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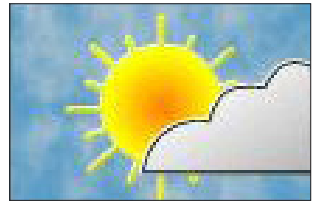


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BIG SPRING HERALD

WEDNESDAY

JULY 16, 2008



VOLUME 103, NUMBER 195

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

Council settles on water-sanitation rate hike

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Big Spring City Council opted to split water rate increases between its base rate for sanitation and water consumption rate Tuesday night, as the council wrapped up the second and final day of its annual budget work sessions.

According to city officials,

The hike
\$2.50 increase in sanitation
and 15.5-cent increase per
1,000 gallons of water

the rate increase — which will amount to a \$2.50 hike in customer's base rate for sanitation

and a 15.5-cent increase per 1,000 gallons of water used — is necessary to balance out a \$500,000 increase caused by the \$215,000 rate hike being passed along by the Colorado River Municipal Water District and a \$252,800 jump in the cost of chemicals.

City Manager Gary Fuqua said splitting the increase between the two rates helps make the hike as equitable as possible.

"I think the council looked at the options available and they basically split it 50/50 between the base rate and the consumption rate," said Fuqua. "I think its fair to everyone. I feel like the council is very concerned about those citizens on fixed incomes and took that into consideration, and that's why they directed us to split that increase. I think they are really looking

out for the people of the city and they understand economic times are hard, and I think we have a good, equitable budget."

The council also decided on a tax rate that will have most property owners breathing a sigh of relief, as the council settled on \$1.0227 per \$100 valuation, the same rate used for the 2007-2008

See **CITY**, Page 3A



HERALD Photo/Thomas Jenkins

John Kitsmiller, an area business manager with Smart Public Safety Software, explains the advantages of using one computer system for all local law enforcement agencies during a Howard County commissioner's meeting Tuesday morning in the county judge's courtroom.

Entities mull software for law enforcement use

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Howard County officials — joined by representatives from the city of Big Spring and 118th District Court — got a crash course in law enforcement and criminal proceedings software Tuesday with a presentation from a leading software designer.

John Kitsmiller, area business manager for public safety software company Smart, explained the ins and outs of the computer system during a meeting with county commissioners, as the court begins moving forward with the outfitting of the new 112-bed

See **SOFTWARE**, Page 3A

Coahoma ISD board narrows superintendent search to one

Motley County chief to take over position

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

And then there was one. Coahoma ISD trustees ended their search for a new district superintendent Tuesday night, naming Randy Brown, former

superintendent of Motley County School District in Matador, as the lone finalist for the position, which became vacant in April when ISD Superintendent Jerry Johnson retired.

Jim Dunlap and Dr. Russell Marshall, heads of Arrow Educational Services Inc., were recently hired by the district to screen candidates for the posi-

tion. Marshall was head of the search team that recruited Johnson for the position in 2005, according to Wayne Mitchell, interim chief of the district.

"The board named Mr. Brown as the lone finalist Tuesday night," said Mitchell. "There's a 21-day waiting period before the

See **CISD**, Page 3A

Plains Cotton Co-op to open facility here

BSEDC agrees to \$150,000 loan

By **BILL McCLELLAN**
News Editor

Record cotton crops in West Texas over the past few years will have an extra economic boost in Howard County, as the Plains Cotton Cooperative Association has decided to construct a storage facility near Big Spring.

To help give them a boost, the Big Spring Economic Development Corporation (BSEDC) agreed Tuesday to loan the cooperative \$150,000.

"It's our standard agreement," said Terry Wegman, BSEDC executive director. "For every \$10 in

"We don't want them to pay it back; what we are looking for is to create jobs."



McClellan

payroll, we give them \$1 credit."

The loan payout is over a 10-year period, meaning that if the Lubbock-based Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA) has a \$150,000 a year payroll,

it won't have to repay a dime.

"We don't want them to pay it back; what we are looking for is to create jobs," said Larry McLellan, BSEDC board member.

Wegman said the \$8 million project would be located off North U.S. Highway 87, west of Porter Henderson Implement Co.

In the first-year phase, the cooperative plans to build a 330,000 square-foot building and another 170,000 square-foot building and employ at least six

See **CO-OP**, Page 3A

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Wegman gets thumbs up at annual evaluation

By **BILL McCLELLAN**
News Editor

"Can you believe it's been a year?" Terry Wegman said over the constant drone of fan blades whirling as he waited in the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce lobby.

No, it certainly hadn't seemed like it had been 12 months since the former auto parts store owner was named executive director of the Big



Wegman

Spring Economic Development Corporation — at that time known as Moore Development for Big Spring.

But Tuesday evening, the board of directors was making its first annual evaluation of his performance while he waited in the fan-filled lobby.

The fans were drying out the flooring, which had gotten soaked sometime over the weekend when an reverse osmosis water filter split, flooding much of the building which houses both the chamber and economic development corporation.

"When I walked in here Monday morning, I knew something had happened, the floor was just like this," he said,

while making a swimming motion with his hand.

Apparently, some of the flooring in the old Montgomery Wards building had been covered with particleboard, and then carpeted over. The particleboard swelled and buckled as it soaked in the water.

Wegman was making small

See **WEGMAN**, Page 3A

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All-Star Marathon

AL finally tops NL, 4-3, after 15 innings of play

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — J.D. Drew wondered whether he'd be pitching soon. Clint Hurdle sounded out David Wright about his mound prowess.

It was the 15th inning of the final All-Star game at Yankee Stadium, and the bullpens were empty. As goodbyes go, this was a long, long one.

"It was just crazy how it seemed like it lasted forever," Texas second baseman Ian Kinsler said. "It was the last year for Yankee Stadium, the last All-Star game, and it's kind of fitting that it seemed like it lasted forever."

Not quite. Justin Morneau slid home just in time on Michael Young's sacrifice fly in the 15th inning, giving the American League a 4-3 victory that extended its unbeat-

en streak to 12.

In a game that began at dusk Tuesday and ended at 1:37 a.m. Wednesday morning, the grand old ballpark was half-empty when Young stopped a 4-hour, 50-minute marathon on the 453rd pitch. Given the ticket prices — \$525-\$725 in the lower deck, \$150 in the bleachers — fans deserved something extra. They got it.

Many of the 49 Hall of Famers honored during pregame pageantry likely were in bed by the final out. For Boston's Terry Francona, the AL manager, this took on the stress of a game that counts in the standings.

"I told Jim Leyland, 'I'll quit cursing, I'll quit chewing,'" he said, referring to the Detroit manager who was part of his coaching staff. "I lied."

The NL was given a pregame pep talk by Hall of Famer Ernie



AP photo/Ed Betz
Minnesota Twins first baseman Justin Morneau (33) of the American League team slides safely into home plate past Atlanta Braves catcher Brian McCann of the National League team, scoring the winning run on a sacrifice fly by Texas Rangers shortstop Michael Young in the 15th inning of the Major League Baseball All-Star Game at Yankee Stadium in New York, Wednesday. The American League won 4-3 over the National League.

Banks, whose motto is: "Let's play two!" And they nearly did, matching the NL's 2-1 win at Anaheim in 1967 for the longest All-Star game.

Winner Scott Kazmir and loser Brad Lidge were the last available pitchers. Some started to worry this would replicate 2002's 7-7, 12-inning tie in Milwaukee,

which caused the commissioner's office to expand the rosters.

Drew has reminded Francona that he could pitch in an emergency.

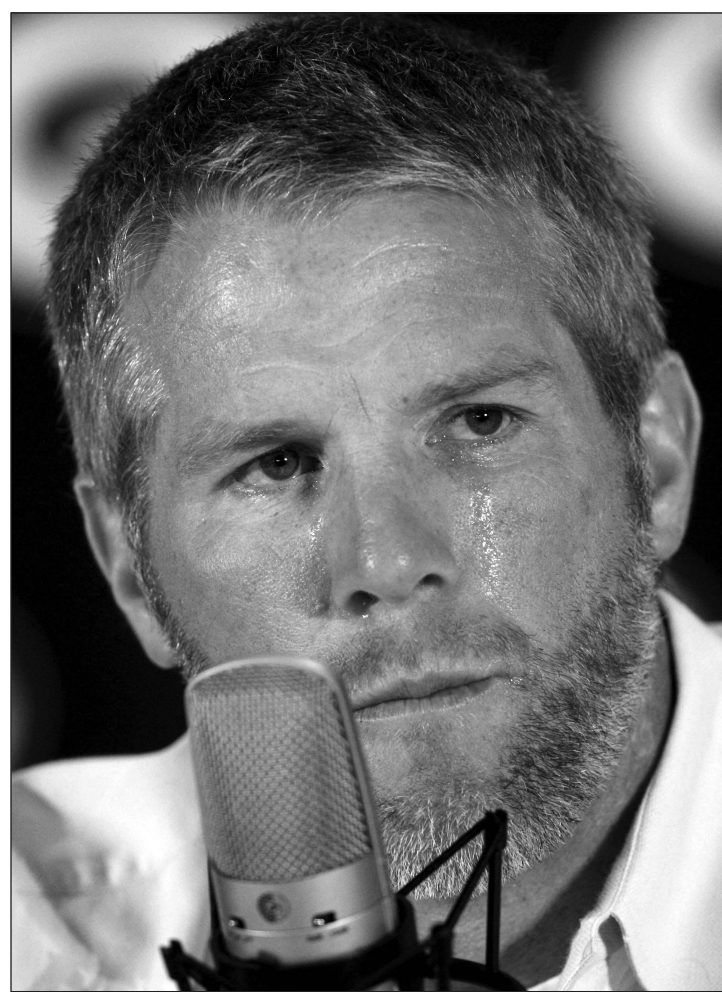
"Just give me a holler out here," the Red Sox right fielder remembered saying. "After it started to come to fruition, I was a little bit nervous."

Hurdle sought out Wright, the New York Mets third baseman who was a late addition to the roster as an injury replacement.

"I told David, 'You were the last pick, I went and got you. Have you ever pitched in an All-Star game?'" Hurdle said. "I was

See ALL-STARS, Page 2B

Retirement hard for most athletes Cowboys ink Hamlin to six-year contract



AP photo/Mark Hoffman/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
Tears roll down the face of Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre as he cries during a news conference announcing that he was officially retiring from football March 6 at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wis.

Brett Favre went on national television to try and explain something he couldn't quite explain. He's got plenty of company, because when it comes to retirement there aren't many athletes who can figure out when it's really over.

Sandy Koufax knew because his arm told him so. Jim Brown and Barry Sanders got out while still in their prime, too, for reasons that went beyond football.

But for every Koufax, Brown or Sanders there's a dozen Favres trying to hold on even as their skills fade and the inevitable aging process takes over. The great Johnny Unitas wasn't immune when he tried to stretch

his career in San Diego, and Michael Jordan couldn't even make the playoffs when he ended his second retirement to play two final seasons with the Washington Wizards.

