

Tomorrow's Weather

HIGH 66
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See expanded weather on Page 2


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Xcel Energy, customers settle on 3 percent rate hike

AMARILLO - Xcel Energy and key customer groups in Texas have resolved Xcel Energy's 2006 Texas rate case and negotiated a new retail base rate that calls for a 3 percent overall increase - the first base rate increase in Texas since 1986. The agreement also calls for improved customer service measures.

Xcel Energy requested in May 2006 to increase rates by 6 percent. The new rate agreement filed Tuesday with the Public Utility Commission of Texas requests that the rates be

effective on an interim basis beginning April 1 until such time as the Commission acts on the settlement. The average residential bill for a customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours a month will rise 3.6 percent, or \$2.90. Some customer groups could see slightly different increases depending on their class of service.

"Our prices are still among the lowest in Texas, and will remain so even after the increase," said David Eves, president and CEO of Southwestern Public Service Co., an Xcel Energy company.

The company also agreed to improve streetlight maintenance by stepping up patrols and speeding up the reporting of streetlight outages.

"Through this process we became more aware of areas we needed to improve upon, and I think we have created opportunities to better serve our customers," Eves said.

To help customers manage costs, Xcel Energy is publicizing energy saving tips through a brochure called "60 Simple Ways" that details simple and mostly inexpensive steps customers can take to boost the efficiency of home appliances. The brochure can be downloaded at www.xcelenergy.com or customers may request copies by contacting customer service at 1-800-895-4999.

Xcel Energy will continue to work with customers who need extra time paying bills, and also will continue working with area nonprofit agencies in finding assistance for customers who cannot pay their bills. Customers who need payment arrangements or help in paying bills should contact Xcel Energy at 1-800-895-4999.

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Ample moisture



Pampa News photos by MARILYN POWERS

A usually-dry creek bed, above, held a rushing torrent of water Tuesday afternoon in the vicinity of 16th and Fir streets as runoff from recent rains made its way along Red Deer Creek. A portion of the walking path, below, around Recreation Park was submerged Tuesday due to a rise in the lake's water level. An automated weather station near the park has recorded 2.65 inches of rain this month, including 1.67 inches Saturday. More rain is forecast for the area tonight, along with strong storms which may include hail and high winds.

City approves PEDC offer to housing project called Hampton Village

By KERRI SMITH
Staff Writer

The Pampa City Commission Tuesday approved a financial offer by Pampa EDC with Hampton Village LP in the amount of \$525,000.

The action came after commissioners met in executive session with Dwight Fiveash, president of PEDC.

Hampton Village LP is proposing to build 76 low-income homes on Alcock beginning in early 2008, if they receive permanent state and federal funding for the \$10 million project.

"This software has allowed for better time management since reports can now be entered at the location instead of taking all of the information back to the office," Fisher said. "I type in the information regarding a code violation and at the end of the day it is sent to a central server."

In other action the commission heard a report from the fire marshal regarding new computer software, discussed an efficiency improvement agreement with TechSolve, and heard the first reading of two ordinances.

Fire Marshal Keith Fisher gave a report on Code Pal software that was purchased by the city to help him enforce city ordinances, especially those dealing with weed control. Fisher has a hand-held device he carries and types information into regarding city code violations.

City Manager John Horst said this eliminates the need for a clerk to type up reports, so it saves time and money for the city.

The initial cost of the software was \$7,300, and the annual fees in following years should be around \$390. This amount does include free upgrades by the company, so Fisher feels this was a good investment for the city.

The commission discussed an efficiency improvement agreement between the city and TechSolve. This company submitted a proposal to come in and assess the work processes, people, practices and procedures in regard to City Hall operations. They would make suggestions on how the city could improve the

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IS IT TIME TO ROLL OVER YOUR NEXT EGG?

Five arrested on various charges include four teens

By MARILYN POWERS
Staff Writer

Alcohol, drugs and guns led to the arrest of five Pampa residents, four of them teens, over a two-day period this week.

Matthew Riley Archibald, 29, was arrested at 12:30 p.m. Monday at his residence and booked into Gray County Jail on a charge of manufacture and delivery of four or more but less than 200 grams of a controlled substance.

"Pampa Police Department narcotics agents and Gray County Sheriff's Office conducted a joint investigation that led to another investigation and ended with the arrest of Archibald," said PPD Assistant Chief Dennis Burton.

A large amount of a substance believed to be methamphetamine was found at Archibald's residence,

Burton said, along with drug paraphernalia and items used to manufacture and deliver methamphetamine.

Four teens were arrested after their vehicle was stopped in the 1300 block of Hamilton Tuesday afternoon by PPD Officer Stephanie Willoughby for a traffic violation.

Willoughby was backed up by other officers who smelled marijuana in the vehicle, Burton said. A search of the vehicle resulted in the discovery of illegal substances, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, a large amount of cash and a switchblade knife.

The youngest, age 15, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. A 16-year-old was charged with possession of a controlled substance.

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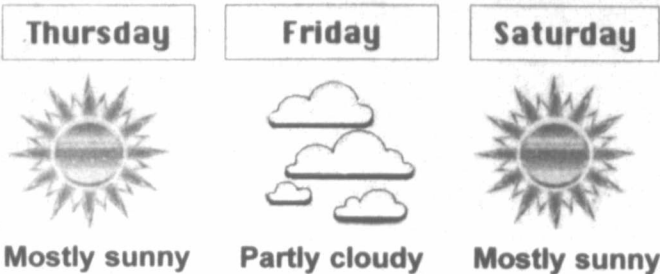


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NEXT DAY FORECAST



Thursday Mostly sunny with a high near 66.
 Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 43.

Friday Partly cloudy, with a high near 63.
 Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 40.

Saturday Mostly sunny, with a high near 68.
 Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 48.

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|---|-------|------------------|--------|-------|
| The following grain quotations are provided by Atebury Grain of White Deer | | KML | 105.88 | -0.04 |
| Wheat | 4.10 | XCEL | 24.61 | +0.02 |
| Milo | 6.33 | Anadarko | 43.06 | +0.30 |
| Corn | 7.12 | XOM | 75.88 | +0.17 |
| Soybeans | 6.38 | Nat'l Oilwell | 78.07 | +0.27 |
| The following 9:30 a.m. N.Y. Stock Market quotations are furnished by Edward Jones & Co. of Pampa | | Limited | 26.45 | -0.12 |
| OKY | 49.92 | Williams | 28.59 | +0.19 |
| BP PLC ADR | 65.15 | MCD | 44.72 | -0.32 |
| Cabot Corp | 47.52 | Atmos | 31.15 | NC |
| Celanese | 30.72 | Pioneer Nat | 41.79 | +0.63 |
| Cabot Oil Gas | 68.86 | JCP | 81.00 | -0.85 |
| Coca Cola | 47.87 | COP | 69.78 | +0.30 |
| VLO | 65.36 | SLB | 69.99 | +0.13 |
| HAL | 30.95 | Tenneco | 25.46 | -0.14 |
| TRI | 52.32 | CVX | 73.98 | -0.19 |
| | | Wal-Mart | 46.82 | -0.67 |
| | | OKE | 45.83 | -0.12 |
| | | New York Gold | 662.50 | |
| | | Silver | 13.28 | |
| | | West Texas Crude | 62.93 | |

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PAMPA TEACHER'S Federal Credit Union is celebrating its 70th Anniversary, and would like to invite all members to join us for our Annual Meeting. The annual meeting will be held on Mar. 29th, 7pm. in the MK Brown Heritage Room.

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Obituaries

Services tomorrow

LOWRY, Leland Burl — Memorial services, 2 p.m., Mary Ellen & Harvester Church of Christ, Pampa.
SHULTS, Cleta Bell Becton — 10 a.m., First Baptist Church, Clarendon.

Cleta Bell Becton Shults, 75

CLARENDON — Cleta Bell Becton Shults, 75, died Monday, March 26, 2007, in Amarillo, Texas. Services will be at 10 a.m. Thursday, March 29, 2007, in First Baptist Church in Clarendon with the Rev. Truman Ledbetter, Baptist Minister, and the Rev. Lance Wood, Pastor, officiating. Interment will be at 3:30 p.m. in Becton Cemetery

near Petersburg. Mrs. Shults was born Oct. 4, 1931, to Mack and Dixie Foy Becton in Estacado, Texas. She was a resident of Pampa before moving to Clarendon in 1976. She married Thomas Byron "Tom" Shults on May 1, 1950, at Carlsbad, N.M. She had taught schools in Anton, Pampa, and Matador prior to her retirement. She

taught in Pampa from 1967 until 1976. She was a member of the First Baptist Church in Clarendon. She was preceded in death by her parents; a sister, Maxine Spencer; and by a son, Tommy Mack Shults in 1956. Survivors include her husband, Tom Shults of Clarendon; a daughter,

Kathy Bateman and husband John of Arlington; a brother, James Becton and wife Bonnie of Idalou; her grandchildren, Emily and Bob Ellis of Amarillo and Thomas Bateman of Arlington; and two great-grandchildren, Autumn and Amanda Ellis of Amarillo. The family requests that memorials be to a favorite charity.

Emergency Services

Pampa PD

Pampa Police Department reported the following incidents during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Seven traffic stops were made. One traffic stop in the 1300 block of Hamilton resulted in the arrest of a juvenile for possession of less than two ounces of marijuana in a drug-free zone and possession of four or more but less than 200 grams of a controlled substance in a drug-free zone.

Traffic complaints were received from the intersection of 18th and Lea streets, the intersection of Highway 60 and Price Road, the intersection of Lefors and Browning streets, the 1100 block of Sierra and the 500 block of South Finley.

An abandoned vehicle was reported at the intersection of 18th and Lea streets.

A vehicle accident was reported at the intersection of 21st and Hobart streets.

Animal control officers made stops concerning animals in the 1400 block of North Hobart, the 1500 block of North Sumner, the intersection of Farley and Bond streets, the 900 block of South Wells, the 1800 block of Williston, the 1800 block of North Dwight, the 800 block of East Scott, the 600 block of Plains, the 1100 block of Varnon Drive, the 1500 block of North Hobart and the 2300 block of Beech.

