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THE Pampa
 MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2003

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WEATHER WEATHER

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LOCAL
Cattle Women set scholarship deadline

The Top O' Texas Cattle Women remind high school seniors attending state-certified schools in Carson, Collingsworth, Gray, Hemphill, Hutchison, Lipscomb, Ochiltree, Roberts and Wheeler counties that the deadline to return the applications for scholarships is Friday, April 25. For more information, contact Sandra Christner at 806-826-3572.

- DEATHS**
- Betty Dilman Brandon, 74, lifelong Pampian.
 - Clyde L. Carruth, 99, civic leader.
 - James E. "Frito" Killian, 62, diesel mechanic.
 - Margaret Sue White, 62, maitre d'.

INSIDE...

- Classified7
- Comics4
- Sports7

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Water rights on city agenda Tuesday

The purchase of water rights will top the agenda of the Pampa City Commission's working session Tuesday night.

The city commission is to meet with Ken Satterwhite, head of the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority, at 5 p.m., Tuesday, at the commissioners work session in the main floor conference room of city hall, to discuss the purchase of water rights. CRMWA provides water from Lake Meredith and their Roberts County well field to 11 municipalities, including Pampa, in the Texas Panhandle and South Plains.

The commission will also have a public hearing regarding a proposed specific use permit that would allow the storage of sand, caliche, stone and gravel in the 400 block of North Ballard Street. They will hear the first reading of an ordinance that would allow the permit during their regular session at 6 p.m., Tuesday, in the commission chambers.

The city commission is expected to hear the second and final reading of an ordinance that will merge the M.K. Brown Auditorium Advisory Board into the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the second and

final reading of an ordinance that will decrease the number of persons on the Cable Advisory Board.

The commission will hear the first reading of an ordinance that would In other business, they are expected to adopt a resolution to extend the auditing agreement with Brown, Graham and Company because of changes in the audit rules next year.

The commission will also consider appointments to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, consider a special meeting Tuesday, May 6, to canvass the votes from the May 3 election and consider adopting the

Promote Pampa Goals that was established by the city commission.

They will also consider awarding a bid in the amount of \$1061 from Steven Allison of Acworth, Ga., for delinquent tax property at 828 S. Faulkner.

The commission is to consider declaring some city vehicles as surplus and authorize their sale. Those vehicles include a 1986 Chevrolet pickup, a 1988 Chevrolet one ton truck, a 1987 Ford one ton truck, a 1986 Plymouth Voyager mini-van, a 1988 Ford Crown Victoria sedan and a 1994 Chevrolet Caprice sedan.

Man with a plan
U.S. postwar administrator arrives in Baghdad today

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — The retired U.S. general appointed as Iraq's postwar administrator arrived in Baghdad on Monday, while two more top members of Saddam Hussein's regime were reported captured.

The New York Times reported Monday that a scientist who claims to have worked in Iraq's chemical weapons program told a U.S. military team that Iraq destroyed and buried chemical weapons and biological warfare equipment only days before the war began March 20.

Members of Mobile Exploitation Team Alpha said the scientist led Americans to material that proved to be the building blocks of illegal weapons, the Times said.

Maj. Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the Army's 101st Airborne Division, said: "Though much work must still be done to validate the information MET Alpha has uncovered, if it proves out it will clearly be one of the major discoveries of this operation, and it may be the major discovery."

The White House had no immediate comment.

Landing at the Baghdad airport from Kuwait, retired Lt. Gen. Jay Garner said his priority was to restore basic

services such as water and electricity as soon as possible.

"What better day in your life can you have than to be able to help somebody else, to help other people, and that is what we intend to do," the 65-year-old Garner said in his first postwar visit to the capital.

With Baghdad slowly returning to normal after days of looting and arson, Marines pulled back Sunday and left the U.S. Army in control of the capital, where coalition-run radio announced an 11 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew.

In Texas, President Bush attended Easter services at Fort Hood, joined by two helicopter pilots who were among the seven prisoners of war rescued from Iraq a week ago. The five other former POWs spent the day with their loved ones at Fort Bliss.

Tensions appeared to ease between the United States and Syria, with Bush saying that Syria appears to be heeding warnings against sheltering escaped members of Saddam's regime.

