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THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2003

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LOCAL

WT commencement set for 7 p.m., Friday

CANYON — Approximately 300 West Texas A&M University students — 209 undergraduates and 94 master's-level candidates — will receive diplomas at commencement exercises on Friday, Aug. 15. The program starts at 7 p.m. at the Event Center in Canyon.

Keynote address will be delivered by R. H. (Steve) Stevens, Jr., a managing partner of Stevens & Company, LLP, of Houston and a member of The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

DEATHS

John Christopher Knipp, 20, university student.

Jess B. Mixon, 92, rancher, farmer, cowboy.

Loretta Fern Rankin, 73, homemaker.

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County fights budget battle

Commissioners to eye cutting fire contracts in Friday session

By **DAVID BOWSER**
STAFF WRITER

The county's budget will dominate the Gray County Commissioners' meeting Friday, although no action is expected to be taken on it.

"We're just about finished," County Judge Richard Peet said this week.

He said the commissioners still need to talk with Gray Constable James Lewis and Justices of the Peace Joe Martinez and Mary Ann Carpenter for their input into forming next year's budget.

Commissioners plan to talk to Constable Chris Lockridge concerning his 2003 budget.

"We still have August and September," Peet said, "and his budget is almost exhausted."

Peet said he hopes to have a proposed budget to present to the commissioners on Sept. 2.

He said he expects taxes to go up slightly to make up for lowered appraised value on property in the county.

Last year's tax rate was 50.833 cents per \$100 valuation. Peet said he expects the effective tax rate for next year to be 52.2267 cents. That, he said, should raise about the same revenue for the county as

last year, an estimated \$5 million.

"I don't know anybody who wants to go above the effective tax rate," Peet said of the commissioners court.

For a home valued at \$31,000, he said, that would mean an increase from \$157.13 in taxes this year to \$161.30 next year.

The difference between the projected \$5 million raised in taxes and the \$7 million in expenditures are expected to be made up by fees, fines and reserves.

In the meantime, Peet said, the county commission will look at each office and see if there are any services or personnel that can be cut.

One of the areas the commission will review is fire services. Gray County now contracts with Pampa, Groom, Lefors, McLean, Hoover, Skellytown and White Deer for fire fighting in the county.

As of now, Peet said, the proposed budget has about \$270,000 for fire fighting expense. Some \$130,000 of that figure is to pay Pampa.

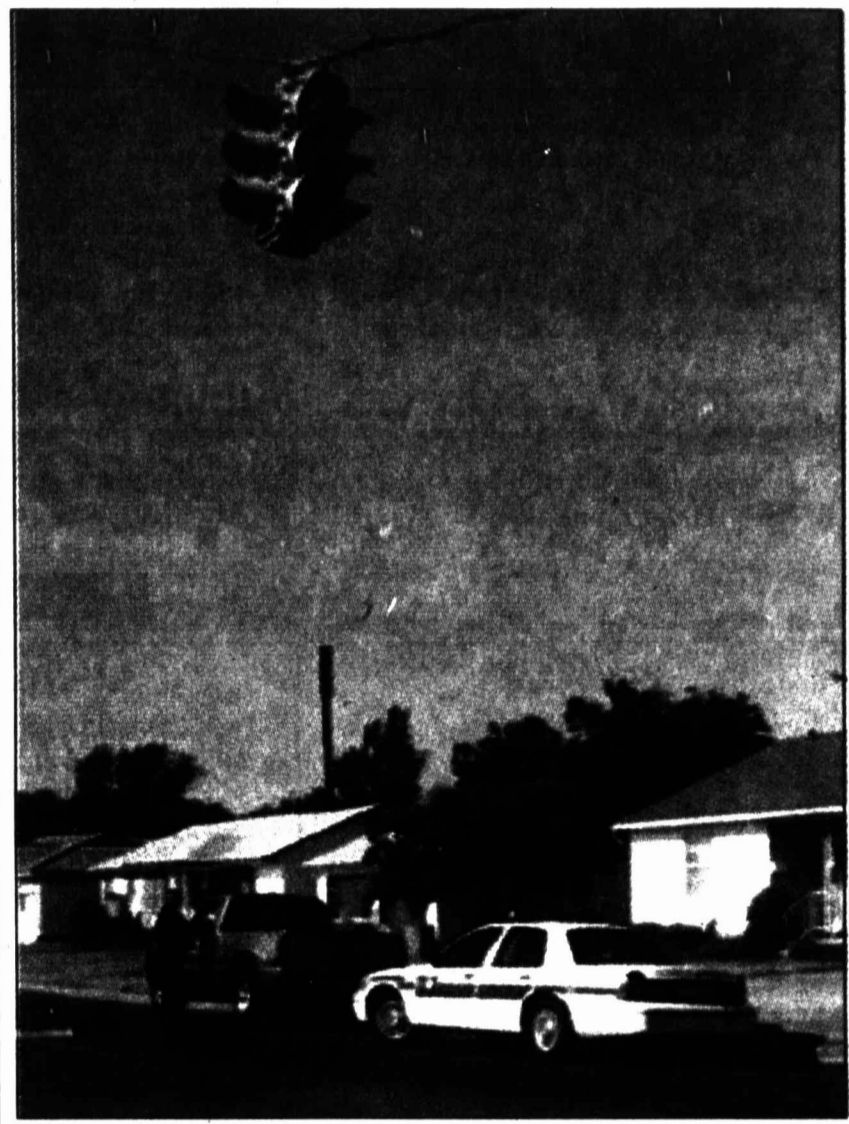
"It's a tremendous expense," Peet said.

