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Texas bill would open up cable market

NEW YORK (AP) — A bill that would make it easier for telephone companies to sell cable TV may be put to a vote again in the Texas statehouse this week, revived for the second time since May courtesy of an unrelated stalemate over public school funding.

The wide-ranging telecommunications

bill, approved by separate House and Senate committees on Thursday, is one of several initiatives in statehouses around the nation and in Congress that would enable phone companies to avoid the arduous task of securing thousands of local cable TV licenses.

Those efforts have already stalled in

The cable industry has opposed the state bills, saying their would-be rivals from the telephone industry should be forced to play by the same rules as any provider of pay television service.

Virginia and New Jersey, two of the states where

are investing billions of dollars to upgrade their local phone networks to deliver TV and faster Internet connections.

The cable industry has opposed the state bills, saying their would-be rivals from the telephone industry should be forced to play by the same rules as any provider of pay television service.

Those rules include

local franchise licenses, regulations governing aerial and below-ground cables, and requirements that a television provider offer service to all homes rather than being allowed to pick and choose neighborhoods.

The Texas House, which has already approved the telecommunications bill twice

See CABLE, Page 2

Vehicle accident



Pampa News photo by DAVID BOWSER

A Pontiac sedan crashed into a tree near Skellytown today, sending the driver of the car, Alvin Wiles of Borger, to an Amarillo hospital.

Area emergency crews respond to wreck

By DAVID BOWSER
Staff Writer

A Borger man was in critical condition today after his car ran off the highway and smashed into a tree near Skellytown this morning. Alvin Wiles, 24, was rushed to Northwest Texas Hospital this morning by Guardian

Ambulance Service after his car, an older model Pontiac Parisienne, ran off the road and hit a tree about three miles east of Skellytown.

Officials said Wiles was westbound on Texas Highway 152 about 7 a.m. today when he apparently fell asleep at the wheel of his car. The

car veered off the highway on to the grass-covered shoulder and crashed into a tree.

Emergency workers from the Skellytown Volunteer Fire Department had to cut Wiles out of the car.

Personnel at the scene said Wiles suffered head injuries and injuries to his

right leg, but they said the injuries were not believed to be life-threatening.

Emergency personnel from White Deer, Skellytown, and Pampa responded to the early morning accident along with the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Carson County Sheriff's office.

City set to conduct sewer line tests in specified areas

Work crews with the City of Pampa will be conducting tests of the city's sanitary sewer system between the areas of Alcock and Gwendolyn streets and Ryder and Hobart streets beginning July 26, a city press release said.

The City of Pampa Wastewater Collection Department will be smoke testing its sewer lines to check for defects. Individuals who live or work in these areas who suffer respiratory problems or who are immobile should contact the city prior to testing at 669-5706 or 898-8072.

"A 'Smoke Test' survey," the press release from the city read, "will assist our inspection crews in locating breaks and defects in our sewer system. The smoke you (may) see coming from the vent stacks on houses or holes in the ground is non-toxic, non-staining, has no odor, is white to gray in color, and creates no fire hazard."

The city advises homeowners to pour a gallon of water into each floor drain prior to the smoke testing.

No smoke should enter any private homes or busi-

See LINES, Page 2

Community project

Business incubator meeting slated tomorrow

West Texas A&M University Enterprise Network and the City of Pampa jointly invite the public to a meeting this week to discuss a business incubator project to be established in Pampa later this year.

The upcoming meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 26, at the M.K. Brown Room of Pampa Community Building (chamber building), 200 N. Ballard.

The network's Dan Redd will discuss with participants exactly what a business incubator is and what benefits can be derived for the community and for small business start-ups.

The meeting is being planned not only to inform the public on the subject but to generate interest among local entrepreneurs who might wish to participate in the project.

Admission to the meeting is free and no reservations are necessary.

Houston police shoot, kill woman

HOUSTON (AP) — Police said they shot and killed a woman who led them on a chase in a stolen vehicle and then pointed a gun at officers.

Officers from Houston and League City were involved in the chase, which ended in a residential Houston area about 12:45 a.m. Monday.

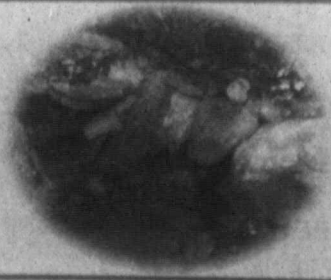
Houston Police Officer Johanna Abad said the woman came out of the car and pointed a gun at officers, who fired at her, knocking the weapon out of her hand. The woman again picked up the weapon, pointing it at herself and then back toward officers, who fired and hit her, Abad said.

The woman died at Ben Taub General Hospital.

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Prospects for energy bill improve; MTBE obstacle out

WASHINGTON (AP) — House and Senate negotiators removed a major obstacle that had deadlocked energy legislation for more than two years, but even supporters say the measure will not provide short-term relief from high gasoline prices.

Lawmakers hoped a compromise bill might be completed in a day although disputes remained over the size of an energy tax package.

The conferees on Sunday abandoned a bid to give makers of the gasoline additive MTBE liability protec-

tion against environmental lawsuits. That decision defused the issue that had caused the collapse of a sweeping energy bill two years ago in the Senate.

Senate negotiators rejected a House proposal for an \$11.4 billion MTBE cleanup fund.

House Republicans had hoped the fund would serve as a compromise liability shield for the oil industry. The industry faces scores of MTBE lawsuits arising from contamination of water supplies by the additive in at

least 36 states.

A number of senators had vowed to filibuster any bill with such protection for the industry, and the bill's supporters doubted they had the 60 votes needed to end debate.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., leader of the Senate energy negotiating team, said while some MTBE issues were still being discussed, they did not include a cleanup fund or liability protection. "Those are gone," he told reporters as the House-Senate conferees

held an unusual Sunday session in hopes of completing work on sweeping energy legislation by Monday night.

Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, the conference chairman, said he was certain the remaining issues could be resolved in time to complete work late Monday and allow both the House and Senate take up the measure later in the week.

Congress has been trying to enact energy legislation for four years, each time falling short after the House and Senate passed widely

different bills.

Facing public pressure over soaring gasoline and other energy prices, President Bush said he wanted a bill on his desk before Congress departs for its August recess. Still, the president and lawmakers crafting the bill have acknowledged it will do little or nothing to lower fuel prices in the short term.

The legislation creates billions of dollars in tax breaks and other federal subsidies such as loan guarantees for energy industries and for

energy conservation and to develop technologies to reduce pollution from burning coal at power plants.

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Trade

White House makes final push for CAFTA

WASHINGTON (AP) — The six countries of the Central American Free Trade Agreement altogether do about as much trade with the United States as The Netherlands. But rarely has a trade deal been more controversial or an administration staked so much on approval.

The House is to vote this week on CAFTA, and despite months of intense effort by President Bush and his trade officials, the outcome is unclear.

The Senate, more amenable to trade agreements, last month approved the pact, signed more than a year ago with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

With some political risk, Bush has put CAFTA near the top of his legislative agenda, meeting personally with dozens of lawmakers, giving speeches around the country, encouraging support from Hispanic groups

and venturing into textile country in North Carolina, where there's little love for free trade agreements.

Portman, a former House member from Ohio, has spent almost every day on Capitol Hill since assuming

individual lawmakers, participated in 300 conference calls and conducted 120 media interviews, his office said.

As the vote approaches, there have been warnings that the fragile Central American democracies could slip back into the turmoil of the recent past if denied this economic partnership with the United States.

America's position as the leader in promoting world stability "could take major steps backward" if CAFTA is defeated, said Rep. Kevin Brady, R-Texas, a leading proponent of the pact. "That's a pretty compelling argument."

