

NM NEWS & VIEWS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2010
THIS IS THE WORLD WE LIVE IN!

Woman's body found on NE ABQ sidewalk:

Police are investigating the homicide of a woman found dead on the sidewalk in Northeast Albuquerque.

Eyewitness News 4 spoke to the man who found the victim's body. He claims, even in the darkness of the early morning hours, he could see the woman was in very bad shape.

The man didn't want to go on camera but he explained he was pretty shook up by what he saw. He detailed how the woman was not responsive when he found her on the side walk, just after 4:30 Thursday morning near the intersection of Chico Boulevard and Chelwood Park.

A search warrant says bloody shoe prints lead from the woman's body to the inside of a house. Inside that home, police found another woman and two children.

Albuquerque Police Officer Lorenzo Garcia said, "We did call the Albuquerque Fire Department and rescue, who arrived on scene and the female was pronounced deceased here at the scene."

Police said the woman, who appeared to be in her mid-thirties, had several wounds. They are not saying if the wounds were from a knife, a gun or blows to the body.

Like many of the neighbors Eyewitness News 4 talked to, Keith Quick said he didn't see anything.

"There's a lot of sick people around, you know. Albuquerque is going through some big, big problems. They just need to get it together, straighten it up," said Quick.

Police went door to door in the neighborhood asking if anyone heard screaming early Thursday morning.

Investigators are also working to identify the victim. "Once we find out who the victim is, we can find out who she had issues with," said Officer Garcia.

Search warrant leads to discovery of pipe bombs at Rio Rancho apt.:

Rio Rancho police briefly evacuated nearly a dozen apartments after finding two pipe bombs inside an apartment.

Early Thursday morning police arrived at the apartment complex near NM 528 and Ridgecrest to execute a search warrant.

Police spokesperson John Francis told the Associated Press that officers found a significant amount of marijuana and cocaine in addition to cash and guns.

Police also found the two pipe bombs, at which time they evacuated the apartment along with 10 other apartments within the building.

The complex was evacuated for a couple of hours while the bomb squad secured the scene and detonated the pipe bombs.

Officers arrested Greg Gonzales, 20 years old and a 17 year old.

According to the Associated Press Gonzales has been booked into the Sandoval County jail on charges of extortion and drug possession as well as charges of child abuse and contributing to the delinquency of a minor because a 17-year-old was in the apartment.

NM deputy arrested on child sex charges, resigns:

HOBBS, N.M. - A Lea County sheriff's deputy has resigned after being arrested in an investigation involving sex crimes against two children.

New Mexico State Police Investigations Bureau agents arrested 59-year-old Danny Surratt of Hobbs on Wednesday. Authorities say Surratt was arrested and charged with criminal sexual penetration and criminal sexual contact involving a minor, as well as charges of intimidating a witness.

Lea County Sheriff Rod Coffman told the Hobbs News-Sun that Surratt resigned from the department at his arraignment Wednesday.

Surratt was booked into the Lea County jail on a \$500,000 bond. State police say the victims were 9 and 15 years old at the time of the crimes.

Domenici calls for a resolution to federal government's debt:

LAS CRUCES, N.M. - Warning of serious consequences if no action is taken, former Sen. Pete Domenici says it's time to resolve the federal government's huge debt.

The 78-year-old Domenici, who retired in 2009, spoke Wednesday at a public policy conference at New Mexico State University.

Domenici says continued federal debt could cause the United States to "cease to be a powerful force in the world."

He says children who were promised a great life would probably have "a second-rate standard of living" because the country is getting poorer.

Domenici fielded questions from former ABC newsman Sam Donaldson.

Domenici says he's working as part of a bipartisan think tank panel in Washington, D.C., that will release a plan in upcoming months to address the debt problem.

Explosive device forces evacuation of nearby Los Lunas school:

Los Lunas Middle School was evacuated Thursday as Los Lunas police investigated what they are calling an improvised explosive device.

One firefighter described the device as a weird looking device containing a mysterious powder that looked like it could be potentially explosive.

According to the Los Lunas Schools website, a precautionary measure was made to ensure the safety of the schools staff and students. Students were held at Los Lunas High School for a short time while officials determined whether or not it was safe for them to return.

In addition to the school evacuation Main St. was closed down for nearly an hour and a half while police and firefighters investigated the scene.

Los Lunas police say the device was moved by the Albuquerque Police Department bomb squad to a secure location.

Students have been sent back to the school and classes have resumed at Los Lunas Middle School.

Police say the device was initially found at a Wal-Mart Distribution warehouse Wednesday, and moved to the fire station overnight.

Police were called Thursday morning to investigate the device.

ERB Chief Resigns, Admits Herrera Loan:

--The chairman of New Mexico's teacher pension fund, Bruce Malott, resigned Wednesday after a Journal interview concerning a \$350,000 loan he received from Anthony Herrera -- a Richardson insider whose son Marc shared in millions of dollars in finder's fees from the pension fund's investments.

Accompanied by four lawyers, an investigator and a publicist, Malott said during the interview that he borrowed the money from Anthony Herrera in August 2006 to pay federal taxes of more than \$290,000 and state taxes of more than \$50,000 that he owed because of a failed tax shelter.

Malott said he had no idea at the time of the loan that Marc Herrera had been getting fees paid by companies that landed investment deals with the ERB, which Malott has chaired since 2005, and the state Investment Council.

He said he asked Anthony Herrera for the loan rather than sell personal assets or go to a bank, because of their friendship.

He made the request after the IRS contended the limited liability company Malott and others were involved with was a tax avoidance mechanism and had no legitimate business purpose. There were no criminal charges or penalties, but Malott had to pay taxes on \$751,000 he had previously deducted as a loss.

