

News Briefs

FLAGS REPLACED WITH SWASTIKAS IN WASHINGTON STATE

ORCAS ISLAND, Wash. (AP) - Vandals burned dozens of small American flags that decorated veterans' graves for Memorial Day and replaced many of them with hand-drawn swastikas, authorities said Monday.

Forty-six flag standards were found empty and another 33 flags were in charred tatters Sunday in the cemetery, authorities said. Swastikas drawn on paper appeared where 14 of the flags had been.

Members of the American Legion on this island off Washington's northwest coast replaced the burned flags with new ones Sunday afternoon.

The vandals struck again on Memorial Day after a guard left at dawn, the San Juan County sheriff's office said. This time, the vandals left 33 of the hand-drawn swastikas.

"This is not an act of free speech. This is a crime," Sheriff Bill Cumming said in a statement released Monday afternoon.

Investigators believe there's more than one culprit, based on the number of flags that were vandalized, Cumming said in a telephone interview. But authorities have no suspects, he said.

The sheriff said deputies were trying to lift fingerprints off what little physical evidence they were able to recover.

FATHER GIVEN LIFE FOR KILLING HIS CHILDREN

ST. LOUIS (NNPA) - A judge sentenced Anthony Moore to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the murders of his two children along the banks of the Mississippi River in 2004.

Moore is now appealing the sentence, claiming he was poorly represented.

He was sentenced to two life terms Friday. Moore killed his two children, suffocating them in the mud along the Mississippi River.

He took his children, born to different mothers, to a location near the Chain of Rocks Bridge on September 7, 2004. Witnesses said they saw Moore stomping into the mud there. A short time later, the children were found dead along the river. Within a few hours, police located and arrested Moore in a nearby home.

The children were 2-year-old Toni Moore and 9-month-old Kanye Anderson.

Moore will not be eligible for probation or parole.

Moore had pleaded not guilty by reason of mental disease, an argument dismissed by the judge. He will likely appeal the conviction, arguing that his attorneys would not let him switch from a judge-only trial to a jury trial.

NAGIN: NEW ORLEANS IS A CITY ON THE MEND

NEW ORLEANS-Mayor Ray Nagin, in his first State of the City address since Hurricane Katrina, said Wednesday that New Orleans is a city on the mend, despite broken promises from the state and federal governments.

"New Orleans is coming back, whether you like it or not," Nagin said to applause from the crowd of city workers and community members gathered at the National World War II Museum.

He said President Bush has failed to move federal aid to "the people who need it the most," and said he should forgive millions of dollars in disaster loans that the city took out after the storm to help it to continue operating.

Nagin referred to the city's challenges, including a storm-depleted police force, that's still working out of trailers, dealing with a rise in violent crime and a health care system in "crisis," but he also touted what he deemed successes, from the cleanup of the French Quarter to the return of more than half the city's pre-Katrina population of 455,000.

As of mid-month, the city said it had received just \$163 million in federal rebuilding aid, a fraction of the \$1 billion or more it says it will need just to restore what Katrina damaged and with little earmarked for permanent infrastructure work.

Obama's wife no coat holder

CONWAY, N.H. (AP) - Illinois Sen. Barack Obama handed his jacket to wife Michelle at one point during a steamy rally Sunday in a school gym, but it was clear she's more than a coat-holder for the Democratic presidential candidate.

When someone in the audience asked Michelle Obama why voters should vote for her husband, she walked confidently onto the stage, took the microphone and smoothly answered.

"He's a man who has put his values before his profit," she said. "He's not running for president because he wants to be president. That's sort of the irony in it. He's running for president because he believes we can do better as a country."

The line brought a standing ovation.



Michelle Obama is accomplished in her own right.

"I think maybe we should stop there," Barack Obama said.

But he took another question: How would Michelle Obama serve as first lady?

Returning to the stage and the microphone, she was a little less reverent.

"You may sit down," she

told her husband.

Roars of laughter from the crowd.

"I come to this with a lot of interesting talents, but I think it would be unfair of me to say today what I would do in a couple of years," she continued. "I need to be prepared to do what the country

needs me to do at the time," she said.

"Whether that's baking cookies or serving as a wonderful hostess, that's my job. I have to be prepared to do what's necessary. And we won't know what that's going to be until we get there. I will be staunchly invested. It is a joint project."

At an "ice cream social" later in Berlin, N.H., the couple's daughters made their own appearance — sort of. As Obama and his wife walked toward the cameras and the crowds, their two young daughters took off from the RV they arrived in, making a straight line to the bins of ice cream arrayed around the town square.

"This is a wonderful vacation for us," Michelle Obama said afterward, standing under red, white and blue bunting on a wooden gazebo. "We try to turn campaigning into a family event. The only reason the girls came is because they heard about this ice cream social and they've been talking about it since we mentioned it a week ago. They got their ice cream and they're gone."

AARP study: Seniors skip drugs because of prices

By Heather Faison

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Many have had to deal with stubborn relatives who "forget" to take their medicines. But, according to a national study by seniors advocacy organization AARP, a number of African-Americans are neglecting their medicines because of high prescription costs.

The study examines the experiences of adults and reveals that more than half of African-Americans expressed a concern about paying their prescription drugs over the next two years.

"The costs of medicines are critically putting people's health at risk," said Drew Nannis, spokesperson for AARP.

"The survey showed that Hispanics and African-Americans are at risk to a significantly greater extent."

Health insurance coverage plays a pivotal role in the accessibility of prescription drugs for African-Americans and Hispanics.

According to the 2005 U.S. Census Bureau, the uninsured rates for African-Americans and Hispanics are 19.6 percent and 32.7 percent, respectively.

African-Americans were also more likely to have coverage through government insurance services such as Medicaid and Medicare Part D, while Hispanics are more likely to pay full retail price

for prescription drugs, according to the bureau's Health Insurance study. Participants in the study overwhelmingly supported legislation to make prescription drugs more affordable and allow states to purchase medicines in bulk.

Almost all participants, 79 percent African-Americans and 81 percent Hispanics, supported legislation to make drug manufacturers accountable for their spending on product marketing.

"This is a problem that is affecting all people across the nation, and it is the job of elected officials to solve this problem," said Nannis.

He noted that the primary purpose of the study was to gauge public support for legislative action on this issue. Some suggestions from AARP for people who need a relief on prescription drug costs are to ask about generic brands; ask doctor about alternative sources other than the pharmacy, such as mail orders; and take advantage of discounted health care plans.

Nannis was optimistic about the response garnered from the study but encouraged people to take advantage of available tools to help with the burden of prescription costs to avoid dangerous ultimatums.

"You have people taking drastic measure like not filling their prescriptions, splitting pills, and they are mak-

ing important decisions about health care such as, 'Do I fill my prescription or pay my rent this month?'"

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