

Animal hospital being investigated for allegedly mishandling birds of prey

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ing whether the complaints are valid. He said some complaints could be the result of personality conflicts.

WildCare's permits remain active, and the organization continues to receive injured, sick or orphaned wildlife.

Carol Bonebrake, a Topeka attorney and longtime WildCare volunteer, said the organization was cooperating with authorities.

"Like all volunteer organizations, we have challenges that come with managing volunteers," she said. "Sometimes we rely on volunteers to take care of matters that don't get taken care of. Sometimes we have paid staff we rely on to take care of matters that don't get taken care of."

She said the organization's board of directors was being reconstituted.

Joe Collins, who resigned as WildCare board president earlier this year, said Schwarting had been running WildCare without an active board.

"Frankly," he said, "I just signed things when I was told to."

Jill Benson, a former WildCare volunteer from Kansas City, Kan., said many volunteers had quit WildCare

because of conflicts with Schwarting. She said a group of volunteers appealed to WildCare leaders and University of Kansas officials to improve the situation before contacting authorities.

"We feel we've given the feds enough reason to be concerned that ... birds are not getting the best of care," she said.

In 1992, state officials confirmed Schwarting illegally transported wildlife to out-of-state facilities. Volunteers at WildCare also charged Schwarting's management mistakes had contributed to the death of wildlife.

No disciplinary action was taken against the organization.

In the current case, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sent the nine confiscated birds to Operation WildLife, a rehabilitation and education center near Eudora.

Operation Wildlife founder Diane Johnson said a barred owl with a vitamin deficiency and a turkey vulture that couldn't walk correctly were euthanized. A red-shouldered hawk's wing had been permanently disabled because WildCare staff left two small pins in its injured wing longer than necessary.

Three of the owls from WildCare were rehabilitated and released by Operation WildLife staff, she said. Four animals are still in its care.

Nation on alert for terrorism

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threats about potential terrorist activities.

Since the administration created a five color coded threat system in March, the government had kept the warning at code yellow, signifying an elevated condition of alert and a significant risk of terrorist attacks.

The code orange set today is the second highest alert status, signaling a high risk for terrorist attacks.

Under the system set up by Ridge, government officials must:

- Coordinate necessary security efforts with armed forces or law enforcement agencies.
- Take additional precaution at public events.
- Prepare to work at an alternate site or with a dispersed work force.
- Restrict access to essential personnel only.

Meanwhile, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said Vice President Dick Cheney had spent Monday night at a secure, undisclosed location "based on an ongoing review of information that is received as well as out

of precaution."

Fleischer declined to say how long Cheney had been there, or how long he would stay.

At the Pentagon, security was already heightened because of the anniversary. A mobile surface-to-air missile launcher — part of an exercise announced Monday — was parked several hundred yards from the Pentagon this morning.

The Pentagon's official security condition remained at "Charlie" — the second-highest of a four-level scale. The Pentagon had been at "Force Protection Condition Delta," the highest level, for weeks after last year's attack.

The FBI told police, utilities, banks and the transportation industry to be wary. U.S. military bases and diplomatic missions worldwide also are on high security alert for the week.

And U.S. Navy officials in Bahrain issued a warning to shippers today following unconfirmed reports that al-Qaida may be planning attacks on oil tankers.

"While the U.S. Navy has no specific details on the timing or means of the planned attacks, and there are no

indications than an attack is imminent, the threat should be regarded seriously," said an advisory from the Navy's Maritime Liaison Office in Bahrain.

It said shipmasters should exercise extreme caution when traveling through strategic choke points such as the Strait of Hormuz or Bab-el-Mandeb, or sailing in traditional high-threat areas such as along the Horn of Africa and other confined waters.

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said the threat of new attacks has U.S. officials on a "higher sense of guard."

"As the anniversary approaches, our concerns increase and that's based on information that we've obtained. That's also based on historical facts about what anniversaries mean. ... Anniversaries can be occasions — not always are but can be occasions — for terrorists to attack again. We're cognizant of that, we're vigilant about that," Fleischer said.

The State Department issued a worldwide caution Monday night urging Americans to remain especially vigilant this week.

Arafat's movement puts out leaflet denouncing civilian attacks

By The Associated Press INTERNATIONAL

JERUSALEM — Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement announced today that it opposes attacks on civilians in Israel, and will try to prevent such violence.

However, in a three-page leaflet, Fatah left open the possibility of continued attacks on Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, a militia linked to Fatah, has carried out scores of shooting attacks on Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza in the past two years of fighting.

The militia is also responsible for several shooting and bombing attacks in Israel, often as revenge for targeted killings of senior members of the militia by Israel.

In today's leaflet, the Islamic movement said "we reject and will prevent all attacks on Israeli civilians to preserve the higher national interest of the Palestinian people and in accordance with our moral values and tolerant re-

around the world

ligion."

However, Fatah said it would continue resisting Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The leaflet did not specifically say that attacks in these areas would continue, but the word resistance is usually taken to mean that.

BERLIN — German investigators searched the offices of an import-export firm today on suspicions that the German-Syrian owner and his family had contacts with the Hamburg cell that participated in the Sept. 11 terror attacks and provided logistical support for Islamic terrorists, federal prosecutors said.

Prosecutors said the manager, his wife and their two sons were suspected of having contacts with people under investigation in the Sept. 11 terror attacks, but they did not give further de-

tails.

All four were being questioned on suspicion of founding a criminal organization that helped smuggle Islamic extremists into Germany, prosecutors said.

Neither the firm, with property in Hamburg and neighboring Schleswig-Holstein state, nor the suspects were named, and prosecutors did not say when the alleged activities took place.

NATIONAL

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The Providence Roman Catholic diocese will pay \$13.5 million to close dozens of sex-abuse claims against clergy — and victims welcomed an apology issued with the settlement.

On Monday, the Most Rev. Robert E. Mulvey, the bishop of Providence, stood with lawyers for 36 male and female sex-abuse victims, and announced the diocese was settling the

decade-old cases.

Victims were gratified.

"Your heartfelt condolences and reaching out to my clients means more to them than anything I could bring," said victims' attorney Timothy J. Conlon. "It's more than you had to do and it's the right thing. ... I applaud your courage."

The settlement covers all but two of the men and women who sued the diocese in the early 1990s, accusing 11 priests and a nun of abusing them when they were children. Negotiations continue in the final two cases.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California is changing the way it handles its dirty laundry.

A law signed by Gov. Gray Davis on Sunday requires all residential clothes washers to be at least as water efficient as commercial washers starting in January 2007.

The bill makes California the first state to mandate water efficiency stan-

dards, a step that could become a model for other states.

Washington and Texas have already begun to tighten their washing machine standards.

The California law is expected to translate into higher costs for the more environmentally friendly washing machine models but lower operating costs in the long run, water officials said.

It will also lead to some changes in how Californians wash their clothes, as most water-efficient washing machines load from the front, not the top as most washers do now.

The law comes at a time when California is receiving as little as half its normal rainfall and is suffering through a second year of drought-like conditions.

WASHINGTON — Election pressures are driving Republican senators to support nearly \$6 billion in aid for farmers and ranchers staggered by the drought, even though President Bush

says the proposal costs too much.

The Democratic-controlled Senate was expected to approve the proposal today. The vote comes less than two months from elections that will decide control of the House and Senate, and amid a drought that has ravaged crops and forced ranchers to reduce the size of their herds.

Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana, top Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee and an opponent of the proposal, was among many saying he expected enough Republicans to vote for it to pass.

He said these senators were reasoning, "After all, there are things of greater consequence, like control of the Senate."

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