

Guam hardest hit

AGANA, Guam (AP)—Houses, trees, utility poles and glass flew across Guam as Typhoon Paka swept through with 175 mph winds, injuring dozens and cutting power to the whole island. No deaths were reported.

The storm blew down the equipment that measures wind speeds for the military's Joint Typhoon Warning Center.

A state of emergency was declared and the National Guard was called out after receiving scattered reports of homes being looted.

The governor estimated the damage at \$200 million.

"This is one of the worst ones we've ever experienced in our history," Gov. Carl Gutierrez said.

State of emergency declared; Damage at \$200M



Carl Gutierrez

"It stayed over us with damaging winds for 12 hours."

Gutierrez on Wednesday asked

the White House for a federal disaster declaration.

"The trees are toppled and headed. There's metal all over the place," he said after touring the island.

At 11 a.m. yesterday Paka was 140 miles west of Guam, moving away at 10 mph with sustained winds of 140 mph, with gusts to 165 mph. There was no landfall in its immediate path, the National Weather Service said.

The storm raked the U.S. territory from Tuesday night to Wednesday morning, packing maximum sustained winds of 150 mph with gusts to more than 175

mph.

It also reportedly caused considerable damage on the neighboring Northern Mariana island of Rota (see story on page 3).

"No more Christmas for me," said John Cruz, 30, as he stood where his wood-and-tin house used to be. "I don't know where I'm going to stay now."

Guam's four major powerplants were heavily damaged, leaving

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Governor to trim down FY '98 budget from \$262M to \$245M

By Zaldy Dandan
Variety News Staff

GOVERNOR Froilan C. Tenorio's revised fiscal year 1998 budget estimate, initially set at \$262 million, may be reduced to \$245 million, it was learned.

Variety sources said the new budget proposal will reflect the reduced revenue projections from Tinian's hotel casino, and the \$4 million to \$7 million fewer

revenues that will result once the governor signs the bill increasing the rebates of individual taxpayers.

Also to be "shaved off" are the \$1 million to \$2 million "multiplier effect" revenues from the hotel casino.

Originally scheduled to open this month, Tinian Dynasty Hotel Casino will not be operational until March or April next year.

Moreover, the current general

economic slowdown in Asia, particularly in Japan and South Korea, has negatively affected the local economy, which is based on tourism and foreign investments, sources said.

With a reduction in tourist arrival, the sources added, there has been less tax revenue from local businesses.

The local construction industry is also in a slump, the same

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Jellian Cuartero, one of Larry Hillblom's alleged eight children, smiles for the camera with her mother, Julie Cuartero, before yesterday's hearing pertaining to the child's guardianship in Superior Court. The court approved an agreement to settle the heirship claims against the Hillblom Estate.
—Photo by Ferdie de la Torre

Bellas approves Hillblom's settlement with claimants

By Ferdie de la Torre
Variety News Staff

SUPERIOR Court Associate Judge Timothy Bellas issued an order yesterday approving an agreement to settle the claims of Larry Hillblom's eight alleged children from Palau, Philippines and Vietnam.

"The Settlement Agreement is in the best interest of the estate of Hillblom and the Will beneficiaries," said Bellas in his order.

Bellas also granted the settlement agreement for Hillblom's former live-in partner Josephine Nocasa.

Nocasa will get \$3 million net.

Pursuant to the order, the "heirs" however, shall not get payment of their shares from

the estimated \$450 million to \$500 million estate unless they have complied with Section X of the agreement.

Section X requires, among other things, that the heirs shall pass DNA testing to prove they are indeed Hillblom's kids, get approval from courts where the guardianships were filed, and permission from the California Court.

The "Will" named Hillblom's Trust in California as main beneficiary of the late businessman's wealth. The Trust will help medical research at the University of California.

Bellas said DNA testing shall proceed immediately.

The formula as contained in the agreement explained how to

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Ethan Barrow, 11-months-old, isn't too jolly around old Saint Nick as his mother Theresa Barrow tries to comfort him Monday in a mall in Nashville Tenn. AP

From Diana to Deng:

1997: A year of farewells

By JOSEF FEDERMAN
UNDATED (AP) — The year began with Peruvian rebels holding hostages at a diplomat's home and came to a close with yet another faceoff between Iraq and the United States. In between: wars, financial strife, political upheaval.

For all that turmoil, or in spite of it, 1997 may best be remembered as a year of farewells to leaders and traditions.

Hong Kong bade farewell to the British. China and Zaire lost longtime rulers. Asia's markets plunged after years of unprecedented gains.

Fashion lovers said goodbye to Gianni Versace. The poorest of the poor grieved over the loss of Mother Teresa.

And the world mourned the death of Princess Diana, the people's princess, who was killed with her lover in a high-speed car crash.

After chastising paparazzi, investigators determined that her

driver had been drunk.

Perhaps because she had touched so many lives — from the wealthy and well-known to the victims of AIDS and land mines — her death prompted mourning beyond Buckingham Palace.

"People want some good to emerge from this," Prime Minister Tony Blair said. The Rev. Billy Graham added: "The global village has stopped to reflect — not just on her death, but on our own mortality."

Outpourings of grief shattered British traditions. In death, as in life, Diana challenged the royal way. At her funeral, commoners sat alongside aristocrats as a pop star sang tribute. For a dignified moment, the royals shared their sorrow in public.

Once-shameless tabloids promised to share.

When Mother Teresa, angel to the world's outcasts, died less than a week later, India set some of its own traditions aside and gave the

beloved nun a state funeral, a tribute usually reserved for heads of government.

Traditions began toppling earlier in the summer. On July 1, the British returned Hong Kong to China, ending 156 years of colonial rule.

"The most precious thing for a nation and a people is to be master of their own destiny," observed the territory's new ruler, Tung Chee-hwa.

Deng Xiaoping, patriarch of modern China, never saw the July 1 handover. He died in February, leaving a country with a growing economy — and memories of social and political repression.

Within months, his handpicked successor, Jiang Zemin, traveled to the United States to mend relations — and meet potential investors.

And pro-democracy campaigner Wei Jingsheng followed, from prison.

While Deng opened China to free markets, capitalism took a jolt elsewhere in Asia as speculators targeted many of the region's currencies. The turmoil sent world financial markets plunging, even tempering a boom on Wall Street. An international infusion of more than \$100 billion helped stabilize the region.

In Southeast Asia, Cambodia's fragile democracy, once the prize of U.N. peacemakers, collapsed into civil war as two prime ministers quarreled.

Hun Sen seized power in a brutal coup. Weeks later, the notorious leader of the Khmer Rouge surfaced for the first time since 1979.

After a dramatic show trial, Pol Pot, sickly at 72, faced a future of house arrest.

With yet more bloodshed, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire was overthrown in May, ending a 32-

year reign and leaving a mineral-rich country in shambles.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila renamed the Congo and promised democracy, but then seized sweeping powers and dodged allegations of massacres.

Months later, Mobutu, a model dictator backed by the West during the Cold War, died in exile.

In Peru, a law-and-order president began the year watching leftist rebels release seven hostages from the Japanese ambassador's home.

Four months later, commandos ended the standoff with a raid that killed all 14 rebels, two commandos and one hostage.

Other conflicts moved toward more peaceful endings.

Iran elected a president intent on improving relations with the West.

Russia signed a peace treaty with its separatist republic of Chechnya. North and South Korea began peace talks.

Britain's new Labor government resumed talks with Sinn Fein, the IRA's political ally. After years of civil war, Liberia elected a president.

Digging into the century's deepest abyss, Swiss banks began recovering assets of Holocaust victims.

South Africa's Truth Commission tried to examine, and heal, the wounds of apartheid, including allegations of violence by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's supporters.

But, too often, peace overtures failed.

Egypt claimed victory over its Islamic insurgents, then watched helplessly as militants killed more than 60 foreign tourists in attacks in Cairo and Luxor.

Israel's prime minister proposed negotiations for a final peace settlement with the Pales-

tinians. But talks stalled because of new Israeli settlements, Islamic suicide bombers and an Israeli assassination attempt on a Hamas leader.

In the remnants of Yugoslavia, protesters targeted strongman Slobodan Milosevic, but faltered.

In neighboring Bosnia, a peace treaty founded as Serb factions nearly collapsed into civil war. NATO-led troops kept a tense peace, and appeared likely to stay beyond next summer.

Nearby Albania needed international help to end anarchy after investment schemes went awry.

Elsewhere — in the hills of southern Lebanon, the villages of Algeria, the mountains of Afghanistan, the jungles of Sri Lanka, the forests of Burundi and Rwanda — nothing could stop the bloodshed.

Brinkmanship raised the likelihood of more. Iraq kicked out Americans serving as U.N. weapons inspectors. Yet the United States persisted, sending in hundreds of planes and thousands of troops. The chilling question: Is Iraq preparing chemical weapons?

Could there be a happy ending to a year of violence and confrontation?

Concerned about global warming, dozens of nations pledged to reduce emissions. And more than 120 countries banned land mines.

"It's a new definition of superpower. It is not one," said Jody Williams, the anti-mines activist who won Nobel Peace Prize. "It is everybody. We are the superpower."

And consider a cloned lamb named Dolly. The Earth's best-ever glimpse of Mars. The computer that defeated the best flesh-and-blood chess player. The world's first surviving septuplets.

Amid so many bloody endings, there are beginnings. Welcome, 1998.



Princess Diana sits beside British pop star Elton John, center, being comforted by an unidentified man, as they attended the memorial Mass for fashion designer Gianni Versace, in Milan's gothic cathedral, July 22, 1997. Diana died in a Paris car accident later in the year. AP

More than half of India's children are malnourished

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — The bread and watery soup Saroj prepares for her family in her New Delhi slum home fills their bellies, but doesn't keep her children healthy enough to attend school regularly, or keep her from feeling overwhelmed by fatigue.

Saroj is the face of the malnutrition crisis detailed in a UNICEF report released Tuesday. Malnutrition kills between 6 million and 7 million children every year, making it more lethal than any disease since the bubonic plague, and UNICEF identified South Asia as the worst hit region in the world.

India alone is home to 40 percent of the world's malnourished children. According to UNICEF, more than 53 percent of India's children under five suffer from chronic or moderate malnutrition, a rate matched by few other countries.

"While poverty definitely leads to malnutrition, the most chronic problem in India is the lack of any basic understanding of what constitutes necessary food items," says Geeta Athreya, a UNICEF official in New Delhi. Saroj's family can afford two meals a day and even has a television set. But they have never heard of iodine — key to preventing mental and physical retardation in children. Saroj, who uses one name only, also knows nothing of the nutritional benefits of vitamin A supplements, which are cheaply available in India. Vitamin A deficiency can cause blindness, impair immune systems and reduce resistance to diarrhea.

Saroj, who cleans houses, and her husband Suresh, who collects and sells discarded rags, are the only two working in a family of 10 that includes their four children. Suresh's brother, his wife and their two chil-

dren. They live together in a two-room hut built of mud bricks in Ghazipur, one of New Delhi's many slums.

A typical meal cooked over her kerosene stove consists of the unleavened bread known as chapati and watery lentil soup. Once in a while Saroj adds cheap vegetables, usually potatoes, to her menu.

There is no potable water in Ghazipur, so diarrhea is a persistent problem, robbing the poor of the few nutrients they do get.

Saroj said most of her family is home ill most of the year, and she is always tired. But she doesn't seem to understand that poor diet may be the problem.

"We try our best to give the children enough food. I buy some milk for them every day... but they are ill every second day," she said.



A young girl holds a campaign sign for Kim Dae-jung aloft as she gets a lift amid a crowd of supporters of Kim, presidential candidate of the National Congress for New Politics, during a campaign rally at Puchon City, west of Seoul Tuesday. AP

Rota also badly damaged

By Ferdie de la Torre
Variety News Staff
SUPER Typhoon Paka reportedly left Rota yesterday in disarray, destroying houses, establishments and crops, and sending residents to shelters.

Governor Froilan C. Tenorio issued as of 2 p.m. an "all clear" signal from typhoon for the CNMI as Paka moved away from the Mariana Islands.

Rota Mayor Joseph S. Inos said 23 houses and 11 private business structures were totally destroyed while 80 percent of roads were "washed out."

No casualties were reported, but six persons suffered storm-related injuries, according to a report from Rota Office of the Mayor sent to the Variety.

"All crops totally destroyed. I don't think there's a flower left," said Inos in a press statement.

The American Red Cross reported that 49 people have been in shelters.

Many public buildings were not spared.

Inos said Rota's public library lost its roof and rains

soaked a book collection.

The roof of the Department of Public Works' administrative office was almost gone while the glass door entrance to the Health Center blew out, said the mayor.

Strong winds dragged parts of the back stop and bleachers from the High School ball field to a nearby residential area.

"Christmas will be a little dimmer for Rota. We lost the big, municipal Christmas tree in our central park. A thousand dollars worth of lights vanished away. We also lost 25% of the candy donated for our Christmas caroling, said Community and Cultural Affairs chief Barrie Toves.

The seaport and airport are operational, but the new terminal and facilities at the airport sustained \$45,000 in damage, said the report.

As of press time, no planes or ships entered Rota ports.

Nearly all classrooms were flooded.

The Arts Council roof collapsed ruining computers and all electronic equipment.

Cameras and video equipment at the Department of Commerce



Joseph S. Inos

appeared to be a total loss, said the report.

At the west harbor, two finger piers disappeared and armor stones were peeled away, among other things, destroying an estimated \$96,000 in damage.

"We've taken a beating here," Inos said. "But Rota people have strong hearts for this sort of thing. With a little help from our friends, we'll bounce back."

Tenorio in an advisory told residents of Saipan, Tinian and Anatahan to expect continued heavy showers and rough winds for the next 48 hours.

"Residents are also warned,

especially when driving, of elevated floods in various low-lying areas," said Tenorio.

The governor urged the people to refrain from driving as much as possible so emergency crews from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and Department of Public

Works can carry out their repair duties efficiently.

On Saipan, a few houses on feeder 4 (Capitol Hill, Sadog Tasi and Kagman) are still without electricity. There are no power outages on Tinian, said the governor.

Darkness remains on island

By Rick Alberto
Variety News Staff
ROTA remained without power yesterday even as the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. was working to restore electricity to one of the two main villages, Songsong, later in the day.

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Public Information Officer Pamela A. Mathis said CUC was to energize the power system in Songsong Village last night.

It was not known when Sinapalo, the other main village, will have its power restored.

Mathis said there was no extensive damage to the system on the island, with only one power pole downed by supertyphoon Paka.

A press release from the Rota

Mayor's Office quoted CUC Deputy Director for Rota Antonio Reyes as saying that power would be completely restored on the island not later than two weeks.

Mathis said the hospital would be the first to be energized.

Mathis also said damage assessment crews were trying to determine the extent of damage.

The power outage also affected the water filter system which was temporarily out of order.

Rota residents were advised to boil their water before drinking it until further notice from the CUC.

"CUC Saipan is dispatching power, engineering and mechanical crews to Rota to assist in the recovery operation," Mathis said.

Airport remains open

By Aldwin R. Fajardo
Variety News Staff
THE SAIPAN International Airport has remained in normal operations though Airline companies have cancelled flights since Tuesday due to typhoon Paka which pounded Guam and Rota.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority yesterday said the airport facilities has remained open and in service, while continuous monitoring of the weather has been observed.

The CPA was expecting that the first flight would arrive on Saipan at noon yesterday but it was reportedly cancelled due to the still bad weather condition in the Marianas.

The Continental Micronesia has cancelled all its flights Tuesday and Wednesday while other airlines servicing the Marianas were on a standby status, apparently waiting for the weather to stabilize.

CPA Traffic Control Specialist Nestor Mariano said the Saipan International Airport has remained open while all facilities were also placed in service.

"We are concerned about the flights but airline companies have already acted on this matter. They have already cancelled their

flights when they feel it is not safe to travel on air due to the weather disturbance," he said in a brief telephone interview.

Airlines servicing the Northern Mariana Islands on Tuesday cancelled incoming and outgoing flights due to weather disturbances brought about by typhoon Paka.

In a random interview conducted by the Variety, Three airline companies said they have already advised the Commonwealth Ports Authority of flight cancellation for yesterday's schedule.

Pacific Island Aviation executive vice president Max Kretzers said all PIA flights are on standby while Guam-bound flights have already been cancelled.

The PIA was expecting to resume normal operations for its Rota and Tinian service routes yesterday afternoon, though Kretzers said they are still waiting for the next weather forecast.

Weather specialists the other day said typhoon Paka, which battered Guam and Rota, may have actually spared Saipan, Tinian and Anatahan and was located 30 statute miles southeast of Rota, moving west direction at 10 miles per hour.

