

UPS Teamsters strike

By KEVIN GALVIN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Teamsters union struck United Parcel Service nationwide early yesterday after talks with America's largest package delivery service broke down over issues ranging from part-time work to pensions.

"We have exhausted every possible approach to try to resolve the problem," Teamsters President Ron Carey declared as he left the bargaining table late Sunday night. "At this point it's just a waste of time."

Workers at UPS offices and distribution centers around the country walked off the job at 12:01 a.m. EDT. A union spokesman said all 206 locals that represent UPS workers were on strike.

The strike by 185,000 Teamsters at UPS threatened to interrupt package deliveries for hundreds of thousands of businesses across the country. UPS handles 12 million parcels and documents a day, and analysts say rival carriers won't be able to absorb the overflow.

The talks fell apart after about two hours of discussions Sunday. Pickets were quickly formed at UPS facilities from Atlanta, New York, Pittsburgh and Louisville, Ky., and in other cities: Dallas, Des Moines, Iowa; Columbus, Ohio; Milwaukee, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Phoenix, Ariz.

"UPS is a great company, and they make so much money because we work so hard," said Ralph Vernon, 47, a driver at UPS' New York hub with 27 years in company. "It's only fair that we get a share of it."

Dave Murray, UPS' chief negotiator called the Teamsters' action "highly irresponsible" and called on union leaders to submit the offer — which had remained unchanged since Wednesday — for a vote.

"Instead of setting up picket lines, they should be sending that final offer out for a vote," Murray said. "Let the people decide."

Murray said the company would try to move priority packages — including hospital deliveries and

perishables — with a limited workforce.

Asked if the company would hire replacement workers, he said "we haven't come to those decisions yet."

Around the nation, local UPS managers began planning to move boxes themselves while drivers and sorters geared up for the pickets.

"This is our stand against big business," said Paul McAuliffe, a driver from Local 804 in Long Island City, N.Y.

In Omaha, Neb., Tim Sullivan, UPS' district human resources manager, said that management employees were ready to drive some of the trucks.

"This is something we've been trying to avoid," he said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Postal Service warned its employees to expect "an extraordinary increase" in parcel mail.

It directed that customers be limited to four parcels per visit until the UPS strike is resolved.

"The Postal Service looks forward to this opportunity to serve



AP Photo

Strikers at the United Parcel Service Distribution Center in Rhode Island block a convoy of UPS delivery trucks. Workers went on strike yesterday after failed negotiations on issues of part-time work to pensions.

new customers," Postmaster General Marvin Runyon said in a statement.

The Independent Pilots Association, which represents UPS' 2,000 pilots, issued a statement saying

they would honor the Teamsters strike, effectively grounding the company's domestic jets.

The company's overseas operations were not affected.

UPS and the union talked for a

little over two hours Sunday evening.

Shortly after 10:00 p.m. Carey emerged and said the talks were getting nowhere and were "a waste of time."

Strike affects Pennsylvania workers, UPS competition

By RACHEL GRAVES
Associated Press Writer

NEW STANTON — Motorists leaned on their horns yesterday to support striking workers at a massive United Parcel Service distribution center near the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

A truck from UPS's competitor — Roadway Package Services — passed the center with only a blare of the radio.

Roadway Package Services and other rival companies stand to benefit from the strike, as customers around the country are forced to find someone other than UPS to carry 12 million parcels and documents a day.

But analysts say competitors will not be able to absorb the overflow.

"We shut the country down! Because

we can! Don't ever forget that," read one sign on the picket line here.

"No one wants to see a strike, but I guess sometimes you have to stand up for something," said Tim Parsons, one of 1,200 Teamsters on strike at the New Stanton facility 30 miles southeast of Pittsburgh.

Philip Loverde said he delivered shoes Friday to a woman who planned to wear them in her wedding the next day.

She had been afraid she would not receive them because of the imminent strike.

"She was so grateful ... that her shoes got to her before she got to church," the driver said.

UPS workers around the country walked off the job at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, many complaining that they remain

part-time employees after years at the company.

Chris Naggy said he drives for UPS 45 to 50 hours a week and has been employed there for 17 years but still is considered one of 850 part-time employees in New Stanton. That means he has a lower pension and less job security, workers said.

"You can never do enough for this company, and they want to work you like slaves," said Mark Jackman, another part-time employee who is only given 15 hours a week of work even though he has been working for UPS for more than 10 years. "You figure 15 hours a week, how are you going to afford a wife and kids?"

Picketing workers outside the Philadelphia distribution center jeered at managers who drove about 20 trucks out of

the facility early yesterday morning. About 6,000 Teamsters work for UPS in Philadelphia.

"They don't even know how to drive a stick," said Loverde in New Stanton. He noted that two managers manned each truck leaving the facility so the drivers would have moral support.

