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Metro

In Brief

Thursday, October 28, 2004; Page B03

VIRGINIA

Inspector Dies in Fall in Fairfax

A 48-year-old man died Monday after falling out of the bucket of a lift boom he was inspecting, Fairfax County police said yesterday.

Patrick Ott, of Pennsylvania, an employee of United Rental in Chantilly, was doing a routine inspection of the lift boom when a safety alarm sounded and the boom's arm tipped over, according to police. Ott fell out of the bucket and was taken to Inova Fair Oaks Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, police said.

Man Sought in Falls Church Assault

Fairfax County police are asking for the public's help in identifying a man responsible for a sexual assault last month in the Falls Church area.

Police said that about 7:30 p.m. Sept. 18, a man grabbed a woman who was walking in the 2800 block of Graham Road, just south of Lee Highway. He dragged her into a wooded area behind the Lee-Graham Shopping Center, where he severely beat and sexually assaulted her, police said.

They described the suspect as Hispanic, 5 feet 6 inches tall, weighing 140 pounds with short black hair and a mustache. At the time, he was shirtless and wearing dark pants, police said. Police believe the suspect may use the name of Rigoberto and may refer to himself as "Macho Man."

Police asked that anyone with information contact Fairfax County Crime Solvers at 1-800-673-2777.

Three Areas Report BB-Shot Incidents

A man was shot in the leg with a BB gun in Arlington and dozens of car windows in Arlington, Alexandria and Manassas were damaged in similar incidents that began Monday, police said.


Manassas police reported that more than 30 vehicles were damaged over a three-day period by shots fired from a BB gun.

In Arlington, a shot was fired Tuesday night at a man walking on Wilson Boulevard, but it missed and struck a window, police said. A short time later, a man walking on Wilson Boulevard was struck in the leg by a BB, according to police, who said the windows of at least nine parked vehicles were shot out.

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Alexandria police yesterday reported similar incidents. Nineteen vehicles parked in the Jordan Street corridor were damaged, as was a skateboard shop in the 2700 block of Duke Street, police said.

THE DISTRICT

Target Confirms as Mall Anchor

Target Corp. has signed an agreement to anchor an urban shopping mall planned for late 2007 in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of Northwest, D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams (D) said yesterday.

Target had announced its intention to anchor the project three years ago. The signing of the agreement last week makes it official.

The discount retailer plans to purchase an 180,000-square-foot building that will be built by GRID Properties, which is developing the retail complex on 14th Street NW between Park Road and Irving Street.

The mall will include a city-financed underground parking lot, with 1,000 spaces, and 15,000 square feet of retail space set aside for local and small retailers at reduced rental rates.

The purchase agreement enables GRID to seek private financing for the project, which officials say will create 700 construction jobs and 1,000 permanent jobs and generate an estimated \$12 million in annual sales tax revenue.

It also means that smaller retailers that have shown interest in the project may be more willing to sign leases now that an anchor store is firmly committed. Prospective tenants include Bed, Bath & Beyond, Modell's Sporting Goods and several others, officials involved with the project said. Whole Foods Market, which had expressed interest in the past, has concluded that it will not locate in the retail complex.

Mercury Leak Forces Evacuation

Twelve people were evacuated from a Northeast Washington home early yesterday after dangerous amounts of mercury vapors were detected inside the residence, fire officials said.

Washington Gas Co. discovered the problem and ordered the 10 children and two adults who reside in the home in the 1300 block of W Street NE to evacuate, said Alan Etter, spokesman for the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. No one appeared to be harmed, Etter said.

The trouble occurred after a contractor moved a gas meter from inside the basement to outside the home. Four ounces of mercury apparently leaked into the basement and first floor.

MARYLAND

U-Md. Students to Work at Polling Places

About 100 University of Maryland students have been trained to work at polls in Prince George's County on Election Day with funds from a federal program aimed at boosting turnout among young voters and reducing a nationwide shortage of poll workers.

The university was one of 15 across the country to receive funding under the Help America Vote College Program, which was started after the 2000 elections, federal officials said yesterday.

The grant to U-Md., which amounted to \$25,000, will fund a study of the project's effectiveness as well as pay the costs of recruiting and training the student poll workers.

Montgomery Approves Homeland Security

The Montgomery County Council voted unanimously Tuesday to create a Department of Homeland Security, as proposed by County Executive Douglas M. Duncan (D).

The agency will be responsible for emergency management, disaster preparedness, public health emergency preparedness, community outreach and obtaining federal grants for homeland security. Designed to better prepare the county for a possible terrorist attack, the department also will coordinate efforts between local, state and federal agencies.

Hyattsville Student Injured on School Bus

A 13-year-old boy who attends Hyattsville Middle School was shot in the eye with a pellet or BB gun yesterday while riding the bus home from school, Hyattsville police said.

Police said a girl approached the bus at a stop sign at 42nd Avenue and Ogelthorpe Street about 2:45 p.m. and fired what appeared to be a pellet or BB gun through the window. Police were still searching last night for the girl.

The boy was taken to a local hospital .

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I'm an actress. They give me a script. That's my job."

-- Betsy Ames, 61, of Alexandria, one of several area voice-over artists busy making political ads as the election season nears its climax. -- Page B1

Compiled from reports by staff writers Debbi Wilgoren, Nicole Fuller, Nurith C. Aizenman, Tim Craig, Nancy Trejos and Elaine Rivera.

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