

Up and away



Twin KIOWA-58 helicopters take off from the General Aviation Terminal at Easterwood Airport. The pilots stopped to get lunch at Freebirds and then continued on to their destination.

JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wall Street has first winning finish in nearly two weeks

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street scratched out its first winning session in nearly two weeks Wednesday in volatile trading that saw investors vacillate between bargain hunting and profit taking.

Analysts were skeptical the upturn would last, characterizing it as just a short break in the market's eight-week slide.

The Dow Jones industrials closed up 69.37, or 0.8 percent, at 8,542.48, according to preliminary calculations, after advancing as much as 250 points earlier in the day and then falling into negative territory.

Yeast experiments challenge scientists' notions about aging

(AP) — An entire diet and supplement industry has sprung up around the notion that one of the keys to a long life is removing oxygen molecules called free radicals from your body. But now experiments with yeast have called that theory into question.

The experiments challenge the notion that free radicals play a central role in aging and longevity. Sales of "antioxidant" vitamins and supplements have grown since earlier studies suggested that free radicals damage cells and DNA.

Abducted 5-year-old girl found dead, investigators say killer left 'calling card'

STANTON, Calif. (AP) — A kidnapped 5-year-old girl was sexually assaulted and suffocated before her nude body was dumped near a rural road in what investigators said Wednesday was a "calling card" from the killer warning that he intends to strike again.

Orange County Sheriff Mike Carona said Samantha Runnion was asphyxiated sometime Tuesday, though he did not say how she was killed.

Autopsy results showed she was alive for hours after her abduction Monday evening. The sheriff also said Samantha may have fought against her killer and inflicted "injuries to his hands, arms and possibly face."

"Don't sleep, don't eat, because we're coming after you," Carona warned the killer in a televised news conference near the girl's home in Stanton.

Authorities said there was no prime suspect, and Carona warned parents in the area to tell their children to stay away from strangers. Samantha's abductor was described by police as a Hispanic man with slicked-back black hair and a thin, black mustache.

"We believe that he is a serial rapist and perhaps a serial killer and would strike again," the sheriff said.

The news spread fear in Stanton, a city of 38,000 southeast of Los Angeles.

Tammie Fike, 31, clutched the hand of her 6-year-old son, Anthony, as she headed to a memorial to say a prayer for Samantha. "I'm scared to let him go out," said Fike, who instructed her son to yell "fire" and to run if a stranger approached him.

"I'm only allowed to talk to friends of my mom," Anthony said.

Samantha's 27-year-old mother, Erin Runnion, who made an anguished plea for the return of her daughter a day earlier, remained in seclusion Wednesday.

Samantha's body was discovered Tuesday afternoon, less than 24 hours and about 50 miles from where she was abducted kicking and screaming outside her apartment building by a man who pulled up in a light green Honda or Acura car and asked for help finding his puppy. Samantha was playing with a 5-year-old friend at the time.

The abduction was at least the third high-profile disappearance of a child in the United States this year. Seven-year-old Danielle van Dam of San Diego was found dead, and a neighbor is on trial. Fourteen-year-old Elizabeth Smart of Salt

Lake City has been missing since June 5.

Two men who had gone out to do some hang-gliding spotted Samantha's body in a ravine near a glider launch site. It was in neighboring Riverside County near heavily traveled two-lane Highway 74, on the edge of the Cleveland National Forest.

"The way the body was found, the fact it was not buried, not hidden and such, and how it was left is almost like a calling card, like a challenge: 'I'm here and I'm coming back again.' This is the reason why we're saying this person is going to strike again," FBI agent Richard Garcia said.

The remains were identified by the girl's grandmother from photos.

"Because the body was found very quickly, we have a high expectation that there will be significant forensic evidence found at the scene and significant forensic evidence found on the body of Samantha Runnion," the sheriff said.

Samantha's mother, a British Petroleum analyst in Long Beach, and stepfather, Ken Donnelly, who works at an investment firm, were at work at the time of the kidnapping. Her grandmother, Virginia Runnion, was at home.

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