

Tardy bus, missing students, upset parents

By JULIE DRAKE
Valley Press Staff Writer

PALMDALE — The first day of school was nerve-racking for at least two Barrel Springs Elementary School families when their sons walked home rather than wait any longer for a tardy bus to arrive.

Some Palmdale School District school buses, operating under a new system, were running late on Monday, the first day of school, district officials said.

At Barrel Springs, the boys' bus ran about 30 minutes late.

"My son asked to use the telephone to call me, and he was declined to use the phone," parent Theresa Hurst said.

By this time, it was about 3 p.m., 30

minutes after school let out for the day, Hurst said, adding that by that time people are scarce at the elementary school.

Hurst's son, a 9-year-old fifth-grader, panicked and took off with a 7-year-old boy, she said.

Hurst called the school four times after she waited for her son to be dropped off in the front of their apartment complex. She was told the students hadn't boarded the bus yet. Instead of waiting any longer, Hurst drove to the school to pick up her son. When he wasn't there, Hurst asked the school employees to call the Palmdale Sheriff's Station.

The boys walked from 37th Street East and Pearblossom Highway to 25th Street

East, in the desert, eventually ending up near Desert Willow Intermediate School.

The boys arrived home between 4:15 and 4:30 p.m. Hurst met with Palmdale School District Superintendent Raul Maldonado on Tuesday.

"They were just apologetic about the situation, and I said this situation could have come out tragic, and your apology would have meant nothing," Hurst said.

Hurst said her son also rode the bus last year and is familiar with it, but she was upset at how the situation was handled Monday when he wasn't able to call home. She said he was concerned about getting home before it got dark.

"I think that the school, especially with

elementary, they need to be a little more focused on the security issue," Hurst said, adding that she was able to take a neighbor's child home Monday.

Maldonado said the first day of school, "is always going to be a little bit hectic."

"Our No. 1 concern, all the time, is school safety, student safety," Maldonado said.

Maldonado added they resolved the issue at the school.

"The students know that schools are safe zones," he said, adding that students are instructed to return to the school if they are unsure about anything.

Maldonado acknowledged there will be confusion on the first day of school with new bus routes in place. A new policy in

place at Barrel Springs requires any children who ride a bus to be held inside the school and walked out to the bus.

"I was there to witness it, and it went very smooth," the superintendent said.

The district implemented a new software program to manage bus routes that assigns students to bus routes and drop-off areas based on their home addresses. The idea is to streamline routes and drop-off zones for students who live near each other because buses cannot stop at every house.

Bus drivers and the schools then receive a printout with students' names and the drop-off points.

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Medical center offering preventative screenings

Valley Press

PALMDALE — Palmdale Regional Medical Center and Life Line Screening, the nation's largest provider of preventative screenings, are teaming to help local residents identify their risk of stroke, vascular disease and osteoporosis before the catastrophic effects of these conditions can occur.

The hospital will provide a Life Line Screening event from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday in the Yucca/Sagebrush Conference Rooms, just off of the main lobby inside the north facing entrance. Call (888) 653-6450 or schedule online at www.life-linescreening.com. Appointments are mandatory.

The offering of these preventive services can help save lives and are painless and affordable. Symptoms rarely are present, and if they are, they are generally subtle, almost unnoticeable. In fact, half of all stroke victims are asymptomatic prior to their attacks. A simple screening may prevent death or disability.

Screenings provided will include:

- Carotid artery screening — painless, non-invasive Doppler ultrasound is used to visualize the carotid arteries, the arteries that bring blood to the brain. The majority of strokes are caused by plaque buildup in these arteries.
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening — Ultrasound is used to

visualize the abdominal aorta, the largest artery in the body, to measure its diameter.

This measurement can indicate if there is a weakening in the aortic wall which can cause a ballooning effect known as an aneurysm. Aneurysms can burst, which generally is fatal.

- Peripheral arterial disease screening — PAD is also known as "hardening of the arteries." Sufferers have a four- to sixfold increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Risk is evaluated through a measurement called the "Ankle-Brachial Index," which is obtained by reading the systolic pressure in the ankle and arm.

- Osteoporosis screening — Ultrasound is used to estimate the bone density of the heel. This can indicate if there is a reduction in bone density, which may indicate the presence of osteoporosis.

The heel is used because it is similar in composition to the hip, where disabling fractures often occur.

- Atrial fibrillation is an abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia) that affects the atria — the upper chambers of the heart — and is the most common form of sustained arrhythmia.

Approximately 2.5 million Americans have been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, and for those over age 40, there is a 1-in-4 chance of developing the condition.

Lights and sirens



RUBY ALVARADO/Valley Press

CRASH SCENE — Palmdale Sheriff's Station deputies investigate an accident Tuesday afternoon which resulted in a fatality on 10th Street West near Columbia Way (Avenue M).

Officials identify driver who had heart attack, crashed

PALMDALE — A senior citizen who died after he suffered a heart attack while driving and crashed into a brick wall has been identified.

Los Angeles County Coroner's officials said the victim was Palmdale resident Richard John Porn, 74.