The judge said that any expense the county faces will be up for discussion.

In other business at the Gray County Commissioners meeting at 9 a.m. Friday

(See **COUNTY**, Page 3)

Watch the lights



(Pampa News photo by Dee Dee Laramore)

Pampa Police Officer Aaron McWilliams warns an errant driver after the he drove through a red light in front of Austin Elementary School Wednesday. School Liaison Officer Colby Brown said traffic lights at public schools throughout the city are no longer flashing, but have been set for the red and green, stop and go, signals. The lights have been reset to get ready for the start of school Aug. 20. Brown warned motorists that for the safety of the children, Pampa police will be issuing tickets to those who do not heed traffic signals and speed limit signs, especially around school zones.

U.S. Marines in Liberia to aid peace force

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) — Dozens of American troops landed at Liberia's main airport Thursday, increasing the U.S. presence to boost West African peacekeepers, as rebels began withdrawing from Monrovia, ending their two-months siege of the starving capital.

U.S. Ambassador John Blaney and rebel chief of staff Abdullah Sherrif shook hands in the center of a bridge marking the front-line of the war-

divided capital, signaling the rebel handover.

The rebel withdrawal opens access to Monrovia's vital seaport and allows food and supplies to flow again, particularly to the famished government-held side of the capital, where hundreds of thousands of residents and refugees have had little more than leaves to survive on.

Small numbers of West African peace forces and U.S. Marines crossed

into rebel territory after the ceremony, and at least four West African military vehicles went directly to the port.

Firing into the air, insurgents left the port and retreated north, heading toward the Po River, their promised new boundary outside the city. They kept their AK-47s, rocket-launchers and other arms, and many carried away stereos, sacks of food aid, and other loot.

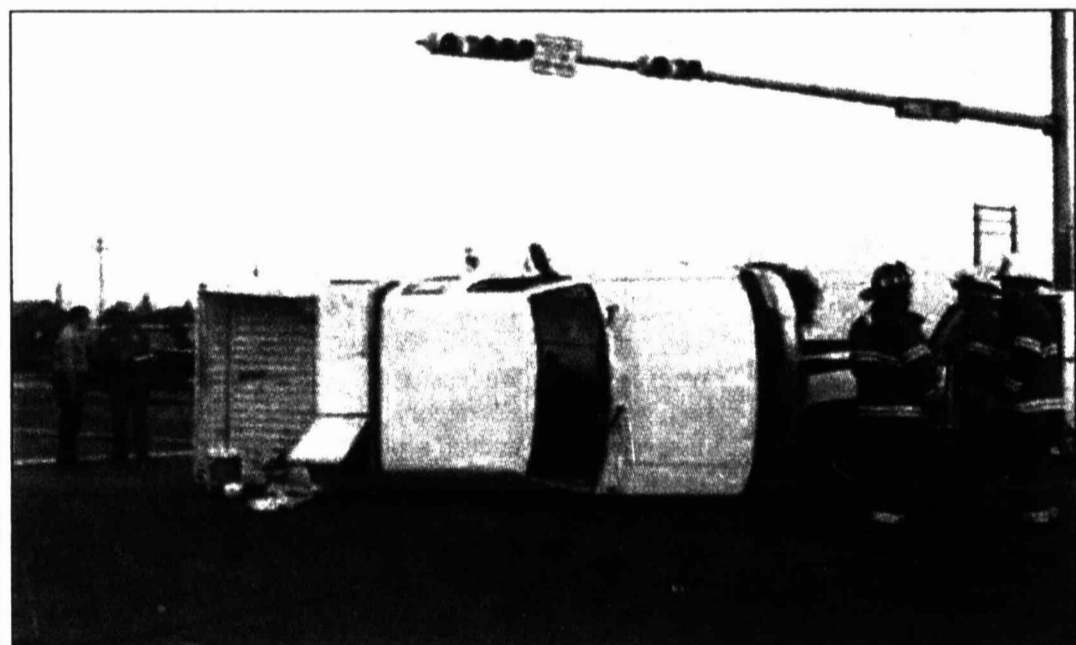
Tens of thousands of civilians

massed on both sides of the New Bridge. West African peacekeepers, trying to curb the chaos, held back hungry crowds on the government side as well as civilians on the former rebel side, who rushed the bridge by the thousands, shouting, "We want peace!"

Excited masses on both sides cheered as two U.S. fighter jets swooped back and forth above the crowd.

(See **LIBERIA**, Page 3)

What a way to start the day



(Pampa News photo by Skyla Bryant)

DPS Trooper Ron Shank, second from left, interviews a witness at the scene of a two-truck collision at U.S. Highway 60 and Price Road early Wednesday. According to DPS reports, a 1994 Chevrolet pickup driven by Earl Kerr Jr., 53, 330 N. Zimmers, ran a stop light in the intersection and struck a 1996 Ford pickup driven by Lavoy Reese, 64, of Borger. The Ford pickup was knocked onto its side, facing northeast. The vehicles blocked the intersection for almost an hour. Kerr was cited for disregarding a red light. Kerr told officers that he was trying to retrieve a water jug that had turned over when the collision occurred. Both drivers suffered minor injuries, Shank said.

Colorado Democrats drive to New Mexico to support renegades

DENVER (AP) — Five Colorado Democrats were in New Mexico Thursday in a show of support for Texas Democrats who have fled there to stymie a Republican-led congressional redistricting plan.

