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THE Pampa NEWS

MONDAY, MAY 5, 2003

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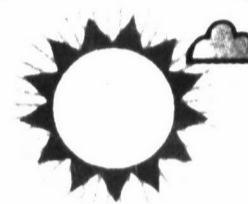
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LOCAL

Police arrest one for drug violations

Clayton Duran Johnson, 39, 300 S. Henry, was stopped Sunday by Pampa Police Department on a traffic violation and charged with manufacture and/or delivery of dangerous drugs, control penalty group three. Officers found \$4,391 in cash on the suspect at the time of the arrest. The cash was seized by the officers. During the search, officers also found 1.9 grams of alprazolam, according to the police report. Johnson was also cited for no driver's license and no insurance. Bond of \$4,000 was set by Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace Kurt Curtman. Johnson posted bond and was released from jail Sunday.

DEATHS

- Jessie Lorene Babcock, 84, homemaker.
- Vera Sackett Cornett, 79, florist.
- Sylvia Irene Detrixhe, 86, homemaker.

INSIDE...

- Classified7
- Comics4
- Sports5

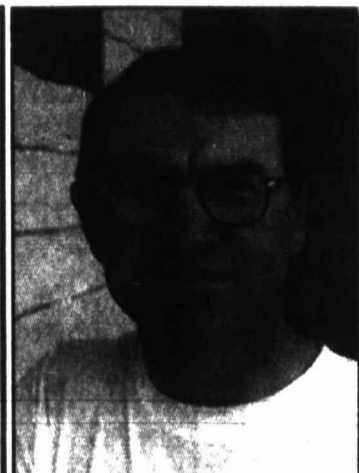
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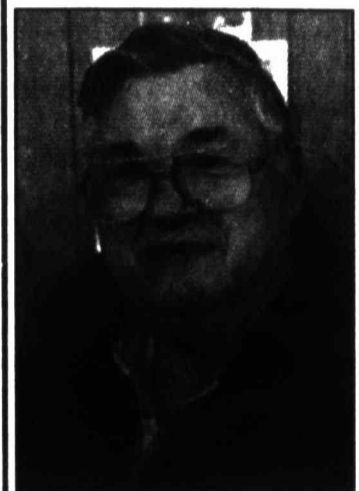
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Jeff McCormick



Robert Dixon

It's not over yet!

Mayor to be decided with runoff May 31

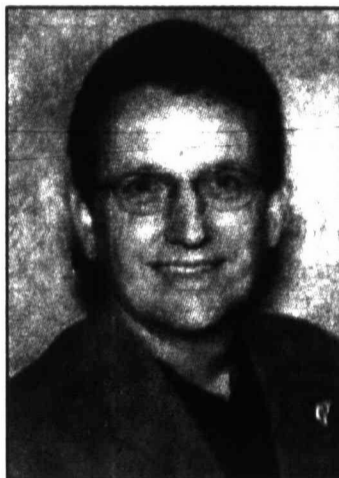
By NANCY YOUNG
MANAGING EDITOR

The elections aren't over yet.

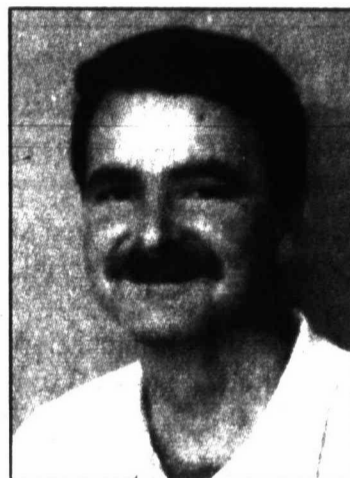
City voters will return to the polls May 31 for a mayoral runoff between incumbent Lonny Robbins and challenger Jeff Andrews, but school voters will not. Instead, school trustees will see a new member - Charles Smith - on that board.

Pampa's city charter provides for a runoff in commission spots if one candidate does not receive 50 percent of the vote plus one vote, said City Secretary Phyllis Jeffers. None of the five candidates seeking the mayor's spot received a majority of the votes in Saturday's city election.

Pampa School Board



Lonny Robbins



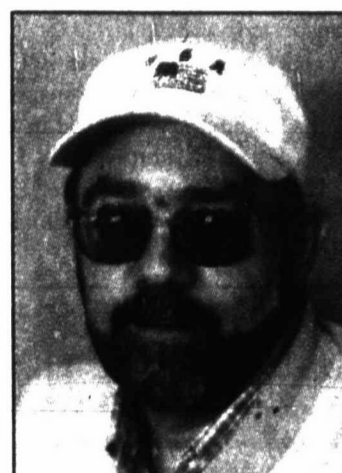
Jeff Andrews

President Lee Porter said Monday morning that there will not be a runoff in the school board race. Reports in area media of a runoff election for the spot on the PISD board were incorrect, said Porter.

