

Radio battle sparks protest

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Public radio station KPFA, a longtime outlet for radical politics in famously liberal Berkeley, has been rocked by arrests, firings and demonstrations in what staff members see as a battle against corporate conformity. Staffers say the station's parent company, the nonprofit Pacifica Foundation, is trying to make KPFA more mainstream. "These people have come in and have stolen the station," said

Lavarn Williams, one of 30 people holding a day-long protest outside the station yesterday morning. "Instead of free speech, they want government-controlled speech." Williams is a consultant brought in to help the station — one of the nation's oldest listener-supported stations — celebrate its 50th anniversary. Instead, she found herself caught up in an escalating series of clashes over KPFA's soul. The unrest has escalated so

much that yesterday, the doors were locked and managers were playing tapes of old shows. "Everyone at KPFA has been placed on administrative leave until we're able to cool things off," Pacifica spokesperson Elan Fabbri said. Longtime staffers say Pacifica's board wants to give KPFA a more conventional image so that it can attract corporate donations. They also suspect that Pacifica, which owns five radio stations, is interested in selling KPFA.

Officials concerned by rising ethnic violence

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Ethnic attacks on Serbs and Gypsies must stop before justice can return to war-ravaged Kosovo, a top U.N. official said yesterday.

The month-old peace in Kosovo has been clouded by ethnic violence blamed largely on ethnic Albanians seeking vengeance for Serb forces' brutal campaign of killings and expulsions during NATO's 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia.

"Killings, kidnappings, forced expulsions, house burnings and looting are daily occurrences," Sergio Vieira de Mello, interim U.N. administrator for the province, said. "These are criminal acts. They cannot be excused by the suffering that has been inflicted in the past."

"Kosovo's future must be built on justice, not vengeance," he said in a statement.

Despite the continuing ethnic strife, NATO's supreme commander for Europe, U.S. Gen. Wesley Clark, said the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was largely in compliance with demilitarization requirements.

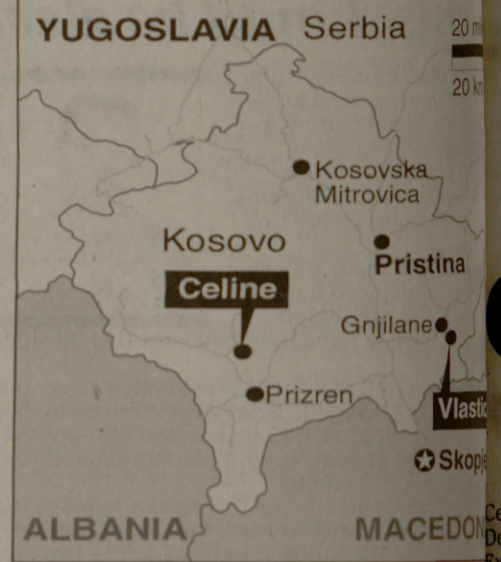
In other news yesterday: • In the northern Serbian town of Subotica, 5,000 people gathered yesterday to demand that the government of President Slobodan Milosevic step down. Government supporters hurled eggs at opposition leaders but police restored order, separating the two groups.

• The town council in Becej, 30 miles south of Subotica, also urged Milosevic to step down, the private Beta news agency reported, becoming the fifth Serbian city or town to pass such a resolution.

• Top U.N. war crimes prosecutor Louise Arbour visited the site of a mass killing in the southwestern Kosovo village of Celine. Walking amid the shoes and clothing of children buried there, Arbour said she was "profoundly moved."

War crimes investigators said they have exhumed 57 bodies so far from nine separate gravesites in the village, 9 miles northwest of Prizren. All the victims — including 11 children — were believed to have been shot by Serb forces in March.

Since the NATO-led peacekeeping force KFOR arrived Monday, there have been scores of ethnic Albanian attacks on minority Serbs as well as Gypsies,



or Roma, whom the Albanians say support the Serbs. Many people have been forced from their homes, which often have been burned in the process. KFOR troops found bodies of Serbs and Roma and allegedly three Serbs and four Roma at an abandoned village, according to Manoel de Almeida e Silva, a KFOR spokesman. He did not specify the number of bodies found or give other details. The U.N. refugee agency said both KFOR and KLA "expressed concern" about reported criminal activity in the southwestern Djakovica area. KFOR troops have found nine bodies in the region in the last 10 days. Yesterday, KFOR sources said Serbs were reportedly to blame for an attack Tuesday in southern Kosovo in which four ethnic Albanians were killed and at least one wounded.

