

NEWS BRIEFING

A LOOK AT THIS MORNING'S HEADLINES

Power council pushes for more authority to restore salmon runs



PORTLAND (AP) — The Northwest Power Planning Council believes it needs more authority

over federal agencies if its efforts to restore salmon runs in the Columbia Basin are to succeed.

The added muscle should come in the form of an executive order from the Clinton administration requiring federal agencies to act consistently with the council's fish and wildlife plan, the council said in a draft report issued this week.

If no administrative order is forthcoming, then Congress should pass legislation requiring the agencies to fall in line with the council's efforts, the report said.

"What we're really asking for is not something radical," said council member Mike Field of Idaho. "We have a good process in the region. What we want is to give it the teeth so it can be enforced."

Under the proposal, the council would be the region's chief planner for fish recovery efforts.

Currently, only the Bonneville Power Administration is required to act consistently with the power council's wishes.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which operate the dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers, are required only to take the council's plan into account. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife are under no obligation to pay any attention to the council.

Body found; attention turns to male suspect in highway abduction



HARRISONBURG, Va. — State police have pursued about 2,500 leads since

Alicia Showalter Reynolds disappeared March 2, but the most valuable clue so far may be the one they least wanted — the discovery of her body.

The woman's family learned Wednesday that an autopsy had confirmed that the decomposed body found the afternoon before in remote logging site in Culpeper County was hers.

Authorities refused to say how, when or where she was killed.

The last time the 25-year-old doctoral student had been seen alive, she was standing on the side of the road peering under the hood of her car with an apparent Good Samaritan helping her.

Since her disappearance, more than a dozen women called police to say that while driving alone on a deserted stretch of highway, a man pulled up behind them, his lights flashing until they pulled over.

He told them there was something wrong with their cars and offered them a ride in his pickup truck. Some accepted. In all cases but one, he politely drove them to their destination.

The exception occurred a week before Reynolds disappeared: He tried to sexually assault a woman, and then pushed her out of his truck when she fought back. She survived.

No women have reported similar experiences since Showalter disappeared, said Lucy Caldwell, state police spokeswoman.

"The perpetrator probably does know the area," Caldwell said.

Buoyed by predictions, Hindu party begins to negotiate coalition



NEW DELHI, India (AP) — The party that has dominated India politics for nearly 50 years admitted defeat Thursday in

parliamentary elections, and a strong-showing Hindu party began seeking partners for a coalition government.

But early returns were unclear about who would govern, and the country appeared headed for a period of political uncertainty.

"We accept defeat, there is no denial of this fact that people have rejected us," said Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, the campaign manager for the Congress Party, which has led Indian politics since independence in 1947.

The Hindu opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, which advocates nuclear armament and tighter control of foreign investment in India, will overtake the Congress Party for the first time in the 545-seat parliament, according to the exit poll.

Buoyed by the poll and voting trends, the Hindu party said it had begun putting out feelers for governing partners.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party is drawing up a common minimum program to negotiate with regional parties," spokesman K.R. Malkani said.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao of the Congress Party was leading in his voting district. But some of his former ministers were trailing.

"We are going to be a very important player in the Parliament," said Mukherjee on the state-run Doordarshan Television.

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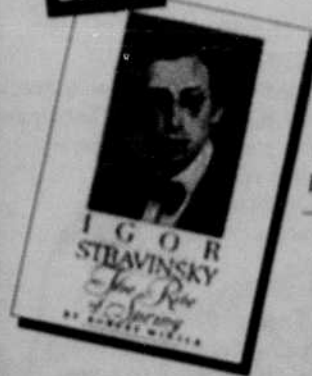
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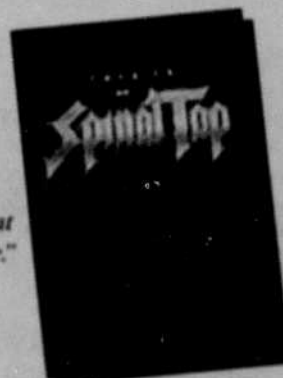
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