



Steamy pictures, searing questions

The photographs spill across the living room floor, dozens of them, showing a young couple in various poses of intimate embrace.

In one series of photos, the boy, shirtless and his underwear showing above low-slung jeans, lies on top of the girl, kissing and caressing her. Her head is tossed back, eyes closed. In another, he stands behind the girl, who is dressed in shorts and a tank top, cupping his hands over her breasts. In a third, the couple kiss, his hands gripping her buttocks.

In a fourth series, the couple are joined on a chaise by another couple, and both are captured in a variety of poses, groping and kissing.

Mercedes Nieto, the grandmother of the boy who appears in all the photos, grows agitated as she flips through the stacks.

"This is art?" she asks angrily.

The sexually charged images are not pornographic. What makes them troubling is that the models are 14-year-old children, and the photographer — according to Nieto and the boy's mother, Ana Veloz — was the mother of the girl.

The boy is Eduardo "Eddie" Veloz, now 15, who leaves today for court-ordered reform school in Nevada. The girl, now also 15, is the daughter of Megan Smith, the Willow Grove woman who faces trial on a variety of child corruption charges involving underage drinking and teen sex.

A bizarre obsession

As I wrote yesterday, Eddie Veloz has paid a high price for his obsessive love affair with Smith's daughter — and the bizarre attention of Smith herself. He dropped out of sports, quit his job, ran away repeatedly and became chronically truant from school. For the past several weeks he has been locked in a Montgomery County juvenile detention center for sneaking over to the Smith's house against police orders.

He is listed in court documents as a victim of Smith's corruption. And yet he has remained jailed as incorrigible even as Smith walks free on bail.

His mother and grandmother, who raised Eddie together in Nieto's home in Northeast Philadelphia, said Smith bought the boy cigarettes, alcohol and expensive clothes, hid him from police, discussed sex with him, and allowed him and her daughter to freely have sex at her home and motels.

The photographs raise even more questions about just what was going through this woman's mind.

Eddie told his mother and grandmother that Megan Smith took the photographs of him and her daughter together and encouraged the steamy poses. She then gave copies of the prints to the boy, which is how the mother and grandmother found them.

Ana Veloz said she confronted Smith about the photos, and Smith defended them as art. "You have a 14-year-old girl with a boy on top of her, and this is art?" Veloz said. "A boy grabbing a girl's breast?"

A cry for help

Said the grandmother: "We showed them to DHS, and they did absolutely nothing."

Alba Martinez, Philadelphia Department of Human Services commissioner, confirmed that Eddie Veloz's family filed a complaint with her staff in September, alleging that Megan Smith was sexually corrupting the boy. Martinez said case workers investigated but closed the file after Eddie moved to Florida temporarily to stay with his paternal grandmother.

"I certainly understand their pain and anger," Martinez said. "The kid is a victim, there's no question."

Eddie's mother also showed the photos to police, who called them inappropriate but not illegal.

Upper Moreland Police Detective John McCue, who led the investigation against Smith, said: "If in fact an adult was taking those, it was extremely poor judgment, but does it come to the level of corruption? I don't know." Yesterday, I tried to ask Megan Smith about the photographs. I wanted to hear all about her views on fine art. She didn't return my message.

I wanted to ask her if she thought 14-year-olds were ready for the emotional complexities of sex and if parents needed to help them say no.

I wanted to ask her if she had anything to say to Eddie Veloz as he heads off to reform school.

Anything, like, you know, sorry for really messing up your life.

John Grogan writes Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Contact him at 610-313-8132 or jgrogan@phillynews.com.

Local News

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Plan to aid affordable housing

A councilman wants to add \$10 million to the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. Advocates had high hopes.

By Leonard N. Fleming
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Scores of advocates for affordable housing converged on City Council yesterday, lobbying for a slice of Mayor Street's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative fiscal pie to assist in housing the less fortunate.

And Council members listened. Councilman Michael A. Nutter introduced a plan to provide \$10 million in new taxable bonds to the anti-blight-initiative budget and to create three funds.

