

Missing Canadian may have fallen from boat

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP-CP) — A Canadian woman remained missing Monday after her disappearance from a cruise ship off the Bahamas was reported by her husband on the weekend.

A U.S. Coast Guard plane and Bahamian naval boats searched in vain Sunday for Jill Begora, 59, who was reported missing by her husband, Dennis Begora, a St. Catharines, Ont., dentist Saturday morning as the Royal Caribbean cruise ship Jewel of the Seas pulled into Nassau, the Bahamian capital.

The ship's crew filed a missing persons report with the coast guard after a search of the vessel turned up no sign of Begora, U.S. Coast Guard spokesman Dana Warr said. "They did a full ship search and there was no evidence that she had left the ship in Nassau," leading authorities to believe she may have fallen overboard, Warr said.

A Christmas Wish * *A Christmas Wish* * *A Christmas Wish* *

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No reprieve for gang founder

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger refused to block the execution of Stanley Tookie Williams, rejecting the notion that the founder of the murderous Crips gang had atoned for his crimes and found redemption on death row.

With a federal court refusing to grant a reprieve, Williams, 51, was set to die by injection at San Quentin Prison early Tuesday for murdering four people during two 1979 holdups.

Williams' case became one of the country's biggest death-row cause celebres in decades. It set off a countrywide debate over the possibility of redemption on death row, with Hollywood stars and capital punishment foes arguing that Williams had made amends by writing children's books about the dangers of gangs.

Williams stood to become the 12th person executed in California since legislators reinstated the death penalty in 1977.

He was condemned in 1981 for gunning down convenience store clerk Albert Owens, 26, at a 7-Eleven in Whittier and killing Yen-I Yang, 76, Tsai-Shai Chen Yang, 63, and the couple's daughter Yu-Chin Yang Lin, 43, at the Los Angeles motel they owned. Williams claimed he was innocent.

Just before the governor announced his decision, the 9th U.S. Circuit of Appeals denied Williams' request for a reprieve, saying there was no "clear and convincing evidence of actual innocence."

But Schwarzenegger suggested Monday that Williams' supposed change of heart was not genuine, noting that the inmate had not owned up to his crimes or shown any real remorse for the countless killings committed by the Crips.

"Is Williams' redemption complete and



AP photo
The entrance to the execution chamber and the lethal injection table at California's San Quentin State Prison in San Quentin, Calif. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Monday refused to spare the life of Stanley Tookie Williams, the founder of the murderous Crips gang.

sincere, or is it just a hollow promise?" Schwarzenegger wrote less than 12 hours before the execution.

"Without an apology and atonement for these senseless and brutal killings, there can be no redemption."

Williams' supporters were disappoint-

ed with the governor's refusal to commute the death sentence to life in prison without parole.

"The governor's 96-hour wait to give an answer was a cowardly act and was tortuous," said former MASH star Mike Farrell, a death penalty opponent.

Bird flu death confirmed

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The World Health Organization laboratory in Hong Kong has confirmed Indonesia's ninth bird-flu death, a man who died in the capital Jakarta last month, a senior health ministry official said Tuesday.

"I have just received confirmation from Hong Kong," said Hariadi Wibisono.

He said the man, identified only by his initials AR, had a history of contact with poultry, but gave no more details.

Five other people in Indonesia have contracted the H5N1 bird flu virus but survived, according to WHO.

The H5N1 bird flu virus has ravaged poultry stocks across Asia since 2003, and jumped to humans killing at least 70, most of them in Vietnam.

Almost all human cases of the disease have been traced to contact with infected birds. Experts fear the virus could mutate into a form that passes easily between people, sparking a pandemic.

Meanwhile, the outbreak of bird flu in Ukraine has expanded to at least 12 villages on the Crimean peninsula, the country's top emergency official said Monday.

"Today we have bird flu in 12 locations," Emergency Situations Minister Viktor Baloga told journalists after returning from the Black Sea peninsula, where officials have been working to stem the outbreak since it was first recorded in six villages on Dec. 4.

Four new locations recorded mass bird deaths, the Health Ministry said Monday, bringing the total to 19 villages and two cities. Tests for bird flu are continuing.

Among the areas still being monitored were the regional capital, Simferopol, and another city, Feodosiya. It was not immediately clear how many birds had died.

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