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NEWS BRIEFING

A LOOK AT THIS MORNING'S HEADLINES

Couple face penalty in long forgery, racketeering trial



NORTHWEST
BEND (AP) — Diane and Dennis Nason were acquitted of child abuse and manslaughter after their year-long trial, but the prosecution still is pushing for a 20-year prison sentence on lesser charges.

The Nasons were convicted of forgery and racketeering after their trial and three years of investigation into allegations of abuse and neglect among the adopted children who became known as the "Celebration Family."

Forgery ranks low on state sentencing guidelines and typically results only in probation for first-time offenders. But racketeering, a Class A felony not ranked under the guidelines, allows any sentence up to 20 years.

Elephant euthanized at Portland zoo

PORTLAND (AP) — An elephant suffering from recurrent foot infections was euthanized Tuesday at the Metro Washington Park Zoo.

Me-Tu, a 33-year-old Asian elephant, was in pain and unable to put her whole weight on her front legs, said Dennis Pate, zoo curator.

She wasn't eating, and the zoo staff felt she was in imminent danger of falling, Pate said.

"We battled the infection as long as we could," he said. "We have too much compassion for Me-Tu to prolong her pain."

Me-Tu is the mother of Rose-Tu, the latest calf to be born at the zoo, which boasts the world's premier Asian elephant breeding program.

Middle class loses as wages, benefits keep leaving them behind



NATIONAL
WASHINGTON (AP) — The wages and benefits paid American workers rose just 2.9 percent last year, the smallest increase on record, and provided fresh fuel for the argument that the middle class is falling behind.

The biggest factor was restraint in health care and other benefits, though they were rising more quickly as the year ended.

The Labor Department said Tuesday the increase in its Employment Cost Index was down from 3 percent in 1994 and the smallest since the government began recording annual changes in 1982.

The gain barely kept worker compensation ahead of inflation. The Consumer Price Index rose 2.5 percent last year.

Kasparov, computer draw in game three

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — World chess champion Garry Kasparov asked for a draw in the 39th move of Tuesday's game against the IBM supercomputer named "Deep Blue," leaving the six-game match tied at 1 1/2 games each.

Kasparov, playing black, opened the match with the same aggressive style of play he used in the first game, which he lost on Saturday. He settled down as the game progressed and was able to hold a slight advantage over the computer in the game's early stages.

But the computer improved its position with an aggressive maneuver on the 21st move. After about three hours of play, Kasparov said he didn't feel he could improve his position any further.

Explosive believed left buried from Vietnam war kills 10 children



WORLD
HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — A bomb believed to have been left over from the Vietnam War exploded in a family's front yard in southern Vietnam, killing 10 children and wounding 17.

Old war weapons and explosives often causes death and injury throughout former South Vietnam, but the toll in this blast was believed to be the largest since the war ended in 1975, the official Vietnam News said today.

It said the chain of events that led to the tragedy began Jan. 25 when rain unearthed a human skull in front of a family home in Binh Long, 60 miles northwest of Ho Chi Minh City and the scene of heavy fighting during the war.

A man named Than began digging to uncover the rest of the skeleton and accidentally set off the bomb with his shovel, the paper quoted local officials as saying.

Secret agents from World War II honored

LONDON (AP) — Looking strong, the 95-year-old Queen Mother Elizabeth appeared Tuesday in her first public engagement since a hip replacement operation three months ago.

The Queen Mother, whose husband George VI was king during World War II, attended a memorial service at Westminster Abbey for Allied secret agents who died behind enemy lines during the war.

The Queen Mother, whose popularity only seems to grow with her advancing years, had surprised the public with her decision to undergo major surgery at her age.

Read the fine print, dear; their prenuptial agreement covers all

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Rex and Teresa LeGalley know what to expect from love and marriage — it's all there in the fine print.

Their 16-page prenuptial agreement spells out the rules of their life together in excruciating detail, including how often they will have sex (three to five times a week), which gasoline to buy (Chevron supreme unleaded), and who does the laundry (Teresa).

"When you look at why people get divorced, the biggest reasons are money, sex, children or some pet peeve the other one just can't stand," Rex said. "We went into this knowing it's a leap of faith when you get married. This gives us a list we can live with."

The agreement, filed in court in July, also spells out how they are to handle their finances. The terms appear to leave little room for Valentine's Day improvisation on what is supposed to be the most romantic day of the year.

On a recent trip to New York City, the LeGalleys — married for seven months — bought diamond-studded gold bracelets for each other. Rex called them Valentine's Day, birthday and anniversary gifts all rolled into

stranger THAN FICTION

one.

"It was spontaneous, but it was something we had thought about for a long time," Teresa said Monday. "Any kind of big purchase we make is planned. It's just a question of when we'll do the buying."

The LeGalleys say their past marriages — and their love of details — made their prenuptial agreement a natural. Rex, 39, a communications specialist at Sandia National Laboratories, is on his third marriage. Teresa, 31, a civilian computer engineer for the Air Force, is on her second.

She said she talked with her first husband about a lot of issues, "but we didn't really agree on the real important stuff."

The LeGalleys said they have been criticized by some who think they're taking the fun of spontaneous gestures out of their romance. But they see it as a realistic way of handling issues that inevitably come up.

"A lot of people say a prenuptial is something you do in case you get divorced," Teresa said. "But we take it differently. This is the plan that we think will keep us married for 50 or 60 years."

World's oldest woman cuts her own rap CD

ARLES, France (AP) — Jeanne Calment isn't one of those pop stars who loses her muse with age — her first album is scheduled to be released on her 121st birthday.

Calment, who lives in a nursing home named after her in this southern French town, does not sing on the album, called *Time's Mistress*. Producers of the CD recorded her speaking and mixed her voice with rap and techno rhythms, but would not release further details on the album Tuesday.

It is to be released on her birthday, Feb. 22.

Producer Philippe Delmas rejected accusations that he had exploited Calment, known for her feisty character and quirky sense of humor.

"No one can tell Jeanne what to do. She's not a circus dog. She really got into this project," he said.

Still, he admitted she backed the project because proceeds will be used to buy a minibus so she and other nursing home residents can go on outings to the shore.

According to the Guinness Book of Records, at 120, Calment is the oldest person in the world able to authenticate her age with birth records.