

Shooting claims six lives on Ohio farm

NICK JULIANO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO

Six people, including two children, were found shot to death Sunday morning in neighbouring farmhouses, and investigators believe one of the dead was responsible for the slayings, a sheriff's officer said.

The same family owned both houses on a farm of dozens of hectares. Two bodies were found in one farmhouse and four were found in another.

Authorities said the shootings probably happened between 6 and 10 a.m. at the farm west of Bellefontaine, a town of 13,000 people about 70 kilometres northwest of Columbus.

"I've been doing this for 35 years, and I've never seen anything like this," Logan County Sheriff's Lieut. Chuck Stout said.

Investigators believe one of the dead was responsible for the attack, he said.

Sheriff Michael Henry identified the dead as Paige Harshbarger, 14; Scott Moody, 18; Megan Karus, 19; Sheri Schafer, 37; Sharyl Schafer, 66; and Gary Schafer, 67.

Sharyl and Gary Schafer were found in one farmhouse, while the others were found in a second house about a half a kilometre away, Henry said.

A seventh person, Stacy Moody, 15, was shot in the neck. After being injured, she called a friend who alerted authorities. Moody was flown to Ohio State University Medical Center in Columbus. The sheriff did not know her condition.

Investigators found several guns at the scene, Henry said, including a rifle inside the house where four bodies were discovered. He would not say whether the rifle was the weapon used in the shootings.

Officers had received 10 nuisance calls concerning that house, though the sheriff would not provide details about the complaints.

People drifted in and out of the sheriff's office Sunday afternoon, hugging and crying. One woman nearly collapsed moments after arriving and speaking with people at the office, and deputies had to help her inside.

"Dealing with a small community like this, everyone knows everyone," Henry said.



Paul Vernon, Associated Press

Women react outside an Ohio sheriff's office to news Sunday that six people had been killed on a nearby farm.



Bob Edme, Associated Press

Leftists celebrate in Toulouse, southwest France, Sunday after early television reports suggested the "No" side would carry the day in France's referendum on the EU constitution.

France says 'non' to EU constitution

Rejection raises questions about Europe's direction

JOHN LEICESTER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS

French voters rejected the European Union's first constitution Sunday, a stinging repudiation of President Jacques Chirac's leadership and the ambitious, decades-long effort to further unite the continent.

Chirac, who had urged voters to approve the charter in the bitterly contested referendum, announced the result in a brief, televised address. He said the process of ratifying the treaty would continue in other EU countries.

"It is your sovereign decision, and I take note," Chirac said. "Make no mistake, France's decision inevitably creates a difficult context for the defence of our interests in Europe."

With votes counted in all of France and its overseas territories, the "No" camp had 54.87 per cent, with only 45.13 per cent voting "Yes," the Interior Ministry said.

The charter's rejection in a bitterly contested referendum in France — the architect of the European project — could set the continent's plans back by years and amounts to a personal humiliation for the veteran French leader.

Treaty opponents chanting "We won!" gathered at Place de la Bastille, a symbol of rebellion where angry crowds in 1789 stormed the prison and sparked the French Revolution. Cars blared their horns and "No" campaigners thrust their arms into the air.

"This is a great victory," said Fabrice Savel, 38, from the working-class suburb of Aubervilliers. He was distributing posters that read: "No to a free-market Europe."

EU leaders in Brussels vowed to continue their efforts to have the constitution approved.

"I am not a doctor, but the treaty is not dead," said Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, whose



Jerome Delay, Associated Press

French President Jacques Chirac, who had campaigned vigorously for the EU charter, leaves a polling station in Sarra, southwest France, Sunday.

country holds the rotating EU presidency. "This ratification process will continue."

All 25 EU members must ratify the text for it to take effect as planned by Nov. 1, 2006. Nine already have done so: Austria, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

The Dutch vote Wednesday, with polls showing opposition to the constitution there running at about 60 per cent. On Friday, the constitution's main architect, former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, said countries that reject the treaty will be asked to vote again.

France's was the first "No" — even though it was a founding member of what over 50 years has grown into the EU.

"There is no more constitution," said Philippe de Villiers, a leading opponent. "It is necessary to reconstruct Europe on other foundations that don't currently exist."

De Villiers called on Chirac to resign — something the French leader had said he would not do — and called for parliament to be dissolved.

Jean-Marie Le Pen, the extreme-right leader who campaigned vigorously for

the constitution's defeat, also called for Chirac's resignation.

Chirac "wanted to gamble . . . and he has lost," Le Pen said, alluding to Chirac's decision not to submit the charter to sure approval by Parliament. The EU constitution can be adopted either by a referendum or a country's legislature.

Chirac and European leaders have said there was no fallback plan in the event of a French rejection. But many French voters did not believe that. Many, especially on the left, hoped their "No" vote would force the EU back to the drawing board and improve the 448-clause document. In the meantime, "No" voters expected the EU to continue functioning under existing treaties.

Chirac had waged an all-out campaign to persuade nearly 42 million sharply divided voters to approve the charter. But the electorate was in rebellious mood, with unemployment running at 10 per cent and wide unease about the direction Europe is taking.

Turnout was close to 70 per cent — testifying to the passions that the treaty and the debate surrounding it aroused.