Republicans called the trip misguided and ridiculed the lawmakers for taking beer to their Texas counterparts.

The Colorado Democrats met for breakfast with the Texans and planned a news conference Thursday before driving back home. Senate Minority Leader Joan Fitz-Gerald, D-Golden, warned the 11 Texas lawmakers what could happen if they return home before a deadline to pass a plan expires.

Colorado Republicans rushed through a redistricting

plan during the last three days of the session in May, suspending legislative rules that could have allowed Democrats in Colorado to block it.

Sen. Ken Gordon of Denver said a Republican senator told him beforehand that the Senate would follow the rules if it took up redistricting, so he was taken by surprise when Republicans suspended those rules. When he questioned his colleague, Gordon said, the Republican told him one rule allowed for suspending them.

The Colorado Democrats did not have the option to flee because legislative rules allowed Republicans, who have an 18-17 edge in the state Senate and a 38-27 majority in

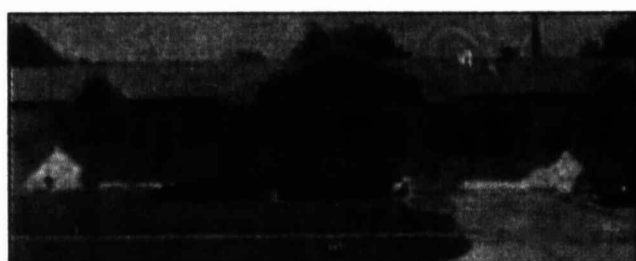
(See **DEMOCRATS**, Page 3)

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LIBERIA

Rebels had promised to pull out of the areas of the capital they control by noon Thursday, following the resignation and departure on Monday of President Charles Taylor, a former warlord blamed for 14 years of conflict in Liberia.

President Bush had refused to send in any significant number of troops until Taylor left — and Thursday's deployment dramatically increased the number of U.S. troops on the ground in Liberia, from only about a dozen to a planned 200, including a 150-member rapid reaction force.

U.S. Marines armed with M-16s and wearing helmets and jungle camouflage jumped out as nine U.S. helicopters settled on the airport tarmac, with two more helicopters hovering overhead.

"We are just here to help the people," Sgt. Michael Hobbs said minutes after arriving. All the 200 additional U.S. soldiers were expected to arrive Thursday.

"This operation today is going to be an important one," said Blaney, the U.S. ambassador, meeting the arrivals at the airport. "You are going to see American boots on the

ground, and a firm commitment to uphold humanitarian concerns in this country."

Fifty members of the new U.S. deployment are to help with the logistics of getting aid flowing again to Liberia's cut-off capital.

Taylor's exit has raised hopes for an end to the bloodshed. Fighting since 1989, when Taylor launched the country into civil war, has killed more than 100,000 people, left the once-prosperous country in ruins, and left the population prey to armed fighters on both sides who loot and rob.

Washington has stressed that the U.S. role would be as back-up to African peace troops, and that they would be concerned primarily with getting in humanitarian supplies. It said it did not intend the Americans to take part in combat.

For Liberians, sight of the American helicopters and troops was enough.

"I am so happy. All these years we've been praying for America to come," said Randolph Eglev, a 51-year-old worker at the airport. "Today maybe peace will begin."

The troops, members of the 26th Expeditionary Unit, have

been waiting in three U.S. warships off Liberia and have now pulled to within view of the city.

Securing the port is a key first step for peacekeepers. Heavy looting of U.S. and World Food Program aid warehouses and other stockpiles of food continued Thursday morning ahead of the rebels' withdrawal. Thousands of people poured out of the area around the port with bags of grain and other goods on their heads. Rebels fired into the air as looters fought each other for the booty.

West African nations have been landing peacekeeping troops since Aug. 4, keeping them at a temporary base at the airport until the force reached sufficient strength to deploy in the capital. Monrovia, a city of more than 1 million, is now crowded with hundreds of thousands of refugees.

About 800 West African peacekeepers, mostly Nigerian soldiers, have landed so far, and a second Nigerian battalion was to start flying in later Thursday.

Leaders of Liberia's post-Taylor government said they welcomed the U.S. deployment. "It's long-awaited and

we thank God it's been realized," said Lewis Brown, the foreign minister. "It leads one to believe we might be closer to the end."

Brown spoke at the airport as he accompanied new President Moses Blah to Ghana and ongoing peace talks there.

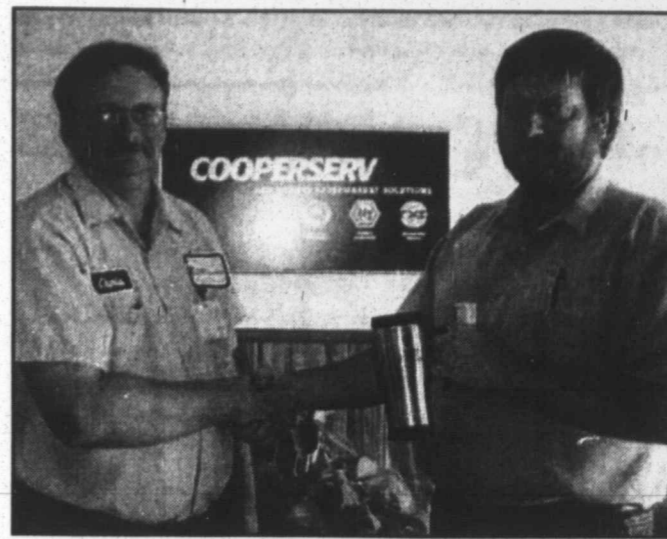
Brown said Blah would meet with leaders of both of Liberia's rebel groups for talks that would focus on their demands that Blah step down.

