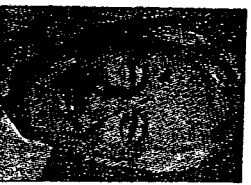


LOCAL NEWS

THE FRESNO BEE • MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2001

Death ruled a mystery

Experts cannot agree on a cause of death for Linda Adanalian.



ELI SETENICH

What will

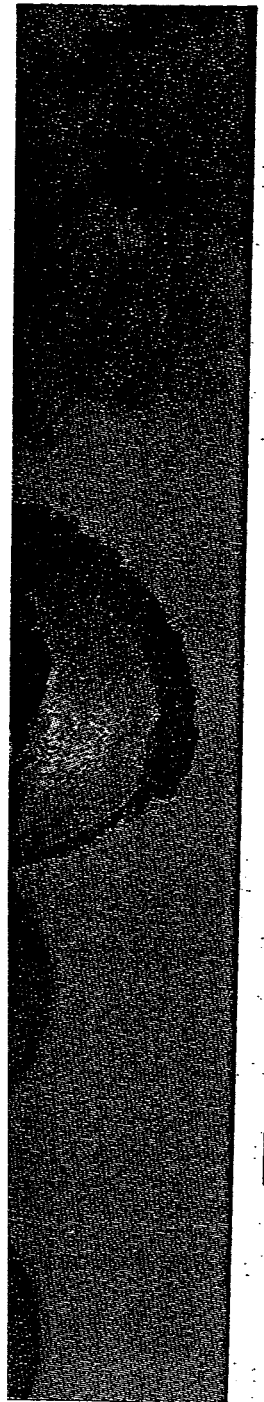
our nation

face next?

Remember the plaint,
"Wake me when it's
over?"

This time, when you do
taken, it's from the worst of
phantoms, and you can't help
undering, what's next?
Even here, a continent away
in the sorrow and bedlam,
thing will ever be the same
ain. And it's all so senseless. So
w can you make sense out of
senseless?

in the pre-dawn, you hesitate
turn on the radio, the
vision, wary of the still
known. What new unbearable
ness happened during the
g night? Was there another
ror you wouldn't be able to
prehend?



MAKING THE GRADE

BY PABLO LOPEZ
THE FRESNO BEE

Nineteen months after Linda Adanalian unexpectedly died in Fresno, the coroner has ruled her death a mystery. The Bee has learned.

"We are left with a sudden death that may be due to selenium toxicity, a cardiac condition, a combination of both, or some other unknown condition," Fresno County Coroner David Hadden wrote in a report.

"Our current state of scientific knowledge does not give us an unequivocal cause of death," he concluded.

The report, which will be made public today, finalized months of scientific research into the Feb. 11, 2000, death of the Clovis mother of four.

Hadden's conclusions did little to mend Adanalian's divided family or squelch rumors of foul play.

Linda's brother David Dalitton said Saturday he was shocked by the report's conclusion. He contends the nation's top toxicologists and forensic pathologists, who assisted Hadden in investigating Adanalian's death, have concluded his sister died of selenium poisoning.

Dalitton's lawyer, Allan Melkian, also expressed surprise at Hadden's conclusion. Melkian said Dr. Albert Siu, the forensic pathologist in charge of the Adanalian investigation, told him last month that Linda died of acute selenium toxicity.

Linda's husband, Mark Adanalian, could not be reached for comment. A friend of his, Fresno lawyer Warren

Paboojian, said, "We're disappointed that it [Hadden's report] didn't give a cause of death because we want to know, too."

Hadden declined to comment, saying his conclusions are in his report. In the report, he said at least 10 selenium experts reached different conclusions as to Adanalian's cause of death. Hadden questioned whether they used the same testing methods.

Both sides agree Linda Adanalian was a vibrant soccer mom who had a lovely home but a rocky marriage when she died at age 37.

Mark Adanalian and Paboojian believe Linda died of coronary spasm; Linda's parents, George and Jane Dalitton, and her siblings David and Meg contend someone gave her a fatal Please see MYSTERY, Page B2



Linda Adanalian



Mark Adanalian

Fresno job skills group danger

Nonprofit business group may be threatened by the county

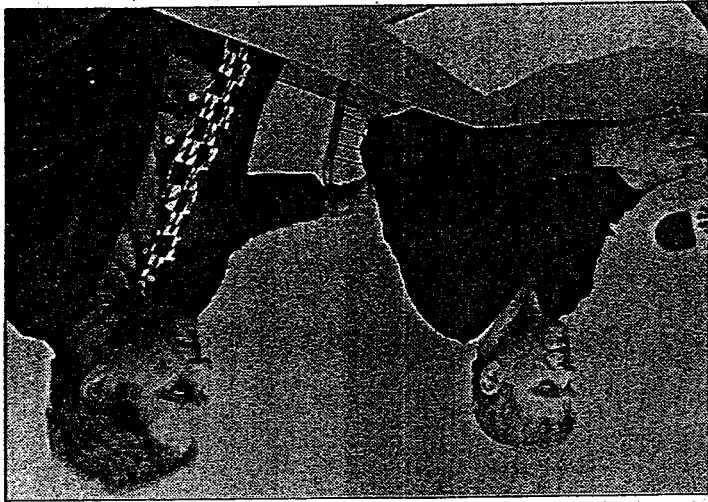
By JIM DAVY
THE FRESNO

A controversial non-profit group that provides education and job-training services to Fresno County might be in danger because some believe it is not effective enough.

