

WEDNESDAY



Toothbrushes
A style for every taste
—Food & More, Page 1

La Vuelta
Bisbee draws top cyclists
—Sports, Page 1D

'Green' stores
Harsh lessons learned
—Money, Page 4B

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Associated Press photos

A lone death-penalty opponent faces police guarding the San Quentin entrance after the execution

Harris dies in Calif. gas chamber after justices bar further appeals

By Michelle Locke
The Associated Press

SAN QUENTIN, Calif. — Double murderer Robert Alton Harris was put to death in the gas chamber yesterday after the U.S. Supreme Court lifted a dramatic last-minute stay that had blocked California's first execution in 35 years.

Harris, 35, died quietly at dawn after an extraordinary night of cross-country judicial duels between the U.S. Supreme Court and the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Following the filing of four stays by the 9th Circuit on Monday, frustrated justices in Washington voted



Lisa ByBee, far left, and Ed Mayeaki, relatives of the victims, react

Credit-card users worried by recession debts, poll finds

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumers used credit cards to help them through the recession and more than half of card users worried about meeting their monthly payments, according to a survey released yesterday.

Forty percent of those ques-

tioned said they were "very concerned" about meeting their current monthly credit-card bills and an additional 14 percent said they were "somewhat concerned."

Ninety percent of the respondents said credit-card rates, despite some recent decreases, were too high. Two-thirds said they could use more information to help them choose the right card and 92 percent said high school students should be required to take instruction in money and

See CREDIT, Page 4A

New bank being formed as offshoot of takeover

By Walt Hiett
The Arizona Daily Star

An investor group led by a former postmaster general unveiled plans yesterday to start a new bank from the 49 Arizona branches Bank of America must sell to satisfy regulators.

The new holding company, called Independent Bancorp of Arizona, will invest at least \$23 billion to buy the branches plus \$1 billion in deposits and \$29 million in branch-related loans from Bank of America Arizona's parent holding company, BankAmerica Corp. Nine of the branches are in Tucson.

The hoped-for result, former

Postmaster General Anthony M. Frank said in a telephone interview from Phoenix, is a very big bank — it would immediately be the fifth-largest in the state — with a strong community-banking emphasis.

Frank said he could not reveal a name for the new bank yet. State and federal banking regulators still must approve the sale.

BankAmerica Corp., under an agreement with Arizona Attorney General Grant Woods, divested itself of the branches and deposits to avoid an antitrust challenge in its takeover of Security Pacific Bank. The takeover, which will make BankAmerica Corp. the nation's sec-

ond-largest bank holding company, will be completed today, but BankAmerica Corp. vice president Peter Magnani said last night that the Security Pacific name won't disappear immediately.

In addition, BankAmerica will sell the new Arizona bank up to \$1 billion in performing loans on a non-recourse basis. That means if the loans become delinquent later, BankAmerica will not be responsible for the loans.

Frank, who resigned Feb. 28 as postmaster general, said he will serve as chairman of the board, but said the investors are committed to

See BANK, Page 2A

TUSD board to restore Catalina High, make it a vocational magnet

By Maureen O'Connell
The Arizona Daily Star

A divided Tucson Unified School District Board voted 4-1 last night to restore Catalina High School.

The board approved \$15 million for restoration of Catalina and a plan to turn the school into a vocational education magnet school.

It was the first time the vocational education matter was considered. In addition, \$5 million will be earmarked to develop a website campus for alternative education.

The board failed to pass four

alternatives.

A vote to renovate existing facilities with \$18 million failed, 3-2, with Joel Ireland, Sylvia Campoy and Robert Miranda opposed.

One motion to build a new school on the southwest side failed, 3-2, with support only from Ireland and Miranda.

An earlier motion to raze Catalina and build a new school lost, 2-2. When Campoy abstained, she agreed with it in theory, but wanted money set aside for vocational education programs at the school. Robert

See CATALINA, Page 2A

Fetus-wielding minister arrested in N.Y. protest

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Police arrested a clergyman yesterday for pushing a human fetus in the faces of abortion-right activists as the group Operation Rescue opened its campaign to shut down women's clinics in Buffalo.

