

Russian court approved parole for American scholar

By The Associated Press
INTERNATIONAL
ROSSOSH, Russia — A Russian court today approved the parole of John Tobin, an American Fulbright scholar serving a one-year sentence on drug charges, clearing the way for his early release, Judge Boris Gladko said.

Gladko told The Associated Press that Tobin could be released later today. He said the court was preparing documents needed by the prison administration. Tobin became eligible for parole Thursday, the halfway point of his high-profile sentence, and the parole board unanimously recommended release, satisfied by his behavior at the prison in the southern town of Rossosh.

Tobin, a 24-year-old from Connecticut, was arrested in January amid strained U.S.-Russian relations, which were exacerbated by Federal Security Service claims that Tobin was a spy in training. No espionage charges were filed, however, and Tobin said he was framed on the drug charges because he refused to work for Russian intelligence.

Tobin, who was doing political science research in Voronezh, about 300 miles south of Moscow, was convicted in April of obtaining, possessing and distributing marijuana and sentenced to 37 months in prison. Later, a higher court overturned the distribution conviction and reduced the sentence to one year.

VIEQUES, Puerto Rico — U.S. Navy security personnel fired rubber bullets and tear gas at a crowd of protesters and journalists on Vieques island, sparking debate over the military's latest use of force and its re-

ap news capsules

sumption of maneuvers on the outlying Puerto Rican island.

The Navy said protesters were trying to break into a restricted area on Thursday night so security personnel fired tear gas, bean bags and rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. The projectiles were fired only after the protesters fired a flare toward the base, shined bright lights at the officers and tried to break into the fence, the Navy said.

Tomas van Houtryve, a photographer for The Associated Press, was hit in the arm by a rubber bullet as he ran away from guards firing tear gas. Van Houtryve said the protesters only shook the fence and yelled at the Navy when security personnel fired a flare, canisters of tear gas and then three rubber bullets at the fleeing crowd.

"There were people cutting the fence (on the range), throwing rocks at the security force and vehicles, and pushing on the fence," said Navy spokeswoman, Lt. Cmdr. Katherine Goode. "As a result the security forces perceived this as threat to harm military personnel."

But according to Van Houtryve, protesters didn't have any tools to cut the fence and didn't fire any flares. Photographers did use bright flashes to take pictures, he said. Goode declined comment when asked about the conflicting report.

NATIONAL
ATLANTA — A strip club owner who prosecutors said prostituted dancers to star athletes to raise the profile of his business has agreed to a three-

year prison term under a deal that allows some of his former employees to remain free.

Gold Club owner Steve Kaplan agreed to the plea bargain Thursday after more than three months of testimony in his federal racketeering trial that provided a glimpse into the high-profile Atlanta strip club.

Kaplan, whose net worth has been estimated around \$50 million, agreed to the deal because it helped keep the others out of prison, particularly former dancer Jacklyn Bush, a single mother with three daughters, attorney Steve Sadow said.

Kaplan, 42, also agreed to pay a \$5 million fine and turn over the club to the federal government, plus pay restitution to some customers.

The Gold Club, one of the most profitable strip clubs in the nation, will be shuttered for good within the next week, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors painted Kaplan as a star-struck profiteer who cheated customers and funneled club profits to the Gambino crime family. He and the others were charged with obstruction, credit card fraud, loan sharking, prostitution and other crimes.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, Wyo. — Firefighters struggling to tame a 2,300-acre wildfire that closed the park's east entrance faced the prospect of even more dry weather and erratic wind.

Fire information officer Sarah Gracey said the wind could push embers up to a half-mile east of the fire,

which was being fought by more than 800 firefighters and 11 water-dropping helicopters late Thursday.

"This fire really has the potential to become quite large," she said.

Employee housing inside the park and the historic Pahaska Teepee resort just outside the gate remained threatened by the fire, she said.

"What makes this fire so difficult is the inaccessibility, the steep terrain, the winds and the wind patterns," fire information officer Bobby Kitchens said.

Wind has hindered the use of tanker planes on the blaze, Kitchens said. Two more water-dropping helicopters were expected to arrive today.

MIAMI — Twenty-two Cubans rescued after their speedboat capsized and sank on an ill-fated attempt to reach the United States were handed over today to immigration officials in Florida.

