



The Herald

Thursday, January 14, 2010

Sports

Palma boys basketball
beats Salinas in TCAL
showdown, D1

www.montereyherald.com

County tops state
in number of sexual claims

Food firm sued for harassment

By JULIA REYNOLDS
Herald Salinas Bureau

Monterey County leads the state in cases involving sexual harassment of farmworkers and other low-wage employees, a government attorney said Wednesday — hours after a federal lawsuit was filed against a Salinas-based food company.

“Of all the counties in California, we’ve had the most cases in Monterey for sexual harassment,” said William Tamayo, an attorney for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in San Francisco.

Although exact numbers were not available late Wednesday, he said Monterey County cases far outpaced Kings County and other agricultural counties in the state.

“It’s part of the condition of these workers,” he said. “They’re pretty brave to step forward and complain.”

The federal agency filed a civil suit Wednesday against Monterey Gourmet Foods, a Salinas-based frozen food producer, charging that a supervisor sexually harassed four workers — including an 80-year-old man — and that after two of the workers complained, the company retaliated by firing all four.

The alleged harassment began in 2006 and was “notorious and pervasive,” reads a complaint and demand for a jury trial filed in the Northern District of California. The government is seeking monetary damages, new

Please see **Harassment** page A9

Haiti quake: World aid on its way to island nation

Staggering death toll feared; many trapped



RICARDO ARDUENGO/Associated Press

People looking for survivors use sledgehammers and their bare hands to dig through a collapsed shopping center in Petionville, Haiti.

“Eighty percent of what kids learn in the first four, five years . . . is through their eyes.”

— Kim Rankin, operations manager for the clinic

Vision exam brings world into focus

By CLAUDIA MELÉNDEZ SALINAS
Herald Salinas Bureau

While covering his right eye with a black examination paddle, 7-year-old Isaac Fausto attempted to decipher the letters on a mirror in front of him.

“See . . . ee . . . eich . . . el . . . tee,” the first-grader at Salinas’ McKinnon Elementary School recited.

“What letters can you see now?” asked optometrist Brett Fredericks.

The boy scrunched his forehead, but no sounds came out of his mouth.

“Can you guess?” Fredericks asked.

“Eich . . . es . . .”

After a few more tests, Fausto’s round face was placed in front of the phoropter to fit him for lenses to improve his vision.

Thanks to the VSP Vision Care mobile eyes clinic, between 100 and 150 migrant students in Monterey County will get a thorough eye exam this week. If those students, referred to the program by migrant education counselors, need glasses, they will be provided, completely free.

The custom-built 40-foot itinerant clinic was parked at McKinnon Elementary on

Please see **Vision** page A9

Second-grader Isaac Fausto, 7, from McKinnon Elementary School in Salinas, gets an eye exam at the VSP Vision Care Mobile Clinic on Wednesday.



VERN FISHER/The Herald

Salinas family awaits word from kin in Haiti

NO MESSAGES SINCE QUAKE HIT

By DENNIS TAYLOR
Herald Staff Writer

A Salinas family was on edge Wednesday, waiting for word from their daughter, son-in-law and 1-year-old granddaughter, all of whom are in the earthquake-devastated country of Haiti.

Steve Sprenkle, a Monterey County attorney, and his wife, Merelyn, say they were exchanging text messages with their 28-year-old daughter, Starry, at the exact moment the catastrophic magnitude-7 earthquake rocked that tiny Caribbean nation.

For the Sprenkles’ daughter, the day began with other tragic news. Her husband, Dr. Erlantz



COURTESY OF STEVE SPRENKLE

Dr. Erlantz “Lantzy” Hyppolite, Starry Sprenkle and their daughter, Jasmine.

Please see **Family** page A9

By JONATHAN M. KATZ
Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Dazed survivors wandered past dead bodies in rubble-strewn streets Wednesday, crying for loved ones, and rescuers desperately searched collapsed buildings as fear rose that the death toll from Haiti’s devastating earthquake could reach into the tens of thousands.

The first cargo planes with food, water, medical supplies, shelter and sniffer dogs headed to the Western Hemisphere’s poorest nation a day after the magnitude-7 quake flattened much of the capital of 2 million people.

Tuesday’s earthquake brought down buildings great and small — from shacks in shantytowns to President Rene Preval’s gleaming white National Palace, where a dome tilted ominously above the manicured grounds.

Hospitals, schools and the main prison collapsed. The capital’s Roman Catholic archbishop was killed when his office and the main cathedral fell. The head of the U.N. peacekeeping mission was

Please see **Haiti** page A9

Inside

How to help. **A9**
Haiti a frequent target of disasters. **C10**



RICARDO ARDUENGO/Associated Press

An injured child sits on the sidewalk in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Wednesday.

On the Web

montereyherald.com
See our Web site for the latest news, video and ways to help with the relief effort in Haiti.

Closure does not mean shortage of options

B. Dalton bookstore shuts doors in Salinas

By LANE WALLACE
Herald Staff Writer

Salinas, which almost lost its libraries a few years ago, has now lost its only chain bookstore.

B. Dalton Bookseller, in the Northridge Mall, is selling everything at half price and will close Saturday, as will all but two of the 50 Dalton stores around the country.

The closure “is not reflective of Salinas,” said David Deason, vice president of development for Barnes & Noble, which owns the B. Dalton brand.

“These are challenging times for all businesses,” Deason said. “It’s

HERALD QUESTION
OF THE DAY

Where do you get your books?

Online Bookstores Library

Go to: montereyherald.com

to place your vote

Herald surveys are unscientific

not an evaluation of any individual market.”

The B. Dalton stores are small, and the trend has been toward large stores, Deason said. Barnes & Noble’s business is primarily “700-plus large-format stores,” he said.

Please see **B. Dalton** page A9

OPENS NEXT WEEK ~ GET THE BEST SEATS NOW!

SoDAonSTAGE
School of Dramatic Arts
presents

Golden Bough Theatre
JAN 21-FEB 14

ALL SHOOK UP

A NEW MUSICAL COMEDY

Book by JOE DIPIETRO
Featuring 25 hits by ELVIS PRESLEY

Box Office 622-0100 www.pacre.org