

COMMENTARY



MIKE HENDRICKS

Holiday brings forth revenge

What — if anything — Osama bin Laden might have in store for us on this second Fourth since 9/11, we shudder to think.

But I can tell you with utmost certainty what many Americans have planned for his evilness on this day of celebration.

After enjoying the holiday barbecues and maybe attending one of those big, patriotic fireworks displays, they'll retire to the backyard, light a match...

And blow Osama's head clean off.

"You've got to get one of these," said the guy at the fireworks stand, a place I visit each July for, ahem, purely professional reasons.

When it comes to fireworks, Kansas City, Kan., may be wide open. But I happen to live in a neighborhood where everything but caps, sparklers and snakes is considered a venal threat.

"What do I have to have?" I asked. "You mean, more than the family pack and the smoke bombs and the snags and the morning glories and those things that zip around on the ground and scare the dog half to death?"

"That is, they would if I were to purchase such contraband, take it across county lines and expose myself to possible arrest and certain embarrassment.

"And by the way, the cops don't ever wait across the street and follow your customers home, do they?"

He ignored my blathering, just smiled and directed my attention to several items wedged between the Roman candles, sparklers and party poppers.

They looked to be cones about seven inches in height. Atop each, a circular piece, looking something like a thick slice of summer sausage. And the whole package was covered in white paper on which there was a drawing of a robed and bearded man in a headscarf clutching an AK-47.

"So there it is," I said, "the famous Exploding Bin Laden Noggin."

Last year, the Exploding Bin Laden Noggin was quite a hit at fireworks stands, though I'd never seen one before.

"Looks just like him," I said, "though I had no idea his eyeballs resembled skulls."

"It's still very popular," my personal fireworks consultant said. "We've sold a lot of them."

Anyone could understand why. According to the Chinese manufacturer, this is what happens when the fuse is lit:

"Bin Laden's last moments are a blast of yellow light with screams, followed by silver to red with loud crackling.

"The final two shots make his head explode!"

More sensitive souls might say "How awful!"

Residency rule stays

Kansas City police must continue to live in the city despite a recent change in Missouri law. B-3



Steve Penn
Western Missouri Mental Health Center's new home will be a major step up. Commentary, B-2

County OKs wastewater rates

Lighter users get relief under structure

By PINN BULLERS
The Kansas City Star

Despite lingering criticism, Johnson County commissioners on Thursday approved wastewater user rates to go into effect in mid-July.

On a 4-3 vote, commissioners passed a rate structure that provides a slight break for small water users compared to those with big families using as much as 500 gal-

lons of water a day.

Commissioners Dolores Furtado, John Toplikar, Susie Wolf and Doug Wood voted yes. Voting no were Commissioners Ed Peterson, a former attorney with the Kansas Corporation Commission that regulates utility rates; chairwoman Annabeth Surbaugh, once on the Water District No. 1 board; and David Lindstrom.

Under the new plan, the county's wastewater customers will pay a

\$1.50 service charge to cover the cost of sending a bill every other month, down from the current \$5.41.

The wastewater bill also will include a volume charge of \$1.78 for every 1,000 gallons of water a customer is estimated to send to the county's sewers. The old rate was \$1.40.

As a comparison, Olathe charges a \$3.21 monthly service charge and a \$3.57 volume charge for every 1,000 gallons of water used, while the Unified Government in Kansas City, Kan., charges a \$6.98 monthly

service charge and a \$2.10 volume rate.

The goal all along, Furtado said, was to reduce the sticker shock associated with an old rate structure that in some cases more than doubled the wastewater bills of small water users on fixed incomes.

Higher bills for heavy users also could force those customers to conserve water, Furtado said.

As adopted, the median water user consuming 183 gallons a day will see a \$21.28 bimonthly waste-

SEE RATE, B-3

Platte County charges 18 in sting

Cases include priest, deputy

By GLENN E. RICE
The Kansas City Star

Platte County authorities on Thursday filed state charges against 18 persons arrested during a metrowide prostitution sting that netted several prominent people, including a priest and a sheriff's deputy.

