

At least Hannibal had pachyderms

Three to try to cross Alps or Elephants

United Press International
VILLETTE PAR AIME, France — An American explorer, a former dancer and a 65-year-old businessman are trying to retrace Hannibal's 2,197-year-old trek across the Alps on elephants, the group, trying to be the first to recreate Hannibal's trek, ran into a problem Monday, said Jack Wheeler, an explorer from Las Vegas. "But

we had difficulties with the Italians and at the very last minute they were unable to provide the elephants," Wheeler said. The elephants now will be brought from the Turin Zoo to a rendezvous with the Americans in about 10 days at the Alpine village of St. Jean de Maurienne. "But we plan to leave in about three days and retrace Hannibal's route through southern France without the elephants," Wheeler said. The guide is Jacqueline Vial, Wheeler's fiancée. She was born and reared in Villette Par Aime, a few

miles off Hannibal's route. Vial is a former star of the Folies Bergere. She met Wheeler three years ago while the troupe was performing in Las Vegas. Los Angeles businessman Sam Oschin also will be on the trip. It was in 218 B.C. Hannibal led 46,000 Carthaginian warriors and 37 elephants over precarious footpaths through 8,000-foot passes to attack the Romans. The Greek historian Polybius wrote that Hannibal's invasion force built huge rafts to float the nearly 40 elephants across the Rhone River

during their route to attack the Romans. "Hannibal's actual route is one of the great mysteries of history," Wheeler said. "We have good clues from Greek and Roman historians, but not the exact route. I think we can make a strong case for the route we'll be taking." Wheeler's trip will lead the group through St. Michel de Maurienne, Modane, Chemin de la Crousta, Col du Pont Mont Cenis and Col du Clapier. "This will be a way of reliving and participating in history," Wheeler

said. "It's going to be quite a thrill for me. It's been a long-time dream of mine to retrace the steps of famous explorers." But this is the first time I've actually done it. Next year, I'm hoping to retrace Marco Polo's trip to China.

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Robbery victim helps police foil St. Louis fencing operation

United Press International
ST. LOUIS — Diane Kerckhoff set out looking for \$50,000 worth of jewelry, porcelain, antique glass and cut glass articles stolen from her parents.

Her efforts led to a key role in an anti-fencing effort that has recovered \$1.75 million in stolen property since the program began more than three years ago. The value of stolen property nationally last year was about \$1 billion, according to the FBI's Uniform

Crime Statistics. Residential offenses accounted for 65 percent of the total burglaries. The St. Louis County police program is designed to eliminate the middleman, the "fence" who is willing to pay burglars as little as 10 percent of what their loot is worth because he can unload the hot property to buyers looking for bargains.

Kerckhoff, director of public education for the program, said nearly two-thirds of all fences are otherwise legitimate businessmen trying to make more money by adding a line of stolen property. The program, she said in an interview, is attacking the most vital link in the property-crime cycle.

Teacher strike delays classes

United Press International
OKLAHOMA CITY — Striking teachers from Oklahoma, Louisiana to Michigan and Illinois are disrupting the start of fall classes, giving thousands of the nation's students an extended summer vacation. Oklahoma City's first teachers' picket ever, which is nearly a week of hundreds of teachers jeered at as they crossed picket lines for the first day of classes Monday.

In Sparta, Ill., 2,300 students stayed home Tuesday on the first day of classes. Teachers there rejected a proposed two-year contract over the weekend. Teacher salary disputes elsewhere in Illinois kept schools closed in Park Ridge for a second day, delayed the start of classes in Granite City and Duplo and prompted an overwhelming strike vote in Elmwood Park.

The whole anti-fencing concept is new," she said. "Police are taking an offensive approach, going to fences to seek property before they know of a particular crime involved. Burglary units often have their own caseload and don't have time to search for a fence or recover property. Property crimes occur because there is a fence to supply money for burglars. There would be no reason for people to steal something if a fence wasn't there to help them get rid of it." In 1975, a few months before the anti-fence unit was formed, Kerckhoff's parents drove home one evening just in time to see burglars speeding off with \$50,000 worth of their prized possessions. She recalled "that kind of sinking feeling you get" as a crime victim and her frustrations in trying to track down the stolen property on her own.

"These were family things," she said. "Mother wanted her grandchildren to have them — she didn't just want the insurance money." At times I felt a hopeless attitude on the part of police. They didn't say they had no time, but I felt that. I kept persisting in it because I felt that victims were entitled to more." Embarking on a tour of antique shops and other places dealing in second-hand property, Kerckhoff heard the name of one particular auctioneer several times. Just as she

look at the little old lady trying to fulfill her dreams as a teacher, said one striking teacher, "I'm a substitute entering a school building. Isn't that wonderful?" Teachers are asking for a 12 percent salary increase and other benefits, but school officials say there is no money for any increase above the 9 percent offered. A strike in Louisiana's second largest school district — Jefferson Parish in suburban New Orleans — failed to gain strength Monday, but support from bus drivers is strong. The walkout is disrupting classes for about 65,000 students and — depending on whose figures you believe — anywhere from the 68 to 77 percent of the teachers are out on the

pick-up lines. Less than 10 percent of the district's buses, which serve 75 percent of the students, showed up Monday. Robbie Davis marched her two children into J.C. Ellis Elementary School past picketing teachers, but only because they "wanted to come to school so badly," she said. "Teachers have been underpaid for years and I'm glad to see 'em getting angry, frustrated enough, or whatever it is to finally do something about it."

"No self-respecting fence is going to tell you he knew his property was stolen. Often the only way you can do it is for burglars to testify against them — but why would a thief want to expose his fence? He thrives in people not knowing he's dealing in stolen property." "We want to create a kind of paranoia for people who are in the business of buying and selling second-hand goods. We want them to stop and think: Could this material be stolen? Should I call the hotline? Do I want to have less crime in the community? Everybody is a potential victim."

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