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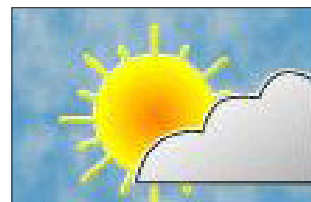
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BIG SPRING HERALD

THURSDAY
JULY 17, 2008



VOLUME 103, NUMBER 196

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HERALD photo/Alex Newsom

Two classes of 18 schoo-age and pre-K students from the New Hope Christian School tour the Heritage Museum this week.

Commissioner wants to mull 'assistance tax'

But whether Howard County qualifies for the special, voter-approved levy is unclear

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

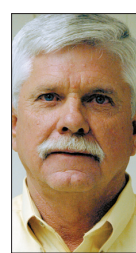
At least one Howard County commissioner would like to see voters consider implementing a county assistance tax in hopes of alleviating lean financial times for the local government.

Commissioner Gary Simer presented the idea to the commissioners court this week, saying Howard County may be eligible for the measure, which would have to be approved by the voters first.

"This is a sales tax we can add on — actually, all of the vendors add it on — that's half of 1 percent," said Simer. "It would have to be voted on. We could put it on this year's ballot and have it voted on by the public. It would effect all of the areas that aren't maxed out, which the city of Big Spring is maxed on its taxes. So, everything outside the (Big Spring) city limits would have that half-percent sales tax on it."

"We would have to have it done by Aug. 20, I believe," he added. "There are some things we would have to do before then."

"This is a sales tax we can add on — actually, all of the vendors add it on — that's half of 1 percent."



Simer

Commissioner Jerry Kilgore questioned the county's ability to levy the tax in surrounding cities, such as Forsan and Coahoma.

"According to what I'm reading here, a municipality may exclude a territory of the municipality by sending notice by certified mail to the court," said Kilgore. "In other words, Coahoma could (exclude themselves), and they're not maxed out, and so could Forsan, which isn't maxed out either. So they could be excluded from the tax?"

Simer said the entire basis for exclusion is based on the city's tax rate.

"No, they can't be ex-

See **TAX**, Page 3A

Bloom: Some polling places will change before November election

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Many area voters may be casting their ballots at new locations when the November election rolls around, as Howard County Election Administrator Saundra Bloom submitted a number of proposed changes to county commissioners this week.

"We have some issues with some of the polling places that have aris-



Bloom

en," said Bloom. "The Northside Fire Station has been a problem, and my No. 1 concern is it's exposed to the elements and we've had to make repairs to some of our machines. I don't know that the repairs can be directly attributed to that, but it's something we need to

be aware of. During the primaries we had a major sand storm, and it worries me, having those machines in the fire station's truck bay, which is open.

"We've also had complaints there isn't enough parking around the fire station, and even though the polling place can be there, the ac-

See **POLLS**, Page 3A

Mid-Summer Festival to begin Friday at St. Thomas Church

Herald Staff Report

Holy Trinity Catholic Parish will hold its Mid-Summer Festival Friday and Saturday at St. Thomas Catholic Church.

The kitchen inside the

parish hall will open each day at 11 a.m. and serve enchilada plates, gordita plates and guiso plates, drinks and desserts. Later, about 6:30 p.m., food outdoor food booths will begin serving brisket burritos,

hamburgers, turkey legs, corn on the cob, Frito pie, drinks and snow cones.

Also at 6:30 p.m. both days, game booths will open. Activities include the Wheel of Fortune, Ring the Bottle, the Prize Walk,

Duck Pond, Cake Walk, Baseball, Canes, Cascarones and train rides.

Bingo will be held inside the parish hall each evening from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday night, Grupo Sierra will perform. DJ Rigo

Moran will host Saturday night's musical selections.

Another activity will be a washer tournament, set for 2:30 p.m. Saturday on the church grounds. Contestants need to register by 1 p.m.

For more information about the festival, contact the parish office at (432) 714-4930.

St. Thomas Catholic Church is located at N.W. Sixth and N. Main.

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www.bigspringherald.com

To reach us:

Please call 263-7331. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call (432) 263-7335 before 7 p.m. weekdays and noon Sunday.

Chalet to have new hours beginning Monday

Herald Staff Report

Big Spring State Hospital volunteers' resale shop The Chalet will have new hours beginning Monday. They will be open from noon to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

The volunteers hope that this will make it easier for



Christie-Morgan

everyone to shop and drop off donations during the lunch hour.

