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NEWS DIGEST

Police looking for owner of stolen Air Force One ring

EUGENE, Ore. (AP) — A ring given to members of the Air Force One crew has turned up in a routine check of pawn shops, and police hope the owner will claim it because otherwise the federal government won't help identify him.

Air Force officials told Detective Bob Holland the ring is a presidential gift for air crew members and is considered a limited edition.

The Air Force keeps a list of recipients and will verify the name of the owner if someone claims the ring, Holland said.

But without a name, the Air Force refuses to let police use the list to track down the owner, he said.

The ring is similar in appearance to a class ring. It is gold with a blue stone center covered by a presidential crest and an inscription that says "Seal of the President of the United States." On one side of the ring, another inscription says "Air Crew" over an American flag and the other side says "Air Force One" over an eagle.

No one has reported the ring missing. Holland said it's likely the owner was keeping the ring in a drawer and doesn't realize it's gone.

Cruise passengers endure 'trip from hell' to Mexico

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Fifty-two cruise passengers fell ill during a weeklong trip to Mexico. One man died, but a Carnival Cruise Lines spokesman said it appeared to be unrelated to the unidentified sickness that swept the ship.

The ship Jubilee returned Sunday as people left the boat calling it "the trip from hell." Los Angeles

STRANGER THAN FICTION

les County coroner's officials met the ship when it docked and an autopsy was expected to be performed on the dead passenger.

Details of the death of 52-year-old Russell Lum of Berkeley remained sketchy because he had been sick the week before sailing and had been to see his doctor, said Tim Gallagher, a spokesman for Miami-based Carnival.

A spokesman at the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control confirmed that the CDC had been contacted by Carnival, but said it couldn't confirm speculation that the sickness was caused by an airborne virus.

"This was like Dr. Kevorkian's trip from hell," said passenger Sharla Dale, 34, of Novato. "Just about everyone else on the cruise we spoke to, everyone we sat with, was sick."

Elizabeth Young, a 35-year-old teacher from Thermal, said seven people in her party of 11 became sick.

"We all walked down to the infirmary one morning. But there was such a long line ... we decided to get something ourselves, in port."

The ship left San Pedro last Sunday with 1,897 passengers. It included stops in Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and Cabo San Lucas.

Fifty-two passengers reported to the infirmary during the trip with symptoms resembling food poisoning, Gallagher said.

Woman charged with selling babies of Hungarian citizens

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — A woman was jailed on charges alleging she brought as many as 30 pregnant women from Hungary and sold their babies to adoptive

parents for up to \$80,000 each. Marianne Gati, 48, was arrested by federal agents working with Hungarian National Police.

Gati is suspected of making \$20,000 profit on each adoption since 1994, said Kenneth Hines, an agent of the Internal Revenue Service.

Gati, who remained jailed pending a detention hearing on Wednesday, maintains that she operated "a legitimate adoption consulting agency," said her lawyer, Federal Public Defender H. Dean Steward.

"I'm going to prove it's not true," Gati said in an appearance before a magistrate.

According to a criminal complaint, Gati and an unidentified Hungarian associate provided airline tickets and other documents for the women to fly to California, where they were put up in a house near Gati's home in Irvine.

Gati promised to pay each mother "\$1,000 for a baby with dark features and \$1,200 for a baby with light features," the complaint alleged. It accuses her of money laundering, tax fraud, harboring illegal immigrants unlawfully and conspiracy.

A manager at a Mail Boxes Etc. branch in Irvine said Gati once received a fax "in which someone demanded the return of \$80,000 because they had not received a child in the course of an adoption," Hines said.

Gati, also known as Maria Rozsa, was identified as a Hungarian-born citizen of Canada. She was arrested Friday.

Irvine police learned of the alleged baby-selling operation in December, according to a search-warrant affidavit filed by Hines.

Hines said Gati opened a bank account Thursday with two cashier's checks totaling \$65,041, and had another bank account containing \$427,000, although tax records show she and her husband claimed a combined income of no more than \$60,000 a year.

Her husband, Thomas, is an engineer, he said.

ON SCREEN

'Eraser' debuts in first, 'Hunchback' second

The top 20 movies at North American theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by studio, gross, number of theater locations, receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday.

1. "Eraser," Warner Bros., \$24.6 million, 2,410 locations, \$10,194 per location, \$24.6 million, one week.
2. "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," Disney, \$21 million, 2,778 locations, \$7,573 per location, \$21 million, one week.
3. "The Rock," Disney, \$14.4 million, 2,426 locations, \$5,935 per location, \$80.7 million, three weeks.
4. "The Cable Guy," Columbia, \$10.3 million, 2,657 locations, \$3,885 per location, \$40.6 million, two weeks.
5. "Twister," Warner Bros., \$6.8 million, 2,532 locations, \$2,667 per location, \$211.4 million, seven weeks.
6. "Mission: Impossible," Paramount, \$6.4 million, 2,411 locations, \$2,673 per location, \$156.2 million, five weeks.
7. "Dragonheart," Universal, \$2.9 million, 2,007 locations, \$1,465 per location, \$40.6 million, four weeks.
8. "Eddie," Disney, \$2.1 million, 1,505 locations, \$1,414 per location, \$26.6 million, four weeks.
9. "The Phantom," Paramount, \$1.6 million, 1,964 locations, \$807 per location, \$13.5 million, three weeks.
10. "Moll Flanders," MGM/UA, \$673,187, 311 locations, \$2,165 per location, \$2.2 million, two weeks.

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