Micronesians take up 25% of food stamp allocations

By Ferdie de la Torre
Variety News Staff
MICRONESIANS were the top non-indigenous recipients of food stamp program for Fiscal Year 1997, according to the Nutrition Assistance Program.

NAP statistics showed that Chuukese ranked third as top recipients of food stamp program behind Chamorro and Carolinians.

There were 90 Chuukese average household food stamp recipients or 411 members, the NAP

statistics said. Chuukese got 11.9 percent shares of the food stamp pie, said the statistics which was contained in the annual NAP report.

Chamorros have remained the top recipients with an average household of 389 or 1509 members, comprising 45.3% shares of the pie.

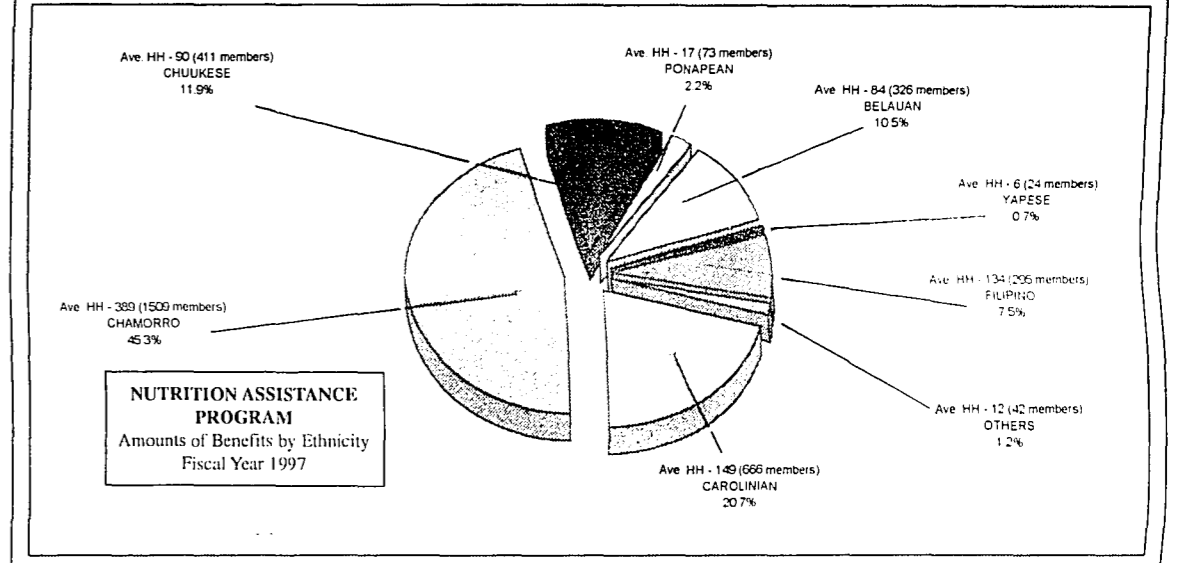
Carolinians followed with an average household of 149 or 666 members, getting 20.7%.

Belauans ranked fourth with 84 average household or 326 members,

receiving 10.5% share. Filipinos with US citizenship ranked fifth with 7.5% or 134 average household (295 members), the statistics indicated.

CNMI receives \$5.1 million annual federal grant, of which \$990,000 will be used for administrative cost.

NAP Administrator Patricia Palacios De Beer said the gross dollar amount of NAP benefits issued to recipients in FY 1997 was \$2,982,292 compared to \$3,512,809 for FY 1996 or a 12.7% drop.



CRM encourages environmental awareness through video

By Rick Alberto
Variety News Staff
THE Coastal Resources Management has distributed 26 schools in the CNMI with a copy of the Chamorro version of the video "Our Island, Our Future."

The subject of the video, according to CRM Director Joaquin

M. Aguon, is the award-winning Rota Habitat Conservation Plan.

"We hope you can find ways to utilize this video in instructing your students on environmental topics concerning the Commonwealth islands," Aguon said in his memorandum to the schools' principals.

The video was produced a year

ago, in cooperation with the Northern Marianas College, as part of the US Fish and Wildlife's public education program in its effort to help people understand habitat conservation planning.

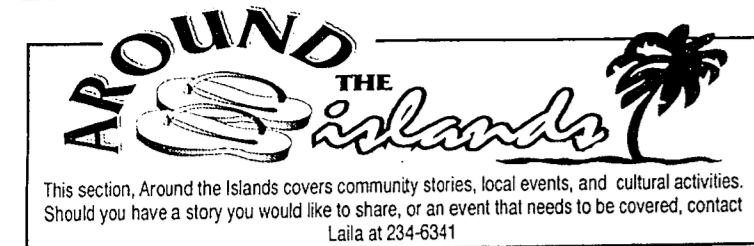
The video narration by Noel Taisacan was translated by some individuals from Rota.

It is hoped that the Chamorro version of the 25-minute video will enable students to know the Chamorro names of animals and plants in the CNMI.

The Rota Habitat Conservation Plan had won over other environmental project proposals from all over the US and its territories,

bagging a \$250,000 grant from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Plan seeks to protect Rota's endangered species including the Marianas crow (aga), fruit bat (fanhi), bridled white eye (nosa) and Guam rails (koko) while pursuing development projects.



Guam Savings welcomes Camacho as new AVP

AGANA, Guam-Philip J. Flores, President and Chairman of Guam Savings announced that Francis (Frank) P. Camacho has joined Guam Savings as Assistant Vice President for Commercial Lending.



Francis (Frank) P. Camacho

Camacho, formerly employed by Bank of Hawaii in its Guam Business Banking Center, has extensive commercial credit training and experience. He will spearhead Guam Savings' system wide commercial lending activities, a news release from the bank said. "Frank has extensive experience in commercial credit and the marketing of commercial loan products and services. He is an excellent addition to our management team," said Flores.

Camacho on the other hand, adds "I am proud to be a member of Guam Savings. I am committed to making a contribution to the commercial lending activities of the organization, and I look forward to growing with Guam Savings in the years to come."

Pacific artists produce video with a message

BEAUTY is in the eye of the beholder, and the same is true of disabilities—or perceived limitations, proven by four artists who have found expression through their own "different abilities."

"Laulima: Working Together", a 29-minute closed-captioned video, merges the message of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with the human spirit, which seeks inclusion, expression and exploration.

Creative thinking and the desire to make things happen provide a forum by which a Hawaiian quilter quilts and teaches, a storyteller conveys personal experiences and mythology, and mouth painters in American Samoa create intricate tapa designs and landscapes.

"Laulima: Working Together" is produced by the Consortium for Pacific Arts and Cultures (CPAC),

one of the seven regional nonprofit arts organizations funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. CPAC primarily serves the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.

The cost to purchase "Laulima" is \$25.00. Net proceeds from sales of this video will go to support CPAC.

The video was funded in part by the National Endowment's Office of Access Ability also gave financial and/or technical assistance, which helped to make this video possible.

To obtain a copy of "Laulima" or for more information, please contact Tina Wabul Foster or Robert Hunter at the Arts Council at 322-9982 or 322-9983 or visit the Arts Council office in Capitol Hill next to the post office.

To prepare for Paka effort: NMI Red Cross calls in its volunteers

By Gerr R. Cayabyab, Jr.
Variety News Staff

A PRELIMINARY damage assessment may start anytime today on the island of Saipan and Tinian after the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter yesterday called in its volunteers.

However, volunteers will not be requested to conduct damage assessment on the island of Rota as of yet because typhoon condition III remains.

ARC-NMI Chapter Director for Emergency Services Cherry C. Schadeck yesterday said the Chapter started contacting some of its volun-

teers after supertyphoon Paka left Tuesday afternoon, and an "all clear" condition was declared on the island of Saipan and Tinian.

Schadeck said around 200 "on-island" volunteers need to be informed so that they may respond to the call immediately, and so the Chapter can proceed with its preliminary damage assessment.

As to the site of damage assessment, Schadeck said, "volunteers need to coordinate and report with us the outcome of partial or final damage assessment."

On Northern Islands, Schadeck

said, the office needs to contact first Mayor Joseph Ogumoro for any vital information on damages wrought by Paka especially on Anatahan.

Schadeck said the Emergency Management Office informed the Red Cross that no evacuation shelters were used as Paka was not much of gusty winds but more on heavy rains.

Meanwhile, the Chapter issued a press release, notifying volunteers that Christmas party originally scheduled Dec. 17 (Wed.) was postponed and rescheduled date will be announced within the coming days.



FUTURE HOLIDAY INN SAIPAN. The artist's rendition of the \$5-million, 90-room hotel, to be managed by a world-renowned hotel chain, is unveiled during a recent management contract signing between Holiday Hospitality Asia Pacific and the Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc., owner of the hotel. The hotel is slated to open in August 1999. Photo by Rick Alberto

Employers who need help on ADA may consult with GDDC

By Gerr R. Cayabyab, Jr.
Variety News Staff

CNMI EMPLOYERS who want to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act are advised to consult with the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council for "proper guidance."

This was one of the public notices recently issued by GDDC Executive Director Thomas J. Camacho who said the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission believes that some employers want to comply with the ADA.

"Because of this, the GDDC is willing to provide sufficient information for the guidance of employers," Camacho said.

Accordingly, Camacho said, the Commission will conduct an active technical assistance program that would promote voluntary compliance with the ADA.

Camacho said the program's objective is to help employers



Thomas J. Camacho

understand their responsibilities and assist people with disabilities (PWDs) understand their rights under the law.

Camacho said the Commission and GDDC recognize that differences and disputes about ADA requirements may arise between employers and PWDs as a result of misunderstanding.

Such disputes, he said, frequently can be resolved more ef-

fectively through informal negotiation or mediation procedures, rather than through the formal enforcement process of the ADA.

EEOC and GDDC encourage efforts to settle such differences through alternative dispute resolution, providing that such efforts do not deprive any individual of legal rights provided by the statute.

Camacho recalled that in 1992, the EEOC published a technical assistance manual that provides practical application of legal requirements to employment activities.

He said the manual has a directory of resources that would aid compliance.

"Recently, EEOC also published other educational materials, provided training on the law for employers and for PWD's, and participated in meetings and training programs of other organizations," Camacho said.

Asian crisis may hurt tourism

By Aldwin R. Fajardo
Variety News Staff

THE EXISTING currency turmoil suffered by most countries in Asia may hurt the Northern Mariana Islands' largest revenue-producing industry, according to a government economist.

Sohale Samari, of the Department of Commerce, said the current currency crisis in Asia may

have an immediate effect on the Marianas' tourism industry.

The Philippine currency on Tuesday fell to a record low of 40.214 pesos per dollar, as traders said speculative attacks on the peso triggered by a plunge in the Thai baht are expected to push the peso down further in coming days.

"Basically, one immediate effect of the dollar appreciation

against Asian currencies would be on the tourism sector," Samari told the Variety.

He explained that as the US dollar gains strength against currencies in the region, traveling becomes more expensive for the Japanese and the Koreans—who comprise the bulk of NMI's visitors.

Japanese tourists dominate the number of visitors on the island. The proximity of Saipan to Japan, where travel time can be compared to that of the United States east coast with the islands of Carribean, is making the Marianas an appealing destination for Japanese travellers especially during the winter months.

At present, close to five percent of the entire Japanese population are travelling overseas. This figure was expected to double over the next few years, the DOC said in an earlier statement.

Tourism officials said Korea is rapidly joining the ranks as a major generator of tourists.

"As the dollar appreciates, Japanese and Koreans will have to spend more of their yens and yuans for the same quality of accommodation they can get in Saipan. So the immediate effect would be on

the tourism side," Samari stressed.

But the positive side of this currency crisis in Asia is that the Commonwealth is expected to experience an influx of low-cost imports from "suffering" countries.

"On the other side, we are going to experience our imports becoming cheaper. The goods that we buy from the Philippines, Korea and Japan are going to be cheaper," Samari said.

He earlier said that Marianas residents will enjoy lower prices of commodities in the next three to six months, citing the current value of the US dollar compared with many Asian currencies.

Samari has said CNMI is seeing a downturn in prices, explaining that the Northern Marianas has been importing much of its goods from countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, which are experiencing financial crisis with the continuous appreciation of the dollar against local currencies.

"What we might see is, with the devaluation of currencies that's taking in the Pacific Rim and since we are importing a lot of our goods from the Pacific, a turnaround in prices," Samari told the Variety.

He added CNMI will experience lower inflation rate as a result of the importation of cheaper goods with the current trade in the money bourse, in three to six months.

"This is assuming that businessmen would not take advantage of the currency devaluation in the Asian and the Pacific region. The businessmen are willing to pass on the lower price to the consumers," he said.

Samari also cited that the low inflation rate in the United States mainland will have a chain reaction effect in the Northern Mariana Islands.

"We will have a continued low inflation rate and there will be no sudden major change in the CNMI economy," he stressed.

The CNMI economy has been enjoying a low inflation rate compared with other economies in the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, the Northern Mariana Islands has never had a double-digit inflation rate in its history.

Inflation is an abnormal increase in available currency and credit beyond the proportion of available goods, resulting in a sharp and continuing rise in price levels.

MTC to offer special rates to low-income residents

LOW-INCOME individuals and families on Saipan, Tinian and Rota who don't have their own telephone service can look forward to receiving it in 1998, Micronesian Telecommunications Corporation said.

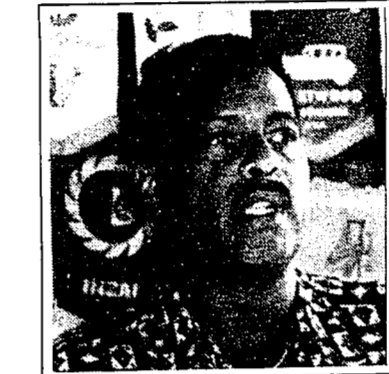
MTC said it will offer the new "Link-Up" and "Lifeline" programs to make it easier for many people throughout the Northern Marianas to have basic telephone service installed at their residences.

According to a news release from MTC, the new plan allows families and individuals meeting certain federal income guidelines to have telephone service at a lower price.

The Link-Up and Lifeline programs will be offered to anyone who currently receives benefits from Supplementary Security Insurance; Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8; food stamps; Medicaid; or the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

"We agree with the U.S. federal government's position that basic telephone service should be available to all Americans whenever possible," said MTC General Manager Del E. Jenkins.

"I certainly hope that anyone who is eligible for these programs will make the effort to take advantage of them."



Del E. Jenkins

The Link-Up program gives qualified low-income islanders an automatic \$30 discount off the cost of installing telephone service at their homes.

The program also allows participants to pay the balance of the installation charges over 12 months with no interest charges.

Once a telephone connection is established at a customer's residence, a Lifeline program takes over, reducing the service charge by \$5.25 every month. The program also gives participants monthly toll-call blocking service at no charge.

Anyone interested in obtaining these services can contact the MTC customer service office as of December 31 on Saipan at 234-7143; on Tinian at 433-0210; and on Rota at 532-3599.

CHAMORRO Church Music

"Umatuna Si Yu'us"

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TB cases increasing

By Aldwin R. Fajardo
Variety News Staff
APPROXIMATELY 1,000 people are becoming newly infected with tuberculosis every year in the Northern Mariana Islands, according to the Department of Public Health.

CRM tells golf course to clean debris at beach

By Rick Alberto
Variety News Staff
THE debris of drainage pipes (PVC) scattered in the Old Man by the Sea beach has been traced to the neighboring Kingfisher Golf Course in Talofofo by the enforcement team of the Coastal Resources Management.
"A lot of...drainage pipes (PVC) debris, similar to those used at Kingfisher Golf Course,

were found there (Old Man by the Sea)," Aguon said in a letter to Kingfisher General Manager Naorsutu Suzuki Tuesday.
Aguon ordered Kingfisher to clean up the debris.
"Before you initiate the cleaning, CRM is requesting that you notify our office," Aguon said in his letter.
The Kingfisher golf course was damaged by supertyphoon

Continued on page 7

health department also noted over half of all nonresident workers entering the Marianas are already infected with the disease.

The DPH said the cases of active TB among alien workers develop after they have resided in the CNMI for two years or more. The report said active TB rate among Chinese workers, especially in Tinian, has become particularly alarming.

Health officials said the DPH is

working with Tinian government officials to address these issues.

The CNMI rate of active TB is now one of the highest rates in the Western Pacific. The rate in the CNMI is five times higher than Guam and over 20 times higher than the mainland US.

DPH officials said people in households and close contacts of people with active TB are at the highest risk of becoming infected.

