

# Dallas diocese will not check volunteers' backgrounds

DALLAS (AP) — The Catholic Diocese of Dallas has no plans to begin requiring background checks on volunteers despite the case of a convicted child molester who until recently supervised altar boys in a Dallas parish, The Dallas Morning News reported in a copyright story in Sunday's editions.

Convicted felon Dennis Jost volunteered with altar boys last year at St. Bernard of Clairvaux parish, where officials acknowledged they did not investigate his past.

Jost was removed after a few months because of what diocesan Vicar General Glenn Gardner called a "miracle" — a parishioner deemed some behavior suspicious, found evidence of a federal conviction and alerted the pastor.

Dallas diocese officials do not require

criminal background checks of all prospective volunteers and have no plans to do so, Gardner said.

"I don't know if we can ever do it. It's very costly," he said shortly before jurors in the Rudolph "Rudy" Kos case hit the diocese with the largest clergy-abuse judgment in history.

Days after the \$119.6 million verdict, Gardner said he stood by his position. Bishop Charles V. Graham continued his practice of not taking reporters' questions.

Mike Daniel, the parent who helped expose Jost at St. Bernard, told the newspaper that one incident in particular stuck in his mind: At a Friday fish fry in early 1996, Jost "came up behind a boy and put one arm on his shoulder and the other around his stomach," then pulled

him close in "a very inappropriate type of hug."

**"I don't know if we can ever do it. It's very costly."**

**Glenn Gardner**  
Dallas diocese vicar general

Daniel, a Dallas lawyer, investigated and learned that a Los Angeles federal judge had sentenced Jost in 1993 to six months' confinement and two years'

probation for transporting a teen-age boy across state lines for sexual purposes. Jost had been allowed to serve his probation in Dallas, under orders that he not participate in youth programs.

The Rev. Gus Melito, pastor of St. Bernard, said he acted immediately when shown evidence of the conviction. He removed Jost and notified police, Child Protective Services and diocese officials, he said.

"I was naive, perhaps," said Melito, adding that he'd not known Jost previously. "It's an embarrassment."

His parish now investigates all prospective volunteers and employees for possible criminal records, he said. Church officials said only one other parish in the Dallas diocese — St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Plano —

does the same.

The diocese education office on criminal-background checks on time employees and recommends each Catholic school do the same to its volunteers. Many, but not all, have complied, said the Rev. Leonard Callahan, school superintendent.

Some other school systems, including the Dallas Independent School District, they investigate all volunteers. So do youth organizations such as sports leagues.

"More and more leagues are getting it, and they're finding out it works," commissioner of Garland Amateur Baseball, Billy Goodgame, told The Dallas Morning News in June. "We've had potential coaches drop out just because we do the searches."

## Ritz-Carlton cancels contract with Houston hotel

Company says owners failed to pay management fees, make capital improvements

HOUSTON (AP) — They checked into the posh Ritz-Carlton. They checked out of a nameless hotel.

Hotel guests found out Saturday morning that Houston's Ritz-Carlton no longer was a Ritz-Carlton from notes slipped under their doors overnight.

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. terminated its management contract with the owners of four of its hotels in Houston, New York, Washington, D.C., and Aspen, Colo., saying the owners failed to pay \$4 million in management fees for the four and refused to make capital improvements.

Early Saturday morning, the Houston hotel was stripped of ashtrays, stationery, flags and other items with the Ritz-Carlton logo, said Judy Rowcliffe, spokeswoman for the Atlanta-based company. It also dismantled its software reser-

varations systems.

The hotel is continuing to run without a name. "We still have rooms and we still are operating but we just do not have a name," an employee in reservations who did not want to give her name said Sunday.

Rowcliffe said a transition staff would help with the change.

The hotel is owned by Los Angeles-based New Remington Partners, a partnership controlled by Saudi Sheik Abdul Aziz Bin Ibrahim Al Ibrahim. The four hotels are owned by separate partnerships, all represented by Al Anwa USA. A telephone call to Al Anwa seeking comment Sunday was not immediately returned to The Associated Press.