The Board of Supervisors Tuesday at term took a \$49 million contract with no Area Workforce Inc. Corp. and taking over the program in six months.

"If it were working, we wouldn't even be talking about this," said Supervisor Jim Davy. "We've given the program a lot of time, but it's not working."

Mystery: Experts' findings clash



MARK CROSSE — THE FRESNO BEE
Linda Adanalian's brother Mitch Daffron, left, and Mark Adanalian make a media statement in February on the one-year anniversary of her death.

Continued from Page B1
dose of selenium. Both sides have spent considerable time and money seeking expert opinions as to her cause of death. Selenium is a naturally occurring, colorless and tasteless element found in many things: soil, plants, vitamin supplements and chemicals used in firearms manufacturing. At high levels, it can be poisonous.

Selenium poisoning is rare, Hadden said in his report. At least 10 experts on selenium helped Hadden study Adanalian's death, but they reached diverse conclusions.

"The problem for all of us is that it is difficult to develop expertise concerning a condition that is extremely rare," the coroner wrote.

On the day Adanalian died, she complained of flu-like symptoms. Despite being ill, she took her children to an ice show at Selland Arena. When the show was over, she complained of chest pains, said she couldn't breathe, then fainted. She died within two hours at Community Medical Center in Fresno.

"This has been an extraordinary, difficult and complicated case," Hadden wrote in his report. "Approximately 20% of sudden deaths in young people are cardiac pathologists. Two found no cardiac cause of death; one deemed useless because a preserved bottle in the specimen container revealed mercury, the report said. Further tests revealed selenium, a rare element found only in traces in the human body, Hadden wrote. "Only since 1973 has it been recognized as an important element in the physiology of human beings," he said.

More important, only a handful of human deaths have been positively linked to selenium toxicity, Hadden said.

Levels of normal human selenium vary in different geographic populations, and different levels of selenium may be required for

"The selenium toxicity issue becomes a case of conflicting experts using varying results from samples with variability."

— David Hadden, Fresno County Coroner

toxicity, Hadden said. The coroner then questioned whether the experts used the same testing method.

Hadden wrote: "The selenium toxicity issue becomes a case of conflicting experts using varying results from samples with variability."

"While the decedent is suspected of having taken over-the-counter dietary compounds, we do not know if she took the ones implicated in sudden death. The family has a history of health food supplements. No specifics as to selenium content or the amount taken by the decedent have been available to us."

That's why Adanalian's death remains a mystery, Hadden wrote. If she did die of selenium poisoning, there's no way of knowing how she ingested it.

"Before I affix a cause of death to an official government document, I want a greater degree of certainty of scientific testimony and evidence as to the cause of death," Hadden wrote. "Therefore, while this case may well be Fresno County's first known selenium toxicity, I am listing the cause of this death as unknown."

► The reporter can be reached at plopez@fresnobee.com or 441-6434.

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State will help with retrofits

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SAN FRANCISCO — Lawmakers in Sacramento have decided on a Bay Bridge earthquake retrofitting deal that requires the state to pay about 40% of the \$1.46 billion needed for the project.

The state will also need to cover up to \$448 million in anticipated expenses.

"This is the best deal we could arrive at to move forward," said Sen. Tom Toria, D-Walnut Creek.

The deal follows weeks of fraught with debate, as well as a standoff that might have put an end to the legislation.

Southern California representatives tried to insert amendments into AB 1171, written by Assembly Member John Dutra threatened to withdraw the measure over amendments. Southern California representatives said the bill would hurt projects in their areas.

This agreement outlined the state would use \$642 million in federal bridge funds to rely on revenue bonds for bridge tolls.

Bay Area representatives pined on the means of funding anticipated expenses, but they didn't get as much state funding for the project as they wanted.

Bay Area legislators were pleased.

"We're going to have a bridge," Sen. Don Perata, D-Oakland, said. "We had to get it on the edge of another delay."

Continued from Page B1
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Fair: Some performers cancel after attacks on U.S.

Continued from Page B1
the bins, fair organizers found a Rodeo's Saturday night grand stand performance that