Health experts said TB may become active anytime after infection,

but the highest risk is in the first year after infection. The number of newly detected cases of active TB in 1997 has now exceeded 106.

TB infection is detected by a positive skin test. Since the DPH started screening children for TB, many children who have had negative skin tests are now becoming infected.

The DPH said about one-third of active TB cases in the CNMI among the indigenous Chamorro, Carolin-

Continued on page 7



A 'DPS Santa Claus' brings joy to children at the Nang Day Care Center during a recent visit. The visit was part of a DPS campaign against drunk and drugged driving. Photo by Laila C. Younis

Safety tips for toy buyers

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Shopping for toys during the holidays can be exciting and fun, but it also can be frustrating. With thousands of toys to choose from, it's important to choose the right toy for the age child.

At a press conference this week, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reported that in 1996, toy-related injuries led to 13 deaths and more than 140,000 hospital emergency room visits nationwide.

"These deaths were not only a tragedy, they also were preventable," cautioned CPSC Chairman Ann Brown.

"It's important for shoppers to take the time to read age-appropriate labels when choosing toys. This information can save a child's life." To help keep kids safe, and to make holiday shopping a little easier, CPSC and Kmart have unveiled the free, new pamphlet, "Toy Safety Shopping Tips."

Kmart is distributing over 2 million copies of this pamphlet to its stores nationwide.

"The best toy is a safe toy. That is why Kmart is proud to join CPSC in this informational effort to reach 2 million shoppers nationwide, so they may have a happy and safe holiday," said Shawn Kahle, Kmart Vice President, Corporate Affairs.

The pamphlet provides the following helpful advice when shopping for toys for kids from infants to age 12.

- Under 3 years old:
* Children under 3 tend to put everything in their mouths.

Avoid buying toys intended for older children, which may have small parts that pose a choking danger.
* Never let children of any age play with uninflated or broken balloons because of the choking danger.

* Avoid marbles, balls and games with balls that have a diameter of 1.75 inches or less. These products also pose a choking hazard to young children.

* Children at this age pull, prod and twist toys. Look for toys that are well-made with tightly secured eyes, noses and other parts.

* Avoid toys that have sharp edges and points.

- Ages 3 through 5:
* Avoid toys that are constructed with thin, brittle plastic that might easily break into small pieces or leave jagged edges.

* Look for household art materials, including crayons and paint sets, marked with the designation "ASTM D-4236." This means the product has been reviewed by a toxicologist and, if necessary, labeled with cautionary information.

* Teach older children to keep their toys away from their younger brothers and sisters.

- Ages 6 through 12
* For all children, adults should check toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards.
Damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away.
* If buying a toy gun, be sure the barrel, or the entire gun, is brightly colored so that it's not mistaken for a real gun.

* If you buy a bicycle for any age child, buy a helmet too, and make sure the child wears it.

* Teach all children to put toys away when they're finished playing so they don't trip over them or fall on them.

Read the Label. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission requires toy manufacturers to meet stringent safety standards and to label certain toys that could be a hazard for younger children.
Look for labels that give age recommendations and use that information as a guide.

Labels on toys that state "not recommended for children under three ... contains small parts," are labeled that way because they may pose a choking hazard to children under three.

Toys should be developmentally appropriate to suit the skills, abilities and interests of the child.

PSS, NMC ready '2+2' plan

By Laila C. Younis
Variety News Staff

THE PUBLIC School System and Northern Marianas College are "wrapping up" articulation agreements for the "2+2 Program" according to a top PSS official.

"We have finalized the MOU between PSS and NMC for the program and we just put clo-

sure on the Vocational articulation agreement," said Associate Commissioner of Secondary Education Patrick Tellei.

"The articulation agreements are to specifically outline what both agencies have to do under the MOU," he said.

"Next, we will wrap up the agreements for Business, and then Nursing. We are think-

ing of establishing a Health Academy at the Marianas High School," he added.

The NMC-PSS MOU explains that the "2+2 Program will enable students from public high schools to earn high school credits for college-level courses taught by NMC, thus completing their high school education".
"Students will also earn

credits taking classes at MHS and that is where we are planning to start come next January," said Tellei.

"We are right on schedule for next school year and we will be able to provide students the opportunity to take the 2+2 Program", he said.

In the Vocational Articulation, it explains that the agreement is "simply a method by which students attending public high schools are given the opportunity to expand their technical knowledge at NMC without the duplication of courses".

It continues to state that the requirements for students to enroll in the 2+2 Program at NMC includes:

- Apply for admission at NMC.
- Minimum cumulative GPA of at least 2.0.
- High school counselor and/or principal recommendation.
- Satisfy financial obligations to NMC.
- Parent/Guardian authorization.
- For the High School 2+2 Program requirements:
 - Currently enrolled.
 - Minimum cumulative GPA of at least 2.0.
 - High school counselor and/or principal recommendation.
 - Have earned a minimum of 12 high school credits.
 - Parent/ Guardian authorization.

Torres: Public schools to be linked to financial system

By Laila C. Younis
Variety News Staff

PUBLIC Schools will soon be hooked up to the new Public School System "Financial Management System", according to Commissioner of Education William S. Torres.

In a letter to school principals yesterday, Torres said "personnel from the IBM Corporation will be delivering and installing the computers needed for each school to access the new Financial Management System at the PSS Central Office" by early January.

"IBM will be adding the financial computer to the data phone line currently being used as the school fax number," said Torres.

"The computer communi-



William S. Torres

computer "will make use of the fax line only when the school needs to upload or download data to the Central computer".

"To avoid complications, we recommend that he current fax machine and computers be located at the same office," he said.

Torres explained that the

computer "will make use of the fax line only when the school needs to upload or download data to the Central computer".

"To avoid complications, we recommend that he current fax machine and computers be located at the same office," he said.

"The use of these computers will be a great step towards School Community Base Education (SCAB)," he added.

In earlier statements, the Commissioner explained that the new Financial Management System will allow school offices to "process administrative procedures like Purchase Orders, more efficiently and allow for financial data access".

CRM tells...

Keith on Nov. 2, particularly the fairways, tee boxes, fairway bunkers, and putting greens in holes 6, 14, 15 and 16 at the cliffside.

A survey conducted by the CRM four days after Keith had struck also found that in some areas, the retaining walls by the cliff and the drainage pipes were eroded as a result of the hard-pounding sea waves that reached past the walls.

TB cases...

ian, and other Micronesian population.
It said transmission is among family members with rapid progression to active disease.

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Ancient human remains reburied near Complex

THE SKELETAL remains of eighteen ancient Chamorros unearthed during the construction of the new Judicial Center in Susupe recently have been reburied at the site, the Historic Preservation Division said.

The human remains, together with stone, shell and bone artifacts were recovered during archaeological excavations undertaken in advance of the Center's construction.

The archaeological work, supervised by Dr. Rosalind Hunter Anderson, documented the remains of a once-extensive Chamorro village site, HPD said in a news release.

It is believed that the village was first occupied around 1400 A.D. and was abandoned in the 1690s when Saipan's residents were forced by Jesuit priests to move into mission villages.

The human remains identified during archaeological excavations were carefully removed from construction areas and examined by Dr. George Milner, a well-respected osteological expert from Penn State University.

An open area near the front of the Judicial Center was selected and the bones interred several weeks ago.

To memorialize this sacred site, the construction contractor, with the assistance of the HPO, erected a latte shaft and capstone, the symbols of the ancient Chamorro people.

Additionally, a commemorative plaque is being fabricated and soon will be placed at the reburial site.

The plaque will present information about ancient Chamorro life and customs at this site resulting from the archaeological investigations.



An HPO staffer stands by the latte stone memorial marking the spot near the Judicial Complex where the remains of ancient Chamorros were interred.

Ocean View Hotel expansion deferred

By Rick Alberto
Variety News Staff

THE expansion of the Ocean View Hotel has been deferred by six months to a year, it was learned.

Kenneth Yeung, president of Saihon Development, Inc., which owns the hotel on Beach Road in Garapan, had requested for a six-month extension from the Coastal Resources Management.

The coastal permit was to expire the other day.

CRM Director Joaquin M. Aguon granted Yeung's request, stretching the extension even further to one year.

The permit will thus expire on Dec. 16 next year.

"(A) review of (your) file indicates that favorable consideration is warranted," Aguon wrote Yeung.

Yeung, in his letter request for extension, said the reason why the actual construction has not started was that "the structural design is still being reviewed by the structural engineers."

The expansion project, which has been classified as a major siting, consists of 51 additional rooms to the existing 86.

The additional rooms will be in a new five-story building south of the hotel building.

The annex building will also have a penthouse and five staff housing units on the ground floor.

The expansion, the second one for the eight-year-old hotel, was spurred by the "favorable growth in the tourism market," according to the developer.

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Mayor-elect Manglona:

'Declare disaster on Rota'

By Zaldy Dandan
Variety News Staff

CITING the extensive devastation caused by typhoon Paka, Rota's mayor-elect yesterday

said the island should be declared a disaster area.

Benjamin T. Manglona (R), in an interview, said preliminary assessment indicated 100



Benjamin T. Manglona

House will pass 'Teno events' spending bill

By Zaldy Dandan
Variety News Staff

DUE TO yesterday's weather, the leadership of the House of Representatives has rescheduled their meeting today, and may hold a session tomorrow to pass the bill to fund governor-elect Pedro P. Tenorio's transition committee and inauguration.

House Majority Leader Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan) yesterday said there will be other pieces of legislation to be taken up in the session, but the House leadership has yet to finalize the "priority bills."

The governor-elect's transition committee recently transmitted to the House a draft bill that would set aside \$30,000 for the transition activities, and \$185,000 for the Jan. 12 inauguration.

Also included are the transition and inauguration activities for the office of the mayor on

Rota (\$40,000), Saipan (\$20,000), Tinian (\$20,000) and the Northern Islands (\$5,000), for a total requested amount of \$300,000.

In addition, the transition committee will also solicit donations from the private sector "to offset costs," Villagomez said.

With Tuesday's certification of the Nov. 1 election results, the transition committee can now proceed to look into the current state of the various executive departments and agencies.

homes damaged, 50 of which were totally wrecked.

At least 50 families are now homeless and are staying with their relatives and friends, the former lieutenant governor said.

In addition, he said, the waves from the sea heavily

damaged the island's East Harbor, while the strong winds downed power poles, causing an island-wide blackout.

"There are lots of electrical and cable lines on the ground, and it may probably take two or three more days before the power returns in some areas," Manglona said.

Roads and government buildings also suffered extensive damages, he added.

"I assume the office of (outgoing Mayor Joseph S. Inos [D]) has already made its assessment, and I'm sure they, too, will say that Rota should be declared a disaster area," Manglona said.

"We expect to receive more damage reports in the following days," he said.

Meanwhile, the mayor-elect is urging the local and national Red Cross, the Office of the

Governor and the Emergency Management Office (EMO) to send relief personnel to the island.

"Food assistance is badly needed," he said.

"I also want to emphasize that the U.S. Department of Agriculture should step in to help our farmers. They have been previously hit by the two other typhoons, and because they need three or four months to produce something, they really need assistance," Manglona said.

Rota and Guam were hard hit by Paka's 140 miles per hour of maximum sustained winds with gusts to 165 miles per hour.

Rota alone was battered for almost a whole day by Paka which spared, however, Saipan and Tinian, according to EMO.

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Cop, 4 others injured in smashup

By Ferdie de la Torre
Variety News Staff

FIVE persons, including a police officer, were reportedly injured during a vehicular accident along Beach Road in Garapan Tuesday midnight.

PO2 Regina V. Pangelinan, of the Division of Corrections, suffered contusions on the right foot, according to Department of Public Safety Information Officer Maj. J. J. Castro.

Castro said the driver of another vehicle identified as Nie Xuan, an 18-year-old Chinese man, was last reported in serious condition at the Commonwealth Health Center.

Castro said Xuan's three Chinese passengers—two women and one man—suffered injuries to the different parts of the body and head.

Initial investigation showed that Pangelinan was driving southward a Station Wagon while Xuan was operating a car on the opposite direction.

The car lost control, swerved and encroached the north-bound lane, resulting to a collision with Pangelinan's vehicle.

Parts of the car were ejected and damaged another vehicle which was parked in front of Ming's Palace, police said.

Pangelinan was off-duty at the time.

The case was placed under investigation.

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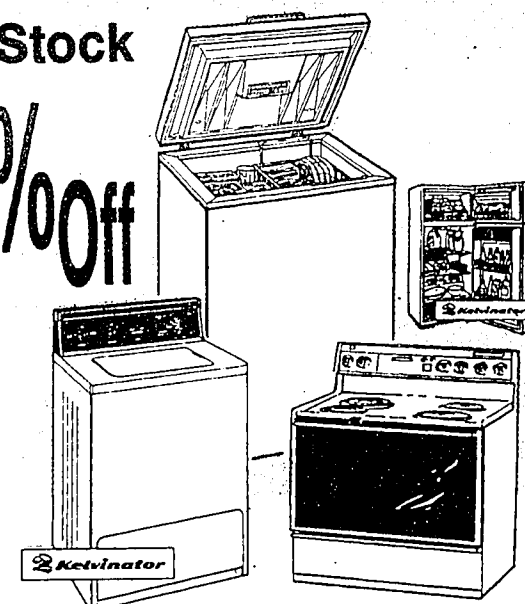
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Elsewhere in the Pacific Former Fiji minister may rejoin Cabinet

SUVA (Pacnews)—Former Fijian Affairs Minister Ratu Finau Mara is likely to re-join cabinet as early as the weekend.
The breakthrough came Tuesday night following a new twist in the legislature audit controversy. Auditor General Michael Jacobs Tuesday night clarified as incorrect a Sunday Times story claiming that an Auditor General's report named some members of parliament as having been paid accommodation and travel allowances to which they are not entitled, The Daily Post reports.
Ratu Finau was one of those named in the report. As a result of the publicity, Ratu Finau resigned

Monday as Minister for Fijian Affairs and ALTA, the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act.
Prime Minister Rabuka Tuesday wrote to Ratu Finau accepting his resignation.
When contacted for comment by The Daily Post Tuesday night Ratu Finau said the clarification appeared to have come too late. However, he said he was glad something was being done.
Earlier, Radio Fiji reported Opposition Leader Jai Ram Reddy saying he believed the Auditor General had lost control over his staff.
He alleged the existence of a clandestine operation where audit reports are authorized, handed over to a political party and then leaked to the media.
Meanwhile, Fiji Labour Party

parliamentary leader Mahendra Chaudhry has written to Prime Minister Rabuka calling for an immediate investigation into allegations of improper and irregular travel and accommodation claims by some members of parliament.
The irregularities are contained in an audit working paper leaked to a newspaper from the Auditor General's Office.
It showed that 15 MPs claimed \$181,800 (\$US117,600) in accommodation and travel allowances which they were not entitled to.
In his letter to Rabuka, Chaudhry said the revelation had proved to be quite embarrassing and had severely tarnished the reputation of parliament.
He suggested the inquiry be headed by a person of repute in whom all political parties had confidence.

Opposition attacks S.I. dollar's devaluation

HONIARA (Pacnews)—Solomon Islands Opposition has criticised the 20 percent devaluation of the Solomon Islands dollar as an irresponsible act aimed at raising government revenue at the expense of the ordinary people.
Opposition shadow minister for finance Snyder Rini says the government has acted very irresponsibly in increasing the prices of imported goods to unaffordable levels while local wages remain static.
Rini says this is grossly insensitive to the ordinary people who will be seriously affected. And he says this clearly shows the government has overlooked the social impact of the devaluation.
Rini says the massive devaluation will make it extremely expensive for local businesses to embark on new capital investments resulting in a reduction of the overall output of the coun-

try. He says while 20 percent devaluation may assist the country's exports drive, it will definitely encourage exporters to bank overseas and the country's liquidity will not increase.
The opposition finance spokesman says in general, the devaluation is an irresponsible macro-economic policy of the Alliance for Change government.

Vanuatu's justice chief under attack

PORT VILA (Pacnews)—The leaders of the new Majority Parliamentary Group in Vanuatu claim that Minister of Justice Father Walter Lini is allegedly manipulating the decisions of the country's Judicial Services Commission.
The criticisms come after decision of the commission to get the Appeals Court to sit on January 5.
The group which claims to have 35 members of the 50 member parliament accused Fr Lini of influencing the decision delaying of the holding of the Appeals Court after it had earlier been set for December 16 or 17.
It called on him to respect the independence of the judiciary. The court is to hear a challenge to the Supreme Court's ruling that the dissolution of parliament was illegal.
But an urgent meeting of the commission late last week, chaired by Lini, decided to set the hearing for January 5.
The criticisms were contained in a statement signed by Willie Jimmy of the ruling UMP faction supporting the opposition, Opposition Leader Donald Kalpokas of the Vanuatu Pati and Jeffrey Lauha of coalition government partner Melanesian Progressive Party.

