

Battalion Classifieds

World Briefs

CBS to discuss Rather-Bush clash

NEW YORK (AP) — CBS affiliates will confer on whether to formally complain about Dan Rather's interview with Vice President George Bush, but the head of the group said Wednesday he thinks Rather had an obligation to ask tough questions.

"I think in the context of a live interview, a lot of dynamics took place that focused more on style than on substance," said Benjamin Tucker, chairman of the CBS affiliates board.

"I think Dan had an obligation to conduct the interview and to ask tough questions like he did," he said.

Tucker said the 11-member affiliate board would confer by telephone Thursday morning, but he didn't expect an outcry.

The affiliates did protest last September when the network went black for six minutes to cause Rather angrily left the set of the "CBS Evening News" because live coverage of a tennis match was going to run 10 minutes into the newscast.

Officials say shuttle still dangerous

WASHINGTON (AP) — The space shuttle is "a very dangerous system" that should be flown with caution by crews limited to essential personnel, say some members of the presidential commission that investigated the Challenger accident.

Some former commissioners said the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has yet to complete all of the testing that they believe should have been done even before the first shuttle flight. They commented in interviews on the eve of Thursday's second anniversary of the Challenger accident.

"The shuttle is a very dangerous system," said Joseph F. Suter, an engineer and a vice president of the Boeing Co.

David C. Acheson, a Washington lawyer, said the shuttle "is damn good" and should be placed as soon as possible with safer spacecraft.

"It's a sloppy, loose, budget-driven design," Acheson said.

Acheson and some other commissioners said the shuttle design was underfunded and NASA was forced to forego tests that should have been done during development of the craft.

Hospitals losing money on Medicare

WASHINGTON (AP) — One-third of the hospitals that treated Medicare patients during 1986-87 made no money or actually lost money for that care, a Health and Human Services Department official said Wednesday.

Overall, the profit margin for hospitals for treatment of Medicare patients declined significantly during that period, falling from 14.4 percent in 1985-86 to 9.6 percent in 1986-87, Richard P. Kusserow, the HHS inspector general, said.

Total profits for the 5,288 hospitals participating in the system declined from \$4.9 billion in the first period to \$3.6 billion in the later period, which worked out to an average decline of \$992.80 for each hospital, from \$1,992.80 to \$687,203, he said.

"In the first two years... the hospitals registering profits were an average of 80 percent of the hospitals registering no profits or losses," he said. "Now we have two-thirds registering profits."

"Up until 1984, Medicare paid the cost of treating our patients, no profit at all, only cost. In 1984, (Congress) basically said they would set the rates and if you can operate more efficiently and are able to treat our patients less expensively than the rates, you can keep the difference."

Smuggler says leader accepted bribe

WASHINGTON (AP) — A convicted drug smuggler testified Thursday that Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega smilingly accepted a \$300,000 cash bribe in 1983 to become "a full-scale co-conspirator" in laundering huge profits from trafficking in marijuana and cocaine.

Steven Michael Kalish told astonished senators that he and Noriega were such close business partners that he lent the general a fancy Lear executive jet, bought with illegal drug proceeds, to fly to Washington for a meeting with President Reagan in November 1983.

Kalish, 35, a high school dropout from Houston who was imprisoned in 1984 as the mastermind of a multimillion-dollar drug operation, gave the sworn public testimony implicating Noriega as an eager participant in a complex web of drug-related payoffs, kickbacks and official corruption.

Senate approves repeal of abortion law

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Thursday approved a measure that would effectively repeal 1975 regulations designed to prevent discrimination against women who have abortions or want them.

The 56-39 vote came on an amendment to the Civil Rights Restoration Act, a sweeping measure that has been a magnet for controversial issues since it was introduced in 1984 to reverse the effects of a Supreme Court decision limiting the reach of federal anti-discrimination protections.

The abortion amendment sponsored by Sen. John Danforth, R-Mo., said nothing in Title IX, the law barring sex discrimination in education, "shall be construed to require or prohibit any person, or public or private entity, to provide or pay for any benefit or service... related to abortion."

The amendment would supersede Title IX regulations that say schools receiving federal funds cannot discriminate against women who have abortions and must, if they have comprehensive health plans, cover pregnancy, childbirth and abortion.

"The question is, do you believe that the refusal to provide or fund abortions constitutes sex discrimination?" Danforth asked.

Meese to review harassment charges

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Edwin Meese III said Thursday he will review allegations of harassment in the FBI's investigations of opponents of the administration's Central America policy.

Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, meanwhile, said the White House has asked for information on the FBI's domestic surveillance campaign and that "we won't have any comment until we see what it's all about."

The Center for Constitutional Rights, a New York-based lawyers group, announced Wednesday that it had received more than 1,300 pages of government documents showing the FBI had investigated hundreds of organizations and individuals opposed to U.S. policy in Central America.

Meese said he has asked for a report on the surveillance from the FBI and would discuss the matter with FBI Director William Sessions. "Then I will determine what action is necessary," he said.

Seabrook owner files for bankruptcy

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Public Service Company of New Hampshire, lead owner of the stalled \$5.2 billion Seabrook nuclear power plant, on Thursday filed for protection from its creditors under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Act.

With \$3 billion in assets, including \$2.1 billion sunk into Seabrook, Public Service is the fourth-largest U.S. company to file under Chapter 11 and the first major investor-owned utility to seek bankruptcy protection since the Depression.

The move came two days after the state Supreme Court denied the company an emergency rate increase by upholding a law against charging ratepayers for power plants in advance of commercial operation.

Public Service has a 36 percent stake in the controversial reactor, which was completed a year and a half ago.

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