

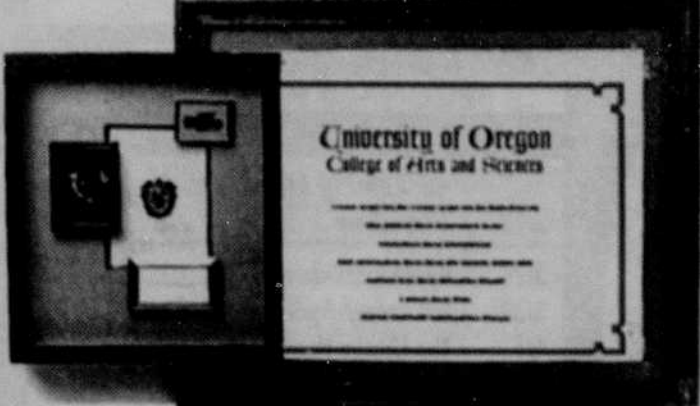
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NEWS BRIEFING

A LOOK AT THIS MORNING'S HEADLINES

Stevens seeks death sentence; convicted of kidnapping, murder



NORTHWEST

ALBANY (AP) — A judge has denied a motion by attorneys for a convicted killer to declare the death penalty unconstitutional.

Linn County Circuit Judge Jackson Frost also refused to move the death penalty hearing for Dallas Ray Stevens out of Linn County.

Also, Frost found no conflict of interest regarding District Attorney Jason Carlile's handling of the case. Stevens' attorneys argued Carlile was personally affected by the death of 5-year-old Nicole Edwards.

Stevens was convicted of kidnapping Nicole, who was his niece, and her two sisters in 1988. Nicole was killed and the others were molested but found alive.

Propane catches fire, family escapes home

PORTLAND (AP) — Exploding propane tanks fueled a fire that destroyed a southeast Portland home.

The fire started early Sunday when a 5-gallon propane tank stored in the basement where two teen-age boys stayed was knocked over, breaking the valve off the top.

The boys rushed upstairs and woke their parents. All four escaped with minor injuries. Firefighters estimated damage at \$200,000.

Fire bureau spokesman Neil Heesacker said a 7-gallon propane tank stored inside also exploded.

Dole prepares for fall; looks past primaries for future campaign



NATIONAL

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — For Bob Dole, it has become a familiar, if welcome, routine: another Midwestern campaign stop, another glowing introduction by a popular Republican governor. Some might say it is an audition of sorts.

"We have a chance to rectify our mistake," Gov. Tommy Thompson said as he warmed up for Dole, lamenting President Clinton's 1992 Wisconsin victory. "We can replace the say-nothing, do-nothing president with a true leader who knows how to deliver on his promises."

Dole is grateful for the support, and says so at every stop, whether his host is Thompson, Illinois Gov. Jim Edgar, Ohio Gov. George Voinovich or Michigan Gov. John Engler.

As he looks past Tuesday's Midwest primaries toward a fall showdown with Clinton, Dole will need more than the governors' support. To win in November, he must find a formula that emulates their appeal beyond traditional GOP constituencies.

Clinton won Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin in 1992 — pocketing 72 electoral votes, more than one quarter of what it takes to win.

Two years later, Thompson, Edgar, Engler and Voinovich were re-elected in landslides, each drawing support from union members and other traditional Democratic constituencies.

Parade, bands bring 300,000 to festival on St. Patrick's Day



WORLD

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP) — Waving shamrocks, wearing green and dancing alongside floats, more than 300,000 people thronged the Irish capital on Sunday for St. Patrick's Day.

Despite rain, cold and gray skies, the parade threaded in carnival atmosphere from St. Patrick's Cathedral, past City Hall and Trinity College to fill the city's main thoroughfare, O'Connell Street.

Once a pale imitation of its American cousins, the Dublin parade for the first time this year featured dancers, jugglers, fire-eaters, mimes and traditional pipe bands.

"The Irish St. Patrick's Day parade as you have come to know, love, hate or even ignore, is a thing of the past," said Tourism Minister Enda Kenny.

Several American bands came for the celebration. A 180-member band from the University of Nebraska marched, along with the 120-member Ohio State University band.

In Cork, 140 miles southwest of Dublin, a 30-member pipe-and-drum band from the Boston police marched, too.

Parade organizers' hopes of drawing Protestant musical and cultural groups from Northern Ireland were defeated by the Irish Republican Army's return to bombing last month.

In London, Queen Elizabeth II's mother, the Queen Mother, distributed shamrocks to the Irish Guards, a ceremony she began 70 years ago.

Atheist group gets permit to gather at cross on Easter

SAN DIEGO (AP) — An atheists' group got permission for an Easter sunrise gathering on city park land surrounding a 40-foot cross, upsetting Christian groups that have held services there for more than 40 years.

"This isn't being done to besmirch Christianity or to kick sand in anyone's face," said Peter Irons, lawyer and professor at the University of California, San Diego, who applied for the permit. "The whole point is to open up [the sunrise service] to everybody."

The April 7 event for the Atheist Coalition of San Diego is being organized by an ad hoc group



called The Park Belongs To Everyone.

Craig Kelso, an atheist who heads the group, said some Christian churches plan to participate in the gathering and protest oppression, and he also has invited Buddhists, Jews and Muslims.

However, Christian groups involved in previous services near the cross on Mount Soledad have decided to stay away to avoid confrontation.

"It's very insensitive," said William J. Kellogg, president of the Mount Soledad Memorial Association. "Our community

has enjoyed having that service for many years."

Woman with flu sues weatherman, station

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Are TV weather reports legally binding? One sniffing Israeli says yes.

A woman in Haifa is suing Channel 2 television and its popular weatherman Danny Rup in small claims court for \$1,000 after he predicted sun for a day that turned out stormy, the Maariv daily newspaper said.

The woman claims the forecast caused her to leave home lightly dressed. As a result, she caught the flu, missed four days' work, spent \$38 on medication and suffered stress.

In addition to financial compensation, the woman wants Rup to apologize.

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