"Failure is not an option for us," said Matt Niemeyer, assistant U.S. trade representative for congressional affairs. "The implications of defeat are so much larger than the economic impact of CAFTA."

'This bill is a commitment of freedom-loving nations to advance peace and prosperity throughout the Western Hemisphere.'

— George W. Bush
President

"This bill is more than a trade bill," Bush said Thursday in a speech to the Organization of American States. "This bill is a commitment of freedom-loving nations to advance peace and prosperity throughout the Western Hemisphere."

Also spreading that message are U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns.

office this spring. He presses his case even with the most adamant anti-CAFTA members and tries to answer concerns over effects on the U.S. sugar and textile industries and labor rights in Central America.

Last week he delivered his CAFTA speech to about 10 members jammed into a Capitol elevator with him.

Gutierrez in the past three months has held more than 200 meetings with

Vioxx trial: Cardiologist on tap to give testimony

ANGLETON, Texas (AP) — At the crux of the nation's first Vioxx-related civil trial under way is whether Merck & Co.'s once lucrative painkiller caused a Texas man's 2001 death from arrhythmia.

While the New Jersey pharmaceutical giant pulled the drug from the market last year after a study showed it doubled risk of heart attack or stroke if taken for 18 months or more, the company claims no studies link Vioxx to arrhythmia, or an irregular heartbeat.

Last week Merck's lawyers presented evidence that the company studied whether Vioxx caused arrhythmias in nine clinical trials before the drug went on the market in May 1999 and found "no clinically meaningful differences" in patients who took the painkiller compared to those who took sugar pills or other anti-inflammatory pain relievers.

But Mark Lanier, the Houston

lawyer representing Carol Ernst, the plaintiff in the case on trial in a small Texas town south of Houston, contends her husband, Robert, died too quickly for his heart to show damage. He also points to Merck's medical manual used by doctors across the country, which says arrhythmia in some form occurs in more than 90 percent of heart attack patients.

On Monday Lanier's next witness on tap was Dr. Isaac Wiener, a cardiologist and co-director of the Cardiac Arrhythmia Center at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Robert Ernst, a produce manager at a Wal-Mart in Cleburne near Fort Worth who also ran marathons and worked as a personal trainer, took Vioxx for eight months to alleviate pain in his hands until he died in his sleep next to his widow. The trial in Angleton is the first of more than 4,200 state and federal lawsuits across the country to go before

a jury.

Lanier alleges that Merck knew Vioxx could be dangerous years before the company pulled the drug but downplayed those concerns in favor of aggressive marketing for a multibillion-dollar seller. Merck's lawyers say the company acted responsibly, disclosed studies on Vioxx and believed it to be safe until results from the long-term study last year prompted pulling the drug.

About 20 million people took Vioxx after its launch in 1999. Controversy emerged when a 2000 study found that some Vioxx users suffered five times as many heart attacks as people who used the older pain reliever naproxen. At the time, Merck attributed the difference to naproxen's heart-friendly qualities rather than a defect in Vioxx, garnering a rebuke from the Food and Drug Administration for making that assertion without scientific proof.

Where Experience Counts

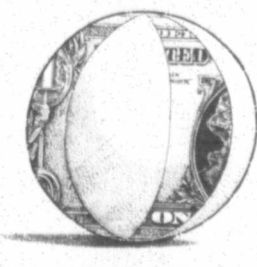


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Viewpoints

Texans' support for troops makes me proud

Every once in a while, someone in Washington asks me why we Texans have so much love for our state. Is it the food? The weather? The culture?

While I love the food, weather and culture in Texas, the real reason I am so proud of our state is its people. And I have no better evidence of the character of Texans than an episode I heard about the other day at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

A plane filled with soldiers coming to the U.S. from Iraq for two weeks of rest, landed after the long flight from Kuwait International Airport. Its passengers were stunned to see two fire engines racing toward their plane with

lights flashing and sirens blaring.

The soldiers said they had been informed the plane was waiting for equipment to arrive. What they thought might be some sort of minor emergency was actually Dallas-Fort Worth's special salute to home-coming soldiers. The two emergency trucks fired a water "salute" over the taxiing airplane.

"I didn't expect such a welcome," Pfc. Heather England, a satellite communications operator for the 578th Signal Company told officials at the airport. "Soldiers on the plane got a bit choked up as they watched the water splash on the plane's windows."

The welcome did not end with the water salute.

Hundreds of Texans applauded the returning soldiers as they got off the plane. They asked for their autographs and offered them food, beer, cigarettes, soft drinks and cell phone use.

Kay Bailey Hutchison

When Staff Sergeant Donald Friedly told a USO volunteer that he had a daughter, the woman took him to some volunteers who presented him with a pink teddy bear, candy and bouquet of flowers for his wife.

The airport is one of the major direct flights for soldiers returning from Iraq. It has been demonstrating its

appreciation for our soldiers for months, and I am proud to report that support for our troops is evident across our state. In June, children gathered on the steps of the state capitol in Austin to show their backing for deployed military personnel.



They gathered under the leadership of sculptor Heather McMahan, who is known for her "Welcome Home" sculpture, which has been displayed in the Pentagon and at Bergstrom International Airport. She invited Austin children to express their feelings about the war and show their sup-

port for the troops through art. At a rally featuring patriotic songs, children displayed their art which will be sent to soldiers overseas.

Texas' legions of NASCAR fans showed their appreciation in April, when 250,000 of them welcomed several hundred Fort Hood Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans to the Texas Speedway before the running of the Samsung/Radio Shack 500.

And I cannot fail to mention the world champion San Antonio Spurs who have always held Military Appreciation Night. This year, skybox ticket-holders donated more than 500 seats to military personnel stationed and convalescing in San Antonio and provided

them with free food and drinks.

Not all of us can donate a skybox, but we can help any of the great organizations supporting our troops. At the very least, we can extend a hand to a member of our armed forces and tell each of them that we appreciate what they are doing and support them with all our heart.

Asked to comment after her welcome to the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, Pfc. England said, "After being stationed in Germany and Iraq for so long, seeing this display of affection at the U.S. airport has definitely reminded me why I love Americans, especially my fellow Texans."

I could not say it better myself.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, July 25, the 206th day of 2005. There are 159 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 25, 1956, 51 people died when the Italian liner Andrea Doria sank after colliding with the Swedish ship Stockholm off the New England coast.

On this date:

In 1866, Ulysses S. Grant was named General of the Army, the first officer to hold the rank.

In 1868, Congress passed an act creating the Wyoming Territory.

In 1943, Benito Mussolini was dismissed as premier of Italy by King Victor Emmanuel III, and placed under arrest. (However, Mussolini was later rescued by the Nazis, and reasserted his authority.)

In 1946, the United States detonated an atomic bomb at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific in the first underwater test of the device.

'No matter what side of an argument you're on, you always find some people on your side that you wish were on the other side.'

— Jascha Heifetz
Russian-born American violinist (1901-1987)

In 1952, Puerto Rico became a self-governing commonwealth of the United States.

In 1963, the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain initialed a treaty in Moscow prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in space or underwater.

In 1978, Louise Joy Brown, the first "test tube baby," was born in Oldham, England; she'd been conceived through the technique of in-vitro fertilization.

In 1984, Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya became the first woman to walk in space as she carried out more than three hours of experiments outside the orbiting space station Salyut 7.

In 1985, a spokeswoman for Rock Hudson confirmed that the actor, hospitalized in Paris, was suffering from AIDS. (Hudson died the following October.)