Muhammad Ali couldn't escape punches that sadly may have cost him more than his reputation, and Joe Namath couldn't escape defenders as he tried to play on creaky knees for the Los Angeles Rams.

And who can forget a 42-year-old Willie Mays stumbling and bumbling around in the outfield in the 1973 World Series for the New York Mets.

They play because they still think they can play. They play because the money is good.

A lot of them play because they just don't know how to quit.

"The easiest thing is to become an athlete," former heavyweight champion George Foreman said. "But how do you get out?"

See RETIREMENT, Page 2B

Cowboys ink Hamlin to six-year contract

The Associated Press

IRVING — Dallas Cowboys safety Ken Hamlin won't have to wait until after the season for a long-term contract.

The Cowboys and Hamlin agreed Tuesday on a \$39 million, six-year deal that includes a \$9 million signing bonus and guarantees the Pro Bowl safety about \$15 million.

After coming to Dallas on a \$2.5 million free agent deal following four years in Seattle, the 27-year-old Hamlin set career highs with five interceptions and 102 tackles for the Cowboys last season. He was a starter for the NFC in his first Pro Bowl.

Hamlin didn't participate in offseason workouts because he never signed a one-year, \$4.4 million tender after the Cowboys in February designated him as their franchise player. But he remained in contact with defensive coaches the entire time.

Had Hamlin not reached another deal by Tuesday, he would have had to play the 2008 season under the one-year deal based on the average salary of the five highest-paid safeties in the NFL.

The six-year deal signed by Hamlin is similar to what safety Gibril Wilson got from Oakland this off-season. Kerry Rhodes signed a \$33.5 million, five-year deal with the New York Jets.

Hamlin was one of the NFL-record 13 Pro Bowlers the Cowboys had last season, when they matched a franchise record with 13 victories before losing to the New York Giants in the divisional playoff game.

The Cowboys also gave new long-term contracts this offseason to four other Pro Bowlers: receiver Terrell Owens, left tackle Flozell Adams, running back Marion Barber and cornerback Terence Newman.

Sports in brief

Steer football season ticket sales to begin

Big Spring High School 2008 football season tickets go on sale July 28 at the Athletic Training Center.

Only people who have previously owned season tickets are able to buy from July 28-Aug. 7.

Sales for the general public begin Aug. 11 and end Aug. 22.

Tickets can be bought Monday through Thursday between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at the ATC.

Call Kay Cook at 264-3662 with any questions.

City of Big Spring Tennis Camp starts Monday

Big Spring tennis pro Ted Olesen and Big Spring Junior High coach Jason Fisher are hosting a second City of Big Spring Tennis Camp Monday through July 24 at Comanche Trail Park's Figure 7 Tennis Center.

Cost is \$100 and includes a lunch each day.

The camp is for all ages and ability levels and is held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. Participants do not have to take the full week of camp.

For more information, visit www.bigspringtennis.com.

Big Spring Boxing Club taking sign-ups, donations and volunteers

The Big Spring Boxing Club has opened its doors and continues to take sign-ups for any male or female from ages 9-26.

Those interested can register for the club's training services from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday at Morgan Park on the north side of town. There is no cost for the training.

Also needed is anyone willing to volunteer time as a trainer, conditioner or as a sparring partner.

Some equipment donations are also needed. Anyone with questions or wanting to volunteer or donate can call Lee at 816-7995 or Willie at 935-0273.

UIL-required physicals due for some athletes

UIL requires all incoming seventh, ninth and 11th grade athletes to have a physical before they are allowed to participate in any sport.

This includes practices and games. All local athletic departments are encouraging athletes and their parents headed into the grades listed above to make an appointment with their doctor and get this physical before the start of the school year.

Football and volleyball players would want to get this

taken care of before the start of two-a-days.

Contact your school's athletic department with any questions.

Rose Magers-Powell volleyball camp scheduled

Big Spring native and former Olympian Rose Magers-Powell will hold a volleyball camp from July 28-30 at Big Spring Junior High.

The camp will be held from 9 a.m. until noon all three days.

Cost is \$125 per camper.

For more information, visit www.gotrosevolleyballcamps.com.

Ivie hunting permit applications now accepted

Applications for public hunting permits on the O.H. Ivie Reservoir Wildlife Management Areas will be accepted by mail only beginning Monday and ending Aug. 15 at the reservoir field office.

Permits are limited and requests for information and application packets should be made by calling the Colorado River Municipal Water District at 267-6341 or by writing to: CRMWD, P.O. Box 869, Big Spring 79721.

Obituaries

Flora Cobos



Flora Cobos, of Midland, passed away Sunday, July 13, 2008.

She was born Aug. 22, 1924, to Raimondo and Rosa Illiano in Cappella Torregavita, Naples, Italy. Flora married Gabino Cobos in 1944 in Naples, Italy, during World War II. They moved to Alpine, and on to Midland in 1955. She was a member of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church. Flora was a homemaker whose priority was raising her family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, infant son Gilberto and sister, Emma Borredon.

Flora is survived by her daughters, Laura M. Hernandez and husband Leonard of Midland, Angela C. Sanchez of Midland, Yolanda C. Belazi of Fort Davis and Rosalinda Cobos of Midland; sons, Jesse R. Cobos and wife Linda of Hurst, Gilberto Cobos and wife Elouise of Bryan and Ricardo Cobos and wife Dorothy of Midland; sisters, Filomena Ferraiolo, Maria Cortesini, Ilde Olano, Virginia Illiano and Anna Capuano; brothers, Antonio Illiano and Giuseppe Illiano, all residing in Italy; 13 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services have been scheduled for 11 a.m. Wednesday, July 16, 2008, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church with Father Edward T. de Leon, OMI, officiating. Interment will follow at Resthaven Memorial Park.

Pallbearers will be Henry Sanchez, David Hernandez, Gerald Cobos, Omar Belazi, Ahmed Belazi, Gabriel Cobos, Adam Cobos and Tony Cobos. Honorary pallbearers will be Jessica Cobos, Nicolaus Hernandez and Paul Hernandez.

Arrangements are under the direction of Ellis Funeral Home, 801 Andrews Highway, Midland 79701 (432) 683-5555. To place online condolences please visit www.mem.com. Memorials may be directed to Hospice Midland, P.O. Box 2621, Midland 79702.

Paid obituary

Take Note

- American Legion Post 506 will be holding a fish-fry Saturday. Deliveries will be made from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. and serving will be from noon until 3 p.m. at the post, located at 3203 W. Highway 80. Plates are \$10 each. A plant/cake walk will also be held. For more information or to arrange a delivery, call 263-2084.

- Evening with Muses will be held from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1001 Goliad. This event will feature the local talents of J. Money, T. Grantham, K. Pike and S. Billingsley who will feature their needle work creations. Also during the evening, selected pieces of native American music will be played and various works of American literature from the Colonial Period will be read.

- Big Spring High School will offer the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Exit Level Re-Test July 15-18. Please report to the High School Library at 8 a.m. Please bring a picture I.D. The testing schedule is as follows:

July 15 — ELA (English Language Arts).

July 16 — Math.

July 17 — Science.

July 18 — Social Studies.

For more information, contact the high school at 264-3641.

- BSHS Class of 1978 30-year reunion is Sept. 12-13. Contact Kent Rice at 870-918-5875 or kent_rice@murphyoilcorp.com

- A medical expense account has been established at Cosden Federal Credit Union for Kody Jackson, who was recently diagnosed with lymphoma in his right knee. He has no medical insurance and must start chemotherapy and radiation treatment as soon as possible. Kody is the son of Susan and Johnny Jackson. For more information, contact Cosden FCU at 264-2600.

- The Texas Department of State Health Services is conducting a community health survey. The information will be used to study barriers to health care and other public health issues. Your personal information will not be used, other than the comments portion of the survey. You will not be asked for your name. The survey is available online and takes about 15 minutes to complete. For the English survey, go to www.questionpro.com/akira/TakeSurvey?id=929625. For the survey in Spanish, go to www.questionpro.com/akira/TakeSurvey?id=929626.

- Ex-Students Homecoming at Forsan High School will be held Aug. 2. For more information, contact Jimmy Anderson at Professional Pharmacy at 267-2546 or at his

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 7 a.m. Tuesday and 7 a.m. today:

- ROBERT RUBEN SANCHEZ, 44, of 429 Westover Road, was arrested Tuesday on a charge of public intoxication.

- THEFT was reported in the 900 block of Willia.
- DEADLY CONDUCT was reported in the 2500 block of March.

- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported: in the 200 block of Main Street.
- in the 2500 block of Fairchild.

Sheriff's report

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity:

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 65 inmates at the time of this report.

- BOE LEWIS PAYNE, 26, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a judgment/sentence.

- GABRIEL NIETO, 31, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for theft by check.

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services reported the following activity:

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1200 block of Ridgeroad. One person was transported to SMMC.

- TRAUMA was reported in the 2000 block of Rickabaugh Road. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Simler. Service refused.

- TRAUMA was reported in the 1400 block of Utah. Service refused.

residence, 267-6143.

- Mobile Meals needs volunteers to deliver meals Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. The organization delivers approximately 70 meals each day and needs drivers to donate just one hour per week. Mobile Meals also needs back-up volunteers to fill in when regular drivers can't make it. For more information, contact Macaria Cantu at 263-4016.

- Road to Recovery, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment in Midland. This requires just a few hours commitment each month. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call Nancy Koger at 267-7809.

- The purpose of life is a life of purpose. Join Nurses' Hospice of Big Spring volunteer program and become an "Angel" or "Teen Angel" in someone's life today. Come by 1008 E. Third St. or call (432) 517-4073 to register.

- Bring joy and kindness to others by becoming a Compass Hospice volunteer. Help those at the end of life's journey. Make a difference in someone's life. Call 263-5999 to begin your journey.

- All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue has an account set up with Big Spring Salvage at 3608 N. Hwy. 87 for all types of metals and aluminum cans. Please tell them that your donations are for All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue. All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue is also still taking weight circles off of all Purina brand dog foods. Send your Purina Weight Circles, to A.C.S. & R. at P.O. 871, Coahoma 79511. All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue is still accepting old and used cell phones and ink jet cartridges, for drop off locations in Big Spring and Coahoma, Call Melanie at 267-7387.

- Christ Community Fellowship is collecting infant car seats and carriers. These are given to new mothers who cannot afford them. To donate your old or new car seats and carriers, call Karen Allen at 263-3517 or leave a message at Christ Community Fellowship, 263-love. All donations are appreciated.

- New Life Ministries Church of God In Christ is holding a soup kitchen every second and fourth Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 204 N.W. 10th. The meal is free. Call 264-0771 for more information.

