

GOOD MORNING

Weak links in local earthquake disaster plan / See 1C

A's SWEEP WORLD SERIES

For complete baseball coverage, See Sports on 1B, 4B



The Olympian

Sunday

October 29, 1989
Olympia, Washington
\$1.25

Mostly sunny
High today, 55
Low tonight, 32

New blast evidence in Pan Am 103 crash

LONDON — Police have found evidence the bomb that brought down Pan Am Flight 103 and killed 270 people was planted in Malta. The Sunday Times of London reported.

The newspaper said the evidence was found in a computer list of all luggage put aboard the flight when it originated in Frankfurt, West Germany, on Dec. 21. Passengers and luggage later were transferred to a Boeing 747 at Heathrow Airport in London.

The Scottish detectives who are heading the investigation have contended for several months that the bomb was put aboard Flight 103 in Frankfurt.

Hostages get envoy's aid

U.S. Ambassador Melissa Wells tried today to free a Bremerton couple who were members of a medical missionary team taken hostage in Mozambique, Africa, early last week.

Wells was scheduled to meet around 9 a.m. (midnight PDT) with Dr. Fred Leist and his wife, Lucille Leist, and five other hostages being held in Maputo, the capital of the South African country.

● Story/1C

Ex-officer fears for life

SEATTLE — A former policeman sentenced to jail for sexual acts with a minor fears he'll be in danger if he encounters some of the people in jail whom he arrested as an officer, his defense attorney said.

John Michael Echeveste, 30, resigned from his job with the Seattle Police Department last month after his conviction on two counts of third-degree statutory rape.

After Echeveste was sentenced Friday to a maximum term of eight months in the King County Jail, his attorney, William Figelstaub, told King County Superior Court Judge Frank Sullivan that Echeveste needs a few days to work out special arrangements.

Oregon boy still missing

CHEMULT, Ore. — About 340 searchers, some on foot and others on horseback, searched in vain Saturday for any sign of a 9-year-old boy missing for six days in a rugged section of south central Oregon.

Forty newcomers joined the army of volunteers looking for the Nathan Madsen of Veneta, who was last seen on his sorrel horse, Tony, during a family catto roundup last Sunday.

No Lotto jackpot winner

There was no big winner in Saturday's \$1.5 million Washington Lotto drawing. Lottery spokesman Peter Gayton said.

Wednesday's drawing will be worth \$2 million.

There were 110 tickets with five of the six numbers correct. They are worth \$492 each, Gayton said. There were 4,412 tickets with four of six numbers correct. They are worth \$23 each.

Saturday's numbers were 2-5-10-11-29-32.

Fall back

Daylight Savings Time ended at 2 a.m. today. Set your clock back an hour.



Gannett News Service

Olympian news services

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A Gannett newspaper
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Yes, he said, whorehouse museum

By Mike Oakland
The Olympian

ABERDEEN — Driven by undisguised lust for tourist dollars to ease economic hard times and nurtured by the understanding of how the American sense of humor thrives on put-ons, some members of this community have rediscovered the quintessential tourist attraction — sex.

A few miles away, Elma has become famous for its Slug Festival and McCleary for its Bear Festival. Statewide, there's a smorgasbord of historical and food celebrations — ranging from serious to funky — that would boggle the mind of P.T. Barnum.

Aberdeen needed something of its own, something special, something to spruce up a dingy Puget Sound logging town and put it on tourists' must-see list. And so, a

Aberdeen residents see tourist dollars in city's Red Light history

few boosters went back to basics. They decided that sex will outsell slugs and bears.

Under the banner of the "Aberdeen Historical Whorehouse Restoration Society" three Aberdeen natives are spearheading a campaign to bring back to life — at least in a museum setting — the town's ribald past as a red-hot, red-light district.

From the turn of the century until the 1960s, Aberdeen was about as good as it gets for seamen, loggers, railroaders and

other travelers in search of some Saturday night sin. Prostitution illegal, but generally accepted. It was big business; the good times rolled.

Tori P. Kovach, 46, a Weyerhaeuser boiler mechanic with a sense of history and a wry sense of humor, says he has known for some time that the town's past might be a key to its future.

"The idea has been running around in my head for a couple of years, but it took me a lot of time to get the guts to talk about it and a lot of time to go public with

it," he confessed.

Kovach, dubbed by fellow workers "Mr. Whorehouse", envisions a whorehouse museum and gift shop with memorabilia certain to excite the curiosity of travelers. His cohorts are tavern owner Bronco N. Tesia, 62, a man with vivid memories of dancing with some of the ladies during the town's prostitution years, and contractor Mike J. Rajetch, 32, who wants to build the museum.

