo D'Alema then headed to the Senate to seek a vote of confidence, which he was widely expected to win. But the new lineup faces a bigger challenge in the Chamber of Deputies, where the governing coalition appears to barely have a majority.

The Senate vote was set for late Wednesday; the lower house vote was scheduled for Thursday.

Addressing the Senate, D'Alema said his coalition was "strong and united." He said it would soon give Italy a new electoral law aimed at ending decades of political instability.

D'Alema, a former Communist, resigned Saturday after 14 months at the helm of a fragmented center-left coalition. But he was quickly asked by President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi to forge a new coalition.

The premier said his revamped government - Italy's 57th since World War II - "has important elements of continuity" as well as some fresh faces. The heads of key ministries such as foreign affairs and the treasury were unchanged, while defense and the interior ministry changed hands.

Four cabinet posts went to the Democrats, a party created this spring by ex-premier Romano Prodi, now head of the European Union.

Democrat Enzo Bianco, the popular mayor of Catania in Sicily, will serve as interior minister. The new defense minister, Sergio Mattarella, 58, comes from the Italian Popular Party.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that the general public that the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) will be having its 1st quarter meeting on December 29, 1999 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Dai-Ichi Hotel Azucena II in Garapan. Interested individuals are welcomed to attend.

AGENDA

I. Welcome
II. Review and Adoption of Agenda
III. Review and Adoption of Minutes of **September 10, 1999 Meeting**
IV. Chairman's Report
  - Trip Report
  - Committee Reports:
    - Consumer Satisfaction
    - Policy
    - Fiscal
V. Director's Reports
  - Trip Reports
  - Program Status
  - Budget/Fiscal
    - Carryover FY99
    - FY 2000
  - 1ST FY98-2000 Status
  - 1ST FY2001-2003 Progress
  - Case Service
    - FY 1999 Cumulative Caseload
    - FY 2000 (Oct-Nov)
VI. Old Business:
  - SRC Membership/Nominations
  - Proposed Annual SRC Calendar of Events
VII. New Business:
  - Proposed Generic Agenda
  - Visit of RSA Officials
  - Schedule of Next Monitoring Visit
VIII. Announcements/Miscellaneous
IX. Adjournment

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting, but requires accessibility such as large print or sign language interpreters must call 664-6537/6538 (voice) or 322-6449 (TDD).

/s/Ramon Dela Cruz
Chairman

Astronauts begin spacewalk

SPACE CENTER, Houston (AP) — Two astronauts went out on a spacewalk more than 370 miles above Earth on Wednesday to replace broken instruments in the Hubble Space Telescope and restore its unparalleled view of the cosmos.

It was the first of three spacewalks to be conducted over three days on the $3 billion observatory and, by far, the most important. The Hubble has been out of service since mid-November.

Keenly aware of the magnitude of the job, Steven Smith and John Grunsfeld floated out of space shuttle Discovery's hatch almost an hour early and quickly began organizing their tools in the cargo bay, where the Hubble was latched down.

"You ready to go?" Smith asked Grunsfeld. "Hubble needs us."

Three hours into the spacewalk, the pair had replaced four of Hubble's gyroscopes, with two more to go. The work was made more difficult by stubborn bolts and storage-bin lids that wouldn't close. Also on the evening's agenda: equipping each of the telescope's six batteries with a voltage regulator to prevent overheating.

Scientists expected to know pretty quickly whether the new gyroscopes worked. But it will be another few weeks before the Hubble resumes making observations.

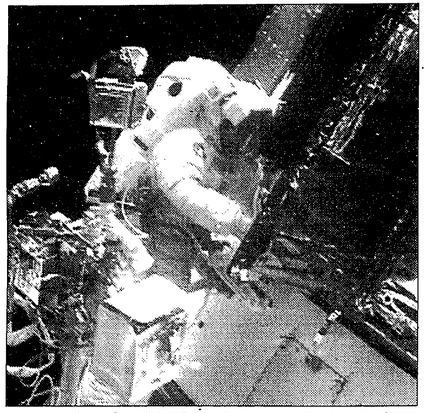
The spacewalk was expected to last six or seven hours.

The Hubble, which was plucked from space with Discovery's robot arm on Tuesday, has been useless to astronomers since a fourth gyroscope failed on Nov. 13. A minimum of three are needed to keep the 43-foot, 25,000-pound telescope steady as it aims at stars, galaxies and other celestial targets.

NASA believes the failures were the result of corroded wires. To avoid a repeat of the problem, engineers used pressurized nitrogen rather than air to force fluid into the new gyroscopes. The oxygen in the air was thought to have caused the corrosion.

The new gyroscopes, which come in 24-pound packs of two, cost $8 million in all.

Smith and Grunsfeld took turns working inside the tight cavity that houses the gyroscopes. They had only a few inches of clearance; one wrong move and they could bump critical instruments and leave the telescope in even worse shape than it was.



Astronaut John Grunsfeld closes the door on the Hubble Space Telescope after installing voltage improvement kits during a spacewalk in this image made from television, Wednesday. AP

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

SECOND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOOD & BEVERAGE CONCESSION FOR WEST TINIAN AIRPORT

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting proposals from interested firms and/or individuals to operate a food and beverage concession at the West Tinian Airport. Interested firms and/or individuals are encouraged to specify in their proposal the types of products and/or services they intend to offer to the travelling public and how to best use the space available. The area of the space available is 430 square feet, and is located at the newly renovated West Tinian Airport. This space is available for inspection between 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Proposal packages can be obtained at the Office of the Executive Director, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, or at the Office of the Ports Manager West Tinian Airport, Tinian, MP 96952. A set of the proposal package may be obtained for a fee of $30.00. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. A pre-award conference shall be held on December 21, 1999 at 2:00 p.m. at the West Tinian Airport conference room located at the office of the Ports Manager.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) must receive all proposal no later than 2:00 p.m. December 27, 1999, in order to be considered for the award. In evaluating proposals, CPA will consider (but not limited to) the following criteria:

1. Financial Proposals
2. Management Teams
3. Capital Investment
4. Design Rendering
5. Services or Merchandising Mix
6. Customer Services
7. Pricing

The successful and unsuccessful Proposers will be notified within thirty (30) days after December 27, 1999.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Mr. Herman R. Bermudes at 664-3500.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals in accordance with Section 3.2(7) and 4.1 of its Procurement Rules and Regulations.

/s/CARLOS H. SALAS
Executive Director

December 10, 1999
Date

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

LIMITED RETAIL CONCESSION SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting proposals from interested firms and/or individuals to operate a Limited Retail Concession at the Saipan International Airport. Interested firms and/or individuals are encouraged to specify in their proposal the types of products and/or services they intend to offer to the travelling public and how to best use the space available. The area of the space available is 100 square feet, and is located at the Departure Building. This space is available for inspection between 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Proposal packages can be obtained at the Office of the Executive Director, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950. A set of the proposal package may be obtained for a fee of $50.00. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. A pre-award conference shall be held on December 22, 1999 at 2:00 p.m. at the Saipan International Airport conference room located at the Departure Building second floor.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) must receive all proposal no later than 2:00 p.m. January 10, 2000, in order to be considered for the award. In evaluating proposals, CPA will consider (but not limited to) the following criteria:

1. Financial Proposals
2. Management Teams
3. Capital Investment
4. Design Rendering
5. Services or Merchandising Mix
6. Customer Services
7. Pricing

The successful and unsuccessful Proposers will be notified within thirty (30) days after January 10, 2000.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Mr. Herman R. Bermudes at 664-3500.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals in accordance with Section 3.2(7) and 4.1 of its Procurement Rules and Regulations.

/s/CARLOS H. SALAS
Executive Director

December 10, 1999
Date

Drug shows promise for asthma

(AP) — An experimental, genetically engineered asthma drug could offer sufferers an entirely new treatment without the dangerous side effects of steroids, the standard medication for many patients, researchers say.

In a study published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, about one quarter of the asthma patients on inhaled steroids were able to stop taking them after being given the new drug, rhuMAb-E25. And one-third of those using oral steroids were able to quit, too.

"It's going to be a breakthrough," said the lead researcher, pediatric asthma specialist Dr. Henry Milgrom of the National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver. "The new drugs such as this one are intended to be the magic bullet against asthma."

Steroids have been widely used to treat moderate to severe asthma for the past decade. But long-term use stunts children's growth. In adults, steroids can cause osteoporosis, stomach bleeding, elevated blood pressure and blood sugar, cataracts and weight gain.

RhuMAb-E25 is an intravenous drug made by splicing a tiny segment of a cloned mouse gene into a human antibody.

After further testing, the three companies developing it - Genentech, Novartis Pharma AG and Tanox - hope to seek Food and Drug Administration approval for sale in about six months. Genentech funded the study.

Despite the numerous drugs available, many patients don't control their asthma well. The condition kills 5,500 Americans annually, is the ninth-leading cause of hospitalization and prompts 10 million doctor visits each year. About 17 million Americans have asthma, an astonishing increase of more than 75 percent since 1980.

In an asthma attack, hypersensitive airways narrow drastically when exposed to an allergen, such as cigarette smoke, pet dander, pollen, feathers and mites. A type of antibody called IgE prompts immune cells to release histamines in a misguided attempt to neutralize the allergens. Instead, the histamines inflame and further narrow the airways.

