

The Dream hits town
SPORTS



LEON KOSSAR
Founding father of Caravan
GREATER TORONTO

Hot, hazy, humid. Thundershowers. High 35 C

Wednesday, August 8, 2001

thestar.com

METRO EDITION

- Scorching 35.6 C sets record for day at Pearson
- Provincial Hydro use hits all-time high
- City opens four 'cooling centres'

And the heat goes on

Emergency declared as millions swelter

BY VERNON CLEMENT JONES
STAFF REPORTER

Toronto declared its first-ever heat emergency yesterday, as the temperature soared to a debilitating 35.3 C. With the humidity factored in, that temperature felt more like 42 C.

- Theo Moudakis cartoon, A18
- Water use near limit, B1
- Steamy jobs, B2
- Power use hits record, B3

Emergency calls were up sharply yesterday, centred around respiratory and cardiac problems associated with the heat and smog, said Rick Boustead, a spokesperson for Toronto Emergency Medical Services.

"We're busier than a one legged man in a butt kicking contest," said an emergency medical services dispatcher who didn't want to be named. "We can't get our ambulances unloaded."

All day yesterday, ambulances were having trouble unloading patients at Toronto hospitals because 14 of the city's 15 hospitals were on critical bypass or redirect. Only the Hospital for Sick Children continued to admit patients.

The searing heat set a record at Pearson International Airport, surpassing the previous high for the date by more than two degrees. And while no deaths can be directly attributed to yesterday's heat, a new warning system says there is more than a 95 per cent chance deaths will occur under such conditions.

The heat is expected to abate by Friday, with temperatures ranging between 27 C and 29 C. But for now the city is rushing to take precautions to save lives — Torontojians were warned to stay out of the sun, to seek air-conditioned environments, to drink plenty of liquids, and to avoid physical exertion.

The city opened four cool-
Please see Showers, A8



FRIENDLY VISIT: Gabe Zelea checks Mildred Hoult's temperature yesterday at her home. Zelea was part of a team of paramedics that roamed the city helping people deal with the 35 C temperatures.

How to cope

When exposed to extreme heat, the body can lose its ability to cool itself down — like when a car loses coolant and overheats.

■ **Heat exhaustion**
The body runs short of water and salt.

■ **Initial symptoms**
Pale face, headache, nausea, cool skin, clamminess, profuse sweating.

■ **Later symptoms**
Collapse or heat stroke, which leads to flushed face, headache, nausea, hot skin, no sweating, body temperature 40C or higher.

■ **First aid**
Get in shade, drink water, two teaspoons of salt per litre.

■ **Precautions**
Drink a lot of fluids, get out of the sun, stay out of the sun.

■ **Heat hotline**
Anyone who experiences dizziness, fainting, extreme fatigue or signs of heat illness can call the Red Cross Hotline at 416-490-2833 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

■ **Public pools**
Hours extended until 12:45 a.m. at these locations:
Alexander Park
Alex. Duff-Christie Pits
Douglas Snow Aquatic Centre
Giovanni Caboto
Ryder Sunnyside
Gregor Park
Wentworth Park
Wentworth Park
Wentworth Park

■ **Cooling centres**
Open 24 hours:
Metro Hall, 55 John St.
Open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.:
York Civic Centre,
100 Yonge St.
Wentworth Civic Centre,
50 Coxwell Ave.
St. Andrew's Civic Centre,
2700 Eglinton Ave. W.
For information, call 328-4338



Aid workers taking city's temperature to keep us cool

BY CHRISTIAN COTRONEO
STAFF REPORTER

The air in Mary Zarines' living room falls on visitors like a warm, wet blanket.

Without air conditioning or fans and with all the windows closed, even the walls of her Willowdale home seem to sweat.

The childless widow doesn't get too many visitors, so neighbour Reg Hoult called the Red Cross hotline, concerned about how she was faring in the heat.

When Gabe Zelea, a paramedic from Emergency Health Services, arrived soon after, he immediately noted swelling in Zarines' legs and

asked about her health.

His partner, Khalid Salim from the Canadian Red Cross, roamed the house with a device measuring temperature and humidity.

The humidity reading in the house was 68% — 10 percentage points higher than outside. Coping with that is like wearing 30 kilograms of clothes, Zelea said.

Salim and Zelea are one of two teams patrolling the city after Mayor Mel Lastman announced that temperatures had reached emergency proportions yesterday.

"Basically, we're calling a



CRUISER HIT: Bullets shattered police car's window.

Shots fired at police officer

BY PHILIP MASCOLL
AND NICHOLAS KEUNG
STAFF REPORTERS

A police officer was met with a hail of gunfire when he arrived to calm a domestic confrontation at a Scarborough apartment building yesterday.