In 1994, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Jordan's King Hussein signed a declaration at the White House ending their countries' 46-year-old formal state of war.

Ten years ago: A bomb exploded on a Paris subway, killing seven people and injuring at least 60. A U.N. war crimes tribunal indicted Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, army commander General Ratko Mladic, and 22 other Serbs for war crimes.



SIGNS THAT CANADIAN BEEF WAS BACK IN THE U.S. FOOD CHAIN WERE SUBTLE AT FIRST.

How 'Media World' portrays terrorism

What do you say we take terrorism out of Media World and look at it in the real world as it really is? What you will find is that terrorism is not the threat it's portrayed to be in Media World and by politicians.

First of all, a terrorist attack is a media event. No terrorist in the world is so stupid as to believe that blowing up a few buildings and people is going to bring down a government or even change its basic policies. What gets blown up and who gets killed are really not that important. What is important is media attention. What the terrorist wants to do is publicize his cause and send out a recruiting message that the big, bad enemy can be hurt. It's fortunate for the ter-

rorists that we live in a world of 500 TV channels, the Internet and the 24-hour news cycle. The fact is, there isn't enough news to fill one station 24 hours a day, given how stingy the corporations are in terms of hiring reporting staff.

Secondly, Media World, like Disney World, is all about stories. There is a big difference between a story and a report. With a report, you merely answer the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Most events can be reported in relatively few words or a short amount of airtime. In London, for

example, at a certain time on a certain day four bombs exploded; three were on subway trains, and one was in a bus; 52 people were killed; 700 were wounded; police are investigating. That's it.

But if you want a story, then you drag it out; talk to witnesses or even to people who weren't witnesses; talk to experts; indulge in speculation; gab, gab, gab endlessly; and, if you're TV, repeat the same video to the point of nausea - and all of that attention greatly benefits the terrorists. If we were wise, we would cover a terrorist

attack for one day, at the most two days, and then drop it. You frustrate terrorists by ignoring them.

What about the risk? Dearly beloved, you are in greater danger driving your kids to school or crossing a busy street. The odds of any one of us being the victim of a terrorist attack are minuscule. I infuriated one of the TV fearmongers once by pointing out that in 2001 our own criminals killed four times as many Americans as the attacks on Sept. 11 did.

The terrorists killed 3,000; homicides totaled 12,000. Moreover, that year, about 101,000 Americans were killed in accidents. About 2 million died of natural causes. Why sit around fretting

Charley Reese
Columnist



President needs around him only those he can trust

Either Scott McClellan was telling the truth on behalf of the president or he was lying.

There is no third choice. "The president has set high standards, the highest of standards for people in his administration. He's made it very clear to people in his administration that he expects them to adhere to the highest standards of conduct. If anyone in this administration was involved in it, they would no longer be in this administration." President Bush's press secretary vowed to reporters - and the nation - at the Sept. 29, 2003, White House news briefing.

The "it" was outing undercover CIA operative Valerie Plame to the press, effectively ending her clandestine career.

A day later in Chicago, the president reiterated McClellan's theme: "There are too many leaks of classified information in Washington, and if there's a leak out of my administration, I want to know who it is. ... Leaks of classified information are bad things." If McClellan and his boss meant what they said, the

president has to fire Karl Rove, the White House deputy chief of staff and political guru largely responsible for Bush's election as governor of Texas and then president.

"Over the weekend, Newsweek reported that Time magazine reporter Matthew Cooper, in an internal e-mail from July 2003, cited Rove as saying that administration critic Joseph C. Wilson IV, a former ambassador, had gone to Niger on a fact-finding trip involving Iraq's

nuclear weapons programs at the behest of his wife," according to The Washington Post.

"At the same time, according to Cooper's account, Rove also noted that she worked for the CIA on issues of weapons of mass destruction," The Post continued.

Patrick Fitzgerald, the independent counsel the U.S. Justice Department named to investigate the Plame matter, recently obtained that information from Time and testimony from Cooper as Rove released the reporter from

See ROVE, Page 5

THE PAMPA NEWS

403 W. Atchison • Pampa, TX 79065

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Publisher: Sean Smith

Advertising Director: ReDonn Woods
Composing Supervisor: Brenda Cook

This newspaper (UPS 781-540) is published daily, except Saturdays, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, by The Pampa News. Periodicals postage paid at Pampa, Texas. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Pampa News, P.O. Drawer 2198, Pampa, TX 79066-2198.

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Chicago workers check on elderly as heat wave scorches Midwest

By **NATHANIEL HERNANDEZ**
Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Skyrocketing temperatures surpassed the 100-degree mark here for the first time in six years, prompting Chicago officials to implement an emergency response plan honed after hundreds of peo-

ple died in a heat wave a decade ago. Sweat-drenched city workers fanned out across Chicago on Sunday, checking on elderly residents and shuttling people to cooling centers. By late afternoon, temperatures at Midway Airport had reached 104 degrees, just one degree lower than the highest tem-

perature ever recorded in the city, according to the National Weather Service. "If you looked at who died in 1995, it was not triathletes, it wasn't people at ballparks, it wasn't people at outdoor festivals, it was the elderly who were living alone," said Dr. William Paul, acting commissioner of the city's Public

Health Department. Chicago was among scores of cities suffering amid a blazing heat wave that stretched across parts of the upper Midwest. Other areas in the region also reached the triple-digits — temperatures hit 102 degrees in St. Louis and 101 in Iowa City, Iowa. Twenty-one people have died from heat in Arizona

this summer. In Illinois, Chicago officials on Sunday implemented an emergency response plan that was honed after 700 people died during a July 1995 heat wave. An automated calling system began contacting 40,000 elderly residents at 9 a.m. to inform them about the heat.



Art exhibition

Artists Linda Nowell of Pampa and Amy Winton of Lipscomb will be exhibiting their art through Aug. 25 at the Baker Art Center in Liberal, Kan. A reception is planned between 2 and 4 p.m. Sunday, July 31, at the art center, 624 N. Pershing, Liberal. The above picture shows Nowell at the pottery wheel. Nowell produces fine pottery that is functional and artistic. She was Pampa Fine Arts Association Artist of the Year in 2001 and has received numerous awards. Winton is a signature member of the Pastel Society of America and the American Plains Artists. She has received numerous awards. Her work hangs in collections in Austria, Russia, Mexico, Canada, Texas, and both coasts.

Media

Continued from Page 4

about terrorists when flu and pneumonia in 2001 killed 62,000 Americans. As hard as it might be to believe, in 2001, more than 15,000 Americans were killed in falls, most of them in and around the home.

The only thing you need to do to protect yourself from a terrorist attack is to be someplace else. In a country of 3 million square miles, 99.99 percent of us will always be someplace else. As a threat to human life, terrorism ranks somewhere close to snake and spider bites.

What you have to realize is that the few terrorists who actually exist are supporting a large industry in the United States. President Bush bases his whole administration on it. There are hundreds of self-proclaimed experts on terrorism. The media

are fascinated by it. The bureaucracy has exploded, and every law-enforcement agency and fire department in the country is latching on to the gravy train. Private industry is thriving selling gadgets and alleged expertise.

But it's all a racket. Do you think if the U.S. government were really concerned about terrorists that it would continue to allow more than 1 million illegal aliens to cross our borders every year? To paraphrase Winston Churchill, never have so few been lied to so often by so many.

Finally, I would remind you that mortality for our species is 100 percent. We're all going to die one way or another, so there is nothing a terrorist can do to us that isn't going to happen anyway. Do not live in fear. Do not let a bunch of opportunistic politicians, greedy entrepreneurs, burned-out Hollywood screenwriters and brain-deficient television people scare you into one minute of discomfort. The war on terrorism is 99 percent fertilizer.