Postal Service to use electric trucks

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Postal Service says it will take a major step for the environment in using hundreds of electric vehicles to deliver the mail in California and the Washington D.C. area.

"We deliver clean air along with the nation's mail," Postmaster General William Henderson said Wednesday as the agency announced it had awarded the single largest contract for electric vehicles in U.S. history to Ford Motor Company.

Under the contract, the post office will buy 500 new right-hand drive vehicles based on the Ford Ranger pickup for about $12 million. The first ones should be delivered late next year.

The Postal Service has about 200,000 vehicles in its fleet nationwide, but only 25 are electric, said Bill Dowling, a Postal Service vice president.

T.J. Glauthier, an assistant secretary at the Energy Department, said only about 500 electric vehicles are now being used in the entire U.S. government.

"This doubles the number of electric vehicles in use in the whole federal government in one swoop," Glauthier said.

The bulk of the electric postal vehicles - 480 - will be used for mail delivery in California, with the remaining 20 going to the Washington, D.C., area, the Postal Service said.

Thanks to a combination of state and federal subsidies, the fleet of pricey $39,000 electric vehicles will cost the Postal Service only a bargain $23,000 apiece.

New York is offering Ford business incentives because the vehicles' body will be connected to its Ranger chassis at an existing Ford plant in Rome, N.Y.

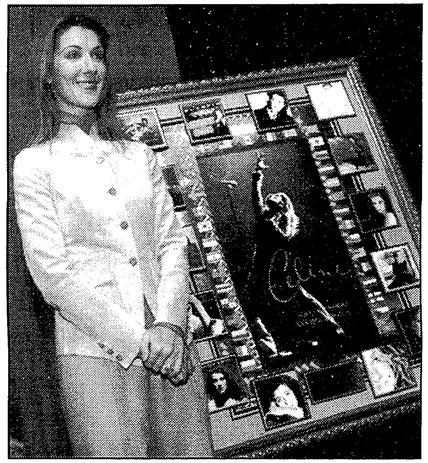
And the state of California and the Energy Department are offering the Postal Service special subsidies for using electric, rather than standard emission, vehicles.

Electric cars are virtually pollution free, and officials say the vehicles will eliminate thousands of pounds of carbon monoxide and smog-causing gases from the atmosphere each year.

The Post Office recently purchased about 21,000 so-called flexible fuel vehicles that can run on either gasoline or ethanol. Because of California state environmental laws, the Postal Service already uses the relatively clean-burning ethanol fuel in its vehicles there.

And it already has the nation's largest delivery fleet that runs on compressed natural gas - about 7,500 vehicles.

An added benefit to the new trucks, said Postal Service officials, is that they are generally quieter and easier to handle than their standard emission cousins. But they only travel about 50 miles before they need to be recharged.



Recording artist Celine Dion poses beside a special commemorative award presented to her by Sony Music in New York in recognition of career sales of more than 100-million albums. AP

Australian singer Kylie Minogue sings in front of Australian soldiers as part of the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) Tuesday in Dili, East Timor. AP

First Anniversary Rosary

In remembrance of

JOSE ADA SAN NICOLAS
(MUNEKA-DAGU)

The family humbly invites relatives and friends to join them in prayer as they commemmorate the first anniversary of our late husand and father, beginning Thursday, December 29, 1999 until January 6, 2000.

Nightly rosary is being offered at 7:00pm at their residence in Kannat Tabla/Chalan Kiya. On the final day, January 6, 2000, Mass of Christian intention will be at 5:00 pm at the San Jose Church

Dangkulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase
From: Juana Manibusan San Nicolas and Children

Study . . .

Continued from page 9

sults showed.

The findings from the initial survey of parents and teachers did generate additional questions.

Recommendations also arose from the new questions raised.

It is believed that the study should incorporate a parent survey with parents of secondary students.

Further, it should follow-up assessment in the classroom settings, which would address issues of the quality, effectiveness, and impact of collaborative practices on teachers and students.

In addition, it should also tackle an assessment which would delve more into the barriers and behaviors that are limiting teachersí ability to engage, on a routine basis, in collaborative activities.

The inclusive education project should also examine more deeply elementary teachers' concerns with their limited ability to engage in collaborative activities to address behavior management and instructional accommodations in the classroom.

It should also conduct a more in depth analysis of secondary teachers' concerns with relative ineffectiveness of co-teaching in their classrooms.

This inclusive education activity was a coordination of services by providing training and coordination between individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, their advocates and service providers such as PSS.

GDDC, according to its executive director Thomas J. Camacho, undertook this project as a means of evaluating current services provided for persons with developmental disabilities and identify through the analysis of other state plans and programs, the gaps in public and private services available to Developmental Disabilities Program.

Keep Saipan Litter Free

Sincere Appreciation

We, the family of the late,

Sally Ann Imaikita Rekita

Extend our most profound appreciation to all of our relatives and friends, for your continuous support during our time of mourning. Your prayers, sympathy, kindness, and thoughtfulness have been most comforting and touching, especially during the nightly rosary. Words can only attempt to express our sincere gratitude. Please be assured that you will always be remembered in this family's thoughts and prayers.

We would like to especially thank the following individuals and groups for their tremendous and outpouring generosity, time and effort:

Bishop Thomas Camacho, Fr. Isaac Ayuyu, Fr. Roger Tenorio, Fr. Edwin, Ben Camp., Funeral Service, CHC Hospital, DPS and most especially to those individuals & groups who gave masses & prayers, and to those not mentioned, Un Dangkulo Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase. You will always be remembered in our thoughts & prayers.

Thank You Yan, Un Son Dangkulo Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

GINEN ANTONIO & MENTINE ESTEVES

Gecko Corner

Samuel Gugliotta

Mysterians and materialists

OVER the past decade investigators from a number of disciplines, such as neuroscience, psychology and philosophy have been attempting to solve what is probably the most difficult and intractable problem in all of science. David Chalmers calls this The Puzzle of Conscious Experience.

Now why should consciousness be such a puzzle? We all know when we are conscious, what we perceive and what we feel. Our sense of who and what we are is intimately connected to our conscious awareness. Well the reason for the "puzzle" is that our present day scientific theories cannot account for, or explain consciousness. It's as if we have built this vast and beautiful mansion, known as knowledge, but have neglected to leave any space for the builders, that is, ourselves. OOP's!

The puzzle of consciousness is traditionally known as the Mind/Body problem. Today, I believe if you ask someone what the Mind is, they will say the Brain. Oddly enough, this position is known as the Identity Thesis, a species of Reductionism or Physicalism (or Materialism). Whatever you say about the mind can in principle be reduced to statements about the brain. Mind is brain and there are no two ways about it!

Now consider the following. Suppose that wrinkled walnut (i.e., the brain) was as big as a factory and you were able to stroll through its incredibly complex maze of corridors. Billions of nerve cells connected by trillions of synapses, a light show of electrical flashes, an overwhelming invasion of chaos and pattern that boggles the...mind? But what you will not see are thoughts, and feelings, the qualia of experience. Think of an image, say, of a building, or a sea, or a person, and nowhere in that fantastic factory will you find that image hiding. It isn't there. Mental items just don't exist in the same space as physical happenings.

The philosopher John Searle notes that conscious experience is a "first-person" subjective irreducible feature of physical reality. For example, you may "reduce" the color red to certain wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation, and you can talk about the neural processes that occur when you see red, such as the photons which strike your retina, electric signals traveling up your optic nerve, and so on. But that doesn't account for the redness itself, the subjective experience you have when you see red, which is part of your private mental life, distinct from all the neurophysiological correlates.

According to the philosopher Colin McGinn, the quintessential mysterian, our "brain" or "minds" are simply not equipped to fathom what links mind to brain. There is a connection, but we will never know it.

In his words, "To understand the general theory of consciousness we would need to understand how the specific forms of consciousness arise from particular sorts of brain property. But that would require us to be able to form concepts of types of experience that we cannot in fact conceive. That is, it would require a conceptual impossibility."

To illustrate the point of just how strange it is that "the squishy gray matter in our head...can be the basis of a rich mental life," McGinn quotes from a science fiction story by Terry Bisson. An alien explorer is reporting to his commander:

"They're made out of meat."

"...That's ridiculous...You're asking me to believe
in sentient meat...Spare me. Okay, maybe they
are only part meat...A meat head with an
electron plasma brain inside."

"But I told you, we probed them. They are meat
all the way through."

"No brain?"

"Oh, there is a brain all right. It's just that the
brain is made out of meat!"

"So...what does the thinking?"

"...The brain does the thinking. The meat."

"Thinking meat! You're asking me to believe in
thinking meat!"

"Yes, thinking meat! Conscious meat! Loving
meat. Dreaming meat. The meat is the whole
deal! Are you getting the picture?"

It seems that we humans, insofar as we wonder about the world, have a desire to comprehend the deep structures of experience in terms of one grand unified and interrelated system. Yet the Great Chain of Being seems to be broken. And the more we know, the more the links seem to separate. We are left with a maze of disciplines, an "epistemological pluralism" of incompatible disciplines forming a shaky mosaic of knowledge characterized by border conflicts. At these borders, where the really big questions are, religion conflicts with science, and the mystic wars with the materialists. A plethora of New Age writers offer banquets of sugar plums for those hungry for cognitive coherence. But the repast is only an illusion masking the real need to fill the explanatory gaps in our understanding. We still await the Einstein of the mind, and some insight into the illusive mystery known as the Puzzle of Conscious Experience.