West African leaders say Blah is to hand over power in October to a transitional government that will lead Liberia to new elections. Rebels insist Blah is only a stand-in for Taylor, and want him out sooner.

A cease-fire has held in Monrovia since the West African peace troops first deployed. Fighting has persisted outside the capital, with recent clashes to the south as Liberia's second rebel group moved forward from the country's second-largest city, the southeastern port of Buchanan.

Blaney, the U.S. ambassador, said the southern rebels have now agreed to withdraw to within a few miles of Buchanan, using the St. John River as a cease-fire line.

Safety award recipients



(Courtesy photo)

Charles Oakley, Cooper Energy Plant Safety Coordinator, left, presents a July safety award to Travis Jennings.



(Courtesy photo)

Travis Jennings, Cooper Energy manufacturing coordinator, left, presents a July safety award to Wallace Fritts.



(Courtesy photo)

Charles Oakley, Cooper Energy Plant Safety Coordinator, left, presents July safety award to John Henderson.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

COUNTY

in the county courtroom, commissioners will hear a report from the Personnel Policy Review Committee on revising county personnel policies.

They will also discuss

revising the rental agreement for the Clyde Carruth Pavilion and consider a road crossing request on Gray County Road N between County Road 1 and 2.

Commissioner will hear a proposal from McCreary, Veselk, Bragg and Allen con-

cerning collecting fines and court costs. Peet said his understanding is that the firm will collect an addition fee for their services from individuals who haven't paid fines or associated costs, and the county will receive the full amount of what's owed the county.

The commissioners court is expected to reappoint Judge Willis Smith to the Texas Panhandle Mental Health Retardation Board.

They will also consider a resolution supporting the creation of a Panhandle Community Services Transit Board. The board will oversee

only rural transit operations in the 26 county panhandle area, Peet said. They will not be involved in other Community Services programs.

Commissioners will consider a resolution authorizing acceptance of a grant from the Texas Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division for the Crime Victim Coordinator in the District Attorney's office.

Friday, commissioners will also consider a proclamation establishing the fourth Monday of every September as Family Day. This year, it would be Sept. 22.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

DEMOCRATS

the House, to pass legislation with a simple majority. Senate Democrats walked out during the vote on redistricting, but the plan was approved anyway.

"We had a terrible experience here in Colorado, and that's what awaits them if they return to the Capitol," Fitz-Gerald said of the Texas lawmakers.

Fitz-Gerald and Gordon were joined by state Sens. Ron Tupa of Boulder, Bob Hagedorn of Aurora, Peggy Reeves of Fort Collins. Before leaving, they loaded up Fitz-Gerald's Dodge Caravan with gifts of Colorado beer and peaches. They were paying for the trip out of their own pocket, Fitz-Gerald said.

Fitz-Gerald gave the Texans a thumbs-up with each hand and embraced Texas Senate Democratic Caucus head Leticia Van de Putte when the Coloradans arrived at an Albuquerque, N.M. hotel.

"What they're doing is very courageous," Fitz-Gerald said. "I think given what the GOP is trying to do to the face of Congress, they (the Texas holdouts) have to understand how important they are in this process of just stopping this wholesale power grab by the Republican party."

"We look forward to being the only two states where this is attempted," Van de Putte said during Thursday's breakfast meeting.

She blamed President Bush for trying to redistrict various states to favor Republicans two years after congressional redistricting and a year after

elections. Presidential adviser Karl Rove and U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay are behind the Texas effort, and by remaining silent, Bush accepts the blame, Van de Putte said.

Colorado Senate President John Andrews, R-Centennial, said the Texas Democrats were setting a bad example. "Now we have Colorado Senate Democrats teaching our kids a civic lesson that running away from your duties is a good thing," Andrews said.

The Colorado Republican Party said the last thing the Texas Democrats need is beer.

"It's hilarious that Colorado Democratic leadership is driving a binge bus to New Mexico to provide beer and advice to their Texas counterparts. With friends like that, Texas Republicans have little to worry about," state GOP executive director Jack Stansbery said.

The Colorado redistricting plan makes Republicans the majority in the 7th Congressional District, which had been nearly evenly divided among Democrats, Republicans and unaffiliated voters.

It also increased GOP numbers in the 3rd District while increasing Democratic influence in the 2nd District and the already heavily Democratic 1st District.

Democrats have filed a lawsuit and have a challenge pending in the state Supreme Court to block it.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

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About 3,000 die of heat-related causes in France, health ministry says

By JAMEY KEATEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PARIS (AP) — About 3,000 people have died in France of heat-related causes since abnormally high temperatures swept across the country about two weeks ago, the health ministry estimated Thursday. It was the government's first official death toll estimate. One of the few organizations to issue an estimate, France's emergency hospital physicians' association, had earlier this week said the death toll was at least 100.

"We can now state what's happening to us is a veritable epidemic," Health Minister Jean-Francois Mattei said on France-Inter radio.

Over the past few days, various city and regional governments had issued death estimates in their

areas. The national government said it was working to compile full, nationwide figures.

Morgues and funeral directors have reported skyrocketing demand for their services since the heat wave took hold. General Funeral Services, France's largest undertaker, said it handled some 3,230 deaths from Aug. 6-12, compared to 2,300 on an average week in the year — a 37 percent jump.