U.S. Central Command said forces had captured Abd al-Khaliq Abd al-Ghafar, Saddam's scientific research minister, on Saturday. Abd al-Ghafar was the four of hearts

(See IRAQ, Page 3)



(Courtesy photo)

Pictured with the Sweepstakes trophies won by the 81 members of the Pampa High School Concert Choir, Concert Women and Concert Men choirs are seniors, from left, Kelsey Charron, Karissa Intemann, Josh Miller, Sarah Porter, Michael Eskridge, Mary Alice Warner and Bonnie Holmes.

PHS choirs sweep contest

Three Pampa High School choirs brought home coveted "Sweepstakes" trophies from Region I UIL concert and sightsinging competitions at West Texas A&M University in Canyon April 16.

PHS Concert Choir, Concert Women and Concert Men all were awarded Sweepstakes honors for earning first divisions in both concert and sightsinging competition conducted at WT's Mary Moody Northern Hall. Each of the three groups received a first division from all six of the judges.

Pampa's Mixed Choir also made a good showing at the compassion with a second division in concert and a first in sightsinging. The PHS Women's Choir received a second division in concert and sightsinging.

PHS Concert Choir performed "Sing Unto God" by Fetter "Ave Maria," by Rachmaninoff, and "Hodie" by John Leavett

with a solo by PHS senior Karissa Intemann. The Concert Men performed "Sing Me A Song," by Porterfield, "Loch Lomond" by Gulping with a solo by Michael Eskridge, and "African Noel" by Johnson. Selections sung by the Concert Women included "Rise Up My Love," by Daley, "Measure me, Sky" by Mulholland and "Laudamus Te," by Clausen.

The Mixed Choir sang "Agnus Dei" by Smith, "Confitemini Domino" by Persichetti, and "O Waly, Waly" by McIver. The Women's Choir performed "Joyfully Sing" by Spiveck, "Scarborough Fair" by Archibeque and "Shady Grove," by McKay.

Concert Choir, Concert Men, Concert Women and Mixed Choir were directed by Fred Mays, PHS choir director, accompanied by Wanetta Hill, assistant director, on the

(See CHOIRS, Page 3)

County Commission to meet on Tuesday

Several matters involved in getting the courthouse restoration project completed before county employees move back in the historic structure will be considered in a special meeting of the Gray County Commissioners Court at 9 a.m. Tuesday.

After almost two years in temporary locations while the restoration was underway, Gray County employees will be moving back into the courthouse May 16 through 26th. Offices in

the courthouse will be open for business on May 27.

Items relating to the courthouse to be discussed will be computer component/internet services proposals, restoration of vault doors, change order on mop sinks, change order on ventilation in computer server closets, moving district court bench rail, redoing courtroom ceilings, and keying of doors.

Also on the agenda is consider payment of sheriff's vehicles.

HOME of the BRAVE

GSM2 William M. Toten
 Rank: E-5
 Branch of Service: U.S. Navy
 Stationed: San Diego, Calif.
 Deployed: Persian Gulf aboard U.S.S. Fletcher
 Family: Fiancee Tammy Fenski, sons, J.D. and William, and daughter, Monica; parents, Bill and Susan Toten; sister Maria; nephew and niece, Anthony and Alyssah.

Golfers... be sure to sign up early for the Pampa Partnership Golf Tournament to be held on May 17th & 18th. Maximum of 72 teams. two players per team. \$65.00 fee per golfer. \$30.00 cart fee. The tournament will be played May 17th at Hidden Hills Golf Course and on May 18th at Pampa Country Club Golf Course.

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Shattered Dreams donation



(Courtesy photo)

Pampa Wal-Mart Manager Terry Randle presents Pampa High School Shattered Dreams Project with a \$1,000 donation. Shattered Dreams is a drunk driving prevention program which will take place at Pampa High School on May 14 and 15.

Aggies unite for solemn tradition

Former students of Texas A&M University will assemble in Pampa tonight for the annual Texas Aggie Muster in honor of all Texas Aggies who have passed away within the last year, announced Ron Easley, Muster chairman. Local muster activities include dinner at 7 p.m., at M.K. Brown Auditorium. Texas Aggie Muster welcomes all former and current students, their families and friends of Texas A&M University, Easley said. Texas Aggie Muster tradition spans more than a century and will be observed in more than 350 locations around the world. These Muster gather-

ings are held in many unique places ranging from battlefields and foxholes during world War II to ballrooms and steakhouses today. Over the years, Aggie Muster has grown to be one of Texas A&M's greatest traditions. The Muster program honors the memory of A&M men and women whose death prevents them from answering Roll Call at this year's Muster. The Roll Call is a roster compiled of all former and current students who have died over the past year. As each name is called, a friend or family member will answer "Here!" symbolizing that their memory lives on in the hearts of Aggies

everywhere. Muster is more than a ceremony; it is also a way for Aggies to renew, each year, the loyalty and unity which constitute the foundation of their friendship for each other and love and devotion for their school. For more information regarding the Texas Aggie Muster in Pampa, contact Easley at 665-7188 or Judy Wood at 669-3039. Additional information about Texas Aggie Muster and other Texas A&M traditions and programs is available by contacting the Association of Former Students at 979-845-7514 or by visiting their website at 222.AggieNetwork.com.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

IRAQ

in the U.S. military's most-wanted deck of cards. Saddam's son-in-law and one of Saddam's bodyguards, both hiding in Syria, were persuaded to leave that country and surrendered to members of the opposition Iraqi National Congress in Baghdad, according to a spokesman for the group, Haider Ahmed. Jamal Mustafa Abdullah Sultan al-Tikriti is married to Saddam's youngest daughter, Hala, and was deputy head of Iraq's tribal affairs office. He was the nine of clubs in the U.S. deck of cards. He was being questioned by the opposition group and will be turned over to U.S. officials, Ahmed said. Central Command had no information on the surrender. Seven of the 55 most-wanted members of Saddam's regime are now in custody, though none from the very top of the list. An eighth figure, Ali Hassan al-Majid — nicknamed "Chemical Ali" for his use of poison gas against the Kurds — is believed to have been killed in an airstrike. Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress exile group, told the BBC on Monday that Saddam is alive in Iraq and moving from place to place. He said the INC is receiving information on Saddam's whereabouts 12 to 24 hours after the fact. In Baghdad, stores were open and the streets crowded as residents swept up debris. Trying to head off food shortages, the U.S. military opened a warehouse to U.N. aid shipments and stockpiled flour. A convoy of food arrived over the weekend for the malnourished animals at the Baghdad Zoo. U.S. forces are trying to restore order until the interim authority led by Garner can take over. Garner heads the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, set up to help rebuild Iraq and

eventually turn authority over to the Iraqis. His initial team of about 19 civilian administrators is to grow to about 450 over the next week. "We will be here as long as it takes," Garner said, before adding: "We will leave fairly rapidly." The retired general will report to Gen. Tommy Franks, commander of U.S. forces in Iraq. In Baghdad, he visited a hospital that was looted after Saddam's fall, got an update from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the city's major electrical plant and went to the moat-surrounded Faw Palace, where he was to spend the night. In Washington, Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said it could take at least five years to create a functioning democracy in Iraq. "The institution-building process in Iraq is a huge endeavor," he said. "There's not much to work with at this point." Across Iraq on Sunday, Shiite Muslim pilgrims journeyed by the thousands to holy cities, and Christians packed churches for Easter, giving full voice to religious convictions suppressed under Saddam. There were fears that religious rivalries that had been brutally kept in check would flare anew if Iraq's majority Shiite Muslims take over.

"If they come to power, we'll leave the country," electrician Jacob Koda, 51, said at Baghdad's Sacred Heart Church. Iraqi Shiites' second-most-senior leader, Sheik Jalal Al Saghir, returned to Iraq after 10 years in exile in Europe. Hundreds of thousands of Shiites were preparing to gather from Tuesday through Thursday in the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf for an annual feast whose celebration was curtailed by Saddam's Sunni Muslim-dominated Baath Party. U.S. troops plan to maintain a low profile during the pilgrimage. A senior Shiite cleric, Sayyed Mohammed Baqer al-Mehri, warned Monday that Saddam's agents were planning "terrorist attacks and clashes" at the Karbala pilgrimage. Al-Mehri said coalition forces would be to blame if

Scott Peterson waits in jail to be arraigned in wife's, son's deaths

MODESTO, Calif. (AP) — Arrested because detectives feared he might try to flee the country, a jailed Scott Peterson waited to be arraigned on charges that he murdered his wife and their unborn child. Alone in a 6-by-9 maximum-security cell in the Stanislaus County jail, Peterson spent the weekend talking to his lawyer and making phone calls, said Kelly Huston, a spokesman for the sheriff's department. "He has been treated much like any other maximum-security inmate that we have here," Huston told reporters gathered Sunday outside the jail. Peterson, who wore shackles and a belly chain whenever he was taken from his cell, was "rather quiet" and "very courteous" to his jailers, Huston said.

Although authorities said the proceeding could be delayed for a day, Peterson was expected to be arraigned Monday on charges that he killed his wife, Laci Peterson, and their unborn son. Prosecutors have not said if they will seek the death penalty. Scott Peterson, 30, has maintained that he had nothing to do with his wife's disappearance, and was fishing in San Francisco Bay when she vanished just before Christmas. Last week authorities found the bodies of Laci Peterson and the baby on the shore of the bay. Investigators had long declined to name Scott

Peterson as a suspect, but even before DNA tests identified the bodies, Modesto police arrested Peterson Friday near San Diego because they feared he might flee to Mexico, Modesto Police Chief Roy Wasden said. When he was arrested, Peterson's naturally dark hair was reddish-blond, he had grown a goatee, and he had \$10,000 in cash with him in his car, a law enforcement source said. Hours later, investigators learned of the DNA results. In the jail, Peterson was segregated from other inmates and placed in the jail's maximum security section because of the nature of the charges he faces, and because prisoners have made threats against him, Huston said. The inmates "definitely have some unfavorable opinions of him," the sheriff's spokesman said. Peterson has declined all interview requests, authorities said. His attorney, Kirk McAllister, talked with Peterson Saturday night, but made no public comment on the case. In an interview with Time magazine Sunday, Peterson's father, Lee, said "police have just bungled this investigation from day one."

"You have a district attorney calling this a slam-dunk before there's even an arraignment," Scott Peterson's mother, Jackie, told the magazine. "I'm feeling like I'm living in Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union." "We're grieving for the baby, as Scott is for Laci," Lee Peterson said. Outside the home that Scott and Laci Peterson once shared, a makeshift shrine of flowers, balloons, candles and cards continued to grow, as local residents spent their Easter Sunday paying their respects to the young woman whose death shocked this sleepy farm town in California's bread basket. Michelle McKinney hugged her daughter and wiped away tears as she watched her 12-year-old son add a blue and gold teddy bear. "The baby didn't get a chance to live his life and grow up," said McKinney, 33. "She didn't get a chance to enjoy her baby." A wooden cross covered with aluminum foil on the Peterson lawn read: "We prayed everyday that Laci and Baby Connor would come home. Now, Laci and Baby Connor are home with the Lord."

Texas murder suspect dies in London

LONDON (AP) — A Texas man accused of a gruesome 1974 double murder died Monday in London, where he was awaiting possible extradition to the United States, the Prison Service said. Robert Elmer Kleasen, 70, succumbed to suspected heart failure at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in southeast London, the service said. He was transferred to the hospital from Belmarsh Prison on Thursday. Kleasen was indicted by a Travis County grand jury in August 2001 for the killings of Mark Fischer and Gary Darley. Last August, a judge approved prosecutors' request to extradite him to the United States, leaving a final decision to Home Secretary David Blunkett. Kleasen was convicted of

Fischer's murder and sentenced to death in 1975, but two years later a state appeals court overturned the conviction because of a faulty search warrant. Missionaries Fischer, 19, of Milwaukee, Wis., and Darley, 20, of Simi Valley, Calif., disappeared in Austin on Oct. 28, 1974. Their bodies were never found. They were to dine with Kleasen in his trailer behind a taxidermy shop where he worked. Police believe Darley and Fischer kept that date and were shot to death, and that their bodies were cut into small pieces with a band saw in the shop. The bodies were never found, but Fischer's watch and bullet-punctured name tag were discovered in Kleasen's former residence west of Austin.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

