

New Year's offers cheap chills

OLALLA, Wash. (AP) — How'd you spend New Year's Day? Nursing a hangover or other regrets about 1993? Watching college football? Shopping? All of the above?

Some folks also celebrated Saturday with a bracing plunge into icy waters, greeting 1994 invigorated — and chilly.

"We do it because it's there, man. It's refreshing, it's exciting and it wakes you up!" said Jon Forseth, 45, of Home in Pierce County. He is a founding member of the Olalla Polar Bear Club, whose members have been saluting the new year with goosebumps in Olalla Lagoon since 1984.

The annual plunge into that arm of Colvos Passage along the Kitsap Peninsula is a community event, and a crowd of about 300 — including dozens of leather-clad bikers — gathered to watch.

Strings of firecrackers popped in a beach bonfire as the celebrants arrived. Some said they were relying on liquid fortification to see them through their annual baptism — indeed, some said they had been up all night trying to attain the proper level of "antifreeze."

A cannon blast at noon sent 200 "bears" into the 52-degree water.

"Well, that was fun," said shivering first-timer Chrystal Tatman, 45, of Purdy. "It really felt good. What a trip!"

"It's a rush! Everyone does it," said Ryan Wade, 12, of Tacoma, who cut his foot charging into the water.

Because of an exceptionally low tide, most opted to wade in rather than try the traditional 15-foot leap from Olalla Bay Bridge. Joe Zimsen, 24, of Seattle tried it and was treated at a Bremerton hospital for abrasions to his foot.

The senior bear Saturday apparently was Ruth Parmley Oakes, 75, of Harper near Port Orchard. The event marked her ninth plunge — and probably her last.

"This is not a seemly thing for a great-grandmother to do," Oakes said.

A similar event at Port Angeles' Hollywood Beach was hampered by water pollution.

"It stank like the sewer," said Bobbi Croxford of the Olympic Peninsula Sports Club, which organized the sixth annual Port Angeles Polar Bear Dip.

"I was nervous and didn't dunk — the smell of the water turned me off," Croxford said.

Some were undaunted. Twice, with shrieks and yells, more than 40 people waded into the 48-degree harbor waters. About half of them waded in chest-deep and dunked their heads. The others were unwilling to dip their heads in the water.

About 40 feet away stood the yellow warning signs posted in August by the Clallam County Health Department to alert swimmers to possible E. coli bacteria along the beach just south of City Pier. Fecal contamination from an unknown source was reported by city health officials in September.

It was not clear whether the waters are still tainted. Health officials could not be reached.

Centerfold thefts prompt library to hide magazines

SALEM (AP) — Somebody is stealing the centerfold pin-up photos from certain glossy magazines at the Salem Public Library, forcing the staff to hide the popular issues behind the counter.

The centerfold models, however, probably don't care. They're real dogs. And cats.

The magazines are *Cat Fancy* and *Dog Fancy*, each featuring a very furry-faced pin-up pet.

The animal magazines appear to be more popular than *Playboy*, which has been available only on microfilm since 1991.

As one library staffer who preferred not be identified said: "I guess you could say that we've gotten to the point that we are really buying it only for the articles."

Now that the dog and cat magazines are tucked behind the counter, the library hopes that damage, vandalism and theft will decline.

Also under protection are *Rolling Stone* and *Spin*, the music magazines coveted for

their pictures of rock musicians, and *Road & Track*, prized for its photos of sleek new cars.

Perhaps most at risk is the pop superstar, Madonna.

"Anything with pictures of Madonna in it, kiss it goodbye," said library director George Happ.

Art books are also a perennial favorite, he added.

One man was found sitting in a corner, methodically slicing out pictures of landscapes and naked women.

When police confronted him, the man appeared to be on medication and didn't realize what he was doing was wrong, Happ said. The man eventually paid back the \$950 in damage he had caused.

Beginning in March, signs will go up, reminding library patrons to look through their books for damage before checking them out, said Beverly Harris, a library worker.

"It lets them know, in a nice way, that they are responsible," Harris said.



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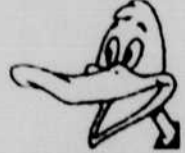
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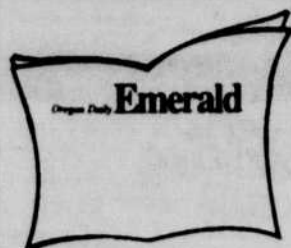
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