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THURSDAY Sept. 20, 2007

50¢ FINAL EDITION

Murder charges dismissed against Md. mother

Evidence from medical examiner's report was insufficient to prosecute, investigators say

By **ANGIE BASIOUNY**
 The News Journal

Murder charges against an Ocean City, Md., woman accused of letting her newborn die in a toilet were dismissed Tuesday, ending a bizarre case that garnered national media attention and raised questions about the enforcement of fetal homicide laws.

Investigators said a medical examiner's report contained insufficient evidence to prosecute Christy Freeman, who told police in August that she gave birth to twins while sitting on the toilet in 2004 and let one of them drown in the water.

Worcester County State's Attorney Joel Todd asked a grand jury in closed-door proceedings to dismiss the single



Christy Freeman had told police she gave birth to twins while sitting on a toilet in 2004 and that she let one of them drown. The prosecutor asked a grand jury to dismiss the single murder count, police said.

count of murder against her, according to Ocean City police spokesman Barry Neeb.

Todd, who could not be reached for comment Wednesday, is scheduled to

hold a news conference today.

"Everything truly hinges on the medical examiner's report," Neeb said. "There are no charges pending or anticipated."

Freeman, a mother of four who owns a taxi service in the resort town, spent 55 days held without bond in the Worcester County Jail before going home about 3 p.m. Wednesday.

Her longtime companion and father of her children, Raymond Godman, said the homecoming was low-key.

"There's no reason for celebration — she's pissed off," he said. "We knew that she was innocent of all charges

from the beginning. She should never have been in there."

Godman blamed authorities for trying to construct a bogus case against his partner. He said investigators were overzealous in pursuing charges and did not follow procedures.

"You're supposed to build a case, then make an arrest," he said. "But what they did is like building the house and then trying to put the foundation under it. They jumped the gun and started throwing murder accusations around, like a bunch of Frisbees, and then tried to make the pieces fit."

See **OC — A2**



The News Journal/SUCHAT PEDERSON
 Josie Roy is one of about 15 Delawareans who boarded a bus Wednesday for a rally in Jena, La.

Rallying behind Jena Six

Accusations of racial bias resonate in Del.

By **ADAM TAYLOR**
 The News Journal

New Castle-area resident Josie Roy has never met Robert Bailey Jr., Jesse Beard, Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Bryant Purvis or Theo Shaw.

But the retired government worker boarded a charter bus full of strangers at 5 a.m.

Wednesday in Philadelphia to travel 1,300 miles to Jena, La. To her, the 20-hour trip to support the six boys, now known as the Jena Six, will be well worth it.

National NAACP officials said they expect tens of thousands to converge today on the central Louisiana town of 3,000 people for a march, a rally and a town meeting — all in support of the six black Jena High School students charged with beating a white classmate.

Originally, the six students were charged with attempted murder, which has since been reduced to assault and other charges. The case resonates here for Delawareans concerned about disparate arresting and imprisonment of minorities in this state. For Roy, who is black, the issue is a fundamental case of injustice.

"This is something all Americans should unite around," she said. "We should all want equal justice for all. If the case were reversed, I would feel the same way for those six white boys."

Roy, 61, is one of about 15

See **JENA 6 — A2**

Divers give Indian River Inlet Bridge its annual inspection



A surveyor's target on the shore provides a reference point for the team inspecting the Indian River Inlet Bridge this week. Special to The News Journal/CHUCK SNYDER

Few engineers are qualified for dirty, dangerous job

By **SUMMER HARLOW**
 The News Journal

The water was cold and rough, filled with old, tangled fishing lines and cables.

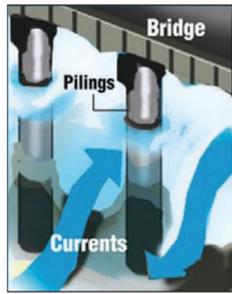
Hundreds of fish darted everywhere, making it even tougher to see in the two-foot visibility.

The three-man crew on board the boat were working on a tight schedule. The rapid current — one of the fastest on the East Coast — means they have a mere 45-minute window every six hours, during "slack tide," in which it's safe to dive into the murky Indian River Inlet.

The divers were inspecting the supports of the bridge that spans the inlet, which has been deemed "structurally deficient" by the federal government. It is closely monitored for scouring — erosion of the inlet's bottom that leaves the steel beams that support the bridge exposed and potentially insecure.

These divers are engineers who have traded in their suits and ties for wet suits and flippers. They spend their days on the open water,

Bridge erosion



Daily tidal flow has eroded the bottom of the inlet. In 1965, when the current bridge was built, the inlet was about 28 feet deep. A 1999 survey showed some the bottom depth exceeding 100 feet. The more the pillings are exposed, the less stable they are.

The News Journal

not tied to a desk and office. And there are probably only two dozen engineers across the country like them, certified not only as professional engineers but also as commercial divers.

"We're few and far between," said Dennis Cassidy, an engineer diver with New Jersey's Boswell

Engineering, before he headed out for the annual underwater inspection of the Indian River Inlet Bridge this week. "It's a hazardous environment, with polluted water, and the currents."

David Severns, chairman of the Association of Diving Contractors International engineering diving committee, said it's a rarity to find a professional engineer who also has undergone the 464 hours of training to become a commercial diver.

And with roughly 150,000 bridges across the country requiring water inspections, and fewer than two dozen professional engineer divers, states often must turn to nonengineers to complete inspections, Severns said.

"There just aren't enough to go around, and that's a problem," he said.

Underwater, there's not someone looking over inspectors' shoulders to doublecheck their work, which is why it's so important to have professional engineer divers, he said.

Built in 1965, the Indian River Inlet Bridge, a vital connection between Dewey Beach and Bethany Beach, has been subject to divers' inspections since 1996, said Jason Gleockler of the Delaware Department of Transportation.

See **BRIDGE — A9**

Flu spray approved for kids age 2

Alternative to shots expected to lift AstraZeneca's revenues

By **GARY HABER** and **HIRAN RATNAYAKE**
 The News Journal

The use of a nasal spray flu vaccine was approved for children as young as age 2 Wednesday, giving parents an alternative for needle-shy youngsters.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval of FluMist for children ages 2 to 5 is also expected to be a financial boost for AstraZeneca, which purchased the vaccine's maker last year for \$15.6 billion.

FluMist, already approved for use by people 5 to 49, is expected to become a widely used vaccine for young children, less than half of whom are vaccinated.

"The goal of preventing influenza is now more attainable with the availability of FluMist for younger children," said Dr. Jesse Goodman, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. "This approval also offers parents and health professionals a needle-free option for squeamish toddlers, who may be reluctant to get a traditional flu shot."

For Fay Smith, it will be a good alternative for her 3-year-old daughter Kaelyn. Last time Kaelyn got a shot, she started getting antsy as soon as she saw the needle. And as the needle got closer, she tried to fight back.

"It was pretty intense," recalled Smith, of Claymont. "She was struggling and upset and crying during the actual procedure."

She wants to consult with her daughter's pediatrician first, but Smith said she's sure she'll consider giving her daughter FluMist this season.

"She does cry and struggle and she does look at me like I'm doing something bad to her," Smith said. "But I certainly would give it a try because I don't want her to associate staying healthy with being painful."

A Centers for Disease Control report released Wednesday said rates of influenza are highest among children, a population that has low vaccination rates.

See **SPRAY — A8**

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TODAY'S FORECAST

HIGH 79 LOW 61
 Details on A4

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