

Around the Globe

WORLD NEWS

Eleven killed, 19,000 evacuated as floods swamp Philippines

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP) — Pounding rains flooded more than 300 farm villages in the southern Philippines, killing at least 11 people and forcing thousands of others to evacuate, officials said today.

Four people were injured and four others were missing, including two children believed to have been buried in a landslide in Butuan City.

Rescuers on boats and helicopters searched flooded areas and delivered food and medicine to evacuation centers in four provinces as the weather improved today, Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado said.

Officials attributed the rains, which began last Thursday, to the La Nina weather phenomenon, in which water temperatures fall in the Pacific Ocean.

Mercado also blamed years of illegal logging for flash floods in villages unaccustomed to flooding.

The National Disaster Coordinating Center reported that the recent flooding affected more than 400,000 villagers, including about 19,000 who were evacuated to 29 government evacuation centers. About \$3.2 million worth of crops, roads and bridges were damaged, the center said.

Agriculture Secretary William Dar said it was fortunate the flooding occurred toward the end of the harvesting season in the four provinces, which are part of a key rice-producing region.

Heavy rains caused extensive flooding in Agusan del Sur province last month, killing six people and displacing more than 8,000 from their homes.

The start of La Nina in the Philippines last year followed a long drought attributed to the opposite weather phenomenon, El Nino, which is caused by higher temperatures in the Pacific Ocean.

ACROSS THE U.S.

Missing boys use survival tactics during cold night on mountain

SANDPOINT, Idaho (AP) — As night fell in the Selkirk Mountains, and freezing wind whipped snowdrifts even deeper, three lost teen-agers settled on a survival strategy: cling together and pray.

"There wasn't much to do but keep yourself huddled together," said Aaron Baudry-Peterson on Sunday, recalling the cold night stranded with two 15-year-old ski pals. "So I sat there and I prayed all night long."

The trio, who were part of a Spokane, Wash., church group's Saturday outing to the Schweitzer Mountain ski resort, carved a snow cave where they passed their sleepless, cold night.

On Sunday, they trekked seven miles through waist-deep snow, eventually stumbling upon the home of Bill Findley, a member of the sheriff's search and rescue team.

"They were soaked clear through and shaking," Findley said. "Their hands were pure white."

Baudry-Peterson, 15, Justin Haeger and the third youth, whose identity was not released, suffered no permanent injuries, authorities said.

International Toy Fair features high-tech toys, affordable prices

NEW YORK (AP) — Unlike the child-to-doll talks of the past, when a kid speaks to My Best Friend, it won't be an imaginary conversation.

The Play-by-Play doll is capable of carrying on a limited conversation, thanks to voice-recognition technology. If she asks a question and a wrong answer is given, she will encourage the child to try again.

My Best Friend, on display at the American International Toy Fair beginning today, is just one example of the latest movement in the toy industry: It's technologically innovative and — at about \$40 — inexpensive.

"It's easy to build a great toy, but it's hard to sell it at the right price," said Sean McGowan, a toy analyst at the investment firm Gerard Klauer Mattison. "This year, we are seeing great use of technology at really affordable prices."

Toy makers have stepped up their high-tech offerings in recent years to make playtime more entertaining and challenging for today's computer-literate kids.

But innovation hasn't always come cheap. In the past, these toys — especially the most advanced — have been expensive — many selling in excess of \$100, above what most value-conscious Americans will pay for a single toy.

Entering 1999, high-tech toy prices are going the way of computer prices: Better products for less.

"A (computer) chip you could buy in 1980 for \$4,000 is now selling for under a \$1," said Doug Glen, chief strategy officer at Mattel Inc., the world's biggest toymaker. "None of us could do what we are doing now at a reasonable price just a few years ago."

AROUND IOWA

Inmate commits suicide while held in Linn County jail

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — A man being held on a public intoxication charge at the Linn County Jail committed suicide by wrapping a telephone cord around his neck, the sheriff's department said.

The inmate was identified only as a 33-year-old Cedar Rapids man until authorities could notify his family. He died of apparent asphyxiation Sunday, the sheriff's department said.

