

# NEWS

## National and world news in brief

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### Military funeral protestors sued for \$10.9 million Actor and entertainer Robert Goulet dies at 73

The Westboro Baptist Church, known for protesting the funerals of soldiers from the Iraq war, was sued on Wednesday for \$10.9 million. A federal jury in Baltimore awarded the money to the family of Lance Cpl. Matthew Snyder. Snyder died in 2006 in a vehicle accident in Iraq's Anbar province. The Westboro Church and its leaders were sued for defamation, invasion of privacy and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The church's members picketed Snyder's funeral with slogans including "God Hates Fags," "Thank God for Dead Soldiers," and "Thank God for IEDs." The church is well known for picketing many military funerals with similar slander.

Snyder's father, Al Snyder filed the lawsuit. Snyder's lawyer asked the jurors to pick an amount "that says don't do this in Maryland again. Do not bring your circus of hate to Maryland again." Snyder's family was awarded \$2.9 million in com-

pensatory damages and \$8 million in punitive damages.

Attorneys for the church claim that Snyder's funeral was a public event and their First Amendment rights protect their ability to protest there. According to the church's founder Fred Phelps, the case was about "putting a preacher on trial for what he preaches." The church plans to begin using a new sign as a result of the trial which reads "Thank God for 10.9."

Phelps claimed that protests were planned later in the week in Massachusetts. The group has also planned a large protest on Veterans Day at a rally in Washington.

Several states have recently begun implementing laws that aim to discourage future funeral protests. Congress has also passed a law that prevents protests at federal ceremonies.

Robert Goulet, star of stage and screen died Tuesday Oct 30. Goulet was 73 years old and left behind a substantial legacy. He died while awaiting a lung transplant at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. He was diagnosed with a rare form of pulmonary fibrosis in September.

Goulet gained notoriety in 1960 due to his performance as Lancelot in the musical "Camelot." In 1968 He received a Tony Award for best actor on a musical while he performed in "Happy Time."

Goulet also found success in his recorded endeavors. In 1962 he won the best new artist Grammy. He also broke the top 20 in 1964 because of his single "My Love Forgive Me." In 1962, the New York Times quoted Goulet as saying "When I'm using a microphone or doing recordings I try to concentrate on the emotional content of the song and to forget about the voice itself."

Goulet's TV debut was in 1961 with "The Ed Sullivan Show." Throughout the '60s he made an appearance on almost every notable talk and variety show. In the late '60s he performed in the musicals

"Brigadoon," "Carousel," and "Kiss Me Kate."

Goulet regained popularity in recent years through Will Ferrell's portrayal of him on Saturday Night Live. Goulet had also recently been appearing in commercials for "Emerald Nuts," a popular brand of trail mix.

Goulet's last live performance was on Sept 20 in Syracuse, NY. He frequently performed on the Las Vegas strip, sometimes two performances on the same night.

Goulet's wife said he was in good spirits when he passed. He told doctors "Just watch my vocal cords," moments before they inserted a breathing tube.

The singer left behind three children, two ex-wives and one widow. Goulet had a daughter named Nikki with his first wife, Louise Longmore. The couple divorced in 1963, and Goulet married Carol Lawrence the same year. They had two sons named Christopher and Michael. After divorcing Lawrence in 1981, Goulet married his current wife, Vera Novak in 1982.



Source: CNN, Hollywood Reporter

## Bad products of the year awarded

By Lenny Smith  
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A worldwide consumer group announced the 2007 bad products of the year awards on Monday where sleeping pills advertised towards children topped the list. Consumers International said in addition to the advertisements, dangerous toys and bottled water from local reservoirs also topped the list.

The top spot was awarded to the United States subsidiary of the Japanese firm Takeda Pharmaceuticals for their advertising efforts of children's sleep aid Rozerem. The company's television ad, which complied with all US laws, included images of children and unique symbolism like chalkboards and a school bus without warning adults of any potential side effects.

"This case demonstrates the lengths to which some drug companies will go to increase sales of their products, how direct to consumer advertising can promote irrational drug use, and how weak regulation can foster irresponsible corporate behavior," a representative from the group said.

Coca-Cola received an award as well for its advertising tendencies with their product Dasani. The award said that Coca-Cola pushed their advertising into, "realms of the ridiculous" because the bottled water source is traced back to local tap water.

A bad food award was given to Kellogg's because of their use with cartoon characters as an advertising ploy for children. Reports say that Kellogg's cereals contain high

levels of salt and sugar.

"Kellogg's are one of a number of international food companies that make money by selling products high in fat, sugar and/or salt," Consumers International said. "Threatened with litigation in the US, Kellogg's have agreed to change some of their marketing practices, however we believe they are doing too little, too late."

The report also featured a company that has made repeated headlines in the last several months, Mattel. The toy manufacturing company has recalled over 19 million products from China because the toys contained high levels of lead as well as other malfunctions. Last month, Mattel apologized to China. The company said the recalls were no fault of Chinas and blamed themselves for design flaws.

Consumers International said, "Wherever the fault lies, the safety of consumers was compromised and this should be the full focus of Mattel's attention, not finger pointing and not blame dodging."

The group's director general Richard Lloyd said, "These multi-billion dollar companies are global brands with a responsibility to be honest, accountable and responsible." The group said the awards are aimed at exposing the abuse of consumer trust.

"In highlighting their shortcomings, Consumers International and its 220 member organizations are holding corporations to account and demanding businesses take social responsibility seriously," the group said.

The awards were selected from submissions by consumer organizations around the world. Some of the criteria for selection included the size of the company and the scale of the company's sales and marketing.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Toys, like the Batman figures above, from Mattel have been recalled because of lead.



Keegan McGregor/THE BEHREND BEACON

The Penn State Behrend Lion statue and the surrounding garden was a recent gift from graduates. The Lion greets students on their walk past the Junker Center.

The *Behrend Beacon* is looking for new writers and editors.

Being a part of a student run organization, like your college newspaper, is a great way to gain experience working as a team.

E-mail Christopher LaFuria (csl5005@psu.edu) or Lenny Smith (lrs5046@psu.edu) if you are interested in joining our winning team.

## Quotes on Civility

"The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own arm."

— Swedish proverb

Janet Neff Sample Center  
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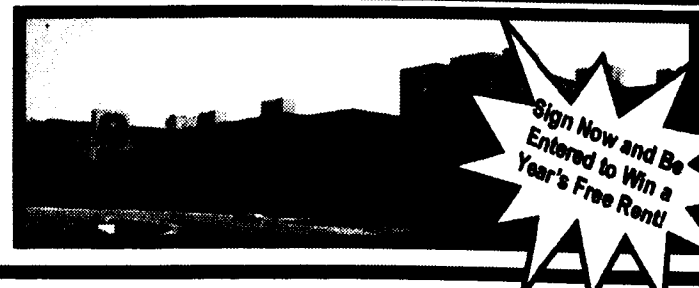
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