They sometimes refer to themselves as "The Croation Mafia," a reference to their Slavic backgrounds.

Community reaction to the idea is mixed. Mayor O'Dean L. Williamson said he believes it has merit. And he doesn't shy away from the blunt title of Kovach's proposal.

See Whores/4A

Battleground for democracy

Thousands in Czech protest



Heavily armed police attempt to halt march

N.Y. Times News Service

PRAGUE — Czechoslovakia's hard-line government used heavily armed policemen on Saturday in an attempt to crush protests by thousands of Czechoslovaks who marched in the capital calling for freedom and an end to communism.

Despite warnings by the communist authorities, about 10,000 Czechoslovaks gathered in Wenceslas Square, long the focal point of both joy and protest in the capital, singing and chanting "Freedom!" and "We want democracy!"

The protest here came almost a month after large demonstrations in neighboring East Germany that have led to changes in the leadership there.

The protests in Germany raised the hopes of many Czechoslovaks that the regime here might also be toppled, as the East German leader, Erich Honecker, was replaced by Egon Krenz.

Hopes were also raised by the political liberalization taking place in Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union.

The Czechoslovak leadership has found itself increasingly isolated, as political turmoil grips most of the Soviet bloc, including East Germany, until recently Prague's closest ally in an informal grouping against change.

One young demonstrator on Saturday, using a Czech saying, described the Communist Party leader here, Milos Jakes, as being "as alone as a slat in a fence."

"The slat must go," he added.

On Friday, the police rounded up some of the country's major dissidents, including

See Protes/8A

Despite being encircled by helmeted riot police, a group of Czechoslovakian demonstrators display the victory sign and shout anti-government slogans while demanding freedom and democracy.

Vets burn flags at Seattle protest

SEATTLE (AP) — As an unruly crowd of street people chanted "burn, baby, burn," members of a Vietnam veterans' group torched a pile of American flags early Saturday, minutes after a federal anti-flag desecration law went into effect.

"We will not stand for this law to be passed," said Brian Chambers of Seattle, an Army veteran who said he served near Pleiku, Vietnam, in 1970-71.

"We're burning the flag to say we will not stand by to see forced patriotism. Abridgement of the First Amendment right of free speech is the first infringement," Chambers said.

In other flag-burning protests Friday, four cloth flags were burned at Berkeley, Calif., and a flag-burning at Colorado State University was halted when a passerby snuffed the flames with his bare hands.

The Seattle event drew hundreds of people, including street people, neo-Nazi skinheads, gays and counter-culture types of every stripe. They cheered wildly and profanely as two small piles of flags were set afire.

They sang the national anthem as a flag was hauled down from a pole outside the U.S. Post Office where the demonstration was staged, soaked with lighter fluid, and burned as it was raised back into the night sky.

The handful of organizers from Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist said there were

See Flag/back page



A member of a radical veterans group burns a flag during a Seattle protest.

Bush condemns Ortega's decision

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — President Bush on Saturday condemned Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega for a "shameful" decision to end a lengthy cease-fire with the Contras and hinted at renewing arms for the rebels even as he urged them to avoid military aggression.

Ortega, who shattered the tranquility of a two-day Hemispheric "celebration of democracy" with his military plans, later softened his stand and said he would decide Tuesday whether to extend the cease-fire.

He accused the Contras of mounting "waves of attacks" inside Nicaragua.

The two leaders clashed at rival news conferences that upstaged the ending to the two-day conference, and the most personal language by far came from Bush.

"The president belittled the leftist Nicaraguan leader as 'this little man — showing up in his military uniform at a democracy meeting,'" and said Ortega "looks like that unwanted animal at a garden party."

A spokesman for Costa Rica's President Oscar Arias, host of the gathering, said Ortega had "dashed cold water on the party, since he was invited to a party for democracy and should have behaved properly."

"Nothing like this has ever been seen before," said Jorge Urbina.

At the United Nations, General Secretary Javier Perez de Cuellar said he was "extremely concerned" about the recent clashes between the Contras and the Sandinista forces and the apparent breakdown of the cease-fire.

He expressed his "strong wish" that both sides exer-

See Ortega/back page

Surprise police raid dimmed red lights

By Mike Oakland
The Olympian

When Aberdeen police Capt. Nicholas Yantsin raided Nellie Curtis' whorehouse on the night of Jan. 31, 1959, it signaled the beginning of the end of prostitution in "Sin City" U.S.A.