Barak set to present Mideast peace plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Expectations are high as Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak takes his case for cautious Middle East peace-making to President Clinton.

"I'm eager as a kid with a new toy," Clinton said of their talks.

The aim is to energize the peace process, and as Barak flew to Washington yesterday on the Israeli Air Force 001 jetliner, administration officials struck a conciliatory stance on the timetable for a pullback on the West Bank and on his strategy for negotiations with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

With the 1998 Wye River accord on hold, along with its promised handover of a further 13.1 percent of the West Bank to Arafat's Palestinian Authority, Clinton is hoping for a

breakthrough in his talks with Barak, which begin today at the White House.

"I hope that we can begin to energize the peace process in the Middle East on terms that are just and fair and will guarantee genuine security for Israel and a way of living for the Palestinians," Clinton said.

Also, Clinton intends to discuss prospects for land-for-peace talks with Syria. In principle, at least, Barak and Syrian President Hafez Assad seem to be interested.

According to a report by Israel Radio, a senior Israeli official said during the flight here that if Syria wants to resume talks with Israel, it would not be difficult to find a formula.

The official, who was not identified, also credited the Palestinian Authority with arresting 2,000 activists in the Hamas radical movement over the past several months. This is more cooperation than expected but could be even better, the official was quoted as saying.



BARAK

Study: Heart valve could offer warning of future problems

AP — The hardening or thickening of a tiny heart valve — a common condition among the elderly that doctors usually dismiss as inconsequential — may be a powerful predictor of heart attacks and strokes.

Previous studies have shown that a severe narrowing or blockage in the left aortic valve is a predictor of heart disease. A new study, published in today's New England Journal of Medicine, has shown for the first time that a precursor condition called sclerosis can also be a warning sign.

Sclerosis is a hardening or thickening in the aortic valve, often due to a buildup of calcium deposits. The condition is found in roughly 25 percent of all adults over 65.

The study offers hope that a simple screening procedure can accurately forecast the risk of heart disease in people with no other symptoms. The procedure, called echocardiography, uses ultrasound to produce a two-dimensional picture of the heart and costs roughly \$350 to \$600.

"Sclerosis itself has been thought to be just a benign, incidental finding of aging because it's so common," said Dr. Catherine M. Otto of the University of Washington in Seattle, who led the study. "Having it is not benign."

Otto said she does not recommend routine echocardiograms for everyone.

Echocardiograms are usually done after a doctor detects a heart murmur using a stethoscope. Otto said that in light of her findings, the image should be closely examined for sclerosis of the aortic valve.

The researchers studied the echocardiograms of 5,621 men and women 65 and older. The valve was normal in 70 percent. In 29 percent, the valve was hardening or thickening, but there was no obstruction. The valve was narrowing, meaning there was some degree of obstruction, in 2 percent.

Following up five years later, the doctors found that hardening of the valve is associated with a 50 percent higher risk of death from heart disease compared with those whose valves are normal.

The researchers do not believe that sclerosis is a direct cause of death but rather a "marker" for heart disease.

In an accompanying editorial, Dr. Blase A. Carabello of the Houston Veterans Affairs Medical Center said aortic valve sclerosis should be viewed "as a harbinger of future events."

"What makes these data remarkable is the fact that this condition has been well known for decades and yet has generally been considered benign," Carabello wrote. "Textbooks that mention the condition usually do so in passing."

Resendez linked to 9th death

Officials say accused killer appears willing to cooperate

HOUSTON (AP) — The man accused of being the railroad killer appeared eager to cooperate with authorities in Texas' death penalty capital yesterday, twice admitting he committed burglary in one of the slayings.

"Can all this be done very quickly so I can say I'm guilty?" Angel Maturino Resendez, wearing an orange jail jumpsuit and handcuffs, calmly asked state District Judge William Harmon.

Shortly after the packed hearing, the 39-year-old rail-hopping drifter was linked by a palm print to a ninth slaying — the death in October of 87-year-old Leffie Mason in the east Texas town of Hughes Springs.

Mason, who lived most of her life within 50 yards of a rail line that cuts through the town of 2,000, was beaten to death with her antique iron by someone who entered her home through a window. Her body was covered by a blanket, as were several other victims believed to have been killed by Maturino Resendez.

