

Bodies of woman, fetus found

EMOTIONAL IMPACT: REPORT ADDS TO BURDEN ON GRIEVING LOVED ONES

By Crystal Carreon
Mercury News

MODESTO — Outside Laci and Scott Peterson's vacant Covena Avenue home, where the expectant parents once put finishing touches on a baby boy's bedroom, a makeshift memorial continued to grow Monday as friends and strangers struggled with the news that her body may have been found.

And in this Central Valley town, they grappled with a terrible question: Would it be better to know the body that of La-

ci Peterson, putting an end to their wondering, or to discover it is not and continue to hope she will someday come home?

On Monday, a visibly shaken Jalaina Bell added a teddy bear to the weather-worn memorial that already included candles, roses and dolls. A crocheted Easter bunny sits near a small picture of an angel with the message, "In loving memory of Laci and Baby Connor. God bless you."

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JIM GENSHEIMER — MERCURY NEWS
Police and coroner's office staff carry the remains of a body found Monday at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline.

LACI PETERSON CASE: POLICE SEARCH FOR LINKS TO MISSING MODESTO WOMAN

By Linda Goldston, Yomi S. Wronge and Crystal Carreon
Mercury News

The search for Laci Peterson took a dramatic turn Monday with the discovery of a badly decomposed female body along the shore near Richmond, about a mile from where a hiker on Sunday found a full-term fetus about the age of the missing Modesto woman's unborn son.

Police from Richmond and Peterson's hometown of Modesto swarmed the narrow beach at



Laci Peterson

Point Isabel Regional Shoreline in the wake of the grim discovery, looking for evidence that the body is that of the 27-year-old substitute teacher who was eight months pregnant when she disappeared on Christmas Eve. Authorities said it could be days before tests determine whether the bodies that washed ashore were those of Peterson and her baby.

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San Jose Mercury News

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APRIL 15, 2003 | TUESDAY

THE NEWSPAPER OF SILICON VALLEY

Davis rating plunges in poll

24% APPROVAL
STATE'S LOWEST
IN 55 YEARS

By Mike Zapler
Mercury News

Gov. Gray Davis' approval rating has reached the lowest point of any California governor in the past 55 years, and nearly half of voters now say they would throw him out of office if a recall effort makes the ballot.

Those are the results from a stinging California Field Poll released Monday in which nearly two-thirds of the California voters surveyed said they disapprove of the way Davis is handling his job.

Davis spokesman Steve Maviglio said the governor's poor approval ratings reflect the poor economy.

"It doesn't usually result in increased popularity, when you have to make difficult decisions, particularly on the budget," Maviglio said. "When the economy goes south, he gets blamed for it."

According to the poll, the percentage of voters who would recall the governor tilt-

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OPINIONS ON RECALL

Voters who would recall governor:

California	Bay Area
46%	34%

Think recall effort is a "good thing":

California	Bay Area
33%	23%

Source: Field Poll

INSIDE

SARS deaths worry officials in China

In a major reversal Monday, the Chinese government said it is deeply worried about the illness called SARS as the number of cases and deaths there jumped. World Health Organization officials reported 74 more cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome in several areas of China, and experts worry that the fatality rate will rise steeply.

Until late last week, Chinese officials had claimed that SARS had been effectively contained. But the disease's spread throughout China indicates the illness is not under control, and is likely to continue to have serious effects on public health, travel, and the economy throughout Asia and the Pacific Rim. See story, Page 3A.

DIPLOMACY

U.S. officials turn up heat on Syria

By Ron Hutcheson

Mercury News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration sharply stepped up its verbal assault on Syria on Monday, leveling accusations that Iraq's neighbor possesses chemical weapons, has given refuge to senior Iraqi officials and allowed Arab fighters to enter Iraq to attack U.S. troops.

Although U.S. officials downplay prospects of military action, the steady stream of accusations against Syria from the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department is strikingly similar to the invective aimed at Iraq in the buildup to war.

On Monday — a day after Bush accused Syria of producing chemical weapons — administration officials branded Syria "a rogue nation" and threatened diplomatic, economic and unspecified "other" sanctions.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

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INSIDE



ASSOCIATED PRESS
JOY: The rescue of Ronald D. Young, right, David Williams and other POWs brings joy to their families. | PAGE 13A

U.S. MARINES TAKE COMPLEX OF PALACES

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SOLDIERS FIND 12 MISSILES NEAR KIRKUK

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As large-scale fighting winds down,

Washington shifts its focus to setting up an interim government in the war-torn nation but cautions that war is not over.

By Jonathan S. Landay, Sara Olkon and Martin Merzer
Mercury News

TIKRIT, Iraq — The Pentagon declared the end of significant fighting in Iraq on Monday as Marines stormed the heart of Tikrit, suppressed hard-core resistance there and captured the last stronghold of Saddam Hussein.

"The major combat operations are over," Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal said after more than 3,000 Marines fought their way to the center of Saddam's ancestral hometown.

In Washington, the Bush administration's attention was already shifting to two postwar concerns.

The administration sharply criticized Syria on Monday, saying that the nation has chemical weapons of its own and has aided escaping Iraqi officials.

U.S. officials looked forward to a meeting today in the southern Iraqi city of An-Nasiriyah, where they hoped to begin forging an interim

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Weather

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INFORMATION FOR LIFE