

Premier Travel
 • Airfare Specials! •
 Miami - \$198.00*
 New York City - \$198.00*
 Puerto Vallarta - \$278.00*
 Tokyo - \$498.00*
*tax and fees not included, restrictions apply. Subject to change without notice.
 Eurail Passes issued On-Site!!!
 E-mail: fares@luv2travel.com
1011 Harlow
747-0909
 Student Travel Experts

ΓΦΒ and ΣΦΕ
Pancake Breakfast
All you can eat!
 Saturday, April 23rd
 10am-2pm
 at Gamma Phi Beta
 1021 Hilyard St.
 \$5 includes pancakes, eggs, bacon, coffee, raffle prizes and more
 Benefits Campfire USA

poppi's Anatolia
 "The Land East"
 Traditional Greek & Indian Food

 Lunch Monday through Saturday
 Dinner 7 Nights a Week
 992 Willamette
 Eugene, Or 97401
 343-9661

Announcing GamesGrid Poker and our Grand Opening

1,000% DEPOSIT BONUS
 For a limited time, get 10x return on what you deposit, up to \$5,000 bonus. Hurry to www.gamesgrid.com/bonus for details.

 Make your best play.™

Lawsuit: AOL monitor seduced girl

BY ALEX VEIGA
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — America Online markets itself as a safe place for children, with parent-friendly features and a force of employees who monitor kids' chat rooms and watch out for adults prowling for youngsters.

But is AOL doing enough to monitor the monitors?

That question is central to a lawsuit filed by a California teenager who claims a chat-room monitor tried to seduce her online.

She alleges the employee used his position to proposition her over two years, during which they exchanged graphic images, e-mails and phone calls — exactly the kind of scenario the man was hired to prevent.

AOL fired the man, listed in the lawsuit as a resident of Oklahoma, and referred the case to the FBI and other law enforcement agencies, none of which pursued criminal charges.

The girl's lawsuit, filed April 1, is the first such claim made against an employee at AOL or any other major Internet service provider, according to online child safety organizations and law enforcement agencies. It alleges negligence and false advertising and seeks at least \$25,000 from the chat-room monitor, AOL and its parent, Time Warner Inc.

AOL says it closely screens its chat-room monitors and acted quickly in this case.

Still, the company is being forced to defend itself over a service it pioneered in the mid-1990s and that remains a selling point to keep its millions of

subscribers from jumping to other Internet service providers.

"This case isn't so much are they properly monitoring chat rooms for kids; this is more a question of what are they doing to monitor the qualities and qualifications of the people they're hiring," said Parry Aftab, an Internet lawyer in New Jersey who runs online safety workshops for parents and children.

Claims of online abuse by an employee are rare, said Aftab, who has heard of no more than a dozen claims against chat-room monitors or moderators.

Chat-room monitors are cyberspace's lifeguards. They typically watch over the messages that participants post and warn users when they cross the line with offensive or otherwise prohibited remarks. They can delete offending remarks, kick violators out of the chat room and even ban them from returning.

AOL is a rarity as a major service provider that offers its own chat service, as well as one of the few online companies that have paid, full-time employees monitoring some chat rooms. The company markets its KOL, or Kids Online, chat area as a safer online experience.

It was inside one kids-only chat room where the AOL employee, then 23, first contacted the then-15-year-old girl, who was living in Kern County, Calif., according to the lawsuit. She is now 19 and living in Los Angeles.

They grew close, according to the lawsuit, the girl gradually confiding in him about her parents' divorce and

Most teens have visited a chat room

According to a survey, 62 percent of teens who visit the Internet daily have entered a chat room, while only a quarter of parents worry "a lot" about their teens being contacted by a stranger online.

Have ever used a chat room

Teens **55%** Adults **26%**

Teens who have ...

Received e-mail or instant message (IM) from a stranger

60%

Exchange e-mail or IM with strangers

50%

Lied about their age to access a Web site

15%

Parents who have ...

Family computer in a public space in the home such as a den

70%

Sat down with teens at a computer and surfed together

68%

Checked on their teen's activities after child had been online

61%

SOURCE: Pew Internet & American Life Project

AP

her troubles making friends. She and the chat monitor were preparing to meet on her 17th birthday and have sex, the lawsuit said, when one of the his co-workers became suspicious and blew the whistle.