Sheriff's Lt. Brian Gardner, the assistant jail administrator, said in a statement Sunday night that the man was found unconscious in a cell shortly before 2 p.m. He had been arrested an hour earlier by Cedar Rapids police, and his blood-alcohol had tested nearly 2 1/2 times the legal limit for intoxication of .10.

Hundreds of thousands mourn loss of beloved leader

Funeral ceremonies begin for King Hussein

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — In a final homage to a much-loved monarch, the flag-draped coffin of King Hussein was borne today through the streets of his capital while hundreds of thousands of compatriots wept and pelted the motorcade with flowers.

More than 800,000 Jordanians — many shouting "God is great!" and using their red-checked keffiyehs, or headscarves, to wipe tears away — lined the streets of the procession route under lead-gray skies. The wail of Koranic verses hung in the air.

The funeral of the king, who died Sunday at 63 of cancer after nearly half a century on the Hashemite throne, was also one of the most extraordinary diplomatic and political gatherings in recent memory.

On this day, bitter enemies came together — at least temporarily — in their wish to

honor the Middle East's longest-serving monarch. Syrian President Hafez Assad, for example, was making an unprecedented appearance at the same event as Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

President Clinton arrived with a large American contingent that included former Presidents Ford, Carter and Bush.

They joined Russian President Boris Yeltsin and hundreds of other dignitaries.

As an honor guard carried the coffin from the door of the Bab es Salaam or Door of Peace palace — named for the peace the king forged with Israel — Hussein's tearful widow, American-born Queen Noor, could be glimpsed in the doorway, surrounded by weeping royal women in black robes.

Her blonde hair was covered with a headscarf of white, the

color of mourning.

"Our eyes cannot contain our tears any more," said an announcer on Jordanian television, his voice cracking with emotion, as the motorcade began making its slow way through the hilly streets of Amman.

The daylong observances were to include devotional prayers led by the new king, Abdullah, and burial at the royal cemetery.

"King Hussein will not die — he will always remain in our hearts," said Mohammed Karim Zabous, 50, from the town of Jerash.

Along the procession route, people pelted the coffin with flowers and waved their hands in farewell as it passed.

At several points in the half-hour journey riot police and soldiers had to hold back the crowd as people surged forward.

