

**FIRE**

Continued from Page 1

"There's not much you can say at this time," Newark Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, who came to offer support, said. "We're glad we're people of faith. The mystery of God's work is always a great mystery."

Patel, who lives on the third floor down the hall from the lounge where the blaze broke out, said he put a wet towel under his door, kicked out his window screens and threw his mattresses on the ground in case he had to jump.

At least two students did jump, witnesses said. Tim Van Wie, 18, of Flanders, said a friend jumped from the third floor and suffered a broken wrist and sprained ankle. Others tied sheets together to climb down from the windows, but firefighters arrived in time and rescued them by ladder.

Keara Sauber, 18, saw one fellow student shivering in a T-shirt and boxers, his skin completely blackened by burns. "His skin was, like, smoking," she said.

Two of those killed were found in the lounge and one was found in a bedroom nearby. Their names were not released. It was not immediately known whether they were students.

Two firefighters and two police officers were among those hurt. The injuries ranged from exposure and smoke inhalation to burns.

The blaze was largely confined to the lounge. Students said they frequently saw people smoking in the lounge, though it is prohibited.

Essex County Prosecutor Donald C. Campolo would not comment on whether careless smoking may have caused the fire. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms was assisting in the investigation.

The 48-year-old building was equipped with smoke alarms and extinguishers but did not have a sprinkler system because it was built before they were required, Campolo said.

Fire hoses inside the building had been disconnected because the equipment was obsolete, Seton Hall spokeswoman Lisa Grider said. Campolo said firefighters generally use their own hoses.

The smoke alarms and extinguishers had passed inspection recently and at least one extinguisher was used during the blaze, he said.

After the fire, soot-faced students lined up in the student center to comfort each other and call parents.

Three roommates on the ground floor slept through the fire and were not hurt. They woke up more than two hours later.

## A little extra oxygen can halve risk of post-surgical infection

(AP)—Talk about an ounce of prevention: A study found that a few pennies' worth of oxygen can cut the risk of surgical infections in half.

That can mean thousands and thousands of dollars less in medical bills. Air is about 21 percent oxygen. But patients routinely get 30 percent oxygen during and after surgery, because the lungs do not work well under anesthesia. The study tested whether a richer mixture would improve the outcome.

Boosting the oxygen level to 80 percent made a big difference. Twenty-eight of 250 patients on the standard mix developed infections, compared with only 13 out of 250 who got extra oxygen.

The study was published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine and was led by Dr. Daniel I. Sessler of the University of California at San Francisco.

The study is significant because it shows an easy, inexpensive way to make a big cut in medical bills, said Dr. Avery Tung, an assistant professor of anesthesia at the University of Chicago's medical school.

According to another study, postoperative infections add an average of \$12,500 to the cost of cancer surgery. The only cost to the richer-oxygen treatment is about three cents' worth of oxygen.

"It's just a matter of setting two knobs in different positions. Both knobs need to be set anyway, and you just turn them a little more to get more oxygen," Sessler said.

Doctors have worried that extra oxygen might make the lungs more likely to collapse. However, he said, a study of his last year in the journal Anesthesiology found no difference in the percentage of such collapses on high and normal doses of oxygen.

There was also an unexpected benefit — patients who got extra oxygen were half as likely to be nauseated after surgery.

The study was conducted at the Dona Hospital in Vienna, Vienna General Hospital and University Hospital Eppendorf in Hamburg, Germany.

Scientists already knew that the white blood cells known as neutrophils use oxygen to kill germs. And they knew that high levels of

oxygen in body tissues help prevent infection and that breathing higher levels of oxygen put more oxygen into the tissues. What they did not know was whether it made a difference in patients' healing.

"This shows it's not just a theoretical benefit but a real benefit, and that it's much greater than you might have expected," Sessler said. "It's an enormous benefit for no cost and effort and risk."

**"This shows it's not just a theoretical benefit but a real benefit, and that it's greater than you might have expected."**

— Dr. Daniel I. Sessler  
University of California at San Francisco

### News in Brief

#### Mother to serve 30 year sentence

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — A young mother accused of killing her baby by putting him in a plastic bag to stop his crying pleaded guilty yesterday in exchange for a 30-year prison sentence.