The sting, which occurred in June, focused on escort services and involved 20 law enforcement agencies in Kansas and Missouri — the largest local sting of its kind. About 100 people were arrested, including Kansas City police, which coordinated the effort.

Sixteen of those charged Thursday in Platte County face a misdemeanor charge of patronizing prostitution. Two persons were charged with a misdemeanor charge of prostitution.

"Prostitution is a public health threat," said Platte County Prosecutor Eric Zahnd. "We don't want people patronizing prostitutes in Platte County, and my office will file charges against those who seek

SEE STING, B-2

KU Med set to open new units

By ROBERT A. CRONKLETON
The Kansas City Star

As Chris Ruder walked through KU Med's new medical telemetry and intensive-care units Thursday, work crews scurried about adding the finishing touches.

One worker scrubbed the walls to remove the construction dust; several technicians tested computer equipment and phones; other people unpacked medical supplies in the patient rooms.

On Monday, KU Med will officially open the new units, which are part of a \$21 million expansion that included adding a sixth floor to the hospital at 39th Street and Rainbow Boulevard in Kansas City, Kan.

"I have no jitters, it is great excitement," said Ruder, KU Med's nursing director. "I think the expanded facility will allow our staff to work in an environment that is a really great place to be."

Patients, however, won't move into the new units until midmonth. The expansion contains the 22-

SEE EXPANSION, B-2

Stocking up for the Fourth



At Rainbow Fireworks on Rainbow Boulevard in Kansas City, Kan., Thursday, Carol Jones of Kansas City selected fireworks for her family's

celebration of Independence Day. For a list of where to find big displays of fireworks, see Page 34 in Preview.

Tables turn as kindly shop needs its own lucky charm

By RUSS PULLEY
The Kansas City Star

Who needs a woodworking shop that builds one-legged milking stools?

Well, only thousands of children who require specialized toys and learning equipment to overcome physical and mental disabilities.

Volunteers at the CHARM Shop in Lee's Summit produce about 2,000 pieces of equipment each year. Therapists use those one-

legged stools to help children improve their balance.

The shop provides them free — along with 91 other kinds of items — to state schools and other institutions.

Now the shop itself needs help, said Bill Akers, one of the co-directors.

It has an end-of-August deadline to move its table saws, drills, sanders, routers and racks of wood to a new location, which it hasn't yet found.

The shop needs at least 3,000 square feet, preferably with a 10-foot-high ceiling to leave room to maneuver boards.

And the new location needs to be rent-free.

For 17 years, volunteers from the Telecom Pioneers have run the workshop now housed in the former AT&T plant at U.S. 50 and Chipman Road. That facility, sold and renamed Summit Technology Campus, is being redeveloped.

"Unfortunately, we got caught up

in it all," Akers said.

If a new home isn't found, he said, the shop probably will disband and hundreds of orders will have to be canceled.

They've been looking. A Raytown church has offered space in its new building, but that won't be available until 2005.

Keeping overhead rock bottom is essential to the shop's success. The CHARM Shop was founded

SEE SHOP, B-3

P.S.

Fire in hotel sauna

A malfunction in a sauna sparked a fire early Thursday at the Kansas City Marriott Downtown. No injuries were reported.

The fire was reported about 6:35 a.m. in a health center on the 22nd floor of the hotel, 200 W. 12th St.

Carol Pecoraro, the hotel's general manager, said the fire began in the men's dry sauna, but that officials had not determined an exact cause. She said no guests were using the sauna at the time. Guests in other rooms were evacuated for safety.

Fire investigators estimated total damage to the hotel at \$145,000.

The health center area will be closed through the weekend for cleaning and repairs, Pecoraro said.

—Kevin Hoffmann/The Star



He won't feel a thing

Demonstrating the danger of fireworks, Ed Schons Jr., captain of the Olathe Fire Department, lit the fuse on a firecracker held by a mannequin in a field next to the Great Mall of the Great Plains parking lot on Thursday. Last year, fireworks injured almost 200 people in Kansas.

SHANE KEYSER
The Kansas City Star

An Independence Day throwback

Area residents can celebrate Independence Day this weekend touring a World War II bomber at Wheeler Downtown Airport, 300 Richards Road, Kansas City.

