

## NEWS BRIEFS

### NOVO NORDISK TO OFFER MINORITY MEDICAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Novo Nordisk, a leading company in the area of diabetes care, has established the annual Novo Nordisk Diabetes Scholarship fund to recognize excellence in academic achievement among minority medical students. In its inaugural year, the fund will provide \$25,000 grants to each of the four historically Black medical schools. The \$100,000 scholarship fund was established to support diversity within the medical profession and to encourage leadership in improving overall healthcare and diabetes care among minority populations and in underserved communities. The following medical schools each will receive a \$25,000 scholarship grant: Howard University College of Medicine, Washington, D.C.; Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn.; Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, Ga.; and the Charles R. Drew University of Science and Medicine, Los Angeles, Calif. Each medical school then will select five students, each to receive \$5,000 scholarships for the 2003-2004 academic years according to selection criteria established by the individual schools.

### WHITE SUPREMACIST JAILED IN CHASING CASE

CHICAGO (AP) - An admitted white supremacist was sentenced Wednesday to 20 months in federal prison for joining two knife-wielding friends in chasing four Black youngsters and shouting racial epithets after a high school football game. Harley Hermes, 21, once a member of a skinhead group, had admitted to taking part in the Aug. 30 incident in Fox Lake, a Chicago suburb. Another man who pleaded guilty in the case, Shaun Derifield, is scheduled to be sentenced in the case by U.S. District Judge Ruben Castillo on Nov. 19. Both men pleaded guilty to conspiracy to violate the civil rights of the four victims. A minor who took part pleaded guilty to a state mob action charge and served six months. Prosecutors said the youngsters were walking home from a high school football game when Hermes and Derifield ran out of Derifield's home, shouting racial epithets and threatening to kill them. Prosecutors said Derifield threatened to kill one victim while holding a knife to her throat.

### SEAN 'P. DIDDY' COMBS EX-BODYGUARD SLAIN

ATLANTA (AP) - A former bodyguard to hip-hop mogul Sean "P. Diddy" Combs was one of two men killed in a gunfight last week outside an Atlanta nightclub, police said. Anthony "Wolf" Jones, 38, was killed at about 4 a.m. outside Club Chaos as dozens of shots rang out during an argument about a woman, said Police Chief Richard Pennington. Demetrius Flenory, 35, was charged with two counts of homicide after being treated at a hospital for gunshot wounds to the buttocks. Officers said more arrests were possible. One man who was hospitalized with a foot wound was questioned and released. The second man killed was identified as Lamont Girdy, 38. Police said they found \$5,000 on Girdy's body and \$7,000 on Jones'. The two men, along with Flenory, were from New York City. Jones and Combs were acquitted in March 2001 of gun possession and bribery charges stemming from a December 1999 shooting inside a New York club in which three people were injured.

### SOUTHERN DRAWLS CONFUSE LA. PHONE SYSTEM

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) - Southern drawls have thwarted voice recognition equipment used by the Shreveport Police Department to route non-emergency calls. A switchover to a lower-tech, touch-tone system - in which callers hear a voice recording they can respond to by pressing a different number for each division - is scheduled for Monday, said spokeswoman Kaycee Hargrave. The voice-recognition system asked people to name the person or department they wanted. More often than not, the system just didn't understand, and they wound up at the wrong place, said Capt. John Dunn, who oversees police communications. "In Louisiana, we have a problem with Southern drawl and what I call lazy mouth. Because of that, the system often doesn't recognize what (callers) say," he said. Interim Chief Mike Campbell knows all too well how frustrating the voice recognition system can be. "I can count on one hand when I have been transferred to where I've wanted to go, and I know the system. I can imagine how frustrating it would be for a citizen," he said.

# FBI reports hate crimes down in 2002

WASHINGTON (AP) - Hate crimes were down sharply in 2002 following a spike the year before that was blamed in part on anti-Muslim and Middle Eastern sentiment after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The 7,462 hate crime incidents reported to the FBI in 2002 represented a drop of nearly 25 percent from the 9,730 reported in 2001, the agency said Wednesday. The number also was below the 8,063 incidents recorded in 2000.

There were 155 hate crime incidents listed as anti-Islamic last year, down sharply

from the 481 reported in 2001, when the nation suffered its worst-ever terrorist attack at the hands of Muslim extremists.

In addition, there were 622 hate crime incidents listed in 2002 against ethnic groups that include people of Middle Eastern descent, down from 1,500 in 2001. There were 931 anti-Jewish incidents in 2002, slightly below the number in 2001.

Arab-American and Muslim advocates agreed that hate crimes dropped from 2001 to 2002. But they said these people still suffer disproportionate discrimination in the

wake of the Sept. 11 attacks and the Iraq war.

"There's an uneasy relationship between the Muslim community and law enforcement," said Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Many Arab-Americans and Muslims fail to report crimes for fear of government harassment, said Dalia Hashad, attorney advocate at the American Civil Liberties Union.

