

WIDER EVACUATIONS AND MELTDOWN FEARS

In Japan, blast rocks second reactor at coastal plant | A4



NCAA BRACKETS OUT; PENN STATE, TEMPLE TO PLAY Sports, C1, C4

READING EAGLE

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Killings rattle residents in Lehigh town

By Ron Devlin
Reading Eagle

ALBURTIS — Harold Frey knows just about everybody in this western Lehigh County community.

In the wake of a double murder Friday, he said, the borough near the Berks County line is in a state of shock.

"The town's people are distressed and upset," Frey, 70, proprietor of Frey's Country Store, said Sunday. "It's hard for them to believe such a thing could happen in this community."

Althea Walbert, 82, and her daughter, Jeanette, 59, were pronounced dead Friday at 10:13 a.m. in their home at 122 Cobblestone Court, Lehigh Coroner Scott M. Grim said. He ruled the deaths homicides.

Althea Walbert, Jeanette Walbert obituaries. B9. Grim is withholding information on the cause of death pending an investigation by state police and the Lehigh district attorney's office. Troopers have released no details on the murders.

On Sunday, a trooper was stationed outside the Walbert house, a white, two-story frame building surrounded by modern townhouses in the Berry Acres development.

Frey, a storekeeper in Albutis for 25 years, said Althea Walbert sold the land around her house to a developer about seven years ago.

Steven R. Hill, Albutis Borough Council president, said residents are uneasy in the wake of the murders.

"I don't believe there's ever been a murder in Albutis before," Hill said.

Frey said that customers in his store have told him they're locking their doors and windows and leaving their lights on at night.

Officials have been tight-lipped about the motive for the killings.

According to Frey and others in the town, Althea Walbert was an eccentric woman who carried large amounts of cash.

"She didn't believe in banks," Frey said. "Everybody in town knew about it."

Albutis police cautioned Walbert about flashing her cash and advised her to open a bank account, Hill said.

Frey, whose store is about two blocks from the Walbert house, said Althea was frugal despite her apparent wealth. She drove a 20-year-old Dodge Aries and showed few outward signs of extravagance, he said.

"Her main concern was what would happen to her daughter, who was disabled, after she died," Frey said.

For Jody Marko, 41, another Albutis resident, the murders rekindled sorrowful memories of a kidnapping-murder in her hometown of Cazenovia, N.Y. Albutis, like Cazenovia, will be scarred by the killings, she fears.

"It's hard to see the fear, pain and sorrow that Albutis is going through," Marko said. "I worry that the world will see only the violence and not the beauty inside this community."

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Union members in Wisconsin protesting a measure stripping most collective bargaining rights from selected public employees. Events in Wisconsin have brought scrutiny to public-sector jobs and how they compare with similar private-sector positions.

Public vs. private

Jobs in each sector have advantages, but comparisons difficult, experts say

By Dan Kelly and Bruce R. Posten
Reading Eagle

ARE GOVERNMENT WORKERS riding a perpetual gravy train?

Do private sector workers make much more than their public sector counterparts?

Comparing the public and private sectors might not be like comparing apples with oranges, but there are big differences in the two work forces that make an easy apples-to-apples comparison impossible, said Zachary Warren, an economist with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"It may be more like comparing red apples to green apples," Warren said.

Josh Heller, 39, of Maiden Creek Township, said he left an information technology job in the private sector for a job at a state college when his bosses started outsourcing IT work at his old job.

Six years ago, Heller left a job at VF Outlet after 12 years for a similar job at Kutztown University, a state-owned school.

But budget cuts in education proposed by Gov. Tom Corbett make him uneasy.

"I have a wife, two children and a mortgage and all this instability is not comforting," Heller said.

Heller is not a member of any of several unions at Kutztown, but his wages are on par with fellow employees who opted to join a union.

"Actually, I started at about 5 percent less in wages than I was making at VF, but after five years I'm making a little over what I did when I was there," Heller said.

Heller said VF offered more retirement options, but the state offers better medical benefits.

Numbers compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that government workers in general make less in wages, but that much more in benefits.

"Government workers also tend to be older and have more experience, which is a big driver of wages," said Warren. "And there is no government equivalent for McDonald's when it comes to wages." [See *Public vs. private* >>> A3]

The labor force

■ As of January, about 70 percent of government workers had what are considered white-collar jobs compared with 54 percent of private sector workers.

■ About 50 percent of public sector workers hold a college degree while fewer than 30 percent in private business hold degrees.

■ In 1983, 20 percent of U.S. workers, or 17.7 million, were in unions.

■ Last year, fewer than 12 percent of workers, or 11.9 million, were in unions.

■ Most of the 5.8 million union job losses were manufacturing positions.

■ Last year unions represented fewer than 7 percent of private sector workers and 36.2 percent of government jobs, mostly in education.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Today



6 a.m.
31°



Noon
43°



6 p.m.
46°



LIFE >>

HIGH ANXIETY: DEALING WITH A DISORDER

A Cumru Township mom and her 6-year-old son cope with his Asperger's syndrome, and the constant stress it creates. **D1**

BERKS & BEYOND >>

PEPPY PREPARATIONS

PSSA testing begins today, and Berks schools are trying everything from pep rallies to pajama days to motivate students. **B1**

PERUGINI RUNNING FOR CITY MAYOR

Louis R. Perugini Jr., calling himself an independent Democrat who won't raise taxes, joins the crowded field. **B1**



A CARRYING COUNTY

Berks is typically among Pennsylvania's top four when it comes to concealed-handgun licenses. **B6**

KITCHEN TABLE >>



'ETHICAL MAN'S' OBSERVATIONS

Randy Cohen, Berks native and prominent former author of "The Ethicist," on his career and more. **A2**

NATION >>

DEBIT TO SOCIETY?

Merchants pay fees to banks for debit card transactions. If those fees are cut, banks say, customers will pay the price. **A6**

MONEY >>

HIS PRETZELS ARE FULL OF IT

Laureldale man stuffs his pretzels silly, turning them into a business that can feed the breakfast, lunch or dinner crowd. **A10**

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