A missing person was reported in the 400 block of Hughes.

Welfare checks were made in the 1900 block of Beech and the intersection of Starkweather and Yeager streets.

Found property was reported in the 300 block of North Hobart. A wallet and contents were found.

Agency assistance was rendered in the 100 block of West 30th.

Attempts to serve papers were made on three occasions.

Suspicious person calls were received from the 1300 block of North Starkweather and the 1300 block of North Hobart.

Suspicious vehicle calls were received from the 1600 block of East Highway 60 and the 1100 block of West Gwendolyn.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 1800 block of Hamilton.

Criminal trespass was reported in the 2300 block of Beech and the 1800 block of Beech.

A domestic disturbance was reported in the police department lobby.

Assault was reported in the 600 block of East Craven. Minor injuries were reported in connection with the incident.

Theft was reported in the 2100 block of North Hobart. A wallet and contents were taken.

Theft was reported at Aaron's Sales, 211 W. 30th. A washing machine and clothes dryer were taken. Estimated value of loss is \$810.

Theft was reported in the 1000 block of North Sumner and the police department lobby.

A gas drive-off was reported at Allsup's, 140 S. Starkweather. Fuel valued at \$37 was taken.

Burglary was reported in the 2300 block of Beech.

Unauthorized use of a motor vehicle was reported in the police department lobby.

Accidents

Pampa Police Department reported the following accident today.

Tuesday, March 27
 4:31 p.m. — A 2001 Chevrolet Blazer, driven by Patti Dionne Villarreal, 39, of 1033 S. Christy, and a 2005 Chevrolet Blazer, driven by Christina Jean Rule, 38, of 1224 E. Kingsmill, collided in the 2100 block of North Hobart. No injuries were reported. Villarreal was cited for following too closely.

Sheriff

Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests today.

Tuesday, March 27
 Justin Wayne Sealman, 18, of Pampa was arrested in the 1300 block of Hamilton by Pampa Police Department for carrying a prohibited weapon, minor in possession of alcohol and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Ryan Goldsmith, 17, of Pampa was arrested in the 1300 block of Hamilton by PPD for minor in possession of alcohol and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Jesus Rodriguez, 27, of Pampa was arrested in the 400 block of North Faulkner by PPD for unlawful possession of a firearm, harboring a runaway child and capias pro fines for two counts of possession of drug paraphernalia, failure to maintain

financial responsibility, two counts of no valid driver's license, failure to identify, two counts of displaying expired registration and running a stop sign.

Fire

Pampa Fire Department reported the following calls during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Tuesday, March 27
 4:33 p.m. — One unit and three personnel responded to the intersection of 21st and Hobart on a vehicle accident.

7:27 p.m. — One unit and three personnel responded to the 2100 block of Aspen on a lifting assist.

Wednesday, March 28
 4:40 a.m. — One unit and two personnel responded to the 1200 block of North Hobart on a vehicle fire.

Ambulance

Guardian EMS ambulance reported the following calls during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Tuesday, March 27
 10:02 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 800 block of Malone and transported a patient(s) to Pampa Regional Medical Center.

11:52 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1900 block of Hilton Road and transported a patient(s) to PRMC.

9:58 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 2300 block of Beech and transported a patient to PRMC.

House gives preliminary approval to e-voting

AUSTIN (AP) — A bill that would allow some military service members abroad to receive ballots by e-mail is a step closer to reaching the governor's desk.

The pilot program received preliminary approval from the House on Tuesday.

County election officials would set up the program, which would allow military personnel to get ballots by e-mail. After filling out the ballots, they would return them by regular mail.

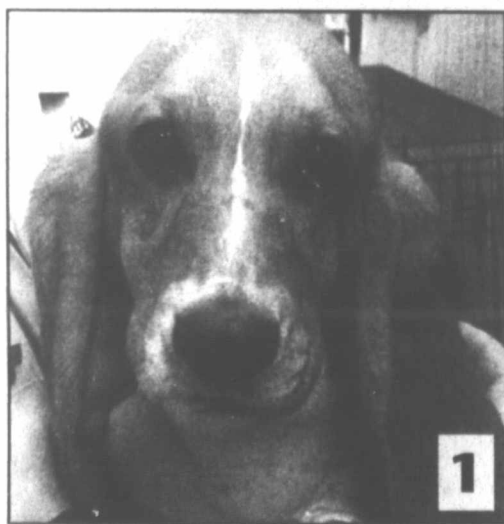
"It cuts the time in half and helps our military overseas citizens be able to vote," said state Rep. Frank Corte, R-San Antonio, who sponsored the bill, which was approved unanimously in the House.

Susan Dillard, Fort Bliss voting assistance officer, told the El Paso Times that many states already provide electronic assistance to help soldiers vote.

The measure has already passed the Texas Senate and needs another OK vote by the House before reaching Gov. Rick Perry.

Helen Jamison, El Paso County elections administrator, said she supports electronic voting assistance for the military.

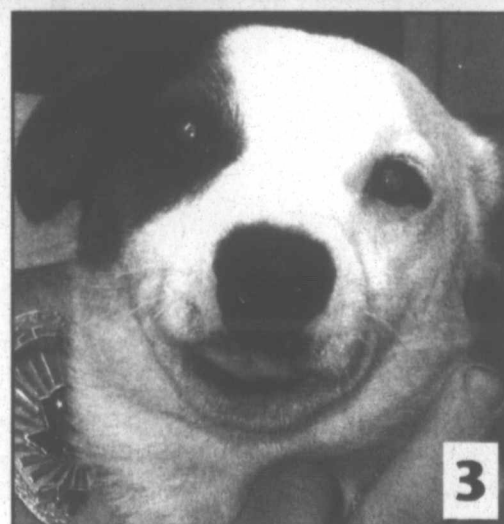
Pets of the Week... sponsored by The Pampa News



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2. BAXTER is a black male Poodle mix.
3. EDDIE is a young adult male Jack Russell Terrier.
4. SNICKER DOODLE is a playful male kitten.

For information about these pets or any other contact the Animal Shelter at 669-5775 or come by their location at Hobart Street Park VISIT OUR WEB SITE: thecityofpampa.org • click on Animal Control for most up to date information

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Children's ads provide junk food for thought

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a child's buffet of food commercials, more than 40 percent of the dishes are candy, snacks and fast food. Nowhere to be found: fresh fruit, vegetables, poultry or seafood.

For years, health officials have warned that kids were being inundated with commercials about not-so-healthy foods. Now, researchers have put numbers to those warnings in the largest-ever study of commercials aimed at children.

"The vast majority of the foods that kids see advertised on television today are for products that nutritionists would tell us they need to be eating less of, not more of, if we're going to get a handle on childhood obesity," said Vicky Rideout of the Kaiser Family Foundation, which conducts health research.

Overall, the foundation's researchers monitored 13 television networks. The viewing took place primarily between late May and early September 2005. They saw 2,613 ads featuring food and

drinks that targeted children and teens.

Children ages 8-12 see the most food ads on TV — an average of 21 a day, or 7,600 a year. Teenagers see slightly fewer — 17 a day, or about 6,000 a year; and children ages 2-7 see the fewest — 12 a day or 4,400 a year.

"Since (preteens) are at an age where they're just becoming independent consumers, understanding what type of advertising they are exposed to is especially important," Rideout said.

In December 2005, the Institute of Medicine concluded that marketing practices from the food and beverage industry are out of balance with recommended diets for children and contribute to an environment that puts children's health at risk.

The institute recommended that companies shift their advertising to emphasize food and drink that are substantially lower in calories, fats, salt and sugars.

In November, 11 major food and drink makers, including companies such as McDonald's, The Coca-Cola Co. and PepsiCo Inc., agreed to adopt new voluntary rules for advertising.

The companies said they would devote at least half their advertising directed to children to promote healthier diets and lifestyles.

The rules have not gone into effect yet. However, researchers believe that the study released Wednesday will serve as an important benchmark that will help determine whether the voluntary guidelines lead to any significant changes in advertising content.

Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy

at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, said the federal government should take a more active role in regulating the content of television ads aimed at children.

"The industry is not as serious about self-regulation as they say they are," Wootan said.

But business leaders asked for patience.

"Give us a chance to see what we can do," said C. Lee Peeler, president and CEO of the National Advertising Review Council, an organization that promotes truth in advertising through voluntary regulation.

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Bush withdraws ambassador nominee amid Dem opposition

By SAM HANANEL
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush today withdrew the ambassadorial nomination of businessman Sam Fox after Democrats denounced Fox for giving money to a controversial conservative group that undermined Sen. John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign.

Kerry, D-Mass., had criticized Fox because of a \$50,000 contribution that Fox made in 2004 to the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

Many Democrats blame the group for sinking Kerry's presidential hopes that year after it aired a series of controversial ads that impugned Kerry's military record in the Vietnam War.

One of Fox's strongest backers, Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., said it was "disappointing that a capable and qualified candidate with bipartisan support has become a victim of a political vendetta."

The White House announced the withdrawal in a press release distributed less than an hour before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee gathered to vote on his nomination to be ambassador to Belgium. On Tuesday, Kerry's Vietnam crew mates had sent a letter urging committee members to oppose Fox's nomination.

"In our judgment, those who finance smears and lies of combat veterans don't deserve to represent America on the world

stage," said the letter signed by 11 Vietnam Swift Boat veterans who served with Kerry.

Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., the second ranking member of the committee, said Tuesday he would oppose the nomination because Fox "refused to apologize for his behavior" during his confirmation hearing last month.

Fox, 77, of St. Louis, is national chairman of the Jewish Republican Coalition and has donated well over \$1 million to Republican candidates and causes since the 1990s, according to Federal Election Commission records. He was deemed a "ranger" by President Bush's campaign for helping to raise at least \$200,000.

Kerry grilled Fox about the Swift Boat contribution during the Feb. 27 hearing, asking him why he gave money to a group that was "smearing and spreading lies" and had been condemned by members of both political parties.

Fox replied that he considers Kerry a hero. But he refused to call the contribution a mistake.

"When I'm asked, I just generally give," Fox told Kerry.

Fox did not backed down in a series of written responses to Kerry since the hearing.

