

National briefs

Town not alerted to nuke's hot 'burp'

United Press International
RICHMOND, Va. — A mechanical failure, apparently compounded by human error, caused Virginia Electric & Power Co.'s North Anna nuclear plant to "burp" radioactive xenon gas into the atmosphere Wednesday, but local authorities say the company never alerted them to the accident.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Veeco officials said the release from the No. 1 reactor — the nation's first known incident since the March accident at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island plant — posed no public health danger.

The Louisa, Va., reactor, the sole nuclear power generator in Virginia, immediately shut down. Cold shutdown was set for Tuesday.

The only residents within a mile radius were plant employees, Veeco said.

The exact amount of xenon gas released was unknown, but NRC officials said it was a "very, very small amount."

"It wasn't a leak, it was more like a burp," said Veeco Senior Vice President W.L. Proffitt. Xenon is a noble gas, which means it doesn't break down and mix with other gases, and is relatively harmless except for its radioactivity.

Longet settles out of court in slaying suit

ASPEN, Colo. — A \$1.3 million lawsuit filed against actress-singer Claudine Longet by the parents of slain professional skier Vladimir "Spider" Sabich has been settled out of court, officials announced Wednesday.

Attorneys confirmed the settlement was reached, but refused to discuss terms. The suit, filed in May 1977, asked for \$1 million in punitive damages, which since have been excluded in wrongful death actions under Colorado law.

Longet served 30 days in jail for the shooting of Sabich, which occurred in March 1976 in the \$250,000 mountain home the couple had shared for two years.

Officers accused of beating aliens

United Press International
SAN DIEGO — Four U.S. Border Patrolmen have been charged with slapping, clubbing, punching and otherwise mistreating Mexicans who crossed into the United States illegally, the first such criminal charges ever brought against border officers.

Accused were Jeffery Otherson, 31, and Bruce Brown, 33, both with three years' experience, and two-year officers Dirk Dick, 25, and Daniel Charest, 29.

A federal grand jury Tuesday returned a six-count indictment accusing the four of a total of 38 overt acts, including conspiracy to "assault, beat, strike, kick and mistreat" aliens with nightsticks, fists and their open hands on three separate occasions in July and August.

One of the officers allegedly told a trainee, as he punched a Mexican in

the stomach, that "sometimes we find it necessary to do something like this because the criminal justice system doesn't do anything" about illegal aliens.

The extent of injury to the aliens could not be determined because the agents dumped them on the Mexican side of the border, officials said.

In attempts to cover up the crimes, one agent allegedly threatened the life of a former border patrol trainee who cooperated in the investigation. Another accused agent was charged with perjury in his testimony before the grand jury.

The agents pleaded innocent at their arraignment late Tuesday before a U.S. magistrate and were released on bonds of \$10,000 each pending a hearing Oct. 1. They face prison terms of 7 to 11 years if convicted.

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Canine is hero of 6-person chase

United Press International
NEW YORK — Ida Joseph is an honest woman and her dog is a hero. Besides, the \$3,500 diamond and white gold brooch they found on the street wasn't to her taste.

Joseph was walking with her terrier, Zero, in Greenwich Village Tuesday when a thief came running — pursued by an antique dealer, gallery owner and his wife, a fire battalion chief and his aide and a mystery bicyclist.

"Everybody was shouting, 'Stop thief,'" Joseph said.

It started at the Grace Galleries on Broadway when antique dealer Edward Howell showed a diamond brooch that had belonged to his mother to a man who told Howell it reminded him of one his mother had had and even named.

"I was still touching it when he bolted," Howell said.

Howell gave chase, joined by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Perry, the owners of the gallery where eight dealers display their pieces.

Enter Chief Joseph Riccio and his aide, firefighter Ralph Ruocco, who

were driving down Broadway.

Riccio said he saw Howell chasing the man, yelling "He's a thief."

Siren blaring, Riccio and Ruocco gave chase.

A mystery man on a bicycle then joined what Howell called the "Keystone Kops-type chase."

Pedaling after the suspect, the bicyclist, who later disappeared, pointed the way for the fire chief and his aide.

Joseph was watching the commotion when "Zero picked up a thing in his mouth and I thought, oh God, he's going to give me another vet bill."

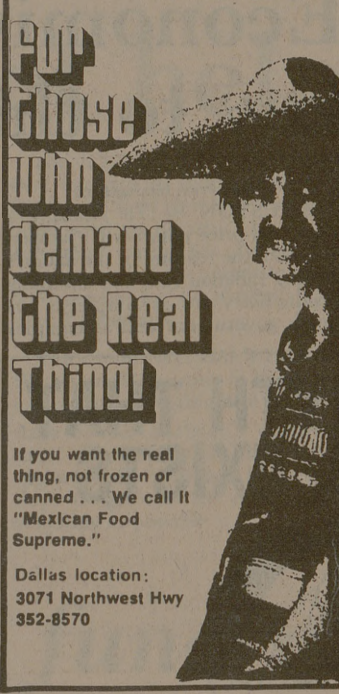
"It was a pin and I thought it was tacky looking," she said of her pet's find.

Meanwhile, Riccio tackled the suspect, identified as Kenneth McCabe, 26, of Jersey City, N.J. "I then saw everyone run back and start looking frantically," Joseph said. "I held out my hand and said, 'Is this what you're looking for?'"

"Oh my God, that's it," Howell shouted upon seeing the \$3,500 brooch.

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