

NEWS DIGEST

your quick guide to news from around the world

Restaurant fire kills 29 in Chinese hotel

1 SHENZHEN, China — Thick, black smoke from a restaurant fire in southern China spread to an upstairs hotel, killing 29 people — some suffocating and others leaping to their deaths trying to escape.

Another 13 people were injured, at least two seriously, said Li Xiaogan, a local government spokesman in Shenzhen, a booming city near the Hong Kong border and the scene of some of mainland China's worst fires.

The fire started just before 2 a.m. in the Fatty Hotpot City restaurant on the second floor of a nine-story building.

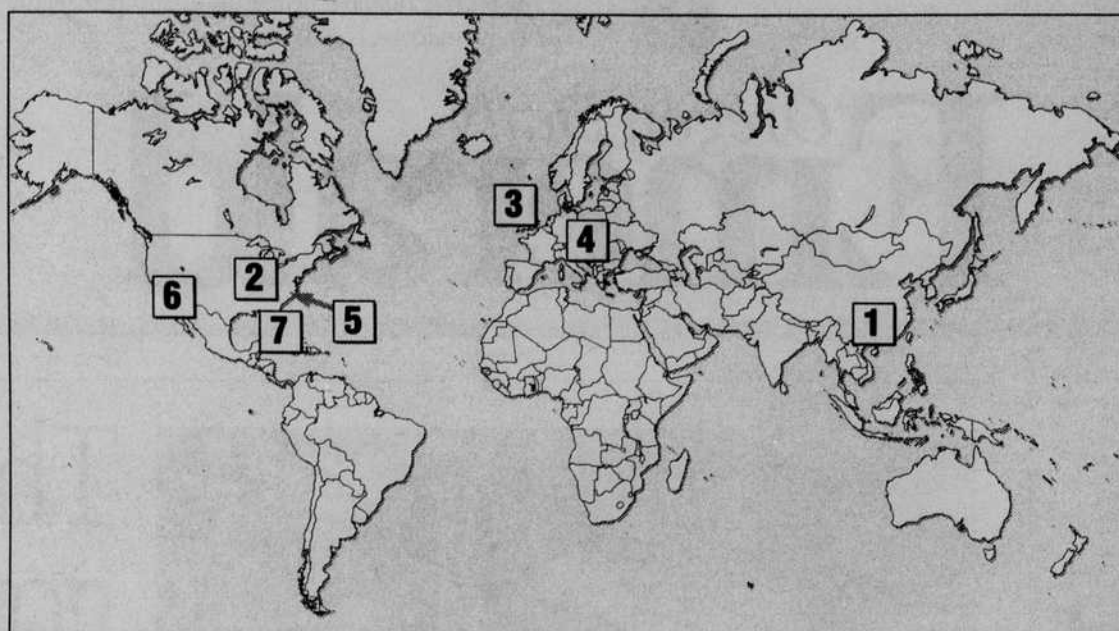
Floods surge in midwest

2 DENISON, Iowa — Motel guests and residents scurried for higher ground early today after as much as 10 inches of rain caused flooding in western Iowa.

Rain tapered off after dawn, but a flash flood warning remained in effect for parts of the area.

Both the Boyer and East Boyer rivers rose out of their banks after a wave of heavy thunderstorms rolled in from Nebraska. Overnight rainfall amounts were generally 5 to 6 inches, with 10.2 inches at Charter Oak, the National Weather Service said.

About 75 to 100 people were evacuated from 45 homes and the Park Motel in Denison.



Boy, 13, charged with killing girl

3 LIVERPOOL, England — A 13-year-old boy charged with killing a 9-year-old girl appeared briefly in court Wednesday and was ordered detained pending further proceedings.

The boy, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, spoke only to confirm his name.

But his attorney, Frank Dillon, said afterwards that the boy has denied the charge.

The body of Jade Matthews was found July 8 on a railway line. Police said she had been beaten to death.

Politics in Bosnia still on shaky terms

4 BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — A top U.S. envoy trying to force Radovan Karadzic from power in Bosnia took his mission Wednesday to Serbia's president — the one Balkan politician who could do the job but has so far avoided it.

