

■ Death penalty

# Ohio man becomes 999th person executed since 1977

*John Hicks, 49, was put to death for the murder of two family members*

BY SARAH ANDERSON  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

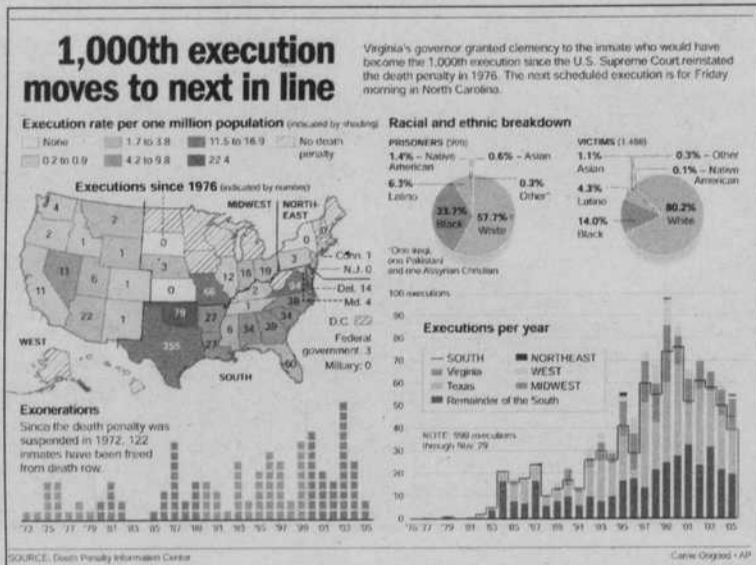
LUCASVILLE, Ohio — Ohio carried out the nation's 999th execution since 1977 on Tuesday, putting to death a man who strangled his mother-in-law while high on cocaine and later killed his 5-year-old stepdaughter to cover up the crime.

John Hicks, 49, was put to death a day after Eric Nance was executed in Arkansas for killing a teen ager by slashing her throat with a box cutter.

The 1,000th execution since the death penalty was reinstated was set for Wednesday, when Robin Lovitt was set to die in Virginia for fatally stabbing a man with scissors during a pool-hall robbery, but Virginia's governor granted clemency, sparing Lovitt's life.

Hicks offered a tearful apology for the 1985 murders earlier this month to Ohio Parole Board members, and said he loved both victims — 56-year-old Maxine Armstrong and 5-year-old Brandy Green. He said his cocaine high made him desperate and paranoid.

He repeated his apology before his execution, telling relatives, "I know this may be shallow or hollow words to y'all, but it's coming



from my heart." Douglas Hughes, Armstrong's son-in-law, witnessed the execution with his wife and daughter, said Hicks "showed no real remorse. He never once apologized to the family and never asked forgiveness."

Hicks had traded his VCR for about \$50 worth of cocaine, court records show. After taking the drugs, he realized that his wife would wonder where it was, so he decided to steal money from Armstrong and get it back.

He found his stepdaughter asleep on the couch at Armstrong's apartment. He woke her and brought her to bed and then

strangled Armstrong, leaving with about \$300 and some credit cards.

Realizing Brandy could identify him, he returned and attempted to suffocate the 5-year-old with a pillow, then strangle her. She struggled, and Hicks covered her mouth and nose with duct tape.

He left Cincinnati, but turned himself in to police.

On Monday, Gov. Bob Taft had refused to change Hicks' sentence from death to life in prison. The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati and the U.S. Supreme Court also turned down last-minute appeals. Hicks was the 19th person executed in Ohio since the state resumed executions in 1999.

IN BRIEF

Virginia governor spares life of man to be executed

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia's governor on Tuesday spared the life of a convicted killer who would have been the 1,000th person executed in the United States since the Supreme Court allowed capital punishment to resume in 1976.