Alberta man dies after swarming

EDMONTON

A father of five is dead and a teenage girl has been charged with second-degree murder after a deadly brawl in Hobbema.

Around 5 a.m. Saturday, RCMP arrived at a home on the Montana reserve to find 30-year-old Ian Montour lying beaten on the ground.

Paramedics were unable to revive him and he was declared dead at the scene.

Montour's common-law wife, Heather Potts, said a brawl started after uninvited guests approached Montour and a few others as they sat by a bonfire.

The party-crashers left, but soon returned with a gang of others carrying a sword, bats and wooden boards, she said.

"He was standing his ground, but there were too many," Potts said.

"They swarmed over him. They kept beating him even though he was already dead."

The exact cause of Montour's death has not been determined. His autopsy is scheduled for today.

The charged 17-year-old female is being held in custody and will make her first appearance in Wetaskiwin youth court on Wednesday.

Pope pledges to end rift

BARI, ITALY

Pope Benedict pledged Sunday to work to end Roman Catholicism's 1,000-year-old rift with the Orthodox Church, delivering a message of healing on the first trip of his papacy.

Benedict flew by helicopter to the Adriatic port of Bari, Italy, home to the relics of St. Nicholas of Myra, a fourth-century saint popular among both Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians. The presence of the relics has earned the city a reputation as a religious bridge between East and West.



Pope Benedict

The 3 1/2-hour trip was Benedict's first outside Rome since being elected the 265th leader of the Roman Catholic Church on April 19.

Though brief, the outing showed he was following in the much-traveled footsteps of his predecessor, Pope John Paul.

Ticket good for \$220M lotto

DES MOINES, IOWA

A ticket bought in Idaho matched all five numbers and the Powerball to win the \$220.3 million US multi-state drawing, lottery officials said. If the winner opts for a lump-sum cheque, it will be written for just over \$125 million.

Lottery spokeswoman Sue Dooley said another 29 people matched all five numbers in Saturday night's drawing. Those tickets are worth \$100,000. For choosing the Power-play option and matching all five numbers, one winner will get \$400,000.

Dooley said anyone who wins a large cash prize on a lottery ticket should sign it right away, then talk to a lawyer before claiming the prize.

HERALD NEWS SERVICES

High-maintenance dolls compete for attention

MISTY HARRIS
CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

Everyone knows kids love toys. Now, a New York design collective suggests what would happen if children's toys loved them back.

Needies are a trio of interactive plush dolls inspired by co-dependent, high-maintenance relationships.

Like their human counterparts, they'll not only trade shameless flattery for love but also compete with each other for attention — sometimes going so far as to plot physical attacks against fellow Needies — in a bid to be their owner's favourite companion.

It's Toy Story meets The O.C., with a dash of Lord of the Flies to keep things interesting.

"Needies are satires of personal relationships, but can also be construed as satire of technology in a larger sense," says Brett Schultz, who along with Amos Bloomberg and Daniel Perlin designed Needies for an interactive telecommunications class at New York University.

The limited-production dolls, only available through Needies.com, boast electronic "nervous systems" that al-

low them to talk, sing, feel hugs and conspire against each other when necessary. They complain when left alone, coo when cuddled and, thanks to embedded radio transceivers, react to another Needie's presence in the room.

The ones who receive the most affection, for example, might taunt or mockingly console a neglected Needie. The most paranoid of the dolls — one that worries the other Needies will "steal his humans" — will jealously demand his plush brethren be thrown across the room. And when all three Needies are placed together and given equal attention, they burst into song.

"You're in a position of constantly trying to satisfy the needs of your Needies," says Perlin, who considers the dolls a "post-ironic" reflection of the trio's past relationships. "They're much more like pets than regular toys."

According to Douglas Rushkoff, an associate teacher at New York University, Needies may represent an emerging trend of networked toys that combine the essence of plush with interactive technology. By design, he says the dolls serve as proxies for their owners who may be too



CanWest News Service

Needies are interactive plush dolls inspired by real-life relationships.

young to network on their own.

"Your toy actually changes depending on what other toys are around it, and that sets up a more advanced form of play," he says. "Kids actually have a reason to play with one another. It's the

same way Gameboys or video games are more exciting if you go online and play against other people."

Parents, however, shouldn't hold their breath for a toddler-friendly version of Needies.

Because of the cheeky nature of the dolls, Needies' creators are marketing them toward the demographic known as Millennials — those born in or after 1982. Consumer analysts at Iconoculture, a trend research firm that describes Needies as "big, soft Furbiies raised on soap operas," say it's the right move.

"These are the kids who've been caring for eggs and flour-sack babies in high school for sex-ed classes; the older ones were part of the first wave of Tamagotchis (virtual pets), and Tamagotchis are back in a big way; they do video games with each other in networks; and it's hard to come up with something more needy than instant messaging and text messaging," says Nancy Robinson, Iconoculture's Millennials research analyst. "It's Millennials' need for touch and contact."

While Needies appear to fit into the macro-trend of comfort toys, which react to their owner's presence in calming ways, Robinson says the dolls are taking the technology to a whole other plane.

"Needies are, in a way, just the opposite (of comfort toys)," she muses, laughing. "It's like bringing real-world roommates into your home."