

Homebuyers still want fixed mortgage rates: survey

—Real Estate

In Showcase

Janet Seathers, divorced mother of 11, and in real life



# THE DAILY HERALD

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## 5 dead after taking Tylenol capsules filled with cyanide

by Pete Nenni and Joann Van Wye  
Herald staff writers

Five suburban residents are dead after swallowing capsules of Extra-Strength Tylenol that were filled with cyanide.

The poisonings triggered a nationwide search for more contaminated pills, and state public health officials ordered all Tylenol taken off store shelves until further notice. Consumers were warned to check for bottles bearing the control number MC 2880, the number found on bottles that were blamed for three of the deaths, and to avoid any Tylenol products regardless of the lot number.

The victims include 12-year-old Mary Kellerman of Elk Grove Village, 27-year-old Adam Janus of Arlington Heights and his 25-year-old brother Stanley, a Lisle resident who unknowingly swallowed the poison in an attempt to calm his nerves after his brother's sudden death. Stanley's 19-year-old wife Theresa also took some of the poisoned Tylenol, and doctors at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights said late Friday she is in critical and unstable condition and shows no signs of brain activity.

In DuPage County, the coroner's office said 27-year-old Mary Reiner of Winfield died after taking poisoned Tylenol on Thursday. And a spokesman for Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove said cyanide poisoning also is suspected in the death of 31-year-old Mary MacFarland of Elmhurst.

Local police said the contaminated capsules that killed Mary Kellerman and the Janus brothers were purchased from two different Jewel supermarkets in Arlington Heights and Elk Grove Village.

Officials believe Reiner purchased her Tylenol at Frank's Finer Foods in Winfield, an independent grocer.

AN ESTIMATED 94,000 containers from the same batch were shipped to the Midwest in late August and were found in a total of 31 states and 50 other communities throughout Northern Illinois.

Dr. Barry D. Lifschultz, the deputy medical examiner who performed the autopsies, said as many as three contaminated capsules were found in each of the bottles of Tylenol that were taken from the Kellerman and Janus homes. Because only some of the capsules were poisoned and because the two families did not know each other, he said it was likely that the capsules were tampered with sometime after they were shipped from the factory but before they were purchased.

Michael Schaffer, chief toxicologist for the medical examiner's office, said the contaminated capsules had been pried open and refilled with cyanide, a deadly and fast-acting poison that starves the body of oxygen and causes death by asphyxiation. A dose of less than 50 milligrams is lethal, but Schaffer said the 500-milligram capsules had been completely filled.

Schaffer said the capsules found to contain cyanide were "moist on the inside and smelled like bitter almonds." Tylenol is a dry, white powder.

Tylenol's manufacturer, McNeil Consumer Products Co. of Fort Washington, Pa., said the company would

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Herald photos by Bob Ringham

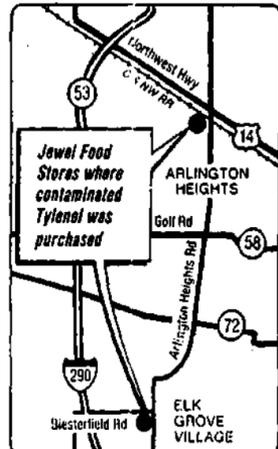
OFF THE SHELVES. Helen Jaster removes Tylenol from the shelves at Harris Pharmacy in Arlington Heights after deaths in the Chicago area were blamed on Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules filled with cyanide.



TWO BROTHERS, Stanley and Adam Janus, died after ingesting lethal capsules. Stanley Janus' wife is still in critical condition.



12-YEAR-OLD Mary Kellerman, left, died after taking a Tylenol capsule like the one above. Deadly capsules were purchased at two Jewel food stores shown on the map.



## Close-to-home deaths trigger wave of fear

by Anna Madrzyk  
Herald staff writer

Fear swept the Northwest suburbs Thursday as worried residents flooded local hospitals, pharmacies and police departments with phone calls in the wake of five deaths attributed to cyanide-filled Tylenol capsules.

Police, fire and health department officials cooperated in a public notification program without precedent in the Northwest suburbs Thursday to warn people of the danger. In Arlington Heights — where two of the victims lived and are believed to have purchased the fatal capsules — police used loudspeakers to broadcast the news in the neighborhoods and at commuter train stations during the evening rush hour. In Elk Grove Village, firefighters taped warning notices on the doors of residences.

Authorities warned people not to take Tylenol of any sort. However, they reassured those who had taken the capsules several hours earlier with no ill effects that they were in no danger because cyanide acts rapidly.

Throughout the suburbs, there was a massive effort to contact food and drug stores, mini-marts, gas stations, businesses, restaurants, schools, day-care centers, nursing homes or any other place Tylenol tablets might be sold or dispensed.

MANY STORES removed all Tylenol products from the shelves before they opened for business Thursday on orders from police or from their corporate headquarters.