The Chalet is located at 115 E. Second St. It accepts donations of good used clothing, furniture and household items.

Please bring only good useable items.


"It is amazing the treasures to be found while shopping at the resale shop," said Billee Christie-Morgan, director of community relations for the state hospital. "You may be surprised when you have to wait to be checked out or find a parking place in downtown Big Spring, but it is well worth the wait. A large donation of really nice childrens' items is expected in the store

in the next few days. Stop by and see what's new.

"Watch for remodeling on the inside and outside to be done in the near future."

This resale shop is completely operated by donations and volunteers and the funds that are generated benefit the patients at Big Spring State Hospital.

See **CHALET**, Page 3A




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Hamilton's testimony

Slugger using growing platform to tell his story

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press Writer

ARLINGTON — In two weeks, Texas Rangers outfielder Josh Hamilton turned Yankee Stadium taunts of “Josh smokes crack” into awe-struck cries of “Ham-il-ton.”

The former No. 1 pick with the remarkable story of recovery from drug addiction did it with a dazzling display of power during the All-Star Home Run Derby. He lapped the field nearly four times in the first round with a record 28 homers Monday night.

Long before hitting 500-foot exhibition blasts or taking 95 RBIs into the All-Star break, Hamilton had just this sort of conversion in mind. He was prepared to tell his story — frequently, without growing weary of the ques-

tions — when he emerged from a three-year fog of drug and alcohol abuse.

It was one of the first things he and general manager Jon Daniels talked about a few days before last Christmas, when the Rangers were completing a trade with Cincinnati.

“He said, ‘Hey, I get it. I know the better I do and the better the team does, the bigger platform I’m going to have to deliver the message,’” Daniels said.

The message: God spared him from self-destruction and gave him a second chance to prove that the Tampa Bay Rays weren’t crazy when they gave a high school kid a record signing bonus of more than \$3.5 million in 1999.

See HAMILTON, Page 2B

Causing a little Khaos



Courtesy photo

Khaos, the 8 & under all-star softball team representing the Big Spring Girls Softball Association, played a total of eight games last weekend in a tournament in San Angelo. The team finished third out of 22 teams in its division. Khaos is from left (players only): Hunter Seymore, Adrianna Rodriguez, Serenity Garcia, Cierra Martinez, Raegan Deel, Ashley Gonzalez, Destiny Mata, Alexis Gaitan, Veronica Chavarria, Bree Franklin, Ysabel Soliz and Kendall Phillips. Also pictured is Coach Michael Mata (standing left), Manager Jolene Deel (kneeling left center), Coach Johnny Deleon (kneeling right center) and Coach J.D. Gonzalez (standing right).



AP photo/Kevork Djanssezian

NFL athlete Brett Favre accepts an award for record breaker at the ESPYs Awards on Wednesday in Los Angeles. Favre made joking comments about his showdown with the Green Bay Packers' front office such as "seeing that makes me want to play again" after seeing a highlight reel of his play from last season. He closed his speech with "we'll see what happens."

And the drama continues...

Packers file tampering charges against Vikings, Favre's agent says next move is Green Bay's

The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Green Bay Packers have filed tampering charges against the Minnesota Vikings alleging the team made inappropriate contact with Brett Favre, a person familiar with the Packers' complaint told The Associated Press Wednesday night.

The person, who requested anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject, said Packers officials have expressed their belief that interest from the Vikings was driving Favre's sudden change of heart about playing football in 2008.

"They feel like Favre had something (in place), and that's why he was so anxious to get his release all of a sudden," the person said.

The tampering charges were first reported by Foxsports.com earlier Wednesday.

The person said the

league already has reviewed evidence provided by the Packers, and team officials believe a league examination of telephone records would indicate more than "normal contact" between Favre and Vikings offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell, a former Green Bay assistant. According to the person, Packers officials also believe the contact began before Favre and his agent, Bus Cook, formally asked the Packers to release him.

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said the league had no comment on the report. Cook did not return a telephone message left by The Associated Press earlier Wednesday.

The tampering charges added a new twist to the Favre saga, which seemed to be over when Favre retired in early March but now has been sizzling for several weeks.

Now, with Favre poten-

tially headed back to an even chillier reception than the below-zero conditions in his last game at Lambeau Field when he makes a scheduled appearance at the Packers' Hall of Fame banquet this weekend, the next step in the iconic quarterback's plan to maneuver his way out of Green Bay is unclear.

