

# REGION IN BRIEF

## Animal rights group targeted UCLA professor

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Animal Liberation Front tried to attack the Bel-Air home of a UCLA primatologist researcher with a "beer cocktail," but left it at the wrong house, an FBI official said.

The ALF said in a statement it had left a bottle filled with a flammable liquid on the porch of Lynn Fairbanks' home in Bel-Air on June 30.

But FBI spokeswoman Laura Emililer said the bottle had actually been left at the home of a 70-year-old neighbor.

"According to animal investigators, they believe that, had the defective container properly, the inhabitants would have had a very different time escaping," she said.

On its Web site, the ALF claimed Fairbanks was keeping (AP) — monkeys to study "psychological, psychiatric and social problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, substance abuse, criminality and violence."

University officials said that description misrepresented Fairbanks' work.

## Police investigate threats to officials supportive of immigrants

MAYWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Police are investigating whether Maywood's deputy city clerk sent hate mail and tried to have a councilman killed after the town banned illegal immigrants from the city.

Not long after the City Council approved a symbolic resolution opposing a proposed federal law to make local police enforce immigration law, Councilman Felipe Aguirre and Mayor Thomas Martin began receiving threats in the mail.

Last week, Hector Duarte, 29, was arrested on suspicion of soliciting to commit murder, said Los Angeles County sheriff's spokeswoman Kerri Webb. The target was Aguirre, police said.

Webb said Aguirre was initially set for \$1 million, but Duarte was released July 5 pending further investigation. He has not been charged.

Aguirre said Wednesday Maywood police first learned of a possible plot when they arrested a man a month ago during a drug bust. The man allegedly said Duarte had inquired about killing the councilman, he said.

Duarte was relieved of his duties by the City Council on Thursday night. Attempts to reach him for comment early this week were not successful.

Police said Sam Pena said he didn't believe Duarte was capable of sending threats or trying to get Aguirre killed.

"To me it sounds like they have a very bad informant ... It's all hearsay," Pena said.

## Elsewhere in California ...

**SAN LUIS OBISPO (AP)** — There's pecking disorder in the city. Brewer's blackbirds, apparently protecting their young during nesting season, are swooping down and attacking the heads of pedestrians.

"On a hot day, we get about 15 attacks an hour," Nautical Bean coffee house business manager Brett Jones said. "I thought about naming a coffee after them."

Customers are often seen flailing their hands over their heads as they walk toward the Laguna Village Shopping Center area. Last week, while walking into the Nautical Bean Espresso Cafe, customer Charlie Magnuson felt tiny claws tug on his peppered hair.

"Once you've been scratched," he said, "it does scare you a little. But not really, because they won't go for your eyes. I think it's a fun thing as long as no one gets hurt."

Wildlife experts said the birds are simply protecting their young. Capt. David Fox of the California Department of Fish and Game said the behavior is a common defense mechanism.

Once nesting season is over at the end of summer, the harassment of Nautical Bean patrons will likely stop, he said.

**SANTA MARIA (AP)** — A man convicted again for violent sex crimes was sentenced to 333 years in prison. Ernie Joe Santos, 57, of Santa Maria, who has a long history of sex attacks, was convicted April 7 of terrorizing a woman who struck up a relationship with Santos by writing him letters in prison.

Santos was previously convicted in 1983 for the kidnapping and rape of a 13-year-old girl and for a sexual kidnapping and sexual assault in Santa Maria. He was sentenced to 35 years in prison but was paroled in 2000.

Four months later, he was arrested in Santa Maria and convicted for methamphetamine possession. Santos was paroled in 2003 on that offense.

During his prison stint in the late 1990s, an acquaintance of his sister began writing to him. After his release, they went on a date in November 2004 and the woman was later attacked in Santos' apartment.

"He ordered her to lie face down on the bed and she could hear him taking shoelaces out of shoes," according to court documents. "He then tied her hands behind her back and tied her legs together. She begged him Please don't do this to me. He told her to Shut up" and then added, "The more you talk the angrier I get."

Jurors convicted him of kidnapping, forcible rape, assault with intent to commit rape, forcible oral copulation, forcible penetration with a foreign object, dissuading a witness, making criminal threats and possession of methamphetamine.

**SANTA CRUZ (AP)** — Harbor High School is adding a new shop class — bicycle shop.

Part auto shop and part drivers' education, teenagers will learn repair and maintenance skills, road safety and how to protect their bikes from thieves.