Puzzles

1. Mary and Mark had a chicken farm. Mark said, "if we should sell 75 chickens, our stock of feed will last just twenty days longer. But if we buy 100 extra chickens, as you want, we will run out of feed 15 days sooner." "Well," Mary asked, "how many chickens do we have anyway?" Can you find the answer?

2. While riding on a carousel, Iris said that one third of the number of kids riding ahead of me, added to three quarters of those riding behind me gives the correct number of kids on the carousel. How many were there?

3. Jason was given a job with the following conditions:

He would get $8.00 each day for 30 days. But if on any day he did not show up for work, he would loose $10.00. Then, at the end of 30 days, Jason earned no money at all, and he didn't owe anything either. How many days did Jason not show up for work?

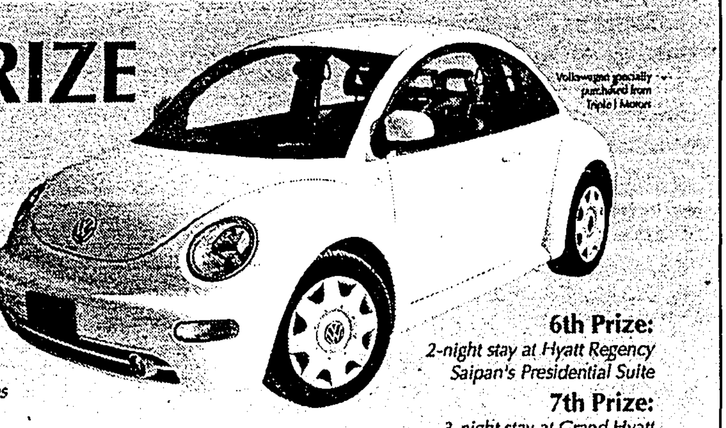
Answers To Last Week's Puzzles

1. There were three boys and three girls. Each received one of the two-for-a-dollar buns and two three-for-a-dollar buns.

2. The names of the four girls are Ann Jones, May Robinson, Jane Smith, and Kate Brown.

3. Twenty-two pieces.

GRAND PRIZE
The All New 1999 Volkswagen Bug



1st Prize:
2 Round Trip tickets to Bali on Continental Airlines and 3-night stay at Bali Hyatt
2nd Prize:
Round Trip ticket to Hong Kong on Asiana airlines and 3-night stay at Hyatt Regency Hong Kong
3rd Prize:
Round Trip ticket to Korea on Asiana Airlines and 3-night stay at Grand Hyatt Seoul
4th Prize:
Round Trip ticket to Japan on Japan Airlines and 3-night stay at Hyatt Regency Osaka
5th Prize:
2 Round Trip tickets to Guam on Continental Airlines and 3-night stay at Hyatt Regency Guam
6th Prize:
2-night stay at Hyatt Regency Saipan's Presidential Suite
7th Prize:
3-night stay at Grand Hyatt Fukuoka, Japan
8th Prize:
3-night stay at Hyatt Regency Cheju, Korea
9th Prize:
3-night stay at Hyatt Regency Pusan, Korea
10th Prize:
3-night stay at Hyatt Regency Manila, Philippines
And more...

HYATT REGENCY SAIPAN

Hyatt Regency Saipan Presents
HYATT INTERNATIONAL CHARITY EVENT:
"Children of the World Charity Sweepstakes"

$10 EACH
BOOKLETS OF 6 FOR JUST $50.00

The Hyatt Regency Saipan, in accordance with Hyatt International Hotels, is raising $2 million to build the Children's Village for orphaned, underprivileged and sick children of the world. Every child deserves a chance, as the children of today will become the leaders of tomorrow. With every purchase of a sweepstakes ticket, you will help a child reach their potential. Help build the Children's Village with a purchase of a ticket today.

Tickets may be purchased at all Hyatt restaurants, DJ's Corner and Front Desk. Also available at the CHC Volunteers Gift Shop.

"$2 MILLION BY THE YEAR 2000 FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD!"

All proceeds to benefit HIH Children's Village for orphaned, underprivileged and sick children of the world, and the CHC Volunteers' Association.

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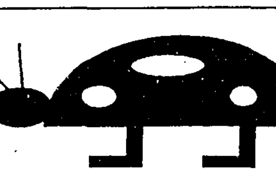
DRAWING JANUARY 1, 2000

Don't be a Litter Bug...
Keep Saipan Beautiful!



According to study

Kids in poverty grow poorer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Children in poverty continue to grow poorer even as the economy surges and overall poverty declines, researchers say in a report analyzing Census data.

The number of poor children has declined significantly since 1993, but fewer families are using government aid programs, leaving less money for children, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal research group.

"It is troubling that those children who remain poor have slipped somewhat deeper in poverty," said Kathryn Porter, co-author of the report. "While the robust economy is helping many families, others are being affected adversely by the contraction in some parts of the safety net."

The poverty threshold differs by household, depending mainly on the size of the family. In 1998, the poverty level was about $16,700 for a family of four. A child's poverty threshold and relative income is a portion of a family's income and depends on the number of family members.

The study released today said increases in employment and wages, along with the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income working families, reduced the number of poor children.

Using Census data that calculates income by including government aid programs and tax credits, the research group reported that there were 10.2 million children in poverty in 1998.

The census, which did not include those aid programs in its figures, reported earlier this year that there were 13.5 million poor children.

Using their broader measure of poverty, the researchers found that between 1995 and 1998, the number of children in poverty declined by 1.2 million, or 10 percent.

But the remaining poor children have grown poorer.

The average incomes of poor children in 1998 fell $1,604 below the poverty line — $133 more than in 1995 and the highest poverty figure since 1979, the study said.

This disparity is caused by the number of children receiving cash assistance and food stamps falling faster than the total number of poor children, the researchers concluded.

Wendell Primus, a second author, said more families have left government assistance programs and have joined the ranks of the working poor, losing many of their benefits in the process.

Often their new incomes do not make up for the lost benefits, he said.

"Some of those families don't know they're eligible and for some of the working poor it's very hard to get assistance," Primus said.

From 1995 to 1998, the number of children receiving food stamps fell 27 percent and the number getting cash assistance dropped 36 percent, the study said.

The study also found that while child poverty has fallen since 1993, the rate of that decline has slowed since 1995. Between 1993 and 1995, the number of poor children fell at a rate of 1.2 million a year, but the annual rate was a third that between 1995 and 1998.

WORKERS UNITED. *Nissan Motor Co. workers holding a protest banner that reads "Nissan should stop a personnel cut or rationalization" shout slogans during their protest rally in front of the Japan's leading automaker's Murayama plant in suburban Tokyo, yesterday. About 3,000 protesters rallied against Chief Operating Officer Carlos Ghosn's restructuring plan to slash 35,000 employees and closing of five assembly plants nationwide, including the Murayama plant.* AP

Clinton not seeking reimbursement

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton says he might be entitled to government reimbursement for his legal expenses, but "his instinct" is not to seek it.

Clinton addressed a report last weekend in The Washington Post that he and Hillary Rodham Clinton were strongly considering requesting taxpayer reimbursement of several million dollars in legal costs.

"I may be entitled to it. But my instinct is not to do it. But I've never really had a discussion about it," he said in an interview on CNN's 'Larry King Live" that was taped Wednesday for broadcast Thursday. CNN made available a transcript of the interview.

"I've been very fortunate, I've had this legal defense fund. People have helped pay for my legal fees."

The president's lawyer David Kendall, has called the report "entirely premature" because there still was an independent counsel, and said it was hoped the legal defense fund "will be sufficient."

ANNOUNCEMENT

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE SAIPAN AGRICULTURAL FAIR COMMITTEE

THERE WILL BE A GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WHEN: DECEMBER 28, 1999
WHERE: DLNR (Division of Land & Natural Resources) Conference Room, Lower Base
TIME: 9:00 A.M

IMPORTANT MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED. ALL MEMBERS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE ESTATE OF
PEDRO REYES LIZAMA,
Deceased.
Probate Action No. 99-0702(D)

NOTICE OF HEARING AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, the Commonwealth Health Center, has filed a Petition in the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands praying that an administrator be appointed to administer the estate of PEDRO REYES LIZAMA, deceased. The attorney of record is Celeste E. Andersen, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Public Health, P.O. Box 500409 CK, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is set for January 4, 2000 at the Commonwealth Superior Court, Susupe, Saipan at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 220A. Any person who has any objection to the petition may file his or her objection with the Superior Court at any time before the hearing, or may appear at the time set for hearing to present such objection or interest in the above-captioned matter.

Notice is hereby given by the undersigned to the creditors of, and all persons having claims against the Estate of PEDRO REYES LIZAMA, that within sixty (60) days after the publication of this notice, they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any claims not so presented shall be barred.

Dated: November 19, 1999

/s/Deputy Clerk of Court
Commonwealth Superior Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE ESTATE OF
JOSE BARCINAS SABLAN,
Deceased.
Probate Action No. 99-729D

NOTICE OF HEARING AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, the Commonwealth Health Center, has filed a Petition in the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands praying that an administrator be appointed to administer the estate of Jose Barcinas Sablan, deceased. The attorney of record is Celeste E. Andersen, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Public Health, P.O. Box 500409 CK, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is set for January 4, 2000 at the Commonwealth Superior Court, Susupe, Saipan at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 220A. Any person who has any objection to the petition may file his or her objection with the Superior Court at any time before the hearing, or may appear at the time set for hearing to present such objection or interest in the above-captioned matter.

