

NEWS IN BRIEF

A QUICK GLANCE AT EVENTS AROUND THE GLOBE

Fliers force First Amendment ruling reversal

ERIE (AP) — A judge now believes that the First Amendment should have prevailed and he should not have convicted a man for putting up fliers that criticized another judge.

In an opinion filed in Erie last week, Mercer County Judge John Stranahan wrote that at first he accepted the prosecution's arguments in the case against Anthony Ruby, but he had second thoughts.

In 1990, Erie County Judge Michael Joyce sentenced Ruby of Cranesville, Erie County, to one to two years in prison on theft and weapons charges.

Ruby later posted fliers on trees and poles that named Joyce, his former wife and their two sons and implied that Joyce ran a "kangaroo court."

Ruby was charged with retaliating for past official action. In February, Stranahan said Ruby's behavior against Joyce was "malicious," and he sentenced Ruby to another one to two years in prison.

In his new ruling, Stranahan wrote that he should have acquitted Ruby.

Philadelphia chemical spill causes evacuation

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A small chemical spill filed a health center with toxic fumes yesterday, forcing an evacuation of about 150 people for the entire day.

The fumes formed when X-ray developing liquid and the sulfuric acid in a drain cleaner came into contact in the drain system, Fire Capt. Henry Dolberry said.

At least one employee at the Maria DeLos Santos Health Center in North Philadelphia, a 27-year-old woman, was treated at Temple University Hospital for dizziness and breathing difficulties and released, Dolberry said.

The spill occurred at 10:40 a.m. It was under control about three hours later, he said. The amount of chemicals released was still being assessed.



Burning Man festival draws many to desert

RENO, Nev. (AP) — On the blank expanse of the northern Nevada desert, a temporary city has arisen that will be home to artists, performers and free spirits drawn to what may be the ultimate anarchist party.



AP Photo

The mascot of the Burning Man festival in Black Rock Desert Nevada stands tall at 40 feet.

Burning Man, a festival that began 11 years ago on a San Francisco beach as a woeeful tribute to scorned love, starts today and culminates Labor Day weekend with the torching of a 40-foot-tall wooden man in a barren desert basin.

Thousands are expected to attend the esoteric mix of pagan fire ritual and sci-fi Dada circus where some paint their bodies, bang drums, dance naked and wear costumes that would draw stares in a Mardi Gras parade.

When 10,000 people showed up last year at a site on public land in neighboring Pershing County, northeast of Reno, county commissioners there worried that the festival was getting out of control.

Researchers trace smells of hog manure

PEORIA, Ill. (AP) — How do you take the stink out of hog manure? That's a question researchers at the University of Illinois and elsewhere are trying to answer.

Scientists at the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, located in Peoria, soon might join other researchers in trying to solve the problem. Rep. Ray LaHood, R-Ill., said last week he would ask Congress for \$1 million in federal money to pay for the research.

Dr. Peter B. Johnsen, director of the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, a division of the U.S. Agriculture Department, said removing the smell from hog waste is not easy.

But, he added, "It's not a bizarrely difficult, intractable problem."



Israel troops tear gas elementary students

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP) — Coughing and crying, Palestinian girls ran out of their classrooms yesterday when Israeli tear-gas canisters aimed at stone-throwing rioters landed in their Bethlehem schoolyard.

About a dozen third- and fourth-graders were treated for tear-gas inhalation. Palestinian police carried away those girls overcome by the gas.

The school's 650 students, dressed in gray- or green-striped uniforms, were forced to evacuate. Many covered their faces with handkerchiefs or pinched shut their noses.

Israeli troops fired rubber bullets at the Palestinian stone-throwers, injuring five of them.

Bethlehem has been the scene of daily protests this week against Israel's closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which bars Palestinians from entering Israel. The biblical town has been hardest hit: Its 60,000 residents are prohibited from leaving their city, and tourists cannot enter.

De Klerk retires from political scene

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Former President F.W. De Klerk, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in dismantling apartheid, resigned yesterday as leader of the party that created it.

Pragmatic to the end, De Klerk said he is quitting politics to give his party a chance to regroup before the 1999 elections. Divided and in disarray, the party now is trying to stay alive in a drastically changed political landscape.

"With my retirement, I wish to open a door for the National Party to provide further proof of its dynamic break with the past," De Klerk told reporters.

Party officials said the 61-year-old de Klerk would stay on until a new leader is chosen on Sept. 9.

When he became president in 1989, De Klerk was widely viewed as a moderate expected to protect apartheid. Instead, he declared soon after taking office that "white domination will have to disappear, otherwise there will never be peace in South Africa."

De Klerk immediately began to dismantle apartheid laws. Within a year, he legalized 60 anti-apartheid groups, including the now-governing African National Congress, whose leader, Nelson Mandela, was elected president in 1994.

Mandela said yesterday he hoped the country would remember how de Klerk, who freed him from 27 years in prison, helped bring about a peaceful transformation.

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