Complicating matters is the presence of three Democratic presidential hopefuls on the committee — the chairman, Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del.; and Sens. Barack Obama, D-Ill., and Dodd.

Bush renews vow to veto troop bill

By ANNE FLAHERTY
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush accused congressional Democrats today of meddling in Iraq war policy and setting a deadline for a U.S. pullout that would have disastrous repercussions for both countries.

As the Senate resumed debate Wednesday on a bill containing a spring 2008 timetable for bringing American troops home, Bush argued again that such a step would result in a needless delay of funds for troops. But Democrats are insisting that he'll have to accept some sort of timeline to get the money.

"Why doesn't he get real with what's going on with the world?" Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said after Bush's speech. "We're not holding up funding in Iraq and he knows that. Why doesn't he deal with the real issues facing the American people?"

Bush said Wednesday that the Democratic strategy move will not force him to negotiate. He said again that he would veto any funding legislation that includes a withdrawal timeline.

"The consequences of imposing such a specific and random date of withdrawal would be disastrous," Bush said in a speech at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association meeting. "Our enemies in Iraq would simply have to mark their calendars. They'd spend the months ahead plotting how to use their new safe haven once we were to leave. It makes no sense for politicians in Washington, D.C. to be dictating arbitrary timelines for our military commanders in a war zone 6,000 miles away."

Drugs

Continued from Page 1

trolled substance in a drug-free zone and possession of marijuana in a drug-free zone.

"There was a large amount of cash on the 16-year-old also," Burton said.

Ryan Goldsmith, 17, was arrested and booked into Gray County Jail at 3:49 p.m. Tuesday for possession

of drug paraphernalia and minor in possession of alcohol.

Justin Wayne Sealman, 18, was arrested and booked into the jail at the same time as Goldsmith. He was charged with carrying a prohibited weapon, minor in possession of alcohol and possession of drug paraphernalia.

The illegal substances found in the vehicle were 22 gross grams of a substance believed to be cocaine and

approximately 25 gross grams of marijuana, Burton said.

The 15-year-old was released to his parents, and the 16-year-old was taken to Amarillo and placed in the custody of the Randall County juvenile probation facility, Burton said. The 16-year-old was to be returned to Gray County to appear before juvenile probation officials here for further legal proceedings, he said.

City

Continued from Page 1

efficiency and effectiveness of city processes and possibly save the city between \$25,000 and \$100,000 in operational savings.

The cost for the assessment is \$24,900, which does not include travel expenses for those coming into town to conduct the study.

"We need another set of eyes to look over our operations and tell us how to be more efficient and use our technology better," Horst said. "We've contacted all of the references provided by this company and they were all pleased with the results."

Commissioner Bill Allison said he did not understand why the city couldn't come up with ideas of their own on how to save money.

"I know the fire and

police departments have come up with good ideas on ways to save money and be more effective, so I don't see why the city can't do that on their own," Allison said.

Commissioner Brad Pingel did not feel the same way.

"I think it is worth spending a little money to possibly save a lot more money," Pingel said. "I know that is a lot of money, but I think it would help the city in the long run."

Mayor Lonny Robbins said the proposal was a good idea, but the commission had only seen reports on cities that were quite a bit larger than Pampa on how this company helped them streamline their processes.

"I would like to see a few more reports from this company on how they saved money for communities the same size as Pampa," Robbins said.

After these discussions, the commission voted to

defer approving this proposal until Horst can get more reports from TechSolve and bring it back to the next meeting.

The commission approved the first readings of two ordinances. One ordinance calls for an amendment to appropriations to fund a bulldozer for the landfill and maintenance at the golf course. The second ordinance calls for an election in November to adopt a fire employee relations act.

This act would "Establish collective bargaining if a majority of the affected employees favor representation by an employees association to preserve the prohibition against strikes and lockouts and provide penalties for strikes and lockouts."

A list of bills for February were approved showing total disbursements of \$1,661,573 and the amount after balance sheet and income accounts is \$791,137.

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Viewpoints

The imperial Mr. Gore sounds off in Congress

Al Gore showed up on Capitol Hill recently proclaiming his devotion to the concept of bipartisanship, calling on Republicans to join ranks with him and the Democrats in his great crusade to save the world from being barbecued by the warming of the globe that he insists is threatening our very survival.

In a rather bizarre display of the spirit of bipartisanship, he then promptly refused to appear until after the Republicans made their opening statements and insisted on being allowed to subject them to his own 35-minute rambling opening statement, delivered in the manner of a British resident commissioner reading the 39 articles of the Anglican Confederation to a conscript

assemblage of Zulus, as the late Murray Kempton once remarked about Bill Buckley's announcement that he was running for mayor in New York City years ago.

That was just the beginning. In both the House and Senate, the Democrats paid him homage and allowed him to run roughshod over any Republican rash enough to raise questions about his specious recitation of the alleged facts behind global warming.

Chaining the hearing in the Senate, Sen. Barbara Boxer allowed Gore to avoid answering Republican questions by letting him run on and on with meaningless observations, thereby using up the questioning senator's allotted time and limiting his

ability to seek answers to legitimate questions.

In one instance, after Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., asked him to sign a pledge that he would not use any more energy than the average American family — he uses 20 times that amount — he avoided making that pledge by talking about other matters thus using up most of the Senator's allotted time.

Michael Reagan
Columnist



Here is a man who makes no bones about wanting to limit population growth by forcing Africans to stop having children but escapes any criticism for what is undisguised racism. If a

Republican engaged in such racist proposals, he would be ridden out of town on a rail.

But cutting population by abortion and contraception and other such methods is not Gore's only contribution to population control in Africa. He and his fellow

envirocrats have an even better way of getting rid of lot of inconvenient Africans — deprive them of the opportunity to have electricity by banning building power plants — a lack of which now kills at least a million Africans every year.

As Paul Driessen explained in the British doc-

umentary "The Great Global Warming Swindle," depriving Africans of the opportunity to have electricity will continue to kill at least a million Africans every year, as the lack of electric power on the African continent is doing right now.

Driessen, a former environmentalist activist himself, reminds us that in the name of environmental safety a million Africans die every year from malaria, a disease that could be all but eliminated by the use of DDT, which has been banned thanks to Al Gore's pals in the environmental movement.

"It was Environmental Defense and the foundations that created it that launched this nasty campaign against DDT just as they're doing on

global warming," Driessen told NewsMax.com in an exclusive interview.

"They just vilified anyone who tried to stand up in defense of DDT — an inquisition threatening to burn them at the stake and they just beat them into silence.

"So that in the end you end up with the same situation you have now with global warming — incredibly nasty attacks on companies, on users of energy — a repeat of the same tactics, and they're gunning for the same power and control — it's not just over a chemical or the chemical industry or one particular insecticide (as in the case of DDT) but what is over the foundation of civilized society — energy, abun-

See REAGAN, Page 5

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, March 28, the 87th day of 2007. There are 278 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 28, 1979, America's worst commercial nuclear accident occurred inside the Unit 2 reactor at the Three Mile Island plant near Middletown, Pa.

On this date:

In 1834, the U.S. Senate voted to censure President Jackson for the removal of federal deposits from the Bank of the United States.

In 1854, during the Crimean War, Britain and France declared war on Russia.

In 1898, the Supreme Court, in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, ruled that a child born in the United States to Chinese immigrants was a U.S. citizen.

In 1930, the names of the Turkish cities of Constantinople and Angora were changed to Istanbul and Ankara.

In 1939, the Spanish Civil War effectively ended as Madrid fell to the forces of Francisco Franco.

In 1941, novelist and critic Virginia Woolf died

'Those who say they give the public what it wants begin by underestimating public taste and end by debauching it.'

— T.S. Eliot
Poet and critic
(1888-1965)

in Lewes, England.

In 1942, during World War II, British naval forces raided the Nazi-occupied French port of St. Nazaire in Operation Chariot.

In 1953, athlete Jim Thorpe died in Lomita, Calif.

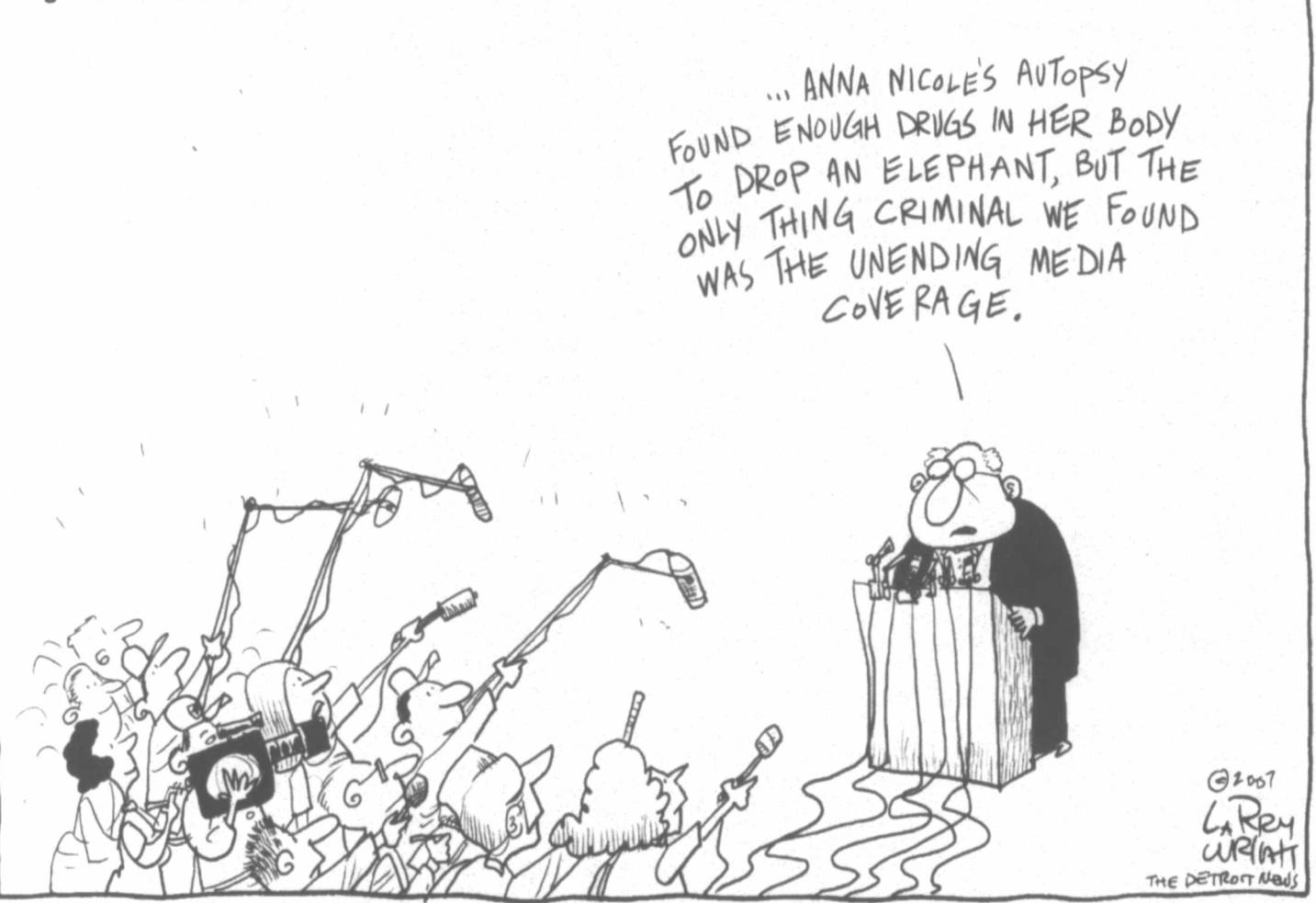
In 1969, the 34th president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, died in Washington at age 78.