The interactive exhibit displaying the B-17 Flying Fortress welcomes visitors to stand in the cockpit, climb through the bomb bay or man the waist guns of the combat airplane. The B-17 will be displayed from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and Saturday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday.

The Collings Foundation requires a \$4 donation for adults and a \$2

donation for children to tour the exhibit. Thirty-minute flights are available for a \$400 tax-deductible donation. Call (386) 451-9508 or (978) 562-9182 for flight reservations. The Collings Foundation is a nonprofit organization that sponsors events to teach American history through direct participation.

For more information, call (816) 415-1996, send e-mail to info@collingsfoundation.org or check the Web site: www.collingsfoundation.org.

—Joanna Dornfeld/The Star

Animal control service

Kansas City is now providing animal control service for unincorporated areas of Jackson County.

Previously, the county's public works department handled animal control issues in that area. However, the county's two animal control officers recently left their positions and the county decided to contract

the service out to Kansas City. The county is paying more than \$69,000 for the contract, which includes the salary, benefits, training, equipment and supplies for two full-time officers. The two officers will work in the county from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

—Bertha V. Williams/The Star

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COMMENTARY

STEVE PENN

New center is triumph for all

Only a couple of blocks separate the Western Missouri Mental Health Center and its future.

And from my vantage point, the future of the center and its patients will be greatly improved.

That's because sometime next January, the Western Missouri Mental Health Center will move from 600 E. 22nd St. into a new \$51 million facility under construction at 23rd Street and Campbell Avenue.

It'd like to think it will be the contents of our services who will benefit the most. ... Scott Carter, the center's chief financial officer, and Rick Doyle, the state's construction administrator, were my guides during the tour.

On the west side is the facility's new emergency entrance. A parking lot with two bays for emergency vehicles is already complete.

There will be the entrance used by the Fire Department, ambulances and by the police. ... The two men led me through two wooden doors where incoming patients will be examined.

Brand new stations where nurses and security officers will work are already constructed.

I saw the windows leading to the courtyard, a feature I found with each unit. The facility also has a gym with a projection screen.

I toured the living quarters. With simulated wood-grain floors, the rooms are both spacious and livable. A mixture of white, cream and lavender wall paint makes them colorful.

Each person still has a great deal of privacy. Carter said. With sensors, the sinks, showers and toilets activate automatically.

Finally, I saw the isolation rooms, where uncooperative patients will be taken. Even the waiting rooms resemble a push doctor's office.

The new digs for Western Missouri Mental Health Center are long overdue. The old building was constructed in 1930. The center simply became too expensive to maintain.

Once known as General Hospital No. 2, the facility served black Kansas Citians during the days of segregation.

However, the building's days of service aren't over: Children's Mercy Hospital has agreed to purchase the facility.

For years, mental health patients have deserved better. The conditions I saw in the new facility represent a major step forward.

The new facility is not only a victory for the patients who will stay here but a step up for the employees who will soon work under improved conditions.

The new mental health facility must also be viewed as a triumph of guts for downtown Kansas City. The new building is a sign that redevelopment of downtown has begun.

Reach Steve Penn, call (816) 234-4417 or send e-mail to spenn@kscstar.com.

www.kansascity.com

For the latest metro news, point your browser to The Kansas City Star's site.

OLATHE

Gas line fire

A construction worker was burned Thursday when he accidentally cut a gas line in western Olathe. The 35-year-old Lenexa man, whose name was not immediately released, suffered second-degree burns on his upper right arm and back.

Officials said the worker was tilling at West Santa Fe and North Overlook streets when he cut the line at 2:48 p.m. Nearby residents heard an explosion and saw the worker scramble from his machine.

Houses and a swimming pool near the fire were evacuated while workers shut off the gas and firefighters extinguished the blaze.

LENEXA

Stabbing sentence

A Lenexa man has been sentenced to nearly 13 years in prison for stabbing his estranged wife in a workplace confrontation last year.

Marquis L. Mannus was sentenced Wednesday in Johnson County District Court, where a jury in June found him guilty of attempted first-degree murder.

