

Man sets fire to own house trying tackle mosquitoes

A Brazilian man accidentally set his own house on fire while trying to get rid of a swarm of mosquitoes.

Rogério Assis Cavalcante, from Dourados, told Terra Notícias Populares that he thought lighting a small fire would make the mosquitoes leave.

He lit a sheet of paper to scare off the insects, but the flames quickly spread and worried neighbours called the fire brigade. A fire brigade spokesman said: "The fire he made took over the room he was in and then the whole house.

"When we took him out he was still angry about the mosquitoes and kept asking if they were gone.

"A lot of damage was done, and it all started with a small fire on a piece of paper.

"People should not carry out brilliant ideas like that."



Ancient medicine bottles found in trash

By Susan Stern
The Tribune

BERKELEY — Is it toxicity or history?

That was the question city environmental health chief Glenn Lynch asked himself yesterday as he examined some 80 antique medicine bottles, some as much as 133 years old, mysteriously ditched in a downtown dumpster.

Incredibly, the bottles still contain ground herbs and flowers and strange concoctions using everything from dangerous zincum picric (a facial astringent which doubles as an explosive) to allium sepa, a solution of garlic and alcohol.

"I'm either going to dump these things as hazardous waste or give them to the Smithsonian Museum," said Lynch.

He said an employee of Grand Auto discovered the brown glass medicine bottles with Latin labels Tuesday evening in a dumpster at Martin Luther King Jr. Way and University Avenue.

He said librarians at the University of California at San

Francisco School of Pharmacy dug into their history books yesterday to help him identify the bottles' contents.

The university, he said, may be given the bottles for its history collections. In the meantime, he is storing them at the University of California at Berkeley's "Acid House" where contemporary hazardous waste is kept.

Some of the bottles contain toxic chemicals such as arsenic, cyanide and strychnine, Lynch said. But others contain interesting examples of patent medicines from what he called the "Doc Holliday" days.

There is pyrarara, a brew to cure loss of appetite and depression, and thuya, a herbal remedy for warts and fungus.

Lynch said one bottle was dated 1854, and he suspects they all once stocked the shelves of an apothecary.

But he said he still has no suspects in the strange case of the antique toxins.

"I don't know," he said. "I just want to get rid of them."

BAY AREA REPO

■ EAST BAY

Funny Old Drugs in Berkeley

Berkeley authorities were perplexed yesterday by an odd case of illegal hazardous waste dumping — a batch of old drugs found in a dumpster.

About 80 amber-colored medicine jars, many labeled in Latin, were discovered Tuesday in a garbage container outside a row of businesses at University Avenue and Martin Luther King Way.

The bottles, some believed to contain arsenic, strychnine and cyanide, were guarded overnight and were carted off yesterday to a special "acid house" at the University of California. Experts there had trouble discovering just what the the bottles contained.

"The pharmacologists really were at a loss to give us any explanation as to what these things are. They're just that old," said Vince Spencer of the Berkeley Environmental Health Department.

He said their labels indicated that the drugs were produced by a long-defunct San Francisco pharmaceutical house, but experts were having trouble tracking down a reference book to decipher the meaning of the Latin names.

Chronicle 4/23/82

Family loses home to fire



KINGS MOUNTAIN — A family of six is homeless after a woman attempted to kill spiders by hitting them with a barely lit piece of paper.

“It was an accident,” said Patricia Martin, who started the fire Tuesday afternoon.

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Cleveland County Deputy Fire Marshal Perry Davis concurred that the fire, which destroyed the family’s home at 122 Timms St., was accidental. No one was injured.

Mrs. Martin said she was trying to “smoke ’em out,” when she lit a piece of paper, put the fire out and tried to hit the family of spiders with it.

“I guess it wasn’t all out,” said her sister-in-law, Debbie McGinnis.

When firefighters arrived, most of the flames were located in the living room and kitchen area, said Kings Mountain Fire Inspector Jamie Black.

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“It was more or less fully engulfed,” he said. The fire took 15 minutes to contain.

Davis said there are several safe methods of getting rid of pests.