The ministry said its estimate was partly drawn from studying deaths in 23 Paris regional hospitals from July 25-Aug. 12 and from information provided by General Funeral Services.

According to 2002 figures, the Paris regional hospitals that were surveyed could have expected some 39 deaths a day, the ministry said. But on Aug. 12 this year, dur-

ing the heat wave, they recorded nearly 180, it said.

"We note a clear increase in cases beginning Aug. 7-8, which we can regard as the start of the epidemic of deaths linked to the heat," the health ministry said in a written statement.

Many of the victims were elderly, and Mattei said the high death rate was a result of an "exceptional" heat wave combined with an aging population.

Health officials say August is often a time when elderly people find themselves alone, when their families go on vacation.

"They are often alone in Paris when their families go away on holiday," said health ministry spokeswoman Laurence Danand. "There are a lot of elderly people alone in big cities in August."

Danand said an exact figure

would be released next week on the number of heat-related deaths, based on a survey of all private and public medical institutions, including retirement homes.

On Wednesday, days after the first complaints accusing the government of a slow response to heat-related deaths, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin asked the Paris region to launch an emergency hospital plan to provide for a massive influx of patients.

Mattei also acknowledged "difficulties" for the government in managing the surge in temperatures, but said that hospital staffers were performing in an "exemplary" manner in response.

The government "carried out the responses that were needed" as soon as the first cases of heat-related death appeared about a

week ago, Mattei said.

"We didn't just remain inactive," he said.

Paris City Hall said Wednesday it had taken extra measures to ensure that city-run funeral homes would remain open to bury bodies on Friday, a holiday in France, and recall more than 30 municipal workers from vacation.

To protect the elderly, the city government's 13 retirement homes bought extra fans and atomizers to keep their residents cool in a country where air conditioning is not widespread.

Record-high temperatures have been set in numerous cities across France, and the capital has baked under heat exceeding 98 degrees. The average August temperature in Paris, which has warm but not torrid summers, is 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

Powerful earthquake rocks Greek isle

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A powerful earthquake struck islands in western Greece on Thursday, cracking roads, toppling lampposts and touching off a panicked exodus toward the mainland.

The quake, with a preliminary magnitude of 6.4, was centered 19 miles west of the Ionian Sea island of Lefkada, about 175 miles northwest of Athens, said the Athens Geodynamic Institute.

People raced into the streets, and cars soon clogged the bridge linking Lefkada with the mainland as frightened tourists tried to leave.

"It was very strong. We were all asleep in my home when it happened and some things, like the television, fell down," said Lefkada resident Ilias Georgakis.

The quake struck at 8:15 a.m. and was centered 6.2 miles under the seabed. The U.S. Geological Survey gave a lower estimate of its magnitude, 6.1.

The island's fire chief, Alexandros Mihos, said some people suffered broken limbs, mostly caused by falling rocks or roof tiles. Rescue officials said the main hospital on the island treated at least 24 people for minor injuries.

The coast guard transported two Italian tourists injured by fallen rocks at a remote beach. Authorities also rescued four rock climbers who were jostled loose from cliffs

and plunged into the sea.

On Lefkada, roads were cracked and lampposts knocked over. A wall in an empty church collapsed and a home was left tilting on its foundation.

Some roads were blocked by landslides and electricity was knocked out in some areas of the island, officials said.

Other Ionian islands reported no major damage, but some older buildings were cracked in Preveza, a mainland port across from Lefkada.

Seismologists urged bathers to avoid beaches where overhanging rocks could be dislodged by expected aftershocks. The Civil Defense Agency sent tents for residents too frightened to return home.

"There was some panic," Georgakis said. "It mostly scared tourists, who have not felt such intense things. We have lived through many earthquakes."

The quake hit as residents of the Ionian islands held

memorials this week for the 50-year anniversary of a series of devastating quakes that devastated the island of Cephalonia and killed 476 people.

Seismologists said the 1953 quakes, which included a magnitude 7.2, came from a different fault zone.

Greece is one of Europe's most earthquake-prone regions, and building codes in many of its regions, especially on the Ionian islands, are very strict. Civil defense officials attributed the slight damage to quake-resistant construction since the 1953 tragedy.

The head of the Lefkada hoteliers union, Theodoros Kondilatos, said none of the island's hotels suffered damage.

"The hotels of Lefkada, especially those built after 1953 earthquake, were constructed with Japanese earthquake specifications, which are the strictest in the world," he said. "The tourists here have nothing to worry about."

Rotary luncheon



(Courtesy photo)

Pampa Rotary Club recently treated its youth leadership camp participants to lunch. Above, left-right: Sara Albracht, Natalie McVay, Tara Jordan, Rotary Committee Chair Judge Lee Waters, Alan Arzola, Jake Hopkins and Samantha Conner. Not pictured: Shawn Goodin. Each of these Pampa High School seniors were selected to attend the all-expense paid five-day leadership camp held this summer in New Mexico. The camp explored the fundamentals of leadership and community/global citizenship in a camp setting and included a variety of recreational activities and informal talks with several guest speakers.

Good During August 2003 Only!

