

QUOTEABLE

"My heart lies in this, at this level, the Dole level."
Former president George Bush pledging his support for
Bob Dole's election as president

NATION

NEWS TO

The five-day National Conference of State Legislatures opens today in St. Louis, Mo.

Twister surprises New Mexico town

By Martha Mendoza
The Associated Press

CIMARRON, N.M. - After a tornado picked up their mobile home, shook them violently and slammed them back down a block away, Stan Davis crawled out from under his bed and asked his wife: "Are we in Oz yet?"

The tornado that hit this northern New Mexico town Thursday injured five people, left guns, clothing, dishes and furniture scattered in the streets, and destroyed a bank and post office.

When the Davises saw it coming, they hid under their bed and waited.

"Next thing we knew we were picked up and turning around in the air," Ella Davis said. "The bed frame kept hitting me, and we were turning around and around."

After their wild ride, the Davises - she with a bruised chest and he with half his ribs broken and a punctured lung - staggered out of the wreckage.

Ella Davis has since been released from the hospital. Stan Davis is in stable condition.

The Davises had moved to this rugged, Wild West town from a part of Oklahoma known as Tornado Alley, following Ella's best friend, Charlene Carlisle. The tornado was the first ever recorded in Cimarron.

"We bragged to our old friends about being out here where we didn't have to go to the cellar all the time," said Carlisle, as she hunted for her friend's belongings near what once had been the Davises' mobile home.

The tornado hopscotched 1½ miles through town, destroying or damaging at least 62 buildings.

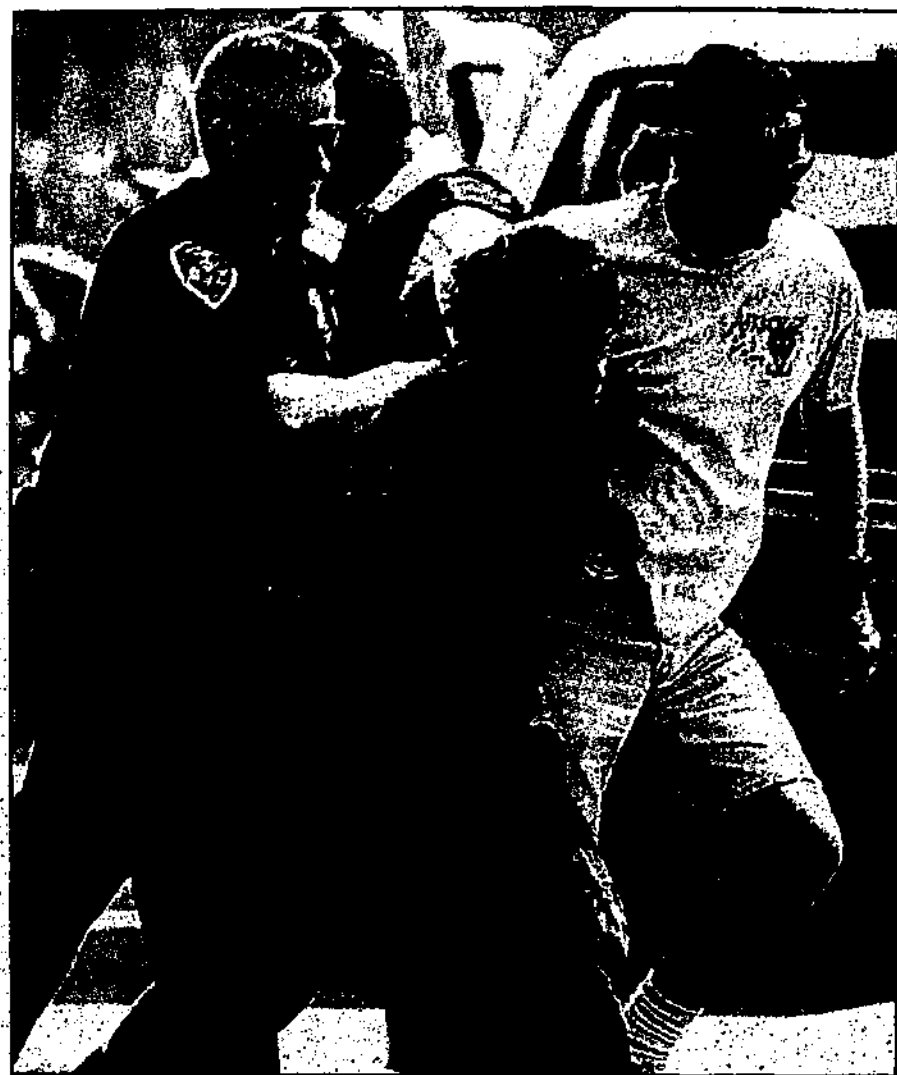
Streets were littered with siding from buildings, broken trees, downed power lines, pink puffs of insulation, books, clothes. Boy scouts who volunteered for the cleanup waded through pile of bricks, junk mail, busted wood and twisted beams at the post office.

