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CHICAGO

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How much for that wooden 'Picasso'?

Gary schools ponder the value of a model that has been in a cafeteria for 35 years

By James Janega
Tribune staff reporter

Like a homeowner musing on whether an armoire in the attic might be a precious antique, school officials in Gary began wondering this month whether a peculiar sculpture squatting in a school cafeteria for 35 years was a lost treasure.

The 12-foot wooden structure was clearly an early version of Chicago's most famous piece of public art, the Picasso in Daley Center Plaza. And indeed, it was the final mock-up for the iconic sculpture.

But local steelworkers built the mock-up, not Picasso—an intermediate step between the Spanish master's 42-inch models and the 162-ton steel gift to the City of Chicago.

That makes it one of a kind—and difficult to appraise.

"There'd be a really difficult time trying to establish a value for it," said Brendan Lindberg, general manager of the Doubletake Gallery in Burnsville, Minn., where Picassos have been sold on consignment. "It would be difficult to find anything with a similar auction re-

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Day laborers' tough choice: rights or job

By Oscar Avila
Tribune staff reporter

Since the Albany Park Workers' Center opened a year ago, soliciting help from the often chaotic day labor market has become as basic as ordering from a fast-food menu.

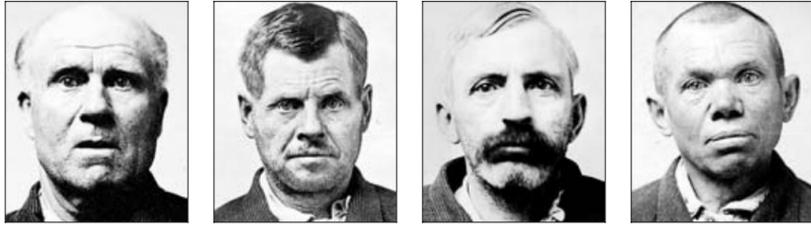
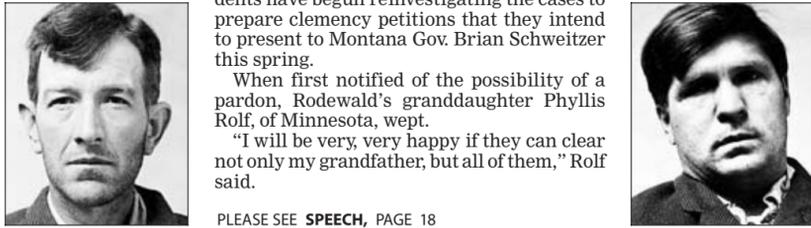
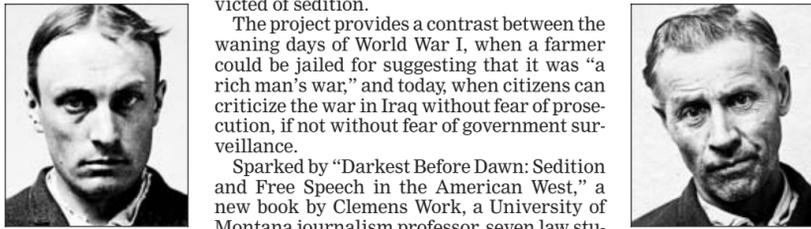
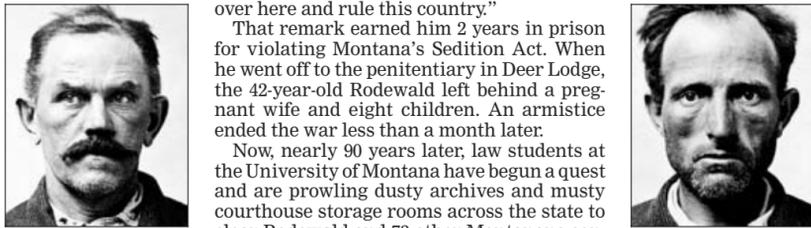
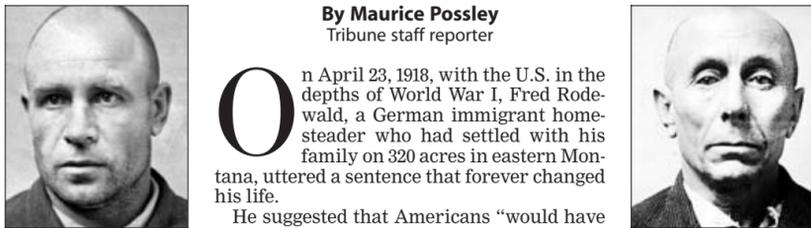
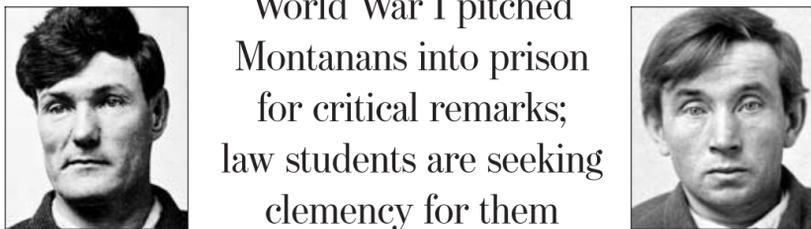
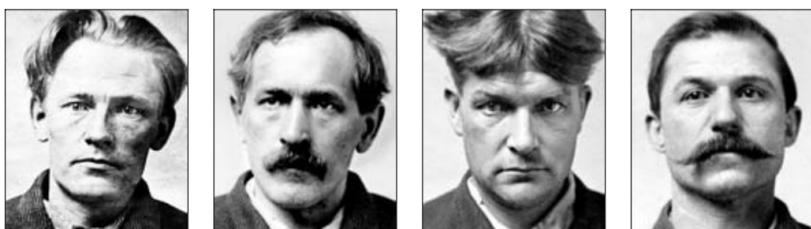
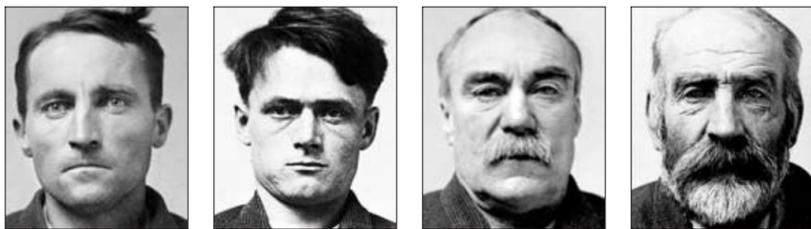
Contractors approach a counter and request, say, a roofer. A man with a clipboard consults the skills of the workers on his roster. He makes the introductions, helps them cut a deal and writes up a contract.

