

The Weekend of
May 2, 1987

WEEKENDER



Join Doug Moe — and step out
on the town. See **Time Out**

Farmers' Market
opens today
ON THE SQUARE

THE CAPITAL TIMES

Local fish warnings unheeded

By DAN ALLEGRETTI
Capital Times Staff Writer

When state officials announced early this year that large walleyes from Lake Monona should not be eaten because they are contaminated with mercury, they said they were surprised to find that many anglers and both state and city of Madison officials knew at least 15 years ago that Lake Monona was seriously contaminated by mercury.

They even went so far as to track down the primary source: major local industries, the University of Wisconsin, leading landlords and decades of sewage dumping.

Despite all the warning signs, however, nothing was done to eliminate the mercury or monitor its accumulation in fish until 1986, during the course of a new Department of Natural Resources mercury testing program aimed mainly at northern Wisconsin lakes thought to have been affected by acid rain.

By then, an unknown number of Madison-area recreational anglers and their families had for many years been eating fish that health officials say may be damaging to



Frozen walleyes taken a few weeks ago from Lake Monona await preparation for mercury testing at a DNR laboratory in Madison. Several Lake Monona fish already have been found to be contaminated with mercury.

Though mercury by then had permeated the environment and many areas began mercury testing, there was little expectation of finding widespread levels in Wisconsin fish.

What the scientists found shocked them. In sections of major rivers below paper mills and chemical plants, fish were highly contaminated. In 1973 the state issued its first mercury health advisories for those waters.

Now that Rev. Jerry Falwell, who has gained most of the money he and Tammy had earned as leaders of the PTL, has taken the organization or spent it on personal wardrobe and social gatherings connected with the ministry.

He added that "I don't want to be a part of tearing down the church world anymore. I have failed. I have moved in my life. God has forgiven me of my sin."

Bakker said in the interview that

30 Pages
Vol. 100 No. 100

35c

Brewers boost record to 19-3. See Sports

AI's Place 14
Astro 39
Births 22
Books 38
Bride 35
Calendar 34-35
Cheap Eats 14
Comics 39-40
Crossword 35
Deaths 22

It's Derby Day! See Sports

Dear Abby 39
Dining Out 10
Editorial 8
Great American Treasure Hunt 14
Just Rock 38
McMedia 12
Movie Capsules 35
Movie Guide 11
TV Listings 12-13
Religion 9
Sports 15-20
Steppin' Out 35
Wheels 20

Weather

NOT THE BEST
weekend on tap.
Cloudy, cool, 50 percent chance for rain.
Details, Page 14.

Bakkers won't fight to return to PTL ministry

By LOUIS BERAGIN
The Capital Times Staff Writer

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — Contrary to reports that Jim Bakker would return to televangelism, he said Friday that he would not return to the ministry.

Bakker's statement came at a hastily called news conference held at the first gate of his \$500,000 home.

Later, in a telephone interview with the Los Angeles Times, Bakker said, "because of the complete ignorance of my name and reputation

Tale of 2 neighborhoods: Highlands and Fair Oaks

By MARC EISEN
Capital Times Staff Writer

In the 1930s, the Highlands began with a group of investors hiring a Chicago landscape architect to plan a stone wherever he felt a beautiful home should be nestled in the hilly farm fields of west Madison, says longtime resident George Jahn.

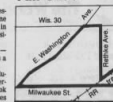
Several years later, the Highlands neighborhood — about 19 to 20 homes scattered on 100 or so acres — is a wooded suburban enclave in the suburban west side.

Dotted with low and old mansions, it is the most exclusive neighborhood in Madison. The homes carry an average assessment of \$100,000 and some owners literally look down from their porches on other prestige addresses such as Highland Crest and Parkwood Hills.

On the other side of town, tucked away between East Washington Avenue and Berlin Street (north of Milwaukee Street), lies an equally obscure neighborhood called Fair Oaks by its name.

Originally settled by workers employed in the city's factory district at the turn of the century, Fair Oaks was belittled by the wave of post-World War II home construction for returning G.I.'s, says local historian Frank Custer.

Fair Oaks



The Highlands



How does your neighborhood stack up against Fair Oaks and the Highlands? See map and chart on City Pulse page.



Spring beauties

The city is alive with color as tulips and daffodils bloom profusely in gardens and along walkways. One of the most colorful spots is in the Gateway near the rebuilt intersection of John Nolen Drive and Williamson and Blair streets. In the background are the Madison Gas and Electric smokestacks.

North got communists to sell arms to contras, report says

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Col. Oliver North helped arrange for communist contras, including China and Poland, to sell Russian-made arms to Nicaragua's contra rebels, according to a published report today quoting congressional investigators.

On another matter involving the live! White House sale, an FBI document shows he received a tip about a bogus South African desire to contribute money to the Nicaraguan contras from a man who operated as a freelance intelligence operative.

The New York Times reported that congressional committees investigating the Iran-contras scandal have found that North persuaded China to sell Soviet-made SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles to the contras but each sale were cut off in 1985.