CHOIRS

piano; and Stephen Nelson; Scott Guthrie; Breck Penrod, Aaron Simon, percussion. Hill directed the Women's Choir accompanied by Susan Draper, piano; Sarah Porter, guitar; and Bonnie Holmes, bells. UIL Concert Contest judges included Kevin Lane of Midland High; Stan McGill, South Garland High School; and Tammy Patterson of Houston. Sight-singing Contest judges were Monica Awbrey, Rowlett; Brett Farr, Coronado High School, Lubbock; and Eric Hindman, Seminole.

AMBULANCE

Rural Metro Ambulance reported the following calls during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m., today.
Sunday, April 20
 11:42 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to Pampa Regional Medical Center; one patient was transported Veteran's Hospital in Amarillo.
 5:11 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 900 block of South Hobart; one patient was transported to PRMC.

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MONDAY • APRIL 21, 2003

DEAR ABBY

written by Pauline Phillips and daughter Jeanne Phillips

All Work And No Play Make This Husband Suddenly Single

DEAR ABBY: I didn't know I had a problem until the day my wife/lover/best friend walked out on me two weeks before our 13th anniversary.

All our married life I worked a seven-day-a-week factory job on second shift, and in the mornings managed my own retail business.

I thought everything at home was great. Our house and cars were paid for. We even owned a boat. It turns out that all my wife wanted was for me to hold her, love her and "be there" for her. Now she lives 600 miles away.

I learned my lesson the hard way. I closed my business, but it's too late. Abby, please warn your readers about the danger of becoming a workaholic. Material things are not worth the price of losing the one person who shares your life. I hope my story will save someone else's marriage.

HIT WITH REALITY
IN MICHIGAN

DEAR HIT: So do I. In order for couples to grow together, they must communicate, spend time with each other and share mutual interests. Good marriages don't just happen. Like anything else worth having, they require work and nurturing.

DEAR ABBY: I am a female college student. I am having a problem with a former classmate from last semester. I'll call her Theresa. We started a friendship, but the conver-

sation was always awkward, and we had few common interests, so it was a chore to spend time with her. Not a good formula for friendship.

Theresa calls my apartment and my cell phone, and she e-mails me on a weekly basis. I screen all of my calls and never respond to her e-mails, but she hasn't taken the hint.

How does one "nicely" end a friendship without burning bridges? Our paths may cross again one day in the corporate world. None of my family or friends have an answer.

BESIEGED
IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR BESIEGED: Since you never see her and do not respond to her e-mails, it shouldn't be difficult to tell your former classmate that you are very busy and do not have the time she has to devote to a friendship. Say it kindly, and wish her all the best in the future.

DEAR ABBY: What do you think of my husband's behavior? We've been married almost 50 years, and if I didn't speak all day long we would live in a silent world. My husband says nothing, not even "good morning." He will stalk right by me on his way out the door and never say a word.

This is nothing new. It has been like this nearly all of our married life. We are both college-educated, with responsible professions, and were raised in well-educated, professional

families. No one else I know gets treated this way.

I have tried talking to him about this, but it does no good. Thanks for any insight you can give me.

SUFFERING IN SILENCE
IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR SUFFERING IN SILENCE: Your husband's behavior could be a sign of long-standing depression or it could be passive-aggressive abuse. How you have tolerated it for 50 years is beyond me. Ask him why he married you. His reply may provide you with some insight. Then ask yourself — is this how you want to spend your remaining years? Your signature says it all. I couldn't live in an atmosphere like that.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby — Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

