

Masks may cure ear noise

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Millions of Americans suffer from persistent sounds in the head, and a National Academy of Sciences panel says ear-worn devices to mask this ringing and buzzing may be the best available way to deal with the problem.

The committee reached this conclusion cautiously because many questions remain. But it said there are no other equally effective treatments for the disorder called tinnitus.

The big concern is the safety of the masking devices which emit steady sounds to drown out the head noises. The committee said in a report that nearly all currently available maskers have the potential to produce hearing loss when used for long periods.

The nine-person committee, headed by Dennis McFadden of the University of Texas, said a recent British survey, if applied to the U.S. population, would indicate 2.5 million Americans are afflicted with severe tinnitus.

Housing industry role in recovery disputed

An administration representative painted a rosy picture for Congress of an economic recovery led by housing sales, but those outside the government are slower to forecast a strong housing industry.

"All indicators tell us the housing industry is back on course and headed for full recovery," Housing and Urban Development Secretary Samuel Pierce told the Senate Banking Committee Monday. He said the housing industry was leading the nation into recovery.

Pierce forecast an increasing demand for housing throughout the 1980s as 41 million Americans reach 30, the peak period for buying a first home.

Business inventories dropped 0.6 percent in December despite a 0.9 percent drop in sales.

Commerce Department chief economist Robert Ortner, reflecting on the latest figures, said, "The economy is not out of the woods yet."

On Jan. 19 the government said that, before inflation, the GNP reached \$3.06 trillion for 1982.

Government economists have checked the economic reservoir represented by inventories and found the level lower than they estimated when reporting the nation's gross national product — the broadest government measure of the economy.


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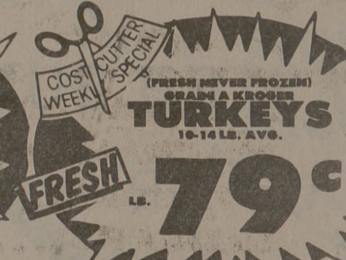


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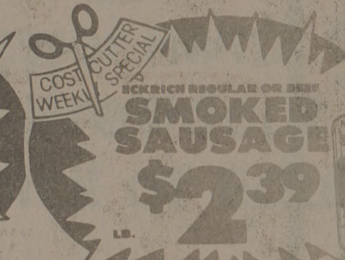
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Bank reopens after merger

United Press International
KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— New owners of United American Bank reopened the bank today — ending a financial scramble that saw flamboyant Tennessee politician Jake Butcher lose control of the insolvent institution.

"The shareholders get zilch," said Lewis Donelson, former Tennessee finance commissioner and now a First Tennessee lawyer. "They lose everything. The reason is because the bank made bad loans."

The bank, trapped with bad loans estimated at more than \$50 million, was bought by Tennessee's largest bank holding company late Monday, just 16 hours after it was declared insolvent in the fourth largest bank failure in U.S. history.

Butcher, a former gasoline truck driver, lost his stock in the bank and ended up barred by the FDIC from his office atop the glittering 27-story UAB tower in downtown Knoxville, Tenn.

Hinckley snaps back to health

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Presidential assailant John W. Hinckley Jr., recovering from his third presumed suicide attempt since he shot President Reagan in 1981, is on a liquid diet and out of danger, hospital officials said.

Hospital officials said Hinckley and his lawyer asked them not to disclose information about the drugs involved.

A spokeswoman for Greater Southeast Community Hospital, where Hinckley was taken Sunday after he was found lying on the floor of his mental ward at St. Elizabeths Hospital, said he is recovering.

Doctors indicated earlier that he may have saved medication with which he was being treated.

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