Notice is hereby given by the undersigned to the creditors of, and all persons having claims against the Estate of Jose Barcinas Sablan, that within sixty (60) days after the publication of this notice, they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any claims not so presented shall be barred.

Dated: December 2, 1999

/s/Deputy Clerk of Court
Commonwealth Superior Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In re the estate of:
JUAN T. CONCEPCION,
Deceased.
Probate Action No. 99-0745D

NOTICE OF HEARING AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

1. The Petitioner William R. Concepcion, seeking to be appointed as Administrator of the Estate of Juan T. Concepcion, deceased, has been set for hearing on 11th day of January, 2000, at the hour of 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 220A of the Commonwealth Superior Court, in Saipan, CNMI.
2. Any person who has any objection to this Petition may file his or her objection with the Commonwealth Court at any time before the hearing, or may appear at the time set for hearing to present such objection or interest in the above-captioned matter.
3. Notice is hereby given b the undersigned to the creditors of, and all persons having claims against the Estate of Juan T. Concepcion or against the deceased that within sixty (60) days after the publication of this notice, they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court of the Commonwealth Trial Court and any claims not so presented shall be barred.

Dated this 14th day of December, 1999.

/s/JOVITA C. FLORES
Clerk of Court

United States District Court
DISTRICT OF

TED MCAVOY,
Plaintiff,
vs.
HONGKONG ENTERTAINMENT (OVERSEAS) INVESTMENT, INC. LD., doing business as TINIAN DYNASTY HOTEL & CASINO; MICHAEL KWN, Chairman; K.F. LIEW, General Manager; OM LUI, Hotel Manager; S.Y. CHEUNG; Assistant Financial Controller; and; ANTHONY KWAN; in their individual capacities and official capacities as Managers and Directors of the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino,
Defendants.

To: K.F. LIEW, TOM LIU, and ANTHONY KWAN

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to file with the Clerk of this Court and serve upon
PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY (name and address)
THE LAW OFFICE OF JOHN M. CHAMBERS
c/o JOHN M. CHAMBERS
MSV Building II, Garapan
Post Office Box 502566
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 233-6901
Fax: (670) 233-6903

an answer to the complaint which is herewith served upon you, withn twenty (20) days after service of this summons upon you, exclusively of the day of service. If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

GALO L. PEREZ
Clerk

December 15, 1999
Date

By:/s/Deputy Clerk

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

TINIAN CASINO GAMING
CONTROL COMMISSION
Plaintiff,
vs.
PAUL A. PALMER,
Defendant.
Civil Action No. 99-0718(T)

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

FROM: The Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

TO: The above-named Defendant

You are hereby summoned to appear within twenty (20) days after final publication of this Summons and completion of posting, and defend in the above-captioned action in the above-entitled Court, and answer the Complaint of Plaintiff, **Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission.** You shall serve a copy of your answer, upon the Plaintiff's attorney: The Law Offices of Robert C. Naraja, PC, P.O. Box 1960, Saipan, MP 96950. If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be rendered against you according to the reliefs demanded in the Complaint which has been filed with the Clerk of said Court.

/s/JOVITA C. FLORES
Clerk of Court

BUILDING FOR LEASE
Apartment - 15 Units
Store - 3 Units
Down payment - $30,000.00
Monthly - $2,750.00
Location: Koblerville Call: 288-9430 (Evening) 287-9430

APARTMENT FOR RENT
1-BEDROOM-$300.00
FULLY FURNISHED
KOBLERVILLE
288-9430 (evening)

APARTMENT FOR RENT
One (1) Bedroom $300.00
Fully Furnished
Koblerville
Tel. No. 288-9430 (Evening)

Marianas Variety News & Views
Classified Ads Section

DEADLINE: 12:00 noon the day prior to publication

NOTE: If some reason your advertisement is incorrect, call us immediately to make the necessary corrections. The Marianas Variety News and Views is responsible only for one incorrect insertion. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time.

Employment Wanted

Job Vacancy Announcement

PUBLIC NOTICE

All interested resident workers are urged to register at the Dept. of Labor & Immigration, Division of Employment Services for the job/s being advertised in which you are qualified and available. For further assistance, please call Alfred A. Pangelinan at Tel. 664-2078.

01 STEEL WORKER-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: MANUEL A. TENORIO dba T&S Const. Tel. 288-2796(12/24)F33810

01 DELIVERY WORKER-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: BEN'S INTERNATIONAL CORP. Tel. 288-2828(12/24)F33817

01 ARCHITECT-Salary:$10:00 per hour Defends on experience.
Contact: JASON DRIES-DAFFNER dba Jason Dries-Daffner Design Tel. 235-8561(12/24)F33813

03 KITCHEN HELPER-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: MARIANAS HOTEL SERVICES CO., LTD. Tel. 233-2150(12/24)F82107

01 ACCOUNTANT-Salary:$3.75 per hour
01 GRAPHIC ARTIST-Salary:$3.50 per our
Contact: YOUNIS ART STUDIO, INC. dba Marianas Variety News & Views Tel. 234-6341(12/24)F82129

01 MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN-Salary:$1,200.00-1,400.00 per month
Contact: J.C.A. INC. dba McDonald's of Saipan Tel. 235-9761(12/31)T82161

04 MACHINE REPAIRER, MAINTENANCE-Salary:$3.05 per hour
01 GENERAL MANAGER-Salary:$800.00 per month
Contact: E TOURS, INC. dba Saipan E Tours Tel. 235-8815(12/21)T33774

01 REF. & AIRCON TECHNICIAN-Salary: $700.00 per month
Contact: JAMES P. REYES JR. dba Erik's Refrigeration and Aircon Shop Tel. 235-7093(12/31)F33894

06 TRAVEL COUNSELOR-Salary:$800.00-2,200.00 per month
Contact: PACIFIC MICRONESIA TOURS, INC. Tel. 234-3913(1/7)F82352

01 ELECTRIC MOTOR REWINDER-Salary:$3.05-3.50 per hour
03 HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR-Salary:$3.05-3.85 per hour
01 BLOCK MAKER-Salary:$3.05-3.40 per hour
01 ELECTRICIAN-Salary:$3.05-3.40 per hour
01 WAREHOUSE WORKER-Salary:$3.05-3.30 per hour
01 STEEL WORKER-Salary:$3.05-3.95 per hour
02 CARPENTER-Salary:$3.05-3.40 per hour
01 ACCOUNTANT-Salary:$3.05-4.00 per hour
01 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT-Salary:$3.05-3.65 per hour
Contact: CONSTRUCTION & MATERIAL SUPPLY, INC. dba CMS, Inc. Tel. 234-6136(1/7)F82334

01 DRESSMAKER-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: NIEVLA C. CABRERA dba Nievla's Dress Shop Tel. 235-6443(1/7)F33974

Classified Ads FIRST

02 WAITRESS-Salary: $3.05 per hour
Contact: CITY CORPORATION dba CNMI Jook Restaurant Tel. 287-2878

01 COOK HELPER-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: BOBBIE'S AMUSEMENT CO., INC. Tel. 235-2624

02 WASHING MACHINE OPERATOR-Salary: $3.05 per hour
01 WELDER-Salary: $3.05 per hour
Contact: HIP SHING (SAIPAN) Tel. 322-8989

01 BARTENDER-Salary:$3.05-4.00 per hour
Contact: L & W AMUSEMENT CORP. dba Len's Tel. 234-8864(12/17)F33719

01 QUALITY CONTROL CHECKER-Salary:$3.05-4.50 per hour
Plus $100.00/mo. housing allowance.
01 COMMERCIAL CLEANER-Salary:$3.05-4.15 per hour
Plus $100.00/mo. housing allowance.
Contact: ISLAND APPAREL, INC. dba Island Apparel Tel. 288-3442(12/17)F33718

01 COOK-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: HUA JIAN CORP. dba Hua Jian Corp. Tel. 233-1118(12/17)F33723

01 (AUTO) DIESEL MECHANIC-Salary: $3.30-4.00 per hour
01 COIL-REWIND-MACHINE OPERATOR-Salary: $3.40-4.00 per hour
Contact: KANG CORPORATION Tel. 288-9366(12/31)F33881

02 AUTO MECHANIC-Salary: $650.00-850.00 per month
01 AUTO BODY REPAIRER-Salary: $650.00-850.00 per month
Contact: KIM ENTERPRISES, INC. dba Auto Repair Shop & Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Tel. 322-0469(12/31)F33882

01 HOUSEKEEPING CLEANER-Salary: $3.05 per hour
Contact: CHERYL BAKA dba Capitol Hill Housekeeping Tel. 322-6510(12/31)F33886

02 GROUNDSKEEPER-Salary: $3.05 per hour
Contact: CHERYL BAKA dba Capitol Hill Lawn Care Tel. 322-6510(1231)F33887

01 MANAGER, TRAVEL & TOUR AGENT-Salary:$1,500-6,000 per month Japanese Language in reading/writing/speaking is preferred. Knowledge in data base computer is required.
01 TRAVEL COUNSELOR-Salary: $800-1,500.00 per month
Contact: R & C TOURS SAIPAN, INC. Tel. 235-7621(12/31)F33890

