



# THE PLAIN DEALER

\*\*\*\*\*  
SPORTS FINAL  
35¢

TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2003

\*\*\*\*\*



Schlessman Dennis



Wilson DeMarco Raulin

## 5 families, 2 campuses left to mourn fire victims

JOHN F. HAGAN  
Plain Dealer Reporter

Alan Schlessman was a sports standout in high school. Erin DeMarco brightened a room as soon as she entered it.

Andrea Dennis was known for her quick wit. Christine Wilson seemed to wear a near permanent smile. And Kyle Raulin was captain of his high school soccer and basketball teams.

All were college kids whose lives came together in celebration — a 21st birthday party — and ended in tragedy Sunday in a suspicious house fire near Ohio State University.

Schlessman and Raulin, who lived in the house, attended OSU. The three women — all from the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority — were from Ohio University.

One of the students rescued from the home, Josh Patterson, 20, of Cincinnati, remained in critical condition at the OSU medical center. A spokesman said he is being treated for minor burns and smoke inhalation.

Some students were sleeping as firefighters went room-to-room banging on doors, yanking them from their beds and carrying them from the burning house.

The two campuses, separated by about 70 miles, drew together in shared sorrow over the deaths.

The smell of smoke clung to the charred house yesterday. Windows were broken, the cream-colored porch railings and pillars were burned black and large furniture springs were the only recognizable item in a black pile of debris on the porch.

A large pine tree in front of the home looked untouched. Students placed bouquets on steps leading up to the house. On the front sidewalk, someone had attached a picture on white cardboard showing several of the 12 roommates who lived in the house.

"In loving memory of our neighbors Kyle and Big Al," the sign read. "We love you, miss you & we'll never forget you."

Investigators, meanwhile, described the blaze as suspicious as they sorted through the rubble and the conflicting stories about what happened.

Arson and homicide investigators were looking for traces of an accelerant — a substance that may have been used to intentionally start the fire that ripped through the three-story brick home.

"It's suspicious until [investigators] determine otherwise," said Columbus Division of Police Sgt. Brent Mull. "The cause still isn't known."

Some students reported seeing occupants of a black and white car throw an incendiary device that landed on or near the home's front porch. Others said a grill filled with hot coals had been overturned and ignited the fire.

SEE MOURN | A4

# A smaller conflict

## Iraq largely pacified; attention turns to Syria



MICHAEL MACOR | SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE VIA AP

Marines hold a man who had been pointed out as a looting suspect in Baghdad on Sunday. The man, who suffered cuts on his face while he was detained, was released after Marines determined the accusation was unfounded.

## U.S. accuses Syria of sheltering Iraqis, helping terrorists

DANA MILBANK  
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration escalated sharp diplomatic warnings to Syria yesterday, accusing Iraq's neighbor of developing chemical weapons, harboring former Iraqi leaders and allowing foreign fighters to enter Iraq to attack U.S. troops.

The administration also accused Syria of supporting terrorism.

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer, at his morning briefing, said repeatedly that "Syria needs to cooperate."

He read from a CIA report to Congress last year that Syria had stockpiles of the nerve agent sarin, that it was "trying to develop more toxic and persistent nerve elements," and that it was "highly probable" that Syria was pursuing biological weapons. Fleischer de-

scribed the document as "authoritative" and said the charge is "well corroborated."

Fleischer declined to dispel the impression that the administration was targeting Syria for possible diplomatic or even military measures.

"I can only say to you that it should not be unexpected that the United States for a considerable period of time has said through diplomatic channels that nations that are rogue nations need to clean up their act," he said. "They should not harbor terrorists. They should not produce weapons of mass destruction."

Syrian officials denied Washington's charges, calling the increasing rhetoric a "campaign of misinformation and disinformation." Imad Moustapha, deputy ambassador to the United States, responded to the charges.

SEE SYRIA | A10

### MORE ON THE WAR

Joint patrols restore order  
A10

Honoring families  
A11

DNA IDs fallen soldiers  
A13

Local families wait, hope  
A15

From the Homefront  
E1

Get the latest at:  
www.cleveland.com/iraq

## Commanders send bombers, carriers back to home bases

ROBERT BURNS  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Large-scale combat in Iraq is finished, and the U.S. war commander is sending warplanes and other forces home, the Pentagon said yesterday, but the remaining troops still face dangers.