In 1987, Maria von Trapp, whose life story inspired the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The Sound of Music," died in Morrisville, Vt., at age 82.

Ten years ago: A medical examiner revealed that some members of the Heaven's Gate cult who'd committed suicide in a California mansion had also been castrated in apparent pursuit of the group's ideal of androgynous immortality.

Five years ago: The Arab League, meeting in Beirut, Lebanon, agreed on a peace plan that offered Israel normal relations in exchange for a full withdrawal from war-won lands and a Palestinian state. Archbishop Juliusz Paetz of Poznan, Poland, announced his resignation, but also protested his innocence, following accusations he'd made sexual advances toward young clerics. U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Timothy Woodland was convicted in a Japanese court and sentenced to nearly three years in prison for raping a woman on the southern island of Okinawa.

caglecartoons.com



Rhetoric, threats do not equal capability

A little more than half of the U.S. population lives in 75 metropolitan areas. Russia has 4,399 nuclear warheads deployed. Except for 624 to be carried by bombers, they are all land-based and submarine missiles.

Furthermore, just recently Russia test-fired a land-based missile, the RSM54, and a submarine-launched missile. Both were intercontinental. Both hit their targets dead-on. The sub launch was, by the way, the sixth such test-firing conducted this year.

In the meantime, Iran has no nuclear weapons and no intercontinental ballistic missiles or long-range bombers. North Korea might have two or three nuclear missiles. Yet the administration, and most of America's news media, seems obsessed with Iran, no doubt because Israel is obsessed with Iran. A story by the Jewish Telegraph Agency reported that the American Israel

Public Affairs Committee played a lobbying role in deleting a provision in the defense bill that would have required the president to get Congress' OK before launching a war against Iran.

So what's my point? First, when assessing threats, all but fools look at capability, not intentions or rhetoric. Russia has the capability of wiping us out. Iran would be hard-pressed to sink one destroyer. Therefore, it would behoove us to put good relations with Russia very high on a diplomatic agenda. Yet, on the contrary, the Bush administration goes out of its way to insult Russia and to interfere in what Russia sees as its internal affairs.

Secondly, because of the cowardice of Congress, the U.S. government has

allowed a little country in the Middle East (Israel) to distort our priorities. Our first priority should be getting along with Russia. Iran is a small country we can squash anytime. Russia is not small, and it can squash us anytime.

How darn stupid does one have to be not to realize that? We've already blundered

by not seizing the opportunity of the collapse of the Soviet Union to disband NATO and seriously pursue helping Russia join the West. Instead, we sent some financial sharpies in to help a few Russians steal most of the country's wealth. Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, is 100 percent correct to go after the oligarchs who bought up the state's resources for pennies on the dollar and became overnight

billionaires. One is in jail, another fled to England, and several others have sought refuge in Israel.

When you hear Putin being maligned by people in the West, whether they're in government, journalism or academia, just remember that money buys whores, and whores service their customers.

Future historians may view the failure to bring Russia into the West, when the opportunity was there, as one of history's all-time strategic blunders.

The only legitimate interest we have in the Middle East is access to oil. Notice I said access, not control. It doesn't matter who controls it, because whoever does will be willing to sell it, since oil is inedible. Other than that, we have no — I repeat, no — legitimate interests, national or otherwise, in that region of the world.

American politicians need to get over their fear of the

See REESE, Page 5

Charley Reese
Columnist



THE PAMPA NEWS

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Texas Thoughts

By The Associated Press

A sample of editorial opinion around Texas:

■ **March 19**

Austin American-Statesman on Sunshine Week:

American-Statesman intern Marcy Miranda exercised her right as a citizen by asking for public information from officials in Hays, Williamson and Travis counties. Her request netted her very little information and a visit from the FBI.

As part of Sunshine Week a national effort sponsored by the American

Society of Newspaper Editors Miranda was detailed to ask county officials in the American-Statesman circulation area for a look at their Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan. Federal law requires the plans be made available to anyone who asks.

Of the four counties Miranda visited, only Williamson did what the law requires and turned over the information. That means 75 percent of the information that should have been turned over was withheld. Not only that, but Miranda was investigated by the FBI just for asking for information that Congress deems public.

The implications are glaring. The law is as plain as the defiance of it. On top of that, people who asked to see it earn themselves a visit from federal agents.

Security issues in an open society are always complicated. There was nothing complicated here because the information Miranda sought was public.

The implications are frightening. After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks we talked a lot about how we could tell if the terrorists won. If access to basic information is cut off, they have won.

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ECONOMY

Bernanke expansion not out of steam

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke told Congress today he doesn't believe the economy will slip into a recession and rejected the notion raised by his predecessor, Alan Greenspan, that the economic expansion, which started in late 2001, could be running out of steam.

"I would make a point, there seems to be a sense that expansions die of old age. ...I don't think the evidence supports that," Bernanke said in testimony to Congress' Joint Economic Committee.

Bernanke also explained that last week's change in the Federal Reserve's policy statement, which hints of future rate moves, was done to achieve more leeway. "We are looking for a bit more flexibility," he explained.

"The risks had increased on both sides," Bernanke said, referring to both the increased threat of higher inflation on the one hand and weaker-than-expected economic growth, on the other.

Last week the Fed again held a key interest rate steady at 5.25 percent, which hasn't budged since August. But the Fed also said there was a possibility that rates could go down or up. Previous policy statements had spoken only of the possibility of rate increases. Wall Street rallied last week on the new language, interpreting it as suggesting the possibility of a rate cut.

The direction of rates, the Fed said at the time, hinges on what incoming barometers say about the economy and inflation. Bernanke repeated that point on Wednesday.

"I do want to emphasize we have not shifted away from an inflation bias," Bernanke said.

Stocks dropped sharply Wednesday in response to Bernanke's comments.

On another topic, Bernanke said the growing troubles in the market for risky mortgages thus far doesn't appear to be spreading to the overall economy. "At this juncture ... the

impact on the broader economy and financial markets of the problems in the subprime markets seems likely to be contained," he said.

It marked Bernanke's most extensive discussion yet of the mounting problems in the risky mortgage market.

'Although the turmoil in the subprime mortgage market has created financial problems for many individuals and families, the implications of these developments for the housing market as a whole are less clear.'

— Ben Bernanke
Federal Reserve chair

Those troubles raise "some additional questions about the housing sector," which has been mired in a deep slump for more than a year, Bernanke said.

Fallout from the risky mortgage market is clobbering some lenders and homeowners and has stoked concerns on Wall Street, Capitol Hill and elsewhere.

So-called "subprime" lenders who make home loans to people with blemished credit histories or low incomes have been battered. Weak home prices and rising interest rates have made it increasingly difficult for borrowers to keep up with their payments. Delinquencies and foreclosures in the subprime mortgage market are soaring.

"Although the turmoil in the subprime mortgage market has created financial problems for many individuals and families, the implications of these developments for the housing market as a whole are less clear," Bernanke said.

The crumbling housing market has been a major factor behind the slowdown in the U.S. economy. Bernanke said the "near-term prospects for the housing market remain uncertain."

Even so, Bernanke stuck with the Federal Reserve's assessment that the economy is likely to grow at a moderate pace over the coming quarters. He also repeated the Fed's belief that inflation also should ease in the months ahead, but he warned that underlying inflation remains "uncomfortably high."

To be sure, Bernanke was careful to hedge the Fed's economic bets. The housing slump could turn out to be worse than expected, perhaps exacerbated by problems in the market for risky mortgages, he said. Recent weakness in business investment also could persist, he added. Those forces could further dampen economic growth.

On the other hand, consumers, who proved "quite resilient" despite the housing slump and increases in energy prices, could continue to keep spending at a pace that would make the economy grow faster than currently expected, he said. And, there are other forces, including a still-good jobs market that is producing fatter paychecks, that could push up inflation.

The Fed chief's testimony comes amid fresh questions about the country's economic health, given problems with subprime mortgages, stock market turbulence and worries about the severity of the housing slump.

Against this backdrop, Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, and some other lawmakers said the Fed should be open to cutting interest rates.

"Another reason to be open to an easing of monetary policy is the concern that the housing market adjustment is far from over," Schumer said. "Recent housing data has offered little encouragement that the market might be stabilizing. So it is still too early to tell if the worst is over for the housing market," he added.

Reagan

Continued from Page 4

dant reliable and affordable energy, and you don't get there with wind power or solar power or any of these other clean, green, fanciful, imaginary energy technologies that they approve of."