Rove

Continued from Page 4

his confidentiality pledge.

Rove maintained — and still maintains — that he did not know the name of Wilson's wife. "I didn't know her name and didn't leak her name," the deputy chief of staff said last year. That is irrelevant. Saying that someone is the spouse of a well-known public figure much in the news more than sufficiently identified her.

The deputy chief of staff apparently never told the president's press secretary the rest of the story, which was at least as important, leaving McClellan to defend Rove and now find himself effectively made a liar.

"In September and October 2003, McClellan said he had spoken directly with Rove about the matter and that 'he was not involved' in leaking Plame's identity to the news media," The Associated Press reported. "McClellan said at the time: 'The president knows that Karl Rove wasn't involved.' It was a ridiculous suggestion," and "It's not true."

But Rove was directly involved, McClellan's apparent ignorance of that notwithstanding. As intimate as the long-standing relationship between the president and the man some have called "Bush's brain" is, that inevitably leads to the question then-U.S. Sen. Howard Baker, R-Tenn., raised during the Senate Watergate hearings: "What did the president know, and when did he know it?"

Keeping Rove in his administration now will keep that question alive, along with the reality that the deputy chief of staff simply cannot be trusted with classified information.

The knowledge that Plame was a clandestine CIA operative was classified to protect her ability to do her sensitive work and to maintain her security and safety.

Did Rove violate the Intelligence Identities Protection Act of 1982, which prohibits intentionally disclosing the identity of clandestine intelligence operatives? Violators are subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years. Fitzgerald, with a federal grand jury's help, will have to continue seeking the answer to that question.

But when someone with

sufficiently high clearance to know classified information blabs it, even without a name, to one or more reporters without even thinking about the implications — or worse yet, fully realizing the implications — that person lacks the common sense and discretion to function in a senior White House position.

Unfortunately and inexcusably, Bush appears not to realize this. "Any individual who works here at the White House has the confidence of the president. They wouldn't be working here at the White House if they didn't have the president's confidence," McClellan said.

The president cannot defend Rove or keep him in the White House or anywhere else in the administration without showing exceedingly poor judgment himself. And in the process, handing the Democrats an issue they will use to dog the president so long as Rove remains in the White House.

The president should end this now by accepting the inarguable reality that, intentionally or not, Rove badly screwed up and giving the deputy chief of staff his walking papers. Not doing so will cost Bush and the country dearly.

Jamboree could be last at Virginia base

BOWLING GREEN, Va. (AP) — About an hour south of the nation's capital, a tent city has sprung up on an Army base to house more than 40,000 Boy Scouts, leaders and volunteers from around the world attending the 2005 National Scout Jamboree.

"It is extraordinary to see," said Maj. Vince Mitchell, a military spokesman who traveled with the Atlanta-based 1st U.S. Army group for the Jamboree, which runs Monday through Aug. 3. "If this was a city in the Commonwealth of Virginia, it would be the seventh largest city."

But the temporary village, created every four years at Fort A.P. Hill since 1981, is in jeopardy because a federal judge recently ruled that the Pentagon can no longer financially support the event.

If the ruling stands, the Boy Scouts of America would have to find another location for their next gathering.

A lawsuit filed by the American Civil

Liberties Union of Illinois contends that the Defense Department's sponsorship violates the First Amendment because the Scouts require members to swear an oath of duty to God.

In exchange for getting use of the Army training base, the Scouts have spent about \$20 million on base improvements that include road paving and plumbing upgrades. The Army uses the Jamboree as an opportunity to train personnel in crowd control, communications and other logistical skills.

"It is our belief that what they do is not fund the Jamboree," said Robert Bork, spokesman for the Irving, Texas-based Scouts. "It is not as if the military is writing us a check."

Still, an estimated \$7.3 million in government money will be used to transport military personnel and goods to the base for this year's event, which includes a scheduled visit from President Bush.

Community happenings

• **Pampa Community Concert Association Presents "Live on Stage"** 2005-06 concert series includes the following programs: Edgar Cruz, guitarist, Oct. 23; Susan Egan, Broadway vocalist, Feb. 18, 2006; St. Petersburg Classic Ballet, March 4, 2006; and The Coats, vocal harmonic band, April 30, 2006.

For more information on any of these events or a complete area concert schedule, contact Ronnie Holmes, PCCA president, at 665-2631. PCCA memberships are available.

• **The 13th Annual Dallam 4-H Arts & Crafts Bazaar** will be held Friday and Saturday, Aug. 5 and 6 at Ranch Market Building in Dalhart during the 69th Annual XIT Rodeo and Reunion Celebration. Hours will be 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call (806) 244-4434.

• **The USS Long Beach CGN-9 Association, Inc.**, is organizing its 2005 reunion Sept. 11-19 at San Francisco, Calif. For more information, contact Don Shade, 299 Kiantone Rd., Jamestown, NY 14701-9370, (866) 352-2469 or LBCGN9@aol.com. Further details are also available at www.ussslolongbeach-assoc.org on the World Wide Web.

• **USS Maddox Destroyer Association Reunion** is planned Sept. 15-18, 2005, in Mobile, Ala. For more information, contact Cliff Gillespie, 215 Wichita Ave., #605, Huntington Beach, CA 92648, call (714) 960-5283 or ewgilles45@aol.com.

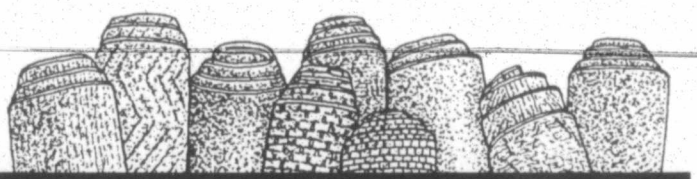
• **USS Columbus CA-74/CG-12/SSN-762** reunion is planned Sept. 21-25 in San Antonio. For more information, contact Allen R. Hope, President, 3828 Hobson Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46815-4505; hope4391@comcast.net.

• **Alzheimer's Association** will conduct its **Memory Walk** fund-raiser Sept. 24 at Sam Houston Park in Amarillo. To register for, or donate to, the walk, log onto www.alztxas.org. For more information, call (806) 372-8693.

• **The reunion of the USS Cascade AD-16** is planned for Oct. 9-16 at Branson, Mo. For more information, contact Lyle "Preacher" Burchette, P.O. Box 566, Hollister, MO 65673, (417) 334-5627; or Bob Croghan, Sr., 7827 Cassia Court, St. Louis, MO 63123, (314) 843-6615.

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Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: I'm 14, and I don't wear shorts because I'm self-conscious about my legs. My mother is always nagging me to wear them in the heat.

The other day, I overheard one of Mom's girlfriends ask her why I don't wear shorts, and what's wrong with my legs? The next day, Mom told me she was going to put on some shorts and how much cooler she felt. Then she asked, "Aren't you hot in those jeans? You should start wearing shorts."

Today, Mom had on some new shorts, and she said they were the most comfortable she had ever worn. Then she handed me a bag with four pairs of shorts and told me, "I got you some, too." She told me to try on a pair. I told her I wasn't wearing them. She yelled that I was being ridiculous to wear jeans in 95-degree weather.