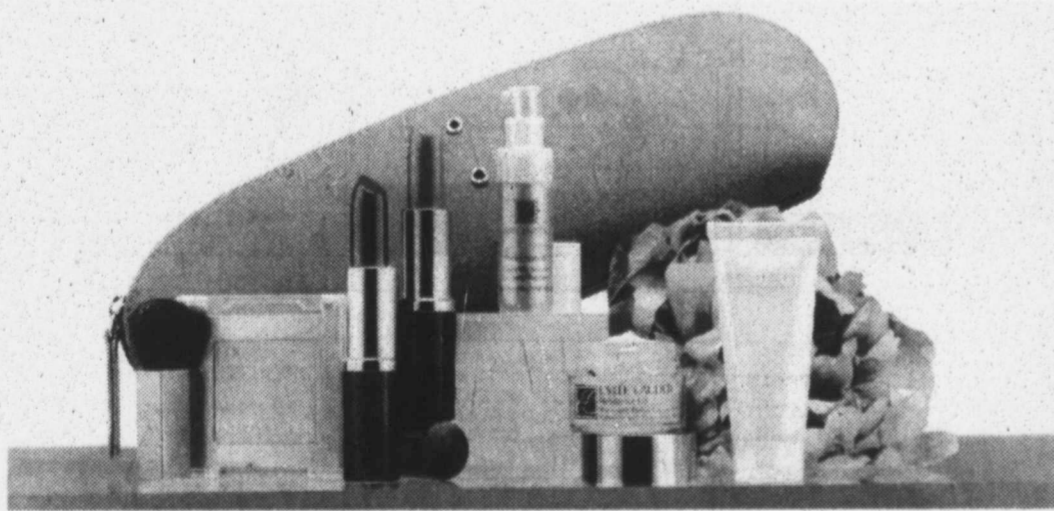
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DEAR ABBY

written by Pauline Phillips and daughter Jeanne Phillips

Woman In Bankruptcy Worries About Giving Man True Account

DEAR ABBY: I am a woman in my late 20s. I declared bankruptcy last year. What led to this decision wasn't so much irresponsibility as it was circumstances beyond my control.

A few months ago, I met a wonderful man I'll call Andrew. We've grown attracted to each other. Andrew has begun talking about seeing me on an exclusive basis. I am extremely nervous about the prospect, primarily because Andrew is a financial adviser. Up until now, I saw no reason to divulge my bankruptcy. However, if we are beginning a long-term relationship, what's the best way to go about it?

I don't want him to feel I've been hiding something all this time, and I don't want him to think I'm using him, for his financial expertise. I'm quite independent, have a stable job that I love and am now managing on my own. Any ideas?

"INVESTING 101" IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEAR INVESTING: Say it this way: "Andrew, there is something I need to tell you. It's something I'm not proud of, so I have been hesitant to disclose it to anyone. Last year I had to file bankruptcy, and this is why." Then explain the situation.

Tell him how special you think he is and that you are getting back on your feet without any outside assistance. His response will give you an indication of the depth of his feelings for you.

DEAR ABBY: I am confused. I have been through four bad marriages and wound up in domestic abuse shelters because all my husbands verbally and physically attacked me.

Six months ago, I met "Mike," and we moved in together. He is very kind, gentle and loving most of the time, but sometimes Mike gets into these moods and makes me feel awful. He'll compare me to his former girlfriends and say I can't do anything right. He also makes fun of the fact that I am seeing a psychiatrist, a therapist and taking medication. He says it proves that I am crazy!

Mike won't get help for himself even though I know he needs it, so I

have started sneaking antidepressants in with his daily vitamins. It has made some difference in his mood. I know I shouldn't do it, but I am desperate. Any advice?

LOOKING FOR TRUE LOVE IN ALABAMA

DEAR LOOKING: Yes. Admit you have drawn five losing cards in a row, and drop out of the romance game for a while. Discuss with your therapist why you are repeatedly attracted to men who are not good for you. And get out now before the abuse escalates again.

Depression is not the problem with abusive people. Abusers use abuse as a method to control their partners.

P.S. It is dangerous to give medications — particularly mood-altering drugs — to people for whom they have not been prescribed. Please call a halt to it now.

DEAR ABBY: Last Sunday, my husband and I attended church in a city where we had lived before our retirement. As we left the chapel, I had a physically painful experience that has happened many times before — and I hope you'll spread the message.

When anyone shakes hands with an elderly person, please do so gently. Many of us have arthritic hands, and a powerful handshake can be excruciating. I appreciated a strong handshake when I was young, but now it can be torture. Thanks, Abby.

SENIOR IN SOUTH PASADENA, CALIF.

DEAR SENIOR: A handshake should be firm without being a bone-crusher. Younger people can also have arthritic hands. I'm pleased you wrote to air your complaint. It's a valid one. A word to the wise ...

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



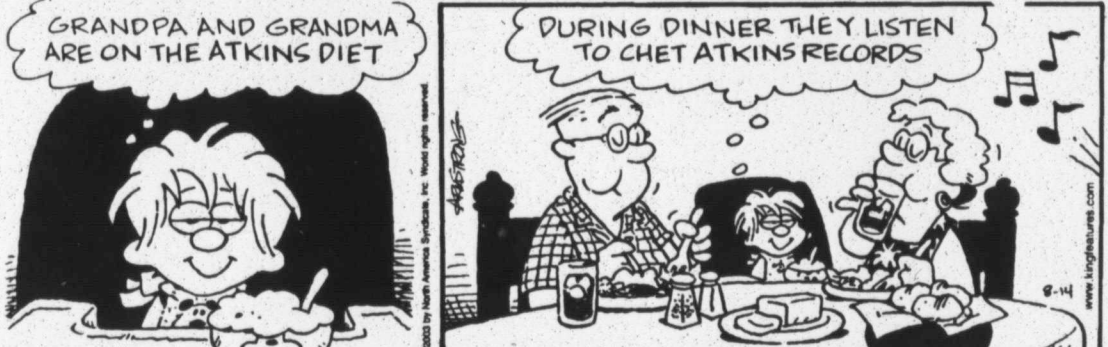
Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS DOWN