Gore tells us that we must change our way of life by cutting our use of energy. For many Africans, however, changing their way of life simply means dying.

Reese

Continued from Page 4

Israeli lobby and attend to America's business. We should cut the strings, stop the tax giveaways, repeal all of the special legislation and tell the Israelis they are on their own.

But, as John Wayne once said, that'll be the day.
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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Events calendar

• **The Comprehensive Breast Center** of the Don and Sybil Harrington Cancer Center has announced the following upcoming breast cancer screening clinic: April 23, Shepard's Crook Nursing Agency, 916 N. Crest. Participants will receive a low-cost self-exam mammogram and a breast health appraisal along with individual instruction by a registered nurse in breast self-examination. Funding is available through the Texas Department of Health for Texas residents who qualify for assistance. All exams are by appointment only. For more information, call (806) 356-1905 or 1-800-377-4673.

• **Pampa Chapter of Ducks Unlimited** will meet Friday for a "ruffling of feathers" at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. at the Pampa Chamber of Commerce, 200 N. Ballard. The price of admission is \$35 for singles or \$45 for couples. The fee to sponsor a couple is \$270. For more information, call 663-9616.

• **Amarillo Museum of Art's Alliance**, a non-profit fund-raising auxiliary, will host its annual membership brunch from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday at the home of Magdalena McMordie, 3200 Hawthorne St., in Amarillo. The event will include the election of officers. The alliance, established in 1972, is celebrating its 35th anniversary. Membership opportunities are available. For more information, contact the museum at (806) 371-5050 or log onto www.AMARILLOART.org on the Internet.

• **S.T.A.R. will sponsor** a free "Back in Control" parent training from 9

a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday at 1500 S. Taylor in Amarillo. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Some CEUs will be available. To pre-register or for more information, call (806) 359-2005.

• **Ten white flowering trees** will be given to each person who joins The National Arbor Day Foundation throughout the month. The free trees are part of the nonprofit Foundation's Trees for America campaign. The trees will be shipped postpaid at the right time for planting between March 1 and May 31 with enclosed planting instructions. The six to twelve inch trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free of charge. Members also receive a subscription to the Foundation's colorful bimonthly publication, "Arbor Day" and "The Tree Book" with information about tree planting and care. To receive the free trees, send a \$10 membership contribution to Ten Free Trees, National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Ave., Nebraska City, NE 68410, by March 31. For more information, check out the foundation's Web site at www.arborday.org on the Internet.

• **St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School** will serve an enchilada dinner from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday in the school cafeteria as a fund-raiser. Cost per person is \$6.

• **Texas Cooperative Extension** will conduct a private pesticide application and M-44 license certification worth three CEUs on Tuesday at the Clarendon College RFO Building in Clarendon. The private pesticide license training will begin at 8 a.m. A state certifica-

tion test will be administered at 1 p.m. by Texas Department of Agriculture for all who qualify. The M-44 license training will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the same location. For more information, contact the Donley County Extension Service at (806) 874-2141.

• **Miami Lions Club** will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a formal banquet at 7 p.m. April 10 in Roberts County Museum Art Room in Miami. Past Miami Lions are invited to attend. District Gov. Gaye Cotton of Hereford and Zone Chair Gaye Henderson of Perryton will be present. The club was established on April 12, 1957, and was sponsored by Pampa Evening Lions Club. For more information, call (806) 868-9061.

• **Pampa Book Club** will discuss the following books: "Peace Like a River" by Leif Enger, April 11; and "The Last Promise" by Richard Evans, May 9. The group meets at 10 a.m. in the Texas Room at Lovett Memorial Library.

• **The 2007 "Fang-Tastic" Rattlesnake Hunt** is slated April 13-15 at Waurika, Okla. The event is being sponsored by Waurika Fire Department and will include James White and the Outlaw Handlers of Granbury; a butcher shop with snake meat, rattlers and hides; a photo booth for pictures with a live diamondback; a carnival; and more. A contest to judge the longest snake, the snake with the most rattles and the shortest snake will also be conducted. Events are all day Saturday and Sunday. For more information, call (580) 228-2553.

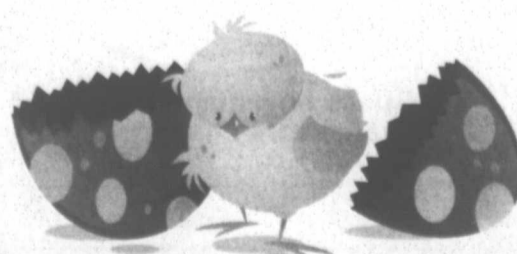
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Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: I have lived with my best friend, "Lance," for five years on and off. Lance is 30; I am 24. Lately we have been discussing marriage. The problem is, he is gay, and the marriage would be for convenience only. I am not in love with Lance, nor is he in love with me. He thinks this would be a good idea because of the financial benefits, tax breaks and the like. I am a little hesitant because I still want the fairy tale. I want the little house with its white picket fence and kids running around in the yard. We have discussed children, and we know it's possible to have them without having to have sex. What is your opinion? — UNDECIDED IN NEW MEXICO

DEAR UNDECIDED: I recommend against what you have in mind. You and Lance are still young. Your lives are just beginning, and the chances of you both meeting someone you could fall in love with are great. Rather than "settling" in order to take advantage of tax breaks, you would both be happier in the long run if you stay true to yourselves and live your lives as who you really are -- best friends, but not spouses.

DEAR ABBY: I have always had a difficult relationship with my siblings. I have befriended them and tried to do for them, but they are mean-spirited and selfish. My brother has also physically abused me. (He has been jailed several times for hitting his longtime girlfriend.) When I turned 40 this year, I finally decided that enough is enough. My psychiatrist, my husband and my friends agree that it's time for me to set boundaries and end these toxic relationships. I feel good about my decision. The problem is that my parents do not. They

feel my two daughters, ages 4 1/2 and 20 months, should have a relationship with their aunt and uncle even if I don't. They accuse me of "brainwashing" my children and insist that my girls be allowed to see my siblings regularly and "make up their own minds" on the subject. I say it is my responsibility to protect my daughters and that my decision should be respected. Last weekend, when my older daughter was visiting my folks, they invited my brother to visit. They knew this was against my wishes and did it behind my back. Naturally, my daughter told me about it. Moreover, whenever my daughter visits them, they put her on the phone with my siblings and try to forge a relationship between them. Because of all this, I told my folks they may have only supervised visits with my children. Do you think this was going too far? — KAREN IN ATLANTA

DEAR KAREN: It is unfortunate that it came to that, but no, I do not. If I were in your shoes, I wouldn't be thrilled to have my children associate with someone who had been jailed for the inability to control his temper -- in addition to having abused me. Please follow the good advice you have received from your husband, your friends and your psychiatrist. By not dealing with the hostility between siblings when you were children, your parents had a hand in the evolution of the situation that has resulted. Sad as it is to say, not all families are functional. And before you are finished with therapy, you may need more sessions with your psychiatrist to figure out what you need to do about your relationship with your parents.

For Better Or For Worse



Zits



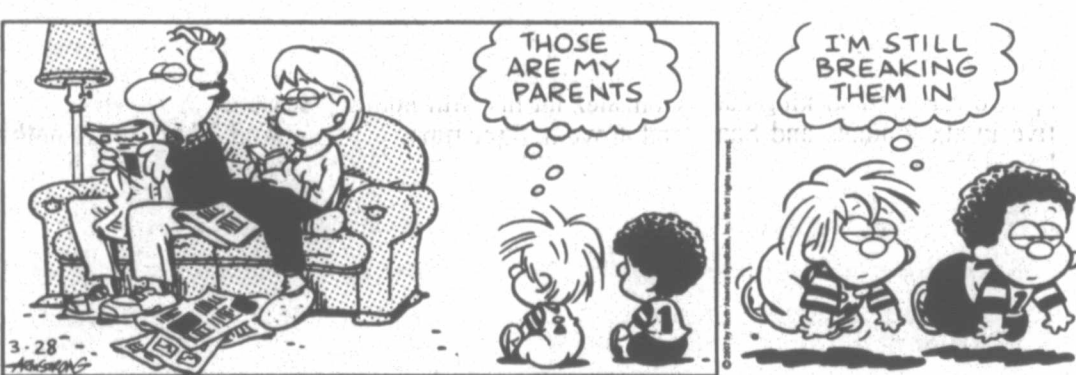
Garfield



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Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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1 Tube tops

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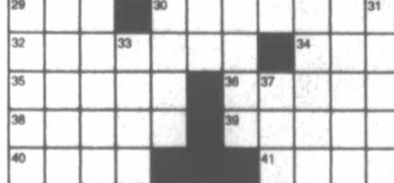
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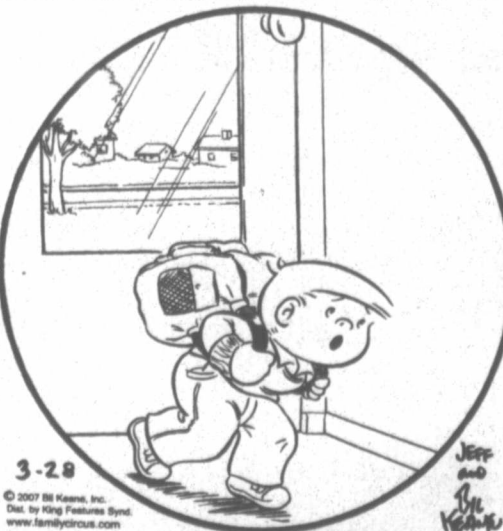


Marmaduke



The Family Circus

By Bil Keane



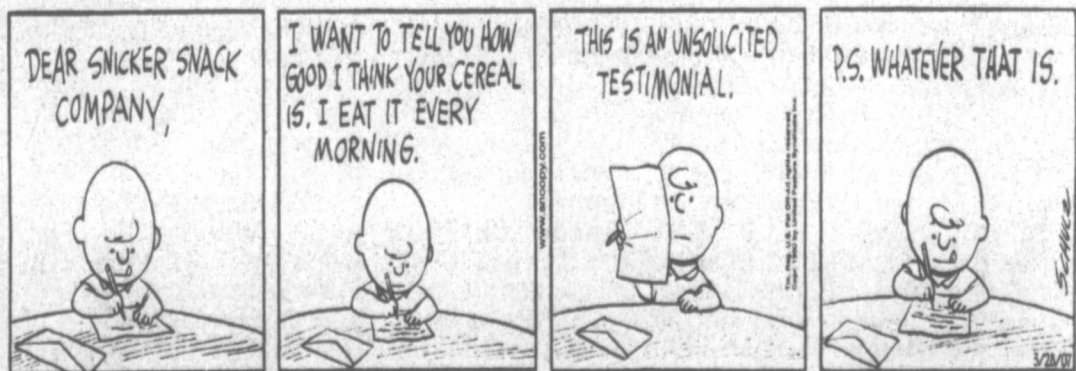
B.C.