Two of them face charges of smuggling illegal immigrants, the Coast Guard said. The rest are considered

witnesses against the accused smugglers and will be allowed to remain in the United States after they testify, said an Immigration and Naturalization Service official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Coast Guard ship carrying the survivors arrived early today in Key West, said Lt. j.g. Sarah Felger. The two alleged smugglers were to be taken into custody by the U.S. Border Patrol, Petty Officer Mike Brock said.

The Coast Guard ended its search late Thursday for a woman and three children presumed dead after the sinking of the speedboat 17 miles off Key West on Wednesday. Two others also drowned.

The INS official said the accused smugglers could be charged in the deaths.

The witnesses and alleged smugglers had been held on a Coast Guard cutter. The witnesses will be taken to the Krome Detention Center near Miami, a guarded facility where illegal immigrants are held until their cases

are resolved, Brock said.

WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON — Russia might share defense plans with the United States and buy American missile technology if a new strategic framework is worked out in talks that open in Washington next week, President Bush's national security adviser says.

Even membership in NATO is not ruled out, Condoleezza Rice said in an Associated Press interview as she outlined the Bush administration's concept for converting a relationship rooted in Cold War hostility to one based on friendly cooperation.

"I am hopeful there can be a new day with Russia," Rice said. "We are talking about a bigger issue than what we do about missile defenses and strategic weapons."

In the talks next Tuesday and Wednesday and subsequent rounds in Moscow and New York, "They will see we have laid out for Russia and most of the world a path of cooperation," Rice said Thursday.

Sign up for Scouts available at fair

Cub Scout Pack 142 in Goodland will have a booth at the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair next week to provide information on the organization and sign up new scouts and leaders.

The booth will be at the pavilion at the Sherman County Fairgrounds on Monday through Saturday.

The Scouts, which are between first

and fifth grades, start as Tigers, working their way through the Wolf, Bear and Weblo levels, until they become a Boy Scout. Tigers attend Cub Scout meetings with a parent.

Activities include woodworking, making boomerangs, making Pinewood Derby cars and racing them, holding a carnival and the bicycle rodeo, camping, day camps, arts and

crafts, archery, bowling, selling popcorn and helping in the community.

The Cub Master is Chad Vinar and leaders include Wolf Den 1, Rick and Monica Stramel; Wolf Den 2, Bill Fulcher and Jim Gillespie; Bear Den, Brandon Terry; Weblo first year, Marty and Stacey Dinkle; and second year, Dennis Fyfe and Troy Smith.

Kirk bank workers held at gunpoint

By Karen Krien
The St. Francis Herald
KIRK, Colo. — Three employees and one customer of the First National Bank at Kirk, Colo., were held at gunpoint while the bank was robbed last week.

Larry McCants, president of the First National Bank in Goodland, said that two white men came into the bank last Thursday and quickly took money, though he wouldn't say how much.

Some of those present were bound, but McCants said that none of the em-

ploees nor the lone customer were hurt.

"Most important was the fact that nobody was injured," he said. "The people are just fine."

McCants said that employees are trained in what to do in the case of a robbery and they followed the procedures.


Tom Keller, a St. Francis resident and president of the Kirk bank, was to leave for his son's wedding that evening but the activities delayed his departure until the next day.

The case is under investigation and McCants law enforcement officers are working on several leads.

"I thought the Yuma County Sheriff's department and Colorado Bureau of Investigation officers did an outstanding job in responding and working the case," said McCants. "The support of the Kirk people has also been great."

The bank opened Monday morning for business as usual.

Kirk is about 60 miles west of St. Francis.



2001 Demo Derby

Sponsored by
Goodland Kiwanis

\$45⁰⁰ - Pre Entry Fee • \$50⁰⁰ - Fee at the Gate
Deadline August 8

Friday, August 10, 2001
7:30 p.m.
Sherman County Fairgrounds

Admission:
Kids up to 5 yrs. old - FREE!
6 to 11 yrs. old - \$2⁰⁰
12 & up - \$5⁰⁰

Pit Gates Open at 5:00 p.m.
Pit Passes - \$15.⁰⁰
We welcome all car entries!

“Bring the family and enjoy an evening of fun!!!”

WELCOME NEIGHBORS

To the Top 4-A High School Reunion in Kansas.
Look with pleasure on the many road improvements.
Residents have worked for years for this to take place.
Be proud of your Local, State and Federal Governments
to improve a Community with vigor.
Have the best day of your life.
John Golden