If approved, the city would allocate \$2.5 million for a Neighborhood-

Based Rental Production Fund to create 100 units of affordable housing; \$5 million for an Emergency Repairs, Preservation and Weatherization Fund for 1,000 occupied homes; and \$2.5 million for an Adaptive Modification Fund to help 167 disabled residents keep their homes.

In addition, Nutter's proposal, which Council plans to tack on to the initiative's budget Thursday, would add \$5 million to create a Child-Care

Health and Safety Fund, an idea first broached by the Street administration last week as part of its proposal to sell and lease back the Philadelphia library.

The measure, if approved, would increase the initiative's proposed budget from \$106 million to \$121 million.

"There's really no words to describe my joy when we say \$10 million, because that's not just lip service," See **STREET** on B4

A time to remember, a call to action



Gov. Rendell wipes away a tear as he speaks of Willard G. Rouse III. Rendell, with wife Marjorie behind him, spoke at yesterday's memorial at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Rouse, 60, died last Tuesday of lung cancer.

Memorial highlights life, legacy of Rouse

By Peter Dobrin
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

It started as your average, basic paean to a man many thought of as Philadelphia's greatest visionary in a generation.

But at various points during yesterday's "Celebration of the Life of Willard G. Rouse III," in typical Rouse-ian fashion, his 90-minute memorial service at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts morphed into something more.

It became a stirring call for Philadelphia's next "go-to" guy or gal.

"Who is going ... to fill those incredibly big, awful-looking shoes?" asked Gov. Rendell before a crowd estimated by organizers at 1,600.

"No one. Not one person. We all must step up. We all must do a little more."

Said Mayor Street: "Our challenge here today is [for each of us] to determine what will be my donation in the spirit and legacy of Bill Rouse."

Rendell said that the city needed



Molly Rouse Terlevich, one of Rouse's eight children, shares stories with the crowd of 1,600. Members from the many realms of Rouse's life spoke.

more leaders like Rouse, people who would "tell us politicians when we are doing something wrong, and who don't worry about the conse-

quences." The governor said that Rouse, 60, who died last Tuesday of lung cancer. See **ROUSE** on B4

No deliveries due at Mercy Fitzgerald

By Marie McCullough
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Darby became the latest hospital in the region yesterday to announce it will stop delivering babies.

It is the eighth maternity ward in Southeastern Pennsylvania to close in the last three years. The hospital blamed rising malpractice-insurance costs, shrinking insurance reimbursements, an exodus of obstetricians, and a market with fewer women of childbearing age.

Mercy Fitzgerald's maternity unit, where deliveries have fallen from 1,182 in 2000 to 839 last year, will close by Aug. 1. Last summer, Mercy See **MERCY** on B4

INSIDE

COMMENTARY

People in all neighborhoods of the city deserve to have clean, affordable supermarkets nearby. **B2.**

PHILADELPHIA

The U.S. Department of Education approves the Pennsylvania plan that complies with the No Child Left Behind law of 2001. **B2.**

Police find four slaying victims, two of them in the same West Philadelphia house. **B3.**

OBITUARIES

Dr. Frank Abercrombie Elliot, 92, founder of the neurology department at Philadelphia Hospital. **B7.**

Monica Yant Kinney's column does not appear today.

Norristown man takes safety of historic area in own hands

By Jeff Shields
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

NORRISTOWN — The door is shut, the blinds are drawn. But from his office on West Marshall Street, Dave Sereny can see his world.

Without moving from his seat, he can watch virtually all of this five-block historic shopping district, streaming live onto his computer monitor from nine cameras perched on his two buildings.

With an investment of \$40,000, he has established his own surveillance network, which has become a community security system in a neighborhood where crime does not mix with revitalization.

"I guess right now Marshall Street is pretty much my baby — I want to see good things happen here," said Sereny, 40, president of the year-old

West Marshall Street Merchants Association and a landlord who has invested about \$500,000 in the purchase and renovation of two buildings on the block. Sereny began putting the cameras up in December. There is currently no state law against such surveillance.

