

National

Autopsy begins on possible 21st Atlanta slaying victim

United Press International
ATLANTA — The medical examiner's office began an autopsy today on the body of a black youth who police believe is the 21st victim of Atlanta's child slayers. Identification of the victim was expected to be established later today.

The body, clad only in undershorts, was found Monday afternoon floating on some debris in the Chattahoochee River in southwest Fulton County, the same general area where a number of other of the victims' bodies have been found.

Two young blacks are listed as missing by the special police task force investigating the string of killings that has terrorized the city's black neighborhoods for the past 20 months.

But authorities said the body could not be that of Darron Glass, who vanished in

September. The other youth, Joseph Bell, 15, disappeared March 2.

Assistant Fulton County Medical Examiner John Feegel said before the autopsy got under way that there did not appear to be any signs of gunshot wounds or sexual molestation.

He said the victim was five feet, five inches tall and weighed about 100 pounds. Feegel said it appeared the body had been in the river more than three days, but not three weeks, as some earlier reports had indicated.

Feegel, echoing police reports of Monday night after the body was recovered, said the victim was "obviously reminiscent of some of the other cases by age, sex, clothing and the place where the body was found."

He said dental records, body x-rays and fingerprints were being used in the identification process.

But, he said, "finding fingerprints of a suspect at this time is totally hopeless" because of the body's decomposed state.

Monday night, Fulton County Police Chief Clinton Chafin, asked if he believed the slaying was the work of the child killers, said, "I don't think there's any question about that."

Most of the bodies of the 20 previous victims found have been fully clothed. But the last body discovered, that of Curtis Walker, 13, was also wearing only underwear. He was also found in a river — the South River, on the other side of the metropolitan area in DeKalb County. The body found Monday was only the fourth child's body to be dumped in a river.

April 10 receives boost for space shuttle launch

United Press International
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The Kennedy Space Center manager for the space shuttle project said he would recommend today that April 10 be officially set as the blastoff date for the Columbia's oft-delayed maiden test flight.

Robert H. Gray said a review Monday showed the winged spaceship, the ground launch equipment, and solid rocket booster retrieval operation were ready for the 54½-hour voyage of John W. Young and Robert L. Crippen 36 times around the Earth.

"We are prepared and ready to commence a launch countdown this weekend," said Gray, who spent last Friday helping search for survivors in the rubble of a

collapsed condominium in nearby Cocoa Beach.

Gray's recommendation goes to acting space agency administrator Alan Lovelace for consideration at a today's meeting of shuttle officials. They plan to review the state of readiness of all aspects of the Columbia's preparations, including the worldwide tracking network and Houston's mission control center. The project is already 2½ years behind schedule.

Launch director George Page said technicians began working Sunday toward the April 10 launch date.

At the oceanside launch pad, technicians wearing protective suits were to complete hazardous hydrazine fuel-loading operations

today. Work fell several hours behind Monday because of a variety of minor difficulties.

The corrosive liquid, which gives off poisonous fumes, is used to drive turbines, which in turn power hydraulic system pumps in the Columbia itself and in its twin solid-propellant booster rockets.

Because the Columbia is part airplane as well as part rocket, it uses hydraulic power to operate the control surfaces that it requires for flying in the atmosphere. A separate hydraulic system steers the nozzles on the shuttle's twin rockets.

Young and Crippen were in Houston Monday for still another rehearsal in a computer-controlled spacecraft trainer.

Farmers call for crop protest

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The American Agriculture Movement is asking farmers to withhold their crops from market to protest President Reagan's decision to maintain the embargo of grain sales to the Soviet Union.

Marvin Meek, leader of the farm group that two years ago tied up Washington with a tractorcade, said Monday the new effort, called "farmers embargo," is intended to pressure Congress to raise floors under crop prices to compensate farmers for losses from the embargo.

Meek estimated farmers have lost \$12 billion in potential crop receipts because of the embargo, which he said translates into a \$60 billion loss to the economy.

While he conceded past efforts to get farmers to withhold crops from market have failed, Meek said the current situation is different due to short supplies of crops after last summer's drought.

"It would be a success if only 5 percent of farmers participated," he said. He also denied it would hurt consumers by causing high prices.

A spokesman for the American

Farm Bureau Federation, the nation's largest farm group and an opponent of the embargo, said the AAM effort probably will not work, primarily because farmers are in such bad financial shape they cannot afford to hold back their crops.

"It just doesn't work," the spokesman said. "Farmers are too independent to organize that much. If they want to try it, they can try it."

In a weekend interview in The Washington Post, Reagan said lifting the embargo, as he promised to do in the campaign, would send

the wrong signal to the Soviet Union.

President Carter imposed the embargo after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

On a related front, Meek said Kansas farmers would lobby the Kansas Legislature to enact an unusual bill setting the price of wheat sold in the state at no less than 70 percent of parity, or \$4.89 per bushel. The current average price is \$3.60.

He said he hoped other states would follow the lead of the nation's largest wheat-producing state.

Man offers burglars a better price

United Press International
GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Calvin Sterk has a message for the burglars who ransacked his home — if a local fence makes an offer for his belongings, Sterk might better

Sterk, whose modest home was robbed March 7, recently posted a sign on his front porch offering to pay for the return of his three suits, radio-cassette tape player, watch and some silver coins.

The sign reads: "To the thieves who stole my belongings: I will buy them back at top dollar. Suit is \$75. Radio is \$50."

"It's an honest, bona fide genuine offer," Sterk said. "No questions asked."

He's particularly anxious to get back his brown herringbone suit. "It made me look like a million, but it only cost me \$120," he said.

ST. LOUIS — Two candidates for mayor have said no thanks to an invitation to follow Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne's example and live in public housing.

Both said they could not afford to maintain their homes and an apartment in the Vaughn public housing complex.

The Rev. Dr. Buck Jones, director of the welfare reform group called Operation Live, Monday

invited the winner of the April 7 mayor's race to move into Vaughn.

Jones said junkies sometimes order residents not to park in front of the buildings and hamper their drug trafficking. He said shootings at the complex were "an everyday affair."

In a letter to Democratic candidate Vincent Schoemehl and Republican Jerry Wamsler, Jones said moving into the complex would be an impressive "humanitarian decision."

Wamsler demurred, saying he already had a mortgage to pay off. Schoemehl also declined.

"Unlike Chicago's Mayor Jane Byrne, I cannot afford to maintain

two homes and therefore respectfully decline Reverend Jones' invitation," Schoemehl said.

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