

NEWS IN BRIEF

A QUICK GLANCE AT EVENTS AROUND THE GLOBE

11-year-old Clearfield boy shot in stomach

CLEARFIELD (AP) — An 11-year-old boy was shot in the stomach by his friend, police said.

The victim had an emergency operation at Clearfield Hospital after the Wednesday afternoon shooting, then was transported to Allegheny General Hospital.

Police did not release the minors' names. The 12-year-old perpetrator was being held for observation. Another boy who witnessed the shooting was released.

The boys were at a home in Clearfield, about 34 miles northwest of State College. Police said the gun was in the house, but have not said who owns it.

"The investigation isn't complete. The biggest thing whenever you're dealing with people of this age is whether (the shooting) is intentional or accidental," Clearfield Police Chief Judd Zimmer said.

Housing discrimination case builds in Beaver

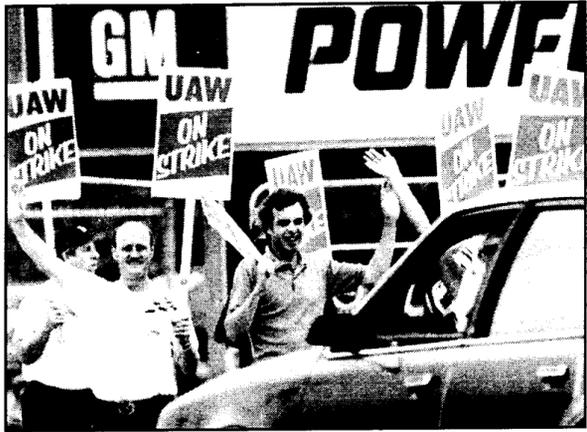
BEAVER (AP) — A wife and mother of two has alleged that a landlord declined to rent to her after learning the family was black.

State Human Relations Commission attorney Jonathan Williams called it the worst case of housing discrimination he has ever seen.

Valentia Pipkin, 30, filed a complaint with the commission. An administrative law judge heard arguments Wednesday in Beaver County Court. The commission's 11-member board will make the final ruling.

Joseph and Barbara Allison deny the allegations, saying they have other tenants of mixed races.

Williams, the assistant chief counsel for the commission, has asked the board to fine the Allisons \$27,000.



AP Photo

Members of the United Auto Workers Local 909 acknowledge the honking of horns from passing cars. The workers walked the picket line yesterday at the General Motors Corp. Powertrain plant in Warren, Mich.

GM workers strike forces shutdown of 3 plants

DETROIT (AP) — A strike at a General Motors Corp. transmission factory forced the shutdown of three GM auto assembly plants yesterday, less than two days into the walkout.

The Buick City plant in Flint, the Orion Township plant outside Detroit and an assembly plant in Lansing suspended production because of the United Auto Workers strike by 2,800 employees at the GM Powertrain Group factory in Warren. All three assembly plants use transmissions built at Warren.

GM's two car assembly plants in Oshawa, Ontario, are scheduled to shut down today.

The strike against the world's No. 1 automaker could bring GM's North American assembly operations to a near standstill within two or three weeks. Only the Saturn plant in Spring Hill, Tenn., does not use parts from Warren.

Number of new unemployment claims is down

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The number of first-time claims for jobless benefits plunged last week to the lowest level in nearly a year, signaling a robust job market for American workers.

New applications for unemployment insurance totaled a seasonally adjusted 299,000 during the week ended July 19, the Labor Department said yesterday.

That's the lowest since the week ended July 27, 1996. The 42,000 drop followed an even larger 45,000 decline the previous week and was more than double what economists anticipated.



China cracks down on illegal books, CDs, films

BEIJING (AP) — China has seized more than 12 million publications and 1.8 million laser discs in a crackdown on pornography and illegal publishing, the state-run Xinhua News Agency said yesterday.

Authorities have also uncovered 40 illegal compact disc production lines and seized about 6.48 million discs, the news agency said.

China has been pressured by the United States to stem piracy of audio-visual products, including compact discs of music, films and computer software.

The crackdown on pornography is part of a Communist Party morality campaign that stresses decency and family values.

Racy novels, politically sensitive books and pulp fiction, often produced by underground publishers, are standard fare at book stalls in most Chinese towns and cities.

Xinhua said the crackdown on illegal publishing has boosted business for legitimate publishers since it started in winter 1996, with sales at state-run Xinhua bookstores up 50 percent.

3 men claim ownership of Mars, sue NASA

SAN'A, Yemen (AP) — Three Yemeni men claiming ownership of Mars have filed a lawsuit against NASA for landing on the red planet, a newspaper reported yesterday.

Adam Ismail, Mustafa Khalil and Abdullah al-Umari have filed documents to a Yemeni court that they say prove their claim, the weekly Al-Thawri newspaper said.

"We inherited the planet from our ancestors 3,000 years ago," the Arabic-language paper quoted the men as saying in one of the documents.

NASA's Pathfinder spacecraft landed on Mars on July 4, and its Sojourner rover began exploring the planet and sending back photos and data for analysis.

"Sojourner and Pathfinder ... began exploring it without informing us or seeking our approval," the men said.

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