West Marshall Street has become a focus of revitalization for the borough, which invested its first streetscape money there as part of the Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy. The money went to improving sidewalks and lighting.

Although Sereny beat the borough to the punch, Norristown and the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office also have been pursuing funding for a camera project since October, said County Detective Lt. Mark Bern- See **SECURITY** on B4

Wounded Iverson friend testifies

Larry Robinson says he did not see the shooter — or the basketball star — at the moment he was wounded.

By Clea Benson
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Larry Robinson, friend of Sixers star Allen Iverson, limped into Philadelphia Municipal Court on crutches yesterday to testify he didn't see the man who fired on Iverson's entourage outside an Old City nightclub two months ago.

But Carlos Perez, the man accused of shooting Robinson in the leg April 14, was held for trial on four counts of attempted murder, aggravated assault and weapons offenses. Perez, 25, of Northeast Philadelphia, will be arraigned June 23.

At the preliminary hearing, another witness testified he saw Perez pull out a shiny silver gun and fire at least two shots at a group that included Robinson and Iverson. The only one wounded was Robinson, who is listed as the senior vice president of Iverson's foundation, Allen Iverson Celebrity Summer Classics.

Despite the testimony of the other witness, Robinson, 46, also denied seeing Iverson. He said he had just gotten out of Iverson's 2000 Bentley when he heard shots, felt a burning sensation in his leg, and realized he had been hit.

"I just knew I was in the killing zone because I was hit," said Robinson, adding that he was a commander in the military reserve. "I saw my leg turn to the side. I dragged myself to the Bentley and I drove myself to the hospital."

The motive for the shooting remains unclear, though police have said they believe an argument erupted between Perez and Iverson's group on South Street.

See **IVERSON** on B8



Carlos Perez, of Northeast Phila., had his bail amount lowered to \$600,000.

Highlighting Rouse life, legacy

ROUSE from B1
cer, was the kind of leader who came along once in a generation, and that only by investing in people did the city realize its leadership potential.

"The next Bill Rouse may be a 4-year-old girl living in North Philadelphia," he said.

After Rendell spoke, images put emotion to the message. Video screens above the flower-lined stage in Verizon Hall carried a shot of Rouse's three bare shoes sitting atop his blue blazer.

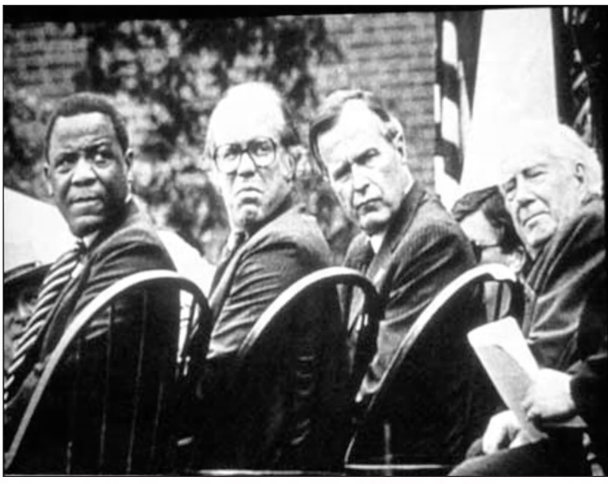
The memorial gave intimate glimpses into all of the realms in which Rouse spent his energies as father, developer, arts thinker and civic leader. Memorials tend to mix worlds, but Rouse's life left an unusually wide swath of society marveling together at the muscle he spent making the city and region better.

"It's a real powerhouse crowd," said Fred Stein, who produced the event. "Everyone is here, even a few construction workers."

Arts leaders heard Rouse's children tell stories about his loves — country music, Whitney Houston, napping, eating Majorie. His family heard Markie O. Rendell list all the "S" words she applied to Rouse (including *sophisticated, subtle, sage, stubborn, seasoned* and *skyscraper*).

Molly Rouse Terlevich, one of Rouse's eight children, provided some artifacts from his charming and unusual handling of the English language, which are better in spoken than printed form.