The officer, who has not been identified by police, had just pulled up to the Rosemount Dr. apartment building about 3:20 p.m. when a man left the building, pointed a weapon at him, and fired at least three shots.

Bullets struck the officer's cruiser, one shattering the back window. The officer returned fire.

No one was injured in the exchange, near the busy intersection of Birchmount Rd. and Eglinton Ave. E. Children were playing in the building's swimming pool and yard not far away, police said.

Majid Sabzehvari, 46, of no fixed address, was arrested at the scene and has been charged with attempted murder.

About 20 minutes before the shots were fired, a neighbour on the penthouse floor of the nine-storey building heard two men — a tenant and his visiting father-in-law — fighting and screaming at each other in an apartment.

"We saw a woman, the (tenant's) wife, running up and down the hall, weeping and crying for help," said the shaken neighbour, who asked that her name not be used.

"She was so afraid and said, 'Call 911. My father and my husband are going to kill each other.'"

The father then left the building by a side door, where he

Please see Officer, A14

INSIDE

- Apartment D8
- Births B7
- Comics E6
- Crossword E4
- Deaths B6
- Editorials A18
- Employment D12
- Horoscope D4
- Landers D5
- Leisure Page F5
- TV listings B8
- Weather B8
- A News
- B Greater Toronto
- C Business
- D Life / Food / Classified
- E Entertainment
- F Sports

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I'm Jose, I'll be your robot this evening

AI designers compete to build a better waiter

BY RACHEL ROSS
BUSINESS REPORTER

SEATTLE — Hold on to your cocktail napkins! Artificial intelligence has arrived in the hospitality industry.

Five of the world's most expensive and sophisticated robots will be dishing it out tomorrow in the battle of the wired waiters.

Teams of computer scientists have converged on Seattle to watch their robots feed hors

Up Front

d'oeuvres to a small crowd of humans at the 10th annual Mobile Robot Competition and Exhibition of the American Association for Artificial Intelligence.

This year's Canadian hopeful in the event was to be Eric, a research robot from the University of British Columbia.

But just days before the competition, Eric suffered a serious injury in training. His hard drive crashed — permanently.

Now the spotlight has turned to Eric's understudy — Jose, a backup robot who stepped in at the last minute.

He stands about 2 metres tall in his tuxedo with white gloves and napkin. A laptop screen sits just above his serving tray to display his many facial expressions that change with his mood, say his programmers.

With only a few days to reach top form, this could be a difficult event for the lone Canadian competitor.

"I think we're in good shape," said Pantelis Elinas, a student at the University of British Columbia and one of Jose's trainers. "He worked well in the lab."

Elinas was one of six computer science students who worked with him this year.

Please see Robot, A12



ROBO-WAITER: Jose's "trainers", from left, are Jesse Hoey, Kang Kang Yin, Pantelis Elinas, Darrell Laney, Stephen Se and Jefferson Montgomery.

Robot waiter can scan room for flesh tones

Continued from A1

along with two faculty members and two technicians. Dozens more students have worked with Jose in the past, honing his skills as a waiter, writing and rewriting his software.

"A few years and a few thousand man-hours have gone into this project," said Elinas. The competition isn't limited to waiters.

There's also the Robot Rescue contest, where robots navigate a simulated disaster scene to find bodies. Moving mannequins with heating pads simulate injured humans. The hope is that rescue robots could be used in the first few hours after a disaster, when it's unclear whether it's safe for human rescuers to enter.

The winning team in each event will get a new research robot for their lab.

Jose's over-all strategy will focus on his team's greatest strength: their vision. The UBC training lab is a hotbed of research on robotic sight, so Jose will be using five video cameras during the competition.

Most of those cameras will be needed to help Jose identify landmarks so he can figure out where he is and build a map of the room. That will help him with his biggest challenge, locating people to serve. Jose's software looks for flesh tones and directs him toward the skin. The team's bold move not to use sonar or infrared sensors means he'll have to rely entirely on sight to avoid obstacles.

Elinas said bumper sensors around his base should keep him from treading on toes — an illegal move that could result in immediate disqualification. (Polite nudges are permitted.) Jose will also have to keep one eye on the food, so one person doesn't hog all the snacks before he reaches his destination.

Jose faces some stiff competition, with entries from Kansas State University, Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, the Seattle Robotics Society and the University of Aveiro in Portugal.

Kansas State University is trying a two-robot approach. While Cadbury the butler serves the guests, his unnamed robotic assistant keeps a camera focused on the serving tray so the robots know when to go back to their home base and get more sandwiches.