"In our race, a plurality is required," he said. The top vote-getter wins the election.

Incumbent Mayor Lonny Robbins received 46 percent of the vote with 844 votes. City Commissioner Jeff Andrews was second highest in the race with 510 votes and 28 percent of the vote.

(See ELECTION, Page 3)



Charles Smith



Lee Porter

Twisters kill 32

Emergency workers search for eight still missing after tornadoes sweep Midwest

By CONNIE FARROW
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PIERCE CITY, Mo. (AP) — Swarms of violent thunderstorms and tornadoes crashed through the nation's midsection, killing at least 32 people in Kansas, Missouri and Tennessee. Eight people were missing in this hard-hit town.

Houses across the region were blown apart by Sunday's storms, trees were uprooted and power lines and other debris blocked roads. Travelers were evacuated from the terminals at Kansas City's main airport and given shelter in tunnels.

In Pierce City, not a home or business was left untouched in the town of nearly 1,400, and wreckage made it impossible to walk the streets. Two bodies had been pulled from the rubble of the town's nearly leveled National Guard Armory.

Officials initially feared the eight missing were killed in the armory, where several people had taken shelter.

After sunrise Monday authorities had found no sign of anyone else, and regional emergency official Glenn Dittmar said he was "99 1/2 percent" sure that no one else would be found there.

"I've never been in anything like this. It was absolutely terrible," said Pierce City clerk Julie Johnson, who rode out the storm in the armory bathroom.

The storms were blamed for at least 14 deaths in Missouri, seven in Kansas and 11 in Tennessee. One tornado carved a 65-mile path across West Tennessee, said meteorologist Gene Rench at the National Weather Service in Memphis.

They were part of a huge weather system that rolled across the Midwest and parts of the South, and also spawned twisters in Arkansas, South Dakota and Nebraska. Damage in Arkansas included wrecked homes and businesses, power outages and overturned trucks. Hail as big as baseballs hammered parts of South Dakota.

By mid-morning Monday, thunderstorms were racing eastward through the Ohio and Tennessee valleys. Some 24,000 homes and businesses lost power in Louisville, Ky., utility officials said.

In Tennessee, a state of emergency was declared in Madison County, including the hard-hit city of Jackson.

Eleven bodies had been taken to Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, said spokeswoman Jan Boud. Much of Jackson had no power Monday and the hospital was operating off a generator, Boud said.

"It's like downtown Baghdad," lawyer Joe Byrd said of the damage in Jackson.

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius declared seven coun-

(See STORMS, Page 3)

HOME of the BRAVE



Capt. Michael J. Foote
Rank: Captain, 82nd Airborne
Branch of service: U.S. Army
Length of service: 4 years
Stationed: Ft. Bragg, N.C.
Deployed: Afghanistan
Graduated: Pampa High School
1994, University of Oklahoma
Family: Wife, Danielle; parents, Jerry and Connie Foote of Pampa; brother, Brian Foote of Amarillo

'Mrs. Anthrax' nabbed

Nucleus of Iraqi government may be selected by June

By CHARLES J. HANLEY
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BASRA, Iraq (AP) — The selection of the core of Iraq's interim government will begin by mid-May, and a group of Iraqis may take the reins, the U.S. civil administrator said Monday. One of Saddam Hussein's top biological weapons scientists, known as "Mrs. Anthrax," has been captured, American officials said.

The northern city of Mosul took a small step in forming a municipal government, selecting a cross-section of residents to run the city alongside the American military until elections can be held, U.S. military officials said.

The captured scientist, a 49-year-old Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, was taken into custody Sunday, a Defense Department official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Ammash, who earned her

Ph.D. from the University of Missouri, was No. 53 among the top 55 most-wanted members of Saddam's regime. U.S. intelligence officials said she is believed to have played a key role in rebuilding Iraq's biological weapons capability since the 1991 war.

The arrest of a former Iraqi intelligence chief was announced by the U.S. military. The Army's V Corps had no details other than his name, Adil Salteq Al Azarun Al Yzarun, a Baath Party official, also was once the mayor of Tikrit, Saddam's hometown. He was not on 55 most-wanted list.

Iraq's U.S. administrator, Jay Garner, said he expected a "nucleus" of Iraqis to assume leadership. The idea was discussed last week at a meeting in Baghdad.