Everyone heard pianist Ignat Solzhenitsyn meditate over a miraculous slice of



During a slide-show tribute Willard G. Rouse III: A Life of Giving: Family, Leadership, Community," a picture is shown of (from left) then-Mayor W. Wilson Goode, Rouse, then-President George Bush, and Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger. They were attending a Fourth of July event.

Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and a brass-and-percussion ensemble led by David Hayes lifted people from their seats in Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*. It was Rouse's own choice for the event.

Many must have recognized a story Rouse was fond of telling and retelling. By all accounts, it was Rouse's "Rosebud" — something from the past that explained who he was and what motivated him.

The tale concerns a house he

wanted to buy early on from a man named Jim Cohen. When Rouse asked the price, he knew the house would be out of his reach.

"Mr. Cohen said to make an offer," recalled one of Rouse's sons, Tanner. Rouse was reluctant, but offered a low price. The man accepted the bid, even though he could have sold it for more to someone else.

Later Rouse asked why Cohen took an offer so low that it was a clear act of generosity.

Cohen responded with this: "The more I give, the harder it is to catch up with what has been given to me."

Said Tanner Rouse: "I believe my father tried to prove Jim Cohen wrong and to give back more than had been given to him."

No one basking in Rouse's spirit yesterday would have disagreed.

Contact staff writer Peter Dobrin at 215-854-5611 or pdobrin@phillynews.com.

Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital no longer delivering babies

MERCY from B1
Hospital of Philadelphia and Methodist Hospital discontinued obstetrics services.

"I am proud to say I was born at Mercy Fitzgerald," said Sister Kathleen Keenan, a senior vice president of Mercy Health System, based in Conshohocken. "This was a very painful decision, for me personally and for all of us, but it was a necessary one."

The 17-bed maternity unit lost more than \$2 million last year and expected a similar deficit this year, despite shutting down its neonatal intensive-care nursery in October, said Sister Donna Watto, a Mercy Health System spokeswoman.

Mercy Fitzgerald faces the same malpractice and financial pressures as other hospitals, but it is also coping with changing demographics. Because of a dwindling number of women of childbearing age in Delaware County and Southwest Philadelphia, the hospital projected only 595 deliveries this year — fewer than two a day, Watto said.

About 44 full- and part-time physicians, nurses, and support staff will be laid off from the hospital at Lansdowne Avenue and Baily Road, officials there said. At least two obstetrics will continue to provide gynecological services.

Despite the recent maternity unit closures, 31 hospitals in the region are still delivering babies, including Delaware County Memorial Hospital, which is also on Lansdowne Avenue.

"It's not like that part of Delaware County doesn't have another [maternity] service," said Joanne Fischer, executive director of the Maternity Care Coalition, a regional advocacy and service group. "But if ob-gyn is a losing proposition, does that mean more and more hospitals are going to be ditching it? It is worrisome."

Peggy Wilkers, a labor and de-

livery nurse who heads the nurses' union at Mercy Fitzgerald, said, "We're concerned that the diverse community served by the labor and delivery unit at Mercy Fitzgerald will be severely burdened. ... We question whether Delaware County Memorial Hospital has the capacity to absorb the deliveries."

Andrew Wigglesworth, president of the Delaware Valley Healthcare Council, said the closing is "one more vivid example of the ongoing threat to access posed by liability insurance crisis."

Of the five hospitals in the Mercy Health System, only Mercy Suburban in Norristown will still have a maternity unit.

But Mercy Suburban has drastically cut back its contract with the Maternity Care Coalition's MOMobile, as have Delaware County Memorial Hospital, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, and Albert Einstein Medical Center, Fischer said. The MOMobile provides outreach and home visitation to low-income mothers.

Next week, the legislature is expected once again to debate bills that address the rising costs of malpractice insurance for doctors and hospitals. Proposed legislative fixes range from a constitutional amendment that would cap certain awards in lawsuits to putting physician profiles on the Internet so patients can examine the disciplinary and malpractice history of their doctors.

