

Rats Ravage County Homes Officials Ponder Microsoft Breakup

By NISHANT GARG
Staff Writer

Fairy tales of the Pied Piper are being heard in one street in Orange County, as residents are battling to eradicate rats from their homes.

For the past two months, residents of the Kennedy Circle subdivision in Hillsborough have been living with rats caused by a construction site at the end of the road.

Construction crews disrupted the rats' natural habitat when ground was broken for a new office complex to be located down the road from the affected residences.

Hillsborough resident Judy Rigsbee of 1941 Kennedy Circle said she was overwhelmed by the presence of enormous rats in her house.

"We have boarded up everything in order to prevent them from entering," she said.

Rigsbee said the rodents were responsible for transmitting diseases and other infections throughout her household.

"We have 11 grandchildren and six daughters who have been running between 101 and 105 temperature for eight or nine days," she said. "Some of them have been hospitalized at UNC Hospitals."

"The rats are as big as the cats. The rats carry diseases in their furs, and they enter our houses by chewing through the wood."

FAYE EVANS
Hillsborough Resident

Rigsbee said she had several domesticated pets at her home that had been fighting with the 16-inch intruding rodents.

"I have a German shepherd dog and two Boston terrier dogs who have been killing those rats and getting them to the front porch," she said.

Another resident, Faye Evans of 1945 Kennedy Circle, said she estimated the damage to her household caused by the unwelcome intruders to be several thousand dollars.

"The rats are as big as the cats," she said.

"The rats carry diseases in their furs, and they enter our houses by chewing through the wood."

Another resident, Andrea Ferguson, who lives at 1940 Kennedy Circle said she had borne \$95 in expenses since the rat influx for using the services of an exterminator to eliminate the infestation.

tion. Although residents continue to voice their concerns over the dilemma, relief comes only in a trickle from area officials.

Officials were unable to provide the community with much assistance, but gave suggestions for dealing with the rat problem.

"Each resident will have to eliminate and isolate food, water and harborage from the rats," said Ron Holdway, the environmental health director for the Orange County Health Department in Hillsborough.

"Residents have to be cooperative and energetic by integrating a baiting and poisoning program for the rats," he said.

"They can be terribly destructive." However, Holdway said combating rat infestation did not fall under the jurisdiction of the county health department.

"We have no legal means or authority to enforce a regulatory program," he said.

"Residents have to get together as a community and preventive measures have to be taken on their own volition."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Microsoft Corp. on Monday denounced as "extreme and radical" a reported government proposal to break up the software giant. Its stock price fell both on recent earnings reports and uncertainty about the company's future.

Attorneys for the Justice Department and the 19 states that successfully sued Microsoft for antitrust violations are considering ways to break up the company as a way to stop its anticompetitive practices, a source close to the talks said Monday.

However, any kind of divestiture is part of a "full array of options" being discussed, the source said.

Another person familiar with the talks said the plaintiffs are also considering temporary sanctions that could be imposed against Microsoft while the case makes its way to the appeals court.

Microsoft's stock fell 16 percent - or by \$12.31 a share to \$66.62 - in trading Monday on the Nasdaq Stock Market following word of the proposed breakup.

Investors also were disheartened by the company's mediocre earnings report last Thursday and the resulting stock downgrades by analysts at SG Cowen Securities Corp., and The Goldman Sachs Group.

The government has until Friday to submit its proposed remedies to U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, who ruled April 3 that Microsoft illegally used its dominance in the operating systems market to hurt competition.

The ruling came after a 78-day trial that began in October 1998.

"There is nothing in the trial record or in this case that would justify such an extreme and radical remedy," Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan said Monday. "This would be bad for Microsoft, consumers and the entire industry."

The company will have until May 10 to respond to the government's proposal, but it may ask for an extension depending on the remedies requested.

"If the government goes beyond the scope of this trial with the issues they raise in their filing, we're going to need an appropriate amount of time to respond," Cullinan said.

A court hearing to consider remedies has been scheduled for May 24.

The Wall Street Journal, USA Today and The Washington Post reported Monday that the government favored a breakup of the company, although details varied regarding how the corporation would be divided.


One reported option would be to split Microsoft into two or three companies selling separate products, such as the Windows operating system and Internet content. Another would be for Microsoft to divest its popular Office software. None of the plans would require Microsoft to separate its Web browser from Windows.

The company's bundling of the two products was a key issue in the government's lawsuit against Microsoft, Cullinan noted as he contended that divesting Windows or Office from the entire company would not be justified.

If the Justice Department calls for breaking up Microsoft, it would be the agency's first such action since the 1974 antitrust suit against AT&T Corp.

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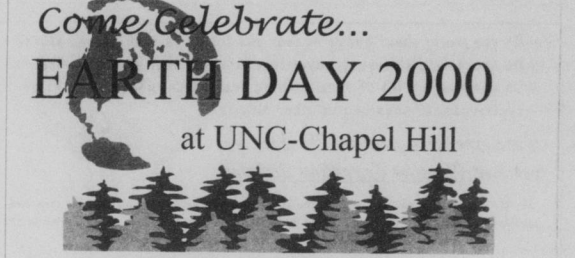
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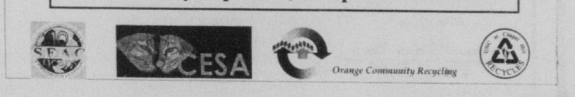
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- Earth Day Celebration
Wednesday, April 26, 10:00am-3:00pm Polk Place
The celebration is entitled, "Sustainable College Kids: Things You Can Do Every Day." There will be information about campus and community groups, workshops, crafts, music, food and fun.
- Senator Ellie Kinnaird
Wednesday, April 26, 2:00pm Polk Place
State Senator Ellie Kinnaird will speak about local and state environmental issues.
- SEAC's 4th Annual Vegetarian Banquet
Thursday, April 27, 7:30pm Great Hall

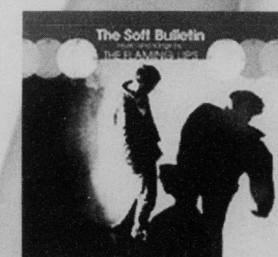


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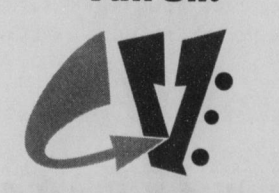
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