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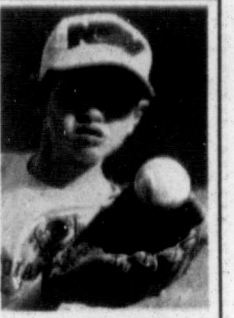
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Monday, June 6, 2005

Volume 101 • No. 1280

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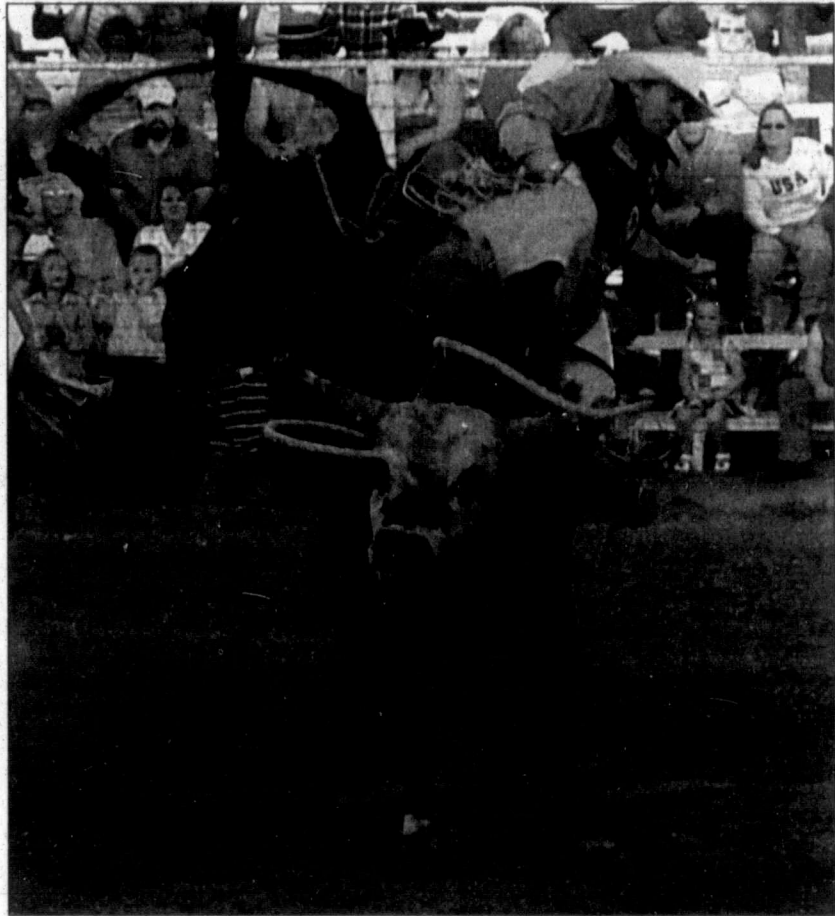
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Pampa News photo by MARILYN POWERS

Justin Francis of Woodward, Okla., hangs on with a look of determination in Saturday night's bull riding at the 59th annual Top O' Texas Rodeo. Eleven bull riders were entered in Saturday night's event.

Pampan charged in family's assault

By MARILYN POWERS Staff Writer

A Pampa man is free today on \$20,000 bond after being arrested Sunday and charged in connection with domestic assault.

David Allen David, 37, Bowers City Highway (Farm to Market Road 749) was booked into Gray County Jail at 2:05 p.m. by Gray County Sheriff's Deputy Jarret Parsons and charged with assault causing bodily injury to a family member and three counts of injury to a child, according to jail records.

Bond on each of the four charges was \$5,000, and was

set by Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace Kurt Curfman. David bonded out of jail at about 10:30 a.m. today, according to a jail spokesperson.

Julie Lynn David, 25, and her three children, ages 7, 5, and 1, arrived at a Pampa residence Sunday and called Pampa Police Department, according to Sheriff's Office Lt. Joe B. Hoard.

The incident occurred outside city limits but in Gray County, so the matter was referred to the sheriff's office, Hoard said.

"He allegedly made contact with her head, face,

See ASSAULT, Page 3

Rodeo Royalty Queen, teen queen crowned in Saturday night ceremony

By MARILYN POWERS Staff Writer

Jamie Schroeder of Pampa was crowned Miss Rodeo Top O' Texas 2005 at Saturday night's rodeo, the last in the three-night schedule of events.

Tara Schilling of Bushland was crowned Miss Rodeo Top O' Texas Teen 2005.

Schroeder won top marks in the appearance, personality and horsemanship divisions of the contest.

Runner-up for the queen's crown was Chelsi Dickerson of Levelland, the only other contestant for the title.

Schilling won in the appearance, personality and horsemanship categories of the teen contest.

See QUEENS, Page 3

It's a rodeo wrap

Big crowd fills stands for final rides

By MARILYN POWERS Staff Writer

A strong turnout Saturday for the final night of the 59th annual Top O' Texas Rodeo cheered on bull and bronc riders, ropers, steer wrestlers and mutton busters as competitors from near and far vied for top spots in their categories.

Only one moment of concern occurred, when Case Drake of Sayre, Okla. was thrown from his bull and then stayed on the ground. Emergency medical service workers with Guardian EMS Ambulance came into the arena to examine Drake, but he made it back to his feet and walked out of the danger zone with some assistance.

Saturday's results are: Bull Riding — First place, Paulo Gouveia of Roswell, N.M., 77 points. Second place, Justin McDaniel, Porum, Okla., 73 points.

Bareback Riding — First place, Justin McDaniel, 82 points. Second place, Cimmaron Gerke, Fort Worth, 79 points.

Mutton Busting — First place, Kason Vigil, Pampa. Second place, Kade Woods, Pampa. Third Place, Kaleb Kimbro, Pampa.

Steer Wrestling — First Place, Roger Anderson, Kenai, Ark., 5.6 seconds. Second place, Tom Watkins, 6.3 seconds. Third, Tanner Winkler, Pampa, 9.4 seconds.

Saddle Bronc Riding — First place, Bradley Hinze, Australia, 69 points.

Calf Roping — First place, Charley Russell, Shamrock, 10.4 seconds. Second place, a tie between Cimmaron Boardman, Stephenville, and Wade Watkins, Canyon, both with 13.0 seconds. Fourth place, Cliff Kirkpatrick Post, 13.2 seconds. Fifth place, J.D. Kibbe, Portales, N.M., 14.8 seconds.

Double Mugging — First Place, Whitney Oxley, Justin Taylor and Tanner Cochran, 43.5 seconds. Second place, Loagan Helton, Aaron Nut and Jeremy Pritchett, 58.2 seconds.

Barrel Race — First place, Terry Bynum, Lubbock, 17.01 seconds.

See RODEO, Page 3



Pampa News photo by DEE DEE LARAMORE

Top O' Texas Rodeo Association Director Sam Condo leads a group of mounted flag-bearers in the Rodeo Parade Saturday morning.

Rodeo Parade winners named

By MARILYN POWERS Staff Writer

Winners in each division of Saturday morning's annual Top O' Texas Rodeo Parade have been announced by the rodeo association.

Best Civic Club or Organization — First place, Gymnastics of Pampa. Second place, 4-H Walk Across Texas Youth Health.

Antique Tractor — First place, Don Oltman of Amarillo. Second place, Bill Davidson of Borger.

Most Attractive Commercial Entry — First place, Cable One. Second place, Jim's Tradin' City.

Best Riding Club — First place, Sand & Sage Riding Club of Lefors. Second place, Top O' Texas Rodeo Directors & Queen

Contestants. Third place, White Deer Riding Club.

Classic Cars — First place, Raymond and Nancy Swaney, Lefors. Second place, Kenneth and Judy Cox. Third place, Jimmie Clark.

Winners may pick up their trophies at the rodeo office, 200 N. Ballard, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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Pampa police investigate accidental shooting

By MARILYN POWERS
Staff Writer

A Pampa man was treated at Pampa Regional Medical Center Saturday morning as a result of accidentally shooting himself in

the leg, according to Pampa Police Officer Colby Brown.

