

METROPOLITAN DIGEST

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

Brothers extradited for trial in slaying

Two Mexican nationals have been extradited to Chicago to stand trial on murder charges in connection with a 2000 Arlington Heights slaying.

Brothers Jose Padilla, 28, and Victor Padilla, 26, were sent to Chicago Monday after they were captured in Mexico in an international manhunt, according to a U.S. Embassy in Mexico news release.

They are wanted in connection with the September 2000 death of Antonio Aguila of Arlington Heights, according to the FBI. The incident is alleged to have started when Victor Padilla believed some men drinking in a courtyard had insulted him. A fight ensued, and the Padillas allegedly stabbed Aguila and four others, police said.

After Aguila's death, the brothers were charged in Cook County Circuit Court with one count each of murder, armed violence and aggravated battery. After posting bail, they failed to appear for a court appearance, and investigators learned the men had fled the country, the FBI said in a news release. They have since been charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution, a felony.

COOK COUNTY

On-air bragger pleads guilty to TCF Bank heist

A Dolton man who admitted taking part in a bank holdup on a radio call-in show pleaded guilty Monday in federal court to the robbery.

Randy Washington, 24, admitted acting as the getaway driver in the April 2004 robbery of the TCF Bank at 3220 S. Chicago Rd. in South Chicago Heights that included five others, including a former employee of the bank. They escaped with about \$81,000 in cash.

The heist had gone unsolved for months before Washington called a radio program last September and divulged enough details of the holdup to capture the FBI's attention.

Washington has cooperated with prosecutors and as a result faces a likely prison term of almost 4 years in prison. U.S. District Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer set sentencing for Oct. 14.

ILLINOIS

Prosecutor to investigate baseball project funding

Associated Press

MARION, Ill.—Williamson County's prosecutor said Monday he will honor an Illinois Republican Party request and review whether a state grant of \$3 million to a minor-league baseball project headed by a Democratic donor violates state ethics laws.

In pressing for the investigation, state GOP Chairman Andy McKenna questioned the appropriateness of state financing for what he argued should be a privately funded ballpark planned in this Southern Illinois community.

The state's \$3 million contribution was endorsed by Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who last month attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the project led by attorney John Simmons.

CALUMET CITY

Hammond woman faces charges in fatal accident

A 26-year-old Hammond woman faces reckless homicide charges in connection with an accident last week in Calumet City that killed a passenger in her vehicle.

Tiffany Young of the 6300 block of Madison Avenue is also charged with aggravated driving under the influence, according to Cook County state's attorney's spokeswoman Marcy Jensen.

Young was traveling eastbound in the 1000 block of State Street at about 2:05 a.m. Thursday when her car crossed the median and crashed head-on into a westbound vehicle, Calumet City police said.

Taylor's passenger, James Edmond, 27, of the 1000 block of Eaton Avenue in Hammond suffered massive head injuries. He was pronounced dead in St. James Hospital and Health Centers in Olympia Fields.

EVERGREEN PARK

Owners of nursing home accept license suspension

An agreement has been reached between the state and a closed Evergreen Park nursing home that officials cited for mismanagement.

Owners of Emerald Park Health Care Center, 9125 S. Pulaski Rd., agreed to have their license suspended and surrendered in a settlement with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the department said in a news release.

The owners are barred from operating the facility and cannot apply for a new nursing home license for two years. Proceedings to revoke the operating license were under way.

For several months state and local officials closed the 249-bed, long-term-care facility poorly run. In April, state police found eight registered and two unregistered sex offenders living there. The home closed in early June.



Tribune photo by Carl Wagner

Pedicure for a pachyderm

Elephant superintendent Joe Frisco, of the Carson & Barnes 5-Ring Circus from Hugo, Okla., trims a hoof on one of his charges Monday before the shows at Maryknoll Park in Glen Ellyn. The circus is touring the Chicago area this week.

Deadly shooting shakes area with waning crime

By Kelly Kennedy

Tribune staff reporter

Devin Fitzpatrick's family thought they had lifted him far out of harm's way.

When the 15-year-old started hanging with a rough crowd in Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood on the South Side a couple of years ago, his mother, sister, teachers and basketball coach got on him.

Initially, it worked. Fitzpatrick graduated at the top of his 8th-grade class at Richard J. Daley Academy last month, his sister said.

Sunday night, after falling back in with what his sister called a "bad group," Fitzpatrick of the 2100 block of West 51st Street was gunned down two blocks from the park where he loved to play basketball.

"He had everything," his sister, Donice Fitzpatrick, said.

"He was hanging with the good kids during the day; there was just one who he shouldn't have been with."