Haggar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



Sports Day

Tournament champs



The Cross Roads team went 3-0 to take first place in the Shamrock Little Dribbles tournament held March 22-24. Pictured here are: (Back row, L-R) Coach Ron Carr, Alexa O'Brien, Jessica Gipps, Monti Sappenfield, Taylor Morgan, Brandi Surrage, Shelby Bell and Asst. Coach Roy Lott. (Front Row, L-R) Khorri Lott and Kylee Metts. Not pictured are Jessie Smith and Shelbie Carr.

Optimist Club to have final baseball/softball registration Friday

Pampa Optimist Baseball/Softball 2007 Club will have one final day of registration on Friday from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Optimist building. All players, including those returning from last year, must be registered by that time in order to be able to play this year.

"We have had eight days of registration this year and have most of our teams set," said Kevin Davis, Optimist Baseball Commissioner. "However, we have room for a few more players. For example, in the 11-12 Cal Ripken Baseball League, we have two teams with 12 players and three teams with 11 players giving us room for three more players in that league."

Drafts have already been completed and practice has already started in several leagues. "We usually assign

late sign-ups on a blind shuffle type basis," Davis said.

"We need a few more players to have 15 teams in our 5-6 T-Ball League," Davis said. "We have nine 7-8 Pitching Machine League teams, six 9-10 Cal Ripken teams and six or seven Babe Ruth teams, depending on how many out of town teams we wind up with."

Davis continued, "We are still in the process of organizing the girls' softball program and should have the teams set by the end of the week."

Games are scheduled to begin in most leagues the week of April 16. The season will conclude in most leagues the second or third week in June.

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

Maddux looks sharp, Padres score 24 runs in win over Rangers

By The Associated Press

Greg Maddux looked sharp in his last spring training start and the San Diego Padres put on quite the power display to back him.

Maddux had his longest outing of the spring, giving up two runs and striking out five in six innings, and San Diego banged out a spring-high 25 hits in a 24-7 victory over the Texas Rangers on Tuesday.

"Very pleased," Maddux said in Surprise, Ariz. "I was glad to survive out there. It's

not like your outfielders practice every day to catch balls in 20-mile-an-hour winds."

Russell Branyan had four hits for San Diego, including his fourth and fifth home runs of the spring. He drove in five runs. Adrian Gonzalez hit his fifth homer and drove in three runs.

Kevin Millwood gave up 12 hits and nine earned runs in 4 1-3 innings for the Rangers.

"I'm not worried about it," Millwood said. "Every time

I made a mistake they hit it hard, and that doesn't usually happen."

Albert Pujols got the most of his first home run of the spring and Barry Bonds put in one last Cactus League game before heading north for the start of the regular season.

And that was nothing compared to the show put on by Greg Maddux and the San Diego Padres.

Pujols hit a first-inning homer off Dodgers starter Brett Tomko that not only

cleared the left-field fence but landed on the balcony outside the Florida Marlins' offices. The home run came in his 63rd at-bat.

"The last couple weeks have been tough," said Pujols, who had two of the Cardinals' six hits in their 3-0 victory and raised his average to .262. "I haven't been swinging the bat too good. I've been working the last couple of days and seeing the ball better, putting together better at-bats, right where you want to be and

this is the right time to do it." Cardinals ace Chris Carpenter allowed four hits in seven innings in Jupiter, Fla. He struck out five and walked two.

In Peoria, Ariz., Bonds went 1-for-2 as the designated hitter in the Giants' 9-8 win over the Seattle Mariners, his final work day in Arizona. A handful of Giants veterans, including new ace Barry Zito, also were scheduled to fly out Tuesday night a day before the team officially breaks

camp following a game with the Milwaukee Brewers at Scottsdale Stadium on Wednesday.

"Most of these guys are ready to go, ready to get north," said bench coach Ron Wotus, the acting manager for a few days while Bruce Bochy attends his mother's funeral in Florida. "We have been here a long time."

Bonds batted .297 (11-for-37) with five home runs, three doubles and 10 RBIs in 15 Cactus League games.

Replay now permanent in NFL

PHOENIX (AP) — Coaches throwing challenge flags and referees sticking their heads in hoods will remain NFL fixtures. Forever.

On Tuesday, instant replay as an officiating tool became a permanent part of pro football.

"Instant replay is an accepted part of the game. It's what we are," said Atlanta Falcons general manager Rich McKay, co-chairman of the competition committee that recommended the change. "There was not really much discussion about it."

League owners voted 30-2, with Cincinnati and Arizona dissenting. All but three stadiums will be equipped with high-definition equipment and will be recabled before the upcoming season, at a cost of as much as \$300,000 per club. The stadiums being replaced in Irving, Texas, Indianapolis and East Rutherford, N.J., will not get the updates.

McKay, once a staunch opponent of replay, has gone

full circle, as have most owners.

"People like myself, I was an opponent of the old system, when the eye in the sky decided which play to review," he said. "As the system was enhanced, with a limited system of challenges, a lot more became comfortable with how it operates. It's not too obtrusive with our game and it does not slow down games."

"I think coaches are more comfortable with it. They were hesitant with the challenge system, and I think they've become more comfortable."

With replay out of the way, another controversial topic — overtime — will be addressed on Wednesday. In part, at least.

McKay was not optimistic that the recommendation to move the kickoff for overtime from the 30-yard line to the 35 would pass. He said some people were concerned about the effect on the return game, and that a group of owners would favor a mandatory two-possession

overtime in which each team gets the ball once.

That has not been proposed, however. Nor has any system similar to the college overtimes, or a continuation of the game from where it ended after four quarters.

"I'm bothered by the stats with respect to overtime," McKay said, citing a significant spike since 1997 in how many teams won overtime games after also winning the coin toss. That percentage went from 55.9 from 1994-97 to 64.6 for the next four seasons. And after it dropped to 60 percent for 2002-05, it went up to 63.6 last season.

"We're a league that tries to balance the field and clearly the field is not balanced with respect to overtime with the kickoff."

On Tuesday, owners also voted unanimously to allow a second interviewing window for assistant coaches on Super Bowl teams who are in the running for other head coaching jobs. Previously, only during the week after the season ended could an interview be conducted.

21 and invincible, Mavs add 1 more victory over Hornets

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Even a throwback night couldn't help the New Orleans Hornets hearken back to the times when they beat the Dallas Mavericks.

Not against a team so proven at establishing and extending winning streaks.

Josh Howard had 25 points and 10 rebounds, and the Mavericks beat New Orleans 105-89 Tuesday night for their 21st straight victory over the Hornets.

For a team that's already become the first in NBA history to have three winning streaks of 12 games or longer in a single season, it was also the seventh straight win for the Mavericks and their sixth in a row on the road.

"It was really a fun trip, obviously. We're trying to work hard offensively moving the ball, and everybody's making shots," said Dallas forward Dirk Nowitzki, who scored 15 points while shaking off an illness. "It was a fun trip."

Jason Terry added 19 points and seven assists, and Devin Harris scored 14 points for Dallas. The Mavericks are already past halfway to an unprecedented fourth 12-game winning streak.

Dallas needs only one more win to match the franchise record of 60, set in 2002-03 and matched last season.

"We just knew we wanted to get better as

a team going on this road trip. In the playoffs, you need wins on the road," Howard said. "We've kind of proven to ourselves right now that we can get wins on the road."

The Hornets haven't beaten Dallas since the turn of the century, the longest losing streak for one team against an opponent in the NBA, NFL, NHL or Major League Baseball. The Mavericks' last loss in the series came on Nov. 17, 1999, in Charlotte.

On a night when fans were asked to wear retro clothing from the 1970s and '80s, Dallas led by 25 points after three quarters, and the team's top three scorers were able to watch the entire fourth quarter from the bench. Hornets coach Byron Scott said he thought his team had quit even before then.

"With 18 minutes left, down 15 points, they said, 'It's too hard. That is very discouraging to a coach,'" Scott said. "I told them I don't want to see that again."

Scott said he didn't think the losing streak against the Mavericks "had anything to do with it."

"I think they saw a mountain that couldn't be moved," Scott said. "They said, 'We can't even push it. It's not going anywhere.' I don't care if it can be moved or not. You keep pushing. You keep trying to move it. We stopped."

Michael the Great: Phelps still wowing them at the pool

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Michael Phelps stood on deck with 50 Cent blaring in one ear, a steely determination in both eyes. When his name was announced to the crowd at Rod Laver Arena, the young American did nothing more than stare down the strip of water at his feet.

Next door at the warmup pool, Phelps' teammates stopped what they were

doing — even those who had races of their own coming up at the world championships. They had to see this one for themselves, so they paused to watch it on a big screen.

"I had a thought in my head," Aaron Peirsol would say later, "that this was going to be one of those legendary races."

Boy, was it ever!

With four laps of the pool Tuesday night, Michael

Phelps wiped out Hoogie and took down the ghost of Thorpedo, leaving little doubt that we're all getting the privilege of watching the greatest swimmer ever to hit the pool.

"You just can't count him out of any race that he's in," said Mark Schubert, head coach of the U.S. team. "He's obviously on a mission. He's going to be real special here — and he's

going to be real special a year from now."

Phelps already is special, of course, his legacy cemented by performances such as his six-gold, two-bronze medal haul at the 2004 Athens Olympics, or his five world records — two of them in different events on the same day — at the 2003 world championships in Barcelona.