"I got called to the hospital on a gunshot victim. He said he was in Central Park, and someone offered to sell him a gun. He was handling it, and says it went off

and shot him in the leg," Brown said.

The incident occurred between 8:30 and 9 a.m. Saturday, according to police records. Brown identified the victim as Chester Stewart of 520 Yeager.

The gun involved in the incident was a .357 caliber handgun, according to the victim, Brown said.

"I question where it really happened," he said.

No evidence of a shooting and

no witnesses who heard a gunshot could be found in the park, Brown said. Blood was found at the victim's residence, he said.

"The (police) investigation is at an end," Brown said of the incident.

Rodeo

Continued from Page 1

Second place, Kaylee Holt, Gruver, 17.09 seconds. Third place, Maegan Reichert, Mt. Pleasant, 17.44 seconds. Fourth place, Laura Rogers, Athens, 17.51 seconds. Fifth place, Christie Gomez, Amarillo, 17.64 seconds. Sixth place, Tamara Reinhardt, Canadian, 21.95 seconds. Seventh place, Amy Adams, Garden City, Kan., 22.42 seconds. Eighth place, Alicia Spann, Amarillo, 22.68 seconds. Ninth place, Randi Lyn Jump, Vernon, 27.98 seconds.

Overall results for the entire three-night rodeo are:

Bull Riding — First place, Cole Taylor, 82 points. Second place, Corey Davis, 79 points. Third place, tie, Hawk Tucker and Paulo Gouveia, 77 points each. Fifth place, Rowdy Thomas, 76 points. Sixth place, Justin McDaniel, 71 points.

Bareback Riding — First place, D.V. Fennell, 84 points. Second place, tie, Travis Johnson and Justin McDaniel, 82 points each. Fourth place, Ryan Gray, 80 points.

Steer Wrestling — First place, K.C. Jones, 9.6 seconds. Second place, Teddy Johnson, 9.9 seconds. Third place, Blake Mindemann, 10.4 seconds. Fourth place, Chance Parsons, 15.2 points.

Saddle Bronc Riding — First place, Anthony Bello,

79 points. Second place, tie, Jeffery Cavey and Brody Bolton, 75 points each. Fourth place, Scott Johnston, 73 points.

Calf Roping — First place, Shane McLemore, 10.2 seconds. Second place, Bill Warner, 10.3 seconds. Third place, tie, Rusty Slavin and Charley Russell, 10.4 seconds each. Fifth place, Brian Bendele, 10.8 seconds. Sixth place, Tyler Merrill, 10.9 seconds.

Double Mugging — First place, Whitney Oxley, Justin Taylor and Robbie Cochran, 31.6 seconds. Second place, Oxley, Taylor and Tanner Cochran, 43.5 seconds. Third place, Loagan Helton, Aaron Nut and Jeremy Pritchett, 58.2 seconds.



Pampa News photo by MARILYN POWERS

Billie Billingsley of McLean grabs a steer by the horns in Saturday night's steer wrestling event at the 59th Annual Top O' Texas Rodeo. Billingsley was one of several local entrants in Saturday's events.

Assault

Continued from Page 1

neck, arms, back, shoulders, ribs and legs," Hoard said.

The seven-year-old had been pulled out of the family's van by his wrist and "thrown to the ground,"

according to the adult victim, Hoard said.

The five-year-old had been "jerked by the hair and thrown to the ground," and the one-year-old had been "picked up and thrown to the ground," according to the adult victim, Hoard said.

An ambulance was called to the Pampa residence where the victims had stopped to make the call to

report the incident.

No further information is known on the condition of the victims, whether they were transported by ambulance, or whether they were admitted to a hospital, Hoard said.

The alleged incident occurred at about 1 p.m. Sunday, Hoard said, as a result of an argument between the two adults.

Michael Jackson jury resumes deliberations; singer spent part of Sunday at hospital ER

SANTA MARIA, Calif. (AP) — Michael Jackson's jury returned to deliberations in the child molestation case Monday after a weekend that saw the pop star make another trip to the hospital.

Jackson's defense team, which was told to be on 10-minute notice throughout deliberations, showed up to join those waiting at the courthouse. The singer did not need to be at court during deliberations.

The defendant's father, Joe Jackson, dropped by at midmorning, and was met by a crush of journalists and fans. Accompanied by comedian-turned-nutritionist Dick Gregory, he went inside the courthouse for a few minutes and then left.

The jurors had received the case Friday afternoon

and deliberated for about two hours before adjourning for the weekend.

The singer is charged with molesting a 13-year-old boy in February or March 2003. He is also accused of plying him with wine and conspiring to hold the boy's family captive.

Jackson, who has complained of back trouble through much of his trial, spent about six hours at the Santa Ynez Valley Cottage Hospital in Solvang. He left late Sunday to the popping of flashbulbs and screams of fans.

"He's in excruciating pain," the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who met with the singer, told CBS' "The Early Show" on Monday. "The physical pain is real. There's also a sense that he feels

betrayed by those that he trusted and was betrayed before a jury."

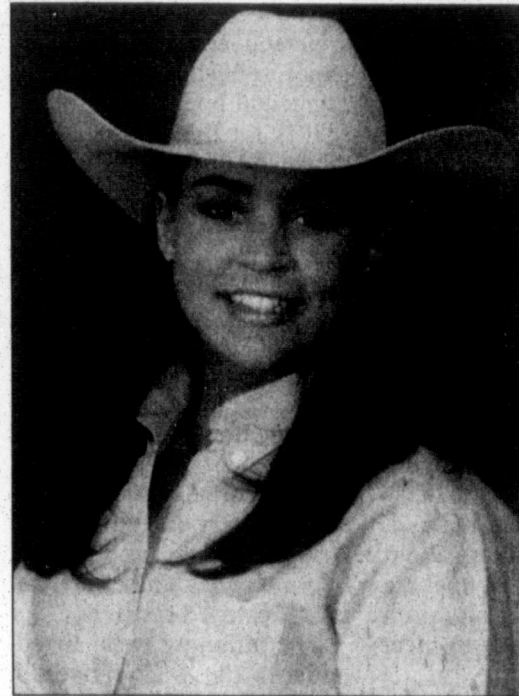
After leaving the hospital, Jackson returned to his Neverland ranch about five miles away to await the verdict with his family.

Olivia Kennedy, switchboard operator at the hospital, said the staff had been asked not to release any information about Jackson.

The singer's spokeswoman, Raymone K. Bain, told CBS that he had been given muscle relaxants in the past for back spasms and probably got the same treatment Sunday.

Bain said stress contributed to the entertainer's back problem Sunday.

"He's under a tremendous amount of stress right now," she said.



Jamie Schroeder
Miss Rodeo Top O' Texas



Tara Schilling
Miss Rodeo Teen Top O' Texas

Queens

Continued from Page 1

Katherine Lasater of Hull, the only other teen contestant, was runner-up.

Schroeder, 19, is the daughter of James and Jill Schroeder. She is a 2004 graduate of Pampa High School and is currently a freshman at Clarendon College.

Dickerson, 20, is the daughter of

Stephanie Coleman and Brian Dickerson. She is a 2002 graduate of House High School and is currently a sophomore at South Plains College.

Schilling, 15, is the daughter of Richard and Sonya Schilling. She attends Tascosa High School in Amarillo, where she will be a junior in the fall.

Lasater, 14, is the daughter of Brandt and Becky Lasater.

She just completed the eighth grade at Hardin Middle School.

Aruba officials call massive island-wide search for missing Alabama teenager

ORANJESTAD, Aruba (AP) — The government called on thousands of civil servants and tourists to join in a massive island-wide search Monday for a missing Alabama teenager, while police, soldiers and FBI agents combed scrubland and beaches.