The entry from the Seattle Robotics Society, which looks like an upside down garbage can, scans the floor for feet. Once it finds anything that looks like shoes, it stops moving so guests can grab a snack.

Jose's booming voice helps him stand out from his competitors. He can actually ask guests if they'd like an hors d'oeuvre —



JENNER LOOKS FOR THE TORONTO STAR

THAT'S SERVICE: Canadian-designed Jose the robot serves bread to a bystander at a Seattle artificial intelligence conference yesterday.

much to the delight of spectators.

Jose can't serve just anybody. He'll have to find groups of people he hasn't served before. "We want the robot to cover the room, like a human waiter would," said Holly Yanco, co-chair of the competition.

Jose has a plan for greedy humans. "Until he gets to the group of people he's chosen as his destination and actually offers them food, if you take something from the tray he assumes that you're stealing it. So he complains about that," said Elinas.

That's when Jose shows his shocked and perturbed face on his laptop screen.

Hopefully, the stress of the trip won't affect performance. The Canadian team expressed some concern over Jose's occa-

sional bouts of dementia.

"Sometimes he gets lost and forgets where he is," said Elinas. "If that happens, you have to hit the big red button and (push) him back to home base."

Waiters shouldn't be looking for their pink slips yet. "It would be far cheaper to hire a person," said co-chair Yanco. A typical research robot costs at least \$10,000 (U.S.).

Along with giving the participants valuable training developing mobile robots, Yanco said she hopes the event will improve human-robot relations and build a robot-friendly society.

"As we create robots that interact better with humans, maybe people will accept them more."

Religious scams con thousands

Victims mortgage homes, dip into retirement plans

WASHINGTON (Reuters-AP) — Scams using religion to lure investors have drawn about \$1.8 billion (U.S.) over the last three years, as swindlers have become more prevalent and sophisticated, say U.S. securities regulators.

Known as "affinity fraud," the ploys use religion to gain a person's trust and ultimately, their money. Often, they manage to convince victims to mortgage homes, run up credit card balances or pull cash from their retirement funds.

"I've been a securities regulator for 20 years and I've seen more money stolen in the name of God than in any other way," said Deborah Bortner, president of the Washington-based North American Securities Administrators Association.

"The con artist makes faith in God synonymous with faith in the investment scam," Bortner, also securities director for Washington state, told a news conference yesterday.

Three big schemes — involving the Baptist Foundation of Arizona, Greater Ministries International Church and IRM Corp. — have cost investors nearly \$1.5 billion.

Regulators added that officials in 27 states have taken legal action against hundreds of companies and individuals that used religious or spiritual beliefs to gain the trust of more than 90,000 investors.

In contrast, a 1989 survey found 15,000 investors had lost about \$450 million in the previous five years.

Forrest Bomar of Palestine, Texas, was among several

scam victims on hand at the news conference.

"I'm embarrassed to say this, but I never asked for an annual report, I never called anyone," he said. "I never had any fear."

Like many of the 13,000 swindled by the Baptist Foundation of Arizona scheme — which also attracted investors from Hungary, Singapore and Taiwan — Bomar was seeking an alternative to the skittish stock market and a promise of above-market returns.

Promoters of investment schemes based on religion often predict imminent crisis, pledge to reinvest profits in a worthy cause, and even kneel to pray with their victims.

'I've been a securities regulator for 20 years and I've seen more money stolen in the name of God than in any other way.'

— DEBORAH BORTNER of the North American Securities Administrators Association

The Arizona foundation promoters used Bible verses — like Luke 6:38: "Give, and it shall be given unto you" — to take in a total of \$590 million before being shut down two years ago. Three people have pleaded guilty to defrauding investors.

A scheme by the Greater Ministries International raised \$580 million between 1993 and 1999 by promising to double investors' money through "divinely inspired" investments in currency markets and gold, silver and diamond mines. Founder Gerald Payne promoted the scheme by comparing investors' money to the biblical story of the multiplying loaves and fishes. He was sentenced Monday in a Florida federal court to 27 years in prison.

It's the **BIGGEST SALES EVENT** of the year, so

DREAMING

DRIVING

NEW CAA SURVEY NAMES CANADA'S DREAM VEHICLES.

The recent 2000 CAA Vehicle Ownership Survey asked its members what vehicle they would buy if price and practicality were not an issue. Not surprisingly, 5 of the top 10 vehicles came from the same company: DaimlerChrysler. The Number One dream vehicle was Jeep Grand Cherokee. Other top 10 include: Chrysler PT Cruiser, Dodge Caravan, Dodge Durango and Dodge Ram Pickup.



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