Porn, who was driving a white two-door Toyota Solara on Tuesday afternoon south on 10th Street East just south of Columbia Way (Avenue M), veered off the roadway, then crashed into a brick wall and a wooden utility pole.

Porn and his wife, who was the front-seat passenger in the vehicle, were extracted from the car by L.A. County Fire officials and were transported to a hospital. Porn was pronounced dead a short time later, Palmdale sheriff's officials said.

Although coroner's officials said Porn had not yet been medically evaluated, sheriff's officials said Wednesday night he had suffered a heart attack. However, officials said it was not clear if Porn died as a result of the heart attack or as a result of the crash.

The condition of Porn's wife was not immediately available.

— CLAUDIA LOPEZ

Vehicle catches fire on AV freeway; no injuries reported

ACTON — No injuries were reported Wednesday afternoon after a car caught fire on the Antelope Valley Freeway.

California Highway Patrol officials responded at 4:47 p.m. to a call about a car fire on the southbound freeway at Crown Valley Road.

Los Angeles County firefighters were also called to assist the vehicle, which was on the right side of the road, CHP officials said.

No further information was immediately available at press time.

— CLAUDIA LOPEZ

One assaulted, one cited for battery at rapist protest

LAKE LOS ANGELES — One man was cited for battery and another person was assaulted during a protest in front of a serial rapist's home Tuesday evening. Lancaster Sheriff's deputies responded to a call at 7:42 p.m. at the 20300 block of East Avenue R, in front of serial rapist Christopher Hubbard's home, where protesters had set up.

What exactly happened as of Wednesday evening wasn't clear, but sheriff's officials had been at the location for approximately two hours where a man had allegedly been punched.

— Valley Press

'Zilch' gets Scrabble champ \$10,000



By CAROLYN THOMPSON
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Conrad Bassett-Bouchard started his championship Scrabble game Wednesday with the word "zilch" and finished with the opposite — the \$10,000 prize and the title of national Scrabble champion.

The 24-year-old player from Portland, Oregon beat 29-year-old Jason Li of Montreal in the final round of the five-day 25th National Scrabble Championships played at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center.

Bassett-Bouchard, the tournament's second seed, said he knew luck was with him when he drew a wild-card blank tile and an "s" on his first seven-tile rack. He led for most of the match, winning by a score of 477-350.

Li, the 18th seed, said, "I was playing catch-up right to the end."

Li had the letters to play an obscure but potentially high-scoring word but didn't see it, creating a buzz among experienced onlookers.

"He's going to be kicking himself for missing 'gramarye,'" tournament director John Chew said after the play.

Chew, co-president of the North American Scrabble Players Association, the event's sponsor, called Li's presence in the final round the biggest surprise in the tournament, which saw an emerging group of younger players edge out the old guard.

Six of the top 10 finishers are in their 20s, and one, Mack Meller, from Bedford, is 14.

Tournament favorite and five-



Associated Press

WORDY WONDER — Conrad Bassett-Bouchard reacts after winning the title Wednesday at the National Scrabble Championships in Buffalo, N.Y. The tournament's second seed, Bassett-Bouchard said he knew luck was with him when he drew a wildcard blank tile and an "s" on his first seven-tile rack. He led for most of the match, winning by a score of 477-350.

time champion Nigel Richards, 47, described by one competitor as the Michael Jordan of the game, finished a surprising 16th.

"All these younger players are avid online players," said Will Anderson, 29, trying to explain the success of the tournament's 20-somethings at an old-fashioned board game.

"These guys have all played thousands of games on the Inter-

net to hone their skills and meet each other before they've ever met in person," said Anderson of Croton-on-Hudson, who finished fifth in Buffalo after placing third last year.

The final game saw Bassett-Bouchard and Li at a white-linen-draped table while a tournament representative live-tweeted their every move. Although it was just one of dozens of games taking place

inside the cavernous meeting room, the muffled clattering of tiles as players shook and drew from cloth drawstring bags was virtually the only sound. The winning board contained the words florigen, trooz, venerate, contuse and barf.

Bassett-Bouchard said his win seemed imminent when Li played "jug," giving him room on the board to spell "docents" and pull further ahead.

Have you seen news happening?

If you have seen or heard something newsworthy, call the Antelope Valley Press newsroom at (661) 273-2700 between 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. After office hours, call (661) 267-4163 between 5:30 and 11 p.m. and ask for the editor on duty.