It also signaled the end of Yantsin's 25 years with the Aberdeen Police Department.

Today, at 79, Yantsin sits in his Oceanside, Calif., home pecking away on his typewriter, working on the pages of his autobiography, tentatively titled "When Madames Reigned." It will be a chronology of illegal prostitution that flourished in Aberdeen for six decades.

Some of his scattered memories include:

He joined the Police Department on Oct. 10, 1935. There were whorehouses in town when he put on the badge but they were mostly cheap, run-down places on the second floors of a few businesses. All of their furniture wasn't worth a few hundred dollars. The community, elected officials and the police looked the other way.

The brothels were as much an industry as a plywood plant, and the well-being of the city depended on the prostitution industry, which was low-key and controlled.

When he returned from World War II, it was big and brassy and growing fast.

Florence Nettleton was one of the most famous madames of the era. She ran her own business and little by little made it prosperous enough that she was able to buy an old bank building.

She rented out the first floor and turned the second floor into the plushiest pleasure palace in the Pacific Northwest. She had \$250,000 invested in furnishings alone. The house had a fine bar and a bevy of beautiful women.

Since other cities in the region had closed their red light districts, Aberdeen became the warehouse capital of the Northwest. It was off limits to military men, but the GIs came by the taxicab load, armed with off-limits yellow pages that told them exactly where to find the action they sought.

The city budget shared in the largesse, as did elected officials willing to ignore the obvious while money was slipped into

their pockets.

State liquor agents would make illegal buys in the brothels, then once a month team with police to raid the same places.

Madames taken to the slammer on liquor law violations would forfeit their \$300 bail and that was that. The city council just budgeted so much money for fines and forfeitures that always resulted from liquor law violations, not prostitution.

Apathy allowed prostitution to flourish and by the early 1950s, Look Magazine declared Aberdeen to be one of the top U.S. cities as far as prostitution and corruption were concerned. About that time, Yantsin and others began to notice changes in the system.

Instead of politicians controlling the prostitutes, madames were controlling politicians. If a cop gave a ticket to a pimp he found himself suspended or fired. It was obvious those in power were benefiting from the whorehouses.

A hotly contested mayoral race in 1958 brought things to a head. The incumbent mayor told the madames to close the houses between the primary and general

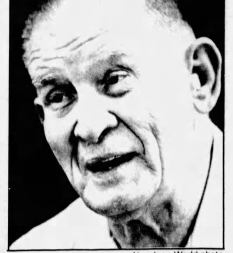
elections. On election night, when the mayor won another term, the red lights came back on at 8. The next day two police officers who had not supported the mayor were framed in a warehouse raid and fired.

It had gotten to the point where men of influence were using the whorehouses as political weapons. Yantsin said he decided if they were going to use the joints as weapons, he would work to dull their blades.

He began questioning soldiers on the streets of Aberdeen. After returning from a brief suspension, he pulled a surprise raid on Nellie Curtis' whorehouse on Jan. 31, 1959. He arrested 18 men and 5 women. The prostitution charges against Curtis stuck. Yantsin was fired.

Stormy City Council sessions followed. Civic leaders began forcing the mayor's hand.

When asked whether prostitution existed in Aberdeen, the mayor said, "I don't know. I will say no. That's a quote." Nasty courtroom fights focused attention on the prostitution problem. The heat was too much. There was talk that



Nicholas Yantsin's surprise raid cost him his job.

money from the whorehouses had been siphoned off by East Coast crime syndicates.

With the battle waning, Yantsin left Aberdeen. Illegal prostitution languished. The last Aberdeen whorehouse closed its doors and turned off its red lights in 1963.

Aberdeen may rekindle legacy of 'Sin City' U.S.A.

From Page One

"They were whorehouses, not brothels," he explained.

Proprietors of the Aberdeen Museum of History are not excited about a competing entity focusing on prostitution. Their museum focuses on the logging and maritime history of Grays Harbor.

History museum volunteer Leonard A. Airhart said, "I don't think the town needs it. We need to salvage the good things we had and forget the bad." City finances should not be used to build a warehouse museum, he said.

While Williamson said he can't bring himself to wear the restoration society T-shirt given him by Kovach, he generally supports the museum as a tourist attraction.

"Morally right or morally wrong, it's still part of our history," Williamson said. As long as the museum doesn't promote or condone prostitution, he sees no real harm.

Police Chief William Ellis is neutral. He shrugs it off, saying the museum is being pitched as "a good venture in economic development."