He said he did not know whether the nucleus would evolve into a collective executive for Iraq.

"I don't know whether

there will be one guy or five guys or three," Garner said during a trip to southern Iraq.

"By the middle of the month, you'll really see a beginning of a nucleus of an Iraqi government with an Iraqi face on it that is dealing with the coalition," he said.

Iraqi faction leaders and U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said they would meet again in coming weeks and hoped to form an interim government early next month.

The Iraq leaders Garner referred to were Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party; Ahmad Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress; Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan; Iyad Allawi of the Iraqi National Accord; and Abdul Aziz al Hakim, whose elder brother heads the Shiite group Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

The group has met several times, and Garner said it

(See IRAQ, Page 3)

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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. \$20.00 cart fee. The tournament will be played May 17th at Hidden Hills Golf Course and on May 18th at Pampa Country Club Golf Course.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Special recognition



(Pampa News photo by Nancy Young)

Retiring Gray County Tax Assessor/Collector Sammie Morris accepts a certificate of appreciation for her many years of service from Gray County Judge Richard Peet. Morris, who officially retired on April 30, was recognized at the May 1 meeting of the Gray County Commissioners Court.

ELECTION

The other three candidates divided the remaining votes. Mike Rummerfield was next with 195 votes while Norman Stephens was fourth with 187 votes. John Goddard received 86.

Voter turnout was termed "heavy" by City Secretary Phyllis Jeffers. She said 1,829 cast ballots in Saturday's elections.

Both incumbent city commissioners retained their seats. Ward 1 Commissioner Jeff McCormick won over Doug Locke, 994-727. Veteran Commissioner Bob Dixon of Ward 3 narrowly edged out Ed Robinson, 885-832.

Incumbent Nancy Coffee on the Pampa Independent School District Board of Trustees was defeated by Charles Smith in her bid for re-election. Coffee received 559 votes while Smith received 601 votes. Third can-

didate was James "Jimmy" Goode with 217 votes.

Porter ran unopposed in his bid for re-election to the board. He received 1,030 votes.

School trustees will hold a special meeting at 7 a.m. Tuesday to canvass the votes, and the Pampa City Commission will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday to also canvass votes.

In Skellytown, voters in that community ousted all the incumbents after considerable controversy the past year or two.

Lucille Lawrence, mayor, will be succeeded by Mike Chaney as mayor. Lawrence received 38 votes while Chaney got 139. Ralph Tice received 12 and Bob Epperson, 7.

In a council election for a two-year term, Bruce Brame was high vote-getter with 132 votes to oust Reva Barnett Williams from her seat on the council. Williams received 62 votes. Others in the race were

Marvin Karamer, who got 95; Glen Smith, 24; and Red Mills, 62.

In the race to decide who would fill out the unexpired term of Chad Johnson who moved from Skellytown several months ago, the voters tossed out Claude Hooks who had been appointed in 2002 to fill out Johnson's term. Larry Brown won the approval of 117 voters to obtain a place on the council while Guy McKissack came in second with 67 ballots. Hooks was third with 11 votes.

Lefors City Council results were as following: Kevin Andis, 69; Taylor Brodes, 65; Gene Gee (I), 62; Russell Jackson, 52; and Melanie Ray, 44. Andis, Brodes and Andis were named to the council.

In the Lefors School Board race, the vote was Ken Miller, 72; Roy Lott, 47; Michael Ray, 44; Sherry Roberts, 41; and Clay Lock, 31. Miller and Lott, both incumbents, were re-elected to the board.

State budgets talks begin, time running short

AUSTIN (AP) — House and Senate lawmakers began negotiations on a new state budget Sunday night, looking at just under a month to draft a spending plan for 2004-05 that addresses a \$9.9 billion shortfall.

"This is where it starts," said Rep. Talmadge Heflin, R-Houston, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

Actually, both the House and Senate have already passed separate budgets that total about \$117.7 billion. But the two plans have big differences in spending for health and human services, education and other areas.

Sunday night was the first meeting of the 10-member conference committee of House and Senate members appointed to negotiate a compromise.

If the grueling budget arguments on the House floor — which lasted several days — were any indication, negotiations this time could be strained and lengthy.

"We can do it," said Sen. Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo. "It's the same work (as previous years). It's just a matter of condensing into a shorter period."

The session is scheduled to end June 2. In previous sessions, conference committees have met earlier than this year

and budget surpluses made decisions easier.

Heflin said lawmakers want to avoid having to meet in special session this summer to draft a budget before the Aug. 31 end of the fiscal year. The state spending plan is the only bill the Legislature is required to pass.

"A special session costs money and time," Heflin said.