“Fire is not one of them,” he said.



By Michael Maloney

Hayward firefighters wore oxygen tanks as they hosed down a trash compactor that exploded, emitting a cloud of toxic smoke at a Safeway Distribution Center

Hayward Chemical Blast Injures 5

By Clarence Johnson

A chemical explosion and fire injured five people and forced 200 others to flee from a Hayward industrial park yesterday.

The jarring blast rocked a Safeway Stores Inc. warehouse at 2500 Clawiter Road, where workers were loading a trash compactor with unstable household products, including ammonia, bleach and insecticides. Some of the products were in aerosol containers.

"I thought it was an earthquake or maybe that a truck had run into the building," said Safeway security chief Kathleen Smith. "It was a large explosion followed by several smaller ones."

Safeway officials said workers had been using the compactor to dispose of damaged products for 2½ years without incident.



Those who were injured are Julio Gonzales, 48, of Oakland; Michael Garcia, 21, of San Bruno; Tony Tate, 22, of Newark and Alec Wong, 23, of San Leandro. All were in stable condition at St. Rose Hospital in Hayward, suffering from second-degree

burns on their faces and hands.

Dairran Nelson, 34, of Union City was treated for breathing problems at Kaiser Hospital in Hayward.

"One guy was on fire, and he had to roll on the ground to get it out," said Frank Lago, who works at a nutritional products company next door to the warehouse.

Lago said he and several of his fellow employees were on a coffee break when they saw smoke, heard screams and ran outside.

One victim "was really burned bad," Lago said. "He was on top of the dumpster when it happened. His whole face was just burned away except for his eyes. I tried to comfort them, but there wasn't anything I could do."

Hayward Assistant Fire Marshal John Boykin said the chemicals involved, combined with the heat

from the truck-size compactor, probably caused the violent reaction that made clouds of smoke visible in surrounding areas.

"There was a lot of smoke, so we evacuated 10 buildings downwind from the accident," Boykin said. "I don't know why it decided to blow. Sometimes you can mix chemicals forever and nothing happens. Then one time you get just the right combination and you get an explosion."

Boykin said firefighters suspect that hazardous materials were involved because the blaze was extremely hot, toxic and difficult to put out.

Hayward officials said they will investigate the accident and possibly write new rules to minimize danger and control the use of large industrial compactors.

Man killed in pipe bomb stunt

A Northamptonshire man who was fascinated with explosives blew himself up after putting a home-made pipe bomb in his mouth and lighting the fuse, an inquest has heard.

Kevin Barnes, 20, of Joseph Priestly Court in Daventry, took the device into his mouth and flicked a lighter as his petrified flatmates and girlfriend looked on.

The bomb, which might have been created using instructions from a book on explosives, then blew up, causing him serious head injuries, and he died on the same day - 13 July, 2002. Recording a verdict of accidental death, Northamptonshire Coroner Anne Pember said she was satisfied he had not intended to take his own life.

She said complications from a risky medical procedure meant to save him contributed to his death.

Mr Barnes was described as a risk-taker with a history of harming himself and the inquest heard he had a short temper.

His girlfriend, Elizabeth Elliot, said: "My opinion was that Kevin was mucking about but didn't actually mean for the pipe bomb to go off.

"People threatened to go to the police about it but Kevin was Kevin; nobody had the guts to."
Story from BBC NEWS:

Child Pricks Self with Heroin-Laced Syringe Found in Front Yard

- **GEOFF GRAMMER**

The Santa Fe New Mexican- April 20, 2002
(Copyright 2002 Santa Fe New Mexican)

Emilio Ray Acuna will have to be tested for AIDS until age 10 Tammy Urban was visibly distraught as she leaned on a chain-link fence in the dirt yard in front of her home in the 1700 block of Hopewell Street on Friday.

Fighting back tears, she explained how she will have to take her 4-year-old son, Emilio Ray Acuna, to the doctor every six months until he is 10 to get him tested for AIDS.

Tuesday, Emilio Ray was playing in the yard with his 5-year-old sister when he pricked his thumb with a syringe that later tested positive for heroin.