- The Pet Patrol helps locate lost pets and owners of found pets. To volunteer or for more information, call Melanie Gambrell at 267-PETS (7387).

Your Local Weather

Thu 7/17	Fri 7/18	Sat 7/19	Sun 7/20	Mon 7/21
90/68 Variable clouds with thunderstorms, especially in the afternoon.	88/67 Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the upper 80s and lows in the upper 60s.	89/67 Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the upper 80s and lows in the upper 60s.	92/67 Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 90s and lows in the upper 60s.	93/68 Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 90s and lows in the upper 60s.

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Bulletin Board

If you have items for the Bulletin board, contact the Herald news room at 263-7331 or email editor@bigspringherald.com

TODAY
• Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge, 703 W. Third St.

THURSDAY
• Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.

- Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

- Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association meets at 5:30 p.m. in the RSVP office at 501 Runnels.

- League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC Chapter 4791 meets at 5:30 p.m. at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. The public is invited.

- American Legion Post 506 meets at 6 p.m. Call 263-2084 for more information.

- Rackley-Swords 379, Vietnam Veterans of America meets at 7 p.m. in the Sparenburg Building, 309 S. Main St.

- Big Spring Masonic Lodge No. 1340 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 2101 Lancaster.

FRIDAY

- Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m. at 1019 Nolan St. Call 267-1037 or 267-7281 for more information.

- AMBUCS meet at noon in La Posada Restaurant.
- Greater Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room.

- Dance at the Senior Center, 1901 Simler, from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Tuesday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 3-5-6-12-14.

Number matching five of five: 1.

Prize per winner: \$26,199.

Winning tickets sold in: Dallas.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery:

2-3-5-9. Sum It Up: 19

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery:

5-6-7. Sum It Up: 18

Support Groups

WEDNESDAY

- RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a chronic pain disease), a new support and informative group meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at (432) 517-9207 for more information.

THURSDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; women's meeting: 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Non-smoking closed discussion meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

FRIDAY

- AA open discussion meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Open Big Book study meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

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ALL-STARS

Continued from Page 1B

doing Chinese arithmetic from the sixth inning on. I felt like I was in algebra class. It got wild."

The AL improved to 6-0 since the All-Star game began determining home-field advantage in the World Series and 11-0-1 since its 1996 loss in Philadelphia. And it even ended an old hex — the AL had been 0-9-1 in extra innings against its older rival.

Kazmir, the record 12th AL pitcher, thought he could have pitched one more inning. Lidge, the 11th NL hurler, was unsure of his endurance.

"I've been in a lot of one-inning situations this year, so I'm not sure how long I could have gone," he said, "I know nobody would have wanted to start marching position players out there to decide who has home-field advantage in the World Series."

Morneau started the winning rally with a leadoff single against Lidge.

After Dioner Navarro singled with one out, Drew walked to load the bases.

Young lofted a fly to right, and Corey Hart's throw home bounced and was slightly to the first-base side of the plate. Catcher Brian McCann gloved the ball and tried a sweep tag, but Morneau sneaked his right foot in, barely ahead of the tag.

Plate umpire Derryl Cousins made the safe call, and the AL players left in the dugout rushed out to celebrate.

Drew was picked as the MVP, with his two-run homer in the

seventh making it 2-all. Being from Boston, he was booed when presented with his trophy. The only other AL player with an All-Star ending RBI was Red Sox great Ted Williams, who hit a three-run, ninth-inning homer in 1941.

The teams set records for strikeouts (34), runners left on base (28) and players (63). This one had nearly everything a fan could ask for — a Yankees fan, that is.

The pinstriped crowd got to boo Boston's Jonathan Papelbon and the Mets' Billy Wagner. The

fans showed their love for Yankees closer Mariano Rivera and captain Derek Jeter.

The AL left the potential winning run at third base in the 10th, 11th and 12th innings.

A sellout crowd of 55,632 had come to honor the 85-year-old ballpark.

Yankees owner George Steinbrenner delivered the balls for the ceremonial first pitches from a golf cart.

And then the game went on and on.

RETIREMENT

Continued from Page 1B

The sad thing about it is so few have been successful in doing that."

Foreman ended up being one of those, though it helped that he had a second career as a grill pitchman that made him more than he ever made in the ring. But even he retired twice and was in the gym training for yet another comeback at age 55 before his wife squashed the idea.

Favre, of course, famously threatened retirement for a few years before tearfully announcing in March that he was done after 16 seasons with the Green Bay Packers. Like many before him he almost immediately had second thoughts and said Monday in a televised interview that the Packers helped push him out the door.

"I am guilty of retiring early and there is a reason for that,"

Favre said.

The Packers deny that, saying they urged Favre to play and moved on only after the quarterback remained noncommittal and they had to make a decision. The team found itself in the uncomfortable position of having to finally say no to a sure Hall of Fame player, something the Mets nearly faced in 1973 before intermediaries finally persuaded Mays to retire.

"I can't even mention the word 'retire' to him," Mets chairman Donald Grant said at the time.

Money is almost always a factor in players wanting to stay, and Favre had about \$25 million remaining on his contract with the Packers. But it goes beyond that, Foreman said, beginning with the admission that every athlete has to eventually make that his or her body is not what it was in younger years.

"When you retire you're basically saying to yourself that my body is no good anymore," he said. "That's something no one

will admit to. To look in the mirror and say you can't do it anymore is so hard."

There's more, of course, including the fear of losing the sense of identity that has been with most athletes since they were playing Little League baseball or youth football. Suddenly you're without the game that has defined you, and without the camaraderie of teammates that have always been around.

And then there are the perks of being a star player, from the adoring fans to, yes, even the media.

"You don't understand how it is when you've got a guy with pen and paper turning the pages of his notebook over and over again, filling them with what you have to say. And behind him there's another one in line and then another one," Foreman said. "And then you wake up the next morning and not even your kids want to know what you have to say."

Indeed, Favre's attempted

unretirement filled a lot of notebooks and ate up a lot of air time. He's suddenly hot again, though not for anything he did on the field, and on center stage for yet another drama about whether he'll have to be dragged kicking and screaming into retirement.

There are signs, though, that this drama may be getting a bit old around the edges, too. An unscientific newspaper poll found less than half the fans in Green Bay want Favre back as their starting quarterback, and a rally in his support in Milwaukee on Monday drew only about 30 people.

Foreman, who became the oldest heavyweight champion when he knocked out Michael Moorer at age 45 in 1994, had the same kind of trouble retiring for the second time after losing to Shannon Briggs in 1997. He hatched plans to fight Larry Holmes in a battle of old heavyweights in a fight that never happened, and was in the ring training for another comeback

four years ago before his wife put her foot down.

Foreman said he cried on a few occasions after retiring because he missed the big stage so much. It took time, he said, to finally accept the fact that that part of his life was over.

He's made himself rich beyond belief selling grills and is now involved with a restaurant franchise. He's happy at home watching his children play sports, and he's proud of the tomatoes he carefully cares for in his garden outside Houston.

Still, there's something missing that he can never replace.

"I've been successful with a lot of business things, but if I told you that took the place of boxing I'd be lying," he said. "The thrill of a crowd roaring for you after just winning a boxing match, nothing touches that. It has to be the same for a guy dancing in the end zone or throwing touchdown passes.

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- 2004 Nissan Murano SE - White w/Cloth, All Power, Local One Owner w/69,000 Miles. Was \$20,995 **Sale Price \$18,995**
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- 2002 Chevrolet Suburban LT - Pewter w/Leather, All Power, One Owner. Was \$17,995 **Sale Price \$13,995**
- 2001 Lincoln Navigator 4X4 - White w/Leather, All Power, Navigator, One Owner. Was \$16,995 **Sale Price \$12,995**

- 2003 Ford Escort ZX2 - Black w/Cloth, One Owner w/66,000 Miles. Was \$9,995 **Sale Price \$6,995**
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CITY

Continued from Page 1A

budget. According to City Finance Director Peggy Walker, the tax rate consists of 68.54 cents for the general fund, 8.07 cents to fund the Big Spring Police Department's Narcotics Task Force, 2.42 cents to refund obligation bonds from 2002, 22.53 cents for general obligation bonds for the Roy Anderson Sports Complex and streets project and .69 cents for certificates of obligation for the rehabilitation of the northside water facility and the new annex for the municipal animal shelter.

Fuqua said the new budget is one of the toughest he's ever worked on.

"There were just so many different components this year, and so many things going on with our bond projects," said Fuqua. "We have rate increases to consider, just like everybody else, when it comes to fuel consumption and overtime rates. We're trying to give our employees a raise. There were just so many different components and variables this year that we haven't had in the past, it was just a lot of pieces to put together."

And while the council's "wish list" — projects the members asked the city staff to consider for this year's budget — got little attention during the work session, thanks to rising fuel costs and other elevated costs, Fuqua said those suggestions certainly haven't been forgotten.

"We certainly hope we'll see some relief from the fuel costs. I really think everyone is hoping for fuel costs to go down, but that's something we just don't know about," said Fuqua. "Some of the things the council brought out in the initial work session are things that aren't going to cost a lot of money."

"One thing the council talked about was the prob-

lems with the plastic (grocery) bags in the city, and that can be addressed with some ordinances we're going to look at. The council also looked at some recycling issues and we'll be studying those. We always apply for grants on those types of projects when we can. We'll continue to look at their wish list and seeing what we can accomplish, and as times hopefully get better for the city, we'll look at those finances and see what we can afford."

Fuqua said the city staff's work on the budget is far from over, as the administration works to have the fiscal plan finalized in the coming months.

"We have the direction from the council and we've pretty much set the base budget," said Fuqua. "Now Miss Walker, our finance director, will sit down and calculate all of the rates, as directed by the council. We'll also be waiting for our certified tax appraisal, which should be coming in the next few weeks. Once we have the certified tax base and finalized numbers we'll be able to bring the budget back to the council for approval. Of course we'll have to advertise and have a public hearing on the budget and do the necessary paper work, but it looks like we're heading in the right direction."

Mayor Russ McEwen offered his thanks to the city staff for their hard work on the budget as the meeting came to a close.

"You guys really do an incredible job each year," said McEwen. "Each time we do this, we recognize the job you do and we understand how difficult it is coming up with this budget, which is a monumental task. And we understand that this year was even more difficult. We appreciate the job you do, we really do. Peggy, we're fortunate to have you. You do a great job, and it's times like this I'm very proud to sit on a city council that has you guys."

WEGMAN

Continued from Page 1A

talk, but he didn't have to wait long on his board's decision.

Reconvening in open session, the board unanimously and enthusiastically gave the longtime local businessman its approval. The move carried an automatic increase in salary from \$62,000 a year to \$67,000.

"The increase was built into his contract at the time we hired him," explained Frank Parker, board president. "And we are very pleased with the job he has done."