Mystery disease claims 10 more
PORT MORESBY (Pacnews)—Another 10 deaths have been reported from the unknown epidemic that has hit some villages in the Telefomin district of Papua New Guinea's West Sepik Province. Earlier reports put 19 people dead and 32 in serious condition, the National reports.
The Catholic Church diocese of Vanimo which reported the deaths has expressed concern about the government's apparently slow reaction to the matter. It says the situation has become a disaster as nobody has reacted to reports which reached Vanimo over a week ago.
West Sepik Administrator Jerry Poiwi says a medical team will be flown to the area today to assess the situation. He says after Thursday they should know what the disease is and start dispatching medication and other supplies to the area.

Soldiers ask for lesser sentences

PORT MORESBY (Pacnews)—The five soldiers found guilty of mutiny Tuesday pleaded for a lesser sentence.
Their lawyer, Powes Parkop, told presiding judge Justice Mark Sevuva to take into consideration that there was no bloodshed in the action of the five soldiers on July 28 in placing Defence Force commander Brigadier General Leo Nuaia and Lieutenant Colonel Carl Malpo under armed arrest, The National reported.
The five—Major Walter Enuma, Captain Bola Renagi, Captain Belden Namah, Lieutenant Michael David and Second Lieutenant Linus Osoba—were found guilty of mutiny by the court martial Monday. They are being held at Bomana Jail. The judge is expected to hand down the sentences Thursday.



Local natives perform at the opening ceremony of the Bougainville Games on the island of Bougainville off Papua New Guinea Monday. This is the first time the games have been held since 1993, because of nine years of civil war between Bougainville rebels and Papua New Guinea army troops. Australian and New Zealand troops are on hand to monitor the recent truce between the warring factions. AP

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Clinton's promise: 'Vigorous action' in 1998

By Terence Hunt
WASHINGTON (AP)—Reflecting on his fifth year in office, President Clinton asserted Tuesday it was "a banner year" for Americans and rejected the idea he is an ineffectual lame duck. He promised a decision soon on keeping U.S. troops in Bosnia and said Saddam Hussein can act "maddeningly stupid."
In a marathon 90-minute news conference, Clinton also pointedly refused to endorse FBI Director Louis Freeh, widening the gulf between the White House and the bureau. Clinton said there had been "too much back and forth" about Freeh, and "I don't want to get into it."
Despite pressure from Republicans, Clinton declined to promise a tax cut though the budget deficit is falling beyond expectations.
While saying he was opposed in principle to the "marriage penalty," Clinton said there are "a lot of tax cuts that might be desirable, but how would you pay for them?" He said he might be open to the idea of tax simplification, but as for offering tax cuts, Clinton said, "I'm not entirely sure that I will."
The president countered criticism from former advisers that his administration is adrift and he is avoiding risks.

Crime and unemployment are at their lowest levels in 24 years and inflation is low, he said. "We had a very good year," Clinton said, and he promised that 1998 "will be a year of vigorous action on vital issues."
"He said he will turn in the coming year to long-range problems: global climate change, lifelong education and preserving Social Security and Medicare."
The president was in an upbeat mood, inviting questions and ignoring attempts by his staff to end the longest press conference of his presidency. But he snapped at a correspondent who suggested his recent town hall meeting in Akron, Ohio, about race relations was little more than "presidential Oprah."
Clinton said criticism was inevitable. He said his race initiative "is working and I think it is taking shape and I believe it has got clear direction." He suggested its work might run until the end of his administration.
The president used the occasion to reveal one of his most closely held secrets: the name of his 3-month-old, chocolate Labrador: It is Buddy, named after a great-uncle who died earlier this year.
Foreign policy questions occupied much of the press conference. After setting and missing two



President Clinton meets reporters Tuesday in an end-of-year news conference where he talked about the Asian financial crisis and announced the name of his new puppy, "Buddy." The news conference was held at the State Department due to Christmas decorations at the White House. AP

sion of the U.S. mission.
"Let me point out that after four years of the bloodiest war in Europe since World War II, we've had 23 months of peace," the president said. He said there had been "a significant amount of progress ... of which the American people can be justly proud."
Clinton said he hopes to meet President Boris Yeltsin in Russia next year, but will wait until the Russian parliament ratifies the START II arms control pact.
Amid concern over the turmoil in Asia over currency rates, Clinton said that "we may need to do more" to help stabilize the situation.
But Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin said later Clinton was not indicating support for an International Monetary Fund request to greatly increase financial resources available for bailouts.
Rubin said the administration continues to believe that a \$90 billion increase in IMF reserves that was approved earlier this year should be sufficient. Clinton said America's economy is healthy but noted that it depends on healthy markets worldwide. The growth in exports amounts to one-third of the growth in America's economy — and Asia accounts for more than 40 percent of U.S. sales overseas.
Clinton said he would announce a decision before he leaves. He is expected to order another extension of the withdrawal of American troops from Bosnia, Clinton said he would announce a decision before he leaves. He is expected to order another extension in June. The president will leave Sunday for a Christmas week visit to Bosnia, and he promised a decision before he leaves. He is expected to order another extension.

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Swiss set date on Marcos' millions



Imelda Marcos

ZURICH, Switzerland (AP) — Switzerland has given the Philippines until March 25 to formally agree to terms for the return of more than \$500 million in assets linked to late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The Swiss government told the Philippine embassy in Bern on Monday it must decide whether it accepts or rejects the conditions, Swiss justice ministry spokesman Folco Galli said Tuesday.

The money would be placed in an escrow account, and released to the Philippines only if it wins a criminal conviction after a trial against Marcos' widow, Imelda, in connection with the funds.

The Swiss also say the Philippines must keep them informed about the proceedings and the treatment of claims filed by victims of human rights abuses under the Marcos regime.

The Swiss Supreme Court last week cleared the way for the transfer of the Marcos' funds back to the Philippines after an 11-year legal tug-of-war between Swiss banks, the Manila government, the Marcos family and other claimants.

RP to get ADB loan

MANILA, Philippines - The Asian Development Bank on Tuesday approved loans to boost electric power distribution in the Philippines, increase the availability of fuel gas in India and support pension reforms in Kazakhstan.

The Philippines' power project, needed to support the country's economic growth, will receive \$191.4 million from the Manila-based bank.

The country's electricity requirement is expected to increase by 10 percent by 2010, requiring an additional 22,400 megawatts of electricity and 9,702 kilometers (6,063 miles) of additional transmission lines.

The loan is repayable in 20 years,

including a four-year grace period, at an interest rate to be determined according to the bank's pool-based variable lending rate system.

The bank's \$150 million loan to India will help fund a \$364 million project to transport liquefied petroleum gas from western to northern regions of the country.

The project will require building a 1,015-kilometer (634-mile) main pipeline linked to a 156-kilometer (97.5-mile) feeder line.

The project will cut costs for transporting gas over long distances, improve the reliability of supply and reduce greenhouse emissions, the bank said.

The loan is payable in 15 years, including a four-year grace period, at the variable interest rate.

Kazakhstan is receiving a \$100 million loan to help reform its pension system. The plans include shifting from a pay-as-you-go pension system to a fully funded, defined contribution system.

It will be the first phase of a process to create a modern, credible and financially sustainable pension system,

which could be a model for other Central Asian countries, the bank said.

Kazakhstan faced difficulties in meeting its pension obligations following the break-up of the former Soviet Union, to which its economy was closely linked. Many enterprises went into arrears in wage payments and pension contributions, resulting in delays in payments to pensioners, the bank said.

RP rebel leader insists on independent Islamic state

BUTIG, Philippines (AP) - In a rare public appearance, the leader of a Muslim rebel group has urged his followers to continue the struggle for an independent Islamic state in the southern Philippines.

"Freedom is the most valuable thing to Muslims," Hashim Salamat, chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said Monday. "It is the life of Islam. Even if you have money and everything, you are nothing if you have no freedom."

It was the first time since 1978 that Salamat had appeared in public to address a general assembly of the MILF.

Salamat led the group in breaking away from the Moro National Liberation Front in 1978 after the MNLF shifted its goal to autonomy from complete independence.

Last year, the MNLF signed a peace pact with the government that increased Muslim autonomy but did not establish a separate Muslim state.

The MILF and the government opened peace negotiations in Janu-

ary aimed at ending more than two decades of Muslim rebellion that has killed more than 120,000 people in the southern Philippines.

The two sides also have signed a cease-fire agreement to improve the atmosphere of the talks. Salamat said, "The MILF will refuse everything except freedom."

However, he said, the rebels can accept an arrangement, which he called "one archipelago, two systems," that would allow Muslims to freely and fully practice religious teachings and establish functional Islamic institutions.

The reclusive 55-year-old rebel leader, wearing an olive-green shirt and a black cap, spoke for more than one hour at the gathering in a clearing at the edge of a forest at Darul Imam. The MILF base in Butig town, Lanao del Sur province, is about 830 kilometers (518 miles) south of Manila.

His speech was punctuated by shouts of "Alahu Akbar" (God is great) by guerrillas and supporters, who raised clenched fists.



A big Christmas tree adorns the center of a shopping mall as a noticeably thin crowd strolls around or just cools off Tuesday in Manila. The ongoing currency turmoil has pushed up prices of commodities and dampened consumers' enthusiasm too. AP

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New 'evidence' on fundraising mess:

DNC funds 'given' to firms

By JOHN SOLOMON
WASHINGTON (AP) - In fresh evidence that fund-raising irregularities date to 1992, congressional investigators have found bank records showing that more than \$100,000 raised in the name of Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party that year was transferred to the companies of two convicted fundraisers.

Much of the money was raised in connection with a California fund-raising event organized by fundraisers Nora and Gene Lum one

week before Clinton's 1992 victory.

The Oct. 27, 1992, event had the blessing of Democratic National Committee Chairman Ron Brown and was attended by the party treasurer, Rep. Bob Matsui of California. Invitations went out on Clinton-Gore campaign and DNC letterheads.

Contributors wrote their checks to the DNC and the money originally was deposited into a DNC checking account. But the checks never were reported to the Federal Election Commission as required

by law.

Instead, \$159,990 was transferred to two companies owned by the Lums, according to bank records obtained by The Associated Press.

The records were discovered this fall by investigators for the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, which is investigating whether the fund-raising abuses in 1996 may have surfaced earlier in Clinton's first campaign for president.

The Justice Department, whose criminal investigation of political

fund-raising has been criticized, did not learn of the transactions until after it had sealed a plea bargain earlier this year with the Lums for an illegal \$50,000 fund-raising scheme to help Democratic candidates in 1994.

"Once again our House investigation has uncovered information that suggests the Justice Department is not vigorously pursuing pertinent witnesses and facts," Rep. Dan Burton of Indiana, the committee chairman, said Monday.

DNC spokesman Steve Langdon said current party officials had "no authoritative information" about the Manhattan Beach, California, fundraiser, or the checking account from which the money was transferred to the Lums' companies.

"If presented with authoritative information about these alleged contributions, we will review it and take appropriate action if necessary," Langdon said.

Matsui said he was asked to attend the fund-raiser, and he did. "I assumed from what I was told that it was a DNC fund-raiser that was supposed to raise \$50,000," he said, adding he assumed the staff would handle any donations.

Melinda Yee, the Clinton campaign's outreach director for Asian-Americans, said through her lawyer that the event was "authorized by senior campaign officials." Attorney Nancy Luque declined to identify the campaign officials, but said that Brown, who was killed in a 1995 plane crash, "was certainly aware of the event."

Yee "assumed someone in the DNC's finance division" would handle the money and was not aware of how the donations ultimately were spent, Luque said.

A second Clinton aide who attended the event, Maria Haley, gave a similar account through her attorney.

The fund-raiser was held by an outreach group that the Lums and DNC started called the Democratic National Committee Asian Pacific

American Advisory Council. The invitations bore a Bill Clinton signature, and promised donors their money would benefit the DNC's Asian outreach effort.

White House special counsel Lanny Davis said the signature on the invitations was not Clinton's own or machine-generated, and that aides have been unable to determine who authorized it.

Yee's attorney, however, confirmed her client sent out one of the fund-raising invitations in Clinton's name with the permission of her bosses at the campaign.

Burton's committee has received a written offer from the Lums to testify in exchange for immunity. So far, lawmakers have held off a decision.

Senior Justice Department officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said investigators had been looking into the 1992 fund-raiser before reaching the plea agreement with the Lums, but did not locate the account until after the couple began cooperating.

That agreement provides the Lums immunity from prosecution for any campaign fund-raising abuses prior to 1997 and any criminal acts the Justice Department knew about prior to the agreement except for tax violations.

The records from Sanwa Bank show more than \$160,000 flowed into accounts that bore the name "Democratic National Committee Asian Pacific Advisory Committee" in late 1992 and 1993. More than \$100,000 came in just before or after the Oct. 27 event.

Among the donors and honorees at the event was Lippo Bank businessman John Huang, who four years later would emerge as a central player in the Democratic fund-raising controversy. He gave \$2,500.

In the weeks that followed, the records show, several checks totaling almost \$159,990 were written from the account back to various Lum companies.



Prior to attending the taping of an NBC TV Christmas gala in Washington Sunday, President and Mrs. Clinton visited with some "elves," the children of administration officials and NBC executives. AP



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

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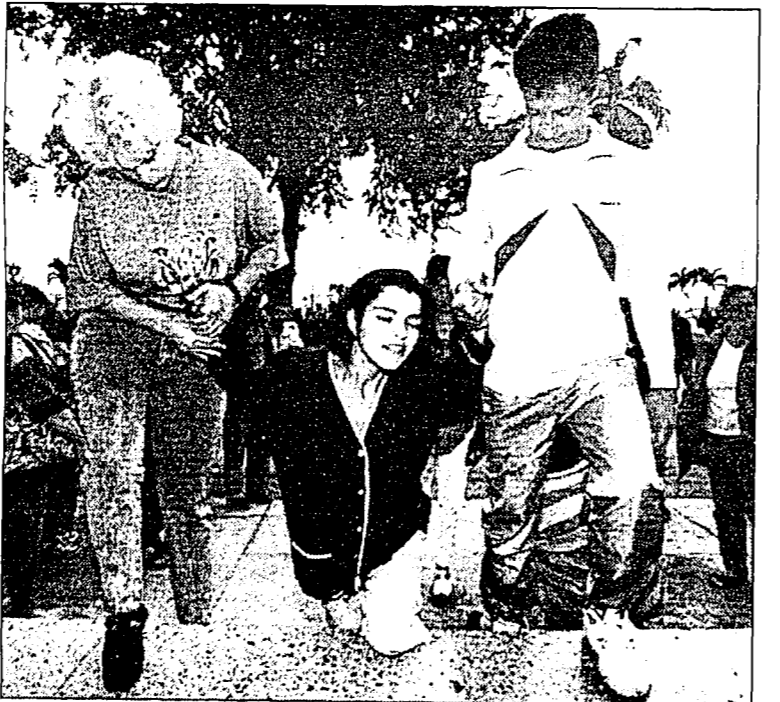
The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairman, Mr. Juan S. Tenorio, and in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Affairs, is pleased to advise CNMI-descent veterans that the **Native American Direct Loan Program has been extended for another four years by President Clinton.**

The interest rate for the program also dropped to 7 1/4%. Eligible veterans may obtain a loan to construct, purchase or improve a primary residential dwelling up to a maximum of \$120,000.00 for a term of 30 years.

This is the only veteran residential loan program available in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Several CNMI-descent veterans on Saipan and Rota have constructed their family residences with proceeds from this loan program. CNMI-descent veterans, who have yet to take advantage of this program, are encouraged to apply. **CNMI-descent veteran who wish to apply are required to provide copies of their DD-214 and certificates of eligibility. Applicants must be honorably discharged from military duty.**

Interested individuals are urged to contact the NMHC offices on Saipan at 234-7689/7670/6866/9447, or Tinian at 433-9213 or on Rota at 532-9410 for more information.

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing agency"



Cuban Maylenis Gonzales, 22, center, mounts the stairs of the church in El Rincon de San Lazaro, southeast of Havana, Cuba, with the help of two friends Tuesday. Gonzalez walked to El Rincon on her knees, hoping for a favor from Saint Lazarus. Tens of thousands of people are making the pilgrimage Tuesday to ask the saint for a miracle or thank him for a wish fulfilled. AP

Harkin urges Senate hearings on child labor

WASHINGTON (AP) - Sen. Tom Harkin is urging a subcommittee chairman to hold hearings on child labor in America, citing an Associated Press series on the topic.