"My daughter brought it in the house and Emilio Ray walked in behind her holding his thumb," Urban said. "I rushed him to the hospital right away."

Doctors at St. Vincent Hospital drew a sample of blood from Emilio Ray and will test it for hepatitis B and AIDS. Results on the blood sample will not be available until Tuesday at the earliest, Urban said.

"Waiting is so hard," Urban said. "I just worry so much about what they (the doctors) might say. The wait now is the hardest thing."

If Emilio Ray shared his mother's concern, he was not showing it Friday as he zipped in and out of his yard on a scooter, grinning from ear to ear.

"He doesn't understand what is going on," Urban said. "He knew something was wrong when I took him to the emergency room, but I just explained to him some bad people put the needle in the yard, and I wanted to make sure he wasn't sick."

Urban said she has little doubt who put the syringe her yard. Urban said she has complained numerous times to the city Housing Authority, which operates the public housing unit where Urban lives, about people in her neighborhood shooting up heroin in plain view of her four children.

Police would not comment on any specific cases of heroin use in the neighborhood.

Deputy Police Chief Beverly Lennen said police are unable to pinpoint who used the hypodermic needle Emilio Ray found. "In this particular case, we were unable to tie it to anyone," Lennen said.

Police were asked to test the needle for narcotics, but criminal charges have not been filed.

Urban, who has lived at 1760 Hopewell St. for eight months, said she can't continue to put her children in danger.

"This is the only time something like this has happened in my yard," Urban said. "That doesn't mean it can't happen again if they don't start doing something about it."

Charged Batteries

- FYI.

The San Mateo County Elections Facility was utilizing some down time to change out the batteries in their election machines. The only problem was that all the batteries were lithium ion and still held a charge.

Apparently what happened was the election staff put some 1,000 + of the button batteries, the size of a quarter, into a small cardboard box. One of the workers noted that the box was getting hot, so he put it in the middle of the room and walked away. A few minutes later, Kaboom!

The good thing was that no one was hurt. This would have done some serious damage if some one was in the room.

The blackened area around where the box was, is approximately 15 feet wide. Most batteries were sprayed in a 25 foot radius with the farthest one ending up some 75 feet away.

Don't try this at home or at work.

- DERMOT

- dermotcasey@yahoo.com



Oxnard, CA
(Ventura Co.)
Press Courier
(Cir. D. 19,715)
(Cir. S. 20,476)

APR 12 1989

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

Chlorine Fumes Fell Bailard Landfill Worker

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An employee at the landfill in Oxnard was injured slightly early today when he was overcome by chlorine fumes after a leak developed in a cylinder on a cascade system, a county fire official said.

The worker, whose name was not available, was taken to St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard and admitted in stable condition, fire Battalion Chief Robert Stone said.

He said the 150-pound tank, about 5 feet long and 10 inches in diameter, began leaking about 3:40 a.m. at the Bailard Landfill, 4105 W. Gonzales Road.

County firefighters from four

engine companies and members of the county and city of Ventura fire departments hazardous material teams went to the landfill and found chlorine seeping from a valve.

Stone said firefighters were unable to cap the leak and were allowing the fumes to dissipate under controlled conditions.

"We are awaiting word from the manufacturer of the tank to explain how to shut off the valve," Stone said.

He said the chlorine did not create any toxic cloud over the area and rubbish trucks were being allowed in to the facility to dump their loads.

LOADED PISTOL FOUND IN TEDDY BEAR

The TSA found a loaded .22-caliber gun after the bear was opened. The boy's family told investigators that the bear was a gift from a girl at the hotel where they stayed during their Orlando vacation.

"She appeared at their hotel room door and offered them the bear," said Robert Johnson, a TSA spokesman in Washington. "The mother said it was OK and so the boy took it."

The Miami Herald reported that the gun had been concealed by cutting a half-inch hole at the bottom of the bear, and that the gun had been reported stolen in 1996 in California.

Johnson said the incident "underscores the need to screen everyone and everything no matter how innocent the people or their belongings may appear."