"His dedication to the community is truly an asset to have in this position," said board member Larry McLellan. "I know as he continues to gain experience, he will do an even better job for Big

Spring." Ever the diplomat, Wegman responded, "I appreciate this. I have really enjoyed working with each of you and I look forward to future."

In an announcement earlier in the evening, Wegman told the board he was hiring Teresa Darden as his assistant — the first assistant he's had. Currently supervisor of the city of Big Spring water department, she will begin her duties Aug. 4.

"I had about 30 applications and interviewed five people and felt like she was the best fit for this organization and has the necessary skills I was looking for," Wegman said.

He said she would be paid \$14 an hour.

As to the fans, Wegman's immediate task won't be economic development, but to find an available contractor — preferably one specializing in floors.

CISD

Continued from Page 1A

board can actually vote on him and make it official, however. The trustees are expected to do that Aug. 5."

SOFTWARE

Continued from Page 1A

county jail facility currently under construction.

According to Kitsmiller, the system would allow several local agencies — including the Howard County Sheriff's Office, Big Spring Police Department and 118th District Court, just to name a few — to share information and cut down on the redundant data in different computer systems.

"I'll give you an example. I live in Taylor, which has a population of about 15,000," said Kitsmiller. "Driving through Taylor, let's say I get stopped for speeding by a sheriff's deputy and I talk my way out of it. They let me go, and a couple of miles up the road, I get pulled over by the police department. That police officer has no

idea I just talked my way out of a ticket because the two agencies don't share information. I might be able to talk my way out of it again. However, if that police officer knew I had just been pulled over for the same thing, that changes the face of everything.

"Your law enforcement agents want to be out on the streets doing their job, not standing around doing nothing while they wait for someone they've arrested to be booked. With this software, most of the booking information would already be in the system when they get there, and that helps speed things up. It does the same thing for the jail and the courts, so they don't have to keep entering the same data over and over."

Kitsmiller, along with other representatives from Smart Software, went over the different aspects of the programs with officials, and according to County

Mitchell, who has served as interim superintendent several times in the past, said he's excited to see Brown come to the helm of Coahoma ISD.

"We had 41 applicants for the position, and to have that many applicants for a school district our size is

just outstanding. I retired several years ago, but with the changes in superintendents I haven't been able to stop working yet," said Mitchell with a laugh. "This decision will give me a chance to take some time off again."

Judge Mark Barr, helped begin discussions between the city and county over possible implementation of the software among local law enforcement agencies.

"We're trying to take that first step to get the city and county looking at what we're trying to do here," said Barr. "We're trying to make this a staff-friendly jail, and by that I mean you make it easier for the jailers and can cut some staff and not have such a staff intensive project out there."

"As far as the money is concerned, as far as we know right now — unless we get so elaborate with it that it's outside (our range) — it fits nicely with our jail budget right now. We'll have to take a long hard look at that once we get all of these components together. It may not be Smart Software, it might be a different company. We really don't know yet.

However, we've looked at some (of the software companies), and they are the leaders and we like this (software) the best so far. We'll probably pull some others in and look at them as well. We're going to do more research on it."

BSPD Chief Lonnie Smith said the presentation was informative, adding the police department is always looking for ways to improve its service to local citizens.

"It was an enlightening presentation. We're always looking to improve the information system we have here so we can share more information," said Smith. "That's one way we can provide the community with better service. So we were interested and glad we got invited over today."

Smith said the city is far from ready to make a decision whether to participate in the program, however.

CO-OP

Continued from Page 1A

people.

"Increased cotton production in recent years necessitated an expansion of our cotton warehouse operations in the western areas of our trade territory," Dean Church, vice president of grower services for PCCA, said in a press release. "We evaluated several good sites and determined the Big Spring site best fit our needs. We sincerely appreciate the assistance we received from the Big Spring Economic Development Corporation and the Big Spring community as we completed the site evaluation and selection process."

Church said construction on the site will begin soon, and storage capacity during the first phase of the project would be 100,000 to 125,000 bales.

In other business Tuesday, the BSEDC took no action on a request to re-invest funds in the Settles Hotel escrow account from Federated Treasury Obligations Trust Shares Fund to the Blackrock Liquidity Federal Trust Shares. Board members determined their approval wasn't necessary for the transaction to take place.

"It seems like it would be safer to refer them back to the contract and have them the deal with that," said McLellan.

Why approval was being sought from the BSEDC was not immediately determined.

"Yes, I want some more information and I think the whole board does," added Frank Parker, board president.

In other news dealing with the Settles Hotel, Wegman told the board it appears asbestos abatement at the historic structure will begin soon and

that a "pretty big kickoff" will be held once construction — or reconstruction — begins on the building.

The economic development board voted unanimously in 2007 to provide up to \$3 million to help Brint Ryan — manager of Settles Hotel Development Corporation and the founder and CEO of Ryan & Company — renovate the Settles Hotel, which he agreed to purchase for \$75,000 from the city of Big Spring.

SHDC announced plans for a \$12 million renovation project in late 2006.

According to SHDC officials, the project includes plans for commercial and residential use of the property, with retail space available on the first and second floors.

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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the Editorial Board of the Big Spring Herald unless otherwise indicated.

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OTHER VIEWS

Money talks, you'd better believe it

Billionaires Ross Perot and Boone Pickens have far more in common than their bank accounts.

They've seen America's future, and they don't like it.

Perot fears the coming economic explosion of rising Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid costs, and so he recently launched PerotCharts.com, a Web site to spotlight these dangers. Likewise, Pickens, who made his fortune in the oil fields, has begun a sophisticated social networking campaign on the Internet to prod Americans, Congress and the next president to end the nation's oil addiction.

These aren't a couple of rich guys who remember the "good old days" with unrealistic nostalgia. To the contrary, they've amassed fortunes by thinking about what comes next.

The problem is that most Americans, including elected policy-makers, continue to live for the moment. The United States hasn't had a coherent energy plan in decades. Countless blue-ribbon commissions have warned of out-of-control deficit spending and soaring entitlement obligations. The nation has unwisely postponed the inevitable day of reckoning, and now it is nearly here.

Both billionaires will do the nation a great service if their viral Internet marketing campaigns build the badly needed grassroots support to help wean us from foreign oil. Pickens' deep-pocketed multimedia campaign includes PickensPlan.com and a Facebook page as tools to build buzz.

Pickens says natural gas could be used to power cars and trucks instead of gasoline, and wind power and clean coal could replace natural gas in generating electricity. He concedes that it is not a complete solution but would at least provide a significant step away from economic disaster.

Yes, America's infatuation with oil made Pickens rich. Yes, he has significant investments in natural gas and wind power. But the United States must make different and better energy choices. Who better than Boone Pickens to champion this crusade?

Sometimes, when money talks, it makes a lot of sense.

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

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- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.

• Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to editor@bigspringherald.com

A SHORT PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for sunrises, sunsets and another day.

Amen

Wiretapping and toe tapping

Hey, it's politics. In the primary, when Barack Obama wanted to connect with his party's disaffected left, he said that he would support a filibuster to stop a reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act if it granted retroactive immunity to telecommunications companies that had cooperated with the federal government after the 9/11 attacks.

Now Obama has those voters in the bag. So he is reaching out to the majority of Americans who want aggressive international surveillance to prevent another terrorist attack.

And the average voter certainly isn't going to lose sleep if the price of that security is that the ACLU does not have carte blanche to sue AT&T for cooperating with the government.

Wednesday, Obama was one of 69 senators who voted for the FISA bill that provided retroactive immunity to the telecoms.

Obama called it "compromise." For his part, Obama also voted — wrongly, I think — in support of failed amendments to limit retroactive immunity. But at least he showed up to vote — which is more than you can say for John McCain, who was too busy campaigning. (It's true; McCain knew that if he skipped the vote, the FISA bill would pass overwhelmingly. Still, the Arizona senator passed up an opportunity to show the public his support for tighter national security.)

The passage of the bill brings to the fore the constant dynamic in Democratic politics during the

Dubya years. Leading Democrats have used the wiretapping issue to discredit George W. Bush in a successful bid to lather up the lefties and win control of Congress. Now in power, they give Bush what he wants — on war funding and now the wiretap bill.

An open letter from 23,000 Obama supporters who had urged him to vote against the FISA bill asked the "change" candidate to at least make good on his pledge of a comprehensive review of the wiretap program, to revisit the bill if elected, and to "promise to use the full power of the presidency to expose the truth. A full investigation of Bush's illegal 'terrorist surveillance program' needs to be conducted by your administration."

Translation: If Obama promises to beat up on Bush from the Oval Office, Obamaphiles can overlook a vote that, to them, sold out their civil liberties.

Which they really, really care about. The ACLU contends that the FISA Amendments Act is unconstitutional. Although the measure "prohibits the government from intentionally 'targeting' people inside the U.S.," read an ACLU statement, "it places virtually no restrictions on the government's targeting of people outside the U.S., even if those targets are communicating with U.S. citizens and residents."

Don't we want U.S. intelligence agencies to spy overseas? Isn't that what they're for? I asked ACLU attorney Melissa Goodman. She replied, "We think that the courts should be involved."

Bill language of course prohibits targeted surveillance of Americans without a warrant. Not good enough, Goodman argued, because "targeted" is not defined. The ACLU wants the courts on top of the safeguards of inspectors general and

congressional oversight.

The ACLU warned that journalists could be targets, too. Goodman noted that in 2002, the FBI knocked on the door of author Lawrence Wright, as he was researching his Pulitzer Prize-winning book on al-Qaida, "The Looming Tower," and asked why his daughter had been talking to a Brit who was in contact with al-Qaida. She hadn't. He had been talking to a British lawyer who represented family members of Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama's top lieutenant.

That's the downside of intelligence. Sometimes it's downright stupid. But tying the hands of intelligence isn't smart either. Bush has been right to fight suits against telecom companies that cooperated with federal officials.

ACLU attorney Harvey Grossman argued that phone companies broke a "social compact" with their customers when they handed information to the feds. And, he noted, they knew better. Grossman contended that lawsuits against Big Phone would have provided "accountability."

That's a word Democrats who voted against the bill used, too. And it's bunk. They don't want accountability. Bush was held accountable by voters, who in 2004 decided Bush would be better on national security, so they re-elected him.

Now Obama wants to be accountable, too — in the Bush way, that is.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsaunder@sfchronicle.com. To find out more about Debra J. Saunders, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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The evil eye is lurking, for sure

I grew up with the evil eye lurking. In my mother's experience, doom was at the end of every rainbow. And the worst thing you could do was call attention to your blessings, a surefire way to attract the evil eye. A compliment required not a thank you, but a "kinnehora, tut tut tut" — the verbal equivalent of spitting three times after you tell the evil eye to look elsewhere. The very idea of buying baby furniture before my eldest daughter was actually born unleashed as many kinnehoras as I ever had heard in my life. You can't do that, my mother said. You're inviting the evil eye. Imagine how you'll feel if something goes wrong and you don't bring a baby home. I tried to explain to my mother that if something went wrong, I would be devastated about the baby, not the furniture, that living life with an eye out for lurking disaster takes most of the joy from the moment, and besides, the baby would need a place to sleep. She was unconvinced; kinnehora was bred in her bones.

