

News digest

**Families of Flight 800 victims can sue**

NEW YORK — A federal appeals court ruled Wednesday that families of the TWA Flight 800 victims can seek millions of dollars in damages for pain and suffering because the crash was not in international waters.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in a 2-to-1 decision that the 1996 crash eight miles off the coast of Long Island was not governed by the Death on the High Seas Act, which limits lawsuit damages.

In its majority opinion, the appeals court noted that President Reagan in 1988 extended the territorial sea of the United States from 3 miles to 12 miles offshore.

The Boeing 747 exploded minutes into a flight from New York to Paris, falling in pieces to the Atlantic Ocean. All 230 people aboard were killed. The exact cause of the crash remains a mystery.

Families of the victims have sought millions of dollars in damages from Boeing, TWA and Hydro-Aire Inc., which made the plane's fuel pumps. The plaintiffs claim the companies were negligent in the construction and operation of the plane. A trial in the case is set to begin next February.

Steve Pounian, a lawyer for the families, said the ruling meant families would not be limited to damage awards of as little as \$100,000 to \$200,000 for "pecuniary losses" or those calculated from an estimate of future earnings and other factors.

Instead, they may be able to seek damages for the loss of care, comfort and companionship of loved ones as well as pain and suffering their loved ones went through when the plane exploded.

Boeing spokesman Russell Young said the company was studying the ruling and did not have an immediate comment.

Julia Bishop, a TWA spokeswoman, said the airline would leave it to Boeing to decide whether to appeal the ruling "because it's more Boeing's issue than ours." A message left with a lawyer for Hydro-Aire was not immediately returned.

**Last wild California condor goes home**

LOS ANGELES — After 14 years behind bars, AC-8 is going home.

The last female California condor to have been taken from the wild was packed into a helicopter at the Los Angeles Zoo on Tuesday for a ride to Ventura County, where she will be released next month to soar among the cliffs where she grew up.

AC-8 is the first of the original 27 birds caught to be returned to her home territory. Officials say she'll have an important job — teaching younger birds about roosting and nesting sites, foraging places and local wind patterns — knowledge that is not instinctive.

"We hope she survives," said Michael Clark, a condor keeper at the zoo. "She can transfer all this

tradition that has been handed down to her for thousands of years. These traditions were alive and well before (condors) were brought into captivity."

AC-8 — the initials stand for "adult condor" — was captured in 1986 as part of an effort to breed the giant vultures in captivity to save them from extinction. AC-8 did her part, providing nine offspring.

But now she is believed to be past breeding age. Clark said the bird, which weighs 17 1/2 pounds and has a 9 1/2-foot wingspan, is at least 28 years old and last bred in 1995.

"She goes through all the motions ... she just doesn't lay any eggs," he said.

Her new job will involve mentoring youngsters, including two 10-month-olds that will be released with her on April 4 in Los Padres National Forest.

"They aren't innately wild at all," Clark said of condors. "I've raised 79 of them. ... They're taught to be wild by the experience of other birds."

**Mobile home fire kills eight**

ACWORTH, Ga. — Fire destroyed a mobile home early today and killed eight people, including an infant, authorities said.

Five bodies were found in a bedroom near the back door and three others were in the front of the four-bedroom, double-wide mobile home, said police Maj. Chuck Martin.

"It appears they were all trying

to exit," said Mark Gresham, a spokesman for the Cobb County Fire Department.

Neighbor Jim Wheeling said he tried to open windows to get to the victims.

"I picked up a big ol' rock and slammed it into the plate glass window, but it wouldn't break," said Wheeling, a 40-year-old construction worker.

The victims were Linda Joanne Cochran, her four children, her niece, her teen-age son's girlfriend and the girlfriend's baby, said Ed Converse, who owns the mobile home park. He said Cochran worked for him as maintenance supervisor until two weeks ago, when she quit to manage a fast-food restaurant.

"Everybody liked Joanne. She was close to her kids. If there was a stray, she took them in — anyone, anything. She had a huge heart," he said.

The names of the other victims were not immediately available.

Police said the fire at the Modern Living Mobile Home Park in Acworth, about 30 miles northwest of Atlanta, was reported at 3:16 a.m.

Converse said some of the mobile homes in the park were 15 to 20 years old, but all are equipped with smoke detectors. He rents them for \$125 to \$150 a week.

However, state Insurance Commissioner John Oxendine said there was no evidence of a working smoke detector in the home.

He said the fire started in or around a clothes dryer.

The Associated Press

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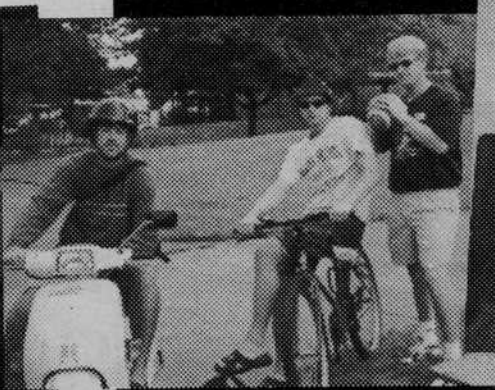
**CANCER**

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**MYTH**

Most UO students drink to get drunk when they party.



**REALITY**

Most UO students have 4 drinks or fewer when they party.

74% of UO students drink 1 or fewer days a week... or don't drink at all.

Data taken from the 1998 CORE Survey

New View 2000

Office of Student Life