

Clinton costumes all the rage this year

1 BOSTON — This year's most popular Halloween costume may call for a blue dress, a beret and, yes, a cigar.

"We thought 'Titanic' costumes would be the big rentals, but it looks like Bill and Monica are winning the race," said Stephen LaLiberte, rental manager at Boston Costume.

As the impeachment process moves forward in Washington, stores around the country are fielding requests for costumes of President Clinton, Monica Lewinsky and Linda Tripp. And that's not all.

"Volvo-driving-type liberals are looking for Kenneth Starr costumes," said Mary Papayotou, owner of Chicago Costumes. "They want to support the president."

The story didn't break early enough for manufacturers to put together rubber masks or costume ensembles in time for Halloween. But customers are asking for wigs, dark berets, cigars and other props.

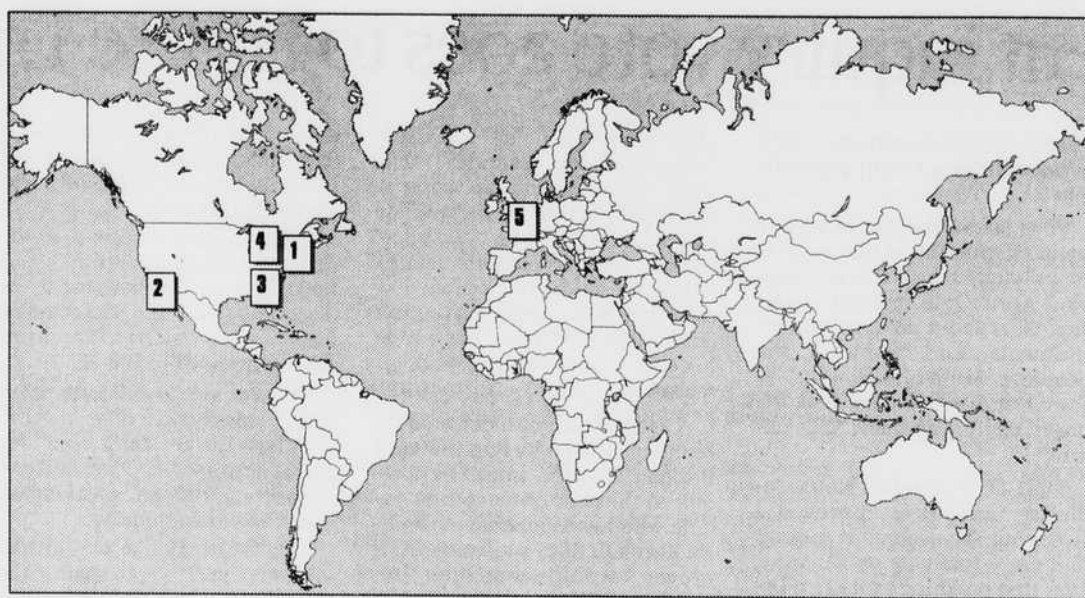
"People even want the tie," said Marilyn Wick, owner of the Fort-Lauderdale, Fla.-based chain Costume World, referring to one of the gifts the former White House intern gave the president.

LaLiberte suggested "power business suits" for those who want to show up as Starr, Tripp or the first lady, and a blond, stringy wig for Tripp.

Schenz Theatrical Supply in Cincinnati is steering clear of the Monica madness because "it's just not a nice thing to do," said manager Stephen Keeling. The business also has refused to sell O.J. Simpson masks.

And when customers say they must have a garment like the now-infamous blue dress?

"We suggest they go to the Gap because that's where the dress came from," Keeling said.



Wildfires may ease as winds die down

2 BANNING, Calif. — Dying winds helped firefighters Tuesday in the battle to control two wildfires that have scorched thousands of acres of brushlands.

"If the winds stay down, maybe they can get a handle on it," said fire spokesman Iral Evans.

