

The Capital Times

May 21, 2003 HOME FINAL

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

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2nd site sold near Overture

Inflated price spurs concern

By Aaron Nathans

Madison developer Marty Rifken has bought a second property on the hot 100 block of State Street, overlooking the big glass wall of the Overture Center concert hall.

His Central Focus LLC paid nearly twice the building's assessed value. The small, two-story building is located at the back of the block at 122-124 W. Mifflin St.

It was assessed at \$541,000 in 2002. In April, Central Focus bought the property from attorney Jack Van Metre for \$1 million, according to the City Assessor's Office.

Rifken said he plans to refurbish the building and vowed not to tear it down. But this latest sale has some downtown advocates on edge that his purchase price will push up assessments, and drive out small businesses from the funky neighborhood.

"Whenever somebody buys a property for way more than it is assessed, it affects all of us," said Sandi Torkildson, president of the Greater State Street Business Association.

Last year, The Capital Times reported that Central Focus bought a property at 120 W. Mifflin St. as part of Rifken's plans to buy up the block, put in an underground parking garage and build a mixed-use condominium-retail complex. Central Focus paid just under twice that property's assessed value.

The purchase sparked a public outcry and a discussion about historic preservation, the size of developments along State Street, and taxes in the area. Rifken later announced he was dropping his plans to redevelop the block, but said he would continue investing in properties in the area.

On Tuesday, Rifken said his latest purchase had been in the works for many months. He said he merely wants to hold onto the property. As for tearing it down, Rifken said: "I rule it out."

The building sits on the corner of West Mifflin and Fairchild streets. Central Focus' purchase gives Rifken two contiguous properties in the highly sought-after area.

Van Metre had owned the building since 1978, and continues to lease offices from Central Focus.

"I don't know where the money's coming from or who wants it, but someone wants that area pretty bad," Van Metre said in an interview.

The building now houses the Mental Health Center of Dane County on

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Looting at Iraq nuke plant feared

20% of radioactive matter gone from main facility

By Dafna Linzer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Some 20 percent of the known radioactive materials stored at Iraq's largest nuclear facility are unaccounted for, and U.S. nuclear experts have found radioactive patches on the ground where looters dumped out barrels believed to contain hazardous materials.

However, a senior commander said the great majority of the dangerous waste at the Tuwaitha nuclear complex was still secure and was not leaking radiation.

"Eighty percent of the barrels are where they were before," said Col. Tim Madere, a specialist in unconventional weapons for the U.S. Army's V Corps.

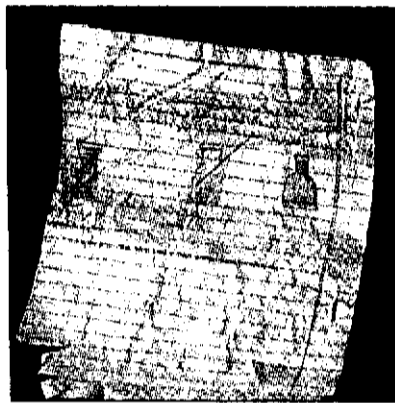
It was unclear how many barrels were missing. The barrels

had been previously catalogued and sealed by international arms inspectors.

The dormant Tuwaitha plant, once considered the heart of Saddam Hussein's nuclear program, has been repeatedly trashed by scavengers. It hasn't been operational for years. The Iraqis had been using it to store declared nuclear materials that were prohibited and sealed by the U.N. nuclear agency.

While the sprawling complex was considered one of the top sites where evidence of weapons of mass destruction might be found, it was left unguarded for days during the war. By the time weapons teams showed up to inspect the facility, so much had been destroyed that it was impos-

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BARTON GELLMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

U.S. officials are examining everything in their search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. A sketch of laboratory flasks found near an unidentified powder raised suspicions but turned out to be a high school science project.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Navy Cmdr. David Beckett (right) and an unidentified Special Forces colleague look down on the Baghdad Nuclear Research Facility near Tuwaitha. Some 20 percent of the known radioactive material stored there is unaccounted for, U.S. nuclear experts say.



Jayson Blair

Ex-writer boasts: I fooled them all

By Howard Kurtz

The Washington Post

Jayson Blair is lashing out at the New York Times, saying that "racism had much more of an impact" on his career at the paper than affirmative action did and boasting about his repeated deception of Times editors.

In an extraordinary interview with the New York Observer being published today, the former reporter laughed about the Times' investigation of him and seemed angry that his serial fabrications weren't being properly appreciated.