In an arrangement with prosecutors, 22-year-old Crista Decker pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

Decker had been charged with first-degree murder in the Aug. 27 death of her 6-month-old son, Gabriel Ellis Decker. She initially told authorities that Gabriel vanished from her minivan in a shopping center parking lot as she looked for a shopping cart.

Detectives became suspicious, and Decker later confessed that she put the baby in a plastic bag to quiet him, then tossed the bag, with the baby inside, into a trash bin.

#### Kennedy nephew: murder suspect

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. (AP) — A nephew of Robert F. Kennedy was

charged yesterday with bludgeoning a girl to death with a golf club in 1975 when he was 15, providing the long-awaited break in a case that frustrated police in wealthy Greenwich and raised suspicions of a Kennedy cover-up.

Michael Skakel, 39, flew to Connecticut from his home in Florida and surrendered at Greenwich police headquarters after a warrant was issued for his arrest in the slaying of Martha Moxley.

Because of Skakel's age at the time of the crime, the case will be handled, at least initially, in juvenile court.

"Michael has stated all along he did not do this," said his lawyer, Michael Sherman.

"He had no knowledge of it. He had no part in it. He is not guilty."

#### Sit-in spreads in Florida's capital

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A sit-in started at the state Capitol by two black lawmakers protesting Gov. Jeb Bush's ban on affirmative action was joined yesterday by 20 other legislators and about 100

protesters.

Sen. Kendrick Meek and Rep. Tony Hill, both Democrats, parked themselves in Republican Lt. Gov. Frank Brogan's office Tuesday and spent the night there after trying to persuade Brogan to get Bush to relent.

The protest escalated yesterday with more lawmakers and about 100 protesters, including students from mostly black Florida A&M University. They crowded the Capitol hallways outside the governor's office.

The Republican governor met with the lawmakers briefly yesterday.

At a news conference, he denounced the sit-in and said it would not change his position on affirmative action. He said the lawmakers haven't presented "constructive alternatives."

Meek and Hill said they would remain "as long as it takes."

"The governor spoke to us as if we were children today," Meek said. "And we're grown men. This is America. And it's a shame in the year 2000 that we have to fight the battles of the '50s and '60s."

State authorities said they had no plans to remove the protesters.

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11:50 2:20 4:45 7:25 10:00 12:30	
<b>GIRL INTERRUPTED</b> (R)	<b>THE HURRICANE</b> (R)
1:10 4:10 7:00 9:50 12:50	12:15 3:30 7:00 10:10 12:55
<b>SUPERNOVA</b> (PG-13)	<b>ANNA &amp; THE KING</b> (PG-13)
12:20 3:00 5:15 7:40 10:25 12:40	12:35 3:40 7:10 10:15
<b>ANY GIVEN SUNDAY</b> (R)	<b>BICENTENNIAL MAN</b> (PG)
12:45 4:25 8:10 12:00	12:40 3:45 6:45 9:35
<b>DEVICE BIGLOW</b> (R)	<b>GALAXY QUEST</b> (PG)
1:05 3:15 5:30 7:50 10:30 12:50	11:55 2:15 4:40 7:55 10:20 12:45
<b>MAGNOLIA</b> (R)	<b>MAN ON THE MOON</b> (R)
11:45 3:35 7:45 11:40	ENDS TODAY! 1:20 7:15
<b>SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS</b> (PG-13)	<b>STUART LITTLE</b> (PG)
1:00 3:55 6:50 9:40 12:35	12:30 2:45 5:00 7:30 9:40
<b>THE GREEN MILE</b> (R)	<b>THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY</b> (R)
12:05 4:00 8:00 11:50	12:50 3:50 7:05 10:05 12:45
<b>THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH</b> (PG-13)	<b>TOY STORY 2</b> (G)
ENDS TODAY! 4:20 9:55	12:00 2:25 4:50 7:20 9:45 12:15

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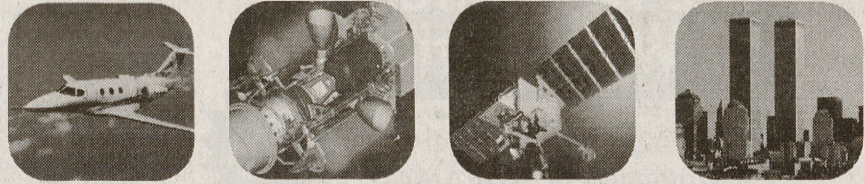
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