Mannus, 29, told the judge Wednesday that he did not intend to kill her when he stabbed at his wife at the Lenexa business where she worked.

After stabbing her, Mannus stabbed himself, according to court testimony.

His intended victim also told the judge Wednesday she thought he was only trying to hurt her and asked him not to impose the lengthy sentence.

Mannus' lawyer, Carl Cornwell, asked for a departure from state guidelines, but District Judge John Bennett denied the request and imposed the 155-month guidelines sentence.

KANSAS CITY

Fall proves fatal

A 20-month-old boy fell from a second-floor apartment window Wednesday died Thursday, police said.

Jordan T. Childress suffered a skull fracture in the 15-foot fall from his home in the 3600 block of the Paseo. The accident occurred about 9:15 a.m.

The boy's mother told police the window was open, but covered by a screen. A neighbor, however, told police the window had not been covered before the fall.

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Four wounded

Two gunmen walked up to a firm sitting on the hood of a car, fired through their pockets and then shot each man early Thursday.

Two victims were shot once in the face. A third victim was shot twice in the side. A fourth victim was shot twice in the chest.

EXPANSION: Hospital set to open new units

Continued from B-1

bed medical/telemetry unit, which includes heart monitoring, and the 14-bed intensive-care unit.

Ruder said special efforts were made to make the patients' rooms in the medical unit efficient. He said nurses and doctors have areas outside the rooms to go over charts. Each room also has storage space for commonly needed medical supplies.

All the rooms are private. The patients' bathrooms are hand-capped-accessible, including showers that accommodate wheelchairs.

The patients' rooms also have an area for family members. Each room has a recliner that can be made into a bed. The rooms are large enough that health-care providers can pull a curtain, so family members won't have to leave.

The medical unit has one room where a patient can be isolated from other patients.

STING: Platte County charges 18 in prostitution case

Continued from B-1

sex for money here." Zahnd said there were about 25 cases referred to his office for review. Criminal charges were not filed in several cases because there was not sufficient evidence, he said.

Among those charged Thursday was the Rev. Vince Rogers, pastor of St. James Catholic Church in St. Joseph, who appeared in Platte County Associate Circuit Court and was found guilty of patronizing prostitution.

Rogers entered what is known as an Alford plea — in which he did not admit guilt but conceded that there was enough evidence to convict him.

In a written statement issued by his attorney, John P. O'Connor, Rogers said, "Prolonging the proceedings would result in further disruptions at his parish and in adverse publicity to the priesthood and the Church."

Rogers received a suspended sentence and was placed on two years' probation. As special conditions of



CHRIS ORBERHOLTZ/The Kansas City Star

Rodeo refreshment

Cowboys and cowgirls are gearing up for the 46th annual Kansas City Jayce Pro Rodeo, which starts at 8 tonight at Benjamin Ranch, 6401 E.

All of the victims were taken to area hospitals. None of the injuries was considered life-threatening.

Police said the victims were shot about 2:10 a.m. in the 2600 block of Drury Avenue. Anyone with information on the shooting is asked to call the Tips Hotline at (816) 474-TIPS (8477).

Police seek gunman

Police and tactical officers scoured the city Thursday, looking for a teen they think fired an assault rifle down a busy street Monday, critically injuring a 2-year-old girl.

The girl's condition remained critical Thursday. A 15-year-old girl was also struck in the leg by a rifle round.

Police did not release the suspected shooter's name, but said he was a juvenile. Mayor pro-tem Alvin Brooks, who has been helping police in the case, said the boy is 15 years old.

The shooting occurred just after 1 p.m. Monday at Linwood Boulevard and Indiana Avenue. Police said the suspect was riding in a dark-colored car that passed a red car. The suspect stepped out of his car and fired at least 14 rounds at the red car, striking the 2-year-old girl who was in the back seat. The 15-year-old girl was standing on a nearby sidewalk after leaving summer school.

Rape charges

Jackson County prosecutors on Thursday accused a man of raping a 16-year-old neighborhood baby sitter.

Adham B. Ray, 24, of Kansas City, was charged with forcible rape and statutory rape in connection with the August 2002 attack. Police had been looking for Ray since the attack. He was arrested Wednesday night.