The announcement came a day after police charged two men in the disappearance of Natalee Holloway, 18, of Mountain Brook, Ala. The honors student vanished May 30 during a five-day trip to Aruba with more than 100 other classmates celebrating their high school graduation.

The Dutch Caribbean island's government asked most of the 4,000 public employees to meet at a sports stadium in the central community of Santa Cruz at 2 p.m. EDT to be briefed on "a systematic search," police commander Trudy Hassell said.

"We hope there will be thousands," Hassell said in the capital, Oranjestad. "This effort is a national effort. We feel with the family."

Authorities also asked the FBI to send a dive team to

search waters with rough currents.

Two security guards from a hotel near where Holloway was staying were arrested Sunday. Aruban police in unmarked cars accompanied by FBI agents arrested the suspects during a pre-dawn raid.

An AP photographer watched as the rumpled men emerged without resistance, hands cuffed behind their backs.

Police searched the homes and emerged with what looked like a metal safe deposit box and a garbage bag of clothing.

Attorney General Caren Janssen declined to release the specific charges, saying the case would go before a judge within 48 hours to determine whether the men can be legally held. She said authorities had not found any of Holloway's belongings at the suspects' homes.

"The charges have a relationship with the disappearance," Janssen said. "There is a reasonable suspicion they may be involved."

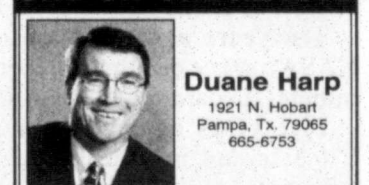
Authorities impounded three vehicles found at the

two homes, and a team of more than a dozen FBI agents helping with the investigation will help perform forensic testing, police said.

Police spokesman Edwin Comemencia said authorities had not ruled out the possibility that other people were involved. The two men in custody were not among three others described Saturday by police as "persons of interest."

Janssen declined to comment on whether there was a relationship between the two men in custody and the three others, described as students, who told police they dropped Holloway off at the hotel where she was staying on May 30 at about 2 a.m.

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Viewpoints

Spend another \$1,200 to avert a water war

I've long admired the Panhandle Ground Water Conservation District.

They do a difficult job and rarely please everybody.

They are paid nothing and have a true sense of duty to the public good.

The past decade or so they have broken new ground concerning water law and practices in the state. They have been sued, threatened and bashed and yet they continue to function and keep their eye on their purpose for being -- to conserve ground water in the eight counties more or less that they serve and still look out for the property rights of their constituents.

They have been con-

demned by people who want to sell their water to other parts of the state, and they have been condemned by those who don't want any water leaving the district. As a working journalist, if figure if you've got both sides mad at you, you're doing something right.

I have long admired their ability to look into the future and deal with what they think is right. They do a great amount of research, but when it comes down to making a decision, they make it. They don't whine about might happen. They make a decision. If the situation changes, they move to meet the changes.

I find their common sense

approach and lack of arrogance refreshing for a governmental body.

It is for this reason I was taken aback last week when a couple of board members were reluctant to come up with money for a coalition fighting to keep parts of the Canadian River from being designated critical habitat for the Arkansas River shiner, a two-inch long minnow that is a threatened species.

The minnow was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1998, but at

the time the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not designate critical habitat.

In 2001, an environmental group out of Arizona filed a lawsuit to force the federal agency to designate critical habitat for the fish. That critical habitat was some 1,200 miles of rivers, including the Canadian as it flows through the Texas Panhandle.

A coalition of agricultural and water groups came together and challenged the initial designation and won. Last fall, the Fish and

Wildlife Service again published critical habitat.

The coalition again funded a legal team to review the federal agency's determinations.

Each of the 21 members of the coalition is coughing up some money. Some more than others.

The Panhandle Ground Water Conservation District is putting in \$1,500. In the past they have come up with two payments to the coalition of \$3,000 each.

At the height of the district's efforts to write their rules to guarantee property rights and still conserve area ground water, their legal bills were running hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Another \$1,500 seems a pittance in comparison, particularly with the stakes involved.

I have never known them to waste money, but after covering Endangered Species Act issues in other parts of the country for a decade now, I think the \$1,500 is money well spent.

The environmental group that initially sued to have critical habitat designated, the Center for Biodiversity is part of what has become known in New Mexico and Arizona and other parts of the West where the government owns much of the land as the confrontation industry.

See WATER, Page 5

David Bowser

Columnist



Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, June 6, the 157th day of 2005. There are 208 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 6, 1944, the D-Day invasion of Europe took place during World War II as Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, France.

On this date:

In 1844, the Young Men's Christian Association was founded in London.

In 1918, the World War I Battle of Belleau Wood, which resulted in a U.S. victory over the Germans, began in France.

In 1925, Walter Percy Chrysler founded the Chrysler Corporation.

In 1933, the first drive-in movie theater opened in Camden, N.J.

In 1934, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established.

In 1942, Japanese forces retreated in the World War II Battle of Midway.

In 1966, black activist James Meredith was shot and wounded as he walked along a Mississippi highway to encourage black voter registration.

In 1968, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy died at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, a day after he was shot by Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

In 1978, California voters overwhelmingly approved

Proposition 13, a primary ballot initiative calling for major cuts in property taxes.

In 1985, authorities in Brazil exhumed a body later identified as the remains of Dr. Josef Mengele, the notorious "Angel of Death" of the Nazi Holocaust.

Ten years ago: U.S. astronaut Norman Thagard broke NASA's space endurance record of 84 days, one hour and 16 minutes, aboard the Russian space station Mir.

Five years ago: Unilever agreed to buy Bestfoods for \$20.3 billion in a deal creating the world's biggest food company.

One year ago: World leaders, including President Bush and French President Jacques Chirac put aside their differences to commemorate the D-Day invasion that broke Nazi Germany's grip on continental Europe. "Avenue Q" won best musical at the Tony Awards, while "I Am My Own Wife" was named best play; Phylicia Rashad, who starred in a revival of "A Raisin in the Sun," became the first black actress to win a Tony for a leading dramatic role.

'To be successful, grow to the point where one completely forgets himself; that is, to lose himself in a great cause.'

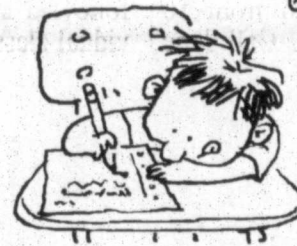
— Booker T. Washington

American educator

NEWS ITEM: GREENSBORO, GA. — MARINE PEN PAL DENIED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS CARSON MIDDLE SCHOOL SIXTH GRADE CLASS...

*Dear Sergeant Richardson,
I am sorry Principal Corbett wouldn't let you talk to our class. Especially since we have been pen pals. She says it is the principal's job to protect "the safety and welfare of our children." *
What is a soldier's job to protect?
I forgot.*

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Sincerely,
Mrs. Lund's
6th Grade Class

*QUOTE: PRINCIPAL CORBETT (IN A STATEMENT)

A year filled with memories

This coming Sunday (June 5) marks the first anniversary of my father's death, and I will mark it by visiting the aircraft carrier that bears his name, USS Ronald Reagan. At 8 a.m., with Captain Jim Symonds and the crew, I will lay a wreath in honor of my dad.

As I get ready for that ceremony I think back over the past year and what I've learned as I traveled all across America on speaking engagements to different organizations and listened to thousands and thousands of my fellow Americans express their love and admi-

ration for Ronald Reagan. As they shared with me their favorite Ronald Reagan stories or their favorite Ronald Reagan moments, I began to understand the reason why those vast crowds took the time last year to stand outside for hours upon hours just to be able to walk past my father's casket for a brief moment, whether it was at the Ronald Reagan Library at Simi Valley, Calif., or

back in Washington at the Rotunda where he lay in state.

I have been able to spend time with Mikhail Gorbachev, who sat behind my daughter Ashley and my son Cameron at my dad's funeral in the National Cathedral. I spent moments with Lady Margaret Thatcher, my dad's staunch Cold War ally, and spoke with her about the accomplishments of the

1980s, when the two of them faced down an aggressive Soviet Union as it had never been faced down before.