And mine, too, I'm afraid. Two days ago, I wrote about my night life with my youngest dog, Irving, who sleeps with me every night, soundly, effortlessly. I wrote about his ability simply to close his eyes and be asleep, free from the all the emotions, the worries and regrets that stand between me and

the sleep I so need. Such a blessing. If only I could learn.

How could I be so stupid?

Two hours later, he came home in my baby sitter's arms, having collapsed at the dog park, where he plays every day.

It was my fault. I knew that instantly. I never should have written that column. It may not have made it to print yet, but clearly the evil eye had seen it. Kinnehora, I muttered, tut tut tut. How dumb could I be?

It wasn't a particularly hot day. He had been running, true, but Irving loves to eat and hates to diet. (He is, after all, my son — and a pug.) The vet had recommended exercise. Usually, he watches his two sisters chase the ball at the park, but on Tuesday, with his 11-year-old cousin Hershey the cocker spaniel joining the chase, Irving raced off. And ran until he couldn't breathe.

Another dog mother at the park blew air into his mouth and checked to make sure there was nothing blocking his airways. Then she told Rosie, my dog-loving baby sitter, to take him right home or to the vet. When she walked in the door with the limp puppy in her arms and tears in her eyes, the column still was sitting open on my computer screen. My son read it, crying, as he waited for a call from the vet.

Over the course of the next eight hours, Irving threw up over and over — in my car, on my son's bed, in his lap and finally at the animal hospital. He had two bloody stools, which I carefully checked. He also had blood work, a chest X-ray and an abdominal scan. Loving

an animal, as we do, is expensive and scary. The money is the least of it, although animal care doesn't come cheap. The fear is the worst. I named Irving for my father, who died at 54. I have hated hospitals ever since. Sitting at the dog hospital, waiting for the doctors to advise me about the health of the newest Irving Estrich, brought me back to a place I try to forget.

I never had a pet when I was a kid. Why tempt the evil eye? My mother's theory was that we would fall in love with a pet, and then the pet would die, and we would be heartbroken. Better to avoid the heartbreak. Better not to have loved and lost.

I have tried to learn from my mother's sadness, to remember that worry doesn't prevent bad things from happening; it only gets in the way of enjoying what you have. But old habits die hard.

At midnight, my daughter and I picked up Irv at the animal hospital. He was still groggy from the ordeal and from the shots and the tests. My daughter carried him in and carefully laid him down in my bed. I put my arm around him, and he closed his eyes and went to sleep. I watched him sleep, full of gratitude for the gift of joy that he brings to our lives. Kinnehora. Tut tut tut.

To find out more about Susan Estrich and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com.

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Release denied for dying Charles Manson follower

By **DON THOMPSON**

Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Nearly 40 years ago, Susan Atkins was a leading character in one of the most horrific chapters in California history.

On Tuesday, the former follower of Charles Manson sought to end her story on her own terms: by being allowed to go home. The state parole board denied that request.

Atkins, convicted in the slayings of actress Sharon Tate and others in 1969, is dying of brain cancer and asked that she be granted compassionate release from prison. She wants to spend her final months surrounded by family and friends, not prison guards.

"Susan has served a life sentence," Virginia Seals, Atkins' sister-in-law, said in arguing that the state's longest-serving female inmate be freed. "This is about her death."

In a unanimous decision, the California Board of Parole Hearings denied the request Tuesday. Her lawyer said he has filed a separate motion in Los Angeles County Superior Court seeking his client's release, anyway.



AP photo

Susan Atkins, shown in this 1969 file photo was convicted that year in the cult killings of seven people, including pregnant actress Sharon Tate. California parole officials Tuesday considered releasing Atkins, who is dying of brain cancer, from prison, but the governor and others said her decades-old crimes were too brutal for her to be shown such mercy.

Los Angeles County prosecutor Patrick Sequeira said the board made the right decision. He informed Sharon Tate's sister, Debra Tate, and two other family members of the victims.

"They are both relieved and pleased with the decision," Sequeira said. "It obviously doesn't take away the pain for them."

Through 90 minutes of

testimony in a packed hearing room, the two sides of California justice played out against the backdrop of one of the nation's most infamous crimes.

Atkins has been serving her punishment for the slayings, but did she — a 60-year-old woman who has spent nearly her entire adult life in prison — deserve a brief, final show of compassion from the

state?

Prosecutors and surviving members of the victims' families were emphatic that Atkins did not.

Anthony Di Maria, the nephew of Jay Sebring, who was killed along with Tate, said the families were left with scars that have never healed.

"Ms. Atkins can die with dignity," Di Maria told the parole board. "You'll hear nothing from the nine people in their graves who died horrendous deaths at the hands of Susan Atkins."

Atkins, Manson and two other cult members, Patricia Krenwinkel and Leslie Van Houten, were tried for the August 1969 cult killings of Tate, Sebring, Voytek Frykowski, Abigail Folger and Steven Parent, as well as Leno and Rosemary La Bianca a night later. Tate, the wife of filmmaker Roman Polanski, was 8½ months pregnant.

The Manson cult also was involved in another slaying about a week-and-a-half earlier. Manson and the two other women remain in state prison.

Atkins was the one who stabbed Tate to death, saying she killed her to silence

the actress's pleas to spare her unborn baby.

After the slaying, Atkins tasted Tate's blood and used it to write the word "Pig" on the victim's door. She claimed she was on LSD at the time of the murders, but did not apologize until a parole hearing years later.

Atkins' doctors and officials at the women's prison in Corona made the request for her compassionate release in March because of her deteriorating health.

Her husband, James Whitehouse, had argued that his wife was so debilitated that she could not even sit up in bed. He told the parole board there was

no longer a reason to keep her incarcerated.

"She literally can't snap her fingers," he said. "She can put sentences together three or four times a day, but that's the extent of it."

Atkins, in a hospital near the Southern California prison where she was housed for nearly 40 years, did not attend Tuesday's hearing.

Atkins has spent 37 years in the California Institution for Women, where she has been held longer than any other female inmate in state history, arriving five days before Krenwinkel.

She was transferred to the hospital in March.

Woman gets nearly 11 years for adoption fraud

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER**

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A woman who lied to adopt 11 disabled children whom authorities say she abused while she raked in more than \$1 million in subsidies was sentenced Tuesday to nearly 11 years in prison.

U.S. District Judge Richard M. Berman said Judith Leekin engaged in "a heartless, dangerous money-driven scheme" when she used fake names and lies about the children to defraud social service agencies in New York City and New York state.

Leekin, 63, has been accused of treating the children like prisoners, subjecting them to beatings and handcuffs while they stayed in a locked room without food, depriving them of medical and dental care and not sending them to school. Authorities said the children were so physically and emotionally abused they can never recover.

Leekin looked down and repeatedly dabbed her eyes and nose with tissue as Berman ordered her to serve 10 years and 10 months, nearly three years above the maximum penalty she had agreed to in a plea deal with prosecutors.

The judge also ordered Leekin to forfeit \$1.68 million to benefit the children.

"This fraud turns the philosophy of adoption and the need to provide long-term care to children — so important to our social services system ... it turns that system on its head," he said.

Before Leekin was sentenced, she sobbed and apologized for committing wire and mail fraud and promised to surrender all her assets.

She pleaded guilty in

May. "I love my children," she said, "and I miss them."

The children, now ages 16 to 28, suffer from a variety of severe mental and physical disabilities, including autism and Down syndrome. Leekin began adopting them in 1988, when she lived in New York City. A decade later, she moved to Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Florida authorities have charged her with aggravated child abuse and aggravated abuse of disabled adults, and she could face as much as 120 years in prison if she is convicted of those and other charges.

Prosecutors say the high school dropout from Trinidad lived lavishly while forcing the adopted children to sleep on the floor of a storage room next to a

garage and banning them from entering the house except to use the bathroom or kitchen.

Attorney Howard M. Talenfeld, speaking on behalf of 10 of the children, told the judge that none of the children could testify before him because they were too damaged by the abuse.

Nine of the children are now in foster or group homes.

Another lives on his own in Florida. One child is missing and presumed dead.

Talenfeld said one child was afraid to face Leekin again while five others who were capable of speaking were not brought before the court because social-services professionals advised that they would be further emotionally and psychologically damaged by the experience.



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Why not check this out? At the county library

The Howard County Library just finished up with its Summer Reading Program. Attendance was great with 106 registered readers. Readers from pre-kindergarten to students who enter the 6th grade read 19,416 minutes and 58 seconds! (I'll let you figure out how many hours that is).



HOLLIS MCCRIGHT

Each child kept track of how many minutes they read or were read to and 2,593 books were checked out in June along with 83 new library cards issued.

On July 1 at 10:15 a.m., children began streaming in for the end of SRP party. Carnival games, coke floats and cookies were enjoyed by all. Each child received a certificate for participating and then the big prizes were awarded.

First place winners Alyssa Payne and Benjamin Brue received bikes for their tremendous reading effort. Second place winners Joshua Long and Megan Reyes received an I-Pod. Third place winners Jacob Brue and Kenra Thibeault received Leap-frogs. Dakota Wulfert and Isabella Moore were the top Read-To-Me readers and each received a book of their choice.

We would like to thank Wal-Mart for donating two bicycles as prizes for our Summer Reading Program. The Friends of the Library donated funds to purchase prizes. Donna Downing, along with Elena Flores, Lindy Mercer, Anna Pierce and Nell Clark put on some great programs. Gloria Hopkins, Nancy Michaelis, Sheri Anthony, Pat and Walt Ward and Dorothy Long all contributed to making the Summer Reading Program a success.

New Books to Library
• "The Texas Rangers:

Wearing the Cinco Peso" (363.209 COX M) by Mike Cox.

Renowned Western writer Elmer Kelton writes "Mike Cox has a unique background for presenting the checkered history of the Rangers. During several years as a spokesman for the Texas Department of Safety, he had access to detailed records and experienced first-hand the mystique that clings to this fabled law enforcement body. Though he gives us the flashes of glory, he does not flinch from the dark side of the Rangers' past." — Kelton on Cox's newest book.

Publisher's Weekly does not give as glowing a review, as they consider it not to be a critical review of the Rangers, but rather a compendium of anecdotes. I guess one should check it out and see who is right; a well known Texan or some liberal Easterner who doesn't know what a lariat is used for.

Gardening
• "1,001 Gardening Se-

crets the Experts Never Tell You" (635 FCA P). Shhh! Don't tell a soul but we now have this book.