"I don't understand why I am the bumbling affirmative action hire when Stephen Glass is this brilliant whiz kid, when from my perspective — and I know I shouldn't be saying this — I fooled some of the most brilliant people in journalism," he said.

Glass, who was fired by the New Republic for inventing stories five years ago, "is so brilliant and yet somehow I'm (an) affirmative action hire. They're all so smart, but I was sitting right under their nose fooling them. If they're all so brilliant and I'm such an affirmative action hire, how come they didn't catch me?"

Times editors have denied that they treated the error-prone Blair leniently because he is African-American — although Executive Editor Howell Raines has said he might have done so subconsciously.

But Blair told reporter Sridhar Pappu: "Anyone who tells you that my race didn't play a role in my career at the New York Times is lying to you. Both racial preferences and racism played a role. And I would argue that they didn't balance each other out."

While ridiculing what he called "idiot" editors at the Times, he also said it was "kind of unfair" to blame Raines and Managing Editor Gerald Boyd for his misconduct. He said Boyd, the paper's highest-ranking black editor, tried to block his promotion to the national staff.

The only point at which Blair, 27, appeared to blame himself was when he said he might have been too young

See FOOLED, Back Page

Evjue Foundation gives \$1.9 million

The Evjue Foundation Inc., the charitable arm of The Capital Times, today announced it has made 118 grants to programs at the University of Wisconsin and to community organizations throughout Dane County totaling \$1,978,180.

The grants, which are made possible by the will of the late William T. Evjue, the founder and longtime editor and publisher of The Capital Times, were mailed today to 87 community organizations for a total of \$1,131,985. The UW is receiving a total of \$846,195 for 30 initiatives.

"These grants are aimed at supporting the important work being carried on by so many hard-working and dedicated people in our newspaper's circulation area and for special needs at the university, which needs financial help now more than ever," said Frederick W. Miller, the treasurer of the Foundation and chairman of The Capital Times Co., who announced the grants jointly with John H. Lus-

Camp Randall to get \$1M from Evjue for press area

The Evjue Foundation's grants today include the first installment of a \$1 million pledge — \$200,000 during each of the next five years — to rebuild the press and communications center at Camp Randall Memorial Stadium.

The gift is in keeping with the Foundation's tradition of helping fund major community projects in the Madison area, from the Monona

Terrace Community and Convention Center to the new United Way building on Atwood Avenue.

The communications center project, which will be part of the huge renovation now under way at the football facility, is being funded from the more than \$840,000 contributed by The Evjue Foundation to the University of Wisconsin today.

At the same time, the university

announced that the facility, which sits atop the upper deck on the west side of the stadium, will be named the William T. Evjue/The Capital Times Communications Center.

Mr. Evjue, the founder of The Capital Times, was not only an ardent supporter of the UW, but enthusiastically backed its sports

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sler, the Evjue Foundation president.

Miller said that today's grants represent a significant portion of the Foundation's giving for its current fiscal year. He pointed out that more grant requests will be acted on in the fall, which means the total announced today will grow.

The community grants benefit a wide range of local educational, cultural and other nonprofit causes. They include larger grants like \$200,000 toward a 10-year pledge to the Overture Foundation's Great Performance Fund, \$100,000 to fulfill a \$500,000 pledge to the Don and Mar-

ilyn Anderson Hospice Center, another \$100,000 as the last installment on a \$500,000 pledge for United Way's new building on Atwood Avenue, and many smaller ones, including \$5,000 to Project Home, \$5,000

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Fooled

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for "a snake pit" like the Times.

But he kept returning to the question of race, telling the Manhattan weekly: "I was under a lot of pressure. I was black at the New York Times, which is something that hurts you as much as it helps you. I certainly have health problems, which probably led to me having to kill Jayson Blair, the journalist. ... So Jayson Blair the human being could live, Jayson Blair the journalist had to die."

Blair did not criticize Jonathan Landman, the metropolitan editor who tried to help the reporter but told his bosses in an e-mail 13 months ago that they had to stop Blair from continuing to write for the Times. But he said Landman, whom he called an honorable man, refuses to believe that some of his subordinates are "racist." Blair added that "there are senior managers at the New York Times who want African-American reporters to

succeed, and there are hundreds of white junior managers who resent that and don't."

Blair has been at the center of a fierce, racially charged debate over how badly the Times handled the lies and plagiarism that led to his May 1 resignation. In a 7,000-word mea culpa, the paper said Blair had fabricated 36 stories — including one that featured the father of rescued POW Jessica Lynch choking up, complete with an erroneous description of his West Virginia home because Blair had lied about being there.

When the Times investigation was published, Blair said, he "just couldn't stop laughing" because his description of the West Virginia home had been so far off from reality.