"Most Americans believe that abusive child labor only occurs in Asia or South America," the Iowa Democrat said Monday. "Hearings will help tell the story that this is a problem right here at home."

Harkin, a member of the Senate Labor subcommittee on employ-

ment, formally requested the hearings in a letter to the panel's chairman, Sen. Mike DeWine, an Ohio Republican.

Within the past five months, the AP found 165 children working illegally in 16 states. A Rutgers University labor economist who analyzed workplace and population data for the series estimated that 290,200 children were employed unlawfully last year. About 59,600 of them were under age 14 and 13,100 worked in garment sweat-

shops, defined as factories with repeated labor violations.

Harkin said abusive child labor isn't about teen-agers who work part time or help out on the family farm.

"It's about tens of thousands of children illegally working, sometimes in hazardous conditions," Harkin said. "The U.S. has been a world leader in the fight to end abusive and exploitative child labor. But the best way to lead is by example."



Ala Jaal, 11, center, watches an older boy work on a body of a gutted Peugeot in a Gaza auto body shop last Thursday. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimates that at least 18,500 children between the ages of 12-16 work. AP

Fed likely to hold rates steady

By DAVE SKIDMORE
WASHINGTON (AP) - Caught between a thriving economy at home and fragile financial markets overseas, Federal Reserve policy-makers are expected to play it safe and opt for no change in short-term interest rates, economists say.

Almost universally, analysts who ventured an opinion expect the central bank's monetary policy panel — the Federal Open Market Committee — at its meeting Tuesday to hold the benchmark rate on overnight loans between banks steady at 5.5 percent. That is where it has been since late March.

"Their No. 1 concern is the fallout from Asia. They're not going to move as long as Asian financial markets remain as fragile as they are today," said economist Mark Zandi of Regional Financial Associates in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Any increase in U.S. interest rates would make dollar-denominated investments more attractive and thus would further strengthen an already-strong dollar. Asian currencies would weaken in comparison, adding to the region's turmoil.

But, if not for Asia, many analysts believe the Fed already would have sought to cool the U.S. economy with higher rates. Unemployment in November, at 4.6 percent, was at a 24-year low and the scarcity of qualified workers propelled a wage gain of more than 4 percent over the past year. That's more than double the 1.8 percent overall inflation rate for the first 10 months of 1997.

Surging industrial production, meanwhile, had pushed the operating rate at factories, mines and utilities to 83.2, the highest level in more than two years.

Economist Robert Brusca of Nikko Securities Co. International Inc. in New York predicted the Fed will wait until either of its next two meetings, on Feb. 3-4 or March 31, before increasing rates.

"The Fed's willing to wait, but it's waiting in a very nervous fashion," he said. "Right now they're in the middle of everything unraveling. The smoke will clear during the first quarter."

However, for the first time, more than a few economists are arguing that the Fed's next move — eventually — will be to cut interest rates.


That's because inflation itself -

as opposed to pressures that could potentially lead to inflation - has been exceptionally tame and they believe it won't take much restraint from overseas to keep it tame.

Prices paid by wholesalers to producers such as factories and food-processing plants have actually fallen this year at a 1.2


percent annual rate through November.

"Ultimately, we believe the deflationary environment will lead the Fed to ease policy," said economist Bruce Steinberg of Merrill Lynch. "Those worried about inflation are fighting the last war."



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



The Directors of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC), through its Chairman, Mr. Juan S. Tenorio, is soliciting sealed proposals from licensed companies in the Commonwealth, engaged in providing ground maintenance services. Areas to be maintained include common grounds described in Proposals Specifications which are available at the NMHC Office, anytime between the hours of 7:30 a.m through 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Sealed proposals, in duplicate, will be received until 10:00 a.m., January 16, 1998 at NMHC's Office in Garapan, Saipan, at which time and place all proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud. The proposal documents shall be signed by the owner or authorized representative of the firm, and shall be enclosed in an envelope which shall be responsible for the proper placement of its firm's name, address, telephone and fax number on the outside of the proposal envelope.

A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 1997 at 10:00 a.m. at the Central Office in Garapan.

NMHC hereby notifies all proposers that it will affirmatively ensure that, in any contracts entered into pursuant to this advertisement, small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, religion, sex, handicapped/disabling conditions, or national origin.

Questions or additional information may be directed to Edith C. Fejeran, Office Manager, at 234-0447/7689/7670.

NMHC reserves the right to waive any informalities and to reject any and all proposals in the best interest of NMHC.

/s/MARYLOU S. ADA
Corporate Director

Popular HK politician to give up British passport

HONG KONG (AP) - One of Hong Kong's most outspoken democrats said Tuesday she is renouncing British citizenship in hopes of regaining the legislative seat she lost with the return to Chinese rule.

"I've decided to give up my British citizenship because I want to stand for direct election to the Legislative Council next year," Emily Lau said at a news conference.

According to Hong Kong's China-written constitution, which came into effect on July 1 when China resumed sovereignty, 12 of Hong Kong's 60 legislators can hold foreign passports.

However, a new law drawn up by the post-handover government restricts the 12 foreign passport holders to legislative seats picked by professional and trade groups. Only 20 legislative seats are chosen by direct, popular election and the new law says these must go to Hong Kong passport holders.

Pro-democracy politicians, including Lau, say this restriction is one of several measures the new government has taken to make it harder for them to win office.

"I can certainly understand that in any national parliament, any legislature, there are rules requiring the candidate not to have foreign citizenship," Lau said. She said China allowed for some exceptions "because they recognized the peculiar situation that Hong Kong is in."

About half a million of Hong Kong's 6 million people have foreign citizenship or residency rights overseas.

Lau was elected to the local legislature in 1995. But she and other democrats lost their seats when China disbanded the legislature upon assuming sovereignty, saying it didn't agree with the rules that produced it.

China replaced it with an appointed legislature that will serve until elections in late May.



Three women dressed in the Western street fashions that are increasingly fashionable among young Chinese, wait for customers at a booth selling sportswear on a Beijing street on Monday. AP

Blazes flare anew in Western Australia

By ROHAN SULLIVAN

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — Two weeks after forest fires wreaked havoc on southeastern Australia, blazes flared in the west of the country Tuesday, killing two people, injuring 21 others and scorched thousands of acres (hectares) of land.

Hundreds of firefighters battled three massive fires in Western Australia state that have destroyed at least three homes, numerous cars and bridges, and thousands of sheep.

Authorities said late Tuesday that the danger had eased as a weather change brought cooler conditions and allowed firefighters to contain the blazes. Police said an 18-year-old woman was found early Tuesday burned to death near her car, which was caught in mud along a highway near the town of Pingelly.

She was believed to have been trying to flee on foot when she was caught in the flames.

"Her car was intact, not burned, so we don't know why she left it," said a police spokesman, who declined to be named.

The fire scorched an estimated 60,000 acres (25,000 hectares), killed 10,000 sheep and caused unknown damage to the region's wheat crop.

A volunteer firefighter aged in his mid-70s died in a hospital Tuesday after receiving burns to 80 percent of his body on Monday while fighting a fire at Welstead in the state's south.

A dozen other people were hospitalized, including an elderly couple, one of whom remained in critical condition.

Other people have been treated for smoke inhalation and minor injuries from fires at Brookton, 90 miles (150 kilometers) south of Perth; Julimar, 55 miles (90 kilometers) north, and Gnaragar, just north of Perth, state Bushfire Service spokesman Graham Swift said.

On Dec. 2, forest fires in New South Wales state, fanned by dry hot conditions, flared into infernos, killing three firefighters and destroying 12

forests in Sydney. The fires were a frightening reminder of three years ago, when widespread blazes killed four people and razed more than 200 homes in that state.

Australia's summer, which began on Dec. 1, is characterized by hot and dry conditions that turn huge forest areas into tinderboxes. Conditions this year have been exacerbated by the El Nino weather pattern in the Pacific.

Forest fires are also burning in other parts of Australia, although there were no reports of damage to homes or loss of life.

In Victoria state, a fire has defied the efforts of 200 firefighters, including water bombing attacks from the air, and scorched 11,000 acres (4,500 hectares) of the Murray Sunset National Park.

In New South Wales, a fire started by a lightning strike more than two weeks ago in a remote region southwest of Sydney continued to burn within containment lines.

He did not say why he thought so. The tourists, who disappeared Thursday, were said to be experienced divers.

On Sunday, fishermen rescued an Indonesian guide who was with the tourists about 13 kilometers (eight miles) from the site where they vanished. The guide, Zubair Ali, was hospitalized.

Zubair has said the group, which reportedly included two married couples, was dragged away from its boat by strong currents after coming to the surface at the end of a dive session.

He said he and the divers tried to signal to their boat with a lamp and siren when they surfaced. The crew did not notice.

"I remember one of the Japanese was exhausted and almost unconscious. But after that, I got separated from all five," Jakarta's Kompas newspaper quoted him as saying.

The missing divers are Nobuhiko Matsumoto, 53, Reiko Okubo, 50, Hiroyuki Ishijima, 47, Mifuyu Kamomiya, 21, and Michie Yamamoto, 39. Matsumoto, Okubo and Ishijima all live in Malaysia, while Kamomiya has been residing there temporarily. Yamamoto was participating in a tour from Japan.



Cambodia's opposition Khmer Nation Party leader Sam Rainsy applauds during their party congress in Phnom Penh Sunday. More than 2,000 cheering members from all over of the country participated in this event to map out a strategy for next year's polls. AP

In Cambodia Election may be delayed but prince can take part

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Officials raised the possibility Tuesday of postponing planned elections from May to October and did not budge from stern conditions for deposed co-prime minister Norodom Ranariddh to take part.

Prince Ranariddh would be eligible if he first undergoes the trial demanded by the co-prime minister who toppled him, Hun Sen, and is subsequently granted amnesty by his father, King Norodom Sihanouk.

"A person is no longer a convict after he is already amnestied, and he has the right to participate in the elections," said Chea Sim, president of the National Assembly.

The prince has been in exile since Hun Sen smashed his forces in two days of fighting in the capital in July, which was followed by the reported torture and execution of 43 of his followers.



Norodom Ranariddh

Hun Sen has said that a score of politicians who followed Ranariddh into exile can safely return, but insists that the prince be put on trial on allegations of weapons smuggling and illegally consorting with hard-line Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

Sihanouk, who is undergoing medical treatment in China, said in his palace bulletin Monday that he would grant amnesty to

Ranariddh. Earlier, Chea Sim adjourned a session of the assembly that was to decide what date would be best for the elections, which Hun Sen has promised to hold next year.

Hun Sen had put forward the date of May 23, anniversary of the U.N.-organized polls in 1993 where Ranariddh won the most votes but was forced into a coalition with Hun Sen, who threatened renewed civil war unless granted power.

Assembly members and government officials said Tuesday, however, that a vote could not be arranged by May. Sar Kheng, a co-interior minister, said that July 31 or Oct. 18 would work.

Chea Sim asked that a group of assembly members and government officials meet to consider a date. The assembly is to reconvene Wednesday to discuss the date and pass a final election law.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC LANDS DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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Report: Foreign investment in China up 21%

BEIJING (AP) — Foreign investment in China rose 27 percent in the first 11 months of 1997 to \$47 billion, but pledges of future investment continued to fall, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

Commitments for new investment fell 27 percent to \$49 billion, the China Securities News said, citing figures from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation.

The report did not give any reason for the decline. But some companies have been disappointed at low profits. In addition, China has been trying to focus investment on infrastructure, high technology and less-developed areas of the country.

15 foreigners arrested in Indonesia on way to islet

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Fifteen foreigners were arrested as they attempted to take a small boat from Indonesia to the Australian territory of Christmas Island, police said Tuesday.

Police said nine adults and two babies from Iraq, along with four Algerians, were caught Saturday in waters off Pelabuhan Ratu, a resort town about 180 kilometers (112 miles) south of Jakarta.

All had earlier entered Indonesia illegally from Johor, Malaysia. They were being held at an immigration center in Jakarta. "With a boat powered by a

38-horsepower engine, they were leaving to go to Christmas Island after staying one night at Pelabuhan Ratu," said police Col. Abubakar Nataprawira.

He said the group told officials that they had wanted to go to Australia to find work.

Christmas Island is about 540 kilometers (335 miles) south of the Indonesian capital, Jakarta. In recent years, Australian immigration officers there have detained several boatloads of illegal immigrants, mostly from southern China.

No trace of Japanese divers missing in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — There was no sign Tuesday of five Japanese tourists who vanished after they went diving last week.

About 100 rescuers continued to search waters around Betang Island near South Sulawesi, about 1,520 kilometers (950 miles) northeast of the capital, Jakarta. "We believe that the five are still alive," said Taguchi Singo, the Japanese vice consul in Jakarta.

He did not say why he thought so. The tourists, who disappeared Thursday, were said to be experienced divers.

On Sunday, fishermen rescued an Indonesian guide who was with the tourists about 13 kilometers (eight miles) from the site where they vanished. The guide, Zubair Ali, was hospitalized.

Zubair has said the group, which reportedly included two married couples, was dragged away from its boat by strong currents after coming to the surface at the end of a dive session.

He said he and the divers tried to signal to their boat with a lamp and siren when they surfaced. The crew did not notice.

"I remember one of the Japanese was exhausted and almost unconscious. But after that, I got separated from all five," Jakarta's Kompas newspaper quoted him as saying.

The missing divers are Nobuhiko Matsumoto, 53, Reiko Okubo, 50, Hiroyuki Ishijima, 47, Mifuyu Kamomiya, 21, and Michie Yamamoto, 39. Matsumoto, Okubo and Ishijima all live in Malaysia, while Kamomiya has been residing there temporarily. Yamamoto was participating in a tour from Japan.

PUBLIC NOTICE

SUMMER JOB

THIS IS TO INFORM ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THAT THE GOVERNOR'S JTPA OFFICE IS SOLICITING ONE HUNDRED (100) APPLICANTS FOR THE YOUTH VACATION EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM.

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RESPECTFULLY,

/s/ MARTIN C. PANGELINAN
Deputy Director, JTPA



China confirms purchase of S. Africa nuke technology

BEIJING (AP) — China confirmed Tuesday that it bought a plant making sheaths for nuclear fuel from South Africa but complained that Chinese officials carrying out the deal have been harassed.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Tang Guoqiang defended the purchase of the facilities as "purely a normal commercial act with all formalities in place."

Tang acknowledged that Chinese enterprises bought "zirconium production facilities" but gave few other details of the deal, first reported Sunday by a Johannesburg newspaper.

The Sunday Independent said South Africa's Atomic Energy Commission sold a plant making zirconium tubing used to sheath fuel for nuclear reactors without informing the government.

The newspaper reported that immigration officials acting on a tip discovered 40 Chinese technicians dismantling the plant at the Pelindaba nuclear complex near Pretoria. The Chinese had been working at the complex since October without proper work permits, the newspaper said.

"The people sent by the relevant companies in China to

South Africa to honor the contracts have been subjected to unwarranted harassment. We regret that," Tang told reporters at a routine news briefing. He did not identify the harassers.

The complaint comes at an awkward time for Pretoria and Beijing. After a year of bargaining, the two are expected to open formal diplomatic relations by month's end, and South Africa will sever ties with Taiwan, the island Beijing claims as a rebel province.

The revelation of the nuclear technology deal heightened South African concerns about its independent Atomic Energy Commission and highlights China's eagerness to acquire nuclear technology.

China, an admitted nuclear power, wants to build up its civilian nuclear power industry to serve its rapidly growing, energy-hungry economy. But Beijing has also been suspected of aiding Pakistan's and Iran's clandestine programs to build nuclear weapons.

Winning South Africa is a coup for Beijing in its 48-year campaign to isolate Taiwan and deny the island the legitimacy conferred by diplomatic

ties. South Africa is the most influential of the 30 countries that still recognize Taiwan.

Pretoria has been at pains to give Taiwan an honorable exit and secure continued investment from the island. But Tang, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, quashed any chance that Taiwan will be allowed to maintain a consulate in South Africa.

China's insistence that its diplomatic partners not maintain official ties with Taiwan has been observed worldwide, Tang said. He added: "The South African government is very clear about the Chinese government's position."

In response to reporters' questions, Tang refused to give a date for the formal start of ties. He noted Foreign Minister Qian Qichen would travel to South Africa Dec. 28 and a formal communique would be issued.

China to build anti-flood system

BEIJING (AP) - China plans to spend 2 billion yuan (\$241 million) to set up a national system to better control and monitor flooding and drought, the state-run Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday.