I was pleased to hear that both of them also fondly recalled their own favorite Ronald Reagan stories and memories, just as had all of those Americans I've met over the past year.

To be able to hear all of these things is what has given me strength and helped me to get through this first year in my life that I haven't been able to go up to his home and spend time

See YEAR, Page 5

Michael Reagan

Columnist



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The 79th Legislature gets an 'F'

The 79th Legislature, which ends today (May 30), failed in its most important assignment overhauling the troubled financing structure for public schools.

Lawmakers completed their constitutionally required duty this session by approving a \$139 billion budget for 2006-07 that appears to balance. But their assignment on school finance reform collapsed at the end.

The lack of action appears in large part to have occurred because the Texas House, led by Speaker Tom Craddick, is more worried about the effect of tax

increases on businesses than on ordinary citizens. A House majority was quite willing to raise sales taxes on everyone by 1 cent. The Senate insisted on a half-cent increase.

Their differences on consumer and business taxation perhaps is not surprising because the House is the chamber closest to its people the business lobby.

For now, at least, the collapse means that homeowners, especially in prosperous suburbs, will get no relief

from steadily rising school property taxes. Businesses will continue to slip away from paying the state's franchise tax. Sales and tobacco taxes will remain the same.

The so-called Robin Hood mechanism that takes locally raised property taxes in comparatively wealthy districts and spends it in poorer districts will continue to function. Teachers won't get an across-the-board pay raise. And public education will

stumble along. What doesn't go away, at least not yet, is the ruling by state District Judge John Dietz that the current system of financing schools is unconstitutional, primarily because it produces inadequate revenue to provide a solid education. Dietz ordered the Legislature to enact a plan by October.

The ruling has been appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, which will hear it in July. The nine justices could relieve the Legislature of taking any action if a majority overturns

See 'F', Page 5

Texas Thoughts

Austin American-Statesman



Pampa News photo by DEE DEE LARAMORE

Gettin' ready for the Mud Bog

Members of High Plains Off-Road inspect a ditch dug in Recreation Park Sunday afternoon by Greg Harden of Miami Roustabout in preparation for the Burnin' the Bricks in June Mud Bog contest Sunday, June 12. The mud bog, which will take place in this pit filled with mud, begins at 10 a.m. Sunday at the park. Registration and tech checks begin at 7 a.m. Entry fee is \$20. Spectators watch for free. Trophies will be awarded for first and second place in each of nine classes. More than 90 vehicles have pre-registered for the event so far. Club members shown are, from left, Chelsie, Junior and Chad Winkleblack, Tyler and Jerimiah Montgomery, Shane "Catfish" Kennedy, Justin Murrell, Don and Angie Wainscott and Jeremy Hill.

Plans under way for McLean's Ex-Students Reunion June 17, 18

McLEAN — Plans are under way for the McLean Ex-Students June 17-18 "Alive in 05" Reunion. Registration will start at 2 p.m. on Friday at the McLean County Club followed by a 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. chicken spaghetti dinner served by the Methodist Women.

On Saturday morning, there will be a pancake breakfast served from 6:30 a.m. - 9 a.m. at the grade school cafeteria by the Class of 2008. Late registration will be available at the high school. There will be a Talent Show in the high school auditorium from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Call Jane

Herndon at 779-2756 if you would like to participate. A \$6.50 brisket lunch catered by Route 66 Restaurant will be served in the McLean Park at noon. Advance ticket purchase required.

In the afternoon, there will be a short business meeting, followed at 3 p.m. by individual class meetings.

The Country Club will be available from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for additional visiting.

The Texas Junction Band will provide music that night for an 8 p.m. dance at the McLean Country Club. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the door.

For more information, contact Ben Reeves at 806-779-3149 or biralusa@aol.com or visit www.McLeanTexas.com.

State's failure to fix school funding aids plaintiffs' lawsuit

AUSTIN (AP) — Some attorneys for school districts challenging the state school finance system view the Legislature's failure to replace that system as a success — in helping their case.

Lawyers representing some 300 school districts are suing the state, saying it has not funded education adequately and that the current finance system is unconstitutional. The case goes to the Texas Supreme Court next month.

The Texas House and Senate had approved differing versions of a school funding plan last week, but leaders of the two chambers could not agree on a compromise.

That gave the attorneys for property-rich and property-poor school districts needed evidence to help uphold a trial court judge's ruling that the state's cap on local property taxes was unconstitutional and funding shortfalls would lead to inadequate education.

"If we had scripted it out so that it would put us in the light most favorable to the Supreme Court and to the general public, we would not have had a better position," said Dallas attorney George Bramblett Jr., one of the lawyers representing property-rich districts in the case headed to the Supreme Court on July 6.

"This failure justifies our clients' concerns that the state would not act," he said.

State District Judge John Dietz of Austin ruled last year that the school tax rate, of which most districts have reached the state limit of \$1.50 per \$100 valuation, has basically become a statewide property tax, which is prohibited in the state Constitution. Dietz also said that the funding short-

fall made it impossible for rich and poor school districts to provide an adequate education.

He cited a significant achievement gap between low-income and wealthier students.

Part of the issue faced by the Legislature involved a growing population of low-income children, who can be harder to teach.

Last year, 2.3 million low-income children attended Texas' public schools, representing nearly 53 percent of the total enrollment. More than 660,000 students who were deficient in English.

'If we had scripted it out so that it would put us in the light most favorable to the Supreme Court and to the general public, we would not have had a better position.'

— George Bramblett Jr.
Dallas attorney

State Rep. Kent Grusendorf, R-Arlington, chief architect of the House proposal, agreed that low-income students cost more to teach, but that Texans are paying plenty for education.

"If we just throw more money (at public education), then what we are doing will be futile," he said. "Let's not just add more money, but let's also change the structure so we can get more from what we're spending."

Information from: San Antonio Express-News, <http://www.mysanantonio.com>

Water

Continued from Page 4

They sue. If they win, the government pays the bill, including all the legal costs. They rarely lose. In addition, they are well funded by well-meaning people who have never tried to make a living

off the land.

What perhaps scares me the most is the way the rule was written that listed the Arkansas River shiner in the first place. It blames farming and irrigation from the Ogallala Aquifer in part for a decline in the stream flow of the Canadian.

Although Fish and Wildlife officials have verbally

claimed they have decoupled the ground water levels and stream flow, I've seen nothing in writing that would change the original rule.

Given that, what the federal government could do with regard to ground water issues in the Texas Panhandle would make the Robert County water war pale by comparison.

Year

Continued from Page 4

with my dad. But the fact that I can no longer be with him at his home does not mean that I haven't been able to visit him. I can visit him by going to the Ronald Reagan Library and standing by his burial site. I feel that I can be with him there.

I believe that I also visit with him when I see the twinkle in people's eyes that I always saw in his eyes, and to savor their hugs that remind me of the times when I hugged my dad and he hugged me. I speak about those hugs as I travel around the nation, and I'm overjoyed when people come up to me afterwards and reach out to hug me.

All this has empowered me to be out as much as I can to learn more about my father's impact on America, to learn more about this great nation, and in the process, learn more about myself.

The other day I heard his-

torian Douglas Brinkley speak about my dad's speech at Pont du Hoc on the 40th anniversary of D-Day — the speech about the heroic "Boys of Pont du Hoc," the handful of courageous Rangers who did the impossible on D-Day.

All this has empowered me to be out as much as I can to learn more about my father's impact on America, to learn more about this great nation ...!

Speaking of them he recalled "At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June 1944, 225 Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. ... The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers on the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades."

They began to climb," he said "When one Ranger fell, another would take his place." One by one, they "pulled themselves over the top, and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the Continent of Europe. Two hundred and twenty-five came here. After two days of fighting only 90 could still bear arms."