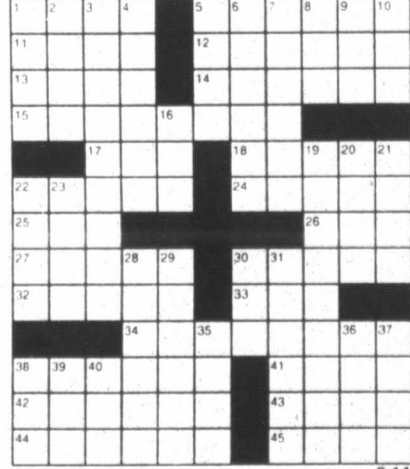
- 1 Stepped down
- 5 Friend of Rachel and Tardy
- 11 Tardy
- 12 Worshipful one
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- 15 Music buy
- 17 Owned by us
- 18 Bistro unit
- 22 Flight makeup
- 24 Permit
- 25 Spy org.
- 26 Exploit
- 27 Beginning
- 30 Helps
- 32 "Hatar" star
- 33 Yank's foe
- 34 Action film staple
- 38 Stand against
- 41 Ogled
- 42 Came down in buckets
- 43 Protracted
- 44 Beliefs
- 45 Slacker address



Yesterday's answer

- 19 Linda
- 20 Misplaced
- 21 Lamb
- 22 Garbage carrier
- 23 Ike's ex
- 28 Concert bonus
- 29 Serving
- 30 Circle section
- 31 Looked upon
- 35 Ohio team
- 36 Transmit
- 37 Advantage
- 38 Choose
- 39 "The Bells" writer
- 40 Groan cause

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send \$4.95 (check or m.o.) to: Thomas Joseph Book 2, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



Marmaduke



"No! I don't want to play water polo today."

The Family Circus



"Not me." "Not me!"

Flo & Friends



Blondie



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FDA approves souped-up wheelchair capable of climbing stairs

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP MEDICAL WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's complicated and carries a hefty pricetag, but the federally approved iBOT wheelchair promises to give some of the nation's 2 million wheelchair users new freedom of movement, even allowing them to climb stairs.

The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday authorized the sale of the iBOT, which uses sensors and gyroscopes to climb up and down stairs. It also shifts into four-wheel drive to navigate grassy hills and can lift its occupant to standing height.

Doctors have called the technology potentially revolutionary and the FDA termed it a breakthrough, but one so complex that, unlike other wheelchairs, it will require a doctor's prescription and special training before patients can buy an iBOT.

The iBOT will cost \$29,000, less than some top-of-the-line models for the severely impaired but far more than basic wheelchairs. The maker, Johnson & Johnson subsidiary Independence Technology, is negotiating with Medicare and other insurers to pay for the wheelchair, but could not say Wednesday if that is likely.

Sales will begin by year's end, a J&J spokesman said.

Dean Kamen, the man who invented the Segway scooter, created the iBOT, and licensed it to Johnson & Johnson. He says he

built it not just for the stair-climbing ability but also the extra elevation because wheelchair users had told him they longed to carry on eye-level conversations with people standing nearby, and to be able to reach top grocery shelves by themselves.

Wheelchairs have become increasingly sophisticated. Some raise a user a few inches to be able to reach high objects. More agile models are specially designed for zipping around basketball or tennis courts. And in the early 1990s, the FDA approved one model solely for stair-climbing, but it never became popular because it did not provide more routine transport, said Robert DeLuca, the FDA scientist who led the iBOT evaluation.

The iBOT, in contrast, is an all-purpose wheelchair that also climbs stairs, he said.

"We think this is something that can really benefit patients," DeLuca said. "It offers many advantages to anything else we've ever seen."

Most wheelchairs have two big back wheels and two smaller front wheels. The iBOT has four wheels the same size that rotate up and over one another to go up and down steps. The user leans forward or backward to direct the chair to climb up or down as the gyroscopes sense and adjust to the person's center of gravity.

The iBOT is not an option for all wheelchair users. People must have the use of at least one arm to operate its controls. They

must hold onto a stair rail to help guide the iBOT, although there is a feature that allows someone else to hold onto the chair's back and assist the more severely disabled on stairs.

So far, it is not built for children or for people who weigh more than 250 pounds.

To prove iBOT works, 18 wheelchair users test-drove it for two weeks. Scientists compared maneuverability in the iBOT with users' regular wheelchairs in everyday situations and in special road tests.

Twelve patients could navigate stairs alone with the iBOT, while the rest used an assistant. In regular wheelchairs, one patient could bump his way down stairs, but no one could go up a single step.

Three study participants fell out of the iBOT and two fell out of their own wheelchairs — none on stairs and none was seriously injured — suggesting the iBOT was as safe as today's technology, FDA concluded.

But the iBOT is complex enough that the wrong person using it could get hurt or injure bystanders, so Independence Technology set up an FDA-approved program to strictly control sales.

Doctors and rehabilitation therapists must be licensed to prescribe the iBOT. They would administer tests to potential users to ensure they are physically capable of handling the machine and have the right judgment skills to discern obstacles, such as which hills are too steep to try climbing.

