

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**Calvin creator to take nine-month hiatus**

KANSAS CITY, MO. — It's enough to make a person want to pack up a sandwich and his favorite tiger and run away from home, or lose himself in outer space, or change into a hungry Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Bill Watterson, creator of the popular comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes" is taking a nine-month hiatus beginning May 5, said his syndicator, Universal Press Syndicate.

The mischievous Calvin and his pet tiger, Hobbes, will be appearing in reruns from 1985 while Watterson takes time off.

Calvin's adventures of the imagination include crash-landing on strange planets, being captured by aliens, turning himself into dinosaurs, traveling in time and literally jumping out of his skin.

"Had I imagined 'Calvin and Hobbes' would last this long, I would have paced myself," Watterson said. "The strip requires a great deal of research, and I need to do more interplanetary exploration and paleontology work before I continue."

**Journalists flee from Iraqi-Kurdish fighting**

ANKARA, Turkey — At least 35 foreign correspondents fled into Turkey from attacks by Iraqi troops, officials and reporters said Tuesday. Most of the reporters had to cross a swift river or hike across rugged mountains, they said.

Turkey's semi-official Anatolia News Agency quoted some of the reporters as saying that one journalist had died and two were injured in clashes between Iraqi troops and Kurdish rebels. The journalists' names were not given, and the report could not be independently confirmed.

The reporters decided to flee Iraq, "because there was no authority left there (northern Iraq) and we really feared for our lives."

Gen. Dogan Gures, Turkey's military commander, said Tuesday 200,000 refugees were expected to try to enter Turkey after the collapse of the Kurdish rebellion. He said the government had not yet decided whether to admit the refugees.

Another journalist who escaped was Jim Hill of Cable News Network, who said Turkish soldiers began firing at the group as the journalists swam toward the Turkish shore, with bullets hitting the water nearby.

**Iraq claims Kurdish rebellion will end soon**

NICOSIA, Cyprus — Iraqi state press said Tuesday that only a few more days would be needed to stamp out fighting with Kurdish rebels, who reported recent skirmishes around the strategic oil center of Kirkuk.

The collapse of resistance in major cities like Erbil, Dohuk and Zakho indicated the rebellion was crumbling throughout the northern region and "they know their inevitable end is near," the official Iraqi News Agency quoted the newspaper of the Baath Party as saying.

INA, monitored in Cyprus, quoted the Al-Thawra newspaper as saying Kurdish areas would be purged of rebels battling the Saddam Hussein regime within days and the region would return to an unspecified degree of political autonomy.

**Nixon meets with Gorbachev and Yeltsin**

MOSCOW — President Mikhail Gorbachev met with former President Richard Nixon on Tuesday and assured him he is still the same "old Gorbachev," indicating he is not abandoning the reform process.

Presidential spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko said at their Kremlin meeting that the two discussed whether there had been a reversal of Soviet reforms.

However, the official Tass news agency said Gorbachev told Nixon: "The United States can be sure that they are dealing with the 'old Gorbachev.'" That was apparently a play on the "old Nixon" and "new Nixon" labels meant to distinguish Nixon's image during different points in his political career.

Ignatenko said Gorbachev told Nixon that republics seeking independence "must accept the constitutional process." Nixon in turn told Gorbachev that Americans were concerned about events in the breakaway republics of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, Ignatenko said.

Nixon also met Tuesday with Gorbachev's political rival, Russian leader Boris N. Yeltsin, and hinted that he hoped for better relations between the two in the future.

"He is a very responsible political leader, and I hope he would play a role, possibly even with President Gorbachev," he said of Yeltsin.

"We are for reforms, and whoever can do it first and best, we are for," he added.

— The Associated Press

**STATE AND NATIONAL**

**Budgets proposed to plan for shortfall**

By David Etchison  
Staff Writer

To tax or not to tax?

That is the question North Carolina's governor and legislators are asking as they plan for an expected revenue shortfall in the 1991-92 budget.

"We're already \$400 million in the hole for next year," said Nancy Pekerak, spokesperson for the governor. "We just won't have that revenue coming in. That's the shortfall."

The \$400 million shortfall will be in the continuation budget made up of all current programs that will be continued in the next fiscal year, Pekerak said.

Gov. James Martin and Lt. Gov. James Gardner both introduced budgets that propose different remedies for the shortfall.

Although some points of their plans are similar, Martin and Gardner differ on whether to raise taxes to boost revenues. The governor wants to discontinue payments of \$242 million aid to counties, Pekerak said. The money for these payments originally came from

intangible and inventory taxes taken from businesses and banks, but these taxes were repealed years ago, she said.

"In order to support the counties, we've still been sending that money back to them as if we were still collecting the intangibles and inventory tax, which we aren't," Pekerak said.

The governor plans to withhold that money from the counties and instead give counties the option of raising their sales tax by 1/2 cent.

"Basically, that \$242 million appropriation has been a gift from the state," Pekerak said. "Any monies that are controlled by the state are subject to decisions by the legislature. It's not a very stable source of revenue for the counties."

Gardner said he believes the budget can be balanced without requiring any form of tax increase. The revenue can be regained in other places, he said.