Later, I got out of the shower and saw the shorts on my bed. All my jeans and pants were gone. Mom then came in and told me to put on the shorts. She said, "You have nice legs and look good wearing shorts. You look normal now -- and don't you feel a lot cooler?" She said she expects me to wear shorts every day for the rest of the summer. What should I do? -- **NEEDS ADVICE IN TEXAS**

DEAR NEEDS ADVICE: You'll wear the shorts, and probably resent your mother every day you put them on -- or attempt a compromise. Believe it or not, you don't need advice as much as your mother does. She has won the battle, but at what price? She turned your insecurity into a power struggle and pulled rank. There was no reason to force you to wear shorts other than the fact she felt self-conscious in front of her friend. Talk about misplaced priorities!

DEAR ABBY: I am writing because I'm having my first child in October. I would like my mother to be in the room with me as I go through the labor because she has had four children and has coached other women through labor.

My husband thinks it's unfair to just have my mom in the room, and he's insisting that his mom be in the room, too. I don't need his mother's help, and I don't think it's necessary. He says he either wants it to be just the two of us for the entire labor and delivery, or both of our moms during the labor.

Do you think that's fair? Shouldn't I have more say in this since I'm the one having the baby? -- **PREGNANT AND ANNOYED IN L.A.**

DEAR PREGNANT: Your husband does not have the right to dictate who will attend the labor and delivery. When he delivers, then he can decide who should be there and for how long.

Before this situation degenerates any further, make your wishes known to your obstetrician. He or she can ensure that the year is carried out.

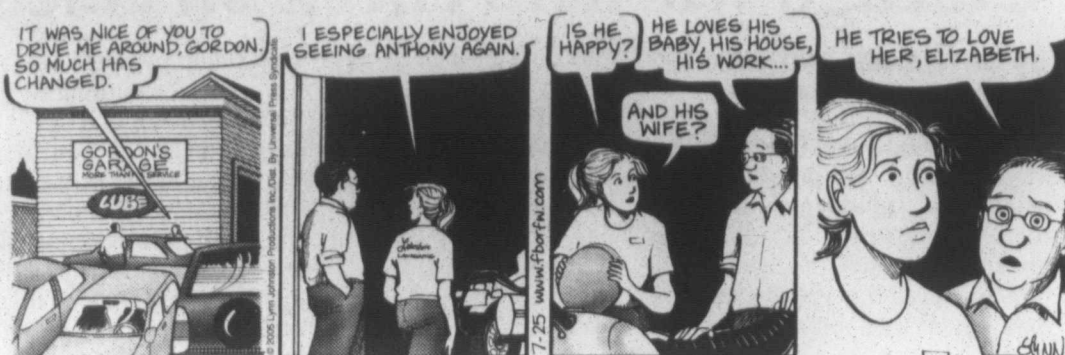
DEAR ABBY: I have recently become engaged to be married. My fiance and I have been together about seven months. We plan to be married next June.

My mother and I are trying to decide the proper time to put the engagement announcement in the paper. She thinks we should do it in a few months, when we have made our final decisions about the wedding. I am clueless. Can you help? -- **IN LOVE IN TEXAS**

DEAR IN LOVE: According to Emily Post, announcements can appear as long as a year in advance of the wedding, or as short a time as one week. However, two or three months before the wedding is average.

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



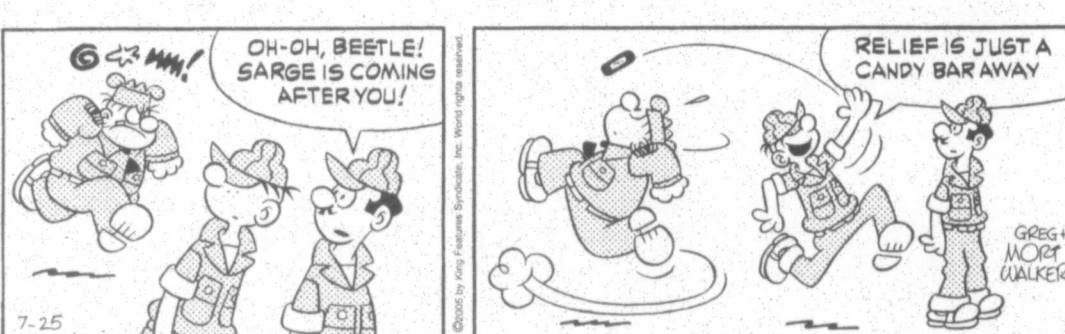
Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS DOWN

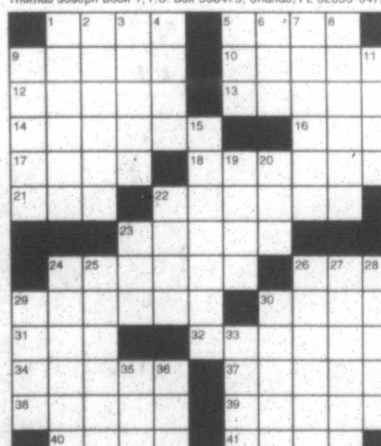
- 1 Approach
- 5 Wallop
- 9 Not hollow
- 10 Window sections
- 12 Twist dry
- 13 Hollywood worker
- 14 Visible
- 16 Compete
- 17 Professional charges
- 18 Find a place to hide
- 21 Cigarette substance
- 22 England invaders
- 23 Rubber source
- 24 1996 thriller
- 26 Fixed
- 29 Crown
- 30 Ernst's art
- 31 Tavern
- 32 Facing trouble
- 34 Olympics award
- 37 Fuming
- 38 Gun salute
- 39 Old harps
- 40 Bring in the crop
- 41 Glided

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Saturday's answer

- 22 Ump's call
- 23 Went ahead
- 24 Lack of musical skill
- 25 Jug part
- 26 Game outing
- 27 Fixed copy
- 28 Government income
- 29 Lower in luminosity
- 30 Hannah of "Splash"
- 33 Musician Lofgren
- 35 One of Frank's wives
- 36 Cut off

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Marmaduke



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The Family Circus

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



"I need a new shell phone."

B.C.



Haggar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie

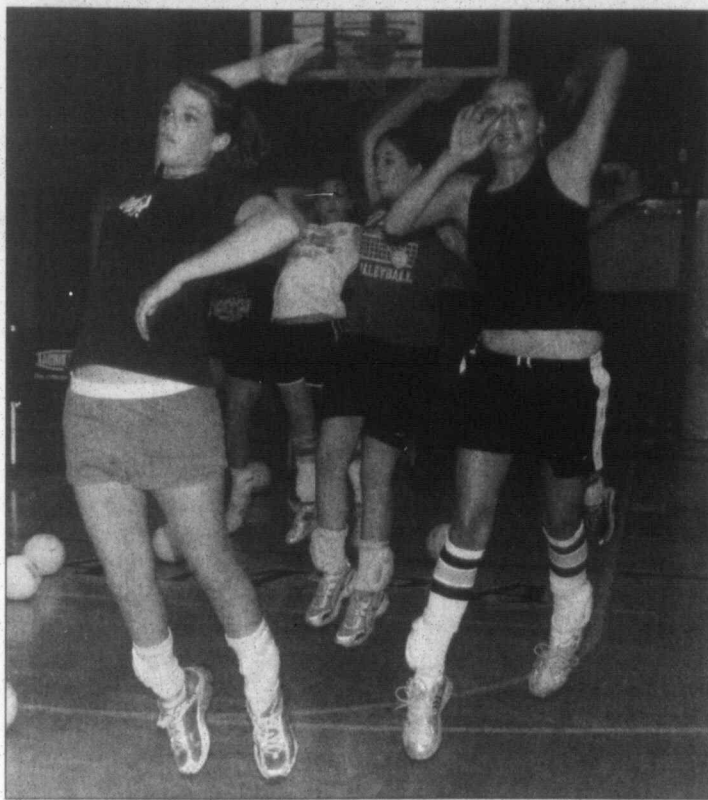


Flo & Friends



Sports Day

Court campers



Pampa News photo by BEN BRISCOE

A few of the campers reporting for duty this morning go through Coach Sonia Van Gilder's drill instruction. Harvester Volleyball Camp will last through Friday.

POTPOURRI OF PONDERING

Thinking out loud

Michael J. Stevens
Sports Editor



Ricky Williams

If you don't have anything good to say, then don't say anything at all. I think I'll abide by that.

Lance Armstrong

Simply amazing. Though I do not condone leaving his wife for Sheryl Crow (okay, maybe I'm jealous), you have to be in awe of this man and what he has accomplished on and off a bike. Seven straight Tour de France titles? I don't see that record falling any time soon. And what he has done — and will do — for cancer research will simply reach beyond dollars and cents.

NHL

I think the league, if it has not done so already, may want to adopt the Dallas Star's approach to ticket sales. Standardize ticket prices and make getting to a game affordable for everyone. I think I read where the Stars were going to offer \$10 tickets for all seats. The NHL will need to pursue every avenue possible to rebuild its fan base. Though many refer to him as the next Wayne Gretzky, 17-year-old Pittsburgh Penguin phenom, Sidney Crosby, will not be the salvation of the league.

WT Buffs

First year head football coach Don Carthel is doing things the right way at West Texas A&M University in Canyon. He is sweating the small stuff. Cleaning and repairing all that is in need of such attention. Carthel knows part of what it takes to build a winning program is to make sure the players feel good about their facilities. Also helps when it comes time to recruit.

Potter County Memorial Stadium

Toward the end of June, Potter County Commissioners in Amarillo blasted the Amarillo Ace Baseball Academy for not coming through with the repairs and upgrades promised in return for the right to play baseball in the old Dilla Villa. An Ace spokesperson later said some of the work involves sandblasting, something that cannot be done in the middle of the season. I'm still not sure what Ace is or does. All I know is you will find more people eating at Coney Island here in Pampa during lunch time than you will find at an Ace baseball game. It was also announced last week that WT would play its home baseball games at the facility while their old field is converted into a softball field for the Lady Buffs. I once wrote how I thought this poor old ball park should be torn down, perhaps offering bits and pieces for sale as memories. It is antiquated and in desperate need of more than just lipstick and rouge. Yet, the fascination with it continues to permeate.

Pampa High School Football

I've had a number of people ask me over the past few weeks, "So what do you think about the new football coach? Think he's any good?" Well, he must be good. I don't think the school board would consider, debate and hire a coach who will be in the spotlight like Coach Wood will be if it didn't think he could take the Harvester program to the next level. But it shouldn't be about what I — or even you might think. Ask one of his players what they think. I have. And the feedback I am getting is this should be a very exciting season for Pampa Harvester football.

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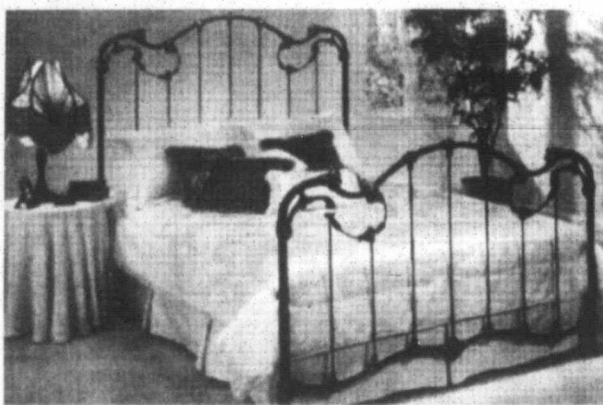
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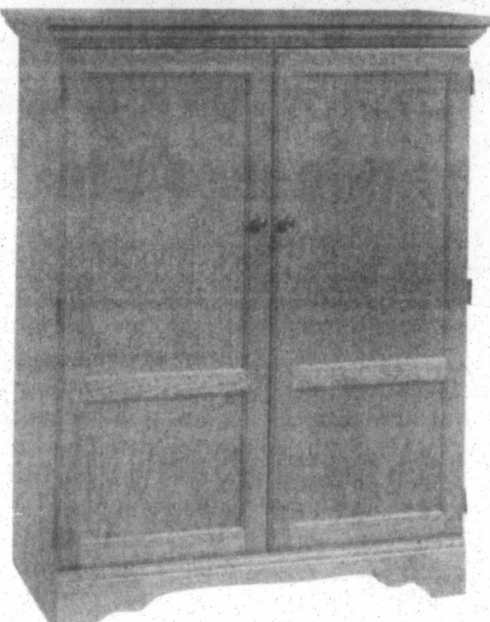
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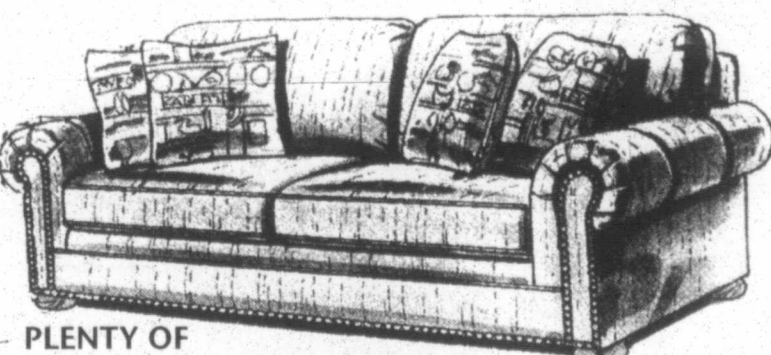
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Practice time

► First-year head coach Emily Laurence was spotted on the PHS tennis courts early this morning getting in some practice time. Laurence, a Pampa High School graduate, returned to her alma mater to take over the tennis program this season. She will host the Pampa Open tennis tournament this weekend. There is still time to register for the open. Forms are available at the Pampa Athletic Office. Call 669-4830 for additional information.



Pampa News photo by BEN BRISCOE

Astros drop Nationals 4-1 in 14 innings

WASHINGTON (AP) — What a long road trip for the Houston Astros. The first game lasted 13 innings, and the last one went 14.

At least they finished with a win, with an unexpected hero who had teammates cheering the television replay in the locker room. For the Washington Nationals, on the other hand, Sunday's loss meant they had to endure five extra innings of their lousy offense.

Eric Bruntlett, who started the day hitting .167, hit a three-run homer with two outs in the top of the 14th to give the Astros a 4-1 victory and a 7-4 record on their road trip.

"Things like that are so big," teammate Morgan Ensberg said. "It is something that is special. He will remember it for the rest of his life."

Bruntlett, who had entered the game in the 10th inning, fouled off three straight pitches before pulling Hector Carrasco's 3-2 slider over the left-field fence and into the

Nationals bullpen.

It was his second homer of the year and his sixth, seventh and eighth RBIs. It was just the seventh career homer for the seldom-used utility player.

"I just got mobbed when I got back to the dugout," Bruntlett said. "That was special. That was fun."

Russ Springer (3-3) pitched two innings for the victory, and Brad Lidge pitched the bottom of the 14th for his 23rd save.

The Astros won three of four in the series and would probably have had a sweep if Willy Taveras hadn't misplayed a fly ball in Saturday's 4-2 loss.

Not bad for a team that started the season 2-21 on the road.

"It would have been pretty heartbreaking if we would have come off with a loss," said reliever Dan Wheeler, who pitched three scoreless innings. "This gives us all kinds of confidence. It is huge."

Athletics 8, Rangers 3

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — The Oakland Athletics are back in playoff contention thanks to an impressive run.