Chicago police spokesman Carlos Herrera said Fitzpatrick was walking in the 1900 block of West 52nd Street at 10:50 p.m. Sunday when a person in a dark full-sized van pulled up next to him and fired several shots from the driver's side.

Police had no one in custody Monday night.

Fitzpatrick said her brother,

who loved math and hoped to be an auto mechanic, was not involved with gangs. He and friends, however, had argued with gang members two months ago, she said.

The shooting shocked neighbors who had started to relax as violent crimes in Back of the Yards have plummeted in recent years.

"Yeah, that's scary," said Cory Washington, 17, who lives in the neighborhood.

"It's usual for here, but it's unusual for the last three years. The gangbangers are slowing down."

Washington said he remembers a time when there were gunshots every night, but he and his friends were surprised to hear the sound return.

Dion Moore, who remembers the violence of the 1980s up through the 1990s, said things have been much calmer since about 1995.

"A lot of people are getting older—growing out of gangs," he said. "And it seems like more of the dads are around trying to give their kids some knowledge."

Rev. Bruce Welles of Holy Cross/Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 4515 S. Ashland Ave., said police called him Monday morning to talk about what happened.

"It's always a surprise, right?" he said. "I always tell the kids I don't want to bury them."

But he said violence has de-

creased.

In 2003 Welles came face-to-face with violence when a man, 23, was shot outside the window of the church office. Welles was the first to reach him.

"He lived," Welles said. "They mistook him for someone else. He wasn't a gang member."

Welles has lived in the area for 15 years. In August, he will lead experts from the National Gang Crimes Research Center on a tour of Back of the Yards, past the memorial wall to young people who have died in gang violence and then past the murals of hope for the future.

"When I initially started here, I had no intention of getting to know the local gang members," Welles said. "But then someone said to me, 'You know these are your kids. Their parents go to your church.'"

Playing basketball at Cornell Park, 50th and Wood Streets, Welles began to learn about the faces behind the statistics—statistics that included a 12-year-old who in 1997 shot and killed two 14-year-old boys to prove he was tough enough to be in a gang, according to police.

In Back of the Yards, 70 percent of the population is younger than 18.

The schools have a student turnover of 30 to 40 percent each year because of the immi-

grant population from Mexico.

Within a few blocks of Welles' church, six elementary schools contain 1,000 children each. And there is no regular high school in the neighborhood.

"It's a hot summer," Welles said. "This violence is always bubbling underneath—it never stops. We have to get at what causes it."

Welles helped open two alternative high schools for teenage dropouts. After the first opened in 1998, the area saw a 60 percent reduction in violence in the first year, Welles said.

He has helped organize 30 youth groups with eight to 10 kids and three adults. Mentors work in groups of three with at-risk kids.

"We're trying to change the environment in the neighborhood," Welles said.

That includes programs that help renters become owners or that encourage the professionals who work in the area to live there, too. And neighborhood leaders have passed out 52 college scholarships in the hopes that the recipients will return to the neighborhood.

For Fitzpatrick, Welles plans to organize a peace march.

"It's hard to accept," he said. "But the important thing is to regroup. We don't want to go inside and lock our doors."

City gets hundreds of porch requests

Publicity increases calls for inspections

By Delroy Alexander

Tribune staff reporter

The city Buildings Department has been inundated with hundreds of requests from residents who want porch inspections after publicity about ongoing porch problems, Buildings Commissioner Stan Kaderbek said Monday.

After several Tribune reports about breakdowns in the porch-inspection system, about 100 porch complaints per day began lighting up the city's 311 non-emergency hot line, department spokesman Peter Scales said.

"I don't know if we're still at that level," he said. "We were for the first couple of days after the Tribune story ran."

The Tribune reported that hundreds of porches are deemed dangerous, for which the city has no record of repair, and hundreds more porch inspections are caught in a computer-entry backlog.

The workload is growing so fast the department recently expanded to eight a team of three inspectors created last month to focus exclusively on porches, Kaderbek said.

"We had probably 600 complaints" early last week, Kaderbek said. "Hopefully, it's now down to 400."

The department hopes to respond to all the requests by the end of the week, assuming the rate of calls tails off, he said.

Since the June 2003 Wrightwood Avenue porch collapse that killed 13 people, porch problems have become a department priority, Kaderbek said.

During a citywide sweep after the Wrightwood collapse, owners of about 500 buildings were cited for potentially hazardous porch conditions. Last month, close to half had yet to apply for their repair permits, the Tribune recently reported.

Scales said the flood of new complaints is typical after publicity is given to building problems.

Kaderbek has said property owners will face court action if they don't obtain permits for repairs.

"That's a good thing," Scales said. "We want to get people to become aware of their porches and bug their landlords about them. And, if the landlords don't do anything, to give us a call."