"It's really a frightening thing. It scares me half to death," said Lucinda Bookout, an employee at K mart, Palatine and Rand roads, Arlington Heights. "That's a real monster who would do anything like that, isn't it?"

Local hospitals were swamped with hundreds of phone calls from worried residents, who had taken the capsules and wanted to know the symptoms of cyanide poisoning. The Poison Control Center at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago reported receiving 100 calls an hour.

Several residents were so panicky that they rushed to local emergency rooms even though they had no symptoms, while Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge performed blood cyanide level tests on two people, including a pregnant woman who said she feared for her baby. Both tests were negative.

RUTH ROCKCASTLE, emergency room supervisor at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights, who spent most of Thursday answering phone calls, said if anyone had taken Tylenol from the suspect batch within the last hour, he or she would have

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Herald photo  
Phillip Capitelli solved the mystery

## A string of coincidences linked Tylenol poisonings

by Anne Burris  
Herald staff writer

It began with a 12-year-old girl complaining of a stuffy nose and a sore throat.

Within a few hours, it had become a full-scale medical mystery with five people dead and a sixth critically ill from poison that had been concealed in capsules of a common pain reliever. The questions of who poisoned the Tylenol, and why, remain unanswered.

In fact, it was only through an unlikely set of coincidences that authorities discovered the connections between the deaths as quickly as they did. The man who found the first clue to the mystery was an Arlington Heights fire lieutenant who happened to be monitoring emergency calls during his off-duty hours and whose mother-in-law happened to be a friend of the first victim.

The tragedy began to unfold at about 7 a.m. Wednesday when Dennis and

Jeanna Kellerman found their 12-year-old daughter Mirry lying unconscious on the floor of the bathroom in their Elk Grove Village home. She was pronounced dead at Alexian Brothers Medical Center three hours later.

AT ABOUT 11 A.M., Adam Janus stopped in a supermarket in Arlington Heights and bought a bottle of Extra-Strength Tylenol. He went home, took a couple of pills and went into his bedroom to take a nap. By 3:15 p.m., he was dead.

His distraught relatives gathered at Northwest Community Hospital and returned to Janus' Mitchell Street house late in the afternoon. Sometime around 6:30 p.m., Stanley Janus and his wife Theresa each took two capsules from the same bottle of Tylenol. Stanley collapsed as he emerged from the bathroom and died at 8:15 p.m., and his wife is in critical condition.

Meanwhile, Arlington Heights Fire Lt. Phillip Capitelli was enjoying a day

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**FRIDAY IN THE HERALD**

**LeFlore arrested**  
"Hard drugs were a big part of my life before I was old enough to get a driver's license," wrote Ron LeFlore, with Jim Hawkins, in his 1978 autobiography, *Breakout*. The specter of drugs once again hangs over Ron LeFlore, the White Sox center fielder who was arrested early Thursday on drug and weapons charges. — Sports

**Humid**  
Partly sunny, warm and humid Friday with a 30 percent chance of showers. Highs about 80.  
The index is on Page 2.

## Despite Reagan prediction, economic forecast dips

From Herald news services

WASHINGTON — Flying in the face of President Reagan's predictions of recovery, the government's main economic forecasting gauge has nosed down for the first time since March and a record number of Americans have lined up for unemployment benefits, officials said Thursday.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige insisted the economy was still heading for an upturn. Some private analysts agreed, though cautioning the improvement would be relatively

weak. But the chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers said the new figures mean "we will not see meaningful recovery until 1983."

House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, D-Mass., said "the worst may be ahead" and raised the possibility of an economic depression.

IN THE specific reports:

• The Commerce Department said its Index of Leading Indicators — designed to show future national economic trends — dropped 0.9 percent in Au-

gust after rising for four straight months.

• The Labor Department said initial claims for state jobless benefits soared to 703,000 in the week ended Sept. 18, the highest recorded since the department began its current form of tabulation in 1967.

• In Illinois, the state's Labor Department released preliminary figures showing that Decatur's jobless rate of 19.9 percent was the highest among Illinois cities for August.

Rockford, with 18.5 percent, ranked

second. Rockford previously had the highest jobless rate in the state, with 19.3 percent in July. The Chicago region, showed a preliminary jobless rate of 10 percent.

In addition, a Commerce measure of current economic conditions continued to decline in August, hitting its low point of the recession and thereby signaling strongly that the downturn was not over.

REAGAN HAD SAID in advance that the expected decline in the leading indicators was no more than a "glitch"

or "blip" in the overall pattern of recovery.

And Baldrige told reporters that "at this point we are in the interim period between a recession and a recovery. The signs of recovery will be more clear as the fourth quarter unfolds." He also predicted September's leading indicators index would be up, reversing the August decline.

The composite index of economic indicators is based on figures for 10 categories of economic activity most likely to affect the economy.