At the nearby International State Bank - its roof missing and a brick wall down - roofers were getting to work.

Untouched was the historic St. James Hotel, a bullet-scarred building built in 1872 that was a hangout for gunfighters such as Clay Allison and Black Jack Ketchum. The hotel claims 26 people were shot to death there last century.

"We've prepared for disasters," said Police Chief Joe Turner, "but we never considered a tornado."

SHOTGUN SLAYING



Two men were arrested in the shooting death of a woman during an apparent carjacking Friday in southwestern Indiana. Joseph "J.J." Henson, 16, shown above, and Jason Wentz, 17; both of Paris, Ind., were captured after a 12-hour manhunt. The two teens were caught when their stolen pickup collided head-on with a sheriff's cruiser.

50th anniversary of Mount Rainier crash set for today

By Richard Seven
Seattle Times

SEATTLE - The first time Carolyn Pope went to Mount Rainier's southwest flank, she was an 11-year-old Kalama, Wash., farm girl in the tow of her grieving parents.

They and other families from across the country scanned South Tahoma Glacier, a grave of ice, snow and rock that held her brother, Leslie Simmons Jr., and 31 other Marines.

The Marines, almost all of them 18- and 19-year-old privates, died Dec. 10, 1946, when their C-46 transport plane heading from San Diego to Seattle's Sand Point Naval Air Station crashed into the snow-shrouded mountain during a blizzard. It is the single worst accident at the mountain.

Seven months after the crash, the bodies and the plane's wreckage were located. But conditions were too dangerous for military and U.S. Park Service mountaineers to recover the bodies, so the Marines stayed there, swallowed in an icy tomb.

Pope, now 60 and living near Shelton, Wash., has made the trip to Rainier every summer since then, long after her father's death in 1973 and her mother's three years ago.

She plans to make the trip again Saturday, commemorating this year's 50th anniversary of the crash. She will continue her ritual of carrying flowers to a memorial on the mountain and letting herself again feel the sadness that has been tucked away by time.

"I go there not just in the memory of my brother, but in the memory of my parents and the other parents, too," she said. "I plan to continue going every year I can."

About half of the families of the 32 Marines became actively involved in the memorial, some returning each summer to share common loss. The ranks inevitably thinned as parents died and generations passed, but each year, 32 white carnations are placed in a vase while the names of the Marines are read, one by one.

The Marines Corps League of Pierce County took leadership of the memorial ceremony beginning in 1984, and planned this year's larger-than-usual event, which includes the playing of "Taps" and "Amazing Grace," as well as a 21-gun salute, a color guard and a fly-by of Marine Corps jets.

Although erosion has made the memorial plaque, which is attached to a 5-foot-high boulder, largely inaccessible, two all-terrain vehicles will transport family members to the site at Round Pass, miles from the crash site, after Sunday's ceremony. The plaque lists the names of the dead and the words: "The flight has ended. They are

"I go there not just in the memory of my brother, but in the memory of my parents and the other parents, too. I plan to continue going every year I can."

Carolyn Pope
Marine's sister

now in thy keeping."
Pope's brother had joined the Marines six months before the accident. He wanted to qualify for the GI Bill, which would pay for his college education. He had his pilot's license at 17, and was an outdoorsman who had scaled Mount St. Helens.