01 MANAGER (PRODUCTION)-Salary: $2,000.00 per month
Contact: JOO ANG APPAREL, INC. Tel. 235-2731(12/31)F33896

02 EXECUTIVE CHEF-Salary: $4.00 per hour
Contact: MARIANA CORP. INC. dba Beach Garden Rest. Tel. 233-3355(12/31)F33901

01 ACCOUNTANT-Salary: $3.05-$10.00 per month
Contact: PANG JIN SANG SA CORP. Tel. 234-7951(12/31)F82234

01 EMBROIDERY MACHINE OPERATOR-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: YOO SUNG EMBROIDERY, INC. Tel. 235-1902(1/7)F33978

01 SALES MANAGER-Salary:$1,000.00-1,500.00 per month
Contact: AGATHA SAIPAN, LTD. Tel. 322-565(1/7)F82340

01 MAINTENANCE, REPAIRER BLDG.-Salary:$3.25 per hour
Contact: LUIS P. & MARIA S. CRISOSTOMO dba APC Company Limited Tel. 235-5847(1/7)F33973

01 BARTENDER-Salary:$3.05-3.25 per hour
01 WAITER-Salary:$3.05-3.25 per hour
Contact: NIIZEKI INTERNATIONAL SAIPAN C., LTD. dba GIG Discotheque Tel. 234-5050(1/7)F82339

01 (POKER) ARCADE ATTENDANT-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: NIDAS CORP. Tel. 233-6600(1/7)F33975

01 MAINTENANCE BUILDING REPAIR-Salary:$3.05-3.40 per hour
Contact: PACIFIC EAGLE ENTERPRISES, INC. Tel. 234-7914(1/7)F33968

01 CASHIER-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: EAST TELECOM CORPORATION Tel. 235-4418(1/7)F33972

01 AIRCON TECHNICIAN-Salary:$4.50 per hour
Contact: GLOBAL TRADERS, INC. Tel. 234-7415(1/7)F33963

01 PRODUCTION SUPERINTENDENT-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: AMERICAN LANGENTE CORP. dba Tom's Tofu Manufacturing Tel. 233-3020(1/7)F33964

02 BEAUTICIAN-Salary:$3.05 per hour
Contact: ARTHUR S. ANULAO dba Arthur's Enterprises Tel. 234-0692(1/7)F33965

WANTED IMMEDIATELY
Transfer Acceptable
1-Mason/Tile Setter
1-Finishing Carpenter
1-Painter
Please call: 235-5434 or 483-9939
Between 12:30 - 1:00 pm & 6:00-7:00 pm
Salary Negotiable

HOUSE FOR RENT
(3) Bedroom, (1) Guest Room
(2) Baths, Huge Outside Kitchen with three (3) Car Garage,
Fenced Compound very safe!
Asking Price $1,200.00
Negotiable!
Must see to appreciate!
Call: Tony at 323-7326

LA LUZ SAIPAN CONDOMINIUM
Now Offering *Affordable Rates!*
- Fully furnished spacious studio-type and 2-bedroom units
- Security guard and housekeeping services
- 24-hours back-up generator, coin-operated laundry facilities
- Individual water heater, swimming pool and barbecue area
- Accepts long term rental w/ full maintenance
- Short term rental available @$30.00/day including tax

Location: Lower Navy Hill, Saipan
Tel. Nos. 322-2406/323-2406

AVON *Christmas Sale!*
20%-50% OFF
STORE STOCK ITEMS ONLY!
Tessie's corner, Oleai, San Jose
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FOR RENT
Restaurant/Mini Mart
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CALL: 233-4378

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ELECTRICAL AUTOMATIC FRYER
Perfect for commercial use
Hotel, Restaurants or Catering
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APARTMENTS FOR RENT
Must see to appreciate
ONE BEDROOM APT.-$350.00/mo.
*Ideal for couple or single
*Fully Furnished
*24-hour water
*Water Heater
*Trash Service Included
Location: As Lito (close to Lucky Supermarket)
For Inquiries call: 288-7525 or 235-3864

JOB VACANCY
WAITRESS - Minimum two years work experienced and japanese speaking preferred.
COOK - Two years work experienced and knowledge of local food.
BAKER - Two years work experienced in baking and knowledge of local bake goods preferred.
Apply in person at
ANN'S CREATION ESPRESSO
in Garapan next to Moby Dick and Country House Restaurant

FOR RENT
APARTMENT & COMMERCIAL SPACE
Location: Garapan near DFS/Hard Rock Café San Vicente Area
2-Bedroom Fully Furnished
Split type A/C on all bedroom including dining, living & kitchen
Laundry facilities, Spacious parking
"MUST SEE TO APPRECIATE"
Phone: 235-7171/7272 Cell: 287-7070

AVON PRODUCTS
Presently seeking Independent
SALES REPRESENTATIVES
Flexible hours.
Earn up to 50% commission.
Will Train... No experience necessary. To inquire call or fax (671) 653-1910.

HOUSES FOR RENT
FIVE (5) BEDROOMS, TWO BATHROOMS WITH GARAGE AND
FOUR (4) BEDROOMS, TWO BATHROOMS WITH GARAGE, LARGE YARD CLOSE TO THE OCEAN AT LOWER ASTEO ARE AVAILABLE FOR RENT.
PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER AT TELEPHONE NO. 235-1839

Saipan International School
a non-profit corporation
ELEMENTARY POSITION AVAILABLE
FOR A
U.S. CERTIFIED ELEMENTARY TEACHER
Class size 17 or less,
Multinational students
Please call (670) 288-9660 as for Mili

SPECTACULAR VIEWS
House Lots for Lease • 1,500 sq. m. lots •
Mt. Tapuchao • View Managaha Islands •
Road Access • Electricity • Water
• Payment Accepted • 54.95 year lease
Please call Lisa at Tel. 234-5684

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FLAME TREE TERRACE - LOWER CAPITOL HILL
2-3 & 4 BEDROOM HOUSE
1 & 2 BEDROOM APARTMENT
FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL: TEL. # 322-3366/5558 FAX: 322-3888

APARTMENT FOR RENT
Quiet Two (2) Bedrooms • Swimming Pool Tennis Court
KANNAT GARDENS
(NEAR NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE)
235-5686 (8:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Weekdays) 235-9620, 234-5849 (6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, Everyday including Sat. & Sun.)

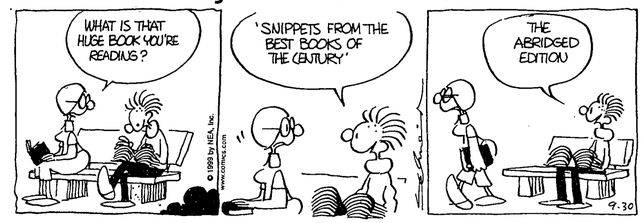
HOUSE FOR RENT
1 or 2 Bedroom Located in San Vicente Bay
Triplex 2 Bedroom Concrete House, Fully Furnished, 24 Hrs. Water
CALL: 234-1778 Office 234-6784 Home

HOUSE FOR RENT
DANDAN
2-Story House (Duplex); 3 Bdrm, 2 1/2 Bath, Furnished includes: washer, dryer, A/C, 24 hour water, quiet area and great ocean view at $900/mo.
For information call:
234-5667 leave your name & contact number

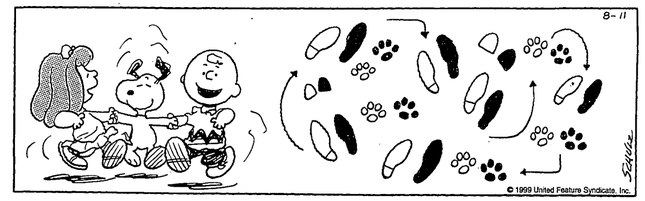
FOR SALE
1991 TOYOTA 4-RUNNER V6
Excellent running condition, new tires, new clutch, recent tune up, very well maintained, am/fm/cassette/CD. $7,000, some owner financing available, and partial trade for Rolex watch considered.
684-4338

MOVING SALE
1996 Nissan Sentra, 2-door, 5-speed manual, 24k miles, $5500.00.
Full size bed, entertainment center, macintosh computer, printer and zip drive, HP5100, flat bed scanner
Call: 235-7826

EEK & MEEK® by Howie Schneider



PEANUTS® by Charles M. Schulz



STELLA WILDER
YOUR BIRTHDAY

BORN today, you have one predominant talent which is likely to open doors for you everywhere you go and give you the kind of confidence and credibility which you so heartily crave. You are not so much after tangible success as you are after a sense of personal fulfillment and accomplishment. If you feel you have done your best work, regardless of the rewards it brings, then you are happy. Fortunately, however, you're likely to enter a field in which your best work can and will bring you remarkable financial results. You may, in fact, become quite wealthy!

You can be rather stubborn at times, but this comes from a certain unspoken insecurity that is ever-present, though never overbearing. This, too, you are able to control in your work, though in personal affairs it may affect you more than you would like. You counteract insecurity with a sense of daring.

Also born on this date are: Eugene Levy, actor and comic; Marilyn Beck, columnist; Arthur Fiedler, conductor; Cal Ripken Sr., baseball player and manager.

To see what is in store for you tomorrow, find your birthday and read the corresponding paragraph. Let your birthday star be your daily guide.

