

Time Warner, Turner Broadcasting merge

The deal will create the world's largest media company.

NEW YORK (AP) — Shareholders of Time Warner and Turner Broadcasting System voted overwhelmingly Thursday to approve a \$7.5 billion merger creating the world's largest media and entertainment company.

Turner Broadcasting shareholders voted 99.75 percent in favor of the deal, about five hours after Time Warner stockholders voted 98.23 percent in favor.

"This is a dream," said a triumphant

Ted Turner, the founder and chairman of Turner Broadcasting who now will become a vice chairman and largest single shareholder in the merged company.

"Considering the difficulties we had with this merger ... it was quite a job to get it completed," Turner said after announcing the vote that followed a tough antitrust review by the Federal Trade Commission, a lawsuit from entertainment partner U S West Inc. and widespread doubt over Turner's ability to accept a No. 2 role.

After a final motion was made to adjourn Turner Broadcasting's final shareholder meeting, a tearful Turner dabbed his eyes with a handkerchief.

"This is the company that I've al-

ways dreamed of and we are now here, complete, one team and one family," Time Warner Chairman Gerald Levin said at a shareholders meeting earlier.

Once the final paperwork on the deal is completed Thursday, the really hard work begins. Time Warner executives will have to mesh two companies with very different management cultures — one led by button-down New Yorker Levin, the other by swashbuckling Turner of Atlanta — but each rich in household names they sell every day. Time Warner's Bugs Bunny, HBO and Sports Illustrated are as familiar as Turner's CNN and Atlanta Braves.

On Wednesday, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. followed through on a threat to sue Time Warner for alleg-

edly violating antitrust laws and breaking an agreement by declining to carry its new Fox News Channel on its cable systems.

The lawsuit came just one day after the New York State attorney general's office subpoenaed Time Warner to request documents for its own inquiry into whether the company violated antitrust laws by deciding not to run the Fox channel in New York State.

The lawsuit should not have any immediate effect on the deal with Turner Broadcasting.

As a condition for the merger, Time Warner was required by federal antitrust regulators to carry a second all-news channel on some of its cable sys-

tems, in addition to the Turner-owned Cable News Network.

Fox has argued that Time Warner, the nation's second-largest cable operator, violated its agreement to carry the Fox News Channel and put on rival MSNBC instead.

The companies also must deal with the unpleasant task of laying off about 1,000 employees whose jobs will become redundant.

The fear of pink slips has been especially jolting to employees at Turner, who until the merger had seen their ranks grow steadily. The already active rumor mill in Atlanta no doubt turned faster when it was disclosed Wednesday that son Teddy Turner was among those to be fired.

Mexican government unearths likely clues to killing conspiracy

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Bones, hair and a mud-covered human skull discovered at a ranch belonging to a former president's brother may strengthen the case against him in one of Mexico's most notorious political killings.

Mexican prosecutors suspect that the remains, unearthed Wednesday, are those of a man who conspired with Raul Salinas de Gortari to kill a political rival.

Raul Salinas is the elder brother of former President Carlos Salinas. Scion of a powerful political clan, Carlos Salinas left Mexico in disgrace soon after his term ended in December 1994; he was blamed for corruption and the collapse of the country's economy.

Raul Salinas has been jailed

since February 1995 on charges of plotting the murder of a top ruling party official, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

But prosecutors say Wednesday's discovery could represent powerful new evidence in the case against Raul Salinas if forensic tests identify the remains as those of Salinas' alleged conspirator, Manuel Munoz Rocha.

Munoz Rocha, a federal congressman for the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, disappeared after the Sept. 28, 1994, slaying of Ruiz Massieu in Mexico City.

Attorney General Antonio Lozano Gracia said the bones found Wednesday were those of a man and that authorities were treating the case as a homicide.

Three charged with bombings, robberies

Members of white supremacist group call 'Yahweh' their defense

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Three men with links to white supremacist groups were charged with robbing banks and setting off pipe bombs at a newspaper office and an abortion clinic as diversions.

"Yahweh is my defense," defendant Jay Merrell told U.S. Magistrate Judge Cynthia Imbrogno on Wednesday as the men were charged.

"I'll ask for nothing from the state," Merrell added, saying he would not seek bail.

"Yahweh," an English rendering of the Hebrew name for God, is a term frequently used in the white separatist Christian Identity religion.

Merrell, Charles Barbee, 44, and Robert Berry, 42, all from the Sandpoint, Idaho, area, were each charged with nine counts of bank rob-

bery, auto theft and use of bombs to rob a bank. Berry also was charged with being a felon in possession of a gun.

If convicted, they could face life in prison without parole.

No one was injured in the bombings. The robberies netted \$108,666, documents showed.

The bombers left letters with markings of the Phineas Priesthood, a shadowy white supremacist organization opposed to interracial marriage, abortion and homosexuality.

At least four masked men in camouflage, carrying assault rifles and shotguns, held up the bank both times. In the first holdup, the fleeing robbers detonated a pipe bomb inside the bank, shouting references to the Montana Freemen.

The robbery occurred a week after the FBI arrested leaders of the Freemen in Montana.

In the April robbery, a pre-holdup bomb blast damaged a branch office of The Spokesman-Review of Spokane; before the July heist, a Planned Parenthood clinic was bombed.

All three men said they understood their legal rights, but refused to sign documents stating they did. Merrell said he did not want a court-appointed lawyer. Berry declined to make a financial statement proving he could not afford to hire his own lawyer.

The three were arrested Tuesday at a convenience store near Yakima, Wash., where officers seized weapons and explosives from two sports-utility vehicles and a mini-van they were driving, witnesses said.

Britain bans cards for viewing porn channel

BOURNEMOUTH, England (AP) — The government has decided to bar Britons from watching pornographic programs beamed across Europe by a French satellite TV channel.

Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley told the Conservative Party conference Thursday that she has signed an order banning the sale of so-called "smart cards" needed to receive transmissions by the channel Rendez-Vous.

Museum buys newfound Rembrandt sketch

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands (AP) — An Amsterdam museum unveiled a previously unknown ink drawing by the Dutch master Rembrandt on Thursday.

The Rijksmuseum recently purchased the drawing for an undisclosed sum after experts determined it was a genuine Rembrandt.

Museum spokesman Frans van de Avert said the portrait came from a foreign collector who approached the

"As a politician and a parent, I will not tolerate gratuitous violence and filth on television," Bottomley said.

An estimated 20,000 Britons have purchased the cards needed to receive Rendez-Vous, which specializes in hard-core porn films.

The government cannot stop porn channels beaming into Britain, but can outlaw the sale of equipment needed to receive the shows.

The museum to seek advice on the drawing's authenticity.

The unsigned drawing, dated 1638 and titled "Portrait of Willem Bartolus Ruyter," shows a Dutch actor leaning forward and resting on his elbows.

The Rijksmuseum is renowned for its superb collection of 16th and 17th century Dutch paintings, including Rembrandt's "Night Watch."

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