Mercy Health System is the largest Catholic health-care system serving the Philadelphia area and is a member of Catholic Health East, cosponsored by 13 religious congregations and Hope Ministries.

Contact staff writer Marie McCullough at 215-854-2720 or mmccullough@phillynews.com.

Staff writer Dan Hardy contributed to this article.

Man takes safety into his own hands

SECURITY from B1
nstiel, who heads the project.

The borough has cleared most of its bureaucratic hurdles and is prepared to spend \$68,000 in private Weed and Seed funds to add its own surveillance system, Bernstiel said. The borough is also asking the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority for an additional \$34,000 for a total of \$102,000 to buy, install and maintain the system, which would be monitored 24 hours a day by Norristown police.

If the borough can mimic, augment or tie into Sereny's existing system, police will have a powerful tool — a round-the-clock eye on a critical area viewable from a computer screen anywhere.

Sereny's system provides a preview. His computer screen contains nine images; each camera is programmed to rotate, pan, tilt and zoom. Each camera can be controlled manually as well as by Sereny's system, which he says he will use to monitor the Internet by anyone to whom Sereny gives a password.

He is already talking to the operators of an independent community Web page, www.norristown.com, about streaming the images live for public viewing.

Computers store the digital images and can be recalled by punching in a time and date. Norristown police already used images from an April 19 gunfire incident to disprove two suspects' claims that they were not in the neighborhood at the time, Sereny said.

"We're pleased that he's doing this," Norristown Police Chief Russel Bono said. "He's being very proactive, and it's just like having an extra set of eyes for us."

Bono said fiscal restraints had kept the department from



Dave Sereny checks the live-stream video from his nine surveillance cameras. The cameras are perched atop his two buildings on West Marshall Street in Norristown, watching the historic shopping district.

dedicating constant patrols to the area, but "obviously we'd like to be up there all the time." Though video-surveillance systems are becoming ubiquitous, and Sereny's system has not generated an uproar, the American Civil Liberties Union warns in a policy paper about the new "surveillance society."

"Too many people still do not understand the danger, do not grasp just how radical an increase in surveillance by both the government and the private sector is becoming possible," authors Jay Stanley and Barry Steinhardt wrote in January for the ACLU's Technology and Liberty Program.

Stanley and Steinhardt warn that all public spaces will come under video surveillance at some point, and coupled with innovations such as face-recognition technology, that they could track people wherever they go, whatever they do. They also argue that

use of surveillance cameras in Britain has not produced evidence that cameras reduce crime. But Bernstiel, in his application for funding to the county Redevelopment Authority, argued that a surveillance system in Wilmington reduced crime by 40 percent in a target area over its first six months.

On West Marshall Street, the merchants feel safer with cameras there.

"If the criminals are afraid of the cameras, I'm very happy," said Aleksandra Eigen, co-owner of the Coffee Talk cafe on West Marshall.

Eigen, who grew up in communist Poland, said that firms "can't do business" with the atmosphere that has pervaded West Marshall Street. Sereny said that the scene outside his office at 405 W. Marshall St. used to be a "circus" of loitering, prostitution and gunshots,

but that it had changed under the gaze of the cameras.

Sereny grew up nearby in Norristown and used to walk to West Marshall Street with his mother to go shopping. Now he owns his 120 rental units, including his office, and the Estin Hardware Building at 501-503 W. Marshall St. His renovations of the Estin building include putting in seven low-cost artists' studios to attract artists to downtown.

His bouncer's physique, shaved head and goatee would not encourage most people to attack him. But he said he was personally "convinced by the cameras."

"Even if I'm walking down the street, I'm thinking: 'If this guy jumps me, he's on film,'" Sereny said. "It gives you a sense of security."

Contact staff writer Jeff Shields at 610-313-8173 or jshields@phillynews.com.

Police identify body found in Fishtown

Jason Sweeney, 16, had been bludgeoned to death. Robbery could be a motive, police said.

By IRINA PORTER
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Homicide officials yesterday identified the body of a teenager found Saturday in a wooded area of Fishtown.