Pastor Richard J. Peterson of Calvary Lutheran Church is out of the neutral zone. "Yes, it's part of our past, but it's not something we're really pleased about. We need to emphasize the positive aspects of the past rather than the immoral lifestyle." Peterson said most townsfolk don't think the museum plans will get off the ground. If the idea looks like it might become a reality, expect the religious community to begin speaking out, he said.

Kovach scoffs at the criticism. "It is history," Kovach said. "I can't see erasing history because it has a seamer side." He labels the opposition "blue-nosed moralists — so-called Christian do-gooders."

"I'm not trying to glorify anything. I just want to preserve part of our colorful history and hope property values rise also."

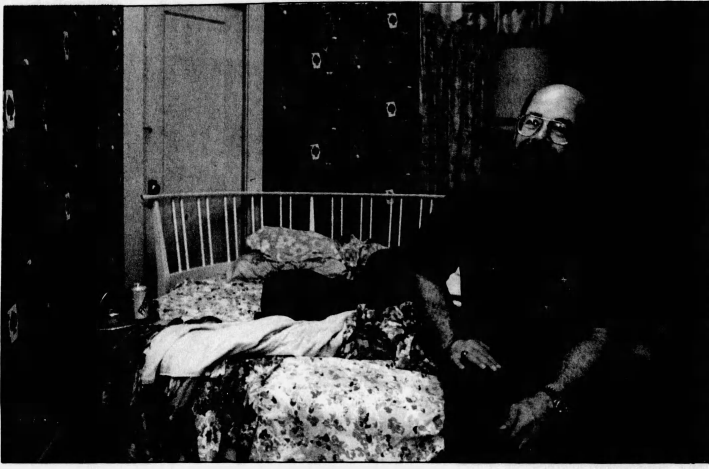
Museum plans

Kovach estimates it will take \$250,000 to purchase, remodel and restore a former bordello into a museum. Donations have reached \$2,500 — mostly from the sale of black T-shirts emblazoned with red lights and the "Aberdeen Historical Whorehouse Restoration Society" slogan across the front.

Kovach said it's important the museum project get going quickly because most of the old houses are gone and a couple of the remaining ones are scheduled for demolition. If promoters are unable to restore one of the whorehouses, a replica could be built, Rajcich said.

"The tall ships (restoration project) is the hub of the city's effort to get people to come here. Hopefully, we're one of the spokes," Rajcich said.

The Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority last March completed construction of Lady Washington, a replica of the ship Capt. Robert Gray sailed when he discovered the harbor that bears his name. Promoters of the \$3 million project hope to construct a second ship, the Columbia, and build a maritime museum and tall-ship repair station.



Tori P. Kovach sits on a bed in one of the 'crib' rooms in the old Olympic Rooms brothel which he wants to convert into a warehouse museum.

"We don't want to get too far into the public's pocket," said Kovach. He'd prefer to see the project funded mostly through private donations, the sale of T-shirts, caps and memorabilia and through corporate contributions.

He envisions a museum and adjoining gift shop selling tasteful lingerie. "We'd be happy if we just broke even," Kovach said.

As for the museum, Kovach would like to use modern technology to recreate the sights, sounds and smells of the brothels.

"For example, maybe the smell of tobacco, whiskey or cosmetics or the sound of mattress springs. It depends how far technology can take us and how tastefully it's done."

Memorabilia might include the old buzzer systems, washbasins and red lights. Any museum, he said, "would be the kind of thing you could take kids to."

Madame Ruby's Place

Former Madame Ruby Taylor's Olympic Rooms is one of the few old bordellos left in Aberdeen.

At the top of its rickety stairs, above Dill's Secondhand Store, is a small room with gaudy green wallpaper and floral drapes. In the middle of the room is a round bed with curved headboard Kovach wants for the museum.

Another old bordello sits above Reiner's sporting goods store at Wishkah and H streets. Lining the narrow hall are two dozen "cribs" where women used to ply

their trade. Drawings bearing the signature "Jaskar, 1947" adorn the glass windows of each room. Old light sockets with pull cords dangle from the ceiling.

An aging electrical cord runs from room to room down the entire hallway.

"It was part of the alarm system," Kovach said. "It would be pulled a certain number of times if the girls had a visitor or if a john was on the way up or if there was a raid."

Not much else remains.

Tesia has an envelope full of room keys and business cards. One card features a naked woman on the front advertising Iowa Hotel, Jackie Adams, mgr. The back of the card reads: "If an old man likes a young girl, that's his business! And if a young girl likes an old man, that's her business! And if they want to get married, that's their business! And if you look on the other side, that's our business!"