SAT., DECEMBER 25

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Criticisms of others aren't likely to hold up today, as those around you meet your expectations and prove far more able than you had supposed.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — A friend or loved one has a warning for you, but may not be willing to speak out of turn. Let him or her know that you're willing to listen.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Time spent with family members is time spent getting more closely in touch with yourself and those who are most pivotal in your life.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — You may be suffering the effects of a little overindulgence. Despite how you are feeling, you can still tend to a new and important duty.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — You will surely have to wait your turn at this time as many are trying to make good on deals that are as yet incomplete.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — You're very likely to get involved in the affairs of others today, but you don't want to put yourself in any kind of superior position.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) — Your tendency to take control may have to be overcome today, as someone else has proved that he or she belongs in the driver's seat for now.

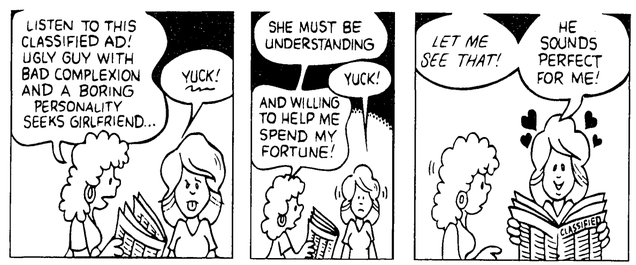
CANCER (June 21-July 22) — Your thoughts may not be in line with conventional wisdom today, but your actions are likely to win the attention and admiration of many.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Innovation is the key to success today. You needn't fall back on the outdated methods of the past. Look forward and move forward.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Lost time translates into lost opportunities today and, possibly, lost wages. Be sure to get back into the swing of things quickly.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Someone from your past may make a brief appearance today, reminding you that what has gone before is the source of all that lies ahead.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Someone you know may be trying to prevent you from doing something that you are determined to accomplish before the day and the year are out.



FIND THE PERFECT DATE! CHECK OUT THE CLASSIFIED ADS!

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS
1 Precious metal in Spain
4 Bagnold, et al.
9 Horse's mouthpiece
12 1963 film for Paul Newman
13 Adored
14 Corrida cry
15 Gold, silver and bronze at the Olympics
17 Billfold
19 Beer mug
21 The whole — and caboodle
22 "Believe — — not"
24 Participated in a marathon
26 Knock for a —
29 Dressed to the —
31 Craggy hill
33 Subordinate officer (abbr.)
34 Lancaster ID
35 Slender finial
37 Ms. Farrow
39 Mr. Pacino
40 Anglo-Saxon letter
42 Sweet potato
44 Bagel kin
46 Precious
48 Capture
50 Ginger —
51 Also
53 A Slooge
55 Stone
58 Allowable margin of freedom
61 Year (Sp.)
62 Distributed playing cards
64 In addition
65 Cowboy's nickname
66 Delete
67 Affirmative

DOWN
1 Unit of electrical resistance
2 Regret
3 Having a good chance (2 wds.)
4 Fashion magazine
5 Polite refusal (2 wds.)
6 Roman four
7 Morning moisture
8 Mount Rushmore St.
9 Singer Michael —
10 Ending with infant
11 Southeast Asian holiday
16 "— — Grows in Brooklyn"
18 "Diamond —"
20 A Turner
22 Asleep (2 wds.)
23 Pronunciation mark
25 — de plume
27 Florida city
28 Tumorous membrane
30 Secret agent
32 Bone of the body
36 Mr. Fleming
38 Passageway
41 Headgear container
43 A Davis
45 Nevertheless
47 Mr. Lowe
49 Chicago cagers
52 "Ye — Shoppe"
54 Network
55 Butter square
56 Opp. of WSW
57 Ending with mountain
59 Sue — Langdon
60 Gridiron meas.
63 Battery type (abbr.)

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

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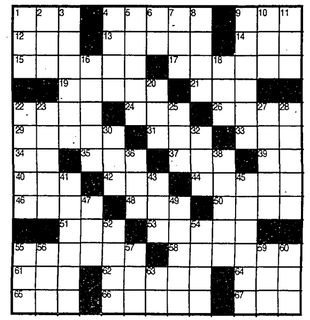
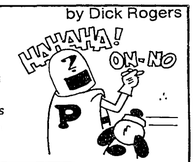


KidSpot™ by Dick Rogers

THE PUZZLER

Here's a puzzle that will have you writing backward. Write in the definitions. Use the same letters you wrote on the left to write in the definitions on the right.



1. Number		Fish trap
2. Quit		Cooking pans
3. Rodent pests		Heavenly twinkler
4. Hit with the hand		Close friends
5. Negative		2000 pounds
6. Spring month		Sweet potato
7. Came in first		Immediately

Dick Rogers © 1999 Tribune Media Services, Inc. 9/4

ANSWERS: 1. TEN-NET. 2. STOP-POTS. 3. RATS-STAR. 4. SLAP-PALS. 5. NOT-TON. 6. MAY-YAM. 7. WON-NOW.

Marianas Variety News & Views
"You Can Get What You Want"

Padres, Braves in six-player trade

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Bret Boone and Ryan Klesko are coming back home to Southern California. Wally Joyner's heading to his native Atlanta.

Wednesday's six-player trade between the San Diego Padres and Atlanta Braves not only helped each team revamp its lineup, but it took care of some natural realignment.

Boone, who was born into a San Diego baseball family, and Klesko, who's from Orange County, joined the Padres, along with minor league pitcher Jason Shiell.

Going to the Braves were first baseman Joyner, second baseman and leadoff hitter Quilvio Veras and left fielder Reggie Sanders.

"I'm looking forward to coming to San Diego," said Boone, whose father, Bob, and grandfather, Ray, were both big leaguers. Ray Boone still lives in San Diego.

"I've always been the opponent, but it's always been one of my favorite places and I'm really looking forward to it," Boone said.

The Padres lose speed but gain power. The Braves gain both a leadoff hitter and an outfielder to make up for the loss of Gerald Williams, who signed with Tampa Bay, and an insurance policy in Joyner in case Andres Galarraga isn't at full strength after an 18-month layoff during his treatment for cancer.

"We're all very hopeful Andres will come back and assume full duty at first base," Braves general manager John Schuerholz said. "That is still somewhat an unknown set of circumstances. Wally Joyner, prior to 1999 before he suffered the shoulder injury, put up very, very good numbers offensively, and of course is regarded as one of the finest first baseman defensively around."

Joyner, 37, promised that next season will be better than 1999, when he slumped badly, in part because of a chip fracture in his left shoulder.

"I don't have a doubt in my mind I can play much better than last year," Joyner said. "I am healthy now. There was some speculation that I've lost it, I'm too old, and I welcome that because it gives me incentive to prove everybody wrong.

"I told my wife, 'If this trade would have happened two years ago or last year, I don't know if I'd be excited about it because of my health. I'm as healthy as I've been in a long time, if not 100 percent."

Joyner, Veras and Sanders get to continue working with batting coach Merv Rettenmund, who joined the Braves in the offseason after spending nine seasons with the Padres.

Joyner batted .248 with just five homers last year.

Klesko and Boone combined for 41 homers last year while Joyner and the switch-hitting Veras combined for just 11. Although Veras had career-highs with a .280 average and 95 runs scored, his on-base percentage of .368 was lower than Klesko's .376. Klesko's slugging percentage was .532 compared to Joyner's .350.

"We've gotten a little bit slower, but we've added more offense," Padres general manager Kevin Towers said. "We've gone from more of a speed club to probably a club that's more of a power-type club."

The left-handed Klesko has 20 or more homers in four of the last five seasons, including 34 in 1996.

Sanders, who led the Padres with 26 homers and 36 stolen bases, was obtained in a money-saving deal last February from Cincinnati for Greg Vaughn, who was coming off a 50-homer season. Vaughn played one season with the Reds and then signed as a free agent earlier this month with Tampa Bay.

Boone was traded from the Red to Atlanta in December 1998 in a five-player deal that sent left-hander Denny Neagle and outfielder Michael Tucker to Cincinnati.

Saipan Softball Men's Fastpitch League

Team Standing as of Dec. 23

Team	Win	Loss
Lite Bear Hit & Run	6	1
GTE Pacifica	5	1
Bad Boyz	4	2
Islanders	3	2
Sunrisers	3	3
Stevedore Mauleg	1	3
Tanapag Waves	0	5
CSI Hunters	0	5

Batting Leaders: (Based on 14 or more times At-bat)

Name	Team	AB	Hit	Ave
John Diaz	Bad Boyz	19	11	.580
Mars Kileleman	Sunrisers	14	8	.570
Mel Teregeyo	GTE	14	8	.570
Ben Duenas	Islanders	16	9	.560
John Acosta	Hit & Run	25	13	.520
Reno Celis	Islanders	18	9	.500
James Diaz	Bad Boyz	18	9	.500
Climaco Laniyo	GTE	25	12	.480
Mike Muna	Sunrisers	21	10	.480
Jerome Delos Santos	Hit & Run	17	8	.470

Runs: (12) Climaco Laniyo, Eli Rangamar, Mel Sakisat (11) Jerome Salas, Gloyd Martin (10) Len Wayne Maratita.
Doubles: (6) Eli Rangamar (3) Ray Seman, Dennis Ngeskebei, Ben DLGuerrero, Climaco Laniyo, Jester Garcia
Triples: (3) Francis George (2) Dave Santos, Gloyd Martin, Mel Aldan, Len Wayne Maratita
Homeruns: (2) Greg.F. Camacho, Jess Stein, Gloyd Martin, Ken Kalen, Chris Camacho
RBI: (13) Ned Norita (1) Reno Celis (8) Ken Kalen, Jerome Salas

Pitching Leaders: (Base on 7 or more innings)

Name	Team	GM	Inn	ER	Hit	W/L	ERA
Jess Peterson	Mauleg	1	7	1	7	1-0	1.00
Tony Satur	Hit & Run	6	26	7	31	3-0	1.89
Manny Tenorio	Islanders	1	7	2	11	1-0	2.00
Tino Camacho	Mauleg	2	13	6	17	0-2	2.23
John Camacho	Bad Boyz	4	21	7	35	2-2	2.33
Jess Manibusan	Hit & Run	6	19	8	38	3-0	2.95
Caleb Dulei	Bad Boyz	4	15	7	19	1-0	3.27
Nobert Torres	Islanders	4	27	14	45	2-2	3.63
Joe Sablan	Hunters	5	23	13	37	0-2	3.96
John Manibusan	GTE	6	30	17	50	3-2	3.97

Strike-out: (14) Paul Roberto (12) Caleb Dulei (10) John Camacho (9) John Sablan, John Manibusan, Tony Satur (8) Joe Sablan

IG. . .