The loan from Herrera was a five-year note at 6 percent interest, with a balloon payment of nearly \$300,000 due next year. The loan was secured by a mortgage on Malott's Tanoan home in the name of a California woman who had a son out of wedlock with Herrera.

Malott's \$2,500 monthly payments go to an account in the names of the woman and her son.

Malott said Gov. Bill Richardson, who reappointed him to the ERB board, had not been aware of the loan before Wednesday.

Malott resigned several hours after the interview. He said he notified the Governor's Office of the loan after the interview, but said the governor didn't ask him to step down. He said he tendered his resignation because he had grown tired of the controversy surrounding federal investigations and lawsuits dealing with how the ERB and SIC invested hundreds of millions of dollars.

Richardson's deputy chief of staff, Gilbert Gallegos, said Wednesday in an e-mail, "The governor did not know anything about the loan. He has accepted Mr. Malott's resignation."

Asked why he didn't make a public disclosure of the loan when news of Marc

Correra's involvement in the investment scandal became public in the spring of 2009, Malott said, "I felt duped and embarrassed, but the proper authorities (Securities and Exchange Commission and FBI) were informed at that time. I think that was the important thing."

Malott said Wednesday that he considered it "outrageous" that Marc Correra shared in millions of dollars in what are known as third-party placement fees from securities firms that got investments from the ERB.

At the time he borrowed the money, Malott said, "Anthony never told me his son was doing business with the state."

Malott said he had only met Marc Correra on a few social occasions and thought he was in the hedge fund business.

"When I saw Marc's name on the spreadsheet of third-party marketers, I was outraged on several levels," Malott said. "I was outraged he received any fees at all."

Malott issued a statement after the Journal interview praising the hard work and accomplishments of the ERB staff.

"I am confident that the ERB's outstanding staff and board members now will move the fund forward to an even higher level, and ease any concerns our retirees may have about their fund."

Federal probes

The ERB and SIC investments have been the focus of criminal and regulatory review by federal investigators.

The finder's fees Marc Correra received have been of particular interest to the federal grand jury investigation since they became public in the spring of 2009. He shared in more than \$4 million in fees for investments made by the teachers retirement board. That total grows to more than \$22 million when state Investment Council business is added.

Aldus Equity Partners, a now-defunct Dallas firm, was an adviser to the state Investment Council and the ERB.

The company's founding partner, Saul Meyer, pleaded guilty to a felony charge in the New York scandal last year and said during his plea that his company made recommendations on New Mexico investments "that were pushed on me by politically connected individuals in New Mexico."

He also said he knew these "politically connected individuals or their associates stood to benefit financially or politically from the investments and that the investments were not necessarily in the best economic interest of New Mexico."

According to his plea, Meyer is cooperating with the investigations in New York and New Mexico.

A few weeks after Meyer's guilty plea, Gary Bland, New Mexico's state investment officer, resigned. He was also a member of the Educational Retirement Board.

Insiders

Both Malott and the elder Correra were insiders in Richardson's administration.

The governor reappointed Malott to the ERB and named him to the state Board of Accountancy.

He and his accounting firm, Meyners & Co., served as treasurers to Richardson's gubernatorial and presidential campaigns, to which Malott also contributed.

Anthony Correra was a friend, political supporter and economic adviser to Richardson, often traveling around the country with the governor during his unsuccessful bid for the Democratic Party presidential nomination.

Marc Correra, whose wife served for a time as Richardson's international protocol officer, was in line to be a partner in a racino in Raton -- as part of a winning bid selected by a Richardson-appointed board -- until the investment scandal broke in the spring of 2009. Marc Correra subsequently was forced out and the racino is on hold.

Malott on Wednesday described his relationship with Anthony Correra as "very close, dear friends."

Anthony Correra's attorney, Jason Bowles, said his client never told Malott that Marc Correra was getting millions of dollars in finder's fees from firms getting state investments.

"Anthony never told him about Marc's business," Bowles said. "It was never his intent to secure favoritism from the loan. Bruce never knew about it."

Polygraph

Malott agreed to be interviewed by the Journal after the newspaper informed him that it had learned of the tax issue, which was on record in the U.S. Tax Court in Washington, D.C., and inquired about the mortgage and possible loan.

During the two-hour interview, Malott showed the Journal records that the monthly mortgage payments have been made to the California woman and her son.

Malott said the boy has suffered medical problems since early childhood and the mortgage payments were to help pay for his care.

Malott said he could have borrowed the money from a bank or liquidated assets, but decided to borrow from Correra -- a former New York securities dealer who surrendered his license from the securities industry because of a civil settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission alleging insider trading.

Malott said the only way he felt he could support his story that he was unaware of the younger Correra's involvement in state investments was to take a polygraph examination.

He shared the report of the exam, which says he was truthful in response to questions about not being aware of Marc Correra's third-party marketing until 2009 and that Anthony Correra didn't ask for anything in exchange for the mortgage other than repaying it.

The polygraph exam and related documents were subpoenaed by a federal grand jury in July.

Whistle-blower case

Malott was named in two civil lawsuits filed by a former ERB investment officer, Frank Foy, claiming corruption in the way state investments were made.

Malott strongly denied Foy's claims that he was involved in any wrongdoing.

Foy's claims gained credibility when an investigation in New York of a pension fund scandal there began to net some of the same firms and players in New Mexico.

Part of Foy's case hinges on state investments with Vanderbilt Financial Advisors, which has been dismissed and is on appeal.