The system, including a computer network, telecommunications and automatic forecasting, will give officials "a quicker and better understanding of floods in all parts of the country," Xinhua said.

Summer downpours frequently trigger deadly floods in China, often because centuries of overfarming have stripped hillsides of vegetation that would absorb rain water.



Bagladesh para-military women hold a military parade in Dhaka on Tuesday, Dec. 16, to celebrate the 26th anniversary of independence. On this day (Dec. 16, 1971) Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan. The nine-month war of liberation claimed nearly three million lives. AP

Iraqi defiance can trigger a showdown



President Clinton

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a full-blast denunciation of Saddam Hussein and his defiance of U.N. weapons inspectors, President Clinton said Tuesday the Iraqi president is "clever crazy" at times and dead wrong in his calculations that he could divide the allies.

Reaffirming U.S. intentions to maintain a tough worldwide squeeze on Iraq's depleted economy despite a devastating impact on the Iraqi people, Clinton shifted from a dispassionate stance toward a personal at-

tack. He also again raised the threat of force. "I wouldn't rule anything out," Clinton said at a news conference.

Asked if Saddam is simply crazy, Clinton launched into a damning description of the Iraqi leader, whose latest defiant move was to declare his palaces off-limits to U.N. weapons inspectors.

"If he is, he's clever crazy, on occasion," Clinton said, "and then sometimes he does something that

seems maddeningly stupid." That is, Clinton said, Saddam evidently believed he could split the allies, capitalizing on a desire of some of them to purchase Iraqi oil to offset Iraqi debts and on a weariness of others to maintain sanctions.

"I also think he knew that the suffering of the Iraqi people is something which has touched the hearts of the whole world, and he thought it was a card he could play," Clinton said.

As it turned out, "he was dead

wrong on virtually every point," Clinton said. "But I don't know that it was the decision of a crazy person. I just think he badly miscalculated."

To ease the squeeze on the Iraqi people — there are reports of thousands of children dying of malnutrition — the United States pioneered an exception to the U.N. embargo. It permits Iraq to sell \$2.14 billion worth of petroleum every six months, provided the proceeds are used for food and medicine.

Butler denied access to Saddam's palaces

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - The chief U.N. weapons inspector left Iraq Tuesday after failing to persuade Saddam Hussein to open his palaces to a search for secret weapons.

Richard Butler flew to Bahrain en route back to New York, where he will report to the U.N. Security Council on Thursday on the outcome of two days of largely disappointing talks.

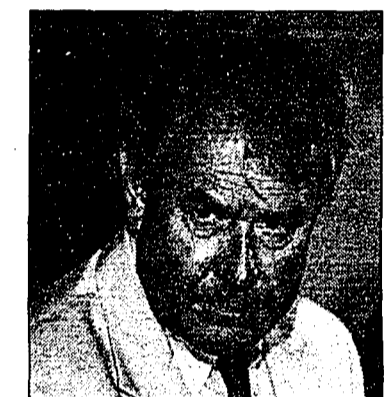
Asked if Saddam's intransigence will trigger another crisis with the United Nations, inspections spokesman Alan Dacey said "I think no. As of Thursday, it is going to be in the Security Council's hands to decide."

Butler announced Monday that Iraq had again refused U.N. demands for full access for its inspectors, who are charged with ensuring that Iraq has destroyed or is dismantling its weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons.

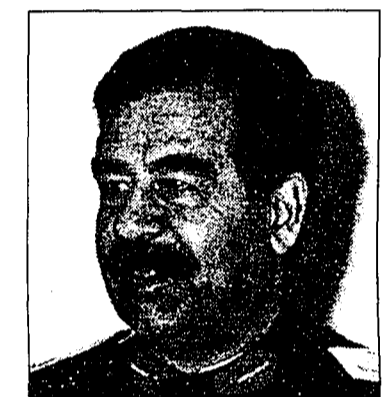
Tuesday, the inspectors drove out of their headquarters in a six-car convoy to continue inspections, but only at sites that Iraq has kept open.

The United Nations says access to the palaces is crucial because Saddam may be hiding weapons there. Iraq denies that and says the 40-odd palaces designated off-limits are symbols of national sovereignty that can never be subjected to outside scrutiny.

In the standoff, Iraq has much to lose: Unless the U.N. inspectors are



Richard Butler



Saddam Hussein

satisfied that their job is over, they will not recommend the lifting of crippling U.N. economic sanctions on Iraq imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Dacey said Butler's mission was not a complete failure.

"There was some success in it. There was a lot of progress although it was not as much as we wanted, but we must report that there was some progress made," he said, without elaborating.

On Monday, Butler reported progress in gaining access to an unspecified number of other sensitive sites.

However, he and Dacey said the talks yielded no significant results on biological weapons.

The talks were Butler's first with the Iraqis since Saddam triggered a three-week standoff by expelling

American members of weapons inspections team last month. Butler then withdrew the remaining inspectors in protest, in a confrontation that had the United States bolstering its military presence in the Persian Gulf. All of them, however, returned Nov. 21 following a Russia-brokered agreement.

U.N. officials have described the biological weapons program as the most difficult of Iraq's arms programs to inspect.

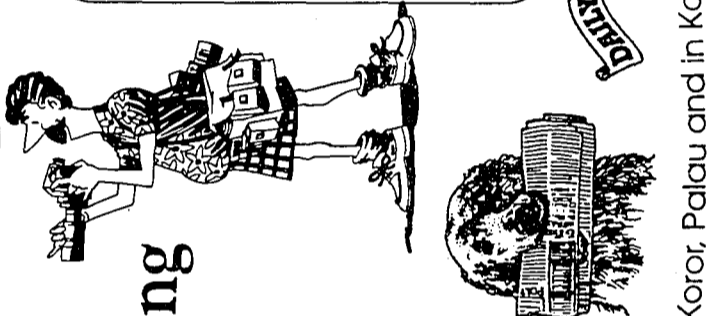
Butler has said that previous Iraqi information on its biological weapons was insufficient and unsatisfactory.

"In the biological area, I am sorry to say, Iraq said they have destroyed everything," Butler said Monday. "That is not quite what our information says... so we do have a problem here."



Chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler Tuesday, Dec. 16, 1997, leaves the al-Canal hotel in Baghdad and gets in his car heading to Habania airport after his five-day mission in Baghdad aiming at solving the crisis between Iraq and U.N. AP

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Death and Funeral Announcement



Juliana Tudela Lizama
"Canang/ Lana"
January 8, 1924- December 11, 1997

Predeceased by:
Husband: Jose Quitugua Lizama
Mother: Anuncia Borja Tudela
Father: Jesus Sablan Tudela
Mother-in-law: Ana Quitugua Lizama
Father-in-law: Antonio Cabrera Lizama
Brother: Francisco Borja Tudela

Survived by Children and Spouses:
Antonio T. and Beatrice Lizama
Jess T. and Victoria L.G. Lizama - Guam
Atty. Juan T. and Mariko S. Lizama
Ramon T. Lizama
Frank T. and Cindy A. Lizama
Vicente T. and Vilma Lizama
Richard T. Lizama
Remy L. and Ben C. Seman
Cecilia L. and James Salvatore - Texas
Dr. Larry T. and Pauline S.A. Lizama - Guam
Rudolfo T. Lizama - Washington
James T. and MaryAnn Q. Lizama
Esther L. and Nick P. Muna

(She is additionally survived by 34 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren)

Brothers/Sisters and Their Spouses:
Francisco B. (deceased) and Ana DLG. Tudela
Magdalena T. and Vicente (deceased) Salas
Raimunda T. and Francisco Palacios
Rulina T. and Victoriano Querubin - Florida
Sabina T. and John (deceased) Pangelinan
Juan B. and Antonia M. Tudela
Rulino B. and Consolacion F. Tudela
Sr. Cecilia B. Tudela, MMB

Brothers and Sisters In Law:
Maria L. and Pacifico Borja (Both Deceased) - Guam
Sr. Antonia Q. Lizama, MMB
Estefania L. and Juan (deceased) Castro - Guam
Vicente Q. and Modesta Lizama - Guam
Remedio Q. Lizama (deceased)
Rosa Q. Lizama (deceased)

Rosary is being held nightly at 8:00 p.m. in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Chalan Kanoa. Last Respects may be paid on **Monday, December 22, 1997 beginning at 8:00 a.m. MASS FOR CHRISTIAN BURIAL** will be offered on the same day at 4:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral. Burial will follow at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery. On Friday, December 19, 1997, the 9th day of rosary, a mass will be offered at 6:00 a.m. at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

Dinner will follow after the 8:00 p.m. rosary.

President Clinton has a new Buddy

WASHINGTON (AP) — The guessing game's over. President Clinton has named his new puppy Buddy.

Discarded were public suggestions that played off his native land (Barkansas, Ark-n-paws) or complemented Socks, the Clinton family cat (Shoes, Boots). Instead, Clinton went with the sentimental, naming the newly adopted 4-month-old chocolate Labrador retriever after a favorite great-uncle.

"Mostly, it's a personal thing," Clinton explained at a news conference Tuesday, where he announced the much-speculated-about decision.

Besides, he added, "It was the name ... (the dog) responded best to of all the names we tried out on him."

Henry Oren "Buddy" Grisham, who died in June, was not only a companion and father figure for young Billy Clinton, but a dog trainer for more than 50 years, Clinton said. "When I was a child growing up, we talked about ... (dogs) a lot," he recalled.

After much teasing by White House officials and furious guessing among the news media, the president disclosed the dog's name after being asked about two former confidants — George Stephanopoulos and Dick Morris — who recently labeled Clinton "asleep" and a "lame duck," respectively.

"President Truman said if you want a friend in Washington, you need to get a dog," Clinton said.

It appeared he was getting an obedient pal, as well. "Sit!" the

commander in chief ordered as he briefly introduced the dog to reporters in the Rose Garden.

Buddy, formerly known as Teddy, promptly complied and was rewarded with a biscuit before deciding instead to munch on the lawn.

"Don't eat that; you just had lunch," Clinton scolded.

The name finally decided, Clinton and his wife and daughter were next turning to the task of reconciling Buddy and Socks, who recently climbed Clinton's back and perched on his shoulder in order to escape the frisky canine interloper.

"I'm trying to work that out," Clinton said of the frosty dog-cat relations. "It's going to take a while. It's kind of like peace in Ireland or the Middle East."

Aides described the housebroken male puppy as already an Oval Office regular, with Clinton himself walking the puppy back and forth between the mansion and its West Wing. The dog sleeps in the upstairs family quarters and also has a little doggie house in the kitchen, Clinton said.

One aide expressed amusement that daily Secret Service "movement logs," which normally record quiet mornings for the president, have this week shown a flurry of odd-hour trips to the back lawn.

Clinton chuckled that he's finding the pup nearly a full-time job: "I get up in the morning and talk him for a walk. ... And then I give him breakfast, then we go for another walk. And then he has lunch and goes for another walk."

A year after, Peruvians remember hostage crisis

By DAVID KOOP
LIMA, Peru (AP) — A small cross marking the grave of rebel leader Nestor Cerpa stands alone in a dusty corner of a shantytown cemetery on the outskirts of Lima. A tin can of dead flowers sits atop it.

A year ago on Dec. 17, Cerpa and a band of leftist rebels stunned the world when they stormed a diplomatic cocktail party at the Japanese ambassador's mansion, taking hostage hundreds of guests.

He and 13 other Tupac Amaru rebels died in a hail of bullets 126 days later as military commandos freed the last 72 hostages in a dramatic rescue broadcast around the world. Two commandos also died in the raid and one hostage died on the way to a hospital.

Now Cerpa's body lies in a poor man's grave on a bleak hillside in the shantytown of Villa Maria del Triunfo, largely forgotten along with his dead comrades.

Most Peruvians want to see the hostage crisis as the denouement of the bloody war against leftist guerrillas, which has taken 30,000 lives since 1980. They see little to commemorate.

"Peruvians don't want to remember the hostage crisis. They appear to want to turn the page on an ugly chapter of their history," said Giovana Penafior, director of the independent polling company Imasen.

The most visible reminder of the hostage crisis — the Japanese ambassador's mansion in the posh Lima district of San Isidro — was demolished in October. No shrine or plaque was put up to mark the spot. Behind a high concrete wall, there is only a dirt field.

Last week, President Alberto Fujimori was the proud host of a

military training reenactment of the bloody rescue raid — complete with explosions and khaki-clad soldiers storming a replica of the residence. Public reaction was muted.

The Rev. Juan Julio Wicht, the Roman Catholic priest who became a hero for volunteering to remain with

the captives, criticized the government's boasting over the success of the hostage rescue.

"This military triumphalism with respect to Peru's serious internal problems does not help create a culture of peace," Wicht said.



Marcos Rojas tends to the grave of his brother, Roli Rojas, in the Lima shantytown of Vitarte on Tuesday. Roli Rojas was the second-in-command of the Tupac Amaru rebels who stormed the Japanese ambassador's mansion a year ago on Wednesday taking 72 hostages for four months until military commandos raided the residence freeing the hostages and killing all 14 rebels. AP

Guam . . .

Continued from page 1

most of the island's 135,000 residents without electricity, a governor's spokesman said. It could be weeks before full service is restored and officials were working to clear live wires from roadways.

Only one-third of the island's homes have water service, but residents were advised to boil it before drinking.

A Japanese tourist suffered a fractured skull after being hit by flying debris and a woman had her fingers amputated when a wind-blown car door slammed on her hand, said Tyrone Taitano, the Guam Memorial Hospital administrator.

Several people were injured by collapsing homes, Civil Defense officials said.

The American Red Cross said at least 1,200 people were in shelters.

The organization planned to send hundreds of volunteers to assist in the recovery effort, organization spokeswoman Shannon Murphy said.

Ben Mesa Jr., 32, and his wife, Mary, came home from

their shelter Wednesday morning to find their three-bedroom house gone.

"It's just a total loss," Ben Mesa said. "It may just be a wood-and-tin home, but it was our house and now we've lost everything."

Paka is the first typhoon to directly hit the island since Omar in 1992, said Arnel Nieva of KGUM radio.

"We got the brunt end of this thing," Nieva said Wednesday morning.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said dozens of hotel guests in the Tumon resort area were cut by flying glass. Shore roads were under 2 feet of water after seas surged to 35 feet. Most other roads were impassable because of debris, including roof shingles.

Hospital officials said low barometric pressure from the storm induced at least nine women to give birth.

The airport was closed and the U.S. Air Force scrambled its planes to South Korea and Japan. The Navy moved its ships out to sea, said Lt. Col. Kevin Krejcarek, based in Honolulu with the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Governor . . .

Continued from page 1

sources said.

The governor earlier warned that the CNMI government will soon run out of money.

He then blamed the Legislature for passing bills that have reduced the government's revenues while at the same time making it difficult for new investments to come in.

Among the legislation that have negatively affected the CNMI's revenue efforts, Tenorio cited in particular Public Law 10-44, which imposes new requirements on foreign investors who want to do business in the CNMI. Tenorio vetoed the measure, but both houses of the Legislature succeeded in mustering the required 2/3 majority votes for an override.

In addition, Tenorio said, the Legislature is set to grant the Public School System an increase of \$10 million in its budget, on top of the judiciary's and the Northern Marianas College's own requests for more funding, as well as the retroactive pay hike the Senate wants passed.

Members of the Legislature, however, downplayed the effect

of P.L. 10-44 and the tax rebate bill, saying that both will have no marked impact on the economy.

They said it is the outgoing administration that should be blamed if the government is indeed in a "financial mess."

Acting Finance Secretary Dolores S. Guerrero earlier said that the budgets for the executive

departments should be reduced by some 25 percent to produce a balanced fiscal year 1998 budget that can pay for all the proposed increased spending.

With the FY 1998 budget bill still in the Legislature, the CNMI government is operating based on FY 1997's \$247 million budget since the end of FY 1997 last Sept. 30.

Bellas . . .

Continued from page 1

distribute Hillblom's assets:

- If there is only one qualified claimant or one passes the DNA test, that child shall be paid 25% while 75% goes to the Trust.

- If there are two qualified claimants, the kids will get 50% to be divided equally among them. The Trust will receive the remaining 50%.

- If there are three or more qualified kids, the children shall split equally the 60% while 40% goes to the Trust.

The assets shall be subject to taxes. Under the agreement, if one of Hillblom's alleged son, Junior Larry Hillblom, passes the DNA test, he shall have the right to exercise an option to purchase any portion of the shares of Bank of Saipan owned by the estate.

Hillbloom, son of Kaelani Kinney from Palau, was the first alleged son to surface and file heirship and paternity claims against the estate.

