

Calls give some voters hang-ups

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANSING, Mich. — Vern and Pam Jarvi returned home from a four-day vacation Monday night to find seven political messages on their answering machine, including one from actor Edward Asner and another from Persian Gulf Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf.

Asner's call warned them that Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush's Social Security plan would hurt seniors; Schwarzkopf's call reassured them it wouldn't.

"None of them was really offensive, and I wasn't unhappy that I got them," Pam Jarvi said Tuesday. None of them swayed her previous decision, either — to vote for Bush.

But some other voters are quite upset, even saying they're ready to vote against whomever the electronic caller is supporting.

Tens of thousands of voters in this closely fought state are being peppered with automated calls from celebrities. And it's being tried in other states, too.

The voice on the line in Michigan, Florida and other tossup states might be that of Bush's mother, Barbara Bush. Or it might be President Clinton. On Saturday, Clinton recorded more than 70 telephone messages to tell blacks that their votes are needed.

The Democrats could make hundreds of thousands of phone calls in the days leading up to the election, the party said Tuesday, featuring four Texans criticizing Gov. Bush's record at home, possibly with an introduction by horror author Stephen King: "George Bush — I know what you did in Texas. ..."

Some voters on both sides are unhappy with all the calls.

Okey Miller, a 70-year-old Democrat from Hurricane, W.Va., had messages left on his machine from Asner and Barbara Bush.

"I'd rather they hadn't called," he said. "There's nobody on the other end. I don't know why anyone would be impressed by getting a recording."

And as for Barbara Bush: "You would expect a candidate's mother to speak well of him."

Deb Strang of Grand Ledge, Mich., is more than a little irritated.

Her 81-year-old mother is in the hospital after suffering a stroke, and Strang says she hates finding an automated political call after rushing for what might be a call from the doctor.

"It's not like a telemarketer you can tell to put you on their 'Do not call' list," said Strang, who hung up Monday when she got a pro-Bush call. She's already voted absentee for Al Gore, so it's too late for any calls to affect her vote.

Alex James, an independent from Columbus, Ohio, says he decided to vote for Bush after receiving the Asner call.

"I just think this is awful, scaring these senior citizens into thinking Gore is going to take care of you," James said. "Senior citizens are not stupid."

Charles Atkin, chairman of the Michigan State University Department of Communications, said political campaigns are turning to phone calls because they know they're not reaching voters such as Evans in more traditional ways.

"The eyes have glazed over at this point. They've seen as much as they want to see" in TV ads, Atkin said of voters. "The telephone does provide a different avenue."

Mideast missiles continue

■ Fighting between Palestinians and Israelis escalates; at least 147 are dead after a month of direct conflict.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Stepping through the rubble of an Israeli missile attack, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Tuesday called for renewed resistance by young activists, "these children who throw the stones to defend Jerusalem, the Muslims and the holy places."

In a clash that lasted through the day and into the night, four Palestinians, ages 17 to 23, were killed by Israeli fire at the Karni crossing point along the eastern Gaza Strip, hospital doctors said. Thirty-four days of fighting have left 147 people dead, most of them Palestinians.

The Palestinians supplemented their stones and firebombs for the first time with machine-gun fire and anti-tank missiles, according to the army. At least 45 Palestinians were injured in three separate clashes in Gaza and two in the West Bank, doctors said.

Tuesday's fighting came a day after Israel rained missiles on several command centers of Arafat's Fatah movement in one of the most intense attacks since the fighting began.

The Israeli raids, launched in

response for the killing of two Israelis, were the latest escalation in the cycle of retaliatory violence, and left Palestinians in a defiant mood.

"What happened here and elsewhere in the Palestinian territories will not shake one hair on the head of the Palestinian children," Arafat said as he examined the battered walls and broken concrete at a base for his Force 17 bodyguards at Khan Yunis in Gaza.

Israel says Arafat's comments have encouraged youths to take part in the daily confrontations. However, many youngsters say they do so with relish, needing no such prompting, while others participate out of peer pressure.

The Israelis have criticized Palestinian leaders, saying they cynically use the children — and the resulting casualties — in the ongoing public relations battle between the two sides.

