



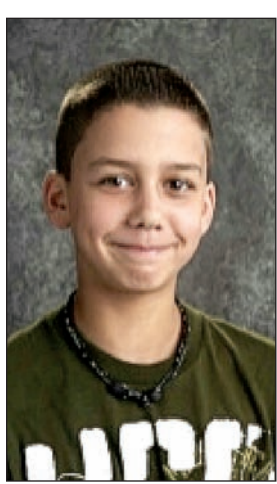
New Haven Register

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NEWSSTAND 75¢

REMEMBERING RALPH RUSSO, 14

'It's like we all lost a son'



Popular teen mourned as West Haven tries to cope



By Abbe Smith
Register Staff

WEST HAVEN — Ralph Russo, a Bailey Middle School student who loved baseball and dreamed of being a firefighter one day, was remembered Tuesday by family and friends a day after he was struck and killed while riding his bicycle at a busy intersection by the beach.

INSIDE: Obituary, B9

Schools were open late Tuesday with grief counselors standing by to help students, parents and teachers cope with the death. A crisis intervention team was made available for firefighters and paramedics who first responded to the accident and tried to save the life of a boy some of them knew from his days spent hanging out at the Allingtown fire station.

"This is so tragic for this community. It's like we all lost a son," Center District Fire Chief James P. O'Brien said. He called what happened to Ralph "a parent's worst nightmare."

Ralph, 14, and a friend were enjoying the warm weather Monday and riding bicycles on Captain Thomas Boulevard, when Ralph turned left and rode his bike directly into oncoming traffic, according to police accounts. He was immediately struck by a black Jeep, his body thrown into the air before landing on the barrier strip.

First responders tried to resuscitate Ralph, but he died on the way to Yale-New Haven Hospital.

O'Brien said the accident is one of the city's worst in recent memory.

See West Haven, A7



ABOVE: Rachel Riccio, 17, left, and Gabriella Valencia, 15, both of West Haven, put flowers and a candle at a makeshift memorial on the island at Captain Thomas Boulevard and Campbell Avenue where Ralph Russo was killed by a car while riding his bicycle. Riccio is a cousin of the boy.

LEFT: Attorney Vincent Falcone, who has been retained by the Russo family, talks with accident reconstructionists Nigel Smith, center, and Michael Cei near the island memorial Tuesday.

Obama wins big in N.C., hangs tough in Indiana

Clinton struggles to stop rival

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Barack Obama swept to victory in the North Carolina primary Tuesday night and declared he was closing in on the Democratic presidential nomination. Hillary Rodham Clinton clung to a narrow Indiana lead, struggling to halt her rival's march into history.

"Tonight we stand less than 200 delegates away from securing the Democratic nomination for president of the United States," Obama told a raucous rally in Raleigh, N.C. — and left no doubt he intended to claim the prize.

Clinton and Obama both said the former first lady would win Indiana. Yet thousands of votes were yet to be counted, principally in Lake County, not far from Obama's home city of Chicago.

She told cheering supporters in Indianapolis, "Thanks to you, it's full speed on to the White House," signaling her determination to fight on in a campaign already waged across more than 15 months and nearly all 50 states.

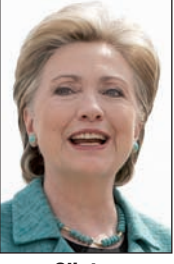
Returns from 99 percent of North Carolina precincts showed Obama winning 56 percent of the vote to 42 percent for Clinton, a triumph that mirrored his earlier wins in Southern states with large black populations.

That made Indiana a virtual must-win Midwestern contest for the former first lady, who was hoping to counter Obama's persistent delegate advantage with a strong run through the late primaries. Returns from 92 percent of the state's precincts showed Clinton with 51 percent of the vote to 49 percent for Obama.

