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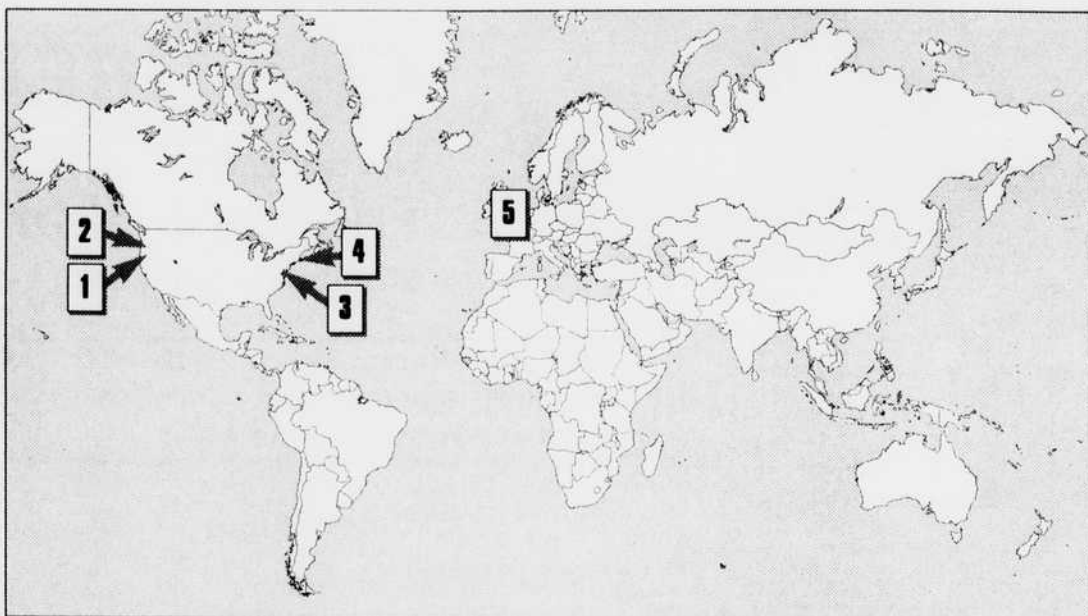
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NEWS DIGEST



Springfield resident drowns in Rogue

1 GRANTS PASS — The father of a state Fish and Wildlife Department official drowned in the Rogue River after he and his son fell off a rock while trying to free their stuck drift boat.

Thomas Hooton, 73, of Springfield, and Bob Hooton, 47, of Beaverton, were traveling down the river about 30 miles northwest of Grants Pass Tuesday when their boat snagged on a rock near a fast-moving section of the river known as Blossom Bar, the Curry County sheriff's office said.

The men, who were wearing life jackets, were swept off a rock while trying to free the boat.

Bob Hooton managed to climb on to another rock and was rescued by people aboard a second drift boat. His father floated downriver and drowned, sheriff's deputies said.

Bob Hooton, a department administrator in charge of trout and steelhead programs, is an experienced boater.

"Bob is probably the most competent person I know on the river," said department spokesman Kay Brown. "He is very careful and safety-conscious."

Police still working on bombing case

2 VANCOUVER, Wash. — Police still aren't ready to say whether the bomb blast that killed a Republic of Georgia emigre in his car was an accident or a planned murder.

"We're still exploring both options," said Detective Scott Creager, one of the lead investigators in the case. "Either one is a distinct possibility. I would hate to call it accidental and find out it's a homicide."

However, The Oregonian reported that officials believe Oleg Babichenko had the bomb on the front passenger seat of his car and might have been tinkering with it when it exploded Friday.

Sources close to the investigation told the newspaper Monday it was unlikely that Babichenko, 28, was the victim of an assassin. The blast evidence indicates the bomb was detonated accidentally.

Babichenko's injuries were mostly on his right side and much of the force of the blast went downward through the front passenger floor.

Babichenko, who had been working as a truck driver for Mitchell Bros. Truck Line Inc. in Clark County, died from shrapnel wounds.

Officials released no information about the bomb, except to say it was "a substantial device."

Creager told The Columbian newspaper he seriously doubts Babichenko's death was a suicide.

The force of the explosion blew debris onto roofs a block away. By the time firefighters arrived, a nearby resident had pulled Babichenko's body from the flaming wreckage.

Church group ill after salmonella outbreak

3 CHAPTICO, Md. — An elderly woman died of salmonella poisoning and at least 143 people became sick after eating turkey, ham and oysters at a church dinner.

About 1,400 people ate the meal Sunday at Our Lady of the Wayside Church in Chaptico in southern Maryland.

Though state health officials blamed salmonella in the death, they had not yet determined the source of the bacteria. Meat, poultry and eggs routinely carry salmonella.

Officials on Wednesday had not released the name of the person who died.

Since Sunday, at least 17 people were admitted to hospitals in southern Maryland suffering from diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and vomiting and fever. All of them were in stable condition Wednesday night.

Hospital officials said dozens more had been treated and were not admitted. The ill range in age from 2 to 81.

"We have a steady stream of people since Sunday," said hospital spokeswoman Martha Mastacco.

Many await verdict in nanny murder trial

4 CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — British au pair Louise Woodward and those anxiously watching her murder case on both sides of the Atlantic will have to wait until at least Monday for a judge to decide her fate.

Judge Hiller B. Zobel, who is away at a conference the rest of this week, plans to post his ruling on the Internet through legal and media Web sites.

Defense lawyers asked Zobel on Tuesday to void the 19-year-old's second-degree murder conviction, order a new trial or reduce the verdict to manslaughter. The prosecution argued that last week's verdict should stand.

The jury found that Woodward had shaken and slammed 8-month-old Matthew Eappen on Feb. 4, the day she called 911 to say the boy was having trouble

breathing. Matthew died five days later.

Supporters of Woodward believe she is innocent or is guilty only of manslaughter. About 25 people kept a vigil outside the courthouse.

Support for Woodward is strong in her tiny hometown of Elton, where Rose Russell said she talked to Woodward's mother Wednesday. Her mother told Russell that Woodward had been depressed since the verdict, but was encouraged after seeing television reports about the support in her hometown.

"But since she's seen this footage, it's given her spirits a tremendous lift," Russell said. "She feels far more confidence, far less alone and as far as I'm concerned, we've achieved our desired effect."

Jet forced to make emergency landing

5 LONDON — A Virgin Atlantic Airways jet from Los Angeles made an emergency landing at Heathrow Airport on Wednesday, slightly injuring some passengers.

The Airbus 340's left landing gear failed to come down, forcing pilot Tim Barnby to land using only the right gear. All 98 passengers and 16 crew members were quickly evacuated down landing slides onto a foam-coated runway.

Airport spokesman Daryl Bartlett said there were no serious injuries. Nine people were taken to a hospital with minor injuries, according to a Virgin statement.

The 39-year-old pilot said he discovered the problem during the descent into Heathrow, London's busiest airport.

"The left main landing gear was not extending properly," Barnby said. "I did all I could to force it down but it didn't work. The undercarriage was stuck."

After burning off fuel for 40 minutes, the former military pilot and acrobatic champion made the emergency landing.

"When we landed, we skidded down the runway. But we came to a stop and all the passengers were evacuated within one minute," Barnby said.

The mishap forced one of Heathrow's runways to close, causing delays for other airlines.

British Airways, which operates the most flights at Heathrow, had to divert 11 flights to London's Gatwick and Stansted airports, or to Birmingham. It also canceled six departures from Heathrow.

— Compiled from AP wire reports