Malott said in the interview that he had dinner with a Vanderbilt executive at Gary Bland's request and then asked ERB staff to look into Vanderbilt's pitch.

Both SIC and ERB invested in Vanderbilt funds, which ended up being worthless. The SIC lost \$50 million and the teacher fund lost \$40 million.

Malott said he didn't understand why Marc Correra would have received finder's fees in connection with the ERB investment because "he didn't do any work."

Those fees totaled about \$800,000.

Cap-Trade Plan Slammed:

CARLSBAD — Words such as "utmost foolishness," "an abomination," "greed," "stupidity," "nonsense" and "grossly unfair," were fired at representatives from the New Mexico Environment Department who were in Carlsbad this week to gather comments on the department's cap-and-trade petition.

The "cap" is a legal limit on the quantity of greenhouse gases that a region can emit each year and "trade" means that companies may swap among themselves permits to emit greenhouse gases.

Representatives from the potash, oil and gas industries, local and state government, business leaders and ordinary citizens spoke strongly against the petitions. They said if passed, it will cost more to do business, jobs would be lost and oil and gas companies will flee the state and drill elsewhere.

Representatives from Intrepid Potash and the Potash Association of New Mexico said NMED has no science to back up the need for cap and trade and were "going forward with this without much thought."

Wayne Ballard, a local contractor, drew applause from the audience at the close of his comments.

"The Environment Improvement Board ... is espousing the mass stupidity that brings us here today," he said. "... What they are attempting to do is nothing less than treason."

Former Carlsbad city councilwoman Louise Tracy called it "one last nail that Gov. Richardson wants to nail into industries that he hates."

Carlsbad retiree Wayne Hughes said the petition also exempts the Navajo Nation and a coal plant that sits on its land. That plant is considered the largest emitter in the state, according to Rep. John Heaton, D-Carlsbad.

"It's grossly unfair," Hughes said. "The Indian nation is sovereign when it comes to the coal plant, but it's not sovereign when it comes to federal health care and education funding. As for Albuquerque and Santa Fe, if they are tired of their brothers down here, then we can make Las Cruces our state capital."

Flag stolen from 9/11 Memorial Park:

The flag that once flew over the Belen 9/11 Memorial Park is missing.

Residents noticed the flag was missing at this weekend's Valencia County Fair Parade, and have already found a replacement, with an anniversary ceremony just days away.

"Obviously it was stolen," said Gloria Sanchez, a Belen 9/11 planning committee member. "I'm distressed. How low can you get to steal a flag that symbolizes so much.

"This belongs to the public, it belongs to all of us. I don't know who is doing it or why they are doing it."

The park, at Church and Main streets, has an 8-foot replica of the Twin Towers; a steel-sculptured eagle; a piece of steel beam from the World Trade Center and a shovel used by the first organized rescue recovery group that entered the Pentagon after the attack.

It has been nationally recognized — including by Life magazine — as one of the only 9/11 memorial parks outside the cities in which the attacks occurred.

The park also has the names of New Mexico service men and women who have died in the line of duty. A limestone slab from the Pentagon was also added to the park in the last year. The slab weighs about 10,000 pounds, and New Mexico Travertine donated about \$1,200 to have the piece shipped from the east coast.

Sanchez said the missing flag is the third incident that has involved theft or vandalism at the park. She said a bronze eagle was stolen and a sign at the memorial was hit with graffiti.

David Foreman, a volunteer firefighter for Los Lunas, agreed to replace the 5-foot-by-foot flag, and said residents should be appreciative of the flag and know what it stands for. He said he wants to educate students about how to display the red, white and blue.

"People can't see a bare flagpole where a flag should be," Foreman said. "I am just trying to help out the community. It's upsetting, but flags are not hard to come by. It was just a cheap shot."

But Sanchez, who has asked city officials for cameras to survey the area, said most of the items at the park are irreplaceable. She said residents should keep an eye on the memorial as they pass by the park each day.

The memorial sits off Main Street near the Wells Fargo building and has been used for 9/11 ceremonies since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"We have so much into it," Sanchez said. "It does hurt. It's someone with no value or respect for what we have there. Everybody has to realize that we cannot let this happen."

Planning Committee member Gil Mullins donated the missing flag on behalf of the local VFW chapter. Mullins hoisted the flag with the help of a group of Boy Scouts in May. The flag replaced an old flag at the park that was worn and tattered. He said the flag cost \$65.

"Every dollar we get is from donations and fundraisers," Mullins said. "Money is tight for us, too."

Mullins, who served in the Vietnam War, said he was disappointed when he learned of the theft.

"I'm really upset this happened," Mullins said. "It's too bad our society has turned to things like this."

A \$500 reward is being offered for information that leads to the arrests of those who were involved with the theft. Residents with information can call the Belen Police Department at 864-6288.

Stephen Hawking: God didn't create universe:

Stephen Hawking argues that it's unremarkable that at least one planet has conditions for life.

LONDON, England -- God did not create the universe, world-famous physicist Stephen Hawking argues in a new book that aims to banish a divine creator from physics.

Hawking says in his book "The Grand Design" that, given the existence of gravity, "the universe can and will create itself from nothing," according to an excerpt published Thursday in The Times of London.

"Spontaneous creation is the reason why there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist," he writes in the excerpt.

"It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper [fuse] and set the universe going," he writes.

His book -- as the title suggests -- is an attempt to answer "the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything," he writes, quoting Douglas Adams' cult science fiction romp, "The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy." It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper [fuse] and set the universe going.