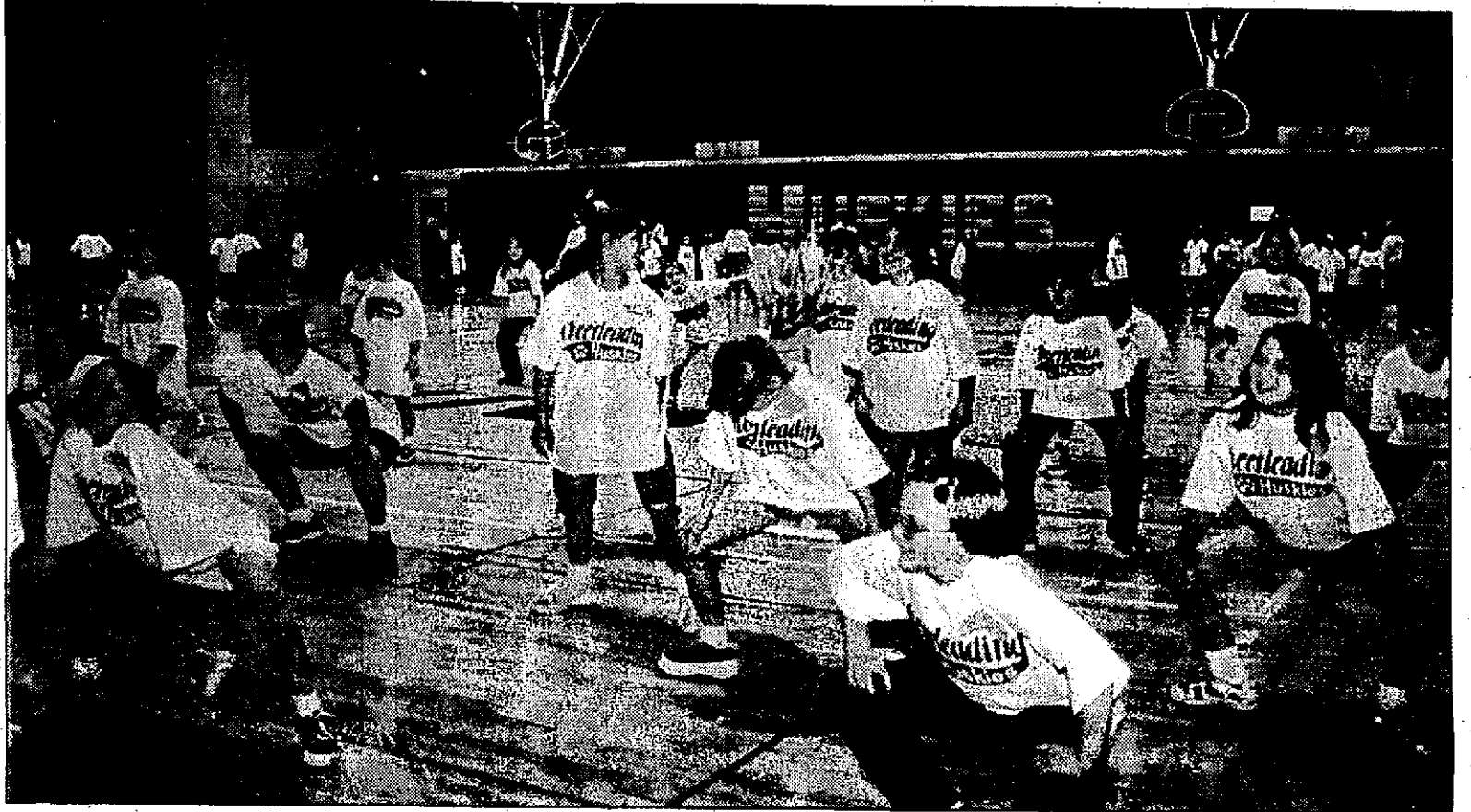
King Abdullah and all the royal princes, flanked by an honor guard, formally received the coffin, carried by pallbearers in black armbands.

Earlier, a riderless white stallion — one of the king's favorite horses — was led into the palace compound with a pair of empty boots in the stirrups, facing backward.

In the hours before the procession, Jordanians piled flowers under posters of the late king, flew black flags from doorposts and car antennas and flocked to mosques for early morning prayers.

The country was to remain virtually shut down until Saturday as a period of official mourning was observed.

In addition to the 800,000 people who turned out in the capital, another 1.2 million attended rites held elsewhere.



Future cheerleaders

Oelwein cheerleaders conducted a clinic Saturday for first through eighth grade students. More than 130 students from the Oelwein and Starmont Community School Districts took part. The youngsters learned various cheers throughout the four-hour clinic and will perform Tuesday night as part of the JV/varsity girls basketball games between Oelwein and Waverly-Shell Rock. The first through fifth graders will perform at halftime of the JV game and should be in the Oelwein High School gym no later than 6:15 p.m. The sixth through eighth graders will perform at halftime of the varsity game and are asked to arrive by 7:45 p.m. The performers will be admitted free, however all others will be charged admission. (Photo by Sue Miller)

Mother claims she met with missing son in 1997

Investigator to meet with Noreen Gosch

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Police plan to have an investigator visit with a woman whose son disappeared more than 16 years ago following her revelation that he visited her in 1997.

Noreen Gosch testified Friday in federal court in Lincoln, Neb., that her son, Johnny Gosch, visited her in her West Des Moines apartment in March 1997.

It was the first time she has publicly mentioned having such an encounter.

Johnny Gosch was 12 years old when he vanished Sept. 5, 1982. His wagon was found about two blocks from his home, filled with copies of The Des

Moines Sunday Register he was to deliver.