The boy's parents, Robert and Angela Barry of Grove City, Ohio, were questioned by FBI agents and released. The boy turned 10 on Monday.

From her home in suburban Columbus, Angela Barry said she didn't want to talk about what happened until the FBI investigation was finished.

"I want every way possible for them to find out who did this," she said.

The FBI did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.



The Concern with E-Waste



Ricin: Dangerous plant toxin

Ricin, which was found on Capitol Hill on Monday, is a powerful, poisonous chemical found in the waste "mash" of castor oil production. Ricin is poisonous to humans but difficult to deliver in fatal doses.



Source

Oil is made from the beanlike seeds of the castor plant and used in cosmetics, laxatives, machinery lubricants, paint and shampoo.

Effect on body

- Accidental exposure is unlikely. It can be breathed in as a mist or powder. Pellets or liquid form can be injected or ingested. Resulting illness is not contagious.
- Travels through bloodstream; destroys cells by attacking their protein-making sites, called ribosomes.
- Fatal organ failure can occur in 36 to 72 hours, depending on how ricin entered the body.
- If not fatal in three to five days, person usually recovers.
- No antidote; treatment consists of minimizing symptoms, removing ricin not yet in bloodstream.

Effect depends on route into body

	Lethal dose	Time of first symptoms	Possible early symptoms*	Possible lethal effect
Skin penetration	Pinhead-size amount	Variable; relatively prompt	Variable	Multi-organ failure
Swallowing	Much larger amount	Less than 6 hours	Vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration	Liver or kidney failure
Inhalation		8 hours	Difficulty breathing, tight chest, cough	Respiratory failure

*Presence of these symptoms does not necessarily mean person has been exposed to ricin



A POLICEMAN GUARDS the Dirksen Senate Office Building after it is shut down Tuesday for the investigation and cleanup of ricin found on a mail sorter. Sen. Bill Frist said the poison, which spilled out of a letter in powder form, did not spread beyond his office's mailroom. RICK MCKAY/COX NEWS SERVICE

Senate officials confirm ricin attack

Vacuum Sucks Prairie Dogs Out of Ground

Associated Press

Cortez, Colo.

The idea came to Gay Balfour in a dream: Build a vacuum system powerful enough to suck prairie dogs from their burrows and the business would come.

He did, and it has.

Balfour vacuums prairie dogs from their holes in urban areas or on farms. The animals are deposited alive "but somewhat confused" in a large tank in his truck.

"It causes them no harm," Balfour said from his southwestern Colorado home. "There's no poisons or gas used, strictly vacuum. It takes the little critter up and puts him in a tank, and there he can either be relocated or dispatched, whatever's necessary to do."

He said the animals go up a tube 4 inches in diameter and about 50 feet long and then slide along a padded deflector plate and down into the tank.

By the time workers stop the suction device to check the holding tank, the animals are already beginning to play and colonize in the dirt that gets sucked up with them.

"They are not too disturbed by it," Balfour said. "It's quite a ride."

His business began operating early last summer. His first job was to remove a colony of prairie dogs from a plot of land the Ute Mountain Indian tribe planned to use for experimental corn crops.

"It was really successful," Balfour said. "We got about 53 dogs in an hour and 23 minutes."

Since then, Dog-Gone has caught on quickly and has been used throughout the Southwest.

The vacuum system offers an alternative to the mass killings of prairie dogs that have long angered animal-rights campaigners.