Blair dismissed the notion that senior editors had protected him, rattling off the names of Raines, Boyd and others who he said never helped him, including a female editor whom he described as caring only about pretty Jewish girls.

Observer Editor Peter Kaplan said Blair appeared "deeply angry" at the Times. "He seems to have obscured his own

'There are senior managers at the New York Times who want African-American reporters to succeed, and there are hundreds of white junior managers who resent that and don't.'

Jayson Blair

moral lapses in what he did, in deference to the racial injuries he feels he suffered."

Times spokeswoman Catherine Mathis said Tuesday the paper would have no comment. But in a memo Tuesday, Raines and Boyd said they planned to demonstrate "our absolute determination to change the way this newsroom works," including the hiring of 20 more people to ease workloads at the paper.

They also said, in response to complaints about a top-down management style, they would "push authority on news coverage and staff assignments down to the department heads" and "work with them in a consultative way on matters of news judgment and deployment of resources."

Describing himself in the Observer interview as having struggled with alcohol and cocaine since he was a teenager, Blair said he botched the coverage of a 2001 benefit concert, which required two corrections, because he was drunk on assignment.

Blair maintained that his web of lies started in earnest in January and that he had fudged the facts perhaps five times before that. However, The Washington Post has reported that he badly distorted an interview done for him in 2000 by a Times free-lancer, Lisa Suhay, and threatened to get the paper to drop her if she didn't stop pressing for a correction.

The Post has also reported that in 1999, while working as an intern at the Boston Globe, Blair faked an interview with D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams. Blair told the Observer that his former Globe colleagues were "a bunch of thin-skinned, sheltered, cocooned babies."

Blair was more restrained in a separate statement to CNN on Monday, saying he is "sorry" and wants to write his story — he has hired an agent to entertain book and movie offers — so that "others will learn from my mistakes."

Looting

Continued from Page 1A

sible to know what was missing.

A nuclear assessment team, which began a survey of the site Monday, has managed to track what remains of materials that had been monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Madere said several areas that had been closed-off by the agency "remain intact and sealed from the inside." U.S. troops didn't break the seals to enter those areas inside the facility, he said.

"We found no radiation outside except for in two small spots where some materials were probably dumped," Madere said in an interview at V Corps headquarters, located at the Baghdad international airport.

Before U.S. troops began guarding the entrance to the facility, reporters saw villagers removing storage barrels and dumping out contents matching the description of uranium oxide. They filled the barrels with drinking water, and some have since reported health problems.

Uranium, if enriched, is a key ingredient in nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Agency was monitoring 2 tons of enriched uranium and several tons of natural and depleted uranium stored at Tuwaitha.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has been sharply critical of the U.S. handling of the site. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Tuesday he would be willing to let members of the agency back into Iraq to assist them at nuclear sites. He wouldn't say when or how the agency teams might work there, but said their previous knowledge and expertise would be welcome.

It was the first time U.S. officials have said the IAEA would be able to return to Iraq and was likely to be seen in the arms

control community as an acknowledgment that the Americans need help.

Military commanders involved in the weapons hunt have said privately for weeks that they were operating without the basic information at the International Atomic Energy Agency's disposal.

Rumsfeld's comments came a day after agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei issued a third plea to the U.S. government to let his teams conduct assessments at the nuclear sites. The United States didn't respond to his previous requests.

"We have a moral responsibility to establish the facts without delay and take urgent remedial action," ElBaradei said.

ElBaradei said he was deeply concerned about the "potential radiological safety and security implications of nuclear and radiological materials that may no longer be under control."

As part of the war, the United States chose to conduct its own weapons search rather than include agency and U.N. inspectors, who found no evidence before the war to support the Bush administration's claims that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons and was reviving its nuclear program.

Madere, who has been working closely with the five U.S. military teams that have taken part in the weapons search, said they haven't found any conclusive evidence of a program.

But some finds, he said, have heightened their suspicions.

"We found a chalkboard in Tuwaitha with diagrams that looked like they were planning to build a bomb," he said.

The teams are already conducting air monitoring around the area, and Madere said "there is still a potential health hazard."

Iraq has about 1,000 sites where radioactive materials are used in industry or medicine, but Tuwaitha, where Iraqis worked on the final design of a nuclear bomb before the 1991 Gulf War, has drawn the most concern.

Overture

Continued from Page 1A

its ground floor. It was built in 1925 as the Fairchild Building Corporation Office Building.