The report of her comments prompted West Des Moines Police Capt. Bob Rushing to say that he would have an investigator visit with her today.

"In the past she told us something similar to this and then chose to recant it," said Rushing, who has been involved with the investigation since it began. "It sounds to me like we'll be following up a 2-year-old lead."

Polk County Attorney John Sarcone said that if Noreen Gosch said she saw her son, he couldn't say anything different.

"I'm not going to doubt her," Sarcone said. "I don't think that woman would get up and lie

before a federal judge ... especially about something this serious that involves her son."

"It would be a terrible thing to lose a child," he said. "I have nothing but sympathy for her in that regard."

Noreen Gosch said that during the 90-minute meeting in 1997, her son, accompanied by another man he refused to identify, provided names and other information concerning a child-sex and pornography ring that abducted him. Gosch said she has interviewed 35 children who were victims.

"He told me what happened to him," she said. "He asked for my help to try and bring this case to a close so that he and many of

the kids involved would be free and able to live their lives."

In August 1997, five months after Gosch claims her son visited, she helped produce a 30-second television spot by the Kansas City, Mo.-based Lost Child Network. In the television spot, Gosch told her son that she knew he was still alive.

Noreen Gosch was in Lincoln to testify in a civil case against Lawrence E. King Jr., the former manager of a failed Omaha, Neb., credit union.

King, who is in federal prison, has not responded to a suit filed by Paul Bonacci of Omaha, in which Bonacci claims he was a victim of sexual abuse from King.

Home on the plane; Oregon man calls jet home

LAUREL, Ore. (AP) — It's definitely the most eye-catching home on the hillside: a blue and white jetliner that logged millions of miles over the last three decades, but saved its most interesting journey for last.

The Boeing 727 is set to become the new residence of Bruce Campbell, a quirky 49-year-old electrical engineer who bought the aircraft last year.

The plane was towed 12 miles from a field near the airport in Hillsboro, a suburb west of Portland, through downtown and onto a state highway before arriving in this tiny general store of a town just before dawn Saturday.

"It's awesome. It's spine-tingling," Campbell said as the jet was towed through Laurel, its fuselage a startling disruption to

the backdrop of fog-covered hills and quiet farms. "It's fascinating how wonderful that marriage is: a natural environment and slick, cool, high technology."

But by Sunday night, the plane was still stuck on his neighbor's property.

The plan was to pull the plane, resting on wheeled dollies, into a gravel-strewn gully behind the barn belonging to Campbell's neighbors, Paul and Chris Denfeld. There it would stay for a few weeks, until the rain let up and Campbell could figure out a way to get the plane up a muddy slope to his 10-acre parcel.

Turns out, the asphalt driveway was much too narrow, so three massive trucks were used to inch it along atop railroad ties on either side of the pathway. About 20 hired workers spent a

day and a half in a driving rain to move the plane only a few hundred feet up the driveway to the Denfelds' house.

Work was stopped until more gravel could be hauled in to support the 32-ton plane, which will remain for a few days next to a goat pen in full view of visitors to the 500-acre walnut and hazelnut orchards.

"I'm not real thrilled about it being in sight of the house," Chris Denfeld said. "But we're into this now, so we just have to learn to laugh about it."

Campbell, who currently lives in a dilapidated trailer, had dreamed of living inside a jetliner since childhood. He got his wish last Halloween when he purchased the 1969 plane for \$100,000. It was decommissioned by Greece's Olympic Airways.

Campbell will outfit the plane with sewer and water, a bedroom, bathroom and workshop for his computer gadgets. After he reattaches the wings and tail, a deck could also be in the works.

But first came the move, a complex undertaking that will end up costing Campbell about \$25,000. For months, he worked to obtain the permits needed to effectively bring the community to a standstill for a few hours.

Even with the trouble farther up the hill, the operation had the upbeat atmosphere of an old-fashioned barn-raising. And Campbell was thrilled just to have his new toy closer to home.

"It's going to take years to fully understand what happened here," he said. "I'm going to owe lots and lots of people spare kidneys."