Hughes Springs Police Chief Randy Kennedy said he will seek a capital murder charge, which could bring the death penalty.

Maturino Resendez, who turned himself in Tuesday after a six-week manhunt that made him one of the most wanted fugitives in America, is charged with two slayings in Illinois and one in Kentucky and is believed responsible for five other killings in Texas. During the manhunt, the FBI referred to him by one of his aliases, Rafael Resendez-Ramirez.

The only charge against him so far in Texas is burglary, at the scene

where Dr. Claudia Benton, 39, was killed Dec. 17 in the Houston enclave of West University Place. She was beaten in the head, stabbed three times in the back and covered with a blanket.

Maturino Resendez's fingerprints were found on parts from the woman's stolen car, and prosecutors said DNA evidence might also link him to the slaying.

"I don't care if he gets the death penalty seven times. I want him in Kentucky."

— Sgt. Mark Barnard
Lexington (Ken.) Police Department

In Texas, a charge of capital murder can usually be filed only when there is evidence that a murder occurred during the commission of certain felonies, such as burglary.

The decision of whether to charge Maturino Resendez with capital murder rests with Harris County District Attorney Johnny Holmes, whose county has the most death-penalty convictions in Texas — which is easily the most active state for executions in the nation.

Of the 469 people on death row in Texas, 146 — about one-third — were sent there by Harris County. If Harris County were a state, it

would rank third in the number of people executed in the nation.

Virginia has executed 56 people since the U.S. Supreme Court allowed capital punishment to resume in 1976.

Maturino Resendez pleaded guilty after a prosecutor described the bloody scene of Benton's killing. But his admission of guilt was not an official plea because his court appearance yesterday were only to set bail and sign him a lawyer. He was without bail.

After hiding out in Mexico, Maturino Resendez surrendered to Texas Ranger at an El Paso station Tuesday in a deal brokered by his sister.

It is still unclear why he turned himself in. Mexico does not have the death penalty and does not turn suspects to countries they may face the death penalty. But Mike Cox, a Texas Department of Public Safety spokesman, said Maturino Resendez has feared bounty hunters. A \$125,000 reward had been offered for his capture.

Texas' hold on Maturino Resendez may also mean that tucky and Illinois officials never get to prosecute him. Lexington, Ky., police Sgt. Mark Barnard hopes that is not the case.

"I don't care if he gets the death penalty seven times," Barnard said. "I want him in Kentucky."

Maturino Resendez is thought to have traveled by hopping trains. All of the victims were near the tracks. Investigators said they have no idea what motivated the killings.

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Researchers blast Clinton, teacher certification

WASHINGTON (AP) — Math and science students whose teachers hold "emergency" credentials do no worse on tests than students whose teachers are fully certified, all else being equal, say researchers critical of plans by President Clinton and some states to end such hires.

"Education is the last remaining field in America where people think you can boost quality by tightening the rules and multiplying the regulations," said Chester E. Finn Jr., president of the Thomas Fordham Foundation, a privately run school-reform research organization. The foundation on yesterday released a collection of reports criticizing a slate of teacher hiring, training, and evaluation trends.

Researchers say students whose teachers have any kind of certification (standard, emer-

gency or alternative) outperform students whose teachers have no certification or are certified in a different subject.

Students whose teachers possess a bachelor's or master's degree in math outperform other students in math, they said, regardless of the teacher's certification.

"This result should cast doubt on assertions that standard certification should be required of all teachers," the reports said.

Currently, 44 states require teachers to pass a test to earn a license. But the tests, which vary, grant teachers credentials based on a range of measures from basic skills to knowledge of a specific subject to teaching performance.

States often fill classroom shortages by allowing teachers to use emergency certificates or alternatives. The Education Department is spending \$1 million to study how states license teachers.

Finn said teacher hiring should be left to lo-

cal school leaders, which he said contradicted Clinton proposal outlined in this year's State of the Union Address, to make states and districts phase out emergency-certified teachers.

The reports say teachers have weak math skills and not nearly enough college major or minor in the subject they teach. But even some standard state certification programs fall short of putting better teachers in the room, they said.

In California, Ohio, New York and Tennessee approved preparation programs have very low entry requirements, no requirements and low subject content, researchers said.

"Licensure isn't a regulatory intrusion to protect children," said Bob Dinkens, president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union. "It is for teachers to know the subject matter and content of what they are teaching."



CLINTON