With tears glistening in his eye, Ronald Reagan spoke the words that Douglas Brinkley said sparked a resurgence of patriotism that still burns in the hearts of Americans today.

It is memories such as that which I find lingering in the hearts of my fellow Americans as I travel across the nation, and I cherish learning anew that people still love my father because they know how much he loved them.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on more than 200 talk radio stations nationally as part of the Radio America Network.

angrily rejected in a special session last year by the House, must decide whether to call another special session. So far he's discouraged the idea. Given the rancor between Craddick and the Senate leader, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, there doesn't seem to be much point in a special session before the Supreme Court acts. Still, Perry knows that his failure

to provide school property tax relief will be a central issue used against him between now and March, which is when he might face GOP primary voters for renomination.

Legislative leaders will try to dwell on this session's achievements, including a balanced budget. But the fact is, lawmakers failed on the big one.

'F'

Continued from Page 4

the ruling or greatly reduces its effect. Or they could uphold the ruling and tell the Legislature to either get moving or shut down the school system.

Gov. Rick Perry, whose own school finance plan was

Senior Savers Day

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

Seniors Save an Extra 15% off Entire Purchase*

This Tuesday it pays to be 55 or older!

Open Tuesday at 10am

DUNLAPS

*Excludes: Hot Buys, Doorbusters, Cosmetics, Fragrances, Brighton, Jon Hart, Calphalon, Dooney & Bourke and Krups. Discount cannot be combined with any coupon or other special offer and may not be used on prior purchases.

Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: While most of my friends are eagerly anticipating graduation, I am dreading it. The reason? My mother.

Ever since I was in second grade, my mother has been addicted to prescription drugs. Mom and Dad divorced when I was in middle school, and I have lived with my dad ever since.

This year, Mom began to press for a ticket to my graduation. I don't want her there. She won't admit to having a problem, despite the fact she has been in rehab 10 times. I can't remember a time prior to her extended hospital stays and visits by home nurses.

Before I have any event, she becomes manipulative and checks herself into the hospital. This hasn't happened just once or twice. I'm talking about every event since I was in fourth grade -- including my birthday, my older brother's graduation, everything. Last year, she forgot my birthday. I didn't even get a phone call. I don't think she has earned a ticket for graduation.

Many people in my life have been there for me when my mother wasn't. Now Mother is claiming that because she is my mother, she should supersede all the others. She is still heavily medicated and prone to making scenes, including threatening suicide, if she doesn't get what she wants -- that ticket. There are only a limited number available. I would like to give them to people who have shown they care about me. What are your thoughts on this? This is tearing what's left of my family apart. -- SHATTERED SENIOR IN MARYLAND

DEAR SENIOR: You have my sympathy. I know you feel cheated because you didn't have the kind of mother you wished for. However, from your description, your mother appears to suffer from a severe mental illness. A person who is heavily medicated and repeatedly hospitalized is not entirely responsible for her actions. Giving birth to you and your brother may

have been her only positive accomplishments in this life. For that reason, I think she should attend your graduation.

The people who have supported you over the years will be happy to celebrate with you after the ceremony, I'm sure. And I'm also sure they'll understand why your mother should see you get your diploma if she is able.

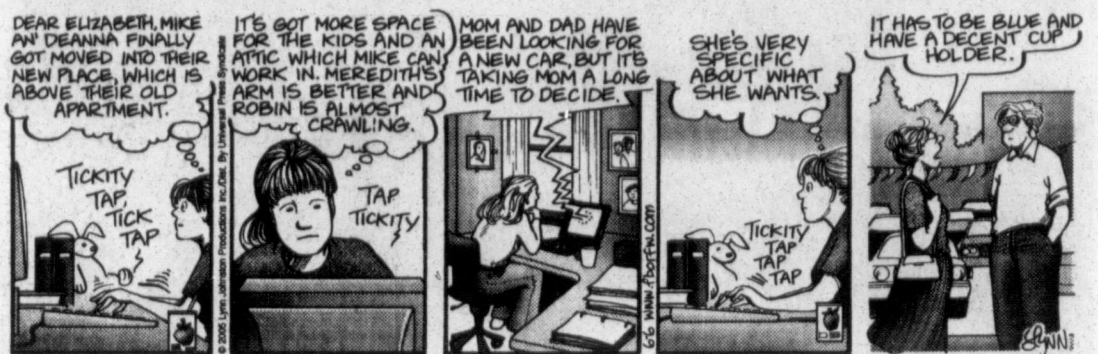
DEAR ABBY: I have been a client of a wonderful hairstylist I'll call "Valerie" for about four years. There's only one problem. She wears large rings on her fingers, and when she uses her fingers to "comb" through my hair as she dries it, the rings catch on my hair. I end up with several hairs either being torn out by the roots or broken at the point where her rings catch. It's downright painful.

I love how Valerie styles my hair and don't want to leave her, but I'm not sure how to tactfully call this to her attention. I'm hoping that she -- and other stylists who do this -- will see themselves in this letter and remove their rings when it's time to dry their customers' hair. -- GOING BALD IN CAPE CORAL, FLA.

DEAR GOING BALD: Nice try, but don't count on it. What if your hairstylist misses my column today? One would think that a client's natural reaction to having her hair jerked out by the roots -- an emphatic "OUCH!" -- would be enough. However, because the discomfort she's causing seems to have escaped her notice, use the direct approach and tell her your preference in plain English.

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 Worse



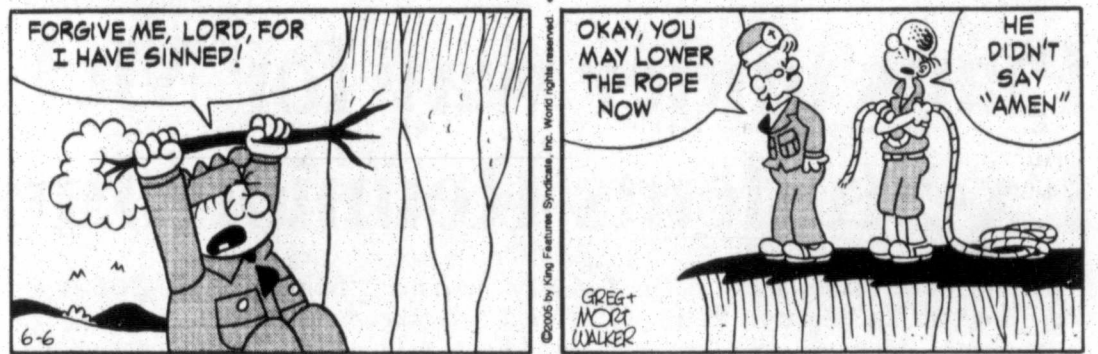
Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

40 Arafat's Nobel role for sharer

6 Mama's 42 Oven mate feature

10 Not worth 43 Dupe of 44 Diplomacy beans 45 Flanks

11 Contents of Pandora's box

13 Accrued 2 Writer John

14 Kitchen cooker 3 Last

15 Singing syllable 4 Winter woe

16 "The Greatest" 5 Llamas' kin

18 Golfer Hogan 6 Danger

19 Seasoning containers 7 Gardner of film

22 Candle material 8 Arcade game 26 Sheepskin

23 Writer Wiesel 21 Cessation 34 GIs

24 Pelts 24 Jazz fan overseas

27 Map book 25 Parent's angry words 41 Jackie's second

28 Mideast ruler 30 Cop's aerosol

29 Joe Paterno's sch. 35 Baseball's Ripken

30 Cop's aerosol 36 Ghost cry

35 Baseball's Ripken 37 mode

36 Ghost cry 38 Battery end

37 mode 38 Battery end



Saturday's answer

1 Hinds' mates 9 Mali 27 Classifies neighbor 29 Debate

2 Writer John 12 Hearing side and touch 31 Critic

3 Last 17 "Small-ville" role 32 Fanatical

20 Annoying 33 TV waitress

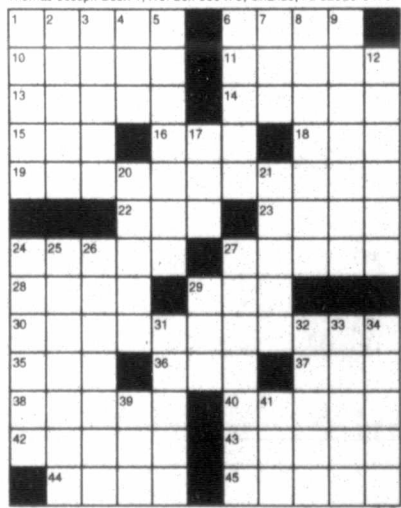
21 Cessation 34 GIs

24 Jazz fan overseas

25 Parent's angry words 41 Jackie's second

26 Sheepskin

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send \$4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 1, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



