

Gerhartsreiter has been identified as a "person of interest" in the 1985 disappearances of Jonathan and Linda Sohus. Under the Chichester name, Gerhartsreiter rented a guesthouse at the home of Jonathan Sohus' mother in San Marino, a wealthy L.A. suburb.

New Orleans

Investigators raid Katrina nonprofit

Federal investigators on Monday raided the downtown offices of a city-chartered nonprofit agency accused of abusing a federally financed program created to clean up houses damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

The \$3.6 million program was intended to help elderly and poor New Orleans residents gut and board up their storm-damaged houses, and to mow their lawns. Instead, as a series of news-media reports revealed, money appears to have gone to politically connected contractors who did little or no work on the houses.

Baltimore

Police say cult starved toddler

A toddler whose remains were found inside a suitcase in Philadelphia this spring was starved to death by members of a religious cult, including his mother, in part because he refused to say "amen" after meals, police said.

Ria Ramkissoon, 21, the mother of Javon Thompson, was charged Sunday with first-degree murder in the boy's death, and Baltimore police said Monday that three other members of a group called 1 Mind Ministries have also been charged with first-degree murder.

Members did not seek medical care for Javon when he stopped breathing, and the boy died in his mother's arms, according to court documents that described police interviews with a confidential informant and two children. He would have been about 19 months old when police say adults stopped feeding him in December 2006.

Salt Lake City

Cousin pleads guilty to lying about ricin

A Utah man accused of failing to report that his cousin produced and possessed the deadly poison ricin pleaded guilty Monday to the felony charge.

Thomas Tholen, 54, pleaded guilty to misprision of a felony — knowing about a crime but failing to report it. Federal prosecutors agreed to recommend that he receive probation rather than prison time at sentencing, set for October.

Tholen's cousin, Roger Bergendorff, pleaded guilty Aug. 4 to federal possession of a biological toxin and weapons charges but denied any criminal intent and said he never intentionally or accidentally released any of the lethal powder.

Tholen, a 54-year-old freelance artist who creates characters for video games, admitted in U.S. District Court in Salt Lake City that he lied when he told authorities Bergendorff never mentioned anything about ricin.

Seattle Times news services