The other kids are Vo Minh Tan and Nguyen Be Lory from Vietnam and Jellian Cuartero, Mercedes Feliciano, Honeylyn Nonan, Alexandra Nonan and Jeril Nonan, all from the Philippines.

Each qualified heir claimant shall have an option to purchase all of the stocks of UMDADEX (company) owned by the estate, according to the agreement.

Bellas said any heirship claim to the estate not filed as of Aug. 3, 1997 is barred as untimely.

Hillblom, co-founder of DHL, died during a seaplane crash off Anatahan waters on May 21, 1995. His body was never recovered. A probate was opened in the Superior Court to determine on how to distribute the assets.

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Contact: DIEGO'S MART, INC. Tel. 234-6153(12/31)Th67226

01 COOK-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: WALVO ENTERPRISES CORP. dba East Ocean Restaurant Tel. 234-3859(12/18)Th24876

01 ACCOUNTANT-Salary: \$700.00-1,000.00 per month
Contact: RAINBOW CORP. dba Lim's Office Tel. 234-654(12/18)Th24877

01 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT-Salary: \$1,000.00 per month
Contact: SANG YOUNG CORPORATION Tel. 234-7200(12/24)Th24950

01 ADM. ASSISTANT-Salary: \$700.00 per month
Contact: M & H ENTERPRISES dba Marcelo A. Acera Tel. 235-0680(12/24)Th24952

01 PLUMBER-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: MARCELO & HELEN A. ACERA dba M & H Ent. Tel. 235-0680(12/24)Th24951

01 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT-Salary: \$3.05-3.50 per hour
04 COMMERCIAL CLEANERS-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
01 SALES REPRESENTATIVE-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: MIDWEST TRADING CORPORATION Tel. 235-8752(12/24)Th24936

01 WELDER, COMBINATION-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
01 AUTOMOBILE-BODY REPAIRER-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: SAIPAN SANKO TRANSPORTATION, INC. Tel. 235-7621(12/24)Th24931

01 LANDSCAPE GARDENER-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
01 MAINTENANCE WORKER-Salary: \$4.00 per hour
Contact: SAIPAN LAULAU DEVELOPMENT, INC. dba LaoLao Bay Golf Resort Tel. 256-6000(12/24)Th69848

01 CHIEF COOK-Salary: \$3.75-5.70 per hour
01 ASSISTANT CHEF-Salary: \$3.50-4.35 per hour
05 COOK-Salary: \$3.25-4.45 per hour
03 JANITOR-Salary: \$3.05-4.17 per hour
01 PAINTER-Salary: \$3.25-4.17 per hour
01 COOK HELPER-Salary: \$3.05-4.17 per hour
01 RESTAURANT WAITRESS-Salary: \$3.05-4.17 per hour
Contact: PACIFIC MICRONESIA CORPORATION dba Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Tel. 234-6412(12/24)Th69847

02 ASSISTANT MANAGER-Salary: \$2,030.32-3,812.67 per month
01 ACCOUNTANT-Salary: \$1,350.00 per month
Contact: Y.O. SAIPAN CORPORATION dba Okadayaya Tel. 234-8422(12/24)Th24944

03 BAKER HELPER-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: ESCOLASTICA T. CABRERA dba Escod's Bake House/Market Tel. 322-9993(12/24)Th24943

01 SALES REPRESENTATIVE-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: GLOBAL TRADERS, INCORPORATED Tel. 234-7415(12/24)Th24939

01 HOUSEKEEPER-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: TAPA BAR INC. dba Sun Palace Hotel Tel. 234-6639(12/24)Th24938

01 ACCOUNTANT-Salary: \$1,000.00-1,500.00 per month
Contact: CONWOOD PRODUCTS, INC. Tel. 235-3501(12/31)W67220

01 SUPERVISOR-Salary: \$4.50 per hour
01 INSURANCE MANAGER-Salary: \$1,000.00 per month
Contact: OCEANIA INSURANCE CORPORATION Tel. 234-8321(12/31)Th25008

01 SUPERVISOR-Salary: \$4.50 per hour
01 CONSTRUCTION WORKERS-Salary: \$3.05-3.50 per hour
01 OFFICE MANAGER-Salary: \$2,000.00-3,000.00 per month
Contact: RODOLFO DV. DELA CRUZ dba RDC Construction Tel. 235-7849(12/18)Th24884

01 PARALEGAL-Salary: \$3,000.00 per month
Contact: PACIFIC ISLAND AVIATION, INC. Tel. 234-3600(12/18)Th 69744

01 COOK-Salary: \$3.05 per hour
Contact: WALVO ENTERPRISES CORP. dba East Ocean Restaurant Tel. 234-3859(12/18)Th24876

01 ACCOUNTANT-Salary: \$700.00-1,000.00 per month
Contact: RAINBOW CORP. dba Lim's Office Tel. 234-654(12/18)Th24877

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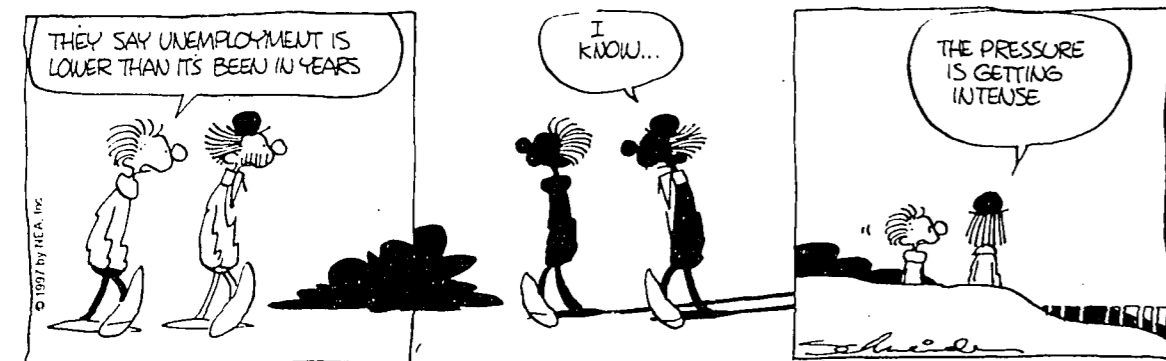
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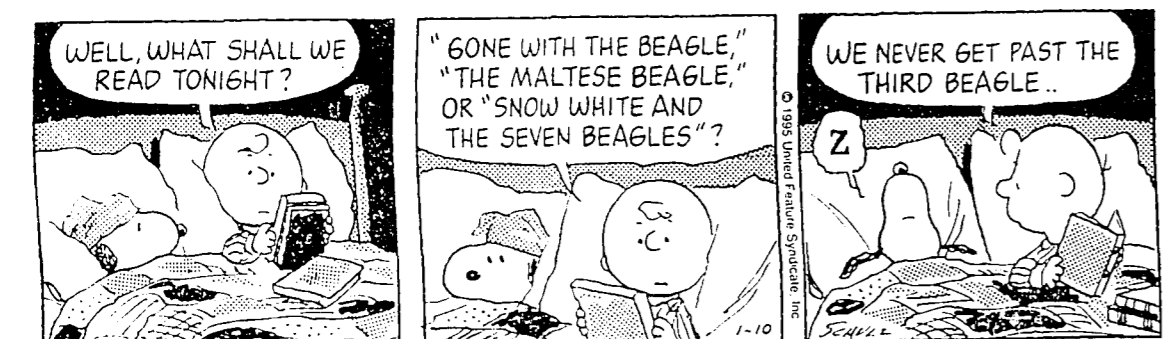
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STELLA WILDER

YOUR BIRTHDAY

By Stella Wilder

Born today, you are not always the most likable individual born under your sign, but no one can deny that you are a force to be reckoned with in your chosen career. Even those who are most critical of you hold you in high esteem for all that you are capable of doing. You have tremendous talent and remarkable drive that is not likely to be matched very often. Once you decide to do something, you do it — no matter what it means to your personal life. This is one reason friends and loved ones find you so difficult at times; you don't always make time for them.

What is misleading about you, however, is that despite what appears to be a gruff, self-centered, and even obsessive exterior, you are quite soft and sensitive underneath. In this way, you resemble a Cancer native — and many Cancerians may prove to be your closest friends.

Also born on this date are: Ty Cobb, baseball player; Joseph Grimaldi, singer, dancer, acrobat, clown; Ramsey Clark, former attorney general; Ossie Davis, actor; Leonard Maltin, film critic; Keith Richards, musician; Steven Spielberg, director and producer.

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.

FRIDAY, DEC. 19
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — A little ingenuity on your part today can keep you from falling into a trap that has been set by someone quite unintentionally.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Your faulty sense of self may have kept you from making the right decisions in the past, but today you'll know for sure just what to do.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — A look at the big picture is appropriate today. Once you begin filling in the details, you can reap profit from almost every situation.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Take the time to concentrate on issues brought to you by younger people who have decided that you're the one to provide guidance.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — You needn't feel insecure about your place at work; you're not likely to get anything but praise and support for your efforts at this time.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — A game of follow the leader at the workplace may result in some unnecessary confusion. You must

be willing to assert your individuality.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) — You mustn't neglect details today. Focus on discipline and doing things in a way which breeds a healthy attitude both at home and at work.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) — You will discover that you have much in common with someone who may have had to weather a good deal of unnecessary criticism recently.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — It may take you longer than usual today to do the things that have been accomplished with ease in the past. Internal rhythms are changing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — You are likely to enjoy working in a new way today, provided you are able to choose what your primary goals really are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Take care that you don't cross a co-worker who is in a position to threaten anything you've been working toward. Be friendly and amenable.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — You may feel as though you don't have enough time to do the things you've promised. You can complete two things at once if you're careful.

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A nanosecond is one-billionth of a second; a yottosecond is one septillionth of a second.

A water heater blanket can save up to 10 percent of the energy a water heater uses.

Some insects can live for up to a year with a severed head.

Ice is about as hard as concrete.

A dog's ear has 17 muscles.

The monetary unit of Uzbekistan is the sum.

In 1910 each American citizen's share of the national debt was about \$12; in 1994 it was \$18,026.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 — Grounds (former N.Y. Stadium)
- 5 Singer Ed —
- 9 Weaken
- 12 Extraordinary thing
- 13 Channel marker
- 14 Sea god
- 15 Taylor of "I'll Fly Away"
- 17 Tin symbol
- 18 Pension-plan initials
- 19 Foolish talk
- 21 Diplomat
- 23 "Darling" Oscar winner
- 27 Selenium symbol
- 28 Merits
- 29 "Tic — Dough"
- 31 Kin to ump? —
- 34 Niven ID
- 35 Took a chair
- 37 — Aviv
- 39 Richmond's

St.

- 40 N.Y. time
- 42 Mr. Grier
- 46 That man
- 48 Friendly
- 50 Siskel and —
- 53 Enthusiastic
- 54 Enemy
- 55 Sun god
- 57 "I, Robot" author
- 61 2,000 lbs.
- 62 Soon
- 64 — contendere
- 65 Level of excellence (abbr.)
- 66 Oscar winner
- 67 Ms. Verdon

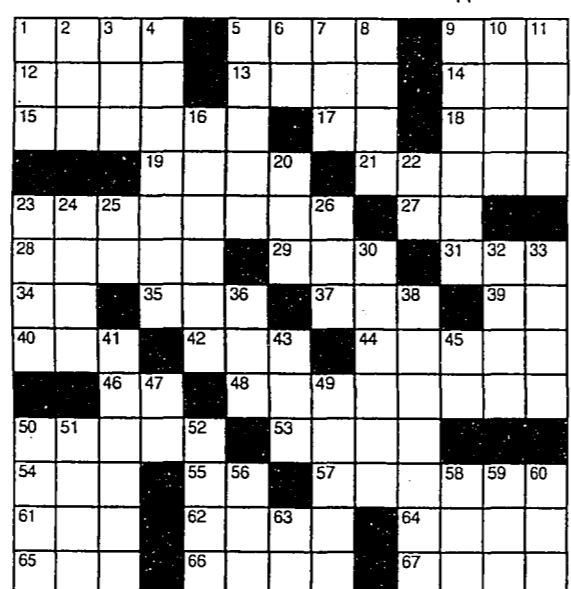
DOWN

- 1 — favor
- 2 Individual
- 3 Ship's journey
- 4 Beginnings
- 5 Sternward

Answer to Previous Puzzle

SHA BOSQ MIRA
SOB UNDO ALAN
TWISTS LEN MK
DES COX SPA
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MONEY ANI SUR
AS MIN LIPS
FOG SAN POD
OP DOG HOBNOB
URSA NEAR EWE
RYAN ADIT YEA

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- 6 Greek letter
- 7 Dawn goddess
- 8 "Auld Lang"
- 9 Sharon Stone film
- 10 Flight prefix
- 11 Appeal
- 16 — Bahamas
- 20 — to be a king
- 22 Nova Scotia (abbr.)
- 23 "Dad"
- 24 — Christian Andersen
- 25 Redford ID
- 26 Dine
- 30 Judas tree
- 32 Knievel
- 33 Ms. Dunaway
- 36 — la la
- 38 Putting aboard
- 41 Storybook closer (2 wds.)
- 43 "Big Girl Now"
- 45 Antimony symbol
- 47 Teutonic deity
- 49 Former wife of Donald Trump
- 50 Salamanders
- 51 "Das —"
- 52 Trolley
- 56 Black cuckoo
- 58 Cut the grass
- 59 Corrida cheer
- 60 Max —
- 61 Sydnov
- 63 Alternative word

KidSpot™ by Dick Rogers

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"HOW'S BUSINESS?" YOU ASK. MINE'S QUITE PUZZLING. LET'S ASK SOME OTHER PROFESSIONALS THAT QUESTION. YOU'LL HAVE TO CRACK MY CODES TO FIND OUT.

IT'S P ICKIN GUP.
(HINT: MISSPACED WORDS.)
THE TRASH COLLECTOR.

— T 'S _ L L WR _ T _
(HINT: VOWELS ARE MISSING.)
THE AUTHOR.

SUTJ WSE EWS.
(HINT: MIXED-UP LETTERS.)
THE TAILOR.

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IT'S ALL WHITE; TAILOR: JUST SEW SEW.
ANS: TRASH COLLECTOR; IT'S PICKING UP; AUTHOR: JEFF REISER

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Target: THE MOVIE HOUSE
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Brown can help Padres

By Bernie Wilson

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Even before they traded for Kevin Brown, 1998 was shaping up to be a critical season for the San Diego Padres.

The addition of the ace right-hander instantly makes the Padres contenders for the NL West title. They won the division in 1996, but fell to last place in 1997 mostly because the pitching staff underachieved.

Beyond that, it gives the Padres one more question for the following season. Brown, acquired Monday from the World Series champion Florida Marlins for three prospects, will cost the Padres \$4.8 million in '98, then be eligible for free agency.

The contracts of three core players are up after 1998 — third baseman Ken Caminiti, the NL MVP and a three-time Gold Glove winner; star center fielder Steve Finley; and first baseman Wally

Joyner.

And clouding the Padres' future is the issue of a new ballpark. Voters are expected to be asked sometime next year whether they'll help finance a new home for the Padres. They currently play in baseball-unfriendly Qualcomm Stadium, expanded to seat 71,600 in a controversial deal to keep the NFL's Chargers in town through 2020.

The Padres say they've lost \$41 million the last three seasons, and a new ballpark would provide more revenue.

They hope acquiring Brown helps bring back a winning record at a crucial time.

"I think it does send a message, not unlike the message we have sent before," Padres president Larry Lucchino said Tuesday. "And that's that (owner) John Moores and I and the entire organization are committed to win and field a team worthy of the fans' support. I hope people have heard the message before, and hope they give it even greater credence now."

Star hitter Tony Gwynn knows the questions will come up about keeping Brown and the core position players past 1998.

"Right now we need to win. That's all we can be concerned with," Gwynn said. "This year is so important to us as far as being in the hunt and winning it. We've got to be in it and competitive right from jump street."

General manager Kevin Towers said it's tough to answer those questions until the season unfolds. "Yes, it's important to win," Towers said. "It's a little bit easier to extend your players when you do win. It would be awfully difficult with a player payroll in the mid-40s if you don't win."

With the addition of Brown, the Padres have already committed nearly \$38.8 million to 14

players for 1998. That figure doesn't account for right-hander Joey Hamilton, who's arbitration-eligible and is expected to get between \$2 million and \$3 million.

Caminiti will make \$3.5 million, Finley \$3.4 million and Joyner \$3.75 million.

The highest-paid Padres player will be struggling slugger Greg Vaughn, due \$5.25 million for the second year of a \$15 million, three-year deal. Gwynn, an eight-time NL batting champion, will make \$4 million.

