

# NEWS IN BRIEF

A QUICK GLANCE AT EVENTS AROUND THE GLOBE

## Fate of recreational trail rests in federal hands

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — A recreational trail from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C., will take longer to complete if Congress does not renew federal bicycle and pedestrian programs, trail advocates said yesterday.

About one-quarter of the nearly 400-mile link remains on the drawing boards and could be threatened if federal funding sources dry up, they warned. That would mean fewer cycling, hiking and recreational opportunities, said Linda Boxx, president of the Allegheny Trail Alliance.

"We will get this trail built but it will take a lot longer," Ms. Boxx said. "Federal money can make a significant difference in whether the project gets completed within five or 15 years."

Most federal transportation programs, including one that funds enhancements such as bikeways and walkways, are set to expire Sept. 30. Many highway lobbyists oppose setting aside gas tax revenues for projects not directly related to highway construction or maintenance.

The Pittsburgh-Washington trail was cited as one of the nation's 10 most endangered recreational rail projects by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a national group. Officials said those projects, and hundreds like them, could be killed, curtailed or delayed without funding renewal.

As proposed, the trail would run from downtown Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Md., where it would connect with the already-completed Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Towpath to Washington. A branch would link the trail with Pittsburgh's airport.

Some \$11 million in federal, state and private money already has been spent, and another \$8 million in federal grants has been committed to the project, Ms. Boxx said.

Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., credited the completed sections for reviving communities through which they pass.

House and Senate committees are expected to consider federal transportation programs next month.



## McKinney denies allegations of misconduct

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The Army's top enlisted man says he "never entertained sexual desires" toward his original accuser, never had sex with the woman a prosecutor said he raped and wasn't even with a woman when she said he tried to kiss her.



Sgt. Maj. Gene McKinney  
the Army's top enlisted soldier

Silent throughout his two-month hearing on sex-misconduct charges, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Gene McKinney submitted sworn statements to an Army hearing officer in which he denied allegations of sexual misconduct and accused military investigators of racism and unfairness.

On Monday, the final day of the two-month hearing at Fort McNair, McKinney's lawyers submitted sworn statements to Col. Robert Jarvis, the officer assigned to determine whether the Army has sufficient evidence to try McKinney on allegations by six women.

Jarvis will make the initial recommendation on whether McKinney should be court-martialed. The final decision will be made by Maj. Gen. Robert F. Foley, the regional Army commander.

"I continue to question the fairness of investigation being conducted by the Field Investigative Unit, U.S. Army CID," McKinney said in the April statement.

He said investigators "have refused to collect evidence that supports my innocence" and also refused to make available copies of statements made by his accusers.

## Woman pleads 'maternity' in court

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD, Wis. (AP) — The police call it road rage. Jaclyn Netzel says it was just a pregnant moment.

Netzel, 19, was cited for disorderly conduct for allegedly smacking a man after a traffic dispute. She pleaded maternity.

Netzel told the officer that he couldn't understand what she did Saturday "because when a female is pregnant, they are more emotional than normal," the police report said.

The police report said Netzel was trying to turn right when the driver behind her started honking and finally drove around her. Netzel and Gary Schachel, 51, exchanged obscene gestures as he drove past her.



## Cuba's Communists plan first major summit

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba's Communist Party approaches its first major summit since the Soviet Union's collapse struggling to salvage a troubled economy without compromising socialism.

The Fifth Party Congress in October is expected to be long on socialist ideology, with members discussing and ratifying President Fidel Castro's policies for the 21st century.

"There is a struggle going on between moderates and hardliners," said Wayne Smith, a former U.S. diplomat in Cuba. "The Fifth Party Congress will be the main ring where the show will be played out."

With more than a month to go, hardliners have the upper hand.

"To the roots!" declare billboards advertising the Oct. 8-10 gathering.

The slogan, splashed against a backdrop of a young Castro and other rebels hoisting rifles in triumph, refers to a government rooted in Castro's 1959 revolution and his subsequent embrace of socialism.

U.S. moves to tighten the 3-decade-old embargo against Cuba and recent explosions at Havana hotels, blamed by the government on U.S.-based groups, have been used to support the harder ideological line.

During a rare interview on Cuban television earlier this month, Castro said a return to capitalism would signify "the most terrible thing that could occur in a society."

## Netherlands refuses to tolerate muskrats

MONTFOORT, Netherlands (AP) — Across the lush lowland echoes a triumphant "Yes!" Within seconds, a furry carcass lands with a thud atop the dike.

"There," says Jaap de Wit, one of 500 government-hired muskrat trappers. "One less rat to make holes in the dike."

The latest threat to the Netherlands' vast system of medieval levees that protect two-thirds of the country from submersion isn't erosion or even old age: It's the incessant tunneling of muskrats.

"Muskrat Love?" Here, it's more like muskrat hate.

"This is a war we cannot win. But if we didn't do this, we'd have a disaster in the whole of Holland on our hands," said Brand Klijstra, one of 40 official "muskrat fighters" in the central province of Utrecht.

For centuries, the Dutch have paid careful attention to their earthen dikes, some of which date to the Middle Ages. The watch has taken on new urgency since 1995, when widespread flooding of the Maas, Waal and Rhine Rivers forced the evacuation of 250,000 people.

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