The plane was among a group of six flying to Seattle when a snowstorm hit. Four turned back and landed in Portland, Ore., and one made it to Seattle, but the sixth disappeared.

All the Marines, except Simmons, were being transferred to the Sand Point Naval Air Station in Seattle. He was flying home for a Christmas break and hitched a ride on the military transport instead of taking a commercial flight.

The plane fought 70-mph westerly winds, was blown off course and vanished. Authorities could only guess the general location of the plane, and a month of intensive ground search revealed nothing.

Bill Butler, Mount Rainier National Park assistant chief ranger at the time, never stopped looking, climbing solo on his days off. On July 21, 1947, he climbed to the 9,000-foot Success Cleaver.

Using binoculars, he swept the vista of South Tahoma Glacier and saw the fuzzy image of what he became convinced was part of a plane protruding from melting snow.

Two days later, he led an expedition of four mountaineers to the glacier, dodging falling boulders and sliding ice as they climbed.

Eventually, they found the front portion of the plane imbedded in a wall of a deep crevasse. All 32 bodies were accounted for, but authorities decided to leave them when a team of mountaineers determined that excavation couldn't be done safely.

Searchers brought down belongings scattered about the glacier - a Marine's health record, a watch that still worked. But the bodies would remain and be forever buried under tons of ice; the glacier is still off-limits to climbers.

Pope said her parents never completely resolved their sadness. Giantic Rainier always served as a reminder, a 14,411-foot tombstone.

Eye doctors warned about laser use

By Lauran Neergaard
The Associated Press

GAITHERSBURG, Md. - Federal regulators issued an unusually strong warning Friday to stop eye doctors from using unapproved machines for laser surgery to nearsighted Americans.

The warning is the latest in a blitz of controversy to overtake a popular laser surgery that promises better vision without glasses to many of the 60 million Americans who are nearsighted.

The FDA has approved two lasers since last fall, made by Summit Technology and Visx, to help people see more clearly at a distance.

But some doctors are importing cheaper, used lasers from Europe, where they have been sold for several years, or building their own, meaning some patients are undergoing surgery on machines not FDA-

approved as safe.

That's illegal, the FDA warned at a meeting of eye specialists Friday. Doctors either must use FDA-approved lasers or, if they feel their own lasers are superior, get government permission to study them while informing patients that the devices are experimental.

"Be on the alert: We will take action against illegal products in the marketplace," said Dr. Susan Alpert, FDA's device evaluation chief.

The agency could seize an unapproved machine or get a court injunction to stop its use.

The FDA does not know how many unapproved lasers are being used. Alpert advised patients to ask their doctor before surgery about the machine they use and their success rate. She also advised they demand FDA-approved patient leaflets and ask to speak with previous patients.

"This - let us be clear - is irreversible surgery," she said. "Wait until you're sure."

Outraged doctors said they are offering their patients better care than the FDA-approved equipment can provide, and that the FDA has no business interfering in their practice of medicine.

"Why did I get involved in nonregulated lasers?" asked Dr. Ralph Berkely of Houston, who built his own laser. "My moral and ethical responsibility to do what I believe is in the best interest of my patients."

If the FDA would speed up its review of new lasers to keep up with Europe, doctors wouldn't be forced to use "untested techniques," said Dr. Stephen Trokel of the American Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery.

In photorefractive keratectomy, or PRK, a laser burns off bits of the

corneal surface to flatten it and improve mild or moderate nearsightedness.

Some 30,000 eyes have been treated so far, but PRK already is controversial.

Last spring, the FDA and Federal Trade Commission warned thousands of doctors against falsely advertising PRK. Ads saying consumers could "throw away your glasses" glossed over the risks and seemingly promised perfection, the warning said. While PRK usually works well, it sometimes results in patients needing reading glasses or causes glare, hazy vision and other problems.

In Idaho, ophthalmologists - who have medical degrees - have sued optometrists - who don't - to stop them from offering PRK. The optometrists say PRK is so computerized that no special surgical skill is needed.

Michigan doctor pleads innocent to charge of illegal late-term abortion

By Greta Guest
The Associated Press

HIGHLAND PARK, Mich. - A doctor pleaded innocent Friday to charges he performed an illegal late-term abortion and faked records to cover it up. The case is the first prosecution under the state's abortion law since 1974.