--Stephen Hawking

His answer is "M-theory," which, he says, posits 11 space-time dimensions, "vibrating strings, ... point particles, two-dimensional membranes, three-dimensional blobs and other objects that are more difficult to picture and occupy even more dimensions of space." He doesn't explain much of that in the excerpt, which is the introduction to the book.

But he says he understands the feeling of the great English scientist Isaac Newton that God did "create" and "conserve" order in the universe.

It was the discovery of other solar systems outside our own, in 1992, that undercut a key idea of Newton's -- that our world was so uniquely designed to be comfortable for human life that some divine creator must have been responsible.

But, Hawking argues, if there are untold numbers of planets in the galaxy, it's less remarkable that there's one with conditions for human life.

And, indeed, he argues, any form of intelligent life that evolves anywhere will automatically find that it lives somewhere suitable for it.

From there he introduces the idea of multiple universes, saying that if there are many universes, one will have laws of physics like ours -- and in such a universe, something not only can, but must, arise from nothing.

Therefore, he concludes, there's no need for God to explain it.

But some of Hawking's Cambridge colleagues said the physicist has missed the point.

"The 'god' that Stephen Hawking is trying to debunk is not the creator God of the Abrahamic faiths who really is the ultimate explanation for why there is

something rather than nothing," said Denis Alexander.

"Hawking's god is a god-of-the-gaps used to plug present gaps in our scientific knowledge.

"Science provides us with a wonderful narrative as to how [existence] may happen, but theology addresses the meaning of the narrative," said Alexander, director of The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion.

And Fraser Watts, an Anglican priest and Cambridge expert in the history of science, said that it's not the existence of the universe that proves the existence of God.

But, he said, "a creator God provides a reasonable and credible explanation of why there is a universe, and ... it is somewhat more likely that there is a God than that there is not. That view is not undermined by what Hawking has said."

Hawking's book will be published on September 7 in the United States and September 9 in the United Kingdom.

Feds sue Arizona sheriff in civil rights probe:

PHOENIX – The Justice Department sued the nation's self-proclaimed "toughest sheriff" on Thursday, calling Joe Arpaio's defiance of an investigation into his office's alleged discrimination against Hispanics "unprecedented."

It's the first time in decades a lawman has refused to cooperate in one of the agency's probes, the department said.

The Arizona sheriff had been given until Aug. 17 to hand over documents the federal government first asked for 15 months ago, when it started investigating alleged discrimination, unconstitutional searches and seizures, and jail policies that discriminate against people with limited English skills.

Thomas Perez, assistant attorney general for the department's civil rights division, said it's unfortunate the department had to sue to get the documents, which neither the agency nor Arpaio would describe.

But Arpaio called the lawsuit "a ruse" and said the federal government is just trying to score a win against the state, which has found itself at the center of the nation's argument over illegal immigration since passing a law that mirrors many of the policies Arpaio has put into place in the greater Phoenix area.

"I think they know we have not been racial profiling, so what's the next step — camouflage the situation, go the courts, and make it look like I'm not cooperating," Arpaio said Thursday.

Arpaio said he provided "hundreds of thousands" of reports but hasn't turned over others because the department's request was too broad.

Kevin Ryan, former U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California and a law professor at the University of San Francisco, said he thought the department's characterization of Arpaio's behavior as unprecedented was overstating it.

He said the contentious relationship between the sheriff and the department is no secret.

"You really can't hold it against the sheriff and assume he's guilty because he's not rolling over for the Justice Department," he said.

But Rory Little, a law professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law who formerly worked at the Justice Department, disagreed, called Arpaio's actions "pretty unusual" because the lawsuit says Arpaio's office signed agreements promising to cooperate with civil-rights investigations and other reviews when it accepted federal law enforcement grants.

Last year, the nearly \$113 million that Maricopa County received from the federal government accounted for about 5 percent of the county's \$2 billion budget. The lawsuit listed \$16.5 million of funding provided Arpaio's office through several programs.

"Normally when you receive \$113 million in grants you're going to cooperate and send over whatever they want to see," Little said. Otherwise, "it raises the level of suspicion pretty significantly."

He also said it's rare for a law enforcement agency to push the department all the way to a lawsuit.

"Cooperating with the Department of Justice is usually not a bad thing so long as you're not the target of a criminal investigation, and the federal government has a lot of power in terms of grants and you don't want to get on their bad side," he said.

Arpaio believes the department's inquiry is focused on his immigration sweeps, patrols where deputies flood an area of a city — in some cases heavily Latino areas — to seek out traffic violators and arrest other offenders.

Critics say the deputies pull people over for minor traffic infractions because of the color of their skin so they can ask them for their proof of citizenship.

Thursday's lawsuit is the latest action in a slew against Arizona by the federal government.

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security stripped Arpaio's office of its special powers to enforce federal immigration laws, and in May, the Obama administration urged the U.S. Supreme Court to prevent Arizona from enforcing its employer sanctions law.

In July, the Justice Department filed a lawsuit to overturn portions of Arizona's strict new immigration law that would require police officers to question people about their immigration status if there is reason to suspect they are in the country illegally. A federal judge put that provision and most of the law on hold.

The continued attention on the state sends a clear political message that the federal government doesn't want Arizona enforcing federal immigration laws, said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates for strict immigration laws.

"It's surprising that the administration would focus on Arizona and go after it on such a high-profile and persistent way," he said.

In a separate investigation, a federal grand jury in Phoenix is examining allegations that Arpaio has abused his powers with actions such as intimidating county workers by showing up at their homes at nights and on weekends.

A Hispanic activist said a federal judge might have to threaten jail time to get Arpaio to cooperate in the lawsuit filed Thursday.

