

Union trouble

Hormel plant closes for fear of violence

Associated Press
AUSTIN, Minn. — National Guardsmen with billy clubs and riot gear closed a strikebound meatpacking plant Tuesday to guard against violence, hours after the company asked workers not to cross picket lines formed by hundreds of jeering strikers.

The Guardsmen lined up shoulder to shoulder in front of the gates at the closed Geo. A. Hormel & Co. plant, which opened eight days earlier for the first time since the strike began in August.

"I'm not going to have people enter when there's a good chance of people being injured," said police Chief Donald Hoffman, who made the decision to close the plant after discussions with Guard commanders and county sheriff's officers.

Hoffman's decision was cheered by strikers, who earlier lined the street, taunting and mimicking approximately 500 Guardsmen on duty. Later Tuesday, officials ordered another 300 Guardsmen to the scene.

Hormel officials vowed to reopen the plant Wednesday. "Today's activities represent nothing more than an interruption in our plans to continue operation," plant manager Deryl Arnold said. "The company has not made any commitment to keep the plant closed."

Union strategist Ray Rogers said, "The Guardsmen are not our adversaries. They've been put in a very difficult position by this company."

Jim Guyette, president of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, said, "Everything has been peaceful. Everything has been non-violent."

"We haven't had any arrests."

We haven't had anyone hurt except the company photographer." The photographer was kicked in the groin and hospitalized briefly Monday; no arrest has been made.

Hoffman said police were investigating a report that a gunshot shattered a pickup truck window near the plant Monday. In addition, he said, police had several reports of strike-related vandalism, including slashed tires and broken car windshields.

"I think a lot of members are overreacting and overzealous," Hoffman said. "They're harming themselves."

Strikers jeered and chanted slogans in the pre-dawn sleet and rain Tuesday as they awaited attempts by supervisors, meatpackers, and, for the second day, replacement workers to cross picket lines.

Exposure to AIDS-linked virus lower in recruits

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of military recruits testing positively for exposure to a virus linked to AIDS fell sharply in November, possibly because of testing that may have discouraged high-risk people from enlisting, Pentagon officials said Tuesday.

During November, the military services tested 49,172 recruits, of whom only 11 tested positively, on a series of blood exams, Defense Department spokesman Lt. Col. Pete Wyro said.

By comparison, during the latter half of October when testing began, 40 individuals tested positively out of 34,996 screened.

The new results, when combined with the October figures, produces a positive testing rate of 0.6 per 1,000. By contrast, based on the October results alone, the Pentagon had charted a positive testing rate of 1.14 per 1,000.

A Pentagon official, speaking on condition he not be identified, said publicity about the testing may have discouraged high-risk people, such as homosexuals, from enlisting in the first place.

AIDS, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is a fatal condition that attacks the body's ability to resist disease. It has been confined primarily to homosexuals, intravenous drug users and people who received tainted blood transfusions.

The blood screen employed by the Pentagon can do no more than indicate a person has been exposed to a virus associated with the disease — not whether he will contract it. Nonetheless, the Pentagon decided Oct. 15 to begin testing all recruits as they reported to processing stations.

Under a policy directive signed by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, active-duty personnel will be tested as well. The order said that such personnel who test positively but show no signs of the disease will remain in the service, but recruits who test positively will automatically be denied entry to the military.

Striking fishermen throw rocks at fish buyers

Associated Press

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. — Police with dogs and riot gear Tuesday confronted a rock-throwing crowd of fishermen angry at a renegade seafood auction house that they say will undermine their strike.

Fifteen people were arrested. More than 200 striking fishermen gathered outside a makeshift auction house on the waterfront about 6:30 a.m. As buyers drove up to purchase fish caught by non-union crews, the crowd began pelting cars with stones, police said. Several windows were broken, but no injuries were reported.

Harvey Mickelson, an attorney for the fish dealers, said he was at the head of the line of buyers when stones began to fly. "I ran in and I turned around and nobody else was there," he said. "The rocks started coming in the building. There was no way to get out, no phone. Was I scared? Yes."