The labor market is quite different a few blocks away, where day laborers linger along Pulaski Road and wait for cars to slow. When a contractor emerges, the workers swarm the vehicle and beg to be chosen.

The laborers on the streets face many obstacles—the bitter cold, police crackdowns on loitering and unscrupulous contractors. Still, more workers are choosing the corners over the center at 4174 N. Elston Ave., even though the latter offers warmth, English classes and safeguards against fraud.

The seemingly illogical disparity can be explained with simple economics, according to organizers and the workers

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JAILED FOR THEIR WORDS

A law passed during World War I pitched Montanans into prison for critical remarks; law students are seeking clemency for them

By Maurice Possley
Tribune staff reporter

On April 23, 1918, with the U.S. in the depths of World War I, Fred Rodewald, a German immigrant homesteader who had settled with his family on 320 acres in eastern Montana, uttered a sentence that forever changed his life.

He suggested that Americans "would have hard times" if Germany's kaiser "didn't get over here and rule this country."

That remark earned him 2 years in prison for violating Montana's Sedition Act. When he went off to the penitentiary in Deer Lodge, the 42-year-old Rodewald left behind a pregnant wife and eight children. An armistice ended the war less than a month later.

Now, nearly 90 years later, law students at the University of Montana have begun a quest and are prowling dusty archives and musty courthouse storage rooms across the state to clear Rodewald and 73 other Montanans convicted of sedition.

The project provides a contrast between the waning days of World War I, when a farmer could be jailed for suggesting that it was "a rich man's war," and today, when citizens can criticize the war in Iraq without fear of prosecution, if not without fear of government surveillance.

Sparked by "Darkest Before Dawn: Sedition and Free Speech in the American West," a new book by Clemens Work, a University of Montana journalism professor, seven law students have begun reinvestigating the cases to prepare clemency petitions that they intend to present to Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer this spring.

When first notified of the possibility of a pardon, Rodewald's granddaughter Phyllis Rolf, of Minnesota, wept.

"I will be very, very happy if they can clear not only my grandfather, but all of them," Rolf said.

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U.S. braces for Katrina car scams

Flooded autos may arrive rebuilt on used-car lots across nation

By Andrew Martin and Andrew Zajac
Tribune national correspondents



AP file photo by David J. Phillip

ST. BERNARD PARISH, La. — As the vast vehicular wreckage wrought by Hurricane Katrina is carted away, law-enforcement and insurance officials are anticipating the arrival of tens of thousands of those vehicles on used-car lots across the U.S.

Already there is anecdotal evidence of flood-damaged vehicles turning up on used-car lots in Florida, Arizona, New York and Oklahoma, authorities said. Two months ago, at least seven 2005 Nissans listed in the National Insurance Crime Bureau database as hurricane-damaged were sold at an auction in Los Angeles.

A task force of insurance investigators and Louisiana law-enforcement officials is building a database of flooded cars to try to prevent as many other vehicles as possible from being spruced up and foisted upon unsuspecting used-car buyers. The database at www.nicb.org already lists more than 205,000 vehicles.

On a brisk afternoon earlier this month, Tim Boucher stood in the median of a four-lane roadway in St. Bernard Parish, La., checking the paperwork of truck drivers hauling away Hurricane Katrina-damaged vehicles.

Boucher, a special agent with the National Insurance Crime Bureau working on the data-

How to identify a flood-damaged car

- Stain marks, rust, mildew, sand or silt under the floorboard carpet
- Dried mud under the dashboard, behind wiring harnesses and in alternator crevices
- Rust on screws in the console and other areas where water normally would not reach
- Rust and water residue in the electrical wiring system
- Anything unusual in the vehicle's title history

Note: To check on the National Insurance Crime Bureau's database on flood-damaged vehicles go to www.nicb.org

Sources: National Automobile Dealers Association, National Insurance Crime Bureau

base, said: "It's really going to be incumbent upon the consumer to check" it.

As he spoke, sport-utility vehicles with an inch of mud and straw on the floor, mini-vans with seats cracked and puckered by water and one car after another with the rank smell

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TRIBUNE INVESTIGATION

Italy presses U.S. on torture claim

Wants details on CIA officer's trip to Egypt

By John Crewdson
Tribune senior correspondent

MILAN, Italy — Prosecutors investigating the CIA's alleged kidnapping of a radical Muslim preacher here want the FBI to question the CIA's former chief in Milan about whether he participated in the interrogation of Osama Moustafa Hassan Nasr, who claims he was tortured after being "rendered" by the CIA to Egypt nearly three years ago. Five days after Nasr, better known as Abu Omar, was

snatched off the sidewalk in this northern Italian city and flown to Egypt, the CIA chief, Robert Seldon Lady, began a two-week visit to Cairo.

Lady's identity no longer is secret because of an Italian warrant for his arrest and that of 21 other CIA operatives on kidnapping charges. Nor is Lady a spy any longer, having retired at the end of 2003, according to his Italian residence permit.

In communications with family and friends who visited his Egyptian prison, Abu Omar claimed to have been tortured by his Egyptian captors. He said the torture began almost immediately.

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INSIDE

BUSINESS
Enron executive takes plea deal

Former accounting chief Richard Causey to testify against two top execs, avoid going to trial.

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