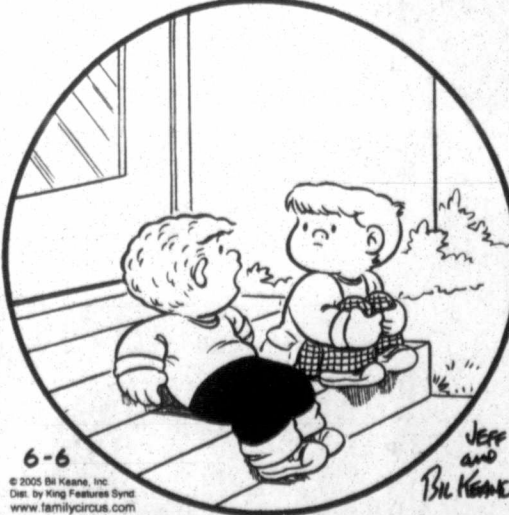
Marmaduke



"If you can wait for the commercial, I'll fill your dish."

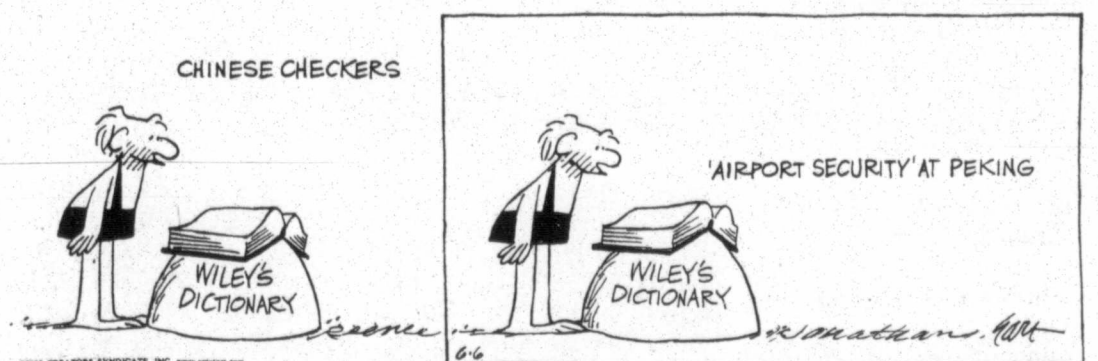
The Family Circus

By Bil Keane



"The best part about gettin' married is you get a big white cake."

B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



Sports Day



Pampa News photo by MICHAEL J. STEVENS

D.E. Chase's Joseph Mechelay sends a pitch plateward in a game last Thursday against Celanese. Mechelay and his team took on Glo-Valve the following night in a showdown between Optimist 11-12 Cal Ripken League leaders.

Glo-Valve blanks Chase; Ferguson tosses no-hitter

There is an old baseball saying that great players come up big in big games. When Glo-Valve Service, the No. 1 team in the Optimist 11-12 Cal Ripken League, squared off against D. E. Chase, Inc., the No. 2 team, Friday at Optimist Park, Tyler Malone proved that saying.

Malone not only pitched a no-hit shutout, but he led his team in hitting as Glo-Valve prevailed in the show down 5-0. No Chase player was able to reach third base.

Malone faced only 21 batters, striking out 14 and walking four, to win his ninth game of the season and second no-hitter. At the plate he was two for four, with a double and two RBI.

Chase was not able to take advantage of a walk to Shane Smith in the first inning. Doug Smith walked in the second inning but was caught stealing by Glo-Valve catcher, Micheal Fisher. Taylor Kellerman reached base on an error in the third but was left stranded at second as was Collin Killgo, who walked in the fourth. Joseph Mechelay walked in the sixth, stole second but was gunned down at third by Fisher.

A two-run double by Schrade Thompson in the top of the second inning gave Glo-Valve all the runs it needed. Cody Davis, who had reached base on an error, and Conor Wilson, who had singled, scored on the play. Thompson later scored on a double by Malone.

Glo-Valve added insurance runs in the fifth and sixth innings. Reid Miller reached base on an error with one out in the fifth, went to second on a ground out and came home on a double by Fisher. Singles by Davis, Wilson and Malone in the sixth resulted in a score by Davis.

Chase made several outstanding defensive plays. Third baseman Bradley O'Laughlin lunged to his left to snag a hard-hit ball and throw a runner out at first. Ryne Sutherland captured a fly ball in right field. The defensive play of the game came from left fielder, Miguel Garcia, who made a running backhanded catch of a fly ball in the sixth inning.

Glo-Valve's defensive plays of the game came on caught stealing from Fisher to Miller at second base and from Fisher to Evan Meschke at third.

Chase's Matt Bowen had six assists and two putouts, an unusually high number for a second baseman.

Wilson went two for three for Glo-Valve with a run scored. Davis scored twice, reaching base on a hit and an error. Miller tripled and scored, and Zach Graves contributed a hit.

Killgo started for Chase. He allowed four hits and one earned run in two innings. Mechelay finished up allowing two runs and five hits. Neither Chase pitcher walked a batter.

Killgo struck out one while Mechelay whiffed three Glo-Valve batters.

Glo-Valve improved to 13-0-1 to win its 17th league championship in 32 years of being an Optimist team. Chase fell to 7-5-2, a half game behind Celanese Corporation, which has ended its regular season at 8-5-2. Glo-Valve will play Rotary Club at 5:45 p.m. today while Chase and Cabot Corporation battle at 7:45 p.m. in the last regular season games for this year. A City Tournament is expected to begin Thursday.

A rarity, never before seen at Optimist Park, also happened Friday as Chase Ferguson pitched a no-hit shutout to lead Cabot past Duncan, Fraser & Bridges Insurance Agency 6-0 in the early game. Three walks and a hit batter were the only baserunners Ferguson allowed in pitching his masterpiece as Ferguson and Malone pitched back-to-back no hitters in the same league.

More than 700 players are competing in Optimist Baseball and Softball 2005 as the season winds down. Most leagues will have City Tournaments to close out the season. All star practice is scheduled to begin about June 16.

There is no admission charge for regular season games.

The Pampa Optimist Youth Club is a Pampa United Way agency.

Armstrong finishes chasing pack

GIVORS, France (AP) — Lance Armstrong finished 79th and in the chasing pack Monday in the first stage of the Dauphine Libere, which was won by Thor Hushovd.

Armstrong is tuning up for his bid for a seventh straight title in Tour de France, which will be his final race before retirement. The Texan was fifth in the prologue Sunday and is expected to excel in Wednesday's time trial and the mountain ascents later in the week.

George Hincapie, the prologue winner who rides for Armstrong's Discovery Channel team, was 26th but kept the overall lead.

Hincapie praised Armstrong and his

teammates for helping him keep the leader's yellow jersey. Usually, Hincapie has one goal: to help Armstrong to win. So he appreciated the favor being returned this time.

"They rode hard as a present for me, to keep me in the yellow jersey," Hincapie said. "This is a really big deal for me and my family. Especially as Lance also has his own preparations for the Tour. For them to do that for me ... I say a big thanks to them."

Hushovd, who races for the Credit Agricole team, edged Robert Hunter in a dash to the line. He was timed in 5 hours, 10 minutes, 55 seconds for the 139-mile leg, which featured three small climbs.

ADULT AFFLICTIONS

Freebie free-for-alls often make grownups look silly

I'm not sure which is sadder, the excited look on a grownup's face while trying to grab a cheap mini plastic football or T-shirt being tossed into the stands during a sporting event, or that of the child, who got crushed in the process.

It happens all the time. A cheerleader, mascot or team representative will enter the field or court, start heaving swag into the seats, only to start an elbow-to-the-head brawl more akin to a third world soccer match. But the truly pathetic thing is how adults make idiots of themselves in trying to snag a free goodie, then celebrate when they manage to keep one of the plethora of pint-sized fans from getting it. Yeah, you go on and celebrate, Hoss. The way you shoved that 6-year-old out of the way so you can get your mits on something you will only laugh to your friends about later speaks volumes about you.

I have seen this time and time again. I bore witness to one of the worst examples of it Saturday night at the Amarillo Dusters game in Amarillo.

Among the freebies being chunked by the Duster Darlings into the seats were little plastic footballs. Poor things (Darlings), some of them just don't have the arm to get much more than four or five rows up. Therefore, the free stuff usually ends up near the bottom rows. The kids know this and gather en masse hoping to get something. Unfortunately, so do the above mentioned adults. I saw one guy intercept a ball that would have been scrummed for by the

group of little ones beneath him. What's more, the dude celebrated as though what he did was cool. I mean, he did everything but spike the thing after his victory dance. Sorry my man, it just made you look silly to many of those who watched.

One of the footballs the af2 league uses got stuck in the netting at one end of the field. A handful of kids spent a number of minutes trying to free the prize. Now that would be cool. Remember, any football that exits the field of play becomes a souvenir. Not long afterward, a lady ambles to where the ball was trapped, works on it and finally dislodges the pigskin. Did she give it to one of the kids? Nope. She ran off all giddy, stoked by what she did. And why shouldn't she? I mean come on, she was the one that finally honed in on the kids' action, used her super human skill and ripped that football away from the end zone net and those rotten kids. You go girl!

I'm not saying that getting something free at a sporting event isn't cool or fun. Frankly, it's part of the show. It's how many schools and teams generate added revenue. My point is simply that grownups shouldn't be moshing after a ten cent mini plastic football. A grownup should not watch a kid struggle to free a souvenir football, then walk up, do what they weren't able to, then split, laughing.

Heck, maybe I'm just mad because none of the stuff got even close to where I was sitting.

Michael J. Stevens
Sports Editor



Battle tested

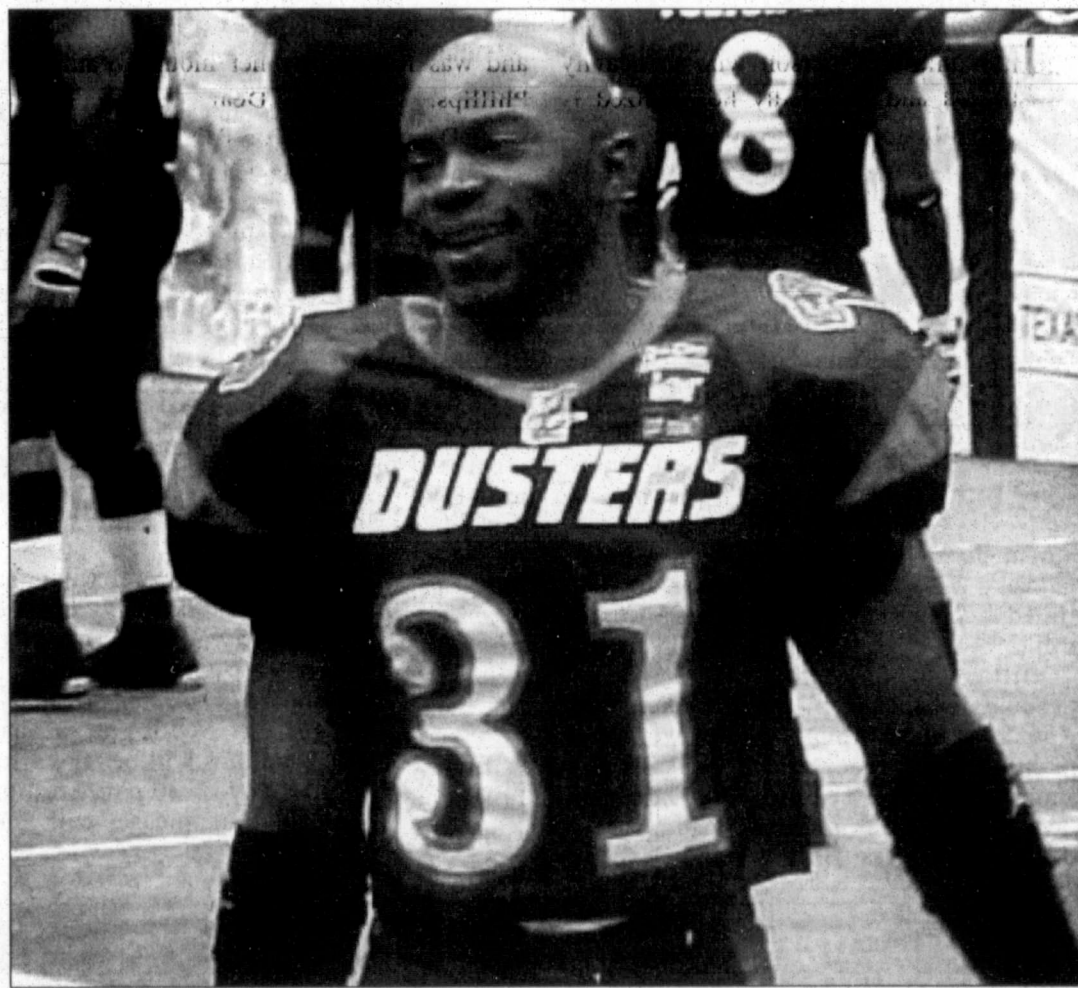


Photo by CAROLYN THERO

Duster WR/DB Kendrick Walker flashes a smile following Saturday night's battle with the South Georgia Wildcats. Amarillo (6-3) held on to second place in the af2's National Conference Mid West division with the 69-63 victory.

UCLA advances to WCWS

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — UCLA advanced to the Women's College World Series on Sunday night, scoring all its runs against Texas starter Meagan Denny in the first inning and beating the Longhorns 3-0. UCLA (39-18) will face either Michigan or Tennessee in the best-of-three title series.

The Bruins scored their runs on a two hits and an error before Texas, which eliminated Arizona 1-0 earlier Sunday, replaced Denny (10-3) with ace Cat Osterman.

Jodi Legaspi's single scored UCLA's first run, an error by Texas shortstop Desiree Williams made it 2-0 and Krista Colburn's single to right gave the Bruins a three-run lead.

Osterman came on to get Lisa Dodd to bounce into a fielder's choice to end the inning. Osterman then retired 15 batters in order, not allowing any hits and striking out six.

UCLA freshman Anjelica Selden (28-12) won her third consecutive game complete game and allowed only two hits, both in the first inning when Texas got runners to second and third but couldn't capitalize. She finished with 12 strikeouts.

Texas also got runners to second and third in the sixth inning, but Selden struck out two to end the inning.

In an earlier game, Monica Abbott allowed just four hits in Tennessee's 4-0 win over Alabama, eliminating the Crimson Tide.

Alabama (63-15) advanced to its second elimination game of the day after beating DePaul 2-1 on Capper Reed's single up the middle in the bottom of the 12th inning, eliminating the Blue Demons.

Abbott (49-8) allowed only singles as Tennessee (66-14) advanced to face No. 1 seed Michigan on Sunday night.

Tennessee opened the scoring in the first inning.

Kristin Durant's squeeze bunt scored the opening run, and Katherine Card's double against Alabama starter Jennifer Wright (20-6) gave the Lady Vols a 2-0 lead.