According to court records, Ray approached the victim about 9 a.m. Aug. 6, 2002 in the 8100 block of Park Avenue and asked her to take a walk with him. The girl agreed and Ray began pulling at her pants as they walked.

Ray then pushed the girl to the ground and raped her, records said, and he told her not to tell or he would kill her.

A neighbor saw the two together and told police the girl looked scared and had mascara smeared down her face from crying. The neighbor also reported overhearing Ray threaten the girl.

Deportation order

A former Kansas City International Airport worker was sentenced Friday to about four months time served and is to be deported.

Elvin Joel Hernandez of Honduras was charged this year with giving a false Social Security number on a job application for a janitorial company that services a cargo facility at KCI.

He was one of four employees who faced such charges as part of Operation Tarmac, in which anti-

terrorism officials conducted background checks on more than 5,000 people whose identification badges gave them access to various areas of KCI.

Witnesses saw the man get into an older model black pickup truck in the parking lot of a Price Chopper across the street from the bank, said FBI spokesman Jeff Lanza.

The man was described as white, mid-30s, 5 feet 8 inches tall, with a slender build. He wore a dark-colored baseball cap, dark-colored tank top, denim cut-off shorts and white tennis shoes. His dark hair was pulled into a ponytail, although Lanza said the ponytail could have been fake.

Fire probe

Investigators Thursday were trying to determine what caused an early morning fire that forced several Kansas City residents from their homes.

Nobody was injured in the blaze, reported just after 4:30 a.m. in the 6200 block of Truman Road. Two structures, store fronts with apartments above them, were damaged.

Kansas City Fire Department spokesman German Friends said several residents were home at the time of the fire. Investigators think the fire started somewhere between the two buildings but had not determined the cause.

The American Red Cross was assisting residents of the buildings.

Robber sought

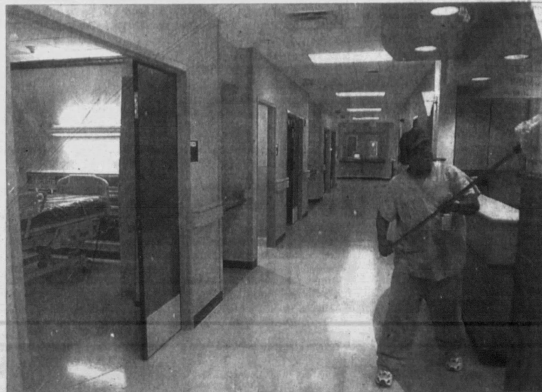
Police on Thursday continued to look for a man who robbed a bank Wednesday.

The crime occurred about noon at the U.S. Bank branch at 200 N.E. Vivion Road. The man walked into the bank and handed a note to a teller saying he had a weapon. The teller put cash into a bag and the man fled.

NORTHLAND

Police on Thursday continued to look for a man who robbed a bank Wednesday.

The crime occurred about noon at the U.S. Bank branch at 200 N.E. Vivion Road. The man walked into the bank and handed a note to a teller saying he had a weapon. The teller put cash into a bag and the man fled.



CHRIS ORBERHOLTZ/The Kansas City Star

Monday is the scheduled opening at KU Med of new units that are part of an expansion project at the Kansas City, Kan., hospital. In preparation, custodian Gerald Saunders on Thursday worked to remove construction dust.

project was financed with operating revenue. The hospital has operated independently of the University of Kansas since 1998, and receives no tax money.

To reach Robert A. Cronkleton, call (816) 234-5384 or send e-mail to bcronekleton@kscstar.com.

Clay County Sheriff's Department could not be reached Thursday. Darity had been suspended after he was arrested.

The sting began with police placing four ads in a weekly newspaper and on the Internet. Police said persons who answered the ads and agreed to exchange something of value for sex acts were arrested. Police said women who agreed to provide sex acts in exchange for something of value also were arrested. The Star's Summer Harlow contributed to this report.

Rush said it probably would be the middle of next week before any decision is made.

Clay County Sheriff's deputy Preston E. Darity also was among those charged Thursday for patronizing prostitution. Officials with the