NEWS CAPSULES

Baker plans Panama visit

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republican leader Howard H. Baker, under pressure from both sides on the Panama Canal controversy, will visit Panama at the invitation of Panamanian ruler Gen. Omar Torrijos.

Baker, who remains neutral, will visit from Jan. 3 through Jan. 7. He said he wants all the facts before taking a position.

Court won't stop crown

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court will not stop the Carter administration from returning the Crown of St. Stephen to Hungary.

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger on Wednesday turned down without comment the request of 17 members of Congress who wanted to delay the planned return next month.

Radiation in the home

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Americans are exposed to low level radiation from TV sets, X-rays, radium watches, microwave ovens, even smoke alarms, and the government is doing a poor job policing such potential hazards, a congressional report said Thursday.

No one knows the impact of long-term exposure to such radiation, and federal law does not generally require new products containing radioactive materials be proven safe before they hit the market, the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee said in a two-year, six-volume study. The report recommended legislation to put the Environmental Protection Agency in charge of all radiation safety, pulling together responsibilities currently scattered among at least 15 departments, commissions or regulatory agencies.

SEC comes down on Goodyear

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Securities and Exchange Commission says the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. falsified its books to cover up illegal corporate contributions and overseas payments. The Akron, Ohio, based company, without admitting guilt, agreed Wednesday to stop violating securities laws.

Trash bag murderer gets life

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — Patrick Wayne Kearney, sentenced to life imprisonment after pleading guilty to three "trash bag murders," said the killings helped vent his frustrations and gave him feelings of power.

Kearney was sentenced for the first-degree murders of Albert Rivera, 21, of Los Angeles; Arturo Marquez 24, of Oxnard, and John LaMay, 17, of El Segundo. Superior Court Judge John Hews imposed the life term after Kearney requested immediate sentencing. Authorities have said Kearney may be linked to as many as 28 slayings.

Scores of F-111s grounded

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cracks in the engine cases of F-111 fighter-bombers and FB-111 bombers are forcing the Air Force to ground some of the multimillion-dollar warplanes for as long as six months.

Flight training probably will be cut back while possibly hundreds of faulty engine cases are replaced.

Adoptees to arrive in time for yule

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Child adoptees from China, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Mexico and Honduras will be able to spend Christmas in the United States with their new families as a result of action by the Immigration Service.

The families-to-be in more than a half a dozen states have been waiting for private congressional legislation to assure U.S. entry of 20 foreign children. Immigration authorities will admit the children in time for Christmas in the absence of the legislation, it was announced Wednesday.

Ski-lift charges dropped

VAIL, Colo. (AP) — Felony manslaughter and third-degree assault charges against Vail Associates and three workmen in connection with a 1976 ski-lift accident have been dismissed.

A three-day hearing involving charges against the company and the indviduals, before Eagle County District Court Judge W.L. Jones, ended Wednesday afternoon after five hours of testimony.

But civil suits resulting from the March 26, 1976, gondola accident that killed four skiers and injured eight others are still to be resolved.

After hearing arguments on Vail Associates, Jones found no probable cause to continue the criminal case, and he said he found no reason to bind Vail Associates over on a lesser charge of negligent criminal homicide, which Healy had sought after dismissal of the original charges.

'Boom' rattles N.J. again

TOMS RIVER, N.J. (UPI) — A series of loud, mysterious explosions Wednesday night alarmed residents along the New Jersey shore for the third time this month.

Sonic boom has been ruled out for the blasts that have rumbled over the coastal area and that have been heard as far away as on Long Island's south shore.

The latest blast was heard at 7 p.m. Wednesday in a 15-mile area of Long Beach Island and as far as five miles inland. Hundreds of puzzled residents called their local police to report the sound, and nearly everyone was talking about the mystery.

Civil defense officials checked with government agencies and ruled out sonic booms and explosions set off by offshore oil exploration rigs.

Norman Diamond, operations officer for the county civil defense office, said the best theory seemed to be the sounds were caused by either meteor showers or thunderclaps.

"It must be something up there in the sky because we can get no answers from any agencies down here on the ground," Diamond said. "I wish we could come up with an answer for the public. We have absolutely no explanation for it."

Officials at the Coast Guard station at Barnegat Light described the sounds as an explosion, followed by a rumble, and then another explosion.

A policeman said the blast frightened his two pet cats, and they ran under the bed for cover.

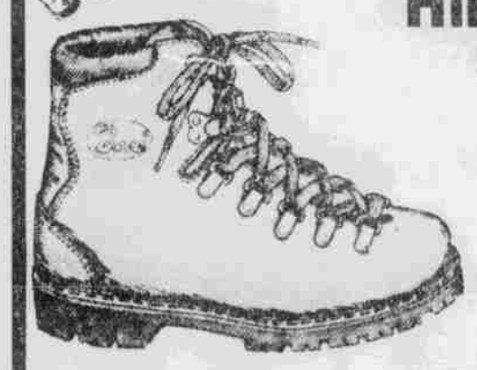
Shirley Lamson, a policeman's wife who lives in Beach Haven one block from the ocean, said she heard the sound but felt no vibration from the blast.

"It sounded like it came from the ocean," she said. "I was sitting facing the ocean in the kitchen. It went 'whoom'"

On Dec. 2, there were two similar incidents.

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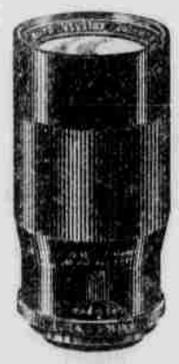
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• 55MM 2.8 Macro	$205	$144
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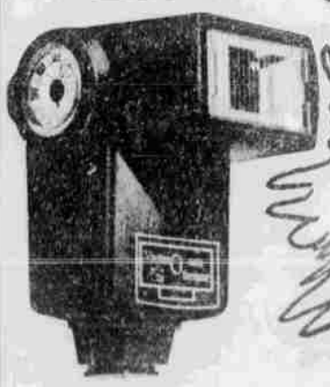
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