His budget will take the \$28 million needed each year for driver's education in the public schools from the Highway Fund instead of the General Fund. The General Fund provides money from

income taxes for most state operations.

Gardner would also like to increase tuition for the University of North Carolina system by 20 percent for out-of-state students and 10 percent for in-state students for the next two years. This would raise approximately \$28 million.

"Those monies need to go into public education because that's where our problem is right now," he said.

With these three ideas, "you've got almost \$100 million Gov. Martin didn't address at all," Gardner said.

Trimming the budgets of state departments helped cut costs by about \$160 million during this year's financial hard times.

Both the governor and his lieutenant favor continuing the practice of "zeroing in on some of the bureaucracy we've built up," as Gardner said.

The governor hopes to maintain current levels of spending and to use "management flexibility" cuts to save \$200 million.

Departments will be given less money than they received in the previous year,

but the department heads, instead of the legislature, will decide where the cuts should be made.

"You cannot have a part-time legislature micro-managing a \$10 billion business," Gardner said. "And that's what the state of North Carolina is: it's a business in the service business."

There's no way the legislators can know what cuts can or need to be made in each department, he said. Only the department heads can make those decisions effectively.

Dave Crofts, senior fiscal analyst for the General Assembly, said the legislature has come to a different conclusion in calculating the size of the budget shortfall.

"The legislative position is that the true size of the continuation budget shortfall is \$779 million," he said.

The governor took into account some one-time, "quick fix" reductions in calculating the shortfall he would deal with, Crofts said. Legislative leaders don't necessarily agree with him and are looking for longer range solutions to budget shortfalls.

**L.A. mayor to call for police chief's resignation**

LOS ANGELES — Mayor Tom Bradley will call for the resignation of Police Chief Daryl Gates, one month after the videotaped police beating of a black motorist shamed the city, a source said Tuesday.

Bradley, who has hesitated to ask directly that Gates quit despite persistent outrage and daily calls for the police chief's ouster, planned an evening news conference to call for his resignation, said a City Hall source who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The mayor's office would only say Bradley planned "a major announcement concerning the police department."

The mayor doesn't have the power to fire Gates. Only the Los Angeles Police Commission can order him out of office.

Momentum for Gates' ouster has been building since the March 3 clubbing of Rodney King. Hours before the mayor's announcement, the American Civil Liberties Union said it had signatures of 20,000 people calling for Gates to resign.

The King beating, captured on video by a bystander in suburban Lake View Terrace, was repeatedly shown to millions on television and led to condemnation by President Bush and civil rights groups.

Gates was attending a meeting Tuesday afternoon where brutality was

being discussed and not immediately available for comment.

"I'm glad the mayor has responded to the overwhelming cry for Police Chief Gates to resign. Each day another organization has stepped forward to ask for it," said Ramona Ripston, executive director of the ACLU of Southern California.

"I think the mayor is cautious by nature, and he wanted to be sure that when he did it, it was what the community wanted, what the city as a whole wanted," Ripston said.

Several investigations were underway in the King incident. In addition to Justice Department probes, a blue-rib-

bon citizens panel selected by Bradley began an investigation Monday, and Gates appointed another panel last week.

Earlier Tuesday, leaders of a newly formed group of black law enforcement officers claimed there was widespread racism within the police department.

"Silence is complicity and we have agreed to break that silence in an effort to gain the community's trust and support," said Officer Carl McGill, head of the 100-member African-American Peace Officer Association.

"We are also calling upon our fellow officers of all colors to uphold their oath of service by following our lead," McGill said.

**Fire prevention groups want to oust 'Fire Marshal Bill'**

NEWARK, N.J. — "Fire Marshal Bill," the combustible character who sets himself ablaze and blows himself up on the TV show "In Living Color," sets a dangerous example for children, fire prevention groups said Tuesday.

The New Jersey Fire Prevention and Protection Association announced at a news conference a campaign to have the character removed from the air. On the FOX television show, "Fire Marshal Bill" is a fire-safety instructor who

routinely puts metal objects into electrical outlets and burns his hands on hot stove tops.

The character, portrayed by Jim Carrey, endangers the lives of children, association representatives said. They said children could injure or kill themselves trying to re-create the character's actions.

"We want him off," said William Schultz, association president. "The network and the show owe an apology to burn victims nationwide."

"In Living Color" spokesman Andrew Shipp said FOX executives would reserve comment until they evaluate the group's allegations.

Show co-producer Eric Gold said from his Los Angeles office that the show tries not to respond to special interest groups.

Other groups calling for removal of "Fire Marshal Bill" included the National Fire Protection Association and the N.J. Fire Protection Association.

"He's like a pyromaniac," said Judy

Marquet of the St. Barnabas Burn Foundation in Livingston. "He almost enjoys the fire. The problem is they are spotlighting a dysfunctional behavior."

A character whose face is a seeming mass of skin grafts is not farcical, Marquet said, and insults those who have had skin grafts.

The National Fire Protection Association of Quincy, Mass., also has written FOX chairman and chief executive officer Barry Diller asking for the character's removal.

**C A R R B O R O**

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