Cook told ESPN on Wednesday that he and Favre have "no definite plans to ask for reinstatement" and it was up to the Packers to decide what to do next.

"It's their move," Cook said.

Favre currently is on the Packers' reserve/retired list. To be reinstated, Favre must write a letter to NFL commissioner Roger Goodell. Once that request is approved — a step considered a formality — the Packers would

See FAVRE, Page 2B

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 Thursday 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

Patricia 'Patty' Rothenbucher



Patricia "Patty" Rothenbucher, 62, of Big Spring died Sunday, July 13, 2008, in an Odessa hospital. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, July 18, 2008, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel. Additional services will be held at a later date in Salem, Ore. The family will receive friends Thursday from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home in Big Spring.

She was born Oct. 3, 1945, in Tulsa, Okla., and married Calvin Belvin June 14, 1990, in Salem, Ore.

Patty was a certified nurses assistant for more than 25 years at several nursing homes.

Survivors include her husband, Calvin Belvin of Big Spring; three sons, Troy Ingram of Sheridan, Ore., Tony Ingram of McMinnville, Ore., and Arthur Belvin of Minot, N.D.; two daughters, Willie Ingram of Seaside, Ore., and Tracy Ingram of Salem, Ore.; four sisters, Mary of Redding, Calif., JoAnn of Spokane, Wash., Sandra of Sheridan, Ore., and Pam of Dallas, Ore.; four brothers, Clyde of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, Tom of Spokane, Wash., Larry, and Steve both of Sheridan, Ore.; 10 grandchildren; and six great grandchildren.

Arrangements are under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at www.npwelch.com

Leo Calvin Bouchereau Jr.



Leo Calvin Bouchereau Jr., 51, of Big Spring died Thursday, July 10, 2008, at his residence. Graveside services will be at 1 p.m. Friday at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

He was born Aug. 17, 1956, in New Orleans, La., to Joyce and Leo Bouchereau Sr. He was a veteran of the U.S. Navy, a carpenter, and a Catholic.

He is survived by two sons, Leo Bouchereau III of Florida and William

Michael Bouchereau of Big Spring; three daughters, Shannon Bouchereau of Georgia, and Robin Grisby and Stephanie Brown, both of Louisiana; one brother, Sean Bouchereau of Big Spring; and two sisters, Brenda Bouchereau of Mississippi, and Linda Bouchereau of Louisiana.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife Darlene and one son, Keith Michael Brown.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersandsmith.com

Paul Lee Thomas Jr.

Paul Lee Thomas Jr., formerly of Big Spring, died July 6, 2008, at his home in Spring Valley Lake, Calif.

Memorial services were held Tuesday, July 15, 2008, at Hall Memorial Chapel in Victorville, Calif., with the Rev. James E. Markham officiating.

Paul was born Nov. 6, 1946, in Big Spring to Corine and Paul Lee Thomas Sr. He attended Big Spring High School where he received basketball scholarships to Howard Payne University in Brownwood and Hobbs Junior College in Hobbs, N.M. After he completed college, he moved to Dallas and worked for Santa Fe Railroad. He later transferred to San Bernardino, Calif., Barstow and Hesperia. In 1994, he married Marie Kennedy and in 1995 joined Emmanuel Temple CME Church of Victorville.

Survivors include his wife, Marie, of Spring Valley Lake; three sisters, Tena McCoy and Bertie Hawkins of Big Spring and Shirley Agumon of Fort Worth; a sister-in-law, Bettye Davis of Victorville; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and three sisters, Pauline Chapman, Jurline Lawson and Hurline Bogany.

Support Groups

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.

SATURDAY

• Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open podium/speakers meeting 615 Settles 8 p.m. until 9 p.m. Open birthday night, no smoking meeting the last Saturday of each month at 8 p.m.

Police blotter

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

• ROCKY ROBLES YANEZ, 26, of 107 NE Ninth Street, was arrested Wednesday on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

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

• ANTHONY THOMAS MCGRUDER, 37, of 100 Lockhart Apt A, was arrested Wednesday on a charge of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

• OBSAINRENE VELASQUEZ-ALVEREZ, 25, of Bridgeport, was arrested Saturday on charges of no driver's license and running a stop sign.

• CODY WINGO, 19, of 1109 Lancaster, was arrested Saturday on a charge of possession of marijuana – less than two ounces, two local warrants and five capias warrants.