The Antelope Valley Press values your opinion. We want to know how you feel about the following:

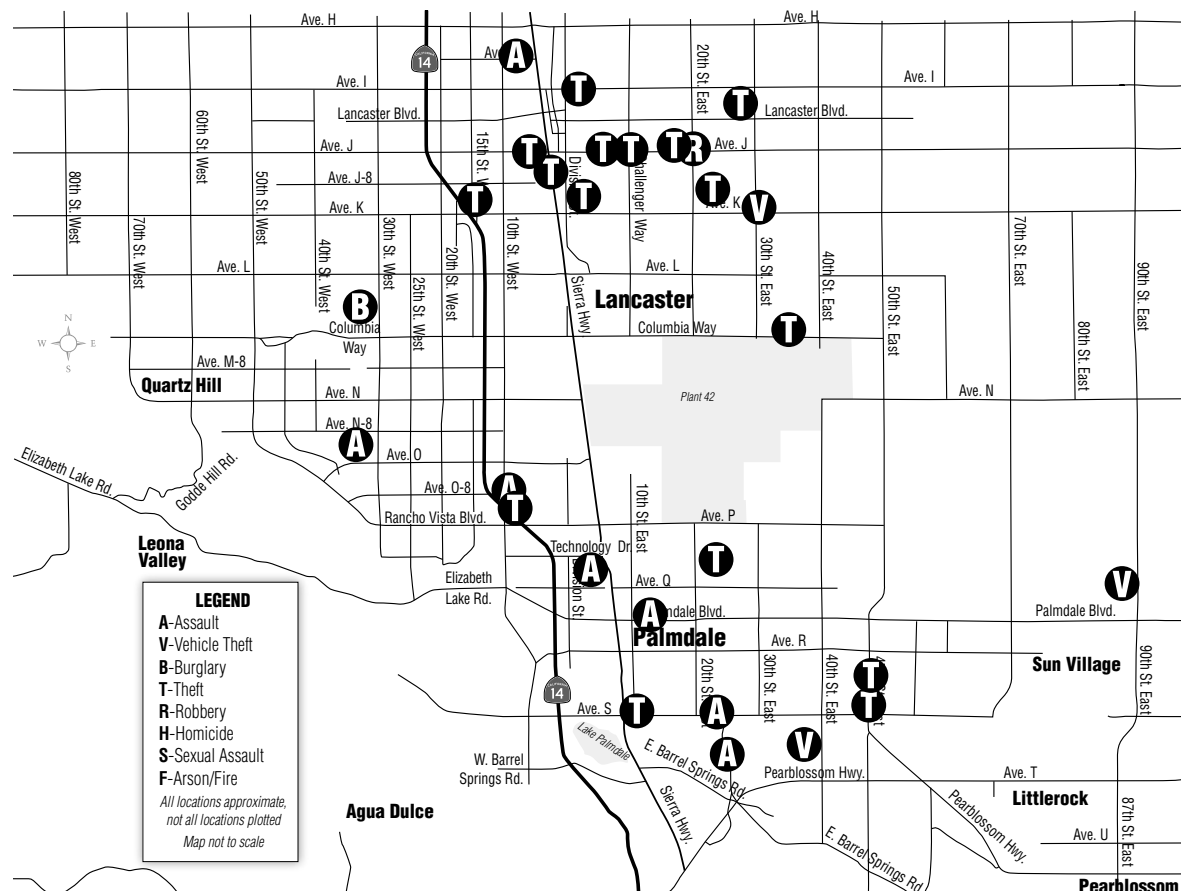
With the Antelope Valley Fair and Alfalfa Festival opening Friday, we want to hear about your favorite experiences and cherished memories.

Tell us about visiting a fair when you were young, old or anywhere in between. What was your favorite ride? Food? Event or performance?

The Valley Press poll runs through 3 p.m. Friday, Aug. 15. Results will be printed Sunday, Aug. 17.

To participate, go online to www.avpress.com and click on "Have Your Say." You also may call the Valley Press survey hot line at (661) 267-4133. Please include your full name and city of residence.

Antelope Valley crime blotter



Crimes reported for July 28, 2014

Source: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

LANCASTER

- THEFT:** 300 block East Avenue I
- THEFT:** 44900 block 27th Street East
- ROBBERY:** 20th Street East and Avenue J
- THEFT:** 300 block East Avenue J-8
- ASSAULT:** Fern Avenue and Avenue H-8
- THEFT:** 44300 block Sierra Highway
- THEFT:** 2300 block Morningside Avenue
- THEFT:** 500 block West Avenue J
- THEFT:** 1700 block East Avenue J
- VEHICLE THEFT:** 3000 block West Avenue K
- THEFT:** 44400 block Challenger Way
- THEFT:** 800 block East Avenue J
- THEFT:** 1300 block Meadow View Lane
- BURGLARY:** 3300 block West Avenue L-8

LITTLEROCK

- VEHICLE THEFT:** 87th Street East and Palmdale Boulevard
- ### PALMDALE
- ASSAULT:** 3900 block Tournament Drive
 - ASSAULT:** 12th Street East and Palmdale Boulevard
 - VEHICLE THEFT:** 36800 block 37th Street East
 - ASSAULT:** 10th Street West and Avenue O-8
 - ASSAULT:** 2300 block East Avenue S
 - THEFT:** 39800 block 10th Street West
 - THEFT:** 39200 block 23rd Street East
 - THEFT:** 38000 block 47th Street East
 - THEFT:** 37200 block 47th Street East
 - ASSAULT:** 38800 block Fourth Street East
 - THEFT:** 1000 block East Avenue S
 - THEFT:** 3500 block East Avenue M
 - ASSAULT:** 36800 block Desert Willow Drive