Both budget proposals have sparked protests, particularly

on cuts for services for the disabled and elderly, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

The Senate budget bill also relies on accounting techniques such as payment delays and fund borrowing that the House leadership is against.

Senators believe their version is more compassionate than the House's. The House version puts education at the top of the spending list. The

Senate, while cutting education and other funding, does more to help poor and disabled Texans who rely on social services.

The first meeting lasted more than six hours, concentrating on less controversial areas, such as how much money state agencies will have to spend on per diem costs for board members, construction and Internet-based licensing and renewal.

Heflin said "those areas

should present few problems.

"The harder things are health and education," Heflin said.

Further complicating matters is the warning from Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn, who has said she disagrees with the Senate budget and that both the Senate and House plans are billions of dollars short.

Strayhorn is required by law to certify the budget bill, ensuring the state has enough money and that lawmakers meet the pay-as-you-go, no-deficit spending requirements of the Texas Constitution.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

STORMS

ties disaster areas.

Eighty homes were damaged or destroyed in Kansas' Crawford County, at least 20 of them in the Franklin area, said county emergency management director Edlon Bedene.

"It wiped out a third of the town. I hate to say it," Bedene said. "The trees are like somebody came in and cut them off 10 feet above the ground. It's a mess."

Several homes were severely damaged in Kansas City, Kan.,

"My daughter's room is gone, but she's OK," resident Jodee Nirschl said, her voice breaking and tears coming to her eyes. "As long as I have my kids and my husband, I'll be OK."

In the southeast Kansas town of Franklin, about a third of the town was wiped out, said Eldon Bedene, Crawford County emergency management director. Dogs were brought in from Wichita to search through the debris.

At Kansas City, Mo., International Airport, officials stopped all flights and evacuated the terminals. Passengers were ushered into tunnels

leading to parking garages until the storm passed.

Missouri Gov. Bob Holden toured Northmoor, a small town in Platte County, where 25 to 30 homes were damaged or destroyed. The town's City Hall and police station also were damaged.

"I had to hold on with all my strength," said resident Charles Tholl, who was with his girlfriend and five children when the storm hit. "It was scary. It felt like the house was twirling."

On the Net:
National Weather Service:
<http://iwin.nws.noaa.gov>

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

IRAQ

would probably be expanded to include a Christian and perhaps another Sunni Muslim leader.

Garner also said he expects the newly appointed L. Paul Bremer, former head of the U.S. State Department's counterterrorism office, to take charge of the political process within the American postwar administration. Bremer is expected in Iraq by next week, Garner said.

"He will get more involved in the political process. I'm doing all of it and don't want to do all of it," Garner said.

He said the appointment of someone like Bremer had been planned all along. "I'll stay a while. There's got to be a good handoff," he said.

Garner traveled Monday to Basra, where he heard from officials at Basra General Hospital. Outside the closed-door meeting, Dr. Hussein al-Farhan said about 70 people a day seek treatment for the effects of lack of clean water.

"There are many cases of gastroenteritis because of bad water," he said.

He said the hospital is short of drugs, particularly painkillers and anesthetics.

"Aid organizations are bringing only water when we need drugs as well," he said.

Doctors also complained that the security situation remains dangerous in Basra, Iraq's second-largest city.

Garner and his team visited several wards in the hospital and saw a poorly supplied, ill-kept institution.

"We will bring in quick cash in to make a quick difference," said Garner's deputy, British Maj. Gen. Tim Cross. He stressed, however, that this would not be a long-term commitment to rebuild Iraq's health-care system.

The newly named regional

coordinator, Danish Ambassador Ole Wohlers Olsen, said he planned to return to Basra on Friday with cash to pay doctors' salaries and other commitments.

From the hospital, Garner's entourage drove to the Shueiba oil refinery, Iraq's second-largest. The general manager, Taha Ibrahim, told reporters the refinery resumed operations Thursday and is processing 70,000 barrels of oil a day, producing liquid petroleum gas, diesel oil, kerosene and gasoline.

He said the site has a capacity of 180,000 barrels per day, and he expects to reach that level in weeks or months, though he said the refinery could use some spare parts to ensure full production.

Garner blamed U.N. sanctions for gasoline shortages that have made some Iraqis angry at American forces. The New York Times reported.

"The U.N. really needs to lift the sanctions so we don't have all of this," Garner said.

Gasoline shortages have limited public transportation and discouraged Iraqis from driving to work. President Bush has urged the U.N. Security Council to lift the sanctions, which were imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

In Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city, more than 200 representatives of tribal and ethnic groups chose a mayor and city council. Retired army Gen. Ghanim al-Boso, an Arab, was selected as mayor, CNN reported.

Lt. Col. Ryan Gonsalves, a U.S. military commander in Tikrit, said the council would be a "representation from the entire city of Mosul."

He said people with expertise in various areas would be part of the council.

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THE Pampa NEWS COMICS

MONDAY • MAY 5, 2003

DEAR ABBY

written by Pauline Phillips and daughter Jeanne Phillips

Only Paperwork Holds This Marriage Together

DEAR ABBY: I moved to Florida six years ago and got involved with a man soon after I arrived. He had just ended a 10-year relationship with his girlfriend. Two years later, he asked me to marry him. I was overjoyed — and I was three months pregnant when I walked down the aisle.

When our daughter was barely 6 months old, I caught my husband having an affair with his ex. I was going to leave him, but I discovered I was pregnant with our son. He would leave for weekends, after fighting with me and getting drunk to go see his former girlfriend. I finally had enough and filed for divorce.

My daughter is now 2 1/2 and my son is 15 months old. They haven't seen their father in almost three months. We all miss him. I thought he would return to me, but he hasn't. He has moved on.

I'm in my 20s with two kids. I hate being alone, but can't move on because my husband refuses to sign the divorce papers. What should I do?

SAD AND ALONE
IN FLORIDA

DEAR SAD AND ALONE: My legal experts tell me there is a procedure you can go through that will allow you to divorce your husband even though he refuses to sign the papers. Please discuss it with a lawyer. Also check with the district attorney's office in your community. The staff there may be able to help you get child support, at no cost to you. Sometimes when spouses are forced to pay

child support, they develop an interest in their children. As long as your husband is sober and behaving responsibly, this should be encouraged.

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating my boyfriend for five years. I'm only 18. Four months ago, I moved out of my parents' home so I could move in with him. Now I miss my mom and dad, but I don't want to tell my boyfriend. What should I do?

HURTING IN MAINE: You have a right to your feelings, and you're making a mistake to keep them hidden. You also have a right to change your mind. Consider this a valuable lesson. Go home and concentrate on your education. A woman should have the skills to be financially independent before linking up with a mate.

DEAR ABBY: I am a nursing home administrator employed by a large facility. I began my career as a nursing assistant, and in that capacity enjoyed caring for geriatric nursing home residents. My love for the work propelled me into nursing school, enabling me to have more input into the quality of patient care. After that, I was frequently promoted to higher positions and finally returned to school to become an administrator.

The truth is — I hate it! I have somehow lost sight of my original goals. I have minimal patient contact and am miserable. The prob-

lem is, I have four children and we need the extra money my position provides. Also, I am reluctant to resign because I would be considered a "quitter."

I am a good administrator and have received outstanding performance reviews by the board of health. However, I cannot ignore the fact that I am deeply unhappy not having the opportunity to give hands-on patient care. What should I do?

MISSING MY PATIENTS
IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR MISSING: Push for the right to be hands-on at least half a day a week. Tell management it will make you a better administrator. (It will!) When your children are older and you need less money, follow your heart.