The Big Spring Police Department was unable to provide a media report.

Sheriff's report

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 62 inmates at the time of this report.

• YVETTE YVONE SOLIZ, 22, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke parole for credit card/debit card abuse.

• JANA ELIZABETH MCMILLAN, 26, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on charges of fraudulent possession of a controlled substance.

• CODY ALAN WINGO, 19, was transferred Wednesday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

• JUAN MIGUEL BERMEA, 44, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of driving while intoxicated – second offense.

• THEODORE E. RIOS, 38, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of failure to appear.

• LEN KELLY LONG, 38, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke parole.

• BOBBY PHILLIP MASTERS, 46, was arrested Thursday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.

Fire/EMS

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

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1200 block of College. Service refused.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 2900 block of W. Highway 80. One person was transported to SMMC.

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.

• All completed cross stitched quilt blocks for the Howard County Fair quilt need to be turned in to Geraldine Posey at Posey Cotton, corner of Scurry and Fifth streets, no later than Tuesday, July 22.

• 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.

Your Local Weather

Fri 7/18	Sat 7/19	Sun 7/20	Mon 7/21	Tue 7/22
91/67	91/68	92/68	95/68	94/68
Mostly sunny skies. High 91F. Winds SSE at 10 to 20 mph.	Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 90s and lows in the upper 60s.	Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 90s and lows in the upper 60s.	Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the mid 90s and lows in the upper 60s.	Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the mid 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

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

• 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.

SATURDAY

• Eagles Lodge Dance at 8:30 p.m. at 703 W. Third.

MONDAY

• The Big Spring-Howard County Retired Teacher's Association meets in the Cactus Room at Howard College, 1001 Birdwell Lane. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m.

• Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. 21 meets at 5 p.m. at the First Christian Church at 10th and Goliad for weigh-in. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. Call 213-1342 or 263-6819.

• Evening Lions Club meets at 6:45 p.m. at Dragon China Buffet.

• DAV and Auxiliary Chapter 47 meets at 6:30 p.m. at 610 Abrams St.

• Prospector's Club work night begins at 7 p.m. at 606 E. Third.

TUESDAY

• Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room.

• The Powwow Committee of Big Spring meets at 7 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church annex, 809 Scurry, or the fellowship hall at 810 Scurry. Call Robert Downing at 263-3255 for information.

WEDNESDAY

• Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room.

• Free blood pressure screenings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Salvation Army, 811 W. Fifth St., provided by InHome Care.

• Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room.

Lottery

Results of the Lotto Texas drawing Wednesday night: Winning numbers drawn: 47-5-31-43-17-32. Number matching six of six: 0.

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Wednesday night: Winning numbers drawn: 4-8-9-26-33. Number matching five of five: 0.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Wednesday night by the Texas Lottery: 1-4-4-7. Sum It Up: 16

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Wednesday night by the Texas Lottery: 6-7-8. Sum It Up: 21

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British Open gets off to a soggy start

By PAUL NEWBERRY

AP National Writer

SOUTHPORT, England — Forget the leaderboard. The whipping wind and soaking rain were getting the best of everyone at Royal Birkdale.

The British Open got off to a cold, soggy start Thursday, with storms rolling off the Irish Sea turning the historic links course into a house of horrors.

Phil Mickelson lost a ball in the tangly rough. Sandy Lyle and Rich Beem both gave up. Vijay Singh signed for an 80. So did Ernie Els.

Turns out, Tiger Woods couldn't have picked a better time to miss his first major since 1996. He was back home in the States, all warm and comfy as he recovered from knee surgery.

Eight hours after Craig Parry hit the opening shot of the tour-

namment, only one player was in the red: Sweden's Robert Karlsson, at 1 under through five holes.

Seven of the first 14 players to finish shot higher than 80, and the average score by early afternoon was 77.

Two-time U.S. Open champion Retief Goosen was the leader in the clubhouse with a 71. The South African overcame a double-bogey at No. 6 and somehow

managed to put up four birdies in brutal conditions that made golf's oldest championship a stern test even without Woods looming over the field.

Despite a sore wrist, defending champion Padraig Harrington got off to a solid start with a 74. He would have been even closer to the lead if not for a bogey-bogey finish, but was pleased with his round given that he seriously considered withdraw-

ing just a day earlier.

The forecast looked more promising in the afternoon, which should help late starters such as Sergio Garcia, who lost to Harrington a year ago in a playoff after missing a 10-foot putt on the 72nd hole.

Five-time Open champion Tom Watson birdied the first hole to send a roar through the shivering gallery and went on to shoot 74.

FAVRE

Continued from Page 1B

have to release Favre or place him on their active roster.

Favre was in Los Angeles for Wednesday night's taping of the ESPY Awards. Host Justin Timberlake zeroed in on Favre sitting in the audience with his wife, Deanna.

"What have you been up to lately? I haven't seen you anywhere," Timberlake said. "Just chillin'? Yeah, me too."

Later, Timberlake went into the seats to hug Favre's would-be successor Aaron Rodgers, the Packers' 2005 first-round draft choice.

Favre sheepishly looked down with a slight smile on his face as the crowd laughed.

That's just the first of several awkward moments potentially on tap for Favre this week.

Favre is scheduled to present

former teammate Frank Winters at the Packers' Hall of Fame induction Saturday. Winters, former Packers defensive tackle Gilbert Brown and video director Al Trembl will be enshrined in the Packers' Hall of Fame.

Should Favre keep his commitment, his return to Lambeau will come a little more than a week after formally requesting to be released -- and only days after expressing his distrust of Packers management, insisting in an interview with Fox News on Monday that the team pressured him into making his retirement decision.

Favre could see some of the same folks he criticized in his trip back to Lambeau. He also might run into Packers offensive line coach James Campen, a former teammate who was dragged into the middle of the controversy this week.

In an unaired portion of Favre's interview with "On the Record With Greta Van Susteren,"

Favre apparently said Campen recently made an unexpected visit to his home in Mississippi and said he had "an answer" for Favre regarding his desire to unretire.

"He says, 'You know, I know they told you they're moving on and playing there's not an option,'" Favre said, according to a full transcript of the interview obtained by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. "Playing here in Green Bay is not an option, which that's what they want. They want to move on. But I'm telling you, if you reinstate or you force their hand, back them in a corner, they feel like they have no other option, they're going to accept you back."

"And he said, 'Just telling you.' And I said, 'OK.'"

In an interview with The Associated Press on Saturday, two days before Favre made his comments about Campen, Packers coach Mike McCarthy chastised the Favre camp for

putting Campen in a "tough spot."

McCarthy said the Packers told Campen to visit Favre as a friend, not on behalf of the team, once they heard Favre was having second thoughts about retirement earlier in the offseason. McCarthy said it was Favre and his representatives, not the team, who turned Campen into an "intermediary" between Favre and the front office.

"I think he's totally been wrongly illustrated in this," McCarthy said. "Ted (Thompson, Packers general manager) would not even talk to Campen about this. He said, 'Hey, your personal relationship with Brett Favre is bigger than this, so don't ever put yourself in that position.' ... James was put in a tough spot. He was put in a situation that was purely personal."

Meanwhile, members of the Packers' management team could face a few awkward moments of their own next week

when the Packers hold their annual shareholders meeting at Lambeau Field on July 24.

A movement to rally fan support for Favre has fizzled so far. A rally in Green Bay drew fewer than 200 fans Sunday, and Monday's rally in the Milwaukee suburbs drew only 30 despite widespread local media attention.

But shareholders supporting Favre could call attention to the issue.

Shareholders aren't expected to have the chance to ask questions during the meeting, but Packers president and CEO Mark Murphy and Thompson will be present to mingle with them and answer their questions afterward, along with other members of the Packers' staff.

AP Football Writer Dave Goldberg in New York and AP Sports Writer Beth Harris in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

HAMILTON

Continued from Page 1B

Hamilton never played for Tampa, eventually getting banned from baseball for two years while he fought addiction and burned through all that cash. He emerged last year in Cincinnati, a \$50,000

Rule 5 pickup who made the team by hitting .403 in spring training. After a solid 90-game season with the Reds, he came to Texas for pitcher Edinson Volquez, another first-time All-Star this year.

Two weeks before the All-Star break, Hamilton made his Yankee Stadium debut in right field for the Rangers, the perfect target for a tough crowd that spares no one. The sudden transformation this week illustrated just how big his platform could get.

"Obviously the better you are, the more people are going to listen. That's the way the world is," Hamilton said. "At the same time, if I wasn't doing well, I'd still be talking about what God's done in my life."

Hamilton has told his story in each of his home stadiums in the major leagues. He did it last year in Cincinnati the day the Christian band Mercy Me played a concert at a Reds game.

Last month at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, the

focus was completely on him and his wