NEWS-IN-BRIEF

A QUICK GLANCE AT EVENTS AROUND THE GLOBE



Mail contractors indicted for tampering

PITTSBURGH (AP) — When people started finding rifled-through letters and packages along roads, in parks and in garbage bins, postal inspectors got their first clue that a mail contract had gone awry.

A federal grand jury has indicted two owners and one employee of T & F Transport in Zelienople on mail-crime charges, postal inspector Kenneth Newman said yesterday

Barbara Lou Feather and Susan Lee Terner, the company's owners, are charged with obstructing delivery of about 430,000 pieces of mail, possessing embezzled mail and conspiracy.

Feather; 52, and Terner, 42, both of Valencia, are accused of failing to deliver mail that filled three trailers.

They hid letters from eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware on someone else's property rather than delivering it to Kansas City, Mo., where it would have been shipped to other midwestern cities, Newman said.

If convicted, Feather and Terner could spend more than 16 years in prison and be fined about \$750,000. They did not immediately return phone calls seeking comment.

Coach sued for giving student pregnancy test

EMMAUS (AP) - The mother of a high school swimmer has filed a lawsuit that accuses the school's swim coach of forcing her daughter to take pregnancy tests in front of teammates.

In addition, the federal lawsuit filed Wednesday claims Emmaus High School swim coach Michael Seip urged team members to shun Leah Gruenke when the tests showed she was pregnant.

Seip denied forcing the student to take a pregnancy test or telling team members not to talk to her.

Joan Gruenke is seeking more than \$225,000 for mental anguish she says the coach caused her and her 17-year-old daughter.

Leah Gruenke, who will be a senior this year, was pregnant when the four pregnancy tests were taken March 5 and 6, the lawsuit said. She gave birth July 3.



Joe Kennedy decides not to run for governor

BOSTON (AP) - Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II, battered by bad news about himself and his family, has decided not to run for governor, The Associated Press learned yesterday.

Kennedy, 44, began calling political allies yesterday morning to tell them of his decision, said a source, who spoke only on condition of anonymity and declined to give the reason for Kennedy's decision.

The Democrat planned to make the announcement during a news conference yesterday afternoon in his congressional district.

His office refused to comment on the purpose of the news conference. His top political advisers, including political consultant Michael Goldman, did not return calls.

Although Kennedy has never formally declared his candidacy, he said he planned to run.

Kennedy, the eldest son of the late Robert F. Kennedy, had been viewed as the prohibitive favorite in the race as recently as a year ago. Members of his family have gone 18-for-18 in general elections in Massachusetts over the past 50 years, and Kennedy was re-elected to Congress in 1994 with only token opposition.

Throughout the year, however, Kennedy has been battered by negative publicity that has undercut his standing in the polls.

Adult newspapers seized from machines

PHOENIX (AP) - Law enforcement officers in black ski masks seized hundreds of copies of an adult newspaper in raids stemming from a new law that restricts the sale of sexually explicit publications from public racks. The publisher of The Beat said that seizing copies of his newspaper from sidewalk vending machines was a violation of his constitutional freedom of expression, a position backed by at least one First Amendment expert.

"I'll just put it on the streets for free. What are they going to do seize the sidewalks?" said publisher Jerry Evenson.

Bill FitzGerald, a spokesman for the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, disagreed. "This is not a First Amendment issue," FitzGerald said. "It has to do with the distribution of pornography and its availability to minors."The raids Wednesday of 15 sites in Phoenix and the surrounding suburbs stem from a law that took effect July 21 making it a felony to sell or display sexually oriented material harmful to minors except via access-card or token-activated machines.



German, French leaders discuss currency

BONN, Germany (AP) - Seeking fresh momentum toward a European currency, Germany and France pledged yesterday to work for a stable euro that will start on time in 1999.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl won the commitment in talks with French premier Lionel Jospin, whose 3-month-old Socialist government has stressed reducing high unemployment over cutting spending to meet the strict fiscal criteria set to qualify for the euro.

Both countries face potential budget deficits this year above 3 percent of gross domestic product, which is the limit laid down in the treaty for monetary union.

But Kohl and Jospin, on his first trip to Bonn since taking office, agreed that introducing the euro "according to the timetable with strict respect for the stability criteria" is essential for Europe's competitiveness in the global economy, Kohl spokesman Peter Hausmann

"Germany and France are committed to the agreements without reservations and will do everything to meet the conditions for introducing the euro," Hausmann said.

Jospin's government last month announced new business taxes after a government audit showed France's budget deficit running at 3.5 percent to 3.7 percent of GDP.

France has conceded it still will probably not meet the 3 percent target, but wants to start the euro on time. Paris has been irritated by calls from some German politicians for delaying the euro if the French

Most forecasts say Germany won't make the 3 percent limit either, but Kohl insists it will.

Victims of forced sterilization speak out

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — A Belgian woman says no one listened when she complained about being sterilized against her will.

Women who were deemed physically or mentally inferior and were sterilized are now speaking out, after revelations in Sweden drew attention to government programs that were common in many parts of Europe. In Belgium, Ingrid van Butsel spent her life in orphanages and state housing. She married in 1985, but only after the regional government - without giving a reason - pressured her into a sterilization

operation. "I could not believe my ears. I wanted children, but they said I was unsuited to raise children. I had a choice: I could marry if I had myself sterilized (or) they would send me to a psychiatric hospital," van Butsel, 40, said in Wednesday's Daily De Morgen.

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