DRILLING INTENTIONS

Intentions to Drill

HEMPHILL (BUFFALO WALLOW Granite Wash) Dominion Oklahoma Texas E&P, Inc., Hemphill-Walser '11', Sec. 11.4, AB&M, PD 12250', for the following wells:

#5, 1500' from South & 1700' from East line of Sec.

#6, 2500' from South & 467' from East line of Sec.

HEMPHILL (WILDCAT & BUFFALO WALLOW Granite Wash) Patina Oil & Gas Corp., #1212P Carr '12', 2600' from South & 467' from West line, Sec. 12.4, AB&M, PD 12000'.

HEMPHILL (WILDCAT & BUFFALO WALLOW Granite Wash) Patina Oil & Gas Corp., Carr '55', Sec. 55, M-1, H&GN, PD 12000', for the following wells:

#5503P, 467' from North & 1513' from West line of Sec.

#5504P, 467' from North & West line of Sec.

#5514P, 990' from South & 1650' from West line of Sec.

HEMPHILL (WILDCAT & BUFFALO WALLOW Granite Wash) Patina Oil & Gas Corp., #7009P Meek '70', 1980' from South & 467' from East line, Sec. 70, M-1, H&GN, PD 12000'.

HEMPHILL (WILDCAT & HEMPHELL Granite Wash) Samson Lone Star Ltd. Partnership, #4 Hobart '49', 1994' from South & 1785' from West line, Sec. 49, A-2, H&GN, PD 12500'.

ROBERTS (WILDCAT) Range Production Co., #1220 Killebrew, 715' from North & 878' from West line, Sec. 220.42, H&TC, PD 12500'.

ROBERTS (WILDCAT & N.W. MENDOTA Upper Morrow) Unit Petroleum Co., #5 Vollmert 'B', 1600' from North & 700' from East line, Sec. 9, —, BS&F, PD 11200'.

ROBERTS (RED DEER Wolfcamp Lime) Gruy Petroleum Mgmt. Co., #6035 Osborne, 2130' from North & 1980' from West line, Sec. 35, B01, H&GN, PD 6000'.

Applications to Plug-Back

HEMPHILL (BUFFALO WALLOW Granite Wash) Patina Oil & Gas Corp., #1046 Abraham, 660' from South & 2100' from West line, Sec. 46, A-2, H&GN, PD 14000'.

HEMPHILL (SPARKS Tonkawa) Tri-Ex Petroleum, L.P., #1 Bertha E. Wilson Unit, 660' from South & 1980' from West line, Sec. 7.43, H&TC, PD 11537'.

Oil Well Completion

HEMPHILL (HEMPHELL Douglas) Upland Resources, Inc., #Jack, Sec. 106.41, H&TC, spud 4-11-03, drlg. compl 4-24-03, tested 7-5-03, pumped 6 bbl. of 40 grav. oil + 81 bbls. water, GOR 3000, TD 8000' —

Gas Well Completions

HEMPHILL (BUFFALO WALLOW Granite Wash) PN Resources, Inc., #4069 J.P. Meek, Sec. 69, M-1, H&GN, spud 6-11-03, drlg. compl 7-1-03, tested 7-19-03 to 7-21-03, TD 11870', PBD 11707' —

Activists oppose proposal to report names of HIV patients

ATLANTA (AP) — AIDS and gay rights activists are fighting Georgia's effort to collect the names of people who test positive for HIV in doctor's offices, saying the new proposal will threaten confidentiality and deter testing.

Georgia is the last state in the country that does not collect HIV case data with personal identifiers, such as a patient's name or an ID code. State officials unsuccessfully have tried several times over the years to win activist support for such a system.

"This is not like cancer or diabetes. There's a stigma attached" to HIV, said Greg Smith, project manager for AIDS Survival in Atlanta.

The Georgia Division of Public Health said HIV data is useless without a name or code because the federal government requires more details when determining how much AIDS funds should go to states.

State health officials said HIV test results will remain confidential under the proposal. Only the state health department will have access to the names.

But activists said people will avoid HIV testing and treatment if they know a positive test result means their names will be reported to the government.

"People whom you really need to test will become fearful. It will be difficult for a community-based organization to reach them," said Pandora Singleton of Project Azuka, which aims to keep women from getting HIV.

Mark Douglas, executive director of My Brothaz H.O.M.E., a men's AIDS outreach group in Savannah, said Tuesday that he didn't believe black and Hispanic men would be tested for HIV if their names were collected.



Keith Black, D.O.
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Derrell Deloach, FNP
Family Practice

Robert Julian, MD
Family Practice

Caleb Kim, D.O.
Family Practice

Dan Powell, M.D.
Family Practice

Kevin Sieck, M.D.
Internal Medicine

K. Allan Ward, M.D.
Physical Medicine &
Rehabilitation

Danina Kennedy, LPC
Professional Counseling

Worley Kennedy, LPC
Professional Counseling

Family Medicine Center of Pampa would like to thank Nam K. Lee, MD for his commitment to his patients and our community over the last twenty eight years.

Dr. Lee has relocated to Amarillo to work within the Family Medicine Centers Network. The Physicians of Family Medicine Center of Pampa would like to assure his patients that they will continue to provide the quality healthcare that they have received in the past. We appreciate your ongoing confidence in us to provide care for you and your family.

We, at Family Medicine Center of Pampa, wish Dr. Lee the best in his new location!



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