Scott Hatteberg drove in three runs, and the streaking A's finished a four-game sweep of the Texas Rangers with an 8-3 victory Sunday.

Bobby Crosby and Mark Ellis each had three hits to help the A's extend their winning streak to six. After going 7-20 in May, they've won 26 of their last 32 to tie Minnesota for the wild-card lead and build a 4 1/2-game edge over the Rangers for second place in the AL West.

"A lot of people doubted we could do this," said Crosby, who also made a diving catch with his back to the plate in short left field to end the fourth. "It took us a while. But I'm not shocked by this. To come here and take four, I'm pretty impressed with how we're playing."

Texas lost its fifth straight and fell to 2-9

since the All-Star break, completing a 1-6 homestand. The Rangers, who've dropped seven of eight to the A's since the break, dipped under .500 (48-49) for the first time since they were 13-14 on May 2.

"This homestand definitely wasn't nice to us," shortstop Michael Young said. "We have a lot of room to make up. There's two months to play. But we're a lot of games back now and that's a fact, so we can't be afraid to admit that."

Rich Harden (8-4) wasn't nearly as dominant as his last start against Texas, but he was good enough to win. He allowed three runs and five hits in 5 1-3 innings, striking out five and walking four. The right-hander threw 111 pitches in temperatures that reached the mid-90s.

In his previous outing against the Rangers on July 14, Harden carried a perfect game into the eighth and threw a two-hitter in a 6-0 victory.

LUCKY NUMBER SEVEN

Armstrong bids farewell to Tour de France

PARIS (AP) — Lance Armstrong will never ride in the Tour de France again. After seven years of dominance, he is trading in rough rides through the mountains for leisurely days on the beach.

Having stepped onto the podium for the last time on Sunday to celebrate his seventh straight Tour victory, Armstrong will spend a few days "with a beer, having a blast."

It's time for him to play with his kids, chill out with rocker girlfriend Sheryl Crow, and toast his success as the undisputed champion of cycling's most demanding event.

"I'm finished," Armstrong said.

He is moving far away from the awe-struck crowds that crossed countries for the merest glimpse, the six-hour training rides in pouring rain that gave him the edge over others, the stress of worrying whether his rivals could ever catch up.

Armstrong is now retired at the ripe old age of 33.

"We're just going to hang out in the south of France for a little while and do nothing," Crow said.

Armstrong loved the mystique that surrounds the 102-year-old Tour, and is proud to see his name listed above five-time champions Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault and Miguel Indurain.

He hated the accusations that his success was based on anything other than a desire to push himself further than any other cyclist. He had an intense dedication to training and meticulous planning, and an ability to bring the best out of teammates.

"This is the most difficult event there is," Armstrong told French television. "I won it once, twice, three, four, five, six, and seven times, so of course they ask those questions. When you don't answer it as they like, they make up the answer for you."

Armstrong planned to escape to a resort near the French city of Nice on Monday.

After his final win, Armstrong set his sights on a Sunday night with friends, his mother, his three children, numerous sponsors, and teammates at a big bash at Paris' Ritz Hotel. He even invited longtime rival Jan Ullrich, the 1997 Tour winner and five-time runner-up — three to Armstrong.

Ullrich finished third this year, right

behind Italy's Ivan Basso.

Armstrong will be back on the Tour next year, as adviser to close friend Johan Bruyneel, the Discovery Channel team director.

"I have a special place in my heart for this race," he said. "I dream about coming back to France, telling stories to my children. I really care about it."

Armstrong won the 23-day race comfortably, again.

He finished 4 minutes and 40 seconds ahead of Basso and 6:21 clear of Ullrich, who has finished off the podium only once since placing second during his debut in 1996. Ullrich struggled into a fourth-place finish last year.

"We're just going to hang out in the south of France for a little while and do nothing."

— Sheryl Crow
Girlfriend, Lance Armstrong

Armstrong praised the two riders, who could fight to succeed him as champion next year.

"To end a career with this podium is really a dream," Armstrong said.

He hugged Ullrich, the powerful German rider who pushed him so close to defeat two years ago. Armstrong's winning margin in 2003 was 61 seconds, his smallest ever.

"What he did was sensational," Ullrich said. "It is his seventh victory. He deserved it."

Emotion flowed when Armstrong took the podium one last time, hand over heart, "The Star-Spangled Banner" ringing out over the Champs-Elysees.

"You have to cherish that moment because it won't ever happen again," Armstrong said Monday on ABC's "Good Morning America."

Behind her dark glasses, Crow fought back tears — as Armstrong had done Saturday when he won the Saint-Etienne time trial to clinch the final stage win of his illustrious career.

"It's a great story and to see it coming to a close for me, and I'm sure for

a lot of other people, it's a very emotional experience," Crow said.

He led his three children up the podium steps. His 3-year-old twin daughters, Grace and Isabelle, wore yellow dresses and stood by their 5-year-old brother Luke.

"Vive le Tour, forever," Armstrong said in his parting speech, arms raised in the air one final time.

He also delivered a final shot at "the people who don't believe in cycling, the cynics and the skeptics" who suspect that doping is rife in the grueling sport and fueled his dominance.

"I'm sorry for you. I'm sorry you don't believe in miracles. But this is a hell of a race," he said. "You should believe in these athletes, and you should believe in these people. I'll be a fan of the Tour de France for as long as I live. And there are no secrets — this is a hard sporting event and hard work wins it."

Armstrong's all-encompassing approach to cycling modernized a sport steeped in tradition. Rivals fell behind as they failed to match his preparation.

"We did come along and revolutionize the cycling part, the training part, the equipment part. We're fanatics," Armstrong said.

The Tour's 21st and final leg, an 89.8-mile ride into Paris from Corbeil-Essonnes south of the capital, started as it has done the past six years — with Armstrong in the yellow jersey.

Holding a flute of champagne, he toasted teammates as he pedaled into Paris, held up seven fingers, and smiled for the cameras.

He almost had a mishap when three of his teammates slipped and crashed while negotiating a bend shortly before they crossed the River Seine. Riding behind, Armstrong skidded but stayed in his saddle.

Alexandre Vinokourov of Kazakhstan won the stage, beating Australia's Bradley McGee and Fabian Cancellara of Switzerland. Armstrong cruised in safely in the pack, in 118th place.

Having ended his stellar career, Armstrong now wants to drift away from the spotlight.

"I need a period of quiet and peace and privacy," he said. "I've had an unbelievable career. There's no reason to continue. I don't need more."

Phelps advances easily this time

MONTREAL (AP) — Michael Phelps didn't wash out this time.

One day after flopping in the preliminaries of the 400-meter freestyle, Phelps breezed into the semifinals of the 200 free at the World Swimming Championships on Monday.

Australian star Grant Hackett, who already won gold in the 400 free, was top qualifier at 1 minute, 47.88 seconds — keeping himself on track for a delayed showdown with the world's best swimmer.

Phelps won his heat and was second fastest overall at 1:48.53.

Hackett and Phelps were supposed to face off in the 400 free Sunday night, but the 29-year-old American stunningly failed to escape the morning preliminaries.

With Phelps out of the way and Ian Thorpe skipping the championships, Hackett finally won the 400 title that eluded him at the last three world championships, as well as the

Athens Olympics.

Each time, Hackett finished second to Thorpe.

If Hackett and Phelps get through the 200 semifinals Monday night, they'll face each other in Tuesday's final.

"I feel better than I did yesterday morning," Phelps said, managing a smile. "I just wanted to come into today and win my heat. That was the big goal."

Phelps did win a gold on the first day of swimming as part of the U.S. 400 free relay team, giving him a chance to match his seven-medal haul from the 2003 championships in Barcelona.

