

# News Digest

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PAGE 2

## Fund-raising inquiry dropped

**The House Judiciary Committee may vote next week on Clinton's fate.**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans jettisoned campaign fund raising from their impeachment inquiry Thursday. That move likely cleared the way for a historic House Judiciary Committee vote next week over President Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky and his effort to cover it up.

At the same time, incoming Speaker Bob Livingston signaled a desire for the full House to convene in a pre-Christmas session to vote on any articles of impeachment that win committee approval.

"If the Judiciary Committee could complete its work next week, it would be my expectation that we could have a vote on the following week," the Louisiana Republican said in his first public remarks on the subject in more than a week.

Taken together, the developments amounted to strong signals that majority Republicans — chastened by

disappointing election results — intend to move swiftly to wrap up the third presidential impeachment inquiry in the nation's history. Even so, while the GOP-controlled panel is expected to approve at least one article of impeachment on a party line vote, the outcome on the House floor remains in doubt.

Democrats, as well as Republicans, including Peter King of New York, intensified efforts during the day to craft an alternative that would stop short of impeachment.

Spokesman Kevin Fogarty said King and several other GOP lawmakers were laboring over a proposal that would "include a strong condemnation of Clinton and require him to pay a financial penalty and issue a statement acknowledging wrongdoing."

Key Democrats met privately with the party's leader, Rep. Dick Gephardt, and — according to two sources speaking on condition of anonymity — they will soon begin contacting Republican lawmakers outside the Judiciary Committee to see what bipartisan cooperation might be possible in the full House. These sources

### Clinton under fire

added that while Democrats are willing to join in efforts to wrap up the issue by year's end, they will insist on a lengthy period for debate on the House floor and demand that consideration be given to censure as an alternative to impeachment.

In comments to reporters, Livingston sidestepped questions over censure.

"Each member of Congress has the responsibility to search his heart and his conscience and judge for himself the importance to his constituents, what his vote should be," said the Louisiana Republican.

Livingston was clear that he wants the Judiciary Committee to complete its work this year, if possible. While he indicated he would like the House to convene after the panel votes, only Rep. Newt Gingrich, the outgoing speaker, has the power to call lawmakers back for a lame-duck session. Gingrich is expected to agree to do so if Livingston asks.

## Kerry to announce his choice Dec. 12

OMAHA (AP) — A day after announcing he had made a decision about running for president — but refusing to say what it is — Sen. Bob Kerrey sounded alternately Thursday like a confident candidate and an outgoing incumbent reflecting on his experiences.

A top Kerrey aide said Wednesday the Nebraska Democrat had decided whether to seek the Democratic nomination but was not ready to share the news.

"A decision is never final until you announce it," Kerrey said Thursday in a conference call with Nebraska reporters.

The senator said he wanted to convene a group of friends Dec. 12 — the same day he convenes a conference on international economics and trade in Omaha — and ask their opinions on his reasoning.

"Am I thinking sound? Have I got my head up in the clouds? In 1991, I did that, but I put cotton in my ears, and I didn't listen very well," Kerrey said.

Kerrey also said his failed bid for the 1992 nomination was due in

large part to not knowing the system.

"It takes 2,142 delegates to have a majority and win the nomination," he said. "I didn't even know that in 1991."

Kerrey said there was just too much he did not know before his first presidential bid.

"I had not been in Iowa. I had not been in New Hampshire," he said. "I didn't have a sufficient amount of leverage with anybody to, I think, have the chance to be a very credible candidate."

Kerrey said he is better prepared now.

"I think I know what one has to do to be the nominee, in this case of the Democratic Party," he said.

In addition to the knowledge he would need to run for president, Kerrey said his experience as a U.S. senator also gave him confidence.

"I've learned a lot in the Senate," he said. "I've been fortunate to serve Nebraskans, and I thank them for the knowledge that I've acquired and the experience that I've gained and the skills that I now have that I didn't have before."

*"I'm afraid my playmates were burned. I saw their burned bodies. I don't want to go back."*

## Fire razes Philippines orphanage

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Trapped behind metal window grates, children screamed for help as the flames drew closer. Neighbors frantically tugged at the padlocked main gate but could not break in.

The result was a tragedy. A pre-dawn fire tore through an aging orphanage in Manila on Thursday, killing at least 28 people, mostly children. Two other children were missing and presumed dead.

Investigators said faulty electrical wiring may have triggered the blaze.

