

LAW & JUSTICE

Saddam's Capture Brings Relief

Hopes rise for quicker return of military overseas

(AP) — Oregonians and their elected officials hailed this weekend's capture of Saddam Hussein with joy, and hoped the events would hasten the return of loved ones serving abroad.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said it was an occasion to congratulate the American military.

"And of course we have soldiers from virtually every nook and cranny in Oregon serving, and that makes us especially proud this afternoon," Wyden said. "Saddam Hussein's capture proves once

again that the United States has the best and most tenacious fighting forces in the world."

His Republican counterpart, U.S.

full and unfettered, sovereign democracy without fearing their former murderous tyrant," Smith said.

"I just feel that the Bush administration has been really good about doing PR stunts to boost the popularity of the war. I don't think the capture of Saddam proves anything or helps anything."

— Jennifer Webster, a board member with Eugene Peaceworks

Sen. Gordon Smith, highlighted the consequences of the capture for the people of Iraq.

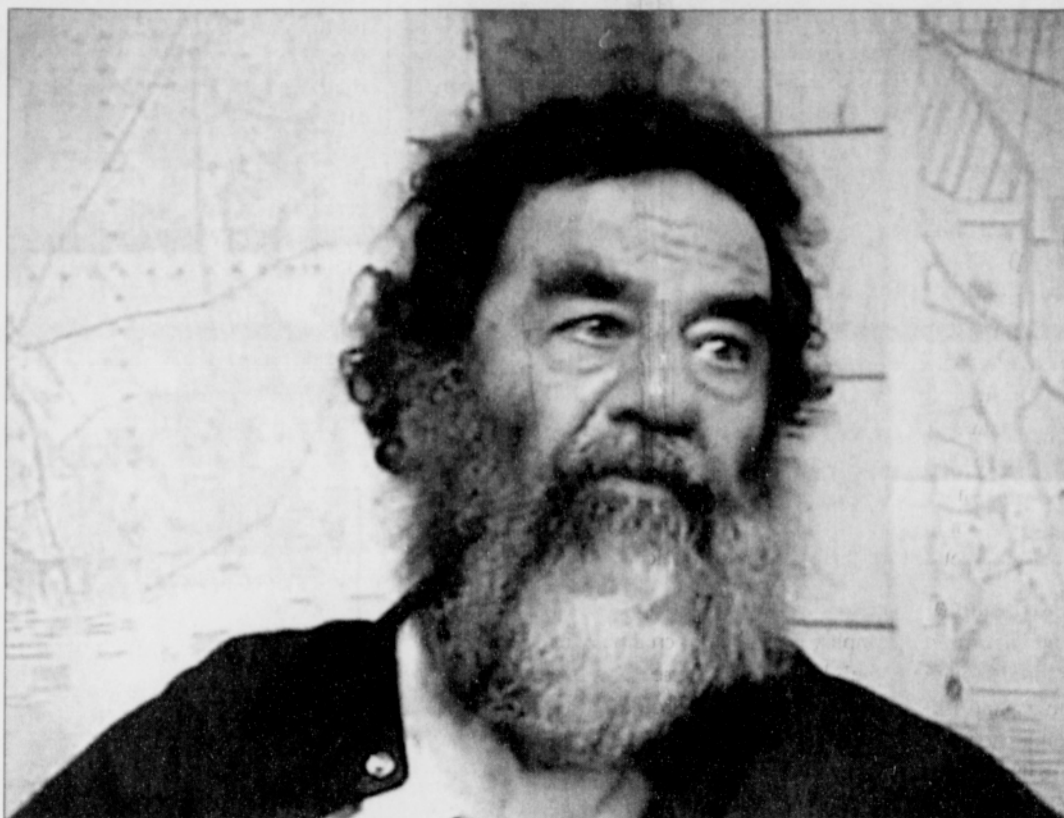
"(The Iraqi people) now have greater freedom to move toward a

And U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., cautioned that terrorism will still exist, even though Hussein is in custody.

"We have to keep in mind that the war on terrorism has never been about just one person, so there will continue to be threats around the world," Walden said. "But certainly Saddam's capture will mean that we will get better information out of the Iraqi people who have, up until this point, still lived in fear that Saddam would come back into power."

Judy and Bob Updyke of Cottage Grove first heard about the capture when their daughter, U.S. Army Sgt. Jennifer Updyke, called them around 3:30 a.m. Sunday from Mosul, Iraq.

"She said she'd heard it through the grapevine," Judy Updyke said Sunday evening. "She mentioned



Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein is captured Saturday by U.S. Army troops in Iraq.

it in passing, was kind of ho-hum about it. But to me it was, 'Oh my gosh, I am so glad they got him.' The first thing we did was run downstairs and listen to the news, and sure enough, it was true."

Other Oregonians quickly placed the news in political context, wondering what it might mean for President Bush and Democratic hopefuls in the 2004 presidential election.