Rowcliffe said the sheik refused to pay for water damage repairs to 40 guest rooms in the Houston hotel after a leak occurred last year.

The rooms have been closed since then.

"This action is intended to preserve the integrity and reputation of Ritz-Carlton, as well as the value of our image and name throughout the world for our owners and investors," said Horst Schulze, Ritz-Carlton's president and chief operating officer.

The 12-story hotel has 232 rooms, two restaurants, a fitness center and 11,000 square feet of meeting space. Room prices range from \$125 to \$800 per night.

The hotel has 321 employees, 42 of them in management positions. Rowcliffe said managers have the option to be transferred to another Ritz-Carlton hotel.

Negotiations with the owners regarding the transfer of hourly-wage employees and operations of the hotel will begin on Monday, Rowcliffe said.

## Firefighters work to contain blazes in Southern California

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Firefighters began to gain the upper hand on wildfires across Southern California on Sunday despite sweltering heat that topped 100 degrees.

Two San Diego County fires should be fully contained by Monday, said Audrey Hagen, a California Department of Forestry spokeswoman.

Downed power lines on Friday started the largest fire, a 720-acre blaze in San Diego County. Arson started another that burned 450 acres and caused \$1.75 million in damage. Eleven homes, 15 outbuildings and 30 vehicles were destroyed.

Another fire north of Santa Barbara burned 100 acres.

Farther north in Los Padres Na-

tional Forest, 260 firefighters fought to surround a blaze that burned more than 100 acres about 12 miles northwest of Santa Barbara.

Water-dropping helicopters and tanks helped stave off the progress overnight, while firefighters contended with heavy brush, poison oak, rattlesnakes and 100-degree temperatures. The blazes should be under control by Monday, officials said.

One firefighter suffered a minor eye injury Saturday and another sprained an ankle, while two other men were recovering from injuries suffered on Friday when their water-dropping plane crashed while attempting to scoop water from the San Vicente Reservoir.

## TAX

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Health economists estimate that for every 10 percent increase in price, the number of teen smokers will drop by about 7 percent, and teens who keep smoking will smoke 6 percent less.

That means a 15-cent tax translates to a barely perceptible 5 percent fewer teen smokers.

"You would need a very sensitive seismograph to pick up any ripples from this," said Richard Daynard, a Northeastern University

School of Law professor who studies tobacco.

Teen smoking will not drop significantly unless price increases are paired with tougher rules and other changes, says Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

Looking for models, many point to California and Massachusetts, where smoking rates dropped after tax hikes combined with big anti-smoking efforts. Both states saw overall smoking rates drop, and teen rates stayed even as they climbed nationally.

In California, a 35-cent-a-pack tax increase was combined with a media campaign, restrictions on vending machines and

laws prohibiting smoking in public places. One TV ad shows a woman smoking through a hole in her neck. Billboards parody the Marlboro cowboy, with one rancher telling

**"Teen-agers are teen-agers. They're going to do what they're going to do."**

**Jupiter Dockery**  
19-year-old

the other: "Bob, I've got emphysema."

Cigarette prices vary widely because of differing state taxes, which range from 2.5 cents a pack in Virginia to \$1 in Alaska come this fall.

Nationally, prices may soon spike up by 50 cents to 75 cents if a proposed tobacco settlement is approved by Congress. Backers hope the increased prices — combined with restrictions on sales and ads — would help cut teen smoking by 60 percent in 10 years.

But teen-agers interviewed over the last week said they smoke because older friends and siblings do, and because it

makes them feel sophisticated.

"Teen-agers are teen-agers. They're going to do what they're going to do," said Jupiter Dockery, 19, who tucks a cigarette behind his ear as he tosses a hacky-sack ball around with friends.

Like most smokers, Jupiter began smoking young, when he was 12 years old.

"Smoking's a big bonding thing," said teen-ager who didn't want her name used. Munching pizza with friends on a restaurant patio, she mentions actress Julia Roberts who smoked through the recent hit "My Best Friend's Wedding." The actress, she said, looked "really good" with a cigarette.