It is published by FC&A and one excellent idea is to use tires as the base for a raised vegetable garden. There is information on what and when to plant; how to prune and the best way to keep cut flowers at their best.

Biography
"Prince: A Thief in the Temple" (B PRI) by Brian Morton is about the musician Prince (formerly known as a gender symbol). Rolling Stone declares him to be on of the topmost artists in the last 25 years (although I cannot remember a single song he has written or sung). This is an account of his life and influence upon music.

"Books: A Memoir" (McM L) by Larry McMurry is also just in. He has written "The Last Picture Show," "Lonesome Dove" and others. In "Books," he writes about his endless passion

for books and how they formed his life. It looks like a really good book to read.

Western
• "Custer's Brother's Horse" (F SHR E) by Bud Shrake starts out like this: It's 1865, the Civil War is just over, but some folks in Texas still settle Yank-Reb scores with bullets and nooses. Shrake's 10th novel, a fast-paced western, begins with Confederate captain Jerod Robin waiting to be hanged for murder in Austin.

Also in the hoosegow waiting for the hangman is blustery English novelist Edmund Varney, who is accused of stealing the horse of Lt. Tom Custer, the famous general's younger brother. Their jailer and tormen-

tor is Santana Leatherwood, leader of a cold-blooded family of misfits who want Robin dead because of a family feud — and Varney dead just for the fun of it. A wacky judge named Dingus sets both men free, but they and Flora Blowprie (a young black fortune teller also spared by Judge Dingus) end up fugitives again after Flora shoots a would-be rapist.

En route to Robin's family plantation, they pick up Isabella Bushkin, the abandoned wife of a disgraced Yankee politician, and now all four must shoot their way through soldiers, outlaws and Leatherwoods.

A mysterious letter in Robin's jacket, Flora's ominous predictions and the truth behind the Robin-Leatherwood

feud add suspense to this action-packed yarn. The ending is delightfully unpredictable and provides a satisfying conclusion to this well-crafted western tale. — a review from Publisher's Weekly

Please remember that the Library is closed Saturdays for the months of July and August. The Howard County Library hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Internet/Video room is closed from noon until 2 p.m. and closes one-half hour before closing. The Library is located at 500 S. Main St. Our phone number is 264-2260. The Web site is www.howard-county.lib.tx.us.

Hollis McCright is director of the Howard County Library.

sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box.

5						1	8	
	7	9			2			
		1			3	9		
1				8			9	
	3	7				4	2	
	9			6				5
		5	6			3		
			5			6	7	
6	4							8

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Child abuse or neglect

Warning signs of abuse:
Suspect physical abuse when you see...

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes or burns, especially when the child cannot adequately explain their causes
- Burns or bruises in an unusual pattern that may indicate the use of an instrument or a human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Aggressive, disruptive and destructive behavior
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Passive, withdrawn, emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after the child has not been seen for several days
- Unseasonable clothes that may hide injuries to arms or legs

You are responsible for your child's safety

- If you permit your child to be in a situation where he or she may be injured, then you may be prosecuted for child abuse. The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child.
- If you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.
- If you are uneasy about your own behavior toward your child, you can call the Parents Anonymous toll-free hotline at: 1-800-554-2323.
- You are legally responsible for the care of your child. You must provide your child with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or else you must arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect

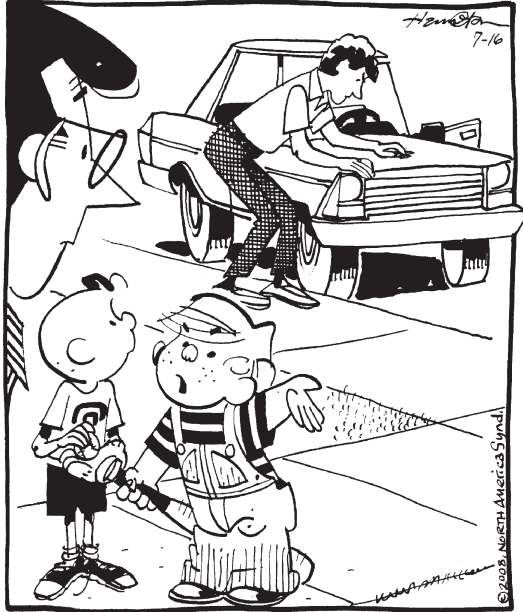
If you suspect abuse:
Don't try to investigate
Don't try to confront the abuser
DO report your reasonable suspicions

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Violence Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
Parents anonymous Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Locally Call-Victim Service: 263-3312

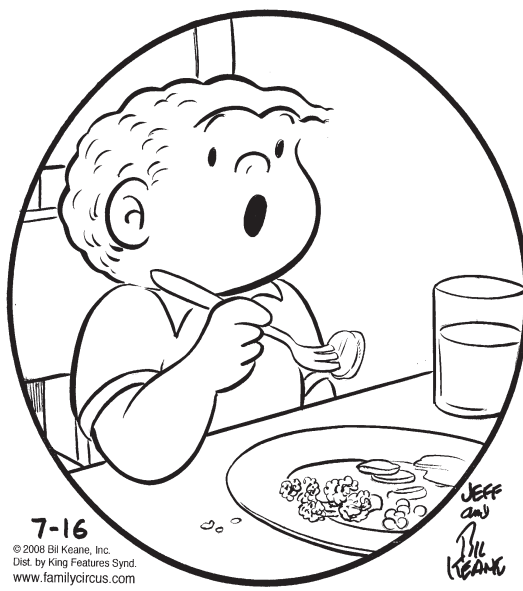
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	Dallas	Midland	Spanish	Odessa	Odessa	Telemundo	Midland	Atlanta	Odessa	Odessa	Discovery	Classics	Spike TV	Atlanta	Black Ent.	Disney	Sports	Sports
5 :PM	News ABC	News ABC	Locura Noticiero	Simpsons King-Hill	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News NBC	Friends Raymond	Cortes Israel	News Business	Cash Cab Cash Cab	Ladder 49, Jacinda Barrett	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Wizards of Waverly Hills	NASCAR	SportsCenter
6 :PM	News ABC	Jeopardy! Fortune	Querida Enemiga	Simpsons Two Men	News CBS	12 Corazones	News NBC	Raymond Raymond	Prophecy Hagee	News Business	Made	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order	Hell Date	Movie: 102 Dalmatians, Alice Evans	Minor League Baseball: AAA All-Star Game	MLB Baseball: 2008 Home Run Derby	
7 :PM	Wife Swap	Wife Swap	Diablo-Guapos	So You Think You Can Dance	Big Brother 10	El Juramento	The Baby Borrowers	Fam. Guy Fam. Guy	Israel Scott	Click & Clack	MythBusters	Movie: Timecop, Ron Silver	Law & Order	Baldwin	Montana Suite Life	Boxing: Wednesday Night Fights	Baseball Tonight	
8 :PM	Supernanny	Supernanny	Fuego en la Sangre	Criminal Minds	Victoria	The Baby Borrowers	Light of the Southwest	Payne Payne	Light of the Southwest	Nova sciencenow	Deadliest Catch	Factory	Law & Order	Movie: Paper Soldiers, Damon Dash	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Baseball Tonight	SportsCenter	
9 :PM	PrimerTime: Crime	PrimerTime: Crime	Don Francisco	TMZ	CSI: NY	Sin Senos	Celebrity Circus	Payne Payne	Carrier (DVS)	Dirty Jobs	Factory	Cold Case	Factory	Cold Case	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Baseball Tonight	SportsCenter	
10 :PM	News ABC	News ABC	Impacto	Two Men	News CBS	Noticias	News NBC	Friends Raymond	Israel	Charlie Rose	Made	Factory	Cold Case	Hell Date	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Baseball Tonight	SportsCenter	
11 :PM	Nightline	Nightline	Noticiero	Raymond	Late Show	Pecadillos	Tonight Show	Friends Dr. Young	Sex & CCM	Smiley	MythBusters	Factory	Cold Case	Diff Wild	So Raven	NASCAR	NFL Live	
12 :AM	Insider Jimmy Kimmel Live	Insider Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Hora de la Risa	Cl	Late Late Show	Programa Pagado	News	Movie: The Mexican, James Gandolfini	Israel Sanchez	Off Air	Deadliest Catch	Movie: Dracula 2000	Star Trek: Voyager	Cold Case	Comicview	Replace	Boxing	SportsCenter
1 :AM	Paid	Paid	Clasicos	RENO 911	RENO 911	Entertain	Pelicula: La	Light of the Southwest			Dirty Jobs	Deep Space 9	Without a Trace	BET Late	Emperor Dragon	Boxing	SportsCenter	

DENNIS THE MENACE



"So I said, 'Go ahead and sue my dad. He's got lots of money!'"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

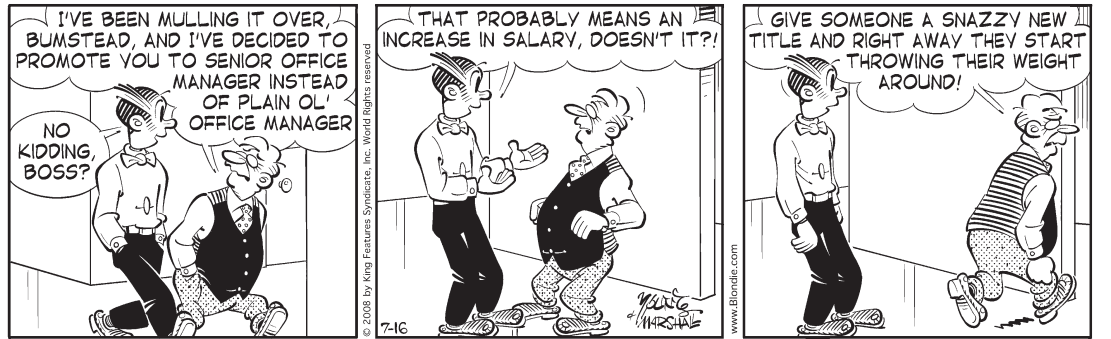


"Are there any chocolate-flavored vegetables?"