Referring to the helicopter attacks, Prime Minister Ehud Barak warned, "the long reach of the Israeli army could be much more painful." Speaking to visiting world Jewish leaders, Barak said he talked to Arafat briefly a week ago to explain Israel's position, "but to my dismay, the emergency situation continues."

More than a month of fighting has put the peace process on hold, but there were plans for a new round of high-level contacts.

Arafat and Israeli elder statesman

Shimon Peres, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 along with the late Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin, planned to meet late Tuesday or Wednesday, Israel radio said.

Barak's top adviser, Danny Yatom, said: "we must settle this ancient conflict, not with violence but with peace."

But harsh words on both sides were more the norm. Ahmed Qureia, a senior Palestinian negotiator, said the Israeli helicopter attacks "started a new stage of aggression against the Palestinian people."

"The Palestinian intefadeh (uprising) will continue as long as there is aggression," he said.

Besides the violence, another obstacle to a resumption of negotiations is the political instability in Israel.

Barak heads a minority government, and his need for political allies became even more urgent Monday as parliament reconvened after a three-month recess.

Barak worked Tuesday to build an alliance with the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, while prospects faded for a partnership with the hawkish Likud faction led by Ariel Sharon.

Barak had been seeking to bring Sharon into his coalition, but contacts broke down Monday after the prime minister refused to grant Likud a veto right over future peace talks.



Fire fighters search for survivors in the wreckage of Singapore Airlines SQ-006 Boeing 747-400 after it crashed after taking off from Chiang-Kai Shek International Airport in Taipei during a typhoon. The crash killed at least 49 people. Taiwan authorities fear the death toll could hit 100.

State ballot issues focus on gay rights

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORTLAND, Ore. — Jose Solano says he's tolerant of gay people, but feels schools shouldn't give teen-agers the wrong message.

"I completely respect the civil rights of adults that want to be homosexual," said Solano, a Spanish teacher at Cleveland High School. "But don't tell me I have to tell my students that it's OK."

Solano supports Oregon's Measure 9, one of several gay-focused measures on state ballots, including Nebraska's Initiative 416.

Measure 9 would bar classroom instruction "encouraging, promoting, sanctioning" homosexuality or bisexuality, and would apply to public schools from kindergarten to community colleges.

Proponents worry that family values are eroding. They argue that activists use schools to indoctrinate children into gay and lesbian lifestyles.

"If traditional-minded people don't win this, the culture is going down," said Lon Mabon, who runs the Oregon Citizens Alliance, sponsor of the measure and of previous failed efforts against gay rights.

Opponents deny children are fed a pro-gay agenda. Instead, they say, the measure threatens policies that provide counseling for gay students, pertinent library books and protection from harassment.

"Of course you don't want people teaching homosexuality

"If traditional-minded people don't win this, the culture is going down."

Lon Mabon
Oregon Citizens Alliance

in the classroom, but that's not happening now," said Sean Cox of For Us Northwest, a support group for students affected or infected by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. "We're teaching diversity and tolerance."

Also facing voters Election Day are Nebraska and Nevada proposals to amend their constitutions to say only marriage between a man and woman is valid. Since 1995, 34 states have enacted a ban on recognizing same-sex marriages, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

And Maine voters will once again decide whether to adopt explicit civil rights protections for gays, now found in 11 states and the District of Columbia.

Among the four measures, Oregon's causes gay groups most alarm.

"Oregon's is the most dangerous," said Elizabeth Toledo, who runs the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington, D.C. "A measure that tries to ensure that homophobia is passed down from generation to generation is something we have to take very seriously."

Death changes race in Missouri for U.S. Senate

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Republican Sen. John Ashcroft wants to talk about Social Security, women's issues and health care.

But everywhere he travels — from the Ozarks to Kansas City to St. Louis — Ashcroft is asked about the death of his Senate opponent and the political turmoil that has ensued.

A former two-term governor and popular vote-getter whose name has appeared on Missouri ballots for almost three decades, Ashcroft faces an opponent against whom he can fire no criticism — the late Gov. Mel Carnahan.

And he effectively got a second opponent when Carnahan's widow, Jean, said Monday she would accept appointment to the Senate if her late husband wins Nov. 7.