AOL spokesman Nicholas Graham said monitors undergo rigorous screening, including drug testing and background checks, and receive specialized training for the area and age group they will be monitoring.

"That monitoring is itself actively monitored and scrutinized by internal compliance and investigation teams with close, long-standing working relationships with both law enforcement

and children's safety advocacy groups," Graham said. "The bottom line is, AOL's self-policing and self-monitoring efforts worked."

Graham would not say how many full-time chat-room monitors AOL has or whether the company has tightened its procedures because of the case.

But if AOL's oversight was effective, the monitor would have been caught well before he arranged to meet the girl, said her attorney, Olivier Taillieu.

"You can't let something like this go on for two years or a year and a half," Taillieu said. "You can't have the lifeguard jump in the pool and drown one of the kids."

High gasoline prices forcing changes in lives of Americans

BY WILL LESTER
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Half the people in the country say record-high gas prices are starting to cause them problems. Who's to blame? Americans point a finger at the oil companies, foreign nations that control the oil supply and politicians.

More than half say they're cutting back on driving, and many plan to stay closer to home on their summer vacations.

An Associated Press-AOL poll found 51 percent of those surveyed say that if gas prices remain high for the next six months it will cause a financial hardship for them.

Thirty percent of those polled classified the hit as "serious," according to the survey conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs for the AP and AOL News.

"You have to decide — gas, groceries, medicine," said Marcia Cain of Indianapolis, who is semiretired. "I'm on limited income. I don't go out as much — eating out, going to listen to jazz. It uses gas you don't want to use."

Cain paid \$2.15 per gallon this week after paying \$2.35 per gallon the week before. "It aggravates me, but there's not much I can do about it," she said.

High global oil prices have pushed the cost of regular gasoline for U.S. motorists to around \$2.21 per gallon, with prices ranging from an average of \$2.64 in California to about \$2 in Oklahoma, according to the auto group AAA. Prices are expected to remain above \$2 nationally through

the summer.

Americans spread the blame around, with 29 percent blaming the oil companies, 24 percent blaming foreign governments that dominate oil reserves and 23 percent blaming politicians. Eight percent blame the high prices on "environmentalists who want to limit oil exploration," while 6 percent blame "people who drive gas-guzzling vehicles."

Anxiety about gasoline prices comes as President Bush is pressing Congress to approve energy legislation that includes tax breaks and subsidies, mostly for energy companies, and would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil development. The House passed its version of the bill Thursday.

The president gets low marks from the public for his handling of the nation's energy problems, with 62 percent saying they disapprove. When he first took office, people were more inclined to say he would handle energy problems effectively.

Many people, 41 percent, say gas prices are making them seriously consider purchasing a more fuel-efficient vehicle.

Sales of big trucks and SUVs are off at General Motors. And purchases of Ford's largest SUVs — the Excursion, Expedition and Explorer — fell by more than 24 percent in the first three months of the year.

Auto makers that produce hybrid cars that run on a combination of electricity and gas are reporting strong interest from consumers.

POLL

Gas prices affecting half of population

More than 50 percent say rising gas prices are causing hardship, according to a poll conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs for The Associated Press and America Online.

Over the next six months, do you expect that increases in the price of gasoline will cause hardship for you or your family, or not?

51% It will **48%** Will not **1%** Not sure

Do you expect that will be a serious hardship or not serious?

30% Serious **20%** Not serious **1%** Not sure

As a result of recent increases in energy prices, would you say you have or have not done each of the following?

☒ Have done ☐ Have not done ☐ Not sure

Reduced the amount of driving **58%** **41%** 1

Turned down home heat or air conditioning **60%** **40%**

Thought about buying a fuel-efficient vehicle **41%** **58%** 1

Vacation plans to stay closer to home **41%** **58%** 1

Cut back on other expenses **57%** **43%**

Which one of the following would you say deserves the most blame for higher energy prices?

Oil companies that want to make too much profit **29%**

Foreign countries that dominate oil reserves **24%**

Politicians **23%**

Environmentalists who want to limit oil exploration **8%**

People who drive gas-guzzling vehicles **6%**

All equally **6%**

Not sure **2%**

No one to blame/not a problem **1%**

Other **1%**

NOTE: Poll of 1,000 adults conducted between April 18-20; margin of error ± 3.1 percentage points

SOURCE: Ipsos Public Affairs for AP and AOL

AP