The madames

Former madame Ruby Taylor took her love to town in the 1940s. She recently visited her old haunts. Her trip down memory lane was videotaped. At one point, she was captured looking in the kitchen drawer where she used to stash her money. It was as if she was looking for some forgotten booty.

"I'm not ashamed of it," she said of her lifestyle. "Nobody can make me say I am. It was a good life." Hooking was just as important to Aberdeen's economy as logging, she said. "I cannot go out and log."

Remembering days gone by, Taylor recalled one customer "who got so excited to see me, he left his (car) lights on."

The madames came in all sizes, shapes and personalities.

Tesia remembers Anna Lackey as a "real, real nice lady. At Christmas time she'd open her heart and donate a bunch of dough for the needy kids."

He described Lillian Bernstein as "the ugliest looking madame I ever saw in my life and she had the best looking whores in Aberdeen."

Florence Nettleton ran the Harbor Rooms in the 1940s.

"It was a real, real high class place," Tesia said. Nettleton, a beautiful blonde, had a bootlegging operation, one of the nicest bars on the West Coast and a minimum of five girls in her stable. "You would see every walk of life up there, but she treated everyone the same," Tesia said.

Thriving Business

Supporters and detractors agree on one point — prostitution was a thriving industry for six decades in Aberdeen.

"It was a rough and tumble town," said Kovach. "There weren't too many high-class ladies (for wives) around here and the men had to do something for recreation."

"At one time, there were upwards of 30 to 35 whorehouses here," Kovach said. As many as 200 prostitutes worked in the town of 23,000.

Tori said one of his earliest recollections was "running down the alleys along the back of the buildings, opening the door to the whorehouses and yelling 'raid.'"

Seldom did patrons and prostitutes duck for cover. Genuine police raids — almost always for liquor violations, not prostitution — were generally announced in advance to give the mayor and any other prominent businessman time to duck out a hidden door, Kovach said.

While prostitution was illegal, city and county officials simply looked the other way.

The town gained a national reputation as "Sin City" U.S.A. Aberdeen girls who went to state universities were denied membership in sororities once it was learned they came from "Whoretown," Kovach said.

Military leaders at Fort Lewis put Aberdeen on the "off-limits" list, but that didn't stop a constant flow of GIs to the coastal community.

Mayor Williamson said he still bumps into people today who remember Aberdeen for one thing and one thing only — "Its cathouses."

"Prostitution was real big business for Aberdeen," Kovach said.

"It was license by fine. It's how they balanced the budget in the city," said Tesia. Madames would be booked for liquor law violations and then forfeit \$300 bond.

The community also turned its back on the houses of prostitution. "It was OK if it was low-key, but people didn't want their noses rubbed in it," Tesia said.

The bordellos were on the second floor of many businesses including the mayor's pharmacy, the bank, the liquor store and saloons.

As a 17-year-old Tesia used to visit the brothels.

"Us kids would go up and dance with the gals all the time," he said. "I've heard of guys going up there 14 years old. If you had the money, they'd let you."

When the ladies went to work, it generally cost their customers \$5. The price climbed to \$7.50 "depending on what services you required and how fond you were of the girl you were with," Tesia said.

When a lady returned to the parlor, the madame would take half and if the girl had a pimp he'd take his cut too. Tesia said the pimps would shop the girls around from madame to madame.

The working girls generally stayed to themselves, he said. "They didn't go anywhere." They were checked by a doctor once a week and generally shopped in the finest clothing stores on Saturdays.

"That was their day," said Kovach. "It was understood and people who wanted to avoid them didn't shop on Saturdays."

In 1952 Look magazine identified Aberdeen as one of the worst cities for corruption and prostitution. In the late 1950s, police raids coupled with public outcry, led to the decline of prostitution.

"The moral element in our community got outraged and began electing people who would do something about it," Kovach said. The last house closed in 1963.

MONDAY In The Olympian

Living

Halloween is Tuesday. Kids will be excited and having lots of fun, but it's spooky business for many parents. Find out how to have a safe Halloween, including protective clothing and candy checks.

Pennywhistle Press

Sir Prize Bear is getting ready for Halloween! Look for him in Pennywhistle Press. There are stories, games, pictures and his famous birthday list. It's lots of fun for boys and girls!

Personal Finance

A credit card consumer group is calling for changes in some ways that businesses ask customers to use credit cards. "Application fraud" and other illegal uses of credit cards have prodded some state legislators to review or take action. Read it in Personal Finance.

The Olympian

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