Continued from page 1

spending of U.S. funds in preparation for renegotiation of economic provisions of the Compact of Free Association.

The audit reported was released by President Imata Kabua on Wednesday.

For 17 of 21 loans checked in the audit, "11 loans were issued based on direct or indirect direction from government officials, three loans were issued to businesses owned by relatives of senior-level government officials, and three loans were issued to businesses owned by elected officials," the audit said.

Marshall Islands Development Bank (MIDB) officials told U.S. auditing staff that "the bank issued some loans based on political direction and influence" and that such loans "may not have been made under normal circumstances."

Inspector General Earl E. Devaney, in a letter to MIDB board chairman Donald Capelle accompanying the audit, said that the audit was requested by U.S. Ambassador to the Marshall Islands Joan Plaisted.

"The board feels that most of the non-compliance would have been avoided if the Bank had been given more autonomy and independence from the start," Capelle said in a reply to the audit's criticism of bank loans.

Loans amounting to $13.7 million are or will likely become uncollectible, a fact which since July 1996 has prevented the bank from issuing new commercial loans from Compact funds and from meeting its legally mandated purpose to "promote the development and expansion of the economy of the Marshall Islands," the audit said.

MIDB issued commercial loans to local businesses and government entities without "adequate assurances that the purposes of the loans were in conformance with official economic development plans and that the loans could be and would be repaid," the audit said. "These deficiencies occurred because the bank issued loans...based on political considerations and without adequate financial analyses of the projects' financial viability."

The audit reviewed 21 of 48 loans funded by Compact funds (initially totaling $18.5 million). "Of the 21 loans reviewed, one loan was current, 18 loans were delinquent an average of 46.3 months, and two loans (which had been delinquent) were exchanged for common stock of the borrowing organization."

This stock, exchanged for two loans to Air Marshall Islands totaling $3.5 million, was described by MIDB managing director Amon Tibon as "worthless." He added that the Cabinet directed MIDB to make these loans (in 1991 and 1992) to AMI for "operating funds." The audit noted that while MIDB now owned about 30 percent of the government airline's stock, it didn't have a representative on the AMI board.

Tibon, in a 1991 memo, objected to a loan for an office building project that involved relatives of former President Amata Kabua and totaled $4.9 million, an amount representing almost 30 percent of the total capital of the bank. But the Cabinet directed that the loan be issued, the audit reported. Seven years after the loan was made, no payments had been made to the bank.

Both Capelle and Tibon told the auditors that the Marshall Islands "Cabinet had direct control over the bank's operations until August 1993, when the bank's enabling legislation was amended to remove the Cabinet's direct authority over the bank." Even after 1993 legislation reduced the Cabinet's control over MIDB operations, "the bank was subject to some political influence," Capelle and Tibon told auditors.

The audit said that "we noted, for example, that five of the six bank directors were government officials."

The Inspector General made a series of recommendations, including the need to revise bank policies to require that loans be issued according to goals and objectives of Marshall Islands national economic development plans, and to reduce the presence of government officials on the MIDB board.

Jaguars. . .

Continued from page 44

Frank Wycheck.

The Colts own the top offence in the NFC behind Manning, who has thrown for 3,696 yards and 26 touchdowns. James, a rookie, leads all conference rushers with 1,400 yards and Harrison leads the NFL with 1,474 yards.

The Ravens' contingent is led by starting linebackers Peter Boulware on the outside and Ray Lewis on the inside. Tackle Jonathan Ogden also was named as a starter, while free safety Rod Woodson and defensive end Michael McCrary were reserves.

The Oakland Raiders joined Tennessee with four selections. Rich Gannon was the third quarterback named to the squad and was joined as a reserve by receiver Tim Brown. Interior lineman Darrell Russell and cornerback Charles Woodson will start for the AFC.

A pair of disappointing teams, the New York Jets (6-8) and Denver Broncos (5-9), each had three players selected.

Receiver Keyshawn Johnson and centre Kevin Mawae of the Jets are AFC reserves and join punter Tom Tupa. Centre Tom Nalen and defensive tackle Trevor Pryce of Denver will start for the AFC and Detron Smith was named as a special teamer.

Buffalo Bills guard Ruben Brown and fullback Sam Gash, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Tony Gonzalez, Miami Dolphins cornerback Sam Madison and New England Patriots safety Lawyer Milloy complete the starting lineup.

Other players named to the squad were running back Corey Dillon and kick returner Tremain Mack of Cincinnati, cornerback James Hasty and guard Will Shields of Kansas City, kicker Olindo Mare and linebacker Zach Thomas of Miami, and linebacker Chad Brown and defensive lineman Cortez Kennedy of Seattle.

The Pittsburgh Steelers failed to have a player named to the squad for the first time since the AFC-NFC version of the game began in 1971.

The San Diego Chargers and Cleveland also were shut out.

Gov't. . .

Continued from page 1

interpret the Year 2000 as 1900, which has the same last two digits.

As a result, any program with a date such as billing, payroll, inventory, and bank accounts, among others, could crash or give misleading answers starting January 1, 2000.

Ewing keys Knicks win

NEW YORK (AP) — Patrick Ewing hit a turnaround 14-footer with 21.3 seconds left and the New York Knicks, despite blowing another big fourth-quarter lead, overcame Vince Carter and the Toronto Raptors 91-90 Wednesday night.

It was the biggest shot of the season for Ewing, who was playing in just his seventh game since recovering from a partially torn Achilles tendon. He finished with eight points — just the 36th single-digit scoring night of his 984-game career — and eight rebounds to support a 25-point effort from Latrell Sprewell.

Carter scored a crowd-pleasing 36 points, the highest total by a Knicks opponent this season.

Heat 74, Jazz 72

In Miami, Alonzo Mourning had 17 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks — including one in the final seconds — to lead Miami.

Mourning blocked Bryon Russell's drive to the basket with 13 seconds remaining and John Stockton missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer for Utah, which had won eight straight in Miami.

Karl Malone had 21 points and eight rebounds to lead the Jazz, who lost for the third time in four games.

Celtics 98, Hawks 81

In Boston, the Boston Celtics said goodbye to their parquet floor at halftime and Atlanta even before that, getting 24 points from Antoine Walker to snap a six-game losing streak.

The Celtics led by 14 points after one quarter, 18 after two, 24 after three and 87-59 early in the fourth before the Hawks scored eight consecutive points. Jamel Thomas completed a three-point play and Kenny Anderson added a layup to squelch the charge.

The 81 points was Atlanta's lowest output of the season and the loss was the Hawks' fourth in a row, tying their longest skid of the year.

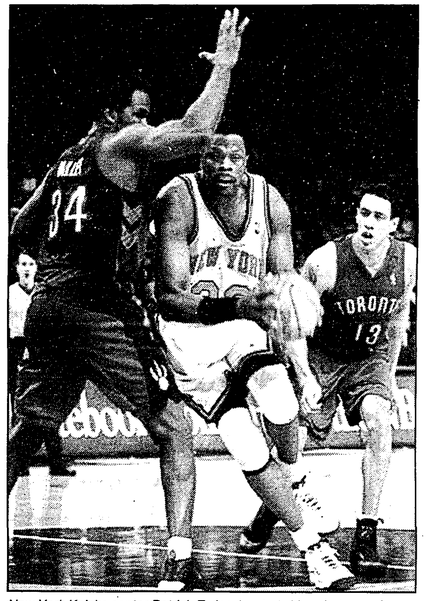
Magic 103, Cavaliers 97

In Cleveland, rookie Chucky Atkins scored 22 points to lead Orlando past Cleveland.

Atkins scored six points down the stretch as Orlando took advantage of an injury-depleted and turnover-plagued Cavaliers team to earn its fourth straight win.

Cleveland, with only nine healthy players, battled throughout but committed 10 turnovers in the first 9:19 of the fourth quarter and lost its fifth in a row.

Bob Sura scored 28 points to lead Cleveland, which was without starting point guard Brevin Knight and reserve forwards Mark Bryant and Danny Ferry.