Richard Holbrooke negotiated the agreement last year that brought peace and a 50,000-soldier, NATO-led force to Bosnia. Now, he's reportedly armed with a threat to reimpose economic sanctions if Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic doesn't deliver Karadzic, his former protege.

Army investigates red swastikas on doors

5 FORT BRAGG, N.C. — In the latest evidence of racism at Fort Bragg, red swastikas were painted in an Army barracks where black soldiers live.

Swastikas were found spray painted Tuesday on eight doors inside a barracks for enlisted men and noncommissioned officers with the 950-man 7th Special Forces Group. Black soldiers live in six of the vandalized rooms; the other two rooms are vacant.

Army investigators were trying to determine whether the vandalism was racially motivated, and if someone outside the unit could have entered the building.

OJ Simpson civic trial gets second judge

6 SANTA MONICA, Calif. — The judge who has heard pre-trial motions in the civil wrongful death suit against O.J. Simpson was removed from the case Wednesday, one day after he was appointed to preside at the trial.

Superior Court Judge Alan Haber of Santa Monica was removed because the defense didn't like him.

"Each party gets one pre-emptive challenge on a judge," said Rosie Ruiz, spokeswoman for the Los Angeles County Superior Court public information office.

A challenge filed by Simpson lawyer Robert Baker said Simpson believes he "cannot have a fair and impartial trial before" Haber.

Guard tries to break into Stallone estate

7 MIAMI — A night watchman at Sylvester Stallone's \$8 million estate was stabbed and shot early Wednesday in what police believe was a foiled break-in attempt by another security guard.

Responding to a 911 call just after 5 a.m., police found a bloodied Corey Wade, 22, walking away from the compound in the trendy Coconut Grove area on Biscayne Bay.

Wade, who was due at work at 7 a.m., told officers he had been in a fight with a fellow guard and had shot and stabbed him.

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Newsroom (541) 346-5511

Display Advertising (541) 346-3712

Business Office (541) 346-5512

Classified Advertising (541) 346-4343

Father mows son's room; charged with assault

BELTON, Mo. (AP) — A boy who wanted to sleep rather than mow the lawn received a rude awakening when his father started up the mower in his bedroom.

Rickey Worthley woke up his son Michael at 6 a.m. Saturday to mow the lawn, but the 17-year-old told him to go away, saying it was too early.

His father returned, this time with the mower. He pushed it through the door and started it up, cutting clumps from the bedroom carpet, said police Sgt. Randy Scott.

Michael threw a fan at the mower and his father left. The boy called police, who arrested Worthley and charged him with assault. No one was injured.

Airsickness bags used to prevent crash

MEDFORD (AP) — A quick-thinking pilot used airsickness bags to help avert an acci-

stranger THAN FICTION

dent after his plane's electrical system and radio died.

Daryl Dickerson scrawled notes on the white bags and tossed them from the small plane to people below as he and instructor Ray Keough flew over the Grants Pass airport in Merlin.

"Is our gear down and locked?" Dickerson wrote. He asked people to cross their arms if the wheels weren't down.

"About 10 people crossed their arms," he said. "We knew we were in trouble."

But Dickerson, 44, didn't panic. He even sent down a joke: "Send the bags back, we might need them."

He then headed for Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport, which is equipped to deal with emergency landings. On the

way, Dickerson and Keough dropped the wheels manually.

They saw a steady green light at the airport, giving them the OK to land. They landed safely Monday morning.

Sculptor depicts nude politicians

ESSEX, Conn. — If President Clinton and Bob Dole take time from their campaign schedules to view a sculpture show, they might find an issue they could agree on — restoring the fig leaf.

The current Democratic and Republican standard-bearers are depicted in an exhibition of 28 bronze nudes that also shows Ronald Reagan, House Speaker Newt Gingrich and First Lady Hillary Clinton.

"That's who we are underneath," said sculptor Nicholas Swearer. "Clothing adds a layer of psychological protection."

The lack of working models apparently left much to the artist's imagination.

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