

The Philadelphia Inquirer

ALWAYS ASKING. ALWAYS PHILLY.

Police say 2 women likely killed in Olney home

Maribel Fresses and Gabrielle Amarando had struggled with drugs, loved ones said. Their bodies are still missing.

By Ellie Rushing, Barbara Laker, Max Marin, and Ryan W. Briggs
Staff Writers

Philadelphia police now believe at least two women were killed inside the decrepit Olney home at the center of a sprawling missing persons investigation, officials said Wednesday — a stunning breakthrough in a probe that began nearly two months ago after a chance encounter near Independence Mall.

Inspector Raymond Evers said homicide detectives had recovered photos and videos on hard drives inside the home that appeared to show the deaths of two women who had been reported missing — neither of whom had been previously linked to the case.

Evers identified the women as Maribel Fresses, who was 27 when she was reported missing in February 2018, and Gabrielle Amarando, who went missing in September 2012 at the age of 22.

The announcement at a Wednesday news conference was the latest and most striking development in a case that has drawn national attention since police launched an investigation in June into the disappearances of two other women last seen at the home of Eugene Albert Horsch, 44, and his late father, Raymond “R.C.” Horsch.

Evers said the two-month search of the home, on the 400 block of West Chew Avenue, involved over 95 search warrants and surfaced an “astounding” array of evidence: five urns of cremated remains, more than 20 containers full of unknown chemicals and oily substances, and 50 hard drives and other electronic devices holding more than 600,000

→ SEE OLNEY ON A10



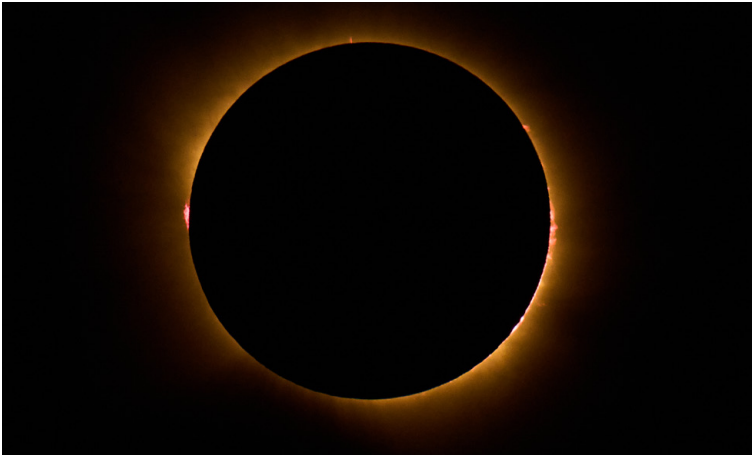
Gabrielle Amarando (left), missing since 2012, and Maribel Fresses, reported missing in 2018. Police believe they were killed inside the home on Chew Avenue in Olney.
Obtained by The Inquirer



Totally awesome

Across Britain, where the sun was more than 90% obscured, people flocked to hilltop parks and anywhere with an open view of the sky Wednesday to see the best eclipse since 1999. In Greenwich Park, with views of the River Thames and central London, the sky turned an eerie gray as a sliver of light sat atop the moon like a hat. At right, a total eclipse is photographed from Berlanga de Duero, central Spain. Across a wide band of northern and central Spain and Portugal, millions of people enjoyed some of mainland Europe's best views of the eclipse. It also passed over slivers of Greenland and Iceland.

Dan Kitwood / Getty Images and Bernat Armangue / AP



White House work to cost at least \$900M

The price tag is much larger than what has been previously reported, and taxpayers would cover most of it.

By Jonathan O’Connell and Sarah Blaskey
Washington Post

The Trump administration plans to spend at least \$900 million for construction projects on the White House grounds, a significantly larger price tag than has been previously reported and one that would be covered primarily by taxpayers, according to records reviewed by the Washington Post.

Instead of securing money directly from Congress, the records show, the administration has pieced together funding from other agencies and private donors and directed it to a little-known account that typically holds a few million dollars for routine maintenance of the executive mansion.

Confidential contracts and related planning documents indicate that the administration plans to use money in that account for White House “modernization projects” — the administration’s term

→ SEE WHITE HOUSE ON A9

Montco Intermediate Unit to tighten travel rules after safari probe

An outside investigator said the IU’s board of directors should sign off on all future trips by agency leaders.

By William Bender
Staff Writer

The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit’s board of directors plans to tighten its professional development and travel policies after learning in March that its leaders had used their agency credit cards to purchase overseas trips — including a 14-day African safari — without the board’s knowledge.

Mark Klein, an attorney and former schools superintendent who conducted a two-month investigation into the trips, told board

members at a virtual meeting Tuesday night that, going forward, the board should require Montco IU leaders to receive board approval for travel.

The current policy, which Klein said includes no such requirement, is “in conflict with many of the school districts that are in the area.” He noted that it is not an unusual policy for an intermediate unit.

The outside investigation began after The Inquirer reported in March that the Montco IU’s executive director, Regina Speaker, and its assistant executive director, Sandra Edling, had used their procurement cards to book about \$40,000 worth of international travel since 2023.

Speaker has defended the 2023 trip she and Edling took to Kenya and Tanzania, which culminated a yearlong academy for education

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‘Field of Dreams’ might have been ‘heaven’ for him; Philly sure wasn’t

“Shoeless” Joe Jackson was a South Carolina fish out of water starting his career with Connie Mack’s Athletics.

By Matt Breen
Staff Writer

It was just the previous season that Joe Jackson played a game without cleats, so he had only been “Shoeless Joe” for a few months. Yet it was already obvious that Shoeless Joe was destined to be a star. That’s why Jackson was on a sleeper train bound for Philadelphia in August of 1908.



“Shoeless” Joe Jackson was a .356 career hitter over 13 seasons. AP

Philadelphia Athletics manager Connie Mack had dispatched three scouts — including his top lieutenant — earlier that summer to get eyes on Jackson in Greenville, S.C., before signing him for \$900.

But Jackson didn’t want to leave his tiny South Carolina hometown.

He had just turned 21 years old and was married weeks earlier. A son of a sharecropper, Jackson never went to school and was thrilled to be earning \$75 a week for the Greenville Spinners.

Jackson, leery of life up North in the big city, delayed his trip while another teammate whom Mack signed left for Philly.

Shoeless Joe finally relented and boarded the train with his minor-league manager Tom Stauch, who was instructed to deliver Mack the player an A’s scout described as “the sweetest hitter I’ve ever seen.”

Stauch woke up when the train pulled into Philadelphia. Jackson wasn’t there. He hopped off overnight during a stop in North

→ SEE SHOELESS ON A9