

Leaders near summit

Hebron agreement could rescue Mideast peace efforts

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel and the Palestinians moved closer Monday to an agreement on Israel's long-delayed withdrawal from the last major West Bank city it occupies. Both sides said a summit of their leaders was imminent.

Officials were trying to arrange a meeting between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. U.S. envoy Dennis Ross was shuttling between the two leaders Monday night.

Both sides warned of a possible last-minute snag, but the atmosphere appeared markedly improved over the past weeks' acrimony. Palestinians walked out of peace talks last week over an Israeli proposal to withdraw troops from the West Bank town of Hebron.

Foreign Minister David Levy said an agreement on Hebron was expected within days.

"If there is no last-minute setback, an agreement is close," he said. "It is not a matter of weeks, but maybe even a few days."

An agreement on Hebron would go a long way toward rescuing the Mideast peace effort from the crisis brought on by Islamic militants' suicide bombings in Israel last winter, the May

election of conservative Netanyahu and last month's deadly gun battles between Israeli and Palestinian forces.

Arafat, who was in Jordan, planned to return to the West Bank town of Jericho on Tuesday with Jordan's King Hussein.

Israel Radio said the sides had already reached broad agreement on the main sticking point — security arrangements in Hebron, the volatile town where 450 Jews live among 94,000 Palestinians.

The Israeli official said an Arafat-Netanyahu summit would be to announce an agreement, but Palestinian officials disagreed.

Hassan Asfour of the Palestinian position that no changes should be made in the Israel-PLO accord that called for Israel to withdraw from Hebron in March. He said reports of agreement on security issues were "totally untrue."

A U.S. official said on condition of anonymity that an agreement was not imminent and that a summit had to be carefully prepared or there would be "double disappointment" if a Hebron agreement was not announced.

King aims to shake up readers

ORONO, Maine (AP) — Horror master Stephen King wants to do more for his fans than leave their spines tingling.

"I don't want to just mess with your head. I want to mess with your life," King said at a weekend conference at his alma mater, the University of Maine. "I want you to miss appointments, burn dinner, skip your homework. I want you to tell your wife to take that moonlight stroll on the beach at Waikiki with the resort tennis pro while you read a few more chapters."

King was keynote speaker at a conference on his works. The conference covered the topics of censorship and student choice. King's books are banned in some schools.

"What I tell kids is don't get mad, get even," King said. "Run, don't walk, to the first library you can find and read what they're trying to keep out of your eyes. Read what they're trying to keep out of your brains. Because that's exactly what you need to know."

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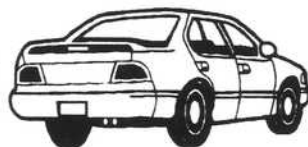
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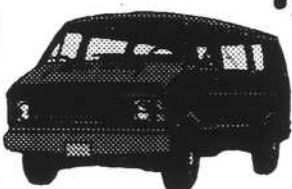
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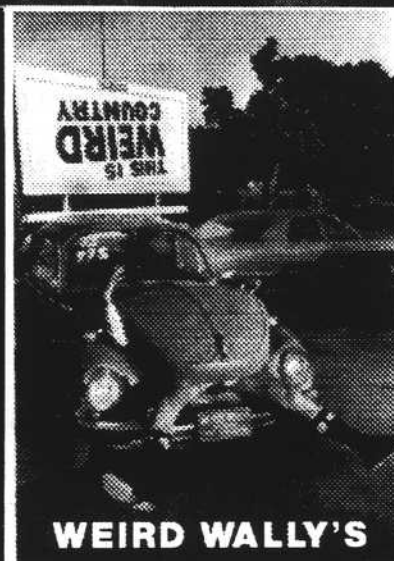
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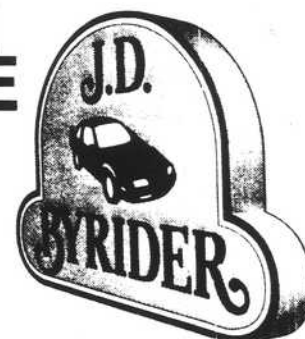
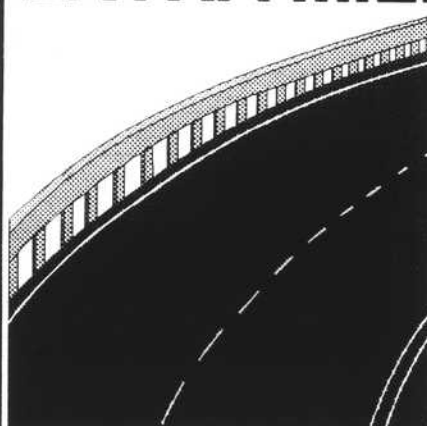
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