So Ashcroft must find a way to politick delicately against an esteemed widow insulated from the usual volleys of campaigning.

"I'm campaigning for the United States Senate," Ashcroft said Monday during an appearance in Kansas City. "I don't want to quibble about that, but I'm not campaigning against anyone."

In the weeks since the 66-year-old Carnahan's death Oct. 16 in a plane crash, Ashcroft has had a third opponent as well, says one analyst.

"Ashcroft's third opponent is the news media, which is providing so much coverage to the Mel Carnahan-Jean Carnahan story," said Rick Hardy, a political scientist at the University of Missouri at Columbia. "John Ashcroft is in a political straitjacket."

Mel Carnahan's name remains before voters because he died after a deadline for revising Missouri's ballot.

Before his death, the Senate race was anything but gentlemanly. Missouri's two best-known politicians clashed about abortion, gun control, taxes, crime fighting, appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court and the governor's controversial commutation of a death sentence at the pope's behest.

World/Nation

The Associated Press

■ New York

Trick-or-treaters score at Clintons' Chappaqua home

CHAPPAQUA — Secret Service agents armed with M&Ms and Snickers fended off Spiderella, Ice Wolf, the Headless Horseman and other young extortionists who besieged the home of President and Hillary Rodham Clintons on Tuesday with cries of "Trick or treat, Hillary!"

One agent became suspicious of a 16-year-old in a cow suit, but otherwise Halloween started off smoothly on Old House Lane in Chappaqua.

Neither the first lady nor the president was home when costumed candy-seekers began arriving in late afternoon; both were away campaigning.

Instead, Secret Service agents at the gate handled the customary duties.

"That's from the first family, not from us," one of the agents said as he offered candy to Maggie Goldberg, Danielle Cohen and Sika Gasinu, all 10 and from Ardsley, Maggie's father, Mark Goldberg, said his daughter "has been looking forward to this since the Clintons moved in" in January.

The agents turned away the two first trick-or-treaters: Will Adams, 16, in a black-and-white cow suit, and Joey Rubin, 17, in devil horns, said they had driven 30 minutes from Yorktown to knock on the first family's door.

The agent who turned them away later said he thought the teens were too old to be trick-or-treating.

■ France

Court refuses to reopen case in death of Princess Diana

PARIS — A Paris court refused Tuesday to reopen the investigation into the 1997 car crash that killed Princess Diana, her boyfriend Dodi Fayed and their driver, judicial sources said.

Lawyers for Fayed's father, Egyptian-born tycoon Mohamed Al Fayed, immediately said they would appeal to France's highest court, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Al Fayed and the family of the driver, Henri Paul, had asked the court to reconsider a lower court's decision to dismiss charges against the news photographers, who were following the car that crashed in a Paris tunnel on Aug. 31, 1997.

■ New York

Poll finds Clinton, Lazio even in race for Senate seat

ALBANY — New York's Senate race between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Republican Rick Lazio is becoming volatile in the campaign's final days, according to two statewide polls issued Tuesday.

A poll from the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute found the first lady's support slipping in traditionally more conservative upstate New York and in the New York City suburbs.

Given the poll's margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, the two were statistically tied with Clinton at 47 percent and the congressman from Long Island at 44 percent. An Oct. 18 Quinnipiac poll had Clinton leading, 50 percent to 43 percent.

■ Russia

Medical woes put U.S. man's espionage trial on hold

MOSCOW — Fueling his family's worst fears, jailed U.S. businessman Edmond Pope suffered an attack of joint and back pain Tuesday so acute it put his Moscow espionage trial on hold — and suggested his bone cancer may be back.

Pope, whose cancer was in remission when he came to Russia this spring, has spent six months in Moscow's dank, overcrowded Lefortovo prison, trying to win permission for an American doctor to examine him.

His pain Tuesday did not appear to advance that appeal.

After complaining of aches through the morning, Pope doubled over during his lunch break in a suspects' cage and asked for medical help, his lawyer Pavel Astakhov said. Pope was returned to the prison and examined by the same doctors who have insisted he is fit for trial.

Weather

TODAY
Thunderstorms
high 66, low 47

TOMORROW
Partly cloudy
high 51, low 31

Daily Nebraskan

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(402) 472-2588
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