"It's going to take the hard hand of the judge to order some sanctions against the sheriff's office," said Lydia Guzman of the Phoenix-based civil rights group Somos America.

Arizona Republican Sen. Russell Pearce, author of the new Arizona law, called the Justice Department's actions against Arpaio a "witch hunt."

"This is the game that's played," he said. "They couldn't find any violations ... that's why they're very vague about what they want. It doesn't take a very high IQ to figure out what's going on with these folks."

Workers bear larger share of health premium costs:

INDIANAPOLIS — Workers are paying a larger portion of their health insurance costs as businesses shift more of the burden to their employees to help ride out the economic downturn, an annual study shows.

The average employee contribution toward premiums for family coverage climbed 14 percent this year to nearly \$4,000, according to a report by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust released Thursday. Contributions for single coverage grew 15 percent. But total premiums — the amount split by the employer and employee — rose a modest 3 percent for family coverage and 5 percent for single employees this year.

Companies that offer benefits still pay at least 70 percent of the total premium, on average, for their workers. But this year, companies passed most of the premium increases on to employees instead of absorbing them as they usually do, something researchers had not seen before, Kaiser CEO Drew Altman said.

“It just speaks to the depths of the recession and the pressure that employers have been under to hold the line on costs while, I think, trying as best they can to avoid layoffs,” he said.

Instead of simply working rising coverage costs into their budgets, companies are finding new ways to push more of the financial burden on employees and trying to make them think more about what they’re spending for care, said Paul Frontsin, director of the health research program for the nonprofit Employee Benefit Research Institute.

“There’s lots of trade-offs employers can make to maintain health benefits when costs are going up,” said Frontsin, who wasn’t involved in the Kaiser study.

For instance, a growing number of workers are covered by health insurance that requires them to pay a deductible of \$1,000 or more before most coverage starts. The Kaiser study found the most striking increase among small companies, where 46 percent of workers are enrolled in these high-deductible plans, up from 16 percent in 2006.

Some companies also are trying to steer employees toward preventive care, in an effort to cut long-term costs. They’re reducing or eliminating the price workers pay for things like primary care visits, diabetes treatments or blood pressure testing that can ward off more expensive care down the road.

“The coverage that employees get is looking less and less like the coverage that their parents used to get,” Altman said.

Altman said premium growth may have slowed for this year's benefits, which would have been calculated in 2009, because of the recession and the possibility of health care reform. He said they've seen restrained premium hikes from insurers in the past when Congress has debated reform.

But it didn't slow for everyone. At the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Mo., premiums for the 26 covered employees rose 18 percent last year and about 12 percent for the current benefits year, said Chief Financial Officer Jeff Walker.

He said museum supervisors were trying focus more on educating staff about the best use of health care, and they're considering offering gym memberships as part of a wellness program. "I think we all know the cost for these insurance plans is going to continue to increase," he said. "This can't be a long-term solution for us."

The nonprofit Kaiser and the research trust surveyed more than 3,000 randomly selected companies from across the country earlier this year for its annual report.

Ex-Baylor, SMU coach Bliss tells church his downfall left him missing integrity, not money:

Ex-Baylor basketball coach Dave Bliss (right), talking Sunday with the Rev. Paul Rasmussen, said he succumbed to 'survival thinking' during the scandal that took his job. "The compromises that you allow to creep into your thinking, that's the devil," he said during a service at Highland Park United Methodist Church. "The devil likes compromises. He'll tell you, 'That's not so bad,' or 'Everybody is doing it.' "

Bliss, 66, resigned from Baylor in 2003 after investigators found he had paid part of basketball player Patrick Dennehy's tuition. He later encouraged players to say that Dennehy, who had been killed by a teammate, had paid the tuition by selling drugs.

Still barred from athletic involvement at an NCAA school, Bliss in May was named athletic director of Allen Academy, a prep school in Bryan, Texas. The announcement represented a long fall from Bliss' \$600,000-a-year salary when he was named coach at Baylor.

"When I was at the depths, I didn't miss the money," he said Sunday. "I didn't miss the trophies. I missed the integrity. I missed the players. I missed the managers. I missed all the things God had given me for free."

Bliss' testimony was the centerpiece of a Cornerstone Contemporary Worship Service at the church adjacent to Southern Methodist University, where he had once served as head coach.

Though the theme Sunday was confessional, the atmosphere was upbeat. Cornerstone pastor Paul Rasmussen, casually dressed, strolled the stage while he delivered a sermon challenging the congregation to do the right thing in their professional and personal lives, no matter the costs.

As he and Bliss sat in chairs angled toward the congregation, Rasmussen asked the former coach to tell his story.

Bliss talked about how, even as he erred, he thought of himself as a Christian.

"I'm so grateful for the mustard seed of faith I had, but I was a believer, not a follower," he said.

He said that when investigators began asking how Dennehy could have afforded Baylor tuition without financial assistance, he panicked and encouraged other players to put out the false story that Dennehy had been dealing drugs.

"At that moment, you're into survival thinking – which is so selfish and unscriptural," he said.

After he resigned, Bliss said, he was in a state of shock for several years. He would leave the house only wearing a hat pulled down to shield his identity.

Eventually, through faith and family, he said, he was able to emerge into the world again – sometimes giving testimonial speeches like Sunday's.

Rasmussen emphasized at the beginning of his interview with Bliss that the former coach had come to the church at the minister's invitation and not to promote a book or as part of an organized tour.

Rasmussen concluded by asking if Bliss had any advice for the congregation.

"I'd say, slow down your life. We don't have time to appreciate the right things," he said. "Guard your heart. God will help us, but we have to slow down to let him help us."