"We look forward to talking with Mr. Rifken about his plans," said Joe Lusson, president of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation. "The buildings on the 100 block of State Street have formed a core part of Madison's identity for 150 years. And while neither of Mr. Rifken's buildings front on

State Street, the threat of that kind of purchase price to the rest of the block can't be ignored."

With relatively few sales in the State Street area last year, property owners found little change in their assessments in January. But in January 2002, assessments in the State Street district increased 24 percent from the previous year.

Jeff Huemmer, a property appraiser for the City Assessor's Office, said that when a developer is trying to buy up a group of buildings, individual purchases may not affect assessments in the area. But when individual buildings are sold

with no project in mind, as Rifken now says he is doing, assessments can increase, Huemmer said.

Dan Milsted, whose family owns slightly less than half of the odd-numbered 100 block of State Street, said again in an interview that he would not sell to Rifken. He accused Rifken of trying to buy up the block by making it impossible for property owners and their small-business tenants to afford to pay their taxes.

"This is a game that has been played in real estate for years. I would not be surprised if this was the game they were playing. Now all Marty has to do in

the next two years is buy one more property. That will put everybody out of business," Milsted said.

Rifken replied: "We are not in any way influencing values any greater than other sales. We're buying in a market of what real estate values are. I don't have any motivation to force the city to raise real estate taxes."

Rifken said he is not trying to buy any more properties on the block. He added: "If someone comes to me and says 'we're dying to sell,' I'd consider it."

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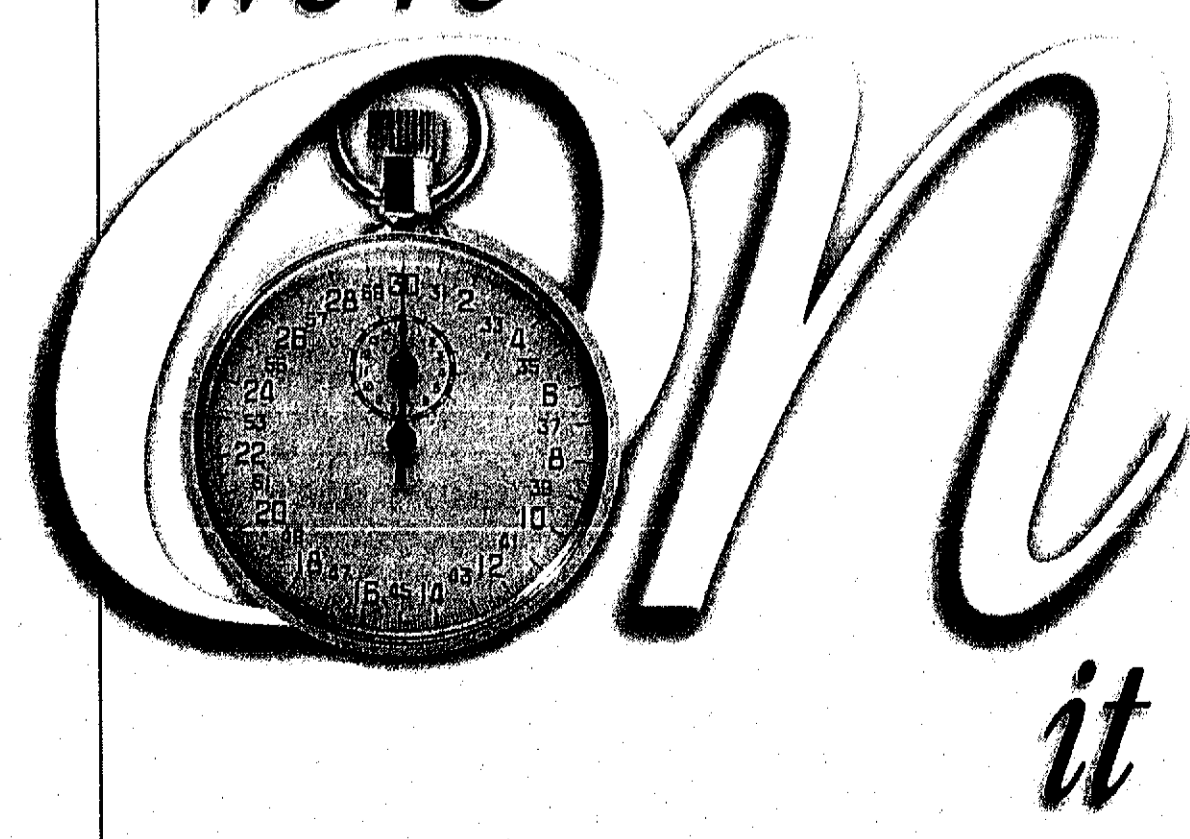
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