

## News in Brief

### Iowa parents arrested for child endangerment

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A couple has been arrested and accused of keeping their two daughters tied up in a motel room while they worked at night.

Police said the girls, ages 10 and 5, wore harnesses that were tied to furniture with leashes.

Detective Brian Danner said the children appeared to be healthy. They had room to walk around but couldn't leave the room.

Donald Ray Melton Jr., 26, and Kimberly E. Melton, 27, were charged Sunday with child endangerment and were being held in lieu of \$13,000 bail each. They were arrested at the Wal-Mart store where they worked.

Melton had been tying up his stepdaughters — Ashley Porter, 10, and Sherrie Porter, 5 — for two or three weeks, police said. Police said the girls' mother was arrested for allowing it.

### U.S. Intelligence obtains detailed terrorist manual

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — U.S. intelligence agencies have obtained CD-ROM copies of a six-volume manual they believe is used by Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden to train recruits at his terrorism camps in Afghanistan, USA Today reported.

The 1,000-page manual contains information on how to recruit followers, shoot weapons, carry out assassinations and other terrorist operations and assemble bombs similar to those that destroyed U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998, the paper reports in Monday's editions, citing unnamed U.S. intelligence officials.

Bin Laden, who is believed to be in Afghanistan, has been indicted in the United States in connection with the attacks in Kenya and Tanzania that killed more than 200 people. He has denied involvement.

# California transit strike forces commuters to drive

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A transit strike forced nearly half a million Southern California commuters to scrounge for rides or get behind the wheel themselves Monday at the start of the work week, worsening traffic on already clogged streets and freeways.

Some commuters showed up at bus stops and waited in vain as temperatures rose into the 90s.

"I just don't know what else to do. I called my friend, but I don't see him," Cesar Marroquin, 34, said as he waited for a ride to East Los Angeles Occupational School, where he was scheduled to take a test.

Some 4,300 members of the United Transportation Union went on strike over wages and overtime Saturday, halting 2,000 buses and rail and subway lines serving a 1,400-square-mile area. An estimated 450,000 people in the car-dependent region depend on the transit system.

No new talks were scheduled, but Metropolitan Transportation Authority spokesman Rick Jager, said transit system negotiators and

a state mediator were ready to bargain. Union spokesman Goldy Norton said union representatives were waiting for an invitation from the mediator.

Freeway traffic rose about 5 percent during the morning commute, the California Highway Patrol reported. The CHP said a lack of major crashes helped highways absorb the additional traffic.

"It is a substantial amount, but it didn't result in a major headache like we thought," CHP Officer Bill Preciado said.

It was a different story on city streets, where cars snaked bumper-to-bumper through downtown and workers complained that commuting times had been doubled.

Bus driver Lisa Smith picketed on a Pasadena Freeway overpass.

"These people should be on the buses," said Smith, pointing to the freeway traffic mess below. "People who rely on buses need buses. We do care about the people. This is as stressful a time for us as it is for our passengers."

MetroLink commuter trains,

which aren't part of the strike, arrived on schedule at the downtown Union Station.

Once there, commuters waited for others to pick them up or scattered on foot and bicycles, which they had carried on the trains.

"It's affecting my boss more than me. He's stuck in traffic, and I just have to sit out here and wait until he gets me," said MetroLink commuter Tim Herrera, 31, of Fontana, who works at Paramount studios in Hollywood.

The MTA said it faces a \$438 million operating deficit over the next 10 years if it doesn't cut costs or raise fares.

It wants \$23 million in savings from its rail and bus operators over the next three years by cutting overtime costs 15 percent.

The MTA proposed that 400 of its 4,400 drivers accept four-day work weeks in which they would be on duty at least 12 hours but be paid for only 10 hours a day.

Overtime would kick in only after 12 hours.

# Dirtier hands in larger cities

## Survey shows New Yorkers skip washing after using restrooms

TORONTO (AP) — Apparently the city that never sleeps is also too busy to wash up. A new survey of public restroom habits in five U.S. cities finds New York commuters are least likely to clean their hands after using the john.

The results, released Monday, are the latest installment in the American Society for Microbiology's effort to cajole folks into following Mom's most basic hygiene advice.

Four years ago, the society sponsored a study to see how often people take time for soap and water in restrooms. Researchers stood around, endlessly combing their hair or putting on makeup, while watching what people did. Or did not do.

They found that about one-third of Americans skipped washing. So the society sponsored a "clean hands campaign" to educate folks about the importance of hand washing in stopping the spread of colds, diarrhea and other infectious diseases.

This month, they did the survey again. The result: Not much has changed. If anything, Americans are even slightly more slovenly than they were in 1996. Especially in New York City, it seems.

Four years ago, 60 percent of folks using the rest rooms at Grand Central and Penn stations washed up afterward. This time, it was just 49 percent.

To the microbiology society, made up of infection control experts, this is serious business. "Fifteen seconds of soap and water and rubbing your hands is a wonderful way to get germs off. We are not making a lot of progress," said microbiologist Judy Daly of Primary Children's Medical Center in Salt Lake City, the society's secretary.

Besides the New York train stations, the observers peeked at bathroom habits at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, the Navy Pier in Chicago, a Braves game in Atlanta and a casino in New Orleans.

# Rare drug testing improves apartment living

CHICAGO (AP) — The way Charles Poole remembers it, The Bryn Mawr apartments used to be a full-service building — if the services you were looking for involved drugs and prostitutes.

Outside its doors was what amounted to an open-air drug store. And inside, right behind the front desk, one woman ran her own little side business, finding customers dope and hookers.

These days, the 79-year-old Poole says he sees none of that. And a big reason, he says, is the

test for illegal drugs like cocaine and marijuana that everybody — from teen-agers right up to a white-haired retired accountant who needs a cane to get around — must pass before they are allowed to move into the building and keep passing once a year to stay.

"To me, it's that much more of a guarantee that we do have a drug-free building," he said of the drug testing implemented more than a year ago by Holston Management Corp. after it bought and rehabilitated his building and two

others. "I think it's great." It is also rare.

The same company requires the tests of tenants in three of its Chicago buildings — one across the street from The Bryn Mawr. And the testing has been required since 1994 at an apartment complex in Cleveland, but nobody in the organization that owns that property knows of any other apartment buildings that have followed its lead.

In both cities the testing — paid for by property owners, not the tenants — was implemented in ar-

reas known for soaring crime rates and illegal drug use.

"This was a property with a history of terrible problems," said Tom Slemmer, the president of National Church Residences, an Ohio-based not-for-profit provider of affordable senior and family housing which began testing for drugs at Summerwood Commons in the Cleveland suburb of Euclid after it bought the property. "There were suspicious murders on the site that were drug-related. The building had been shut down and fenced."

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