Obama won at least 69 delegates and Clinton at least 63 in



Obama



Clinton

HOW THEY VOTED

INDIANA
4,787 of 5,230 precincts - 92 percent
Hillary Clinton 588,823 - 51 percent
Barack Obama 568,156 - 49 percent

NORTH CAROLINA
2,796 of 2,817 precincts - 99 percent
Barack Obama 888,979 - 56 percent
Hillary Clinton 655,482 - 41 percent

DELEGATE COUNT

INDIANA
4,787 of 5,230 precincts - 92 percent
61 of 72 Delegates allocated
Hillary Clinton 32 - 44 percent
Barack Obama 29 - 40 percent

NORTH CAROLINA
2,796 of 2,817 precincts - 99 percent
71 of 115 Delegates allocated
Barack Obama 40 - 34 percent
Hillary Clinton 31 - 26 percent

the two states combined, with 55 still to be awarded.

Voters in both states fell along racial lines long since established in a marathon race between the nation's strongest-ever black presidential candidate and its most formidable female challenger for the White House.

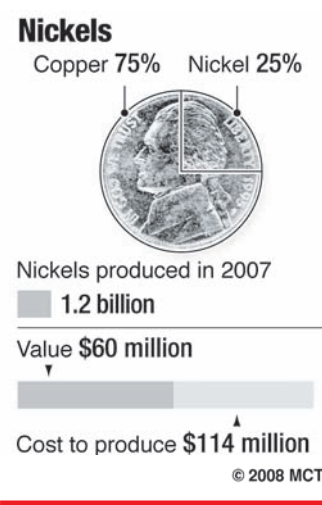
The economy was the top issue by far in both states, according to interviews with voters as they left their polling places.

Two weeks after a decisive defeat in Pennsylvania, Obama

See Democrats, A7

Cost of coins now exceeds value

It takes 7.7¢ to make a nickel; soaring metal prices to blame



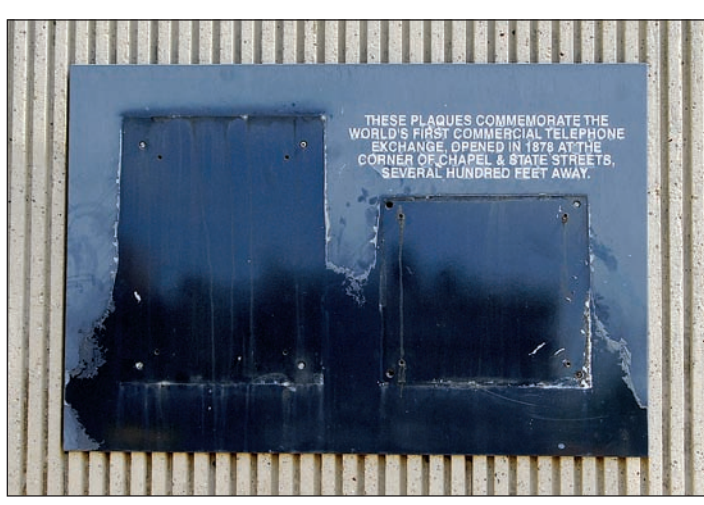
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — If you think times are tough, it now costs more than a penny to make a nickel. And the cost of a nickel is more than 7½ cents.

Surging prices for copper, zinc and nickel have Congress trying to bring back the steel-made pennies of World War II, and maybe using steel for nickels, as well.

"If we continue minting coins with the current metal content, with each new penny and nickel we issue, we will also be contributing to our national debt by almost as much as the coin is worth," said Rep. Luis Guterrez, D-Ill., who chairs the House panel that oversees the U.S. Mint.

See Inflation, A7



Peter Hvizdak/Register

Bronze plaques commemorating the world's first telephone exchange at 400 State St. have been removed for safekeeping after someone tried to steal them. Several others are missing from the city's historic buildings.

Historic plaques fall victim to thefts

By William Kaempffer
Register Staff

NEW HAVEN — Did you know that the first-ever telephone exchange in the world was in New Haven, or that the birthplace of Walter Camp, father of American football, was in the Chapel Street house that now is occupied by an AIDS patient advocacy group?

If you didn't before, it will be much harder to find out now.

It seems pieces of New Haven history are being erased, at least from the public eye, as commemorative plaques — at least five so far — have disappeared from landmarks around the city, either stolen or removed for safekeeping as the latest victims

See Outrage, A7

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