The Times quoted an unidentified official as saying he believed the deal had been made through contacts with the Chinese military and that it was possible the Chinese political leadership was initially unaware of the sales.

The contras were also buying arms from Poland, the Times reported, adding that North

was said to have told associates he helped arrange that effort. The report said one associate revealed that North was amused because sales bearing arms destined for both the Sandinistas and the contras were docked in the same Polish port.

The FBI document, written by an agent who interviewed North at his National Security Council office on July 12, 1985, stemmed from an investigation of a case in which a Lake County, Indiana, gross, Monastros (Richard Jahn), defrauded a Philadelphia bank of \$25,000.

North, fired from his NSC job last November for his role in the Iran-contras affair, allegedly was involved in raising private money for the contras while working to overthrow the Sandinista government.

In his interview with the FBI, North said he first learned about the "prison" offer to help support the contras from Kevin Wiatka, a maintenance engineer from Freeport, N.Y., in 1984.

6 — THE CAPITAL TIMES, Madison, Wis., Weekend of May 2, 1987

Lake Monona walleyes may have caused illness

By DAN ALDERBETTI
Capital Times Staff Writer

It is possible, but not very likely, that some people may have become ill by eating Lake Monona walleyes contaminated with mercury, state health officials say.

Large walleyes in Monona have been found to be contaminated enough — up to 11 parts per million, or more than twice the health advisory level — to have caused illness in people who ate large amounts of them, according to Dr. John Clasen, the toxicologist who oversees mercury for the state Division of Health.

Whether mercury poisoning is likely to occur depends on how much tainted fish was eaten, over what period of

time, and on the individuals who ate it, Clasen said.

Children and pregnant women are most vulnerable to mercury poisoning. The effects of which can range from very subtle to violent, or even fatal.

"If you ate enough fish, (the illness) is there," said Dr. Henry Anderson, chief of environmental and chronic disease epidemiology for the Division of Health.

Clasen said there have been no verified reports of anyone in Wisconsin becoming ill from eating mercury-contaminated fish.

However, mercury poisoning at low levels is very hard to pin down," he said. With symptoms such as head-

aches, general malaise and memory difficulty, "it would be a long shot for people to even think of a correlation with mercury in their diet."

On the other hand, if a pregnant woman ate contaminated walleyes, her fetus could result, he said. Fetuses are four times as susceptible as adults to mercury. Depending on levels ingested by the mother, defects could range from mild learning problems and reduced reactions, to stillbirths, or, in extreme cases, vital brain damage.

All symptoms of mercury poisoning seem to be reversible and disappear when a victim stops eating the contaminated food, Clasen said. Brain damage, however, is not reversible.

Mercury accumulates in the body when ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin, and everyone has some level of mercury in their body, he said. It occurs naturally and is found in low levels in many of the foods we eat besides fish.

But it also has a "half-life" in the body of 70 days, meaning half of it will be eliminated within 70 days of exposure, Clasen said.

"The lowest level of mercury body burden is about 10 micrograms, and that is about 10 millionths of a gram," he said. "Eating a half pound of fish containing 1 part per million of mercury would add about 8.5 micrograms to your body burden, so you'd have to eat 8.5 such meals in

a short time to reach 10 micrograms. People who eat fish and eat it often are eating shellfish containing 4 to 7 parts per million of mercury, Anderson said. "What we don't know is at what level you might get neurological or reproductive damage."

"We don't know how many big walleyes people eat. If they ate it a week every year, they would eat about a pound a week," he said.

Madison, he said, people who have eaten large amounts of Lake Monona walleyes should consider seeing their doctor for tests.

Mercury can be detected in both blood and hair samples, Anderson said. The state caused by the tests by request.

Mercury

From Page 1

high mercury levels were detected in fish in 1971, as high as 20 parts per million in Lake Monona fish, 10 in the Yahara River above Lake Monona, 10 in Starbuck Creek, 10 in Lake Waubesa, and 10 in Lake Kegonsa.

All these levels were above the health standard, but still not as high as in several river hot spots that they were virtually ignored, it went by the state.

The DNR first learned of the problem of the Madison lakes up to the city of Madison, which aimed trying to find out where the mercury was coming from.

By 1973, the city had done enough testing of water and sediments in area lakes and their tributaries to pinpoint a number of mercury discharge sources: dozens of cooling towers, especially on the UW campus, that were washed with a mercury solution; the Power Motor Co. Madison Gas and Electric Co.; and especially the Broyhill Co. Together, they comprised a lot of the city's major industries and employers.

In addition, mercury was found to be leaching into groundwater, and apparently into the lakes from several abandoned landfills. It also was known that raw sewage, high in mercury, had been dumped for decades into the area lakes, and that mercury from coal burning was entering the lakes by atmospheric deposition.

"We found mercury everywhere we looked," says Donald Laidy, a health department environmental toxicologist who supervised the mercury testing program in 1972.

The DNR also was concerned about the possibility that mercury would be discharged into streams and lakes.