The class could lead even to a career on the bike-happy Central Coast. "I imagine these kids growing up to ride and drive safely, to value the idea of one less car on Highway 1, or that much less pollution," said Berri Michel, who owns the Bicycle Trip shop and developed the class. "No to mention, bike shops and the industry could use more well-trained mechanics for hire."

# Fire officials worry fire could reach national forest

By CHRISTINA ALMEIDA Associated Press

YUCCA VALLEY — A huge wildfire was edging toward San Bernardino National Forest Thursday, worrying fire officials that it could grow rapidly and get close to the resort community of Big Bear Lake and add to the nearly 100 structures it had already devoured.

A severe bark beetle infestation has killed many trees in the National Forest in recent years, and could provide the Sawtooth Complex fire with substantial fuel.

"If it starts in there it will be almost impossible to stop," said California Department of Forestry spokeswoman Karen Gullenheim.

The blistering heat and strong winds that have made firefighting efforts difficult were not letting up, as forecasters expected 100 degree plus temperatures Thursday.

Temperatures hit 108 degrees Wednesday as 2,500 firefighters attacked flames burning grasswood, Joshua trees, piñon pines and brush in hills and canyons. Eight air tankers and 13 helicopters attacked from above.

Containment was 16 percent late Wednesday.

The fire, ignited during the weekend by lightning, had destroyed 42 houses, 55 other buildings and 91 vehicles in and around this high desert community 100 miles east of Los Angeles, authorities said.

As of late Wednesday, it had burned 27,000 acres.

Luckily, the historic build-

ings that made nearby Pioneer town famous, old western-style saloons and storefronts that once were props for movie cowboys like Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, were spared.

The fire was moving southwest, pushed by 10 mph winds and gusts between 25 and 40 mph. About 1,000 evacuees from Pioneer town, Burns Canyon, Rimrock, Gamma Gulch, Flamingo Heights and Little Morongo Canyon had not returned to their homes, said Capt. Marc DeRosier of the California Department of Forestry.

Eight firefighters and two civilians were treated for minor burns or smoke inhalation.

Smoke blanketed the sky over the Mojave Desert north of Yucca Valley. In the Gamma Gulch area scores of dead animals littered a property where a home and barn burned.

In Morongo Valley — where large ranch homes are surrounded by highly combustible grasswood and Joshua trees, piñon pines and fine brush — residents watched nervously.

An evacuation center was set up at Yucca Valley High School, and horses and other livestock were taken to the town of Lander.

Meanwhile Thursday, four lightning-sparked fires that began in the remote San Bernardino National Forest had burned a total of 2,000 acres, said U.S. Forest Service spokeswoman Melody Lardner. Two of the 100-acre Millard Fire blaze was just 5 percent contained late Wednesday.

On the Net: National Interagency Fire Center. <http://www.nifc.gov> Pioneer town. [www.pioneer town.com](http://www.pioneer town.com)

steep terrain and little access to water, Morgan said.

"We had a setback out there," Morgan said after the blaze grew from 11,000 acres earlier and the containment level went down from 45 percent earlier in the day. "I got into some very tough territory and it blew out our lines."

With more erratic wind expected overnight and higher temperatures forecast for the weekend, nearly 1,800 firefighters were working to keep the fire from spreading further, Morgan said. Three firefighters were treated for minor heat-related illnesses, and some residents voluntarily evacuated.

The cause of the blaze was not determined.

In Livermore, about 45 miles east of San Francisco, a grass fire that closed both directions of commuter-choked Interstate 580 for hours on Tuesday flared again Wednesday morning but was quickly controlled.

The fire burned about 10 square miles and blackened a wide swath of hillsides around the windmills along the Altamont Pass before being put out around 9 p.m., Morgan said.

"The winds were absolutely ferocious out there," he said. "It just absolutely took off like a freight train. They did a fabulous job keeping it that size."

On the Net: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)

—Firefighters worked to contain a wildfire that started in rugged rural canyons in western Stanislaus County and quadrupled in size before crossing over into Santa Clara County, state fire officials said.

By nightfall Wednesday, the wind-whipped fire in the Del Puerto Canyon near Frank Raines Regional Park had burned more than 16,600 acres and was heading southwest over ranch land toward Henry W. Cooe State Park, said Chris Morgan, spokesman for the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Eight buildings, mostly hunting cabins and lodges, were destroyed and another 80 and a winery were threatened by the blaze that started Sunday about 85 miles southeast of San Francisco in a remote ranching area with

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