Strikers allowed the trucks to pass because they were carrying important medical supplies, they said.

"The last thing the Teamsters want to be responsible for is someone having difficulty in the hospital," Loverde said.

Jim Gavin, manager of Diabetes Medical Supply in suburban Pittsburgh, said his company sent urgent orders yesterday via Airborne Express.

"An order that by UPS would cost maybe \$3.50 or \$4 would probably take

\$10 to \$12 to get there Airborne," Gavin said. "We have to do that, so that's just what we'll do."

Chris Bertino, a worker on the Philadelphia picket line, was hoping for a quick settlement so he could pay his bills. Despite the strike, he had a good word to say about his employer. "It's a great job, you can't beat it, the benefits are awesome," Bertino told WJLB-FM. UPS personnel manager

Jerry Purcell said he hoped picketers would act professionally.

"Nobody's throwing rocks. No one's got a ball bat," he said.

Settling in for the long haul, drivers in Philadelphia were playing catch and cooking hot dogs. "This is no picnic," said UPS driver Kathleen McHugh. "We're just trying to make the best of it."

Israel is on alert for more attacks

By GWEN ACKERMAN
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Israel arrested 29 Palestinians early yesterday in a sweep of the West Bank, part of a strike to weaken Islamic militants after a twin suicide bombing killed 15 people in Jerusalem last week.

Israel remained on alert for more attacks and reinforced security in major cities and along the edge of the West Bank.

The Maariv newspaper said Israeli extremists were suspected in the fatal shooting of a Palestinian in the West Bank on Sunday night. Police are investigating the incident, which could further aggravate a tense situation.

At the main Jerusalem bus station, bomb squads cleared a block-wide area today to check an unat-

"This is revenge."

— Mahmoud Sabbah

Palestinian whose home was destroyed by Israeli mandate

tended bicycle for explosives. At a roadblock outside the city, soldiers scrutinized identity cards and pulled vans aside for examination.

Leaflets distributed in the name of the Muslim militant group Hamas claimed responsibility for Wednesday's bombings.

Hamas leaders have cast doubt on the authenticity of the claim, but Israel has said it has reports indicating Islamic militants will attempt additional bombings.

"We are unfortunately prepared for the worst," Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu told CBS television.

A Sunday night deadline set in the leaflets for Israel to free all Palestinian prisoners passed without incident.

Israel has yet to identify the two suicide bombers who blew themselves up in Jerusalem's fruit and vegetable market, killing 13 Israelis.

An army statement said the Palestinians arrested today were suspected of being involved in "hostile terrorist activity."

Since the bombing, Israel has arrested 145 Palestinians, imposed tight travel restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and suspended talks with the Palestinians that had been about to resume after a four-month break.

Israel also has stepped up demolitions of homes illegally built by Arabs in east Jerusalem, razing two homes and several shacks Sunday and two more yesterday.

"This is revenge," said Mahmoud Sabbah, whose unfinished home was intended to house 25 family members in the Shuafat refugee camp in east Jerusalem. "Netanyahu decided to take revenge against Palestinians for the crazy suicide bombers."