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 Better or For Worse



Zits



Garfield



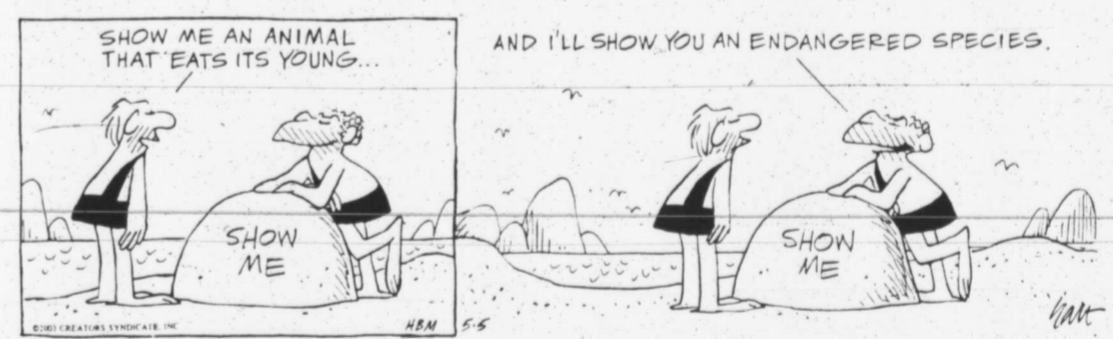
Beetle Bailey



Marvin



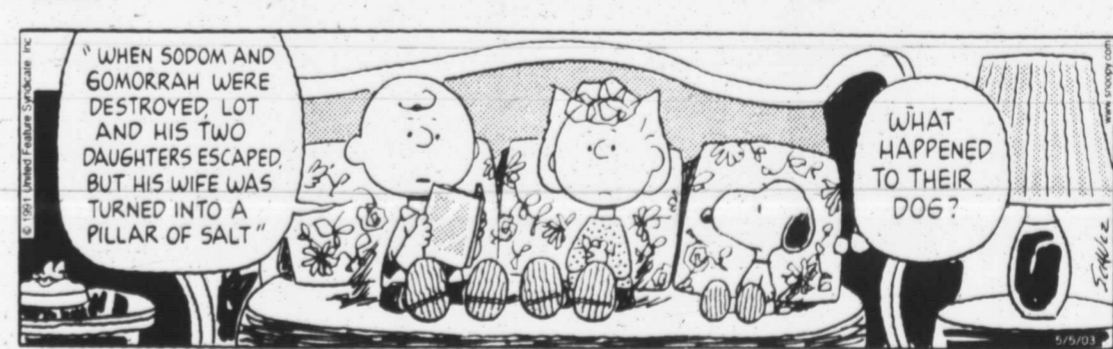
B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie

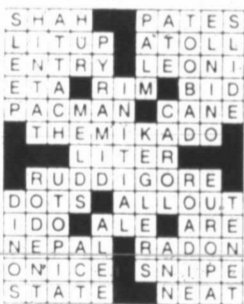


Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

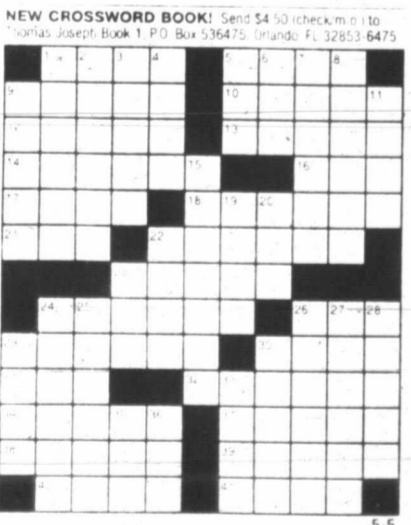
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- Memories show
 - Lowly chessman
 - Accrued
 - Dated
 - Overture
 - Hound baskets
 - Pacific island
 - Sardine container
 - Genesis place
 - "Forget it!"
 - Sleuth
 - Spade
 - Wine holder
 - Bakery
 - Buys
 - Laments
 - Upper limit
 - Coped
 - Challenge
 - Big gairot
 - Cheap
 - Puccini opera
 - Make blank
 - Seaweed-wrapped item
 - Greasy spoon
 - Plank part
 - Checkout act
- DOWN**
- Second-largest nation
 - Patriotic song
 - City of Italy
 - Location
 - Hound hand
 - Tad's dad
 - Speculative question
 - Beginner
 - Ceremonies
 - Russo of "Ransom"
 - Tangled port
 - Mine yields
 - German article
 - Deck unit
 - Pool need
 - Plan in detail
 - Russos of "Ransom"
 - 25 Greek X
 - 36 Suffer
 - Beach structure
 - Gotten up
 - Early czar
 - Porch items
 - Column type
 - Marries
 - 35 Greek X
 - 36 Suffer



Saturday's answer

19 Mine
20 German
22 Deck unit
23 Pool
24 Plan in detail
25 Greek X
26 Beach structure
27 Gotten up
28 Early czar
29 Porch items
30 Column type
31 Marries
32 Column type
33 Marries
34 Column type
35 Greek X
36 Suffer



STUMPED?

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Spacemen safe despite off-target touch down

MOSCOW (AP) — It could have been a lot worse for the two Americans and one Russian whose landing ended up nearly 300 miles off course and their recovery hours late.

In 1976, a Soyuz spacecraft came down in a freezing squall and splashed into a lake; the crew spent the night bobbing in the capsule.

Eleven years before that, two cosmonauts overshot their touchdown site by 2,000 miles and found themselves deep in a forest with hungry wolves. That's when Russian space officials decided to pack a sawed-off shotgun aboard every spacecraft.

Astronaut Kenneth Bowersox said with a smile that he didn't need the gun in the Kazakh steppes where he landed Sunday: "There was nothing out there but grass and us."

On Monday, Russian space experts met to discuss what went wrong with the Soyuz capsule carrying Bowersox, astronaut Donald Pettit and cosmonaut Nikolai Budarin back from the international space station. The spacecraft was a new model that had never gone through a re-entry before.

"I'll call it an interesting test flight experience," Bowersox, a Navy captain and former test pilot, told The Associated Press several hours after touchdown.

It was the first time NASA astronauts had returned to Earth in a foreign spacecraft and to a foreign land. The switch from a shuttle to Soyuz landing came after the Columbia disaster in February, which resulted in the indefinite grounding of the entire shuttle fleet.

The cockpit computer displays abruptly switched from a normal re-entry to a ballistic one just minutes before touchdown, and the three men knew they were in for a considerably steeper and rougher ride than usual. They came in short of their targeted landing site, and two hours passed before recovery forces spotted them. Two more hours went by before helicopters arrived for them; and another two hours before NASA personnel reached the scene.

Bowersox, who commanded the 5 1/2-month space station mission, said he and his crewmates enjoyed having some time by themselves to get their land legs back and savor nature.

"It was the most beautiful dirt I've ever seen," he said. By late afternoon, Bowersox, Pettit and Budarin had landed in the Kazakh capital of Astana, and a few hours later, they reached Star City, outside Moscow, where they were greeted by a crowd including their wives.

During the flight from Astana to Star City, Bowersox told the AP he thought the crew had notified Russian Mission Control about the computer indications for a ballistic entry, but couldn't be sure. It's also possible communication was lost at that point, he said.

Villagers attack building in SARS protest

By WILLIAM FOREMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BEIJING (AP) — Villagers protesting their local government's SARS policy beat up officials, broke windows and smashed office furniture in China's eastern Zhejiang province, witnesses and officials said Monday.

The demonstration in the town of Xiande was one of the most violent since SARS began hitting Asian nations and stirring up fears among residents worried that their governments aren't properly battling the mysterious virus.

On Sunday, authorities said that schools in Beijing will stay closed an additional two weeks to protect students from SARS. China's capital shut down the schools about two weeks ago and set May 7 as the date for allowing more than 1.3 million students to return to class.

So far, severe acute respiratory syndrome has killed 461 people worldwide and has infected 6,300 others.

In Xiande, several thousands of villagers began protesting last weekend in front of a local government building where suspected SARS patients were being quarantined, said a witness, who asked not to be named.

"They shouldn't have hospitalized patients in the government building, which has no

medical facilities and professional staff," said the villager, reached by telephone.

The witness said five villagers broke into the building Sunday night, shattering windows and breaking furniture in a few offices.

Three officials trying to stop the violence were injured, the witness said.

An officer in the Yuhuan County Public Security Bureau said two people who led the attack would be detained for between five and seven days. Five other detainees would be released later, said the policeman, who would only give his surname, Chen. It was not clear when the two additional people were detained.

The witness said villagers continued their protest Monday morning when they heard three more people had been placed under quarantine inside the building.

Last week, protesters in a village east of Beijing ransacked a school after hearing the building was to be used as a SARS ward.

China reported nine new SARS deaths on Monday, three of which were in Beijing, raising the mainland's total to 206. Officials added 160 new cases, bringing the national total of 4,280.

Beijing has also sent police to guard 80 reservoirs around the capital, protecting the

drinking water supply from SARS contamination, the Beijing Youth Daily reported.

The number of new cases have been dwindling lately in Hong Kong, and the trend continued Monday when the government reported only eight fresh cases. However, three more people died, raising the territory's toll to 187.

Many Hong Kong patients have been trying to fight SARS with Chinese herbal remedies, and two traditional medicine practitioners from China were discussing treatments with authorities on Monday, officials said.

The two were expected to stay in Hong Kong for a few weeks, talking about their experiences treating SARS patients with combinations of Western and Chinese drugs.

Countries around the region have been assessing the severe

damage SARS has done to their once-lucrative tourism industries. Australian officials estimated on Monday that the epidemic paired with the war in Iraq will cost its tourist industry \$1.2 billion.

The Australian Tourism Export Council believes the number of tourists visiting Australia in the three months to the end of June will slump by 25 percent compared with last year.

"The joint impact of Iraq and SARS is having a devastating effect on the tourism export industry," said Peter Shelly, the council's managing director.

