



Baldwin and M's defense
shut down the A's 7-1

SPORTS E1

All flaky and creamy,
coconut cake's dreamy

LIFE AND ARTS D1



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2002

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

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Endangered status denied

Agency gives orcas less extensive protection

BY LISA STIFFLER AND ROBERT McCLURE
P-I reporters

The decision is "a death knell for the population," said Brent Plater, a lawyer with the non-profit Center for Biological Diversity. "We know that the threats facing the (orcas) cannot be addressed by the Marine Mammal Protection Act."

Puget Sound's orcas could be extinct within the next century but do not qualify for protection under the Endangered Species Act, officials with the National Marine Fisheries Service announced yesterday.

Instead, the agency is seeking protection for the killer whales under the less powerful Marine Mammal Protection Act. Since 1996 the population has declined almost 20 percent, from 97 to 79 orcas.

"The Marine Mammal Protection Act appears adequate for the moment," said Bob Lohn, regional administrator of the agency. He said the agency will order more research into the cause of the whales' decline and take a close look at the effect of boats, including whale watchers and shipping vessels.

But environmental groups said without the protection of the Endangered Species Act, the outlook is bleak for the orcas that

return each summer to Puget Sound and nearby waters.

While the Marine Mammal Protection Act governs the harassment, capture or killing of marine mammals, the Endangered Species Act would have provided much stronger protections. For example, it would have given strong ammunition to environmentalists challenging government-sanctioned dumping of pollutants, and required the government to set forth a detailed plan for rebuilding the orca population.

The decision announced yesterday is "a death knell for the population," said Brent Plater, a Berkeley, Calif., lawyer with the non-profit Center for Biological Diversity. "We know that the threats facing the (orcas) cannot be addressed by the Marine Mammal Protection Act."

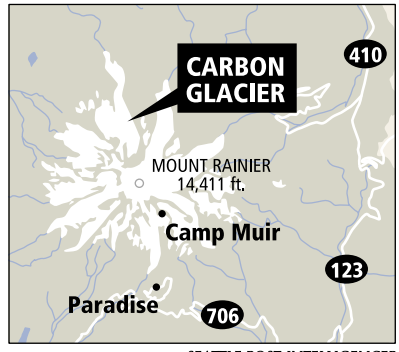
Lohn said the federal fisheries agency will consider the stronger protection mea-

SEE ORCAS, A8



An orca splashes as it comes up out of the water off San Juan Island near the lighthouse at Lime Kiln Point State Park yesterday.

RENEE C. BYER / P-I



Close call during Rainier rescue

Helicopter crashes, but crew is unhurt, continues its mission

BY SCOTT SUNDE AND CANDACE HECKMAN
P-I reporters

LONGMIRE - Another Northwest mountain helicopter crash. Another miracle.

Two rescuers and a pilot walked away yesterday after their helicopter crashed into the snowy flanks of Mount Rainier. Just a month ago, a military helicopter on a rescue mission on Oregon's Mount Hood crashed and rolled down the slope, but all six crewmen survived.

On Mount Rainier, the helicopter had been dispatched to help a 19-year-old climber knocked out by a falling rock yesterday morning. But the Bell Jet Ranger hit the mountain, spun around and landed nose first in the Carbon Glacier at the 8,800-foot level, said Maria Gillett, a spokeswoman for Mount Rainier National Park.

"I can't tell you how relieved we were they weren't hurt," Gillett said of the people on the chopper that went down. The cause of the crash wasn't immediately known.

As the last rays of the sun were fading last night about 9:15, the injured climber, his climbing partners and most of the rescuers were taken off the mountain by a Chinook helicopter and transported to Madigan

SEE RESCUE, A10

WorldCom overstates cash flow by \$3.8 billion

Survival of company in question as false bookkeeping revealed

BY SIMON ROMERO AND ALEX BERENSON
The New York Times

WorldCom, the nation's second-largest long-distance carrier, said last night that it had overstated its cash flow by more than \$3.8 billion during the last five quarters in what appears to be one of the largest cases of false corporate bookkeeping yet.

The discovery of the problem in an internal audit throws the survival of WorldCom and MCI, the long-distance company it acquired in 1999, into doubt. The company, which was already the subject of a federal investigation into its accounting practices, has been struggling to refinance \$30 billion in debt. Its credit was relegated to junk-bond status last month, and even before last night's announcement, the stock price was down more than 94 percent so far this year.

Some analysts now see a bankruptcy filing as a strong possibility, which would follow the pattern of Enron, Global Crossing and other companies laid low by accounting scandals since last fall. In an effort to avoid that fate, WorldCom said last night that it would cut 17,000 em-

SEE WORLDCOM, A11

WILDFIRE THREAT NOT EASING IN WEST



A home is threatened by a new fire that erupted less than a mile west of the 62,000-acre Missionary Ridge Fire near Durango, Colo. That fire yesterday was just 30 percent contained. As early summer wildfires erupt in the West, experts are warning that drought conditions and lightning could cause even more damage in this unprecedented fire season. SEE A2

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israeli troops control 7 West Bank cities

BY SUSAN SEVAREID
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM - Israeli troops took over the seventh of the West Bank's eight major cities yesterday, after President Bush laid out a peace plan widely interpreted here as an American nod of approval for an offensive that is confining at least 700,000 Palestinians to their homes.

Smoke billowed over Hebron when the Israeli army blew up a building within the fortresslike municipal compound. Israeli soldiers exchanged heavy gunfire with Palestinian police inside the compound throughout the day, and four Palestinian officers were reported killed. Security officials said about 200 Palestinian officers had been detained.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat seemed the lone Palestinian optimist following Bush's Monday speech, saying the American president certainly wasn't referring to him in the call for Palestinians to elect new leaders who are "not compromised by terror."

Speaking to reporters at his Ramallah headquarters,

ISRAELI ADVANCES

Israeli troops occupied seven of the eight major centers in the West Bank yesterday.



Sources: The Associated Press; ESRI AP

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Today's weather
Mostly sunny. Highs in middle 70s to middle 80s. Lows to lower 50s. E10

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Raw emotions emerge among whites as race becomes issue in latest shooting involving an officer

Black leaders, media draw critics after deputy killed

BY VANESSA HO AND MIKE BARBER
P-I reporters

'Shootings involving officers often spark raw emotions about race, but in the latest incident, in which a drug addict is accused of killing a police officer, the issue of race has emerged with a twist.

In the past, black community leaders have criticized police departments after shootings involving officers. But after Saturday's shooting, in which a black man killed a white King County Sheriff's deputy, the Seattle-area black community is feeling the heat.

"I've never been accused of being a racist, but what I see is creating a racist climate. I'm becoming someone who is divisive," said George Baena, 65, a retired military aviator from Olympia.

Baena, who is white, said he's angry at black leaders whom he says have blamed police and white people with a broad brush of accusations.

"Without a doubt, they have opened this racial box,"

SEE RACE, A9