Temperatures remained hot and humidity low, but the Santa Ana winds that had rapidly spread the fires were easing in the inland region 90 miles east of Los Angeles.

No serious injuries were reported Tuesday, and local evacuations were over. About 1,000 people had been driven from their homes Monday.

The largest blaze, dubbed the Mount Edna fire, was estimated at 23,893 acres. While it was still out of control, no structures were threatened. The other fire a few miles to the north in Taylor has charred 4,200 acres.

A huge force was assembled against the two blazes burning within miles of each other in northern Riverside County: 2,500

firefighters, 11 air tankers, 13 helicopters.

Both big Riverside County fires began Monday as Santa Anas — northeast winds from the desert interior — roared down through the canyons and passes of the San Bernardino Mountains, which lie to the north of Banning, Beaumont and Calimesa.

Chrysler Corp. recalls 685,000 flawed cars

3 WASHINGTON — Chrysler Corp. is recalling 685,000 late-model cars that are prone to rolling away, under some circumstances, when left in park, the government and the company said Tuesday.

Models being recalled are the Chrysler Cirrus and Dodge Stratus from model years 1995-1998 and the Plymouth Breeze and Chrysler Sebring from model years 1996-1998. Dealers will notify motorists in December about bringing their cars in to be fixed for free, said company spokesman Mike Aberlich.

Drivers shifting out of park when the key is in the locked po-

sition can break a part connected to the shifting mechanism, later allowing a stationary car to roll away when the parking brake is not set, Chrysler officials said.

Fifty motorists have reported the problem, claiming it caused five accidents and one injury, Aberlich said.

The company also is recalling factory-installed child seats in 157,000 Chrysler Town and Country, Dodge Caravan and Grand Caravan and Plymouth Voyager and Grand Voyager minivans for model years 1996-97.

Man owns trademark for 'Year 2000'

4 NEW YORK — While few were thinking about the Year 2000 in the early 1990s, Robert Guberman was making the biggest business decision of his life.

The veteran retail executive secured the trademark for the "Year 2000," giving him the exclusive rights to almost everything bearing the best-known slogan of the new millennium.

Today, that foresight is paying off. As the turn of the century

nears, stores across the nation are filling with "Year 2000" merchandise — everything from key chains to playing cards to tapestries to leather jackets.

"We were well aware that the millennium was coming and this was going to be big," said Guberman, president of New York-based Planet Marketing. "Now, the excitement is building and we are seeing how big it's really going to be."

Few can escape the buzz about the Year 2000. Anxious Americans already are making hotel and restaurant reservations for New Year's Eve 1999, while businesses are hard at work to prevent millennium-related computer glitches.

Thousands of companies have won trademarks for words and slogans like "millennium," "Y2K," "2000," and "01-01-00," and thousands more are still applying, according to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Crashed plane carried chemical used in sarin

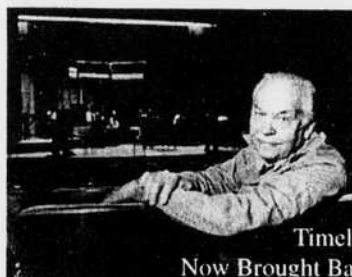
5 AMSTERDAM, Netherlands — In the shadow of towering apartment buildings, a living monument to victims of the worst Dutch air disaster bears this inscription: "The Tree That Saw Everything."

Six years later, investigators are struggling to uncover what no one can see — the cause of chronic illnesses that have plagued the neighborhood and its rescuers since the crash of an Israeli cargo jet.

New disclosures the plane was carrying a chemical that can be used to produce the deadly nerve gas sarin have reignited demands for the truth — and renewed speculation over what the Israelis intended to do with the material.

Forty-three people were killed on Oct. 4, 1992, when the Israel-bound Boeing 747 cargo jet lost its two right engines and smashed into a 12-story apartment block shortly after takeoff from Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport.

—The Associated Press



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