But that was as far as it went until 1974, when the DNR tested Lake Monona walleyes and found them to have contained roughly 1 part per million of mercury. Even then, however, the lake did not get on the DNR's health advisory list, because it was thought the "raw" fish might be an exception.

That's what last year, the DNR tested three more Lake Monona walleyes and found high mercury levels in two of them. Scores of other Wisconsin lakes at the same time were determined to be highly contaminated by mercury.

The levels in Lake Monona walleyes were much higher than those found back in 1971 — as high as 11 parts per million. The lake went into the DNR's highest health warning category. No one, the agency said, should eat Lake Monona walleyes more than 2 inches long.

A new generation of DNR scientists, unaware of the findings from the early 1970s, said they would not figure out how Lake Monona had become so contaminated. It did not fit the "profile" of lakes where they expected to find mercury problems.

Most of the contaminated lakes were in the north. They had not suffered through winter storms, but settled in lakes from the atmosphere could be flushed. And they were relatively quiet lakes, consistent with current fish to move readily about mercury through the year.

The Madison lakes, though, are not quiet and mercury that settled in them from the air would be expected to flow out through the Yahara River. The fish should not be contaminated unless there were other major sources of mercury, said the DNR lake of note.

Industry was not surprised, however. He knew from the early tests that even if area industries were no longer discharging mercury, sedi-



Fish fillets, top left, are ground up, placed in jars and sealed before being sent to the state Laboratory of Hygiene in Madison. Below, the DNR has had walleyes from Wisconsin lakes. An assembly line is set up at DNR's fish laboratory in Madison, above, to prepare fish samples to be analyzed for mercury. More than 1,000 such samples already have been completed. DNR is doing them at the rate of about 700 a year.



ments in lake bottoms and feeder streams were in line with what the problem was not likely to have caused.

Each lake and the DNR are now trying to determine the extent of mercury contamination in the area lakes, and to pinpoint the "hot" areas.

But the question remains: Why, with all the warnings, were these efforts not undertaken earlier? And why have mercury levels greatly increased in Lake Monona fish? Is mercury still being dumped into the lake?

The answer to the first question seems to be, probably, that the DNR thought the city was handling the Madison lake problem, and so turned its attention to other areas. The city, meanwhile, was being assured by the DNR that the problem was not serious.

The DNR also was preoccupied throughout the 1970s with testing for PCBs, another toxic contaminant. It apparently thought the mercury problem here was a short-term one that would go away by itself.

Thomas Sherry, one of the DNR's top water-quality and land-use specialists, confirmed the extent of the widespread distribution of the problem in 1971 air assessments of contaminated air. The environment was what it is now. When we mentioned, it was far, far, years below "danger" sources.

Fish testing now, Sherry says, "is always on their's side" a widespread problem not there. The more you look, the more we find contaminated fish."

In 1982, the Wisconsin lake went under a mercury health advisory by July. Only the number had increased to 48. It now stands at 10 and is expected to rise as more lakes are tested.

"The consensus is it's a serious economic, public health and resource management problem," Sherry says. "It involves not only the health of people but all kinds of wildlife, too, especially birds and other fish-eating animals."

Sherry admits the city also was too preoccupied. Despite all its concerns about mercury, it never followed through with the program it had planned early on to deal with the problem.

In early 1982, the city bought a \$150,000 airborne absorption spectrophotometer with which to test for mercury in fish, water and sediments. It turned out the state required a special ventilating system in the city laboratory to protect workers from mercury fumes, and the city did not



want to spend the additional funds. Experts still are puzzled over why mercury levels in Lake Monona fish are so much higher now, especially since levels dropped in the other area lakes.

The most common theory is that the levels from 17 years ago, with less sophisticated equipment than that used today, were simply not very accurate.

"If that is so, and mercury levels in Lake Monona have been high along the health consequences could be serious for people who have been eating Lake Monona walleyes, not aware of the danger (see accompanying story)."

But it also may be that mercury is continuing to enter the food chain in Lake Monona at greater rates than in the other lakes, either because of the large amounts deposited years ago in sediments or from some unknown source, such as leaking landfills.

Sherry says he is "certain, certain" that the UW and area industries have stopped discharging mercury into area streams from where it could enter the lakes.

The city finally is getting contracts for a ventilation system so it can do its own mercury testing. It will begin

Canon S-58
PERSONAL TYPEWRITER

- 44 cpi with 6-line margin
- 100 characters per inch
- 100 to 500-character correction
- 100 to 500-character correction
- 100 to 500-character correction
- 100 to 500-character correction

Now Only \$199

RSJ

FURNITURE CLEARANCE SALE!!
Today & Tomorrow only!
Saturday 10-5, Sunday 11-5

Sofas, sleepers, recliners, mattresses & more!

furniture warehouse outlet

Ask about our 90 Day
1406 East St.
1000-1000-1000

The Treehouse
ANNUAL SPRING FLING

SUN, MAY 3rd — 2-5PM

BEER.....75¢ BRATS.....75¢

Dance to "High Stepping" 6-10 (No Cover)

2301 Traceway Drive 274-7771