• • •

DEWEY'S DAILY CUP:

ps to ps.....

Posted on September 2, 2010 by Dewey Moede

Really ask yourself throughout the day if are you doing the Father's Business.....this day and all days.....are you in our Father's Will?.....or are you doing life your way? What do you spend your time doing?

prayerful ps to cup.....

Posted on September 2, 2010 by Dewey Moede

Hello Dear friends.....

The Lord pulled me back from leaving my office and led me to these writings for you this day the Lord has made.....Let us follow the Lord's Will and His Way not our's.....

The Lord led me to these as I was getting to go this morning.....

Father, may we not let the bad news we hear in the SECULAR media or other sources trap us in a state of fear. Give us discernment for trusting others.

"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval" John 6:27

What are you and I doing today for our Father?

Are we about our Father's Business?

The questions are simple.....the answers may be more difficult as you analyze your life for the Lord.

Thursday CUP with Dewey KKIM/KARS DDC

Dear KKIM/KARS Family, Let us rise and shine and serve our Lord today! Let us be about our Father's Business..... Who is wise and understanding among you? He should know his works by good conduct with wisdom's gentleness. James 3:13 I was having lunch with Lars yesterday when I saw a friend I had not seen in years, Terri from Citadel broadcasting! Great to see friends!! Good to see you Terri! She said she reads the CUP everyday! PRAISE GOD! We have many prayer needs today..... Awoke today reading more about corruption in our government in New Mexico! It seems everyday right now in our State there is a new case of monkey business!! We must be the Salt and Light of the World until the Lord returns! I just love what Ken Houts says..... The plan of the Lord has for us is not to deliver us out of the world, but for us to invade "power of darkness" with the dominion of heaven. breakthrough is when Heaven invades the darkness on the earth. Breakthrough interrupts the devil's plans, and it intrudes upon his works with the works of God. Also from one of the Greatest Preachers of all time.....Charles Spurgeon..... "I often hear it said, Do not bring religion into politics, This is precisely where it ought to be brought.....We

have had enough of clever men without conscience. Now let us see what honest, God fearing men will do." AMEN! and AMEN! Enough of the darkness! Please pray for Danielle as she recovers from a series of surgeries from Breast cancer.

Hurricane Earl now category 3; N.C. and Va. bracing:

Hurricane Earl weakened slightly Thursday afternoon, downgrading from a category 4 to category 3 storm, as it moved toward affecting the Virginia and North Carolina coasts overnight Thursday and into Friday.

The outside edge of the storm is expected to reach the Virginia Peninsula between 2 a.m. and 2 p.m. Friday.

Earl was packing maximum sustained winds of 115 miles per hour, moving north at 18 miles per hour and located 185 miles south of Cape Hatteras, N.C., according to the National Hurricane Center's update Thursday evening.

Get breaking news alerts delivered to your mobile phone. Text BREAKING to 52669.

A hurricane watch and tropical storm warning are in effect for north of the North Carolina-Virginia border to Cape Henlopen, Del.

A turn toward the north-northeast with an increase in forward speed is expected on Friday, according to the NHC's forecast track. The center of Earl will pass near the Outer Banks of North Carolina Thursday night, and approach southeastern New England Friday night.

Gradual weakening is expected during that time, but the storm is large and will still be strong when it scrapes the east coast.

Weather effects include possible high winds, storm surge, rainfall and dangerous surf conditions with rip currents.

Bill Read, director of the National Hurricane Center, said the storm is following its projected path as forecast so far and shouldn't change speed or track anytime Thursday.

Evacuations continued in the Outer Banks, and officials warned that time is short for Virginia and North Carolina residents to get ready at this point.

"We're past planning, this is a day of action," said Craig Fugate, administrator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "Folks need to be completing it in North Carolina, and others on the East Coast need to be focused on what they're

going to do when the storm hits, implement your plans and be ready to heed any additional evacuation orders or protective measures."

Heavy rain and strong winds will move in overnight Thursday as Earl moves just offshore, according to WTKR NewsChannel 3 Meteorologist Myles Henderson. Expect tropical storm conditions across most of Hampton Roads, and hurricane conditions for parts of North Carolina, especially the Outer Banks.

The rain from Earl will clear out by Friday afternoon and winds will calm down by Friday night.

The Peninsula's largest private employer, Northrop Grumman Corp., is allowing some of its shipyard workers on Thursday night's overnight shift and Friday morning's first shift flexibility in showing up for their shifts, under what it calls a liberal leave policy.

Amtrak canceled several routes through Newport News because of the hurricane threat. The changes will continue through Saturday.

Hampton will be activating its Emergency Operations Center at 10 p.m. Thursday with limited staffing, and will remain open until no longer necessary, according to city spokeswoman Tami Back.

Newport News will partially activate its Emergency Operation Center at 8 p.m. Thursday to monitor conditions throughout the evening and overnight, according to city spokeswoman Kim Lee.

Newport News officials encouraged residents to assemble emergency kits and prepare evacuation plans, avoid unnecessary travel on interstate highways to accommodate the traffic influx from Outer Banks evacuations, and to secure garbage carts and bulk materials outdoors.

White House: No "Big New Stimulus Plan" Coming:

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said today that there are no plans for a "big new stimulus plan" to goose the sluggish economy.

The comment was spurred by a question about comments yesterday by departing White House chief economist Christina Romer, who reportedly pushed for a larger stimulus package than the \$814 billion Recovery Act measure passed soon after President Obama took office.

"The only surefire ways for policymakers to substantially increase aggregate demand in the short run are for the government to spend more and tax less,"

Romer said. "In my view, we should be moving forward on both fronts."