The Rev. Robert Schenck, 33, was charged with disorderly conduct for displaying the hand-size fetus and was cited for "creating a physically offensive condition," said Angelo Alessandria, the Police Department's chief of detectives.

"It made some people sick," Alessandria said.

At one point, the fetus was knocked out of the minister's hand and fell to the ground as activists on both sides of the abortion debate jostled each other.

Police confiscated the fetus to determine if it was enticed to a burial or if it should be disposed of as a hazardous medical waste," Alessandria said.

A medical examiner determined the fetus was real and that it had been about 19 weeks in development, police said. The examiner couldn't determine if it had been aborted or stillborn.

Operation Rescue began mass demonstrations this week designed to close down four women's clinics in Buffalo. The clinics said they

were open and all women scheduled to have abortions got in.

The group said it plans to besiege clinics in the predominantly Catholic city of Buffalo for two to four weeks. The campaign is patterned after last summer's siege in Wichita, Kan., that resulted in 2,600 arrests.

Similar militant groups of abortion-right activists said they would use force to keep the clinics open.

In Washington, President Bush's spokesman, Martin Fitzwater, urged anti-abortion protesters in Buffalo "not to break the law in any way."

Bush, who has stiffened his stance on abortion over the years, opposes abortion except in cases of rape, incest or endangerment to the mother's life.

Schenck's twin brother, Paul, was arrested on charges of trespassing and obstruction of justice when he got onto a police bus where officers had taken his brother, police said.

The Schencks are Assembly of God ministers at a church in suburban Tonawanda, N.Y.

The Schencks and about 100 other anti-abortion demonstrators prayed, sang "Amazing Grace" and held signs such as "Abortion Has Two Victims: One Dead, One Wounded" in a turnout at the Erie Medical Center clinic.

Beer, Halcion aid accittal in molestation

By Ignacio Ibarra
The Arizona Daily Star

BUICK — A Douglas man accused of sexually molesting a 5-year-old girl last year was found innocent Monday, in part because he was temporarily insane after consuming six beers and the sleeping medication Halcion.

David Elias Lopez, 30, was insane last Aug. 18 when he molested his girlfriend's 5-year-old daughter as she bathed, ruled Judge James L. Riley of Cochise County Superior Court. Court records indicate that Lopez has a history of paranoid schizophrenia.

"Obviously when you have someone with that kind of pre-existing condition, with a history of mental illness, the addition of alcohol and all the controversy surrounding Halcion raises some real concerns," Riley said.

Halcion, the world's best-selling sleeping pill, has been under scrutiny since the British government banned it last October. It has been linked to depression and short-term memory loss in some patients.

President Bush uses Halcion occasionally to help him sleep, according to press secretary Martin Fitzwater, who revealed the information after the president became ill during a recent trip to Japan.

Riley ordered Lopez committed to the Arizona State Hospital in Phoenix for treatment. For him to be released from the mental hospital, state mental health officials would have to determine that Lopez's mental condition was stabilized and that he no longer poses a threat to himself or others.

According to court records, Lopez was baby-sitting his girlfriend's 5-year-old daughter at her

See HALCION, Page 2A



WEATHER

Sunny, breezy. Today is expected to be sunny and breezy, with occasional high clouds and winds of 10 to 20 mph. Look for a high of 85 to 90 and an overnight low of 52 to 57. A pair of weak weather disturbances are expected to keep temperatures fairly level the next two days, but it could heat up by the weekend. Yesterday's high was 80, the low 50. Details in Page 11A.

INDEX

Accret	1-4C	Berkeley	1C
Bridge	1C	Manly	4B
Clinton	5-8D	Overland	7D
Comics	1C	Public Records	8D
12-13A	Spurs	1-4D	
Crawford	7D	Tues Today	1C
Dear Abby	3C	Tucson, Arizona	1B
De-Gun	1C	TV	1C