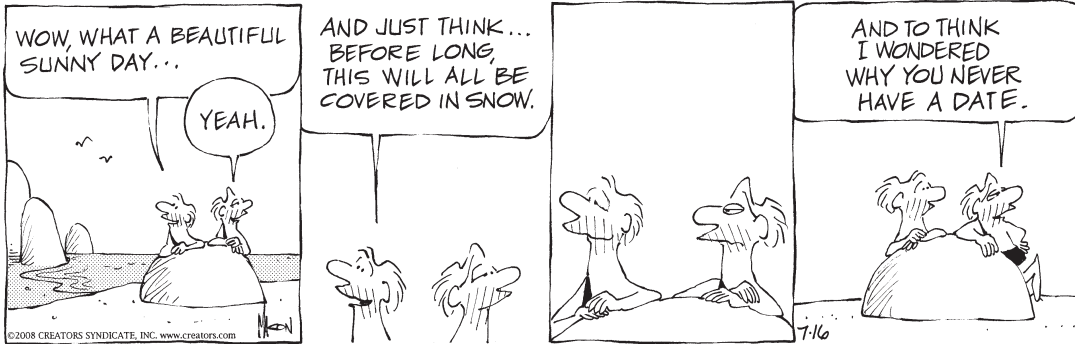
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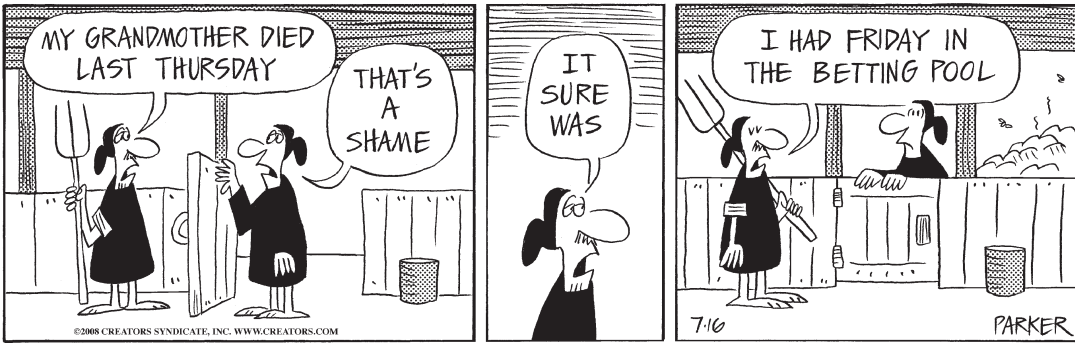
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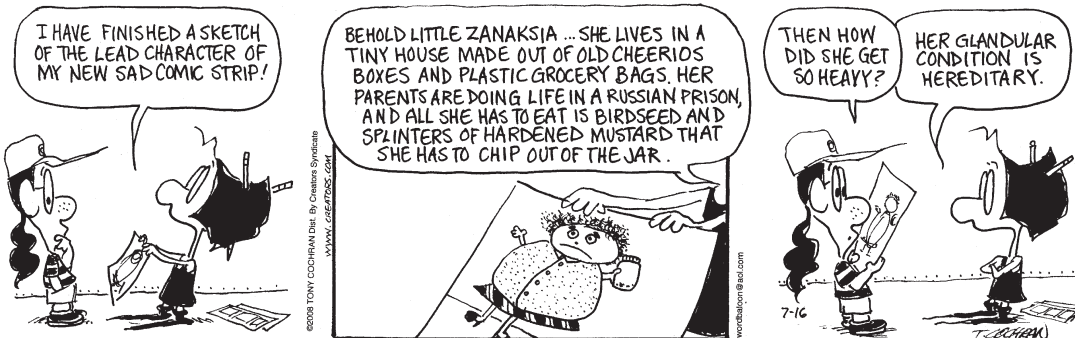
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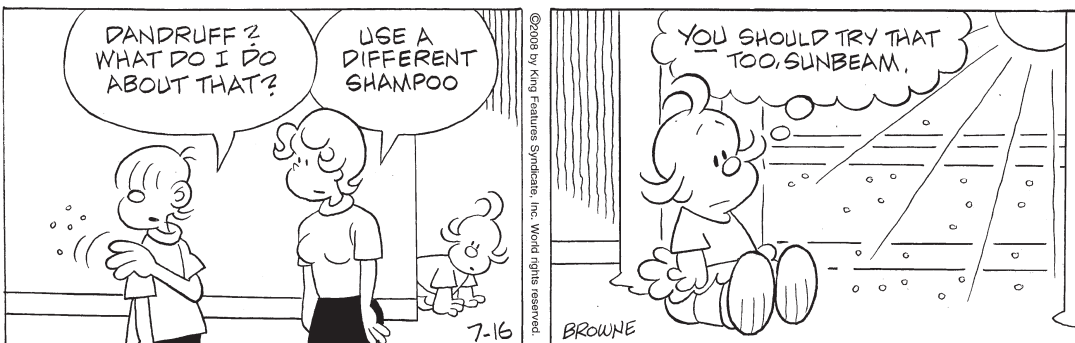
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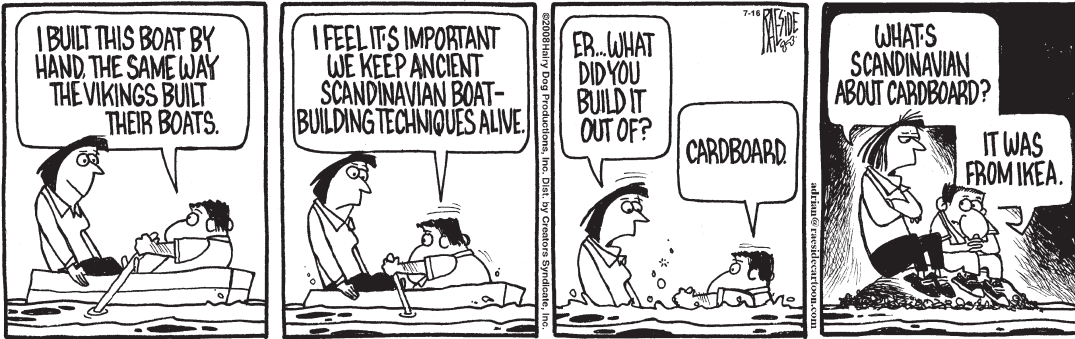
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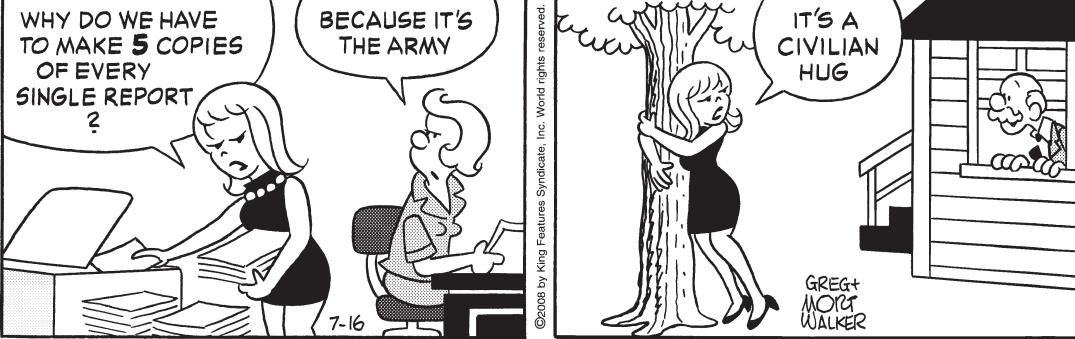
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Wednesday, July 16, the 198th day of 2008. There are 168 days left in the year.
 Today's Highlight in History:
 On July 16, 1945, the United States exploded its first experimental atomic bomb, in the desert of Alamogordo, N.M.
 On this date:
 In 1790, the District of Columbia was established as the seat of the United States government.
 In 1862, David G. Farragut became the first rear admiral in the United States Navy.
 In 1935, the first parking meters were installed in Oklahoma City.
 In 1957, Marine Maj. John Glenn set a transcontinental speed record by flying a jet from California to New York in 3 hours, 23 minutes and 8 seconds.
 In 1958, the science-fiction film "The Fly" opened in San Francisco.
 In 1964, in accepting the Republican presidential nomination in San Francisco, Barry M. Goldwater said "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice" and

that "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."
 In 1969, Apollo 11 blasted off from Cape Kennedy, Fla., on the first manned mission to the surface of the moon.
 In 1973, during the Senate Watergate hearings, former White House aide Alexander P. Butterfield publicly revealed the existence of President Nixon's secret taping system.
 In 1979, Saddam Hussein became president of Iraq.
 In 1999, John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn, and her sister, Lauren Bessette, died when their single-engine plane, piloted by Kennedy, plunged into the Atlantic Ocean near Martha's Vineyard, Mass.
 One year ago: Declaring a "moment of choice" in the Middle East, President Bush said he would call Israel, the Palestinians and others in the region to a peace conference. A man carrying a gun and declaring "I am the emperor" was shot and killed by security outside the offices of Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter. A 6.8-magnitude earthquake on Japan's northwest coast killed 11 people and caused radioactive leaks at the world's most powerful nuclear power plant.
 Today's Birthdays: Former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh

is 76. Soul singer William Bell is 69. Actor Corin Redgrave is 69. Former tennis player Margaret Court is 66. Violinist Pinchas Zukerman is 60. Actor-singer Ruben Blades is 60. Rock composer-musician Stewart Copeland is 56. Dancer Michael Flatley is 50. Actress Phoebe Cates is 45. Country singer Craig Morgan is 44. Actor-comedian Will Ferrell is 41. Actress Rain Pryor is 39. Actor Corey Feldman is 37. Rock musician Ed Kowalczyk (Live) is 37. Rock singer Ryan McCombs (Drowning Pool) is 34. Actress AnnaLynne McCord is 21. Actor Mark Indelicato ("Ugly Betty") is 14.
 Thought for Today: "The fear of becoming a 'has been' keeps some people from becoming anything."
 — Eric Hoffer, American author-philosopher (1902-1983).