Dr. Jose Gilberto Higuera is charged with performing an abortion on a woman who was 28 weeks pregnant, four weeks past the limit set by state law unless the mother's life is in danger.

"What concerns the doctor is the attack on women's rights," said Higuera's attorney, Max R. Hoffman Jr. "Why is he being singled out?"

A former nurse tipped authorities to the abortion and provided medical records that she took when she left her job, said Donovan Motley, a spe-

"Whether one is pro-life or pro-choice, there is universal agreement that third-term abortions performed when the mother's life is not in jeopardy are unjustified."

Frank J. Kelley
Michigan attorney general

cial agent with the state attorney general's office.

Prosecutor Mark E. Blumer said it is the first time since 1974, a year after the Supreme Court legalized abortion in the Roe vs. Wade case, that a doctor has been charged with violating Michigan's abortion law.

The nurse, Rebecca Black, said Higuera regularly performed abortions beyond the 24-week limit, according to the complaint.

"Whether one is pro-life or pro-choice, there is universal agreement that third-term abortions performed when the mother's life is not in jeopardy are unjustified," state Attorney General Frank J. Kelley said. "Medical experts have stated that a fetus born after the 24-week period has a 90 percent chance of surviving to normal adulthood."

Black told investigators that the Detroit woman, identified only as Jane Doe, requested the abortion. She said the ultrasound, performed

by Higuera, showed the woman was 28 weeks pregnant.

Higuera performed a two-day abortion procedure on the woman Oct. 14-15, 1994, Black told authorities.

Doe told investigators she was not aware of the exact stage of her pregnancy and was shocked when Higuera told her the first stage of the procedure could induce labor, because she realized the fetus could survive on its own. The woman allowed Higuera to complete the abortion, the complaint said.

The ultrasound report given by Higuera to state health investigators indicated the fetus was 24 weeks old, according to the criminal complaint. Forensic document examiners said the records likely were altered in May 1995, Motley said.

Higuera was freed on \$500 bond and faces a preliminary hearing Aug. 28. If convicted, he faces up to four years in prison on each of two felony charges.

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Debate draws attention to closeted legislators

By John E. Yang
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON - The congressional debate over same-sex marriages has put renewed attention on closeted homosexuals in Congress.

A full-page advertisement in Friday's Washington Blade, a weekly gay newspaper, urges "closeted gay and lesbian members of Congress... to end your silence and defend your community in this time of unprecedented hostility."

Headlined "A call to conscience," the ad asks gay and lesbian House members who voted for legislation seeking to prevent gay marriages by defining marriage in federal law as the union of a man and a woman to "atone for your vote against your community."

The ad marks the first time since the battles over AIDS research funding in the late 1980s and early 1990s that a group of gay rights activists have sought to make an issue of closeted gays in Congress. Three members of Congress publicly have said they are gay: Reps. Gerry Studds, D-Mass.; Barney Frank, D-Mass.; and Steve Gunderson, R-Wis.

It neither names any members of Congress nor threatens to identify any lawmakers against their wishes. It pledges to work with lawmakers who publicly declare their homosexuality "to defeat ignorance and bigotry."

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"The purpose of the ad is not to name names, it is to encourage members to come out."

Joel Lawson
public relations consultant

members to come out," said Joel Lawson, a public relations consultant who was a Democratic House aide. Lawson organized the ad with Martin Childers, a local gay activist, and Mickey Wheatley, a civil rights attorney.

The ad, which was signed by 29 gay rights activists and elected officials across the nation, reflects the frustration of many gay activists over this month's lopsided House approval of the same-sex marriage legislation - which Republicans have dubbed the "Defense of Marriage Act" - and the vitriolic attacks some GOP lawmakers made on homosexuality and homosexuals during debate over the bill, Lawson said.

But other gay rights activists called the ad counterproductive.

"Every single vote for the Defense of Marriage Act was unconscionable and indefensible," said David M. Smith, communications director for the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay rights advocacy group. "There is no reason to single anybody out in Congress."