But a magical swim in the

200-meter freestyle might have been the best yet, a swirling symphony of wind-milling arms, flapping feet, somersaulting turns and rocket-like bursts just beneath the water line of the temporary pool.

"I will say," Phelps allowed, "everything was pretty close to perfect in that race."

On a night when four world records fell, three of

them to the powerful U.S. team, no one stood out more than the 21-year-old who loves hip-hop music, video games and a pet bulldog that he had to leave back home in Michigan.

The 200-meter freestyle record was one of swimming's hallowed marks, the time of 1 minute, 44.06 seconds set six years ago by Australia's Ian Thorpe, the iconic "Thorpedo."

Tanking games? If only NBA's bad teams were that good

By JIM LITKE
AP Sports Columnist

It's easy to see how fans of the Memphis Grizzlies and just about every team in the NBA's Atlantic Division could get the wrong impression.

Short of a confession, though, there's still no way to prove a team is tanking games. Remember that as the clunkers pile up during the last dozen or so regular-season games remaining on each team's schedule.

Conspiracy theorists love this time of year because the draft matters way more in the NBA than in major league baseball, even more than in the NFL, and more this year than most. It's one of the deepest in a while and likely topped by Ohio State's Greg Oden and Texas' Kevin Durant, two guys who need seasoning but could dominate for a decade.

With only five players on the floor, nearly all of the league's championships have been won by teams that locked up one or two of the best, and most of those come to town as one of the first six players taken in the draft. Less obvious is whether it's

really worth losing games to get there, and if so, how many.

Evidence of teams not giving — how to put this? — their all in recent days is scattered all around. The Bucks, already languishing near the bottom of the Eastern Conference, shut down two of their best players, Andrew Bogut and Charlie Villanueva, rather than risk letting nagging injuries become chronic ones. Last week the Celtics, who are looking up at the Bucks, left all five starters on the bench as they blew an 18-point lead to lowly Charlotte.

"I was not throwing the game, or anything like that," Boston coach Doc Rivers said.

"I've heard all those questions. Honestly, I got to the point early in the fourth quarter and I turned to the coaches and said to them, 'We are either going to win or lose with this group.'"

Not to be outdone, Charlotte played New Jersey a few nights later already minus two injured starters and decided to sit two others, Gerald Wallace and

Raymond Felton, for good measure — and lost.

Conspiracy theorists immediately began arguing whether: a.) Wallace and Felton sat because they needed the rest; b.) Bobcats part-owner Michael Jordan ordered the benchings to improve his own team's chances of losing and thus gaining an extra pingpong ball in the lottery; or c.) since those same Nets are fighting the free-falling Knicks, among others, for the eighth and final playoff spot in the East, Jordan did it because of a lifelong grudge against Knicks coach Isiah Thomas.

And of course, it didn't help matters when Rockets coach Jeff Van Gundy told the Houston Chronicle earlier this week he had a plan that would keep teams from losing intentionally.

"I don't want to accuse anyone of anything. I would say to take away any possible conflict of interest, everyone should have an equal chance at the top pick all the way down. That way there would be absolutely no question by anybody about anything."

"If it's better for the game,

they should do it," Van Gundy added. "I never quite understood why losing is rewarded, other than (for) parity."

But parity is precisely the point.

There's not a business in the land that wouldn't jump at the chance for a do-over every year, but only pro sports makes it a point to grant that wish. Unfortunately, few of those wishes pan out.

Even with a lottery pick, chances of drafting a player who blossoms into a Magic Johnson, Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal or Dwyane Wade are slim enough. And research by ESPN.com concluded that even a five-game drop in the standings improves a team's chances of landing the top pick in the lottery by only a few percentage points. Few enough, anyway, that it would make a difference "only about once every two decades."

The NBA has explained the math countless times and tweaked the draft rules nearly as often to take even that incentive away. Drafts were originally based on territorial rights, then the top pick

awarded to the winner of a coin flip between the worst teams. After widespread accusations of tanking in the months leading up to the 1984 draft — the top five picks in order: Hakeem Olajuwon, Sam Bowie, Jordan, Sam Perkins, Charles Barkley — the league put one envelope for each non-playoff team in a basket and drew out a winner.

The following year, with Patrick Ewing as the top prize, commissioner David Stern pulled the Knicks envelope first and set in motion a rumor that persists to this day — that the Knicks envelope was stuck in a freezer just before the selection so he'd have no trouble finding it. After the Magic landed O'Neal and Penny Hardaway with the top picks in successive drafts, the NBA tried weighting the lottery so the worst teams' chances improved by giving them more pingpong balls in the hopper.

A lot of good that will do the Knicks. They've played just well enough to stave off Thomas' firing, but since the reprieve, have dropped six of

their last seven heading into Wednesday's home game against Cleveland. Because the Knicks agreed to swap first-round picks with the Bulls in the deal that brought Eddy Curry to New York, they could fall into the lottery and wind up drafting in Chicago's position — likely somewhere above No. 20 — instead. But they're certain to have competition.

No less a conspiracy theorist than Dallas owner Mark Cuban saw this coming. Back in January, he asked on his Web site, blogmaverick.com, "Could it be that if the division continues to win at the same percentages that only the Knicks will (have) an incentive not to tank the season and win the division by default?"

"Of course," Cuban added, "the chances of any of this are slim, right?"

Right.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at jlitkeap.org

Broyles tells paper he's offered basketball job

LITTLE ROCK (AP) — Arkansas athletic director Frank Broyles says he's offered the Razorbacks' basketball coaching job to someone, but he wouldn't say to whom.

"We could have a quick announcement," Broyles told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. "Or it could fall through. I've offered the job, and we're waiting to hear."

Speculation has centered on Texas A&M coach Billy Gillispie, who took the Aggies to the Sweet 16 this year. Arkansas fired Stan Heath on Monday, and attention immediately turned to Gillispie.

Broyles said he has not talked to any coaches, but that "the one I'm trying to get knows I want him to have the job."

No matter who ends up coaching Arkansas, it will be time for the Razorback Foundation to open its checkbook again. The school's private fundraising arm will be indebted to three different basketball coaches once the Razorbacks hire a new one.

With Heath's firing, his contract

must be bought out, and Arkansas' financial obligation to Nolan Richardson — fired in 2002 — doesn't end until next year.

And the new coach will be compensated in part with money from the foundation in addition to the salary paid by the university, as has been the case with every major coach for several years.

Chuck Dicus, the foundation's president, says his group has no say in personnel matters such as Heath's firing.

"We don't involve ourselves in decisions about hiring or firing. That's purely a university matter," Dicus said. "We know what our contractual obligations are. We're willing to follow through on those when someone is terminated. When someone is hired, we of course work with the university as far as making them aware of funds available for certain things."

Richardson's buyout was for \$500,000 a year, and Heath's is reportedly for \$300,000 a year for three years.

Dicus said he trusts Broyles to

make smart decisions when it comes to financial commitments.

"He's real good at what he does," Dicus said. "He knows what it takes to hire a coach. He's not going to overstep his bounds."

Heath indicated Monday that Broyles was concerned about season ticket sales and the state of Arkansas' fan base. Arkansas' actual attendance was around 14,400 per home game this season. The Razorbacks averaged 18,294 fans at Bud Walton Arena in 1998-1999, a figure that fell to 15,065 by 2001-02, the season Nolan Richardson was fired.

Heath replaced Richardson, and Arkansas has averaged fewer than 16,000 fans at home ever since.

Dicus said he did not notice a major decline in contributions, however.

"I'm not certain if there's a significant increase or decrease during his tenure here," Dicus said. "Our contributions are steady — reasonably steady. I would put it that way, year in and year out, even when we have a really good year or one not so good."

Stars finish strong over Coyotes

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Stars were vulnerable for most of the first two periods, but they made up for their sluggish start with a furious finish to wrap up a playoff berth.

Mike Ribeiro scored two goals, Mike Modano notched the 505th of his career to extend his record for U.S.-born players, and the Stars routed the Phoenix Coyotes 6-0 on Tuesday night.

Marty Turco made 21 saves for his 30th career shutout, and the Stars also got goals from Jere Lehtinen, Ladislav Nagy and Loui Eriksson to improve to 8-1-1 in their past 10 games.

The Stars were clinging to a 1-0 lead with a little more than seven minutes left in the second period before goals

by Lehtinen and Modano gave Dallas some breathing room heading into the third period.

"We just had a bad start and had a lot of turnovers," Ribeiro said. "But we created some turnovers later in the game that led to some good scoring chances. We had only four shots halfway through the game but we found a way to score. I know if we play a better team with a start like that, it will be a different story."

Dallas finished the season series against Phoenix at 7-1 to move to 98 points, two behind the first-place Anaheim Ducks in the Pacific Division.

The Stars clinched a spot in the playoffs when Colorado lost to Vancouver.

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-28 CRYPTOQUOTE

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QV SCZBJU LZ JLEU CFU

ECLJXFU CZB WKKUWW

WVXFKU XZH ZVPZ

Yesterday's Cryptquote: REINHART WAS NEVER HIS MOTHER'S FAVORITE — AND HE WAS AN ONLY CHILD. — THOMAS BERGER

Clemson Tigers advance over Air Force

NEW YORK (AP) — The Clemson Tigers walked off the court at Madison Square Garden thrilled to be playing for a title — and relieved to be done with Air Force.

K.C. Rivers scored 19 points as Clemson held on and advanced to the National Invitation Tournament championship with a 68-67 victory over the Falcons Tuesday night.

"All of our guys made big plays down the stretch to hold them off," coach Oliver

Purnell said. "I thought we really showed some mental toughness and the desire to win this thing."

Trevor Booker added 13 points for Clemson (25-10), which will play West Virginia (26-9) for the championship Thursday night. The Mountaineers beat Mississippi State 63-62 on Darris Nichols' buzzer-beating 3-pointer in the earlier game.

Clemson, which tied the 1986-87 Tigers for most

wins in a season with its fourth straight victory, reached the NIT finals for the second time — and first since losing to California in 1999. After being snubbed for the NCAA tournament, the Tigers are motivated to bring an NIT title home.