Robin Lovitt's death sentence was commuted to life in prison without parole a little more than 24 hours before he was to be executed by injection Wednesday night for stabbing a man to death with a pair of scissors during a 1998 pool-hall robbery.

In granting clemency, Gov. Mark R. Warner noted that evidence from the trial had been improperly destroyed, depriving the defense of the opportunity to subject the material to the latest in DNA testing.

"The commonwealth must ensure that every time this ultimate sanction is carried out, it is done fairly," Warner said in a statement.

Warner, a Democrat, had never before granted clemency to a death row inmate during his four years in office. During that time, 11 men have been executed. Virginia is one of the most active death-penalty states, having executed 94 people since 1976.

Vatican defends statement about homosexual priests

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican defended a policy statement designed to keep men with "deep-seated" homosexual tendencies from becoming priests, but said there would be no crackdown on gays who are already ordained.

The Vatican document, the first major policy statement of Pope Benedict XVI's papacy, was officially released

Tuesday after being leaked earlier. Conservatives have said it may help reverse the "gay culture" of many U.S. seminaries, while liberal critics complain the restrictions will create morale problems among clergy and lead to an even greater priest shortage in the United States.

The Rev. James Martin, a U.S. Jesuit who has written on the issue, said American theologians, canon lawyers and other Roman Catholics will "hope that the document won't really mean what it says." But he believes it's clear the Vatican wants to keep gay men from being ordained — even if they're committed to celibacy — and hopes bishops and seminary rectors will act accordingly.

Bush says early withdrawal from Iraq would be mistake

WASHINGTON — President Bush said Tuesday a U.S. military pullout from Iraq would be a terrible mistake, beginning a new push defending his embattled war policy. His Pentagon chief said, "Quitting is not an exit strategy."

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said of the Iraqis, "They know that they're the ones that are going to have to grab that country. And it's time."

The administration is under pressure to convince increasingly skeptical Americans that the president's strategy for Iraq is headed in the right direction. The president is to give a speech on the subject Wednesday at the Naval Academy.

The unrelenting violence that continues to claim American lives has contributed to a drop in Bush's popularity, to its lowest level yet, and to growing doubts about the war. It also has led to a debate in Congress about when the 160,000 U.S. troops there should begin to come home.

—The Associated Press

# Elections Board is Hiring

The ASUO Elections Board is in charge of organizing and overseeing the ASUO elections.

**ELECTIONS MANAGER**

- Organize Electronic voting process on DuckWeb
- Organize absentee ballot procedures
- Organize voting booths
- Organize the counting of ballots
- Hold 5 office hours/week plus attend weekly Elections Board meetings

Expected hours: 10-15/week; approximately 4-month position  
Applicants must be currently enrolled with at least 8 credits  
Salary: \$125/month stipend for 4 months  
Selection Process: Interview  
Reports to: Elections Coordinator

**OFFICE MANAGER**

- Prepare Elections Packet
- Constitution Court Liaison (investigate elections violations and complaints)
- Hold 5 office hours/week plus attend weekly Elections Board meetings

**PUBLICITY COORDINATOR**

- Advertise for public hearings, Elections Packet, and elections.
- Determine and implement all elections publicity including, but not limited to, banners, signs, balloons, etc.
- Act as liaison between all campus publications and the Elections Board
- Responsible for the production (design, layout, paste-up and typing) of the Voter's Guide
- Hold 5 office hours/week plus attend weekly Elections Board meetings

**VOTER EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

- Contact residence halls, Greeks, international students, Student Housing, etc. to promote knowledge and interest in elections
- Schedule and organize debates
- Organize candidate fairs, candidate meetings, etc.
- Act as voter/candidate liaison for Elections Board
- Hold 5 office hours/week plus attend weekly Elections Board meetings

All applications due January 9, 2006  
541-346-0629 • <http://asuo.uoregon.edu>

**STUDENT SENATE SEAT #18**

Grad/ Law Student Seat  
Applications due December 9 @ 5:00 p.m.  
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