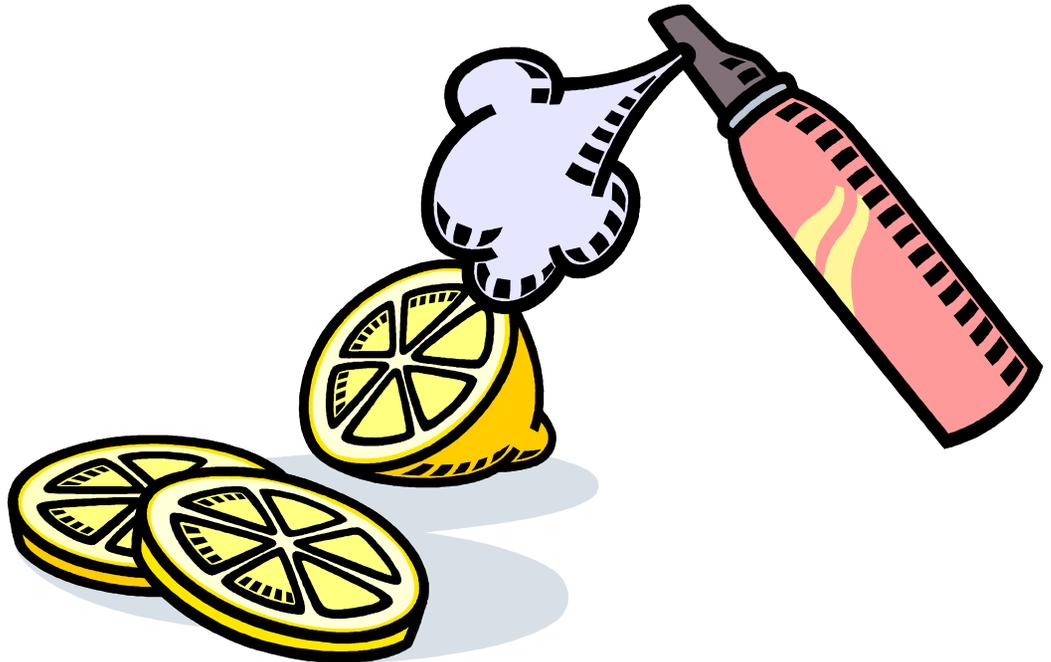
"We're all for it if it's used for altruistic purposes, such as relocation," said Robin Duxbury, national director of the Denver-based Animal Rights Mobilization. "But if it's used by exterminators, then we would not approve it."

Balfour said the prairie dogs captured by his vacuum may have to be killed if there is no place to relocate them. He said he is trying to avoid that by developing a market to send them to Japan to be used as pets.

Thought for the Day

“We are now living in a world where lemonade is made from artificial flavors and furniture polish is made from real lemons”

Alfred E. Newman



EAST BAY ROUNDUP

Danville

Teen brings bomb devices to school

The Alameda County bomb squad was called Friday to Monte Vista High School after a student brought four explosive devices to school and gave them to his friends, police said.

Danville Police Chief Chris Wenzel said the student found instructions online to create the four bomblike devices.

The bomb squad came to the school around 11 a.m. and took control of the devices, disposing of them, Wenzel said.

Three or four students, all 15 and 16 years old, were cited for possession of explosive devices, he said. Their names were not released because they are juveniles.

A14 San Francisco Chronicle

MONDAY, MAY 15, 1995

Suspicious Pipe Device Detonated at Landfill

Richmond — A piece of galvanized pipe at a Richmond landfill was detonated by a bomb squad yesterday because it looked like an explosive device, authorities said.

The suspicious device was deposited by two Richmond girls who were cleaning out trash from their late grandfather's garage. An employee at the landfill on Parr Boulevard saw the 8-by-2-inch pipe and contacted the Contra Costa County sheriff's office.

A technician from the University of California at Berkeley bomb squad was called in and he decided to blast open the pipe because it contained brass end caps and was the size of a typical pipe bomb. Inside were four blasting caps.

Explosive gets stuck in man's nose

Reuters

DENVER — Who ever thought blowing your nose could be fatal?

It could have been for Nicolas Villarruel, 29, of Denver after a machine blew up Monday at the plant where he worked and lodged a dangerous explosive charge in his nose.

The machine loads a charge equal to five big M-80 firecrackers into a small device that activates car air bags. But the device, called an initiator, became stuck in the man's nose when the machine exploded.

He was escorted to a hospital by the bomb squad and was operated on partly under water because the initiator is activated by air.

"We were all on edge," Dr. Michael Gordon said.

Gordon and a member of the bomb squad wore lead-lined gowns during the delicate operation, which was successful. The man was discharged from the hospital earlier this week.