About 75 police officers, including 30 officers wearing helmets and shields, escorted 14 buyers inside the Yellowbird Trucking Co. building, where 65 tons of scallops and fish were sold. Officers and police dogs from nearby Fairhaven, Dartmouth and Aschuset also were called in to help, officials said.

"... I turned around and nobody else was there. The rocks started coming in..."

— Harvey Mickelson, attorney for the fish dealers.

Those arrested faced charges ranging from disturbing the peace to assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

On Monday, when seafood was sold at Yellowbird in the first auction since the strike began, two men were arrested on assault charges for allegedly throwing rocks at a car.

Some of the fishermen, who have been on strike since Dec. 27, claimed that boat owners had violated a 20-year-old city ordinance that makes it illegal to unload fish anywhere but at the city auction house.

"Fishermen are mad," fisherman Kevin Medeiros, 31, said. "There have been arrests on our part. What about arrests on their part? A lot of boats have unloaded and no one's been arrested."

Mayor John Bullard said the auction was set up this week on the private property of Yellowbird Trucking so dealers wouldn't have to cross picket lines.

Striking fishermen, members of the Seafarers International Union, have kept a vigil outside the city auction house since their walkout began.

A boat captain was arrested Monday for unloading his fish at a fish plant instead of the city auction house, and Bullard promised additional arrests.

Dolphins being schooled in language

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Like Dr. Dolittle talking to his animals, Dr. Louis Herman is teaching a pair of bottlenosed dolphins the meaning of words.

And while they haven't exactly struck up a two-way conversation yet, the seagoing mammals are learning to do what they are told.

Herman, director of the Kewalo Basin Marine Mammal Laboratory of the University of Hawaii, for six years has been working with two female dolphins, Phoenix and Akeakamai, who were captured in the Gulf of Mexico.

Using pool toys floating in a tank, the two dolphins have demonstrated they can understand certain words.

But more important, they have shown they understand that words strung together in different ways can mean different things, the novelty of language long thought to be an exclusively human attribute.

"With training and the development of their knowledge and skill in the laboratory," he says, "these animals can go far beyond what many had thought possible."

Through workouts in two connected, circular tanks, the dolphins have been taught a series of nouns, modifiers and verbs.

By combining the words together into commands, Herman tests their comprehension by their responses to commands.

New commands are created by new combinations of words or rearrangement of words according to grammatical rules.

Correct response indicates the dolphins' understanding of syntax, or how word order affects meaning.

For instance, the command "get the hoop, and take it to the frisbee," means something different than "get the frisbee, and take it to the hoop."

Whether or not animals can create or understand sentences has long been an open question in scientific research.

It may take years to determine whether the dolphins eventually will be able to produce language, Herman says, but his dolphins are providing the equivalent of "yes" or "no" answers.

"We probed to see what would happen if we told the dolphin to jump over the ball, and there was no ball," Herman says. "The dolphin searched, in both tanks, for 50 seconds, then slowly returned to the trainer as if to say: 'It's not there.'"

"That's a pretty large step in animal work, to be able to have an animal report back to you on what is out there and what is not out there," Herman says.

"In this way," he says, "the dolphin is telling us the contents of her immediate world."

With Ake, two small panels were installed at tankside that she can hit to indicate "yes" or "no" answers.

A small staff of permanent trainers is complemented by students from the University of Hawaii and volunteers.

The work is supported by the National Science Foundation, the Of-

ice of Naval Research of the U.S. Navy, and Earthwatch, a private research organization.

One recent morning, a two-hour session started with visual identification trials with Phoenix, using such things as a toy lawnmower, a laundry basket and a piece of storm drain.

An assistant held up an item for several seconds and then took it away. Later the researchers held up the object again, along with two other items.

When Phoenix swam over to the original object she was rewarded with a fish.

Ake was tested on 24 sentences of from two to four words each. She got 23 of them right.

When the researchers introduce new words to create new commands, the dolphins' performance has been only slightly below that for familiar commands, says Dr. James Wölz, associate director of the facility.

The research began here shortly after Akeakamai and Phoenix were caught about one mile apart in the Gulf of Mexico on the same summer day in 1978 near Gulfport, Miss. The two were about 2 or 3 years old at the time.

So far, Phoenix and Akeakamai have progressed at almost identical rates.

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