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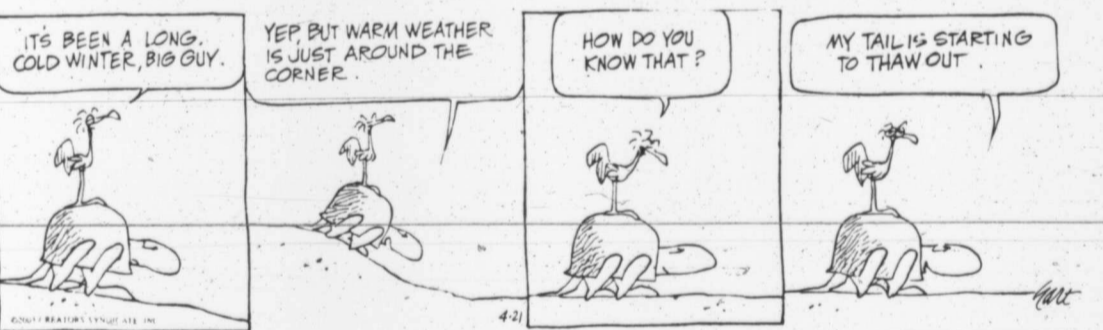
Beetle Bailey



Marvin



B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS DOWN

- 1 Big snakes
- 5 Bashful
- 10 High point
- 11 Found darling
- 13 Singer McEntire
- 14 Take out
- 15 Some dances
- 17 Veto
- 18 Treat derisively
- 19 Bran base
- 20 Moving truck
- 21 Remote button
- 22 Big books
- 25 Spud
- 26 Milky stone
- 27 Took first
- 28 Used a spade
- 29 Hotel room feature
- 33 Pub brew
- 34 Chic
- 35 Lease signer
- 37 Metal sources
- 38 Lure
- 39 Use a drill
- 40 Circus worker
- 41 Pot start

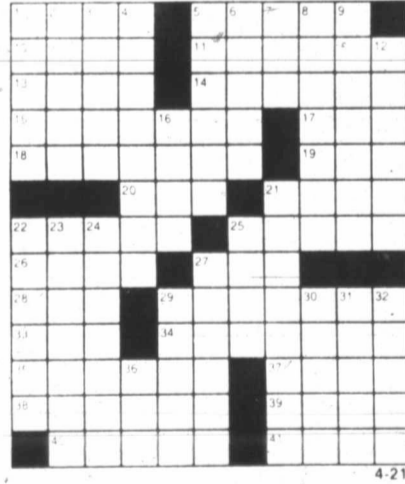


SAMSON SCAR
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LIONS KENDO
SEND GANDER
BLIP OUT
BIAYOPIGTS
RAT STAN
EVADES FADS
GALAS CONIC
IRON MARTINA
MIST ARTISEN
EASE DETIEST

Saturday's answer

- 21 North
- 8 Dakota
- 9 Veer
- 12 Jazz
- 22 So far
- 23 Showy
- 24 Red hue
- 25 A lot
- 27 Cold time
- 29 Chop up
- 30 "Child Harold"
- 31 Wide poet
- 32 View awake
- 32 View anew
- 36 Target

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Flo & Friends



TRACK

PAMPA Elementary Meet will be at Randy M. meet will be with field c. Relay r after the lun BASEBA

MANH/

(AP) — Jim three runs Saturday w career-high seven—in Wildcats be 1. Kansas Sta Big 12), w Tech 10-8 consecutive first time s The Wildc school-rec before Frid: Kansas Sta Baldwin w RBIs and hi of the seaso Maloney al

GOLF

HILTO ISLAND, Davis Love his closet a when he no jackets he'd MCI Heritag

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There w — especial Love ch final hole to Then return its famous li after hitting his approach "This is him, obvio things happ Austin said. Love tra stroke on his sent his app of the greer fidence that success her brother and would chip

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Arafat, Abbas struggle over new cabinet formation

By **RAMIT PLUSHNICK-MASTI**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

JERUSALEM (AP) — Yasser Arafat and his prime minister-designate, Mahmoud Abbas, remained at loggerheads over the composition of the Palestinian Cabinet on Monday, after all-night negotiations failed to produce a compromise.

The crisis threatens to torpedo a U.S.-backed "road map" to full Palestinian statehood within three years.

Abbas, who must win parliamentary approval for his Cabinet by Wednesday, has threatened to resign if his team is not accepted. The United States, in turn, has said it will only present the peace plan once Abbas and his Cabinet have been installed.