People have grown fearful of contacting the FBI or local police because of government policies like forced registration of mainly Middle

Eastern men, perceptions of police profiling in terrorist investigations and more restrictive immigration rules.

"Bringing yourself to the attention of the government if you are Arab or Muslim in this country puts you at risk of being questioned," Hashad said. "You see people less willing to trust the government."

Hooper said that even if anti-Islam hate crime has waned, people who appear Arab or Muslim still are confronted more often than in the past with indignities such as lack of service or tougher

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## Verdict

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Virginia law.

Muhammad was found guilty of killing Dean Harold Meyers, a Vietnam veteran who was cut down by a single bullet that hit him in the head on Oct. 9, 2002, as he filled his tank at a Manassas gas station. He was also found guilty of conspiracy to commit murder and use of a firearm in a felony.

The victim's brother Robert said he believes Muhammad deserves the death penalty: "I must say that I can't think of too many more heinous crimes than this one."

Fellow suspect Lee Boyd Malvo, 18, is on trial separately in nearby Chesapeake for the killing of FBI analyst Linda Franklin at a Home Depot in Falls Church. He also could get the death penalty. Malvo's attorneys are pursuing an insanity defense, arguing that the young man had been "indoctrinated" by Muhammad.

Prosecutors presented evidence of 16 shootings, including 10 deaths, in Maryland, Virginia, Alabama, Louisiana and the District of Columbia that they said were part of a plot to extort \$10 million from the government. Prosecutors say that during the sentencing phase, they also plan to present evidence of a killing in Washington state.

The men's trials were moved some 200 miles to southeastern Virginia out of concern that it would be too hard to find an impartial jury close to the nation's capital because the sniper attacks had terrorized so many people.

The verdict came after three weeks of testimony in which a series of victims and other witnesses graphically — and often tearfully — recalled the horror that gripped the Washington area.

William Franklin recalled being splattered with his wife's blood outside a Home Depot. A retiree described seeing a woman slumped over on a bench, blood pouring from her head. The only child shot during the spree testified: "I put my book bag down and I got shot."

Jurors also saw several stomach-turning crime-scene photos, despite protests by the defense that the pictures were gratuitous.

Ten people were killed in the region and three were wounded in the spree, many of them shot as they went about their daily tasks: shopping at a crafts store, buying groceries, mowing the lawn, going to school.

At the height of the killings, the area was so terrified that sports teams were forced to practice indoors, people kept their heads down as they pumped gas, and teachers drew the blinds on their class-

room windows.

At one point, a handwritten letter was found tacked to a tree near a Virginia restaurant where a man was shot, and it included the chilling postscript: "Your children are not safe anywhere at any time." A tarot card left near a shooting outside a school declared: "Call me God."

The prosecution case included ballistics tests that connected the .223-caliber Bushmaster rifle found in Muhammad's car to nearly all the shootings; testimony that his DNA was on the weapon; and a stolen laptop computer discovered in the blue 1990 Chevrolet Caprice that contained maps of six shooting scenes, each marked with skull-and-crossbones icons.

The gun was found strapped behind the back seat of the Caprice, which prosecutors said Muhammad converted to "a killing machine." The back seat was unhinged so that it could flip up and provide access to the trunk. The windows were tinted, and a hole was cut in the trunk, allowing a person to fire the rifle through it.

Prosecutors presented no direct evidence that Muhammad pulled the trig-

ger, but said it didn't matter. They described Muhammad as the "captain" of a two-man "killing team" and portrayed him as Malvo's father figure, a stern and controlling man who trained the teenager to do his bidding.

"That is a young man he molded and made an instrument of death and destruction," prosecutor Paul Ebert said in closing arguments.

The defense appeared focused on saving Muhammad from the death penalty, arguing that the evidence did not prove Muhammad directed the shootings or fired the gun in the Meyers slaying. Attorney Peter Greenspun said in his closing statement that prosecutors had "pounded" jurors with gory photos and heartbreaking testimony in an appeal to their emotions.

In the penalty phase, prosecutors must prove one of two factors for the jury to recommend a death sentence: that Muhammad would present a future danger or that the crimes demonstrate "a depravity of mind."

If the jury recommends a death sentence, the judge can reduce it to life without parole.

If the jury recommends life, its decision is binding.

## Al Brown

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at the Westside Action Alliance Korps-Uplifting People (WAAK-UP) meeting, representing students from Charles I. West to voice their concerns.

Brown is survived by wife, Betty; daughters, Candace Allen and Cherie Brown of Las Vegas; stepsons, Derrick and Eric Johnson of Las Vegas; sister, Carol Jones of Las Vegas; and brothers, Leroy Brown of Fresno and Wayne and Spencer Brown of Los Angeles.

# BBQ Dinners

# \$5

## Whole Pigs Smoked

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