"It makes me feel kind of sad," said Jennifer Webster, a board member with Eugene Peaceworks. "I just feel that the Bush adminis-

tration has been really good about doing PR stunts to boost the popularity of the war. I don't think the capture of Saddam proves anything or helps anything."

And others said they doubt Saddam's removal will convince guerrilla fighters to lay down their weapons.

"I don't think the violence has anything to do with Saddam," said Diane Sayer of Eugene. "I think it has to do with the people of that country wanting us out."

Oregon veterans spoke of the

enormous morale booster they thought the capture would provide to Oregon troops stationed overseas.

Barbara Hosier, who served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War era and now leads Salem's American Legion Post 149, a post made up entirely of female veterans, called the event, "a turning point."

"I think the whole situation will see a big change and will speed things up," Hosier said. "It shows we mean business."

Child's Life Term Overturned

Defendant was just 12 when playmate killed

(AP) — Critics of a Florida law that allows child murderers to be locked away for life want it reconsidered after an appeals court overturned a young teenager's conviction in the death of a 6-year-old playmate.

While the 4th District Court of Appeal did not directly challenge the law, it did order a new trial for 16-year-old Lionel Tate, saying the boy's mental competency should have been evaluated before trial.

Tate was the youngest defen-

dant to be sentenced to life without parole in Florida, which leads the nation in the prosecution of juveniles as adults. His lawyers argued Tate, then 12, was imitating pro wrestling moves when he punched, kicked and stomped Tiffany Eunick to death.

Democratic state Sen. Steven Geller has filed legislation that would allow child murderers under 16 to be eligible for parole if they had not been previously convicted of violent crimes.

"We must find a reasonable approach where justice is served and our humanity is kept intact," Geller said.

The appeals court said at a minimum, the trial judge had an obliga-

tion to ensure that Tate understood the plea bargain he was offered and the possibility of a life sentence if he rejected it.

Besides noting his age, the three-judge panel said Tate had "significant mental delays" and a below-average IQ.

Tate and his mother had maintained his innocence and turned down a deal that would have given him a three-year sentence. Had he accepted, he could have been out of prison 10 months ago.

"I feel like somebody lifted a 200-pound weight off my head," said his trial lawyer, Jim Lewis. "It's just a beautiful thing, and I hope now that Lionel's going to have a chance at a life."



Lionel Tate cries as a life sentence is imposed in this March 2001 photo.

Assassinated Leader Remembered

Harvey Milk was Martin Luther King of gay rights

(AP) — Harvey Milk was assassinated a quarter century ago in San Francisco, yet his legacy of public service as an openly gay man remains very much alive for a community still hungry for heroes.

The anniversary of Nov. 27, 1978 - the day Milk, one of the nation's first openly gay elected officials, and Mayor George Moscone were gunned down - has inspired panel discussions, a museum exhibit and a memorial march.

The occasion has provided a timely barometer for people who see Milk as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. of the gay civil rights movement.

"Harvey remains a symbol of what's possible," said director Robert Epstein, who is preparing a

25th anniversary DVD edition of "The Times of Harvey Milk," the 1984 documentary that won an Academy Award.

Milk would be 73 today, an aging pioneer instead of a modern gay martyr.

He had been in office less than a year when fellow supervisor Dan White, a former police officer, smuggled a gun into City Hall. Days earlier, White had resigned from

the board and he blamed Milk and Moscone when the mayor refused to reappoint him. White shot both men multiple times.

White argued that junk food fueled his rampage. His now infamous "Twinkie defense," supported by psychiatrist, worked. Instead of murder, White was convicted of manslaughter. He served a little more than three years in prison, and then committed suicide.



Harvey Milk poses in front of his camera shop in San Francisco in this Nov. 9, 1977 file photo. (AP photo)

Complaint Draws Investigation

Treatment of black students in question

(AP) — The Seattle chapter of the NAACP plans to investigate a suburban school district's treatment of black students after the suspension of a 16-year-old who spoke out last spring against the use of "Huckleberry Finn" in English class.

Renton High School student Calista Phair has had two in-school suspensions since school resumed this fall, and one full-day suspen-

sion. School officials say the disciplinary actions are unrelated to her book protest. Phair, her family and the NAACP are not sure that's the case.

Phair opposed use of the Mark Twain classic, "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," in her 11th grade English class last spring. The book, written in 1884, focuses on Huck, a 13-year-old white boy, and his friendship with a black man in the South.

Phair was unhappy with Twain's portrayal of blacks and use of the "n" word. At her request, she was excused from read-

ing the book. Phair also handed out fliers explaining her resistance in school hallways.

"I believe that the book is degrading and denigrating toward African Americans," Phair said.

Carl Mack, president of the Seattle-King County chapter of the NAACP, accused the school district of taking it upon itself to retaliate against a young woman who expressed her opinion.

The NAACP also plans to look into disciplinary cases involving other black students, Mack said, noting that some parents in south suburban Renton have already contacted his office.

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