But his pursuit of eight medals — the total he piled up at the Athens Olympics, including six golds — ended with his dismal performance in the 400 free.

"I'm starting to get back on track," said Phelps, who only managed the 18th-fastest time in the 400 prelims. "What happened yesterday, that's behind us."

Busch prevails at Pocono

LONG POND, Pa. (AP) — Kurt Busch dominated at the beginning, surged back to the lead late and raced to his second win of the season Sunday in the Pennsylvania 500 at Pocono Raceway.

Rusty Wallace, who will retire at the end of the season, finished second in the No. 2 Dodge and fell just short of matching Bill Elliott's record of five career wins at Pocono.

Perhaps driving his last

race at Pocono, Mark Martin finished third in the No. 6 Ford and Carl Edwards followed his win here in June with a fourth-place finish.

WEST ALLIS, Wis. (AP) — Sam Hornish Jr. raced like he was driving a stock car, putting his teammate into the wall and touching tires with at least two other drivers before wrapping up a hard-earned victory in the A.J. Foyt 225.



(Texas Cooperative Extension photo by Scott Ludwig)

Consumer demand in urban areas for bedding plants such as these begonias is expanding in East Texas. All the counties with large ornamental producers have seen growth in sales in last couple of years, according to Dr. Scott Ludwig, Texas Cooperative Extension IPM specialist.

Nursery/greenhouse startup risky, but possibly profitable

By **ROBERT BURNS**
Texas A&M News/Public Affairs

OVERTON — So you say you want to get started in the greenhouse and nursery business?

"Maybe not," said Dr. Scott Ludwig, a Texas Cooperative Extension specialist who works closely with the East Texas nursery and bedding plant industry.

To help prospective nursery operators decide if the business is for them, Ludwig has planned "So you want to start a greenhouse or nursery?" a four-day workshop designed to give prospective growers an overview of the industry.

"We'll cram as much information into four days as we can," he said.

Two workshops will be held, the first one will be Aug. 30-Sept. 3 at the Texas A&M University System Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Overton.

The second workshop, with nearly an identical program, will be held Oct. 4-7 in Fort Worth at the Resource Connection Conference and Recreation Center, 2300 Circle Drive.

Many people seem to think that operating a greenhouse or tree nursery is a business where they can make a lot of money with little effort, Ludwig said.

"But that's just not the case. It's a lot of work, a 365-days-a-year business," said Ludwig, whose Extension speciality is integrated pest management.

And it's also a knowledge-intensive business, requiring the owner/operator to keep up on the latest changes in the market and technology.

But it is possible to do very well in the nursery bedding plant industry. Bedding plants are a significant part of the billion-dollar ornamental industry spanning both rural and urban Texas.

Most bedding plant and tree nurseries are in rural counties, but the majority of retail sales are in urban areas. In the last few years, wholesale receipts have averaged more than \$250 million alone for the four East Texas counties of Cherokee, Van Zandt, Smith and Henderson alone, according to

Ludwig.

Statewide, the nursery industry accounted for nearly 9 percent of all agricultural production, with total wholesale receipts of \$1.2 billion.

Full blooms

• A four day workshop will be held for anyone interested in starting nursery.

• It will be from Aug. 30-Sept. 3 or Oct. 4-7. Both will take place in Fort Worth. Registration is \$300.

"And all the counties with large ornamental producers have seen growth in sales in the last couple of years," Ludwig said.

Still, it's a good idea to look before you leap, as startup and capital investments can be large.

"Also, without training and a willingness to work very hard, new growers may not produce a quality product," Ludwig said. "And that could reflect badly on the region's (nursery/bedding plant) industry overall."

Each workshop will consist of three days of lectures and one day of tours of local working nurseries and greenhouses.

The lectures will cover such topics as a history of the business in Texas; how to make a business plan; calculating the cost

of producing various types of ornamental plants; production technology; integrated pest management; weed control; insect management; soil fertility; production of trees and shrubs in containers and in the field; and marketing.

Registration for either workshop is \$300, which includes lunch each day, refreshments at breaks and educational materials.

To pay by check, call Ludwig at (903) 834-6191.

It's also possible to register via the Internet with a credit card. Extension maintains a secure Web site at <http://www.peopleware.net/1542b>.

Maps and driving directions to the Overton center can be found at <http://overton.tamu.edu/maps.htm>.

Driving directions to the Fort Worth conference center can be online at http://www.tarrantcounty.com/tc_resource/. The conference center is located on a 262-acre campus in southeastern Fort Worth, with regular bus service from the Fort Worth Transportation Authority.

Earthquake hits off Indian coast; Thailand issues tsunami warning

NEW DELHI (AP) — A powerful 7.2-magnitude earthquake hit India's southern Nicobar Islands on Sunday, triggering panic in the islands and prompting Thailand to issue a tsunami warning for the region devastated by December's earthquake and tsunami.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or damages. The islands are in the Indian Ocean between India and Thailand, where some 5,400 people died in the Dec. 26 Indian Ocean tsunami. By late Sunday, no tsunami was seen and Thailand withdrew its warning.

The Indian Ocean basin was battered by the December earthquake and tsunami which followed, killing at least 178,953 people in 11 countries and leaving 49,616 people missing, most of them presumed dead.

Sunday's quake also was felt in Indonesia's Aceh

province, the area hit hardest in December tragedy.

Aceh residents, jolted from their sleep, said the quake rattled their homes for about 10 seconds. Some went outside to look for damage, returning minutes later when none was found.

In Sri Lanka, residents of Peraliya village — where the Dec. 26 tsunami swept away a commuter train killing 2,000 — fled to a Buddhist temple on higher ground. Some Sri Lanka naval ships were moved out to sea to reduce any chance of damage from waves or sea surges in port.

"We are taking all precautions in a situation like that and keeping the past in mind," said navy Commander J.K. Jayaratne.

The National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo., reported that the quake was centered about 80 miles west of Misha, Nicobar Island.

"There is nothing to worry about," India's Science and

Technology Minister Kapil Sibal said Sunday in dismissing another tsunami. He said the sea level had not risen significantly.

The quake also jolted southern India's Tamil Nadu state, where the Dec. 26 tsunami killed more than 8,000 people.

In Thailand, the head of the National Disaster Warning Center, Plodprasop Suraswadi, formally lifted the tsunami warning about 90 minutes after issuing it on television broadcasts.

Bomb scare empties New York City's Penn Station

NEW YORK (AP) — Police arrested a man following a bomb scare that emptied Pennsylvania Station and disrupted service on Amtrak, commuter trains and city subways for about an hour.

The busy commuter hub was evacuated after the man allegedly threw a backpack at an Amtrak agent and said it was a bomb, said Marissa Baldeo, a spokeswoman for New York City Transit. The threat was a false alarm, and service on all lines was soon restored.

Police arrested the man, Raul Claudio, 43, on

Sunday, according to Manhattan District Attorney's office spokeswoman, Barbara Thompson. Claudio is awaiting arraignment on felony charges of making terrorists threats and falsely reporting an incident, Thompson said. Each count carries a sentence of up to seven years in prison.

The incident came days after a second bombing attack on London's commuter system prompted New York police to start random inspections of subway riders' bags.

But travelers seemed to be taking the disruption in

stride. Tim Allen, a Londoner headed from New York to Boston, has endured similar false alarms recently in London.

"This is the second time this has happened in two and a half weeks to me," he said in regards to the threats.

The incident was over as quickly as it began. One minute, camouflage-clad soldiers were shouting, "Penn Station is closed indefinitely," and the next minute they got the all-clear and started letting people back into the station.

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