

killed four black girls in 1963. The judge noted that \$200,000 was the maximum allowable and said neither man appeared likely to flee to avoid prosecution. Defense lawyers said friends and relatives were prepared to put up bail for the men. Bobby Cherry, 69, of Mabank, Texas, and Thomas Blanton Jr., 61, of Birmingham are charged in the dynamite blast. The two men and another had been suspects for decades in the attack. Only the third man had been prosecuted in the bombing. Former Klan member Robert Chambliss was convicted in 1977; he died in prison.

Protection of marine ecosystems planned

A plan to set up a network of marine protection areas to preserve examples of ocean ecosystems off U.S. shores will be unveiled today, White House officials said. Some of the preserves will ban fishing, mining, and other commercial activity, officials said. President Clinton's executive order doesn't specify how many reserves will be established or where they will be. But environmentalists say sections of the ocean off California's Channel Islands, the New England coast, the Florida Keys, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are worthy of protection.

— Traci Watson

Memorial Day observance, closings

Monday, the White House is urging all Americans to observe a moment of silence or reflection at 3 p.m. local time to "put the memorial back in Memorial Day." The National Moment of Remembrance, a project of the White House Millennium Council, is intended to honor those who helped preserve freedom for the nation. More information is available on the Web site: www.whitehouse.gov/remembrance.

► Federal, state and local government offices will be closed Memorial Day. Mail won't be delivered. Schools, banks and financial markets will be closed.

Correction

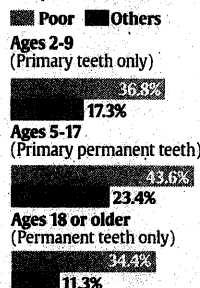
Berkshire Hathaway says it did not lose money on its USAir investment as stated in Thursday's USA TODAY.

National dental healthcare plan sought

More than 100 million people lack private dental insurance and millions more can't get necessary dental

Poor's tooth decay

Among the findings in the surgeon general's Oral Health in America report: the percentage of people who live below the poverty line¹ who have at least one untreated, decayed tooth, compared with others:



1 — For 1999, a family of four with an annual income of \$16,954 or less
Source: Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1988-94.

By Julie Stacey, USA TODAY

care, says the first surgeon general's report on oral health. The 309-page report, *Oral Health in America*, calls for a national program to improve care. The report notes that about 40% of U.S. residents lack fluoridated water, an effective safeguard against cavities. Surgeon General Davidatcher says the report aims to alert people to the link between oral and general health and to vast nationwide disparities in access to dental care, particularly for black and Hispanic Americans.

Most Americans have fewer cavities and healthier gums than in the days before fluoride was added to water and toothpaste and dental care became readily available. Yet disparities

still exist, in part because many employers don't provide dental coverage.

Satcher calls for a "National Oral Health Plan" to boost resources for training, equipment and facilities; to eliminate barriers to oral health care; and to build public-private partnerships to fund education programs and expand access to care. — Steve Sternberg

Written by John Bacon from staff and wire reports.

better less risk.

By Richard Wolf
USA TODAY

A critical shortage of lifeguards threatens many of the nation's pools and beaches as they prepare for this weekend's traditional opening of the summer season.

► Washington, D.C., is offering \$12 an hour in hopes of hiring the 180 lifeguards needed to staff about 20 outdoor pools. Unless it finds 55 more guards, the city might have to limit the number of swimmers at peak times.

► Schlitterbahn Water Park in New Braunfels, Texas, needs about 100 more lifeguards to fill its 600-guard contingent. Until they're hired, the park will stagger operating hours of different attractions.

► Massachusetts has hired fewer than half of the 427 guards it needs to cover state beaches and pools. Less-popular beaches might be unprotected this summer, and other facilities might have limited hours.

► And in Cincinnati, aquatic coordinator Jincey Yemaya is hiring guards as young as they come — at age 15 — in order to open 46 municipal pools. If she's short-staffed, the city will have to adjust operating hours and shift guards from pool to pool. "This is the hardest year we're having," Yemaya says.

There once was a time when a lifeguard's job was a plum assignment: Sit in the sun, chat with your friends and earn spending money. But today, high school and college students often can earn more working at a grocery store or a fast-food restaurant. And their opportunities are increasing: Pools and beaches now must compete with Dell and Microsoft.

"If your choice is between a wonderful job as a lifeguard at the beach making \$7 an hour or \$20 an hour working for a dot-com company, the decision may be purely economic," says Chris Brewster, chairman of the United States Lifesaving Association's national certification committee.

The American Red Cross has been training about 190,000 lifeguards annually for the past three years. But that's not enough to keep up with growing demand. Now the agency is putting children as young as 11 through junior lifeguarding programs to get them ready to work at 15.

A private firm, Ellis & Associates, trains 43,000 guards each year, mostly for water parks and municipal pools. "It gets a little bit harder each year, because teenagers can make more money flipping burgers than they can in a guard's chair," the firm's Nathan Oostman says. "Also, they don't have that added risk and liability of somebody drowning on their watch."

Today's lifeguards often have to be trained to use more complicated equipment such as a defibrillator, which corrects an irregular heartbeat. Regardless of their heroics, they still can face legal action.

"Lifeguards are getting hauled into court, even after they've saved a life," says Shawn DeRosa, waterfront program coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. "Combined with the pay scale, guards are saying it's not worth it."

While the supply of lifeguards shrinks, the demand for them grows. There has been an increase in the number of water parks over the past few years. About 1,000 water parks attracted 68 million customers last year, marking the seventh straight year of record attendance.

To combat the shortage of lifeguards, employers are raising pay, subsidizing training, advertising online and recruiting from as far away as Canada and Australia.

In the nation's capital, lifeguards can earn \$12-\$13 an hour and get reimbursed for Red Cross training. Officials in Austin, Texas, throw in uniforms, movie passes and parties and \$150 year-end bonuses.

Unless thousands of lifeguards are hired during the next few weeks, pools could be forced to limit their hours and operations. Beaches could be posted with signs that read, "Swim at your own risk."

Some experts fear that, in an effort to stay open, pools and beaches might hire lifeguards without proper credentials. "We're going to have near-drowning situations because the staff was not certified," says B.J. Fisher, director of the American Lifeguard Association.

The situation isn't dire everywhere. Some parts of the country, such as southern California and Florida, recruit lifeguards year-round and offer better pay.

California's famous surf beaches have fewer prob-



In Natick, Mass.: Geese swim v

lems attracting lifeguards, partly to \$20 an hour. The city of Los Angeles has 55 pools, four lakes, camps and 700 lifeguards.

Atlantic City thrives on its reputation as the oldest paid beach patrol in the country. At \$80 a day and up, it attracts teenagers, even a doctor and a dentist this summer.

But more typical of the nation's beaches is the city used the cast of TV's *Baywatch*.

Looking

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