Doctors from the World Health Organization continued their rare visit to Taiwan, which doesn't have official ties with the U.N. health agency. During the early stages of the outbreak, China refused to allow WHO

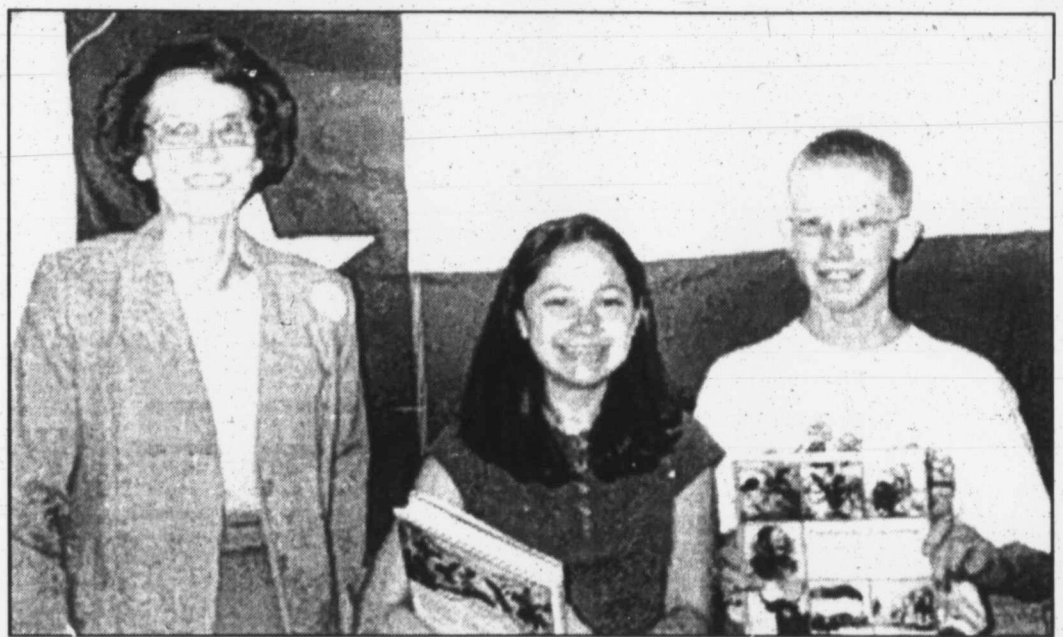
to cooperate with the island. China regards the self-ruled island to be part of its territory and opposes Taiwan's attempts to work with U.N. agencies.

But in an unusual about-face, China announced last weekend that the WHO officials could go to Taiwan. Because the visit is a sensitive issue, the WHO officials have avoided reporters.

Lee Lung-teng, deputy chief in Taiwan's Health Department, said the WHO doctors were observing SARS treatment at hospitals. He said Taiwan hoped the WHO visit would help the island's campaign to overcome China's objections and gain observer status in the WHO.

Lee said, "If they approve of our efforts to stem the illness' outbreak and favor granting us observer status, we'd be most pleased."

El Progreso award



(Community Camera photo)

Julia Dawkins, of El Progreso Study Club, recently presented Jaycee Dillarreal and Brody Russell, both seventh grade students at Pampa Middle School, with "Panhandle Pilgrimage" books by Pauline Durette Robinson and R.L. Robertson in recognition of their high scores in history.

Iraqis finally free to dig up suspected mass grave

KHAN AL-RUBEA, Iraq (AP) — The knowledge weighed heavily on local Iraqis — the location of mass graves that witnesses say are filled with those who dared to defy Saddam Hussein's absolute power.

Human rights groups say Iraq is dotted with such graves. But before Saddam's government fell, citizens who knew or suspected were forbidden to go to the sites.

Now free to search for missing relatives, Iraqis on Saturday and Sunday dug up 72 bodies from a shallow mass grave 13 miles northwest of Najaf, one of Shiite Muslims' holiest cities. Bullet casings also were found in and near the graves.

Witnesses said the grave was filled with the bodies of men and women executed after a failed Shiite uprising against Saddam's regime in 1991.

"Everybody knew and could see, but they kept quiet," said Kamel al-Tamimi, a farmer. "We were told to stay away from this area, not to go near it, that it was a security zone."

Iraqis exhumed bodies with shovels and their bare hands, and they expected to find more remains this week. Others were searching the region around Najaf for additional mass grave sites in the area. At least one smaller site turned up a few miles away and was guarded by U.S. Marines.

"This is the tip of the iceberg in this country," said Marine Capt. Mike Urena. "I am sure you will find more."

More than 25 bodies were unearthed Saturday, and at least 10 had been identified, local Iraqis said. Another 47 sets of remains, including those of women, were uncovered Sunday afternoon. At least some of the victims were apparently lined up and shot.

It was unclear how many bodies were buried at the site near Najaf, but several mounds dotted the flat farmland — mounds that U.S. Marines said could mark additional gravesites.

"I'm looking for my relatives," said Jawad Shaker, searching the site. Another person was searching for a nephew who disappeared in 1991.



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