He was Jason Sweeney, a 16-year-old boy who lived on the 1500 block of East Susquehanna Avenue and who neighbors said worked in construction alongside his father.

The Medical Examiner's Office said the teenager — who had been missing since Friday — had been bludgeoned to death with an unknown instrument. Police yesterday

said they were trying to establish why he was killed.

"At this time, it appears that the male was beaten," said Homicide Capt. Richard Ross. "What we're trying to determine right now is whether robbery was the motive. We do know some of his belongings were missing, but at this time it is not clear to us."

Sweeney's body was found about 2 p.m. by a group of children riding mountain bikes along the wooded area in the 2400 block of Beach Street, a short distance from where he lived.

Sweeney was last seen by his father about 4 p.m. Friday, police said. When the boy did not return that night, his parents filed a missing person report.

Yesterday morning, they positively identified their son's



Jason Sweeney's body was found in woods near his home.

body, police said. They declined comment.

News of Sweeney's death shocked residents of the 1500 block of East Susquehanna, a narrow stretch of two-story row-houses.

"Jason was a good kid. He was like one of my children," said neighbor Joe Murawski, 46. "He was never in any trouble. He wasn't in a gang or anything. We don't understand how something like this could happen to him."

Murawski said that the teenager was not enrolled in school and was living in contracting with his father, Paul.

Another neighbor, Frank Cella, 42, said: "It's sad. It's too many youth dying around here. It's graduation time; they should be doing that and looking forward to their future."

Ross of the Homicide Division said, "This was a particularly brutal crime, and as such the individual or individuals responsible for this crime need to be taken off the streets as soon as possible."

Police are asking anyone who may have information to contact Homicide at 215-686-3334.

Contact staff writer Ira Porter at 215-854-2641 or iporter@phillynews.com.

\$10 million boost sought for housing

STREET from B1
Cheri Honkala, executive director of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, said of the three funds proposed by Nutter.

Honkala, whose group was joined by members of the Philadelphia Affordable Housing Coalition, said housing advocates originally had wanted to use funds that the administration did not spend on demolitions last year. Demolitions were slowed by community protests.

But the bonds that were not spent on demolitions could not be switched to affordable housing because they are tax exempt, officials said.

"I've believed that the number one priority in dealing with the question of blight for neighborhood revitalization means providing decent, accessible housing for people who live in the neighborhood," Honkala said.

Yesterday's hearing combined testimony from the Street administration on the initiative's budget and the \$63.7 million in Community Development Block Grant funds being sought by the Office of Housing and Community Development. That federal grant was slashed by \$5.7 million in part because the city is losing residents.

The hearing, which lasted well into the evening and delayed a barrage of tough questions from some Council members, pushed other items off the scheduled agenda because of the long roster of residents who wanted to testify mostly about affordable housing.

Kevin R. Hanna, the city's secretary of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, said the ad-

ministration agrees that affordable housing needs to be dealt with in a world where there are few dollars.

"There is a dearth of affordable housing in the city," Hanna said. "Our pie is relatively small. We can only cut it up into a certain number of slices."

As for the initiative, director Patricia L. Smith said that the city anticipates issuing \$275 million in bonds over the five-year program instead of \$295 million because taxable bonds require larger annual payments to service debt.

Nutter said the administration seems to have

Housing advocates originally had wanted to use funds that the administration did not spend on demolitions.

seems to have heeded some lessons about the initiative, which had been criticized for moving slowly in its first year in efforts to eradicate blight and abandoned properties.

"Things happen," Nutter said. "I don't know that many of the things that have happened were not anticipated. I think that any new program is always going to have some start-up issues."

Councilman David Cohen, who was incensed that Mayor Street did not appear and testify, said the initiative was being "treated as a routine matter instead of a dynamic, living program that needs excitement surrounding it to produce results."

"I'm excited by the tremendous turnout of citizens who are demanding what I think would make Philadelphia a much finer city to live in," he said.

Contact staff writer Leonard N. Fleming at 215-854-4330 or lfleming@phillynews.com.

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