Asked at his press briefing Thursday if Romer's remarks were "setting a stage for a second stimulus," Gibbs said no, though he added that "we will continue to look at and take steps that are...targeted in nature to help continue the recovery and to help create an environment where the private sector is adding jobs."

He also noted that there is a bill before Congress that would cut small business taxes, which Mr. Obama has complained that Republicans are blocking for partisan purposes.

"My economic team is hard at work identifying additional measures that could make a difference in both promoting growth and hiring in the short term and increasing our economy's competitiveness in the long term," the president said Monday.

But a second stimulus package is not among the possible "additional measures" being explored, Gibbs insisted Thursday.

Asked if "something even resembling what we saw when you all first came to the office is off the table," he replied: "I have not been in a meeting where that's been discussed."

After the briefing, however, the Washington Post reported that "President Obama's economic team is considering another big dose of stimulus in the form of tax breaks for businesses - potentially worth hundreds of billions of dollars, according to two people familiar with the talks."

Asked about the Post story, Deputy Communications Director Jen Psaki told CBS News that "there has been a lot of reports and rumors on different options being considered--many of which are incorrect."

"The options under consideration build on measures the President has previously proposed, and we are not considering a second stimulus package," she said. "The President and his team are discussing several options, as they have been for months and no final decisions have been made."

An aide to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told CBS News that he does not see how any stimulus could pass in the current political environment. Even though many tax proposals are popular among both parties, the aide said, Republicans would find a way to block it.

Economists say the stimulus package has created 2.7 billion jobs and added \$460 billion to gross domestic product since being signed, and some economists

are calling for a second stimulus package to further boost the economy. But the unemployment rate has not fallen as far as the White House hoped - it stands at 9.5 percent - and Americans are not buying the administration's attempts to sell stimulus 1.0.

Add to that the fact that it's an election year - one in which many conservatives are motivated by the anti-spending, anti-debt message being pushed by the Tea Party movement - and pushing anything called a "stimulus" looks like bad politics. Though new measures to help the economy are expected in the coming months, they are likely to be relatively small and not presented as "stimulus" measures.

Satanic group to hold October event at Oklahoma City's Civic Center:

Church of the IV Majesties, a group whose members call themselves Satanists, is planning an event Oct. 21 at the Civic Center Music Hall in downtown Oklahoma City.

An organization claiming to be "the only legal satanic church in Oklahoma" is hosting an event at the Civic Center Music Hall in October that will include a "public satanic exorcism."

The group, called the Church of the IV Majesties, has booked the Civic Center, 201 N Walker, for Oct. 21, said Jim Brown, Civic Center general manager.

The group posted its event on Meetup.com, stating that it is a "church for any Satanist (modern or traditional) or anyone who is interested in Satanism."

In a telephone interview, James Hale, 37, of Oklahoma City, said he is the Church of the IV Majesties' lord high master of the Infernal Council.

He said his group is hosting the October event to educate the public about what they do.

"We've been a group for a while, and we've just legally formed a church," Hale said during a telephone interview Monday. "When the boogeyman comes out of the basement, it's not so bad."

The group's website at <http://churchoftheivmajesties.webs.com> states that members believe that "man created god and that man can destroy god. Thus man is god."

Hale would not disclose how many people are members of the church, but he said it is made up of people who believe in Satan as a friendly entity, people who

believe there are no gods and people, like himself, who believe they are gods.

Hale said the group "likes to keep things mobile" by meeting in members' homes. He said this is to prevent problems caused by people with opposing viewpoints, which he said they encountered in Yukon.

He said the ritual of satanic exorcism promoted in the group's Meetup.com posting was written by himself and another Church of the IV Majesties member about two months ago. One website found on the Internet by The Oklahoman described the purpose of the "rite of satanic exorcism" is to "drive the 'holy spirit' from one who has recently converted to the ways of the Left Hand Path and Satanism." However, Hale said the ritual his group plans to perform is a parody of the Roman Catholic Church's exorcism ritual.

"It's just a blasphemy ritual poking fun at the Catholic ritual," Hale said.

Monday, Jennifer McClintock, Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation spokeswoman, said the Civic Center has hosted a wide variety of groups over the years. She said the Church of the IV Majesties has leased one of the smaller rooms at the Civic Center, not the main hall.

She said the Civic Center has been the site of Easter pageants in the past.

"As a public building, we don't discriminate against any group, whether it be religious or nonreligious," she said. "As long as the group comes in and abides by city laws, we will host them."

Hale said the church is unsure of the public response to their event.

"We're not looking to start trouble or anything," he said.

"We are hoping they (public) will take advantage of the opportunity to be educated. We know Christians can be violent. They shot at (Anton) LaVey (founder of the Church of Satan). ... We have the utmost confidence that the Oklahoma City Police Department will do their job."

Oil platform explodes, catches fire off La. coast; all 13 crew members are rescued from Gulf:

NEW ORLEANS - An oil platform exploded and burned off the Louisiana coast Thursday, the second such disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in less than five months. This time, the Coast Guard said there was no leak, and no one was killed.

The Coast Guard initially reported that an oil sheen a mile long and 100 feet wide had begun to spread from the site of the blast, about 200 miles west of the source of BP's massive spill. But hours later, Coast Guard Cmdr. Cheri Ben-Iesau said crews were unable to find any spill.

The company that owns the platform, Houston-based Mariner Energy, did not know what caused the explosion.

Mariner officials said there were seven active production wells on the platform, and they were shut down shortly before the fire broke out.

Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal said the company told him the fire began in 100 barrels of light oil condensate, but officials did not know yet what sparked the flames.

The Coast Guard said Mariner Energy reported the oil sheen. In a public statement, the company said an initial flyover did not show any oil.

Photos from the scene showed at least five ships floating near the platform. Three of them were shooting great plumes of water onto the machinery. Light smoke could be seen drifting across the deep blue waters of the gulf.

By late afternoon, the fire on the platform was out.

The platform is in about 340 feet of water and about 100 miles south of Louisiana's Vermilion Bay. Its location is considered shallow water, much less than the approximately 5,000 feet where BP's well spewed oil and gas for three months after the April rig explosion that killed 11 workers.

Responding to any oil spill in shallow water would be much easier than in deep water, where crews depend on remote-operated vehicles to access equipment on the sea floor.

A Homeland Security update obtained by The Associated Press said the platform was producing 58,800 gallons of oil and 900,000 cubic feet of gas per day. The platform can store 4,200 gallons of oil.

Karzai's brother calls for U.S. to shore up Kabul Bank as withdrawals accelerate:

Despite media reports of corruption at Kabul Bank, Afghan officials insist that it is not in danger of collapse.

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - As depositors thronged branches of

Afghanistan's biggest bank, Mahmoud Karzai, the brother of the Afghan president and a major shareholder in the beleaguered Kabul Bank, called Thursday for intervention by the United States to head off a financial meltdown.

"America should do something," he said in a telephone interview, suggesting that the Treasury Department guarantee the funds of Kabul Bank's clients, who number about 1 million and have more than \$1 billion on deposit with the bank.

Kabul Bank handles salary payments for soldiers, police and teachers. It has scores of branches across Afghanistan and holds the accounts of key Afghan government agencies. The collapse of the bank would probably spread panic throughout the country's fledgling financial sector and wipe out nine years of effort by the United States to establish a sound Afghan banking system, seen as essential to the establishment of a functioning economy.

Action by the United States, said Mahmoud Karzai, would prevent a run on Kabul Bank and protect other banks too. He said Kabul Bank is "stable and has money" but cannot withstand a stampede by panicked depositors.

"If the Treasury Department will guarantee that everyone will get their money, maybe that will work," said Karzai, who holds 7 percent of the bank's shares, making him the third-biggest shareholder. Karzai, who spends most of his time in Dubai - where he lives in a waterfront villa paid for by Kabul Bank - rushed to the Afghan capital Wednesday to join efforts to salvage the bank.

Treasury officials have said they have confidence in Afghanistan's Central Bank, which ousted Kabul Bank's top officials this week and has sought to stabilize the bank's finances.

But those moves may have spurred a panic: Depositors yanked at least \$90 million from Kabul Bank on Wednesday, according to people familiar with the situation, and the hemorrhaging of funds accelerated Thursday.

"Yesterday was not too bad, but today is worse," said a Kabul Bank insider. "It is a very bad situation."

At a news conference in Kabul on Thursday, Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal played down concerns about the bank's future, blaming foreign news media for stirring alarm. "Kabul Bank will never collapse," Zakhilwal said. "It will remain strong. The government will support Kabul Bank."

The finance minister acknowledged that fearful customers have flocked to Kabul Bank branches over the past two days to try to pull their savings. Withdrawals, he said, were "more than usual," but "it's not a crisis."

The Afghan government, he added, will "give back every last penny. People should not bother getting in line to withdraw their money."

Banks had shorter hours Thursday due to Ramadan, the Islamic holy month, and Friday is a holiday, which will give authorities some respite and could help calm public alarm.

NEWS MAKERS OF THE DAY:

First up was KKIM/KARS Ministry Representative Ryan Freeman, who talked about Stephen Hawkings claim that 'God didn't create the universe.' Ryans new program, 'Speak-Easy' airs Saturday evening at 6:30pm MT on KKIM, AM 1000 ABQ, FM 94.7 Santa Fe & WORLDWIDE on the internet at <http://mykkim.com> + you won't want to miss another new program, by Pastor Jimmy Sandoval of Grace Community Church in Santa Fe, which will air Fridays at 2:30pm MT on KKIM & KARS, AM 860, The Heart of NM and mark your calendar, because Jerry Stewart will be back Sunday @ 2pm & 7pm MT, with his Labor Day Special and again on Monday at 4:30pm & 8:05pm MT. Jerry joined us to talk about this special, saying, 'If we can't bring God in, we've lost our greatest support.' Regarding Stephen Hawkings comments, he quoted The Bible, 'The Fool Says In His Heart, There Is No God.' Pray for Jerry, as he is heard on 400 radio stations, many of them secular. He joined us today from TX, saying his special will be about Virtue, stating that 'God is the True Father of our Nation.' Quoting Ben Franklin, Jerry said, 'We hang together or we hang seperately.' Chris and Eric Tomlin joined us as well, to talk about the Biblical World View Conference, which they attended. They are heard every Saturday at 11:30pm MT and Sunday @ 4pm MT and Eric encouraged us all to sign the Manhatten Declaration. 33 counties were represented at last weeks event that stood for life, marriage and religious liberty. Chris told us that Proverbs means: to rule and be an example; to be a ruler, which means anyone in authority. They were both just in Moriarty to speak on God's Appointed Times, about the great feast days of The Bible. Shalom!

Many Blessings,
Rev. Mark F. Tross
Ekklesia Outreach
<http://ekkleisiaoutreach.com>
<http://ekkleisiaoutreach.weebly.com>
<http://powersforgood.weebly.com>
<http://www.whatissimplechurch.com>
<http://simplechurchfellowship.weebly.com>