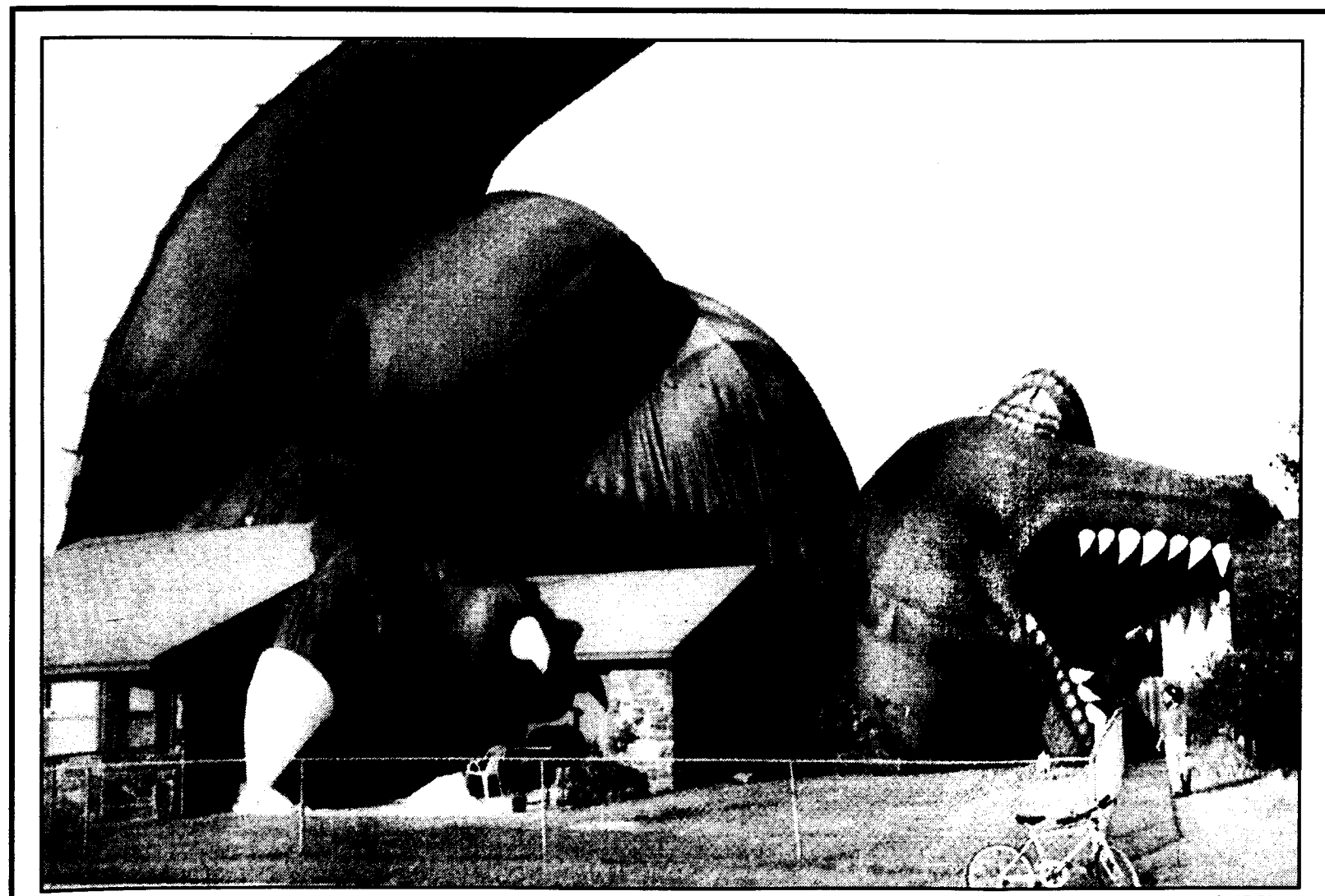
Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat called the Israeli measures "collective punishment."



AP Photo

Extinguishing

A helicopter drops water on a 100-acre brush fire near Santa Clarita, Calif., Sunday. Helicopters helped to contain the fire.



AP Photo

Tyrannosaurus wrecks

The Sinclair Dinosaur balloon crash lands over a house, a backyard and a neighboring roof in Tulsa, Okla., Saturday. The dinosaur was part of the Gateway Balloon Festival. There were no serious injuries reported.

Guinness-recognized oldest living person dies at 122 years old

PARIS (AP) — Jeanne Calment, who took up fencing lessons at 85 and credited an occasional glass of Port wine and a diet rich in olive oil for making her the world's oldest person, died yesterday at age 122.

Though blind, nearly deaf and in a wheelchair, Calment remained spirited and mentally sharp until the end. That was clear to those who attended her 121st birthday in February 1996, when she released her CD, *Time's Mistress*, which featured her reminiscing to a score of rap and other tunes.

Officials in the southern city of Arles gave no precise cause of death. Calment, who was 14 when the Eiffel Tower was completed in 1889, died at a retirement home where she had spent the past 12 years.

"She was the living memory of our city," said Michel Vauzelle, the deputy mayor of Arles. "Her birthdays were a sort of family holiday, where all the people of Arles gathered around their big sister."

For Calment, birthdays were a chance to indulge. She said in February that she had impatiently awaited her birthday so she could "eat some chocolate and drink a little sweet wine." Calment's doctor persuaded her to give up sweets two years ago.

In later years, Calment lived

mostly off the income from her apartment, which she sold cheaply more than 30 years ago to a lawyer.

He had agreed to make monthly payments on it in exchange for taking possession of the apartment when she died, but never got to do so. He died more than a year ago at age 77; his family was required to keep making the payments.

Calment had no direct descendants, having survived her husband, her daughter and her grandson.

Born Feb. 21, 1875, Calment became Arles' greatest attraction since the artist Vincent Van Gogh, who spent a year there in 1888. She met him when he came to her uncle's shop to buy paints, and later remembered him as "dirty, badly dressed and disagreeable."

The Guinness Book of World Records had listed Calment as the oldest living person whose birth date could be authenticated by reliable records.

Calment gave up cigarettes in 1995, but her doctor said her abstinence was due to pride rather than health — she was too blind to light up herself, and hated asking someone to do it for her.

She was still riding a bike at 100.

"I dream, I think, I go over my life," she said. "I never get bored."