The Padres anticipate that it'll be difficult to retain Brown after 1998. The team has had preliminary talks with agents for Caminiti and Finley.

Finley's agent, Tommy Tanzer, wouldn't speculate on what his client's market value would be after 1998. But he knows how

important the ballpark issue is.

"Steve built his home there, is into all the community things, is excited about Kevin Brown and would love to stay there," Tanzer said. "When we know about the stadium, we'll know what kind of offer they can make."

Caminiti's agent, Adam Katz, refused to discuss the situation other than to say, "Ken likes San Diego and would be responsive to staying." Joyner's agent didn't immediately return a phone call.

Also Tuesday, the Padres signed right-hander Pete Smith to an \$850,000, one-year deal that gives him the chance to make \$400,000 more in incentives. He was 7-6 with a 4.81 ERA in 1997 and is projected as the No. 5 starter behind Brown, Hamilton, Andy Ashby and Sterling Hitchcock.

Stewart ...

Continued from page 24

— Australians Anthony Painter (1996), Shane Robinson (1995), Michael Clayton (1994), David Diaz (1993), Rodger Davis (1992) and inaugural winner Ian Baker-Finch (1990) are playing this year.

Australian favorite Stuart Appleby, winner of US dls 1 million on the U.S. PGA tour this season, is suffering from neck spasms but is hoping to play following two treatments Wednesday.

Appleby's neck locked through the night and he had virtually no

movement by the time he consulted a physiotherapist.

"He is suffering from acute muscle spasm and joint inflammation," said Dr. Dale Richardson. "He had about 10 percent range of movement but it's freed up quite a lot since."

"If his range of movement is restricted to a major degree tomorrow, I'd recommend he didn't play, but that's unlikely at this stage."

Appleby, winner of the Honda Classic and runnerup in the Bay Hill Invitational on the US PGA tour, pulled out of Wednesday's pro-am event.

Jazz freezes Heat

MIAMI (AP) — Utah's backcourt of John Stockton and Jeff Hornacek sparked a 10-0 run to start the second half as the Jazz beat the Miami Heat for the seventh straight time, 103-95 on Tuesday night.

Utah entered the game with a three-game road losing streak, but had not lost at the Miami Arena since Nov. 19, 1991.

Karl Malone scored 29 points for the Jazz, but it was Stockton and Hornacek that led the third-quarter

surge. Hornacek finished with 18 points and Stockton had 14.

The Heat, however, went 10-for-25 on 3-pointers while Utah was 0-for-7.

Utah took the lead 53-51 on two free throws by Stockton just before the end of the second quarter.

Malone after making only two of his first seven shots, hit three straight baskets, including a monster dunk following a steal, late in the second quarter.

game, converting only 23 of 34.

The Heat, however, went 10-for-25 on 3-pointers while Utah was 0-for-7.

Utah took the lead 53-51 on two free throws by Stockton just before the end of the second quarter.

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Steelers ...

Continued from page 24

pound defensive end Kevin Henry's unlikely pickoff of a Drew Bledsoe pass to set up the tying touchdown and 2-point conversion Saturday in New England.

In Pittsburgh, they're comparing the play to Harris' miracle touchdown catch to beat Oakland in the 1972 playoffs. In Boston, they're comparing it to Red Sox first baseman Bill Buckner's muffed ground ball in the 1986 World Series.

The Steelers have matched an NFL record with three overtime victories, two in the last three weeks.

Their beat two losing record teams,

Indianapolis and Arizona, only because kickers missed makeable game-winning field goal attempts late in the fourth quarter.

"One thing you can say about this team: We're fighters," defensive back Camell Lake said. "We'll fight you down to the last second."

Still, there are concerns as the Steelers try to become the fourth AFC No. 2 seed in as many seasons to reach the Super Bowl.

By playing what essentially is a meaningless game Sunday and then taking next week off, they risk losing the momentum they've worked so hard to build. And there are health concerns: running back Jerome Bettis has a strained knee and a sore back

and offensive linemen Justin Strzelczyk, John Jackson and Jamain Stephens are less than 100 percent.

There's also a nagging worry among Steelers' fans that a team that teetered on the brink of disaster all season could be in for a big fall in the playoffs, especially if it must beat Denver or New England in a rematch.

"The one thing we can't lose now is this edge, and we've talked about that with the players," Cowher said. "People say we're a team of good fortune, and we know we've got a good opportunity, but the minute you think you're there is when somebody will pass you by."

Rice ...

Continued from page 24

jolting hit sent Rice to the ground. He lay there for a few seconds before getting up and walking off on his own power, but he didn't go back into the game.

Team doctors suspected the kneecap, or patella, might be broken after X-rays late Monday night.

An MRI scan Tuesday confirmed the fracture.

The surgery was performed by team physician Michael Dillingham, who repaired shredded ligaments in the same knee when Rice went down in the sea-

son opener at Tampa Bay on Aug. 31, the first major injury in 13 years in the NFL.

"The patella fracture was in good position and fixed with screws," Dillingham said in a statement following the operation at Stanford Hospital. "His prognosis is very encouraging, and he is expected to fully participate in the post-draft mini camps (in May)."

Dillingham said Rice would be in a brace for six weeks but could begin rehabilitation work in a week.

Mariucci said doctors told him the two injuries were unrelated, and Rice's reconstructed knee

escaped any ligament or cartilage damage.

He also said the titanium brace Rice wore offered mostly protection from a hit on the side rather than a frontal blow to the kneecap.

Rice wasn't wearing a knee pad, which could have cushioned the blow. NFL receivers and defensive backs frequently don't wear knee pads because they say it slows them down.

Rice, the National Football League's career leader in touchdowns, receptions and receiving yardage, was not available for comment.

A's ...

Continued from page 24

signed to a one-year deal worth \$525,000.

The left-hander was one of four players on the A's roster eligible for arbitration. The three others are pitchers Bill Taylor and Buddy

Groom and infielder Rafael Bournival.

Mohler, 29, was 0-7 with a 6.83 ERA in 10 starts last season before moving to the bullpen at the end of May.

In 52 relief appearances, Mohler is 1-3 with a save and a 3.21 ERA.

No ...

Continued from page 24

that the game doesn't really mean anything. But, coming back home for the first time in a month? We'll be excited."

The Packers were irked when the schedule came out and sent them on the road for a three-game trip in December and brought a cold-weather team to Lambeau Field for the finale.

The Packers responded with just the fifth three-game road sweep by an NFL team this decade. And they did it in spectacular style, outscoring Minnesota, Tampa Bay and Carolina by a combined 75-27 while not allowing a TD pass.

"Well, that little road trip was for the league," Butler said. "No matter how you schedule us, we're going to win regardless. But to come back to Lambeau Field really feels good. I think our fans have missed us."

They'll get to see the starters on

Saturday, although backup quarterback Steve Bono said he figures he'll play the second half in place of Brett Favre.

Bono, who's still waiting for his first pass attempt this season, said when he signed a free agent contract last summer, he thought he would have plenty of passes by now.

"But then I started having thoughts about what happens in the season following a Super Bowl and every week the team you're playing against is playing the Super Bowl against you," Bono said. "And I realized, 'Hey, wait a minute, there aren't going to be any blowouts for us this season.'"

It's going to take something like a blowout on Saturday for the backups to get into the game because Holmgren pledged to keep his starters in as long as it's close. Isn't that risky?

"I think if you don't do it that way, there is a risk," Holmgren said. "There's a danger there where you lose anyway you've developed. And I don't want to do that."

SPORTS



Steelers looking good

By Alan Robinson
PITTSBURGH (AP) — Twenty-five years after Franco Harris' gift-from-heaven Immaculate Reception made the Steelers realize they weren't fated to lose forever, Pittsburgh again looks like a team of destiny.

How else to explain a season nearly as inconceivable and unpredictable as that of 1972, when the Steelers emerged from four decades of virtual non-stop losing to win a division title?

"It's too early to talk about that," said coach Bill Cowher, who was asked Tuesday if he senses something magical is oc-

curing with his team. "The time to talk about those things is late January."

But unless they lose Sunday in Tennessee by more than 64 points—something no NFL team has done in the regular season—the Steelers (11-4) will clinch their fourth consecutive AFC Central title and the No. 2 seed in the AFC playoffs. They also would match their best record (12-4) since 1994.

That would be surprising enough, considering the doom-and-gloom forecasts after they replaced five starters, including Pro Bowl defensive players Rod Woodson and Chad Brown, from last year's 10-6 team.

How they've done it—with remarkable resiliency, an innate knack for making big plays and a new starting quarterback, Kordell Stewart, blessed with no fear of failure—has made this season all the more inexplicable.

"We've made great plays down the stretch, and that's what it takes to win this time of the year," receiver Yancey Thigpen said. "If we keep finding ways to win, we'll be great

down the stretch."

But even the Steelers themselves find it difficult to explain their inexhaustible run of extraordinary comebacks and, it would seem, plain old good luck:

"They've trailed in seven of their 11 victories, five times by as many as double-digit margins. They rallied to beat Baltimore after falling behind by 21 points, and they've won their last two games (Denver 35-24 and New

England 24-21) despite trailing by 14 points in each.

"We're not trying to create these deficits," Cowher said. "When you go into the playoffs and you're playing the better teams, the less margin for error you have."

There's been no Immaculate Reception—yet—but they had an immaculate interception: 290-

Continued on page 23

Rice comeback over as he cracks kneecap

CLARA, California (AP) — Jerry Rice's touchdown in his astonishing return from major knee surgery came at an awful price: He cracked his kneecap when crashing to the ground and will miss the rest of the season.

"It was very surprising, and the word (team doctors) used was it was a fluke," San Francisco coach Steve Mariucci said Tuesday.

"It's very unfortunate. He was playing very well. He felt very good. After the play, he did get up slow. But that's where the fracture took place,

when his knee hit the ground.

"Obviously, it was a shock to him and a disappointment."

Rice's touchdown catch was the 49ers' first score in their 34-17 win over Denver on Monday night which clinched home field for San Francisco throughout the playoffs.

He underwent surgery Tuesday to repair the left kneecap which was broken across the middle.

Rice made a leaping grab of Steve Young's pass in the end zone between defenders Darrien Gordon and Steve Atwater, whose

Continued on page 23

No rest for Green Bay Packers

By Arnie Stapleton
GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — With the top seed in the NFC playoffs no longer within reach, you'd think the Green Bay Packers would rest their starters in their season finale on Saturday.

Not a chance.

Coach Mike Holmgren said if the Packers (12-3) want a breather, they're going to have to put away the Buffalo Bills early so that reserves can take the field.

"I want to win the game, OK? We have not lost at home in a long time and we're not about to approach the game any differently," Holmgren said Tuesday.

The only exceptions are players who are injured, such as nose tackle Gilbert Brown (ankle), who didn't play in the Packers' 31-10 victory at Caro-

lina on Sunday.

"Other than that, the game will be played as we've played every game since I've been here," Holmgren said.

Brown didn't practice Tuesday and neither did defensive end Reggie White, who revealed that he's been battling pneumonia for the last several weeks and not the flu, wide receiver Derrick Mayes and backup tight end Jeff Thomason, both of whom have sprained ankles.

The Packers have won nine of their last 10, including three straight on the road, but that wasn't enough to catch the San Francisco 49ers (13-2), who wrapped up homefield throughout the NFC playoffs by beating Denver on Monday night.

Green Bay has secured a first-round bye and a home game in the divisional round, but the players don't seem to mind not catching a

break against Buffalo.

After all, they've got a 25-game home winning streak to uphold and momentum to maintain.

"So, we're not just going to blow off this game," strong safety LeRoy Butler said.

"We're going to get a bye in the first round of the playoffs anyway," cornerback Doug Evans said. "So, I think we should go this game full tilt."

Tight end Mark Chmura said the Packers won't let up because they'll be home for the first time since drubbing Dallas 45-17 on Nov. 23.

"It feels like we've been on the road forever," Chmura said. "People talk about a letdown this week,"

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A's sign Mohler, Blowers

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The Oakland Athletics on Monday agreed to terms with free-agent infielder Mike Blowers and pitcher Mike Mohler.

Blowers, who hit .293 with five home runs and 20 RBI last season with the Seattle Mariners, was signed to a one-year contract. Terms of the deal were not released.

In nine major league seasons with the New York Yankees, Seattle and Los Angeles, Blowers hit .262 with 65 home runs and 287 RBI.

"Mike is a proven option at third base and provides right-handed power in the middle of our lineup," said Billy Beane, A's general manager.

Mohler, who was 1-10 with the 5.13 ERA last season for the A's, was

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Stewart eyes Coolum win

COOLUM, Australia (AP) — American Payne Stewart will head the strongest field in the eight-year history of the Coolum Classic when the US dlr 185,000 golf tournament begins Thursday.

Stewart, who won his first pro tournament on Queensland state's Gold Coast in the early 1980s, will partner Florida neighbor and Australian tennis player Todd Woodbridge in the pro-am for-

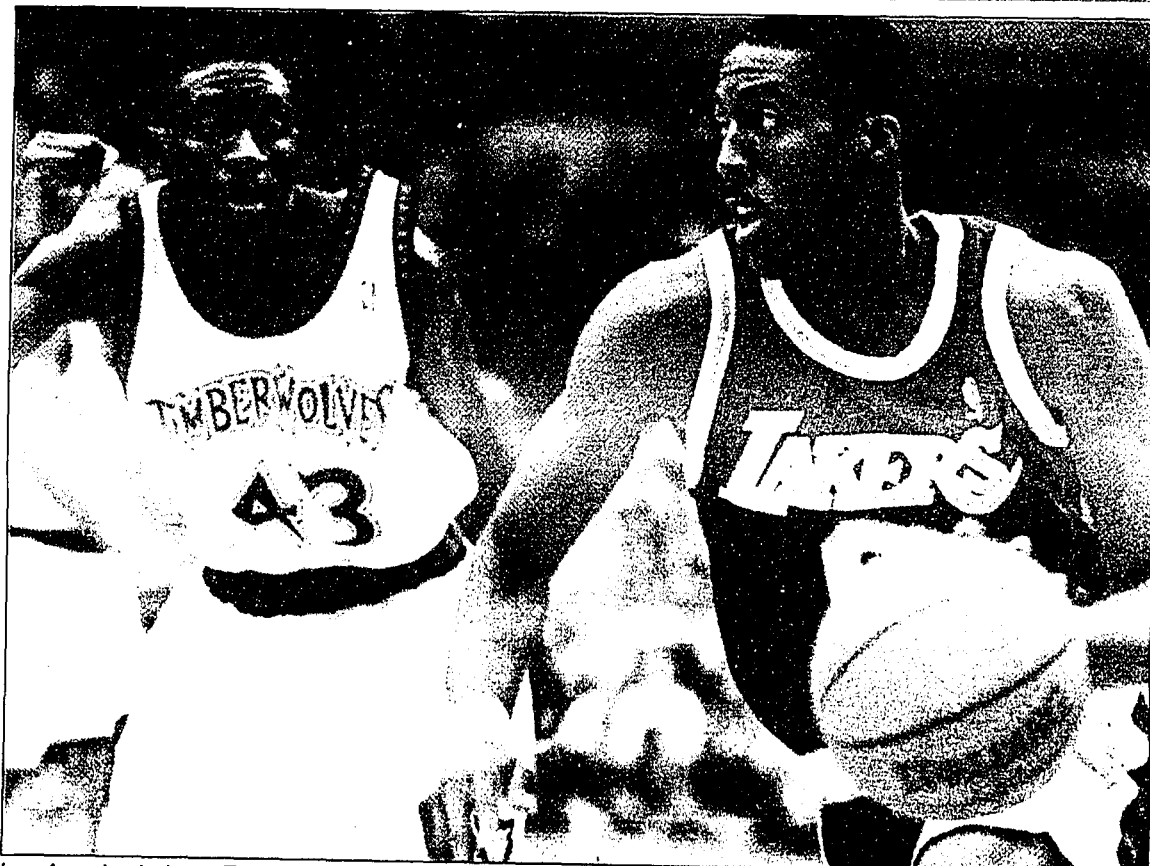
mat for the first 54 holes.

The pros will play alone for Sunday's final round over the par-72, 6,326-meter (6,918-yard) Hyatt Regency resort course designed by Robert Trent Jones.

Stewart, 39, winner of the 1989 U.S. PGA and 1991 U.S. Open tournaments, is making his Coolum debut.

All previous Classic winners

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Los Angeles Lakers' Eddie Jones, right, gets Minnesota Timberwolves defender Chris Carr (43) watching as he drives the baseline on his way to a 32-point performance Tuesday night as the Lakers beat the Timberwolves 109-96 in Minneapolis. AP

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