## TEXAS

Continued from Page 1

Unlike DFW, the metropolitan Houston area had a net gain made up of mostly foreign migrants — about 148,000 in the past six years, compared to about 51,000 domestic migrants.

New Houstonians go there to find work in the oil, health-care and construction industries, said Bill Gilmer, senior economist with the Federal Reserve Bank.

The Austin and San Antonio metropolitan areas both had mostly domestic newcomers.

The Austin area had a net gain of about 112,000 domestic migrants, lured mainly by computer company headquarters, state government and the University of Texas. There was a net gain of about 16,000 foreign immigrants.

San Antonio attracted a net gain of 41,031 domestic migrants and 23,323 foreign immigrants in the past six years.

Weinstein said the domestic migration can be attributed to senior citizens looking for refuge near the Hill Country.

San Antonio also does not have much to offer foreigners in terms of jobs, except in the tourism industry, he said.

"Mexican or Central American migrants who are looking for jobs are going to go to Houston," he said.

"They may go through San Antonio, but there are a lot more jobs available in Houston, Dallas, Austin than San Antonio."

Texas border towns are also growing due to increased manufacturing and trade with Mexico.

"You drive along the border and all you see are retail stores and banks," said Keith Phillips, senior economist with the Federal Reserve in San Antonio.

In the South Texas counties of Webb and Hidalgo, foreign migrants outnumber domestic migrants two-to-one. Significant numbers of domestic migrants are also moving to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A lot of them are manufacturing plant managers and retirees, Phillips said.

In El Paso County, although residents have benefited from increased Mexican trade, it has not stemmed the outflow of domestic migrants, said Federal Reserve economist Lucinda Vargas. In the past six years, El Paso lost 36,000 residents and gained about 46,000 foreigners.

That's typical since the city has always had relatively few white collar jobs to keep well-educated workers, Vargas said. El Paso's economy is dependent on the military, the maquiladora industry and related transportation and construction jobs.

El Paso, however, does attract many skilled immigrants from Juarez, which is just across the border. After becoming affluent in Juarez, many go to El Paso for new opportunities, Vargas said.

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

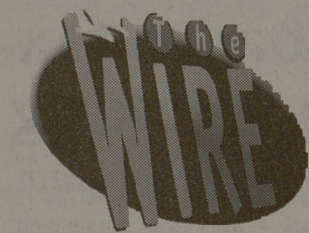
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly Cloudy High: 94° Low: 74°	Partly Cloudy High: 94° Low: 71°	Thunderstorms High: 94° Low: 68°

## Sketch



## By Quatro

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## WHAT'S IT LIKE AT THE PLASMA CENTER?

To the staff of the Plasma Center,

I would like to start by saying thank you to each and every employee for making the past three years enjoyable in a professional, efficient and courteous environment. As a donor since 1993, I have been more than satisfied with every aspect of your operation, which allows myself and others to contribute what we can to community service, all the while being serviced by diligent, but relaxed, workers. Everyone at the Plasma Center, from those behind the front counter to the phlebotomists to the supervisors, have made great efforts to insure that each donor feels hygienically safe, as well as keeping the atmosphere light.

Like most, I started coming to the Plasma Center for monetary reasons, but I soon developed acquaintances that appealed to me almost as much as the original need for money, enabling me to look forward to each donation, not only for my wallet's sake but also

to see my friends. Like I commented to someone recently, talking to people at the Plasma Center was like getting mail from a far-off friend that you don't get to do much with, but who you can talk to as often as you write. For those acquaintances and for your continual services. I would like to thank all of those I've come to know and appreciate over the past three years - Emily, and Tracy, Heath, and Marty, Ada and Josie, etc... more I can't remember or those who have gone on to better things.

So, as I graduate from this great University, I bid you all a fond farewell and strong commendations on such a successful blend of quality medical practice and friendly service. Thank you all and have a great summer. Thanks, C.F.

**WESTGATE BIOLOGICALS**  
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**THE BATTALION** (ISSN #1055-4726) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer session (except University holidays and exam periods) at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Battalion, 015 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.