Tennessee scored again in the second inning on Lindsay Schutzler's RBI single. Pinch-hitter Natalie Brock singled home the fourth run in the sixth.

See WCWS, Page 8



Pampa News photos by DEE DEE LARAMORE

Republicans see hope in California

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Every six weeks, the Republican Party chairman has traveled to California, a large and solidly Democratic Party stronghold. With Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor and the state's most conservative areas growing rapidly, Republicans are sensing an opportunity.

Democrats have won the last four presidential contests in California and maintain overwhelming majorities in the congressional delegation and legislature.

But Republican National Committee Chairman Ken Mehlman insists GOP prospects are improving, thanks to demographic changes and Schwarzenegger's star power.

"There's tremendous opportunity here because of the governor and his leadership, and because of President Bush and his leadership," Mehlman said in a recent interview.

Mehlman nonetheless faces steep challenges in making his party competitive in California.

Bush lost the state by 10 points to Democrat John Kerry last November, and Schwarzenegger is engaged in a bruising battle with teachers, nurses and other Democrat-leaning interest groups over government reform measures he's proposed to curtail their influence. Polls show the governor's popularity has dropped below 50 percent.

But analysts have noted several population shifts that suggest potential for Republicans to expand their reach.

California is home to nearly 37 million people — one of every eight Americans — and is projected to add as many as 11 million more in the next two decades, roughly the equivalent of the state of Ohio. But while population growth is slowing in left-leaning coastal areas like Los Angeles and San Francisco, it is accelerating in more conservative regions such as the Central Valley and the Inland Empire area east of Los Angeles.

The state's large Hispanic population, long staunchly Democratic, has become somewhat less so in recent years. Bush won 32 percent of California's Hispanic vote in 2004, up from 28 percent in 2000. Schwarzenegger won about a third of Hispanic voters in the 2003 recall election even though Democratic Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante, was also on the ballot.

Mehlman has seized on those trends, traveling to California for outreach work in Hispanic areas.

Mickey's eight seconds

This Disney-inspired float built on a Cable One truck won first place commercial entry in the Top O' Texas Rodeo Parade Saturday.

As battle over judges fades, Supreme Court war looms

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sound bites and e-mails about their fitness to be federal appeals court judges — along with the demonization and canonization of their character — are almost over for Janice Rogers Brown and William Pryor.

Senators warred almost three years over the nominations of the California Supreme Court justice and Alabama's former attorney general. This week lawmakers will honor a truce on judges and on Democrats' use of filibusters to block nominees, and put Brown and Pryor on a path to confirmation.

The battle over Brown, Pryor and Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen included accusations of sexism, racism, elitism and religious bias. While that fight is ending, it offered a preview of what President Bush's first Supreme Court nominee may face.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, 80, is battling cancer. Many court watchers expect a Supreme Court vacancy soon, possibly with the end of the court's current term.

Brown has been held up as an example of the kind of judge Bush would like on the nation's highest court. But the battle over getting Brown and Pryor on the appeals courts probably disqual-

ifies either for an immediate shot at the Supreme Court.

Brown was compared negatively in a cartoon to Justice Clarence Thomas. Pryor's opponents said she was the "most anti-gay federal judicial nominee in memory."

The truce

This week lawmakers will honor a truce on judges and on Democrats' use of filibusters to block nominees, and put Janice Rogers Brown and William Pryor on a path to confirmation.

The television commercials in which they were labeled "extreme" and "dangerous" will fade into memory.

So, too, will the praise from their supporters: Brown's rise as a sharecropper's daughter from segregated Alabama; Pryor's enforcement, as Alabama's attorney general, of a court order to remove a monument of the Ten Commandments from a state building.

Brown was nominated for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

As a result of a temporary recess appointment by Bush to get around a Democratic filibuster, Pryor already has joined the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Atlanta-based court had to help decide the fate of Terri Schiavo, the comatose woman whose parent and husband fought all the way to the

Supreme Court over whether to keep her alive.

The federal courts refused to stop the removal of her feeding tube. Pryor has never made public which way he voted in those decisions. One of the court's orders did say Pryor did not vote because he is recovering from surgery.

Pryor opposes abortion rights and has criticized the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision. But he promised he would follow the current law if confirmed for the regional court, one step below the Supreme Court. For his lifetime appointment to take effect, he needs confirmation from the Senate before the end of the year.

The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee circulated some of Pryor's writings on that court this year, hoping it would sway some Democratic votes his way.

"It shows a pattern by Judge Pryor of concern to protect the rights of those often overlooked in the legal system," Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said last month. "No one has refuted that analysis, except his opponents."

"Pryor has compared our love to bestiality, incest and pedophilia," said Kevin Cathcart, executive director of the gay-rights group Lambda Legal. "He says prohibiting anti-gay discrimination is giving us 'special privileges.'"

Bush to urge steps to defend democracy in Latin America

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — President Bush is stepping into a debate over how far Western Hemisphere governments should go in rescuing countries where political instability threatens democratic survival.

Bush planned to deliver a speech Monday to an Organization of American States foreign ministers meeting after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told OAS delegates Sunday night the institution must remain faithful to its pro-democracy charter.

"We must act on our charter to

support democracy where it is threatened," Rice said. "Wherever a free society is in retreat, a fear society is on the offensive. And the weapon of choice for every authoritarian regime is the organized cruelty of the police state."

She singled out Bolivia, Ecuador and Haiti as countries that need help in overcoming chronic instability.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, delivering a radio address to his countrymen, said the U.S. proposal is a ploy to justify U.S. intervention in the hemisphere.

"The times in which the OAS was

an instrument of the government in Washington are gone," Chavez said. "Are they going to try, through the OAS, to monitor the Venezuelan government? ... Those who think they can put the peoples of Latin America in a corral are mistaken."

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Ali Rodriguez was expected to deliver a more extended response to Rice's proposal on Monday; however none had come by press time.

Although Rice did not mention Venezuela by name in her remarks, the Bush administration believes that Chavez has been engaged in a sys-

tematic power grab, putting Venezuelan democracy at risk.

Rice said she hoped to reach agreement with her OAS colleagues on mechanisms to protect endangered democracies.

Brazil and several other countries were working on a counterproposal to an American draft document. "We'd like to strengthen democracy in the region but we'd also like to avoid intruding mechanisms," Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said in a statement.

The OAS meets annually.

Government requiring major dealers in precious metals and gems to help combat money laundering

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Bush administration, in its latest effort to nab drug lords and terrorist financiers, will require major dealers in gold, diamonds and other precious metals and gems to set up comprehensive anti-money laundering programs.

The Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement, dubbed FinCen, announced the action on Friday.

Specifically, such dealers will need to take steps including establishing policies and procedures to identify risks and minimize opportunities for abuse, training employees and designating a point person to assess compliance.

The provision applies to dealers who have bought and sold at least \$50,000 worth of precious metals and gems.

Dealers whose activities for the 2005 calendar year fall into that dollar threshold will have until Jan. 1, 2006, to set up anti-money laundering programs.

Given the dollar threshold, most retailers in this industry are not required to set up such programs, a statement issued by FinCen said.

"The dollar threshold is intended to ensure that the rule only applies to persons engaged in the business of buying and selling a significant amount of these items, rather than small businesses, occasional dealers and persons dealing in such items for hobby purposes," the agency said.

The Treasury Department has required a broad range of financial companies to adopt anti-money laundering pro-

grams. The issue took on heightened importance after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

"The characteristics of jewels, precious metals and stones that make them valuable also make them potentially vulnerable to those seeking to launder money," said FinCen's director William Fox.

In one money-laundering scheme uncovered by authorities, drug-money cash was exchanged for gold, which was then molded into tools, belt buckles, light switches and other items to be smuggled out of the country.

Congressional investigators have told the Treasury Department it needed to get a firmer grip on how terrorists may be using alternative means.

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