New York Knicks center Patrick Ewing (center) drives between former teammate Toronto Raptors forward Charles Oakley (left) and Raptors guard Doug Christie in the first period of their NBA game Wednesday at New York's Madison Square Garden. REUTERS

Timberwolves 106, Bulls 86

In Chicago, Kevin Garnett provided the muscle inside and Malik Sealy and Terrell Brandon hit just about everything outside as Minnesota routed Chicago.

It was the third win in a row for the Timberwolves, who started the month 0-8. Garnett led five Timberwolves in double figures with 22 points. He also had 13 rebounds.

Sealy had 19 points on 8-of-10 shooting, Brandon added 16 and Joe Smith came off the bench to score 18.

The Bulls were led by Elton Brand's 17 points and eight rebounds.

Clippers 103, Warriors 99

In Oakland, California, Tyrone Nesby scored a season-high 28 points and Lamar Odom added 22 and seven blocked shots for Los Angeles.

Eric Piatkowski also scored 22 for the Clippers, who ended a six-game losing streak on the road and won for the first time this season after trailing at halftime.

John Starks scored 22 points to lead the Warriors, who have lost three of their last four. Vonteego Cummings had a career-high 13 assists to go with 12 points as six Warriors players reached double figures.

NFL suspends Orlando Brown

Cleveland Browns offensive tackle Orlando Brown talks with the media at the Cleveland Clinic Tuesday, where he is being treated for impaired vision. On Monday, it was revealed that Brown might have permanent damage in the eye that was accidentally hit by referee Jeff Triplette's weighted penalty flag. AP

BEREA, Ohio (AP) — The NFL pushed back at Orlando Brown on Wednesday, suspending the Cleveland tackle for shoving a referee who accidentally hit him in the eye with a weighted penalty flag.

The indefinite suspension was announced hours after Brown learned he must stay in the hospital because of new bleeding in his right eye. He was to have been released Wednesday before this setback.

Brown also faces a possible fine and could be suspended for part of the 2000 season. He is the first player in league history to be suspended for more than one game for contact with an official.

Commissioner Paul Tagliabue will meet with the 6-foot-7, 350-pound tackle in New York after the Pro Bowl in February. Additional penalties will be discussed at that hearing.

"We continue to hope Orlando Brown makes a full recovery from his injury," Tagliabue said. "However, as everyone has acknowledged, the injury to the player was completely inadvertent and did not justify his action against the referee.

"It was an unfortunate accident but we cannot condone under any circumstances physical contact against our game officials."

Brown was hit by a flag weighted with BBs — thrown by referee Jeff Triplette — during Sunday's game with Jacksonville. Brown stormed back on the field and knocked down Triplette with a two-handed shove to the chest.

Brown blamed his violent actions on the fact that his father, Claude, lost his sight to glaucoma in 1993. Brown has been in the hospital since Sunday night, with impaired vision and bleeding in a chamber of his right eye.

The injury would have kept Brown out of Cleveland's season finale against Indianapolis on Sunday. The Browns have a bye week on the last weekend of the season.

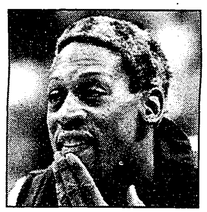
Still, that weekend counts toward the suspension and Brown will not get a paycheck, NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said. Brown signed a six-year, $27 million contract with Cleveland in February. Based on his 1999 salary, Brown will lose $49,411.

Brown's agent, Tom Condon, did not say if his client will appeal.

"I would prefer we wait until after the hearing before making a comment," said Condon, who on Tuesday hinted about a possible lawsuit against the league if Browns' injury was career threatening.

Rodman booked in drunk driving probe

COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP) — Dennis Rodman, who has had a stormy few months since his NBA career ended abruptly, was booked Wednesday for investigation of drunken driving, police said.



Dennis Rodman

Rodman, who was driving a Bentley, was stopped for a traffic violation, a passenger not wearing a seat belt, police Sgt. Bob Ciszek said.

"Also, the security in the area had reported he was possibly intoxicated as he was leaving a restaurant and bar," police Sgt. Don Holford said.

The 38-year-old former NBA rebounding champion was booked and bail was set at $2,500, said Holford, who added that Rodman flunked the field sobriety test conducted by a special driving-under-the-influence team.

Rodman was expected to remain in jail for up to six hours, Holford said Wednesday night.

It was the third time within the past four months that Rodman has been arrested, although charges were either dropped or never filed in the previous cases.

Rodman was arrested Aug. 21 in nearby Newport Beach after a disturbance at a restaurant and bar. But the Orange County district attorney's office decided not to charge him with misdemeanor public drunkenness because evidence did not show Rodman was so drunk that he could not care for his own safety.

Rodman, waived by the Los Angeles Lakers last April after spending a rocky seven weeks with the team, was arrested Nov. 5 in Miami Beach, Fla., after he and his wife, Carmen Electra, allegedly had a loud fight in their hotel room. Both initially were charged with simple battery, a misdemeanor, but those charges later were dropped.

Rodman, who led the NBA in rebounding seven years, played on league championship teams twice with the Detroit Pistons and three times with the Chicago Bulls.

He was released by the Lakers after showing up late for several practices and missing others. Rodman indicated he would like to continue playing in the NBA, but no other teams apparently wanted to sign him.

SPORTS

In Men's slowpitch softball

Toles Gone wins over Sofang

TOLES Gone got out of the cellar by defeating Sofang with a 7-0 forfeiture as the two winless teams clashed Wednesday during the Saipan Softball Men's Slowpitch League.

It was Toles Gone's first taste of victory in eight games, dropping Sofang to 0-10.

Sofang had three innings to field the required 10 players playing with just nine, but were not able to come up with one more with the score tied at 4 after three innings for the forfeiture.

In the second game, Peleliu exploded for 19 runs in the top of the sixth to clinch victory over the Warriors, 28-20.

The Warriors led 14-9 after five complete innings, but two costly errors pumped up Peleliu enroute to a 28-14 lead after 5 1/2 innings of play.

The Warriors had one last shot in the bottom of the sixth due to time limitation, but could manage only six for their fourth loss in 10 games and improved Peleliu to 5-6.

Poland Masaharu went 3 for 3 with six RBI's to lead Peleliu. Francis George and Ismael Aguon each went 4 to 4 in a losing effort.

Tkel Olikong Everette and Clark Ngiraidong each homered to lead Power Factor to a sixth inning 17-7 shut-out over the Laly 4 in the third game of the night.

Laly 4 kept the game close in the first four innings trailing by just three runs, 7-4, before the Power Factors then scored 10 of the next 13 runs for the shut-out.

Team Fadang were just one out away from upsetting the powerful Bad Boyz squad, but an error by right fielder Ben Camacho turned the outcome around as Tom Diaz blasted the game bagger, a two-run shot to right for an 11-10 victory, their eight win in 11 outings and handed Fadang their eight loss in 10 games.

Diaz led the winners with two homeruns and five RBI's and Jay Morishita led Fadang going 3 for 4 with two inside-the-park homerun with five RBI's as well.

Jaguars dominate AFC Pro Bowl selections

NEW YORK (Reuters)—The Jacksonville Jaguars, whose 13-1 mark is the National Football League's best, dominated the AFC picks for the 2000 Pro Bowl on Wednesday.

Seven Jaguars, including NFL receptions leader Jimmy Smith, were among the players named to the AFC Pro Bowl team.

The second-highest total in the conference went to the Baltimore Ravens, who are just 7-7 but had five playersselected.

The Tennessee Titans (11-3), in second place behind Jacksonville in the AFC Central, will send four players to the game, while East champion Indianapolis Colts (12-2) will have their celebrated trio of quarterback Peyton Manning, running back Edgerrin James and wide receiver Marvin Harrison in Honolulu as starters for the February 6 game.

The players are selected in balloting by fans, players and coaches, with each counting one-third of the total.

Five Jaguars were named as starters - Smith, tackle Tony Boselli, defensive end Tony Brackens, linebacker Kevin Hardy and safety Carnell Lake. Quarterback Mark Brunell and tackle Leon Searcy are reserves.

Rookie linebacker Jevon Kearse and veteran Bruce Matthews of the Titans were named as starters for the AFC squad, joining running back Eddie George and tight end

Continued on page 42

Judge Edward Manibusan prepares to hit the ball while a Telesource CNMI Inc. official looks on at the 16th hole of Lao Lao Golf Resort during Wednesday's goodwill golf tournament sponsored by Telesource.

Photo by **Ferdie de la Torre**

Dandan Elementary School students (front) hold a set of softball equipment donated by the Saipan Softball Association Wednesday. Also in photo are DES Principal Frances Taimanao (3rd from left) and SSA President Robert A. Guerrero (2nd from left).

Yankees trade Irabu to Expos

MONTREAL (Reuters) — Japanese pitcher Hideki Irabu, who never reached the lofty expectations the Yankees had for him, was traded by New York to the Expos on Wednesday for minor league pitcher Jake Westbrook and two players to be named.

Irabu, 30, was 11-7 with a 4.84 ERA in 32 games for the World Series champion Yankees last season.

In his only postseason appearance in Game 2 of the American League Championship Series, Irabu was racked for eight runs and 13 hits over 4 2/3 innings by the Boston Red Sox.

New York originally acquired Irabu's negotiating rights from the San Diego Padres on April 22, 1997 after he stated his desire to play for the Yankees.

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