Answer to previous puzzle

WORD	PARED	AHEM
ISEE	AGILE	MALE
SLAV	TALKS	PSST
HOME	FRIES	TEHEE
	LOONS	HERB
BABOON	GENERAL	
ADEPT	SMART	ONE
SUE	ROUTE	WIT
ELF	RANGE	CANSO
STRAITS	ARISEN	
ONCE	SOLAR	
SPADE	CLAMBAKES	
EASY	PHOTO	CITE
ANTE	TAMES	ELAN
REST	SPORT	SOLD

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Elaborate parties
 - 6 French mountains
 - 10 Crunch time fill-in
 - 14 Pueblo dwelling
 - 15 Wife of Jacob
 - 16 Nobelist Wiesel
 - 17 Giant of myth
 - 18 Well aware of
 - 19 Granny
 - 20 Lillian Hellman play
 - 23 Night before
 - 24 Actress Witherspoon
 - 25 Stand for
 - 29 In force
 - 32 Tusked beast
 - 33 Paddock papas
 - 34 Towel term
 - 37 Very inexpensive
 - 41 Intersection parts: Abbr.
 - 42 Vinegar holder
 - 43 Seagoing predator
 - 44 Parking-meter locations
 - 45 Sprain soother
 - 47 Boot up
 - 50 Hubbub
 - 51 Feature of some large houses
 - 58 Weaponry
 - 59 Recovered from
 - 60 Higher than
 - 62 Chimney sweep's removal
- DOWN
- 1 Sprat's no-no
 - 2 Cut and paste
 - 3 Canine visitor to Oz
 - 4 Web auction site
 - 5 Had a feeling
 - 6 Unaccompanied
 - 7 Mardi Gras follower
 - 8 Something trodden
 - 9 "... buckle my ___"
 - 10 Camped out
 - 11 Raise the spirits of
 - 12 Short dresses
 - 13 Truce result
 - 21 "Boston" or "poison" plant
 - 22 Greet the day
 - 25 Flows back
 - 26 Zoo trench
 - 27 Candy units
 - 28 Assn.
 - 29 Hampton's instrument
 - 30 "I smell ___!"
 - 31 TV exec Moonves
 - 33 Purposely ignore
 - 34 Soup flavoring
 - 35 Peruvian of old
 - 36 For men only
 - 38 Intense
 - 39 Like some vbs.
 - 40 Curly pal
 - 44 Summits
 - 45 Sun Valley's loc.
 - 46 Reef components
 - 47 Secret store
 - 48 Sharp spasm
 - 49 Joustler's wear
 - 50 See eye to eye
 - 52 Fast-food drink
 - 53 Stratford's river
 - 54 Take ten
 - 55 Lie adjacent to
 - 56 Mongolian desert
 - 57 "As ___" (letter closing)
 - 61 Mag. workers

STORAGE by Fred Piscop
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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65									66			67	

State Briefs

Man killed by lightning strike

GRAND PRAIRIE (AP) — A Fort Worth man died overnight after he was struck by lightning while camping at Joe Pool Lake, near Dallas.

Police say Dexter Leonard was hit Tuesday evening while rushing to load his camping gear in his car after a storm broke over Lynn Creek Park at the south Grand Prairie lake. He was taken to Arlington Memorial Hospital in nearby Arlington, where he died early Wednesday.

Ex-Alice mayor pleads out in case arising from dognapping

ALICE (AP) — A former small-town South Texas mayor has reached a plea deal in a case of a purloined pooch.

Grace Saenz-Lopez pleaded no contest yesterday to filing a false police report, a Class B misdemeanor. Under terms of the deal, she'll pay a \$300 fine and serve 48 hours of community service and two years of probation.

The charge was a byproduct of a custody dispute with Saenz-Lopez's neighbors over custody of the neighbors' dog.

Saenz-Lopez had claimed Puddles died last summer while she was pet-sitting for the neighbors. Three months later, however, a relative of the neighbors saw the dog, renamed Panchito, at a grooming business where the mayor had stashed him.

Saenz-Lopez insisted that Rudy Gutierrez and Shelly Cavazos had neglected the animal, but state District Judge Richard Terrell in McAllen ordered her in April to return the dog.

Saenz-Lopez had faced two felony counts of tampering with evidence and concealing evidence for hiding the dog with her sister and reporting it as missing. Her sister, Gracy Garcia, was indicted on a count of concealing

evidence. Those charges were dropped under the plea deal.

Poultry leader paid \$9,000 for Perry, aides to travel to promote waiver request

AUSTIN (AP) — An East Texas poultry producer, who wants a waiver of federal ethanol mandates, paid more than \$9,000 in airfare for Gov. Rick Perry and three aides to attend a June 24 news conference in Washington to promote the waiver, according to newspaper reports.

Lonnie "Bo" Pilgrim also donated \$25,000 to Perry's political committee about a month after the waiver request was made. Furthermore, Pilgrim donated \$25,000 to Texas Comptroller Susan Combs 11 days before Perry filed the waiver request. Perry's letter to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson was copied to Combs, it was reported Wednesday.

Pilgrim is co-founder of Pilgrim's Pride Corp. of Pittsburg, the nation's largest chicken producer. Pilgrim's aides did not respond to a request for comment.

The newspaper reported Perry met with Pilgrim in March and six days later donated \$100,000 to the Republican Governors Association, a group chaired by Perry. The donation, given March 31, also helped pave the way for Pilgrim to address nine Republican governors during a closed-door energy conference in Grapevine to explain his belief that ethanol production is increasing feed costs for poultry and livestock producers.

Family reaches settlement in pledge's death

HOUSTON (AP) — The family of a University of Texas student who died of alcohol poisoning after a fraternity binge-drinking party said Tuesday they had reached a \$4.2 million settlement of a lawsuit against a fraternity.

The family of Jack Phoummarath sued the Lambda Phi

Epsilon national and Austin chapters and some individual members following the 18-year-old's death. His body was found Dec. 10, 2005, in a garage apartment behind the fraternity house.

Part of the proceeds from the settlement were used to create an educational video, titled Enough is Enough, and a scholarship in Phoummarath's memory, family members said.

"Slowly, we're accepting the fact that he's gone. We want to prevent other deaths. That's why we wanted to develop this video," Phoummarath's sister, Marion, said in a story in Tuesday's online edition of the Houston Chronicle.

The video is geared for teens and young adults to educate them on the dangers of hazing and binge drinking. Together with UT officials, the family is establishing an \$8,000 to \$10,000 annual scholarship in Phoummarath's memory.

Houstonians pay tribute to Michael DeBakey

HOUSTON (AP) — Houstonians who filed past pioneering heart surgeon Michael DeBakey's body, lying in repose in Houston City Hall on Tuesday, said it was a fitting tribute to see him dressed in his familiar uniform: surgical scrubs and cap and white coat.

"I thought that was very neat. It's who he was," said Donna Roth, an attorney and one of the many people who filed past DeBakey's coffin to say goodbye.

Patients who said they benefited from the cardiovascular surgical techniques he helped create, as well as many of Houston's social and political elite and others who simply wanted to pay their respects filed past his flag-draped coffin.

Officials said it is the first time a Houstonian has been given the honor of lying in repose at City Hall. DeBakey's family requested it.

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Hezbollah hands over coffins believed to contain Israeli soldiers' bodies

ROSH HANIKRA, Israel (AP) — Lebanon's Hezbollah guerrillas turned over to Israel two coffins believed to contain the bodies of Israeli soldiers captured two years ago, setting in motion a dramatic prisoner exchange between the bitter enemies Wednesday.

The swap — mediated by a U.N.-appointed German official who shuttled between the sides for 18 months — is likely to be a significant boost for Hezbollah at a time when the guerrillas are regaining their footing following the blows they suffered in a 2006 war against Israel. It also closes a painful chapter for Israel, which launched a war in against Hezbollah response to the soldiers' capture in a cross-border raid.

"We are handing over the two Israeli soldiers that were captured by the resistance ... and whose fate has been unknown until this moment," senior Hezbollah security official Wafik Safa said. "Now you know their fate."

If the bodies are confirmed to be those of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, Israel will turn over five Lebanese prisoners to Hezbollah.

Official: Top U.S. diplomat will make rare appearance with other powers at Iran nuclear talks

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top U.S. diplomat heading to Tehran has no plans to meet separately with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, but the mere presence of the Bush administration official at talks between the Iranian negotiator and representatives of other world powers will be a sharp break with past administration policy.

William Burns, America's third highest-ranking diplomat, will attend talks with the Iranian envoy, Saeed Jalili, in Switzerland on Saturday. The talks are aimed at persuading Iran to halt activities that could lead to the development of atomic weapons, a senior U.S. official told the Associated Press on Tuesday. It will be the first time such a high-ranking U.S. official has attended such talks.

Official contacts between Iran and the United States are extremely rare and although Washington is part of a six-nation effort to get Iran to stop enriching and reprocessing uranium,

the administration has shunned contacts with Tehran on the matter.

The senior U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of a formal announcement of Burns' plans expected on Wednesday, acknowledged a shift in the administration's approach but stressed that Burns would not meet Jalili separately and would not negotiate with him.

"This is a one-time event and he will be there to listen, not negotiate," the official said.

U.S. troops quit Afghan base where militants killed 9 troops

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — U.S. and Afghan troops have abandoned a remote outpost in eastern Afghanistan where militants killed nine American soldiers this week, officials said Wednesday.

Compounding the military setback, insurgents quickly seized the village of Wanat in Nuristan province after driving out the handful of police left behind to defend government offices, Afghan officials said.

Some 50 officers were headed to the area to try to regain control, said Ghoolam Farouq, a senior provincial police official.

Sunday's attack by some 200 militants armed with machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars was the deadliest for the U.S. military in Afghanistan in three years. Rebels fought their way into the newly established base, wounding another 15 Americans and suffering heavy casualties of their own, before the defenders and warplanes could drive them back.

The assault underlined how Islamic militants appear to be gaining strength nearly eight years after the ouster of the Taliban, and the difficulties facing foreign and Afghan forces trying to defeat them.

Military buildup in Iraq ends, but shift in mission means more troops there than before surge

WASHINGTON (AP) — The military surge into Iraq that began more than 18 months ago has ended. But 150,000 U.S. troops remain, as many as 15,000 more than before the buildup began.

In recent days, the 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade, the last of the five additional combat brigades sent in by President Bush last year, left the country.

Its departure marks the end of what the

Pentagon calls the "surge." And it starts the 45-day evaluation period that Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, told Congress he would need to assess the security situation and determine how many more troops he could send home.

In the complex battlefield that is Iraq, it's not that easy.

While there now are technically 13 Army and two Marine combat brigades in Iraq — the same as before the buildup — the force is as much as 10 percent larger than it was in January 2007.

Massachusetts Senate votes to repeal law barring out-of-state gay couples from marrying

BOSTON (AP) — Gay couples from across the country are one step closer to a Massachusetts wedding.

The state Senate voted Tuesday to repeal a 1913 law used to bar out-of-state gay couples from marrying in the state. The law prohibits couples from obtaining marriage licenses if they couldn't legally wed in their home states.

The House is expected to vote on the repeal later this week. Gov. Deval Patrick,

whose 18-year-old daughter announced publicly last month that she is a lesbian, would have 10 days to sign it.

Michael Thorne, 55, and James Theberge, 50, say they're hoping for an August wedding in Provincetown.

The Maine couple have been together for 25 years, have two children, and wanted to get married four years ago after Massachusetts became the first state to legalize gay marriages. They were blocked when then-Gov. Mitt Romney ordered town clerks to enforce the little-known law and deny licenses to out-of-state gay couples.

Senate proposes lifting travel and immigration prohibitions on people with HIV

WASHINGTON (AP) — A two-decade ban on people with HIV visiting or immigrating to the United States may end soon through a Senate bill aimed at fighting AIDS and other diseases in Africa and other poor areas of the world.

The U.S. is one of a dozen countries — including Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Russia — that ban travel and immigration for HIV-positive people.



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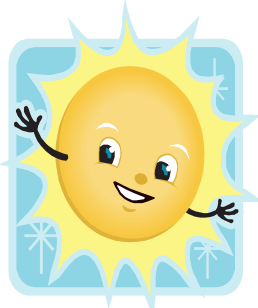
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