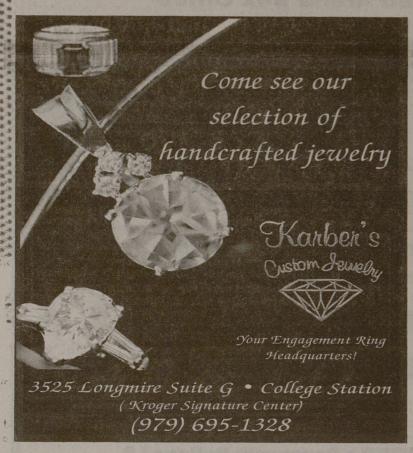
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State

Thursday, September 27,

Terrorism task force freezes ISP accounts

DALLAS (AP) — Citing an investment from the wife of a top Hamas political leader, the Treasury Department has frozen two bank accounts of a North Texas Internet service provider already under investigation by a federal terrorism task force, according to a published report.

Arch McColl, an attorney for InfoCom Corp., told The Dallas Morning News in a copyright story for Wednesday's editions that the \$250,000 annuity investment by Nadia Elashi Marzouk in 1993 was the only explanation the agency gave in a letter to company owner Bayan Elashi announcing the decision.

Investor Nadia Marzouk is married to Moussa Abu Marzouk, a former U.S. resident who is now deputy of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, Syria. Since 1995, Marzouk has been on a Treasury Department list of specially designated terrorists, making his assets subject to seizure.

Hamas is a militant Palestinian movement blamed for scores of attacks against soldiers and civilians in Israel.

McColl said Nadia Marzouk's investment was legal and not connected to finances

from Mousa Marzouk or Hamas.

"And once he was on the (terrorist) list, there was no new business conducted with him," McColl said. "It was the one and only time.

Representatives of the FBI in Dallas and the Treasury Department in Washington declined to comment on the freezing of InfoCom's assets.

InfoCom was served with the letter Sept. 5, the same day that the North Texas Joint Terrorism Task Force began a three-day search at the company. The order affected about \$70,000 in two accounts, another company attorney said in an interview three weeks ago.

The letter made no mention of Hamas, McColl said.

The FBI has declined to give a reason for the InfoCom raid, which caused 500 client Websites worldwide to crash and prompted criticism of what some Islamic groups called a witch hunt. The search warrant and affidavit used to obtain the warrant remain under federal

A federal grand jury has issued subpoenas for records to five members of the Elashi family and two pro-Palestinian organizations in Richardson whose Websites are hosted by InfoCom, also based in the North Dallas suburb.

Israel has accused those two clients, the Islamic Association for Palestine — described as an information clearinghouse and Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development which describes itself a charitable organization - of being fronts for Hamas.

Officials of both organizations have said the accusations are false.

The two nonprofit groups share officers with InfoCom Corp.

The Holy Land Foundation's board chairman, Ghassan Elashi, is InfoCom's vice president for marketing. The local chapter president of IAP is Basman Elashi, the operations manager for InfoCom and younger brother of Ghassan.

Another brother, Bayan Elashi, is chief executive officer of InfoCom and technical contact for the IAP and Holy Land Foundation Web sites and hundreds of other Islamic clients in the United States and the Middle East.

tortured artists

Austin musician find it difficult afford the capita Nol

AUSTIN (AP) Texas capital may als known as the "Live M Capital of the World," new report says musician no longer afford to live i

Austin is threatened by effects of the overall eco ic success it has helped to ate," according to a report Texas Perspectives, an nomic consulting firm.

years of grumbling musicians about how ha has become to live and pla Austin.

Music pumps more \$616 million per year Austin's economy and vides 11,200 jobs, the re said. The industry also made the city more attra to those that fueled Ce Texas' high-tech boom in

toll on the music so according to the report.

Higher rents pushed n cians away from the city, skyrocketing appraisals squeezed ven Several long-standing d including Liberty Lunch the Electric Lounge, closed in the past two year

"An awful lot of the owners) I talked to are h ing on by the skin of teeth," said Jon Hoden managing director d Perspectives, in Wednesday

Austin American-Statesman Paul Minor, a mu who moved to Austin in said the city has failed to trol rising rents or help st gling venues. He said hopes the stumbling ecor

goes south, maybe it means there will be afford housing for musicians again Minor said.

The City Council music venues

Texas Department of Insurance says mold may raise premiums

(AP) - Concerns over mold may soon cause an increase in insurance premiums already substantially higher than the standard rates set by state regulators, according to new premium comparisons by the Texas Department of Insurance.

A review by the department shows that the vast majority of insurers have priced their policies higher than the standard rates, which are supposed to allow companies to earn a reasonable profit.

Consumer groups say Texans are being charged too much for homeowners' insurance, a charge evidenced earlier by a national study that showed Texans pay the highest premiums in the country.

When you have the highest rates in the country, the rates ought to be coming down, not going up," said D.J. Powers of the Center for Economic Justice, which represents low-income and small-business consumers.

Mentally disabled group left in van for almost an hour

TYLER (AP) - While their caretakers went shopping, a group of mentally disabled people was left unattended for almost an hour inside a van in East Texas.

"The windows were up and the van was not running so there was no air conditioning," said Chris Moore, Tyler police spokesman. "A lady observed a bunch of

handicapped people sitting inside.'

The group — clients of the Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries - was traveling from Kilgore to the East Texas State Fair when their chaperones stopped to shop Saturday, reports show.

The pair had been shopping for more than 40 minutes when police arrived, witnesses said. No one was injured. The high temperature was 83, records show. Linda Hawkins, director of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, said the staff members at the center of the welfare concern were relieved of their duties

Bankruptcy judge voids ruling denying Smith's inheritance

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Former Playboy model Anna Nicole Smith won a victory in federal court as a bankruptcy judge voided a Texas court's decision that had declared her ineligible for a \$474 million inheritance.

Judge Samuel Bufford agreed Tuesday with Smith's claim that the Texas judgment violated federal laws, said Philip Boesch, an attorney representing Smith.

Smith has been battling in the courts for the right to claim an inheritance from her late husband, J. Howard Marshall II. His son, E. Pierce Marshall, has argued that Smith has no claim to the oil tycoon's estate.

In December, Bufford finalized a previous ruling awarding Smith \$474 million from the estate. E. Pierce Marshall then filed new claims in Texas and a jury found that Smith had no claim to the estate. Tuesday's ruling voided that decision.

October will discuss report, which suggests thed consider providing incenti for the building of downto

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