The dozens of children at the Catholic-run Bahay Kalinga orphanage had been looking forward to a Christmas party today. Instead, the Christmas decorations were scattered, along with toys and children's clothes, among the burned debris.

"I'm afraid my playmates were burned," said Brian De Mesa, 5, who survived along with his twin brother. "I saw their burned bodies. I don't want to go back."

About 70 people were inside the orphanage in a slum area of Manila's Paco district when the fire broke out at 2 a.m., fire officials said, adding that three-fourths of the orphanage was already ablaze when they arrived.

"We couldn't even go near

*"We couldn't even go near because of the intense heat. A few seconds after we arrived, part of the roof collapsed."*

**MAJ. PABLITO CORDETA**  
Manila Fire Department

because of the intense heat," said Maj. Pablito Cordeta, operations chief of the Manila Fire Department. "A few seconds after we arrived, part of the roof collapsed."

Thirteen dead children were found huddled together in one room. In another, a dead adult was found clinging to two children, all charred beyond recognition.

Rescuers gingerly lifted the bodies of small infants wrapped in blankets from the remains of the orphanage, which included a two-story main structure and two cottages, all built between 1913 and 1927.

Staff members said the fire spread so quickly that they did not have time to rescue many children.

"I was sleeping on the ground floor when I was woken up," said Carina Bellosillo, a teacher.

"Already, the ceiling was on fire and the stairs going up to the second floor were burning. I wanted to go upstairs to save the babies, but my companions pulled me back."

The orphanage also cared at night for children of working parents, who wept outside while they waited for word of their children.

"He was my only joy," said Anabel Sambriano, 21, whose 9-month-old boy died in the blaze. "I heard about the fire on the radio and rushed here, but it was too late. I want my baby."

President Joseph Estrada visited the gutted buildings Thursday afternoon and pledged to help the orphanage recover.

"I will raise funds personally. I will do everything I can to rebuild this place."

## Phillip Morris kicks off antismoking campaign

NEW YORK (AP) — Philip Morris, the nation's biggest tobacco company, plans to spend \$100 million not to lure potential customers, but to drive them away.

The campaign target is kids, and the creator of the Marlboro Man says it plans to convince them that smoking isn't cool.

But critics say Philip Morris is only trying to buff its image and that a surer way to discourage youngsters from smoking would be if it dumped the macho cowboy as the icon for its biggest brand.

The Philip Morris campaign kicks off Monday with ads that get the tobacco maker's name in television ads for the first time since cigarette advertising on broadcast outlets was banned in 1971.

The unusual campaign comes as the industry remains under attack in court and may face renewed efforts in Congress to regulate tobacco as a drug.

Big tobacco recently agreed to pay \$206 billion to settle claims by 46 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories for reimbursement for the health costs of treating tobacco-related illnesses.

The settlement payment included \$1.7 billion to study why children smoke and to finance programs aimed at discouraging them from starting.

But Philip Morris spokeswoman Ellen Merlo said her company wanted to act more quickly to reverse the recent reported rise in youth smoking.

"We feel strongly kids shouldn't smoke, and we are taking what we hope is responsible action," she said.

She said the company will spend more than \$100 million over the next year to help prevent youth smoking. The program includes support for community groups and educational programs as well as programs to make it harder for youngsters to get cigarettes.

## Newest steps in N. Ireland peace lead to disagreements

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Northern Ireland's major Protestant and Catholic parties clashed Thursday, hours after apparently agreeing on the next steps toward making April's peace agreement a reality.

Rival wings of Irish Catholic opinion, the moderate Social Democratic and Labor Party and militant Sinn Fein, accused the British Protestant party, the Ulster Unionists, of retreating from commitments made early Thursday in negotiations overseen by British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The prime minister's spokesman, Alastair Campbell, said Blair was "disappointed that the parties had not been able to build on the progress made last night and that a number of different interpretations had arisen."

When Blair left early Thursday, Catholic politicians were openly confi-

dent they and the Ulster Unionists would announce two key planks of Northern Ireland's new government: forming a 10-post Executive administration, and seven policy-making committees to work with the Irish Republic.

The Irish prime minister, Bertie Ahern, had planned to travel to Belfast to demonstrate support for the package.

But in an Ulster Unionist meeting, members complained to leader David Trimble that the package conceded too much at a time when the outlawed Irish Republican Army, linked with Sinn Fein, was refusing to disarm.

Ulster Unionist deputy leader John Taylor said the members were supporting only three of the proposed cross-border committees — an essential part of the agreement for Catholics, who think the committees will promote eventual unification.

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