"It would mean a lot to me because it would kind of get this bitter taste out of my mouth of everything that's happened before," Rivers said.

Nick Welch scored 16

points and Matt McCraw 15 for Air Force (26-9), which had its three-game winning streak stopped after reaching the NIT semifinals for the first time in program history.

"For our seniors, to culminate their career on this floor and in this city is very special," coach Jeff Bzdelic said. "It hurts that it ended."

But the Falcons didn't go away easily. The Tigers had to hang on in this one after leading by as many as 13 early in the second half.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, March 29, 2007.

Excess takes you in a new direction. How you describe a situation could change substantially. Extremes mark your decision and fiery actions. Your circle of friends could transform, as people and needs change. Impulsiveness and spontaneity force new doors to open. If you are single, move in a new direction, looking at new types of people. Romance could be the headline of your year. If you are attached, you have the choice whether to stoke the fires of romance. LEO is always a good time.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic, 4-Positive, 3-Average, 2-So-so, 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Just because you get some flak doesn't mean you have lost your magnet touch. Others might test the limits concerning a goal or mutual decision. Think positively and move with the moment. Express your innate creativity. Tonight: Toss yourself into the whirlwind of life.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ You could be torn between two different interests and really not know which way to go. If you stop and think about it, if you don't honor who you are and your inner needs, nothing will work. If you follow that idea, you'll head out into clear waters. Tonight: Home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You have a way with words that draws many to you. Right now, mixed messages might cause a problem. Stay centered and question what you want more often if heading into murky, uncomfortable waters. Tonight: As you like.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ You might want to revise your thinking because of a developing personal matter. You might not visualize what is going on as clearly as you'd like. Ask for feedback, even if you might be uncomfortable and need to make changes. Tonight: Easy does it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ The morning could push you in many different directions and force your hand. How you handle a partner or people in general might need some revision. Trust what you think and feel this afternoon. Your ability to reinvent yourself might be on call. Tonight: Ever playful.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Though you believe you are on the right course, you'll discover otherwise. Pull back and relax. Others' reactions could change dramatically. You know far more than you are willing to share. Tonight: New information heads your way.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ You speak your mind, and others hear you — at least in the afternoon. Up until that point, you could feel a bit crazy and silly. Know when to say "enough" and head in a new direction. Be responsive to a special person. Tonight: In the whirlwind of life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Your ability to get past an issue yet understand what needs to happen within your immediate core of friends emerges. You simply might not buy someone's story anymore. How you let this person know that the jig is up can have many different results. Tonight: Easy does it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Your willingness to head in a different direction could earmark your dealings and decisions. You might want to revamp your thinking. Listen to a friend at a distance. Walk in another's shoes. Tonight: You gain new insight.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Work with others and deal with a situation head-on. You might be uncomfortable with information that heads your way. Your intuition helps with a partnership and perhaps a money venture. Tonight: Togetherness.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ You make a difference. You could, however, challenge others, forcing them to retreat, at least this morning. Dig in and understand what is ailing a friend. You might be able to make everyone happy and not even mind. Tonight: Say "yes."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ You might want to try something differently or reach out for an associate. Just when you feel you are on a roll, events force you to juggle and rethink. Consider options with an eye to greater daily ease. Tonight: Go for a walk or opt for some other form of exercise.

BORN TODAY
Singer Pearl Bailey (1918), tennis pro Jennifer Capriati (1976), founder of Walmart Sam Walton (1918)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at <http://www.jacquelinebigar.com>.
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Kerry presses baseball to hold off on DirecTV deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. John Kerry urged Major League Baseball on Tuesday to hold off on a deal to put the sport's "Extra Innings" package of out-of-market games exclusively on DirecTV Group Inc. A top baseball official declined to agree, with opening day less than a week away.

Kerry, D-Mass., made the push at a Senate Commerce Committee hearing on behalf of subscribers to cable TV and EchoStar Communications Corp.'s Dish Network who had received the package previously.

The dispute concerns which homes will receive baseball's new television network in 2009: DirecTV, a satellite service, has agreed to carry that package as part of its deal. The company would also receive an equity stake in the channel.

At Tuesday's hearing, Rob Jacobson, president and CEO of iN Demand, owned by affiliates of the companies that own Time Warner Cable Inc., Comcast Corp. and Cox Communications Inc., offered to carry the package on the same terms that DirecTV is,

while putting off the issue of The Baseball Channel until it is launched.

"This would ensure that for the next two years at least, all baseball fans would have access to the 'Extra Innings' package," he said. "If we're unable to reach an agreement when the channel launches, we'd give baseball the right to cancel the 'Extra Innings' deal. We think this is a fair compromise."

Kerry, often playing the role of mediator, got behind the effort.

"What's the matter with that?" he asked Bob DuPuy, baseball's chief operating officer.

"We believe that DirecTV has the right to begin to help us build the channel," DuPuy answered, adding that the cable industry had nine months to negotiate a deal.

Kerry pressed the issue, suggesting that the status quo be kept in place while the sides tried to work out a deal.

DuPuy wouldn't agree to that, although he said, "Our door remains open" for a resolution.

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Peace in Israel focus of summit of Arab leaders

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Arab leaders opened a summit today to revive a plan for peace with Israel, with U.S. allies trying to enlist other Arabs in efforts to win Israeli and Western acceptance of the deal.

The two-day summit in the Saudi capital comes at a time when the United States has shown some progress in maneuvering all sides into place for a resumption in long-stalled negotiations.

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal and other Arab officials said Israel must accept the Arab offer.

"If Israel refuses, that means it doesn't want peace. Then (the conflict) goes back into the hands of the lords of war," al-Faisal said Tuesday.

The initiative, first launched by the Arab summit in 2002, offers Israel recognition and

permanent peace with all Arab countries in return for Israeli withdrawal from lands captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

It also calls for setting up a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital and a "just solution" to the issue of Palestinian refugees forced out of lands in what is now Israel.

Israel rejects a full withdrawal from the West Bank and east Jerusalem, and it strongly opposes the influx of large numbers of Palestinian refugees into the Jewish state.

'If Israel refuses, that means it doesn't want peace. Then (the conflict) goes back into the hands of the lords of war.'

— Saud al-Faisal
Saudi foreign minister

Israel rejected the Arab initiative in 2002, but Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said last week his country was willing to accept it with some changes, particularly if demands on Palestinian refugees were watered down.

The Arab summit plans to relaunch the peace plan without any changes. "They tell us to amend it, but we tell them to accept it first, then we can sit down at the negotiating table," Arab League Secretary-

General Amr Moussa said in a speech at the summit opening.

The summit will create "working groups" to promote the offer in talks with the United States, United Nations and Europe — and perhaps Israel. U.S. allies Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt are hoping that the groups can work behind the scenes to make the initiative more palatable to Israel and the West and the basis for a relaunching of talks.

Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdul-Ilah al-Khatib said there was a "potential" that the working groups could hold direct talks with Israel. "This has been discussed," he said in an interview published Wednesday in the Arab daily Al-Hayat.

Much depends on the makeup of the working groups, which could be the source of dispute at the summit.

San Antonio man set to die in Texas

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (AP) — A San Antonio man convicted of killing an Air Force officer during a carjacking 10 years ago heads to the Texas death chamber this evening.

Vincent Gutierrez, 28, would be the 10th prisoner to die by injection this year in the nation's busiest capital punishment state. Another execution is set for Thursday.

Gutierrez was one of two carjackers condemned for the March 1997 shooting death of Capt. Jose Cobo, whose body was shoved from his car and dumped on the shoulder of Interstate 410 during a morning rush hour in the Alamo city.

A Bexar County jury also decided Gutierrez' companion, Randy Arroyo, should receive lethal injection, but his death sentence was commuted to life after the U.S. Supreme Court two years ago ruled people could not be executed for crimes committed when they were under the age of 18. Arroyo was 17 when Cobo was killed. Gutierrez was 18.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals late week turned down an appeal to halt Gutierrez' execution. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles refused this week to commute his sentence to life. No late efforts to spare Gutierrez were planned.

"At this point, it's basically over," Gutierrez' lawyer, Alex Calhoun, said.

Just two weeks before the shooting, Gutierrez had been released from a two-month stint at a prison boot camp for a burglary conviction. It was the latest in a string of burglaries and thefts by the acknowledged street gang member.

"If I wouldn't have gotten locked up, I would have probably really been dead by now," he recently told the San Antonio Current, a weekly newspaper, from death row. "So, I've made the best of it while I was here, I think I did."

And he warned if he got out, "I'd create havoc in Texas."

He acknowledged the Cobo shooting — and expressed no remorse — saying he fired at the military officer because he didn't want to go back to jail for another robbery.

The Colombia-born Cobo, 39, was a 13-year Air Force veteran who was chief of maintenance training at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy at Lackland Air Force Base.

"It's such a sad case," said Bert Richardson, who was among the Bexar County assistant district attorneys prosecuting Cobo's accused killers. "He put himself through school. He had the American dream. He became an Air Force officer."

Cobo was abducted at gunpoint outside his apartment and was forced to the passenger side of his car. When he tried to bolt from the vehicle in slow rush-hour traffic, he was shot by Gutierrez, who was in the back seat of the Mazda sports car as Arroyo drove.

Authorities said Arroyo and Gutierrez chose Cobo's

car because Gutierrez had the same model and needed some

'If I wouldn't have gotten locked up, I would have probably really been dead by now. So, I've made the best of it while I was here. I think I did.'

— Vincent Gutierrez
Texas death row inmate

parts. Gutierrez' roommate, Christopher Suaste, had dropped them off at dawn March 11, 1997, outside Cobo's apartment, where they

hid until he left for work.

Suaste surrendered to police after his two companions were arrested. He's now serving a 35-year prison sentence for aggravated robbery.

He and Arroyo gave statements implicating Gutierrez as the shooter. The murder weapon, a .357-caliber Magnum pistol, plus another gun Gutierrez was carrying, were recovered from the San Antonio River. Cobo's car was recovered. It had been abandoned but not stripped.

On Thursday evening, a former Houston air conditioning contractor, Roy Lee Pippin, 51, is set to die for the slayings of two men shot 13 years ago in a Houston warehouse during a drug dispute.


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