The main dispute is over the appointment of Mohammed Dahlan, a former security chief in Gaza. Abbas wants to give Dahlan a key security post, while Arafat wants to keep a confidant, Hani al-Hassan, in the job. The new security chief would have to supervise a crackdown on Palestinian militants, a prerequisite for moving ahead with

the internationally backed peace plan.

On Saturday, Abbas stormed out of a meeting with Arafat after the Palestinian leader refused to support Dahlan's inclusion in the Cabinet. Israel and the United States back Dahlan, who has said he is confident he can rein in the militants.

Al-Hassan does not have much international support, and as interior minister in the past few months has not succeeded in halting attacks by militants on Israelis.

Qadoura Fares, a Palestinian legislator, said there are no real alternatives to Abbas because no one else has his standing.

"At the moment, there is no agreement (on a Cabinet), but in the end, we are talking about 48 hours, they have to find some compromise. There is no time to be hesitant and to delay processes that are so important," Fares said.

The wrangling is over more than Cabinet appointments. If Abbas prevails, it would suggest he can pursue an independent policy. If Arafat wins, it may mean Abbas is little more than a figurehead.

Dahlan has offered to give up the securi-

ty post to defuse the tensions, but Abbas insists on his appointment, the officials said.

Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, has until noon Wednesday to present his government to the 88-member Palestinian legislature.

If he does not complete his Cabinet list by Tuesday, there will not be enough time for all legislators to arrive in the West Bank town of Ramallah for the session, officials said Monday.

Abbas and Arafat have not met since Saturday, but their aides have been holding marathon talks, including an all-night session that ended early Monday without results, the officials said.

Several senior officials declined to speak on the record, apparently afraid they would end up backing the loser in the showdown.

Several possible alternatives to Abbas have been mentioned, including al-Hassan and Cabinet minister Nabil Shaath, who has served as a de facto foreign minister since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994.

The Quartet of Mideast negotiators — the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations — has demanded that Arafat reform his corruption-plagued regime before moving ahead with the road map.

In recent days, Arafat has come under growing international pressure to stop undercutting Abbas, Palestinian officials said.

European leaders, including German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, have spoken to Arafat by phone, pressing him to help get the new Cabinet approved quickly. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah have also urged Arafat to bring the process to a close, the officials said.

Israeli officials are closely following the Arafat-Abbas talks, warning that Arafat is attempting to retain control over the Palestinian Authority, a move that they say would torpedo efforts to advance the long-stalled peace process and end 30 months of fighting.

Opposition accuses Nigerian president of fraud

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — President Olusegun Obasanjo took a commanding lead in early returns from voting that could bring Nigeria's first successful transition from one civilian government to another, but the main opposition party claimed the vote was rigged and a "huge joke."

With more than 20 million votes counted in 21 of Nigeria's 36 states and the federal capital territory, Obasanjo had 66 percent of the votes compared with 27 percent for Muhammadu Buhari, a former ally.

Buhari's campaign spokesman, Sam Nda-Isai, said his party rejected the results.

"The entire so-called election is a huge joke," Nda-Isai told The Associated Press. "As far as we are concerned, democracy has failed."

Buhari and other party leaders will meet in the next few days to decide a course of action, the spokesman said.

declining to speculate whether that could involve massive protests as opposition officials earlier warned.

Obasanjo's campaign spokesman, meanwhile, called the results "a victory for the entire country."

"The people have spoken," Akin Osuntokun said, dismissing opposition threats as "the inability of losers to accept defeat gracefully."

Nigeria's election commission promised to cancel results in areas with proven cases of fraud.

"As far as we are concerned, (so far) there has been no rigging," Abel Guobadia, the election commission chairman, said Sunday.

The election was a major test of whether democracy has taken root since Obasanjo was elected four years ago, ending 15 years of brutal military rule.

Nigeria has never seen a civilian government successfully hand over power to

another. Though it is one of the world's largest oil exporters, it is desperately poor and has a history of coups and unrest.

Obasanjo was once a military ruler, but he traded his uniform for traditional robes and ran for election in 1999. In Saturday's vote, he faced 19 challengers, including Buhari. The two former army men were once close colleagues, but their relationship soured after Obasanjo accused Buhari of mismanagement.

Police and soldiers patrolled some cities, fearing unrest. In the central town of Bukuru, police fired tear gas and bullets in the air to disperse hundreds of Buhari supporters marching through the streets carrying tree branches. Demonstrators accused an incumbent governor of using fraud to win a second term. No results have been announced there so far.

The vote was marred by a shooting at a polling booth in

the oil-producing Niger Delta, the scene of a month of ethnic and political violence that has left more than 100 people dead. Six were killed in the attack, election monitors said.

Nearly half of Nigeria's 126 million people registered for the ballot in 36 states and the capital. It was unclear how many voted, though officials said turnout was strong.

"Where there is substantial violence and boxes disappear, the results will not be accepted," stressed Hakeem Babu-Ahmed, commission secretary, who declared the ballot a "vast improvement" over previous elections.

At home in the southwest,

Buhari gained notoriety by smiling but declined to speak to reporters. A group of village women outside his house cheered when he gave them a bundle of cash — a common custom in Nigerian politics. Obasanjo was preparing a speech to the nation to deliver Tuesday, his spokesman said.

Obasanjo's rule has brought some improvement in individual and press freedoms. Outbreaks of political, religious and ethnic violence have left more than 10,000 people dead since 1999. The leader's critics say he has done little to fight poverty and corruption.

Buhari gained notoriety by

China dismisses mayor amid SARS controversy

BEIJING (AP) — The mayor of Beijing was fired following the disclosure of a tenfold increase in SARS cases in China's capital and charges he mishandled the outbreak of the deadly illness, state-run media said Monday.

The dismissal of Mayor Meng Xuenong came shortly after he and China's health minister were removed from key Communist Party posts, and the Health Ministry announced that the number of cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome in Beijing had jumped from 37 to 339.

A Beijing city government spokesman, Liu Wei, declined to confirm the firing of the mayor, who was appointed three months ago.

But detailed accounts in state-run newspapers said senior party officials accused Meng of failing to gather information on SARS, track new infections and trace people who might have been exposed to the mysterious ailment.

The flu-like SARS has sickened more than 3,800 people and killed at least 211 others around the world, according to health officials in the affected countries. The illness has killed least 94 people and infected more than 1,400 in Hong Kong, while mainland China has reported 79 deaths and more than 1,800 people infected nationwide. Singapore and Canada have also been hard hit by the virus.

Governments in Asia are adopting increasingly drastic efforts to stem the spread of SARS. China called off its week-long May Day vacation in hopes of stopping tens of millions of people from traveling and spreading the virus.

Singapore announced that all 2,400 employees of a vegetable market are under quarantine after a coworker fell ill.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa said efforts to contain the spread of SARS by quarantining households of victims and tracking down potential contacts are paying off.

India sends negotiator to Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — India sent a negotiator to Kashmir on Monday to follow up on the prime minister's offer to hold talks with Pakistan on their conflicting claims to the Himalayan region.

Former Home Secretary N.N. Vohra was scheduled to begin a weeklong visit to Indian-held Kashmir on Monday to explore the possibility of a dialogue with separatist groups demanding independence or merger with Pakistan.

"Doors for talk are fully open," Vohra told reporters as he left New Delhi on Sunday.

Vohra said he would first hold talks with pro-India groups and state lawmakers before trying to reach out to others. Vohra was appointed government negotiator early this year after another emissary was unable to arrange a dialogue with the separatist groups.

Islamic militant groups have been fighting since 1989 for mainly Muslim Kashmir's independence from India or its merger with Pakistan in an insurgency that has claimed 61,000 lives. India is predominantly Hindu.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a conditional offer of talks during a rare visit Saturday to the region.

Vajpayee said India would immediately send a top Foreign Ministry official to Islamabad to draw up a schedule for talks if Pakistan announces an end to its support to cross-border attacks and closes training camps for Islamic guerrillas in its territory.

4-H Consumer contest



(Community Camera photo by Emily Elliott)

(Left-right) Intermediate 4-H Decision-Making team members Meagan Crawford, Amanda Lawrence, Ryan Baggerman and Jessica Baggerman placed first at District 1 competition held recently in Amarillo.

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