The batch of new complaints "is by no means insurmountable," Scales said.

Tribune staff reporter Antonio Olivo contributed to this report.

City watch

'Lace and Pearls' party a labor of love

Many taking part in benefit have more than passing ties to La Rabida Hospital

By Jon Anderson

Tribune staff reporter

A hospital? Fun?

Seems unlikely, but there was plenty going on Thursday night at La Rabida Children's Hospital and Research Center in Jackson Park.

Inside, visitors were touring the S.S. La Rabida, the inpatient care wing—recently redecorated in a nautical motif—that delights kids with a ship's bow by the check-in desk, stars on the ceilings, port-hole windows and a fish tank.

Outside, under a white tent, the La Rabida's Women's Board, which helped build the hospital around the former Spanish pavilion at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, was holding a nostalgic ball. It featured turn-of-the-last-century costumes.

A high point was headgear.

Some two dozen vintage hats, donated by longtime Women's Board member Eve-

lyn Stamm, 98, were the hit of a silent auction.

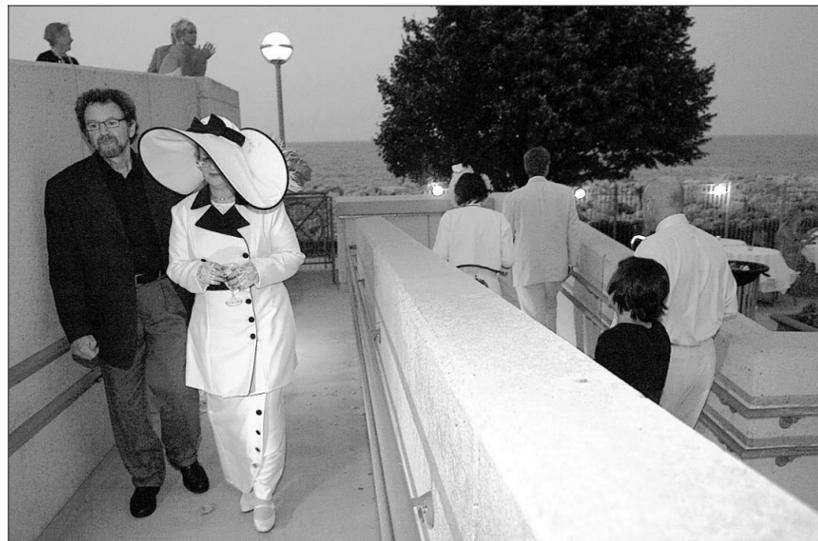
Others made their own.

"I've been researching first ladies and this is Florence Harding," said Barbara Wynne Bansley, an artist from Beverly, referring to her wondrous working of materials into what looked like a product of the Attractive Lampshade School of Great Hats.

Like many at the "Lace and Pearls Lawn Fete," which raised about \$100,000, Bansley had more than passing ties to the hospital.

Years ago her mother, Helen McCann, spent considerable time there as a volunteer. Recently, the family raised funds to name the hospital's specialty designed, soft-cushioned, lakefront playground in McCann's honor. At the dedication, some 43 McCann grandchildren gave it a good trial run.

"I think it's important that a woman be acknowledged for something as simple as rocking children," Bansley suggested, noting that one of La Rabida's strengths is the sensitivity of its staff and volunteers to the needs of emotionally and physically vulnerable children.



Tribune photo by Abel Uribe

Mary Jane Myers (with husband Michael Boreh) was among those sporting unique headgear at Thursday's "Lace and Pearls Lawn Fete," benefiting La Rabida Children's Hospital.

"I grew up in Hyde Park. I had polio as a child and I spent time here," noted another longtime volunteer, author Sugar Rautbord.

"I'm a polio survivor, too. So, hospitals for children go back a long way with me," added restaurateur Ina Pinkney.

Pinkney pitched in to help cook with a team of six chefs led by Jackie Shen of Red Light, a restaurant in the West Randolph Street market area.

"We've never had an event

like this on the hospital grounds before," noted Susie Jacobson, president of the hospital's Women's Board, as her husband, Walter, a reporter for WFLD-TV, and his colleague, anchor Robin Robinson, readied themselves to emcee the evening's activities.

The purpose, Mrs. Jacobson said, was twofold: to raise funds and, even more important, to raise the hospital's public profile.

"People are confused about

who we are, what we are and where we are," she said. "I thought, 'What a great opportunity to deal with all three.'"

Working on a budget of \$40 million, La Rabida provides care each year for some 9,000 children with ongoing medical conditions.

Its name, staffers noted, means "outpost of the frontier." It comes from La Rabida, an ancient monastery that inspired Spain's 1893 exhibit. jsanderson@tribune.com