"The major combat operations are over, because the major Iraqi [fighting] units on the ground cease to show coherence," said Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, vice director of the Pentagon's Joint Staff.

Two of the five Navy aircraft carrier battle groups engaged in the war are to head home this week. Each has about 80 planes aboard, including about 50 attack planes. McChrystal said war commanders are reviewing the timetable for sending the Army's 1st Cavalry Division into Iraq. Another official said a decision already has been made not to deploy the

1st Cavalry.

The Air Force has sent home the four B-2 stealth bombers that flew wartime missions, as well as F-117A stealth fighter-bombers and F-15C fighters, officials said.

With little public notice, the last two U.S. aircraft based at Incirlik, Turkey, flew home Saturday to Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., ending 12 years of enforcing a flight-interdiction zone over northern Iraq.

About 45 U.S. and British planes were based at Incirlik. They did not participate in the war because Turkey would not permit it. With the fall of the Saddam Hussein government, the need for "no-fly" zones over northern and southern Iraq disappeared, officials said.

It was not immediately known whether the U.S. planes that enforced the southern "no-fly" zone would remain at bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

SEE WAR | A9

## INSIDE

- Dear Abby ..... E8
- Classified ..... F1
- Comics ..... E7
- Deaths ..... B6
- Editorials ..... B8
- Movies ..... E5
- Sarah Crump ... E2
- Sports ..... D1
- Television ..... E6

## WEATHER

Windy, partly sunny and very warm. Cloudy and mild tonight. High 80, low 58. Map, B10.



## Schools feel budget pinch

State budget cuts force Euclid to limit summer school, Willoughby-Eastlake to cancel field trips. B1

## New SUV for Avon Lake Ford plant

Union sources say Ford is planning to build a second sport-utility vehicle at the Ohio Assembly Plant. C1

## School gunmen kill 15-year-old

Shooters open fire in a packed high school gym in New Orleans, killing one 15-year-old boy and wounding three girls. Police arrest four suspects. A7

## SARS outbreak called grave crisis in China

Washington Post

BEIJING — China and Hong Kong reported 10 new deaths yesterday from severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, and Premier Wen Jiabao described the disease for the first time as a "grave" crisis that continues to spread.

Wen warned the country's economy, international image and social stability could be affected by the sometimes fatal illness.

Wen's statement marked a change in the government's tone. In past weeks, Chinese officials generally claimed SARS was under control.

SARS is believed to have originated in southern China in November and has spread to at least 20 countries, killing more than 140 people and infecting 3,300. China has been hit the hardest, with 63 dead.

The number of suspected cases in Ohio grew to 10 yesterday, adding a

Geauga County man and a Summit County family of three.

The Geauga man, 50, no longer has the flulike symptoms of SARS and is resting at home, said Peggy Scherer, nursing director for the county health department. He had traveled recently to a country with a SARS outbreak, but she said she did not know which one.

The Summit family — a 35-year-old man, his 32-year-old wife and their son, 7 — came down with upper respiratory infections after one family member traveled to China, said Dr. Ronald Hawes, medical director for the county health department. All are in voluntary isolation at home until 10 days after symptoms go away.

Hawes said it is not likely the Summit County cases are SARS.

Plain Dealer reporter Roger Mezger contributed to this story.

## Is it biology or happenstance causing a few to infect so many?

DONALD G. MCNEIL JR. AND LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN  
New York Times

A child in China so infectious that he is nicknamed "the poison emperor." A Chinese doctor who infects 12 fellow guests in his Hong Kong hotel, who then fly to Singapore, Vietnam and Canada. An elderly Canadian woman who infects three generations of her family.

While watching the mysterious illness called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) hop around the world and explode in new outbreaks, epidemiologists began to ask themselves an unsettling question: Is it carried by "super-



Henderson

spreaders?"

The notion that some people are hyperinfective, spewing germs out like teakettles while others simmer quietly like stew pots, has been around since Typhoid Mary became notorious in 1907.

"There hasn't been enough time, thinking and probing" to hazard more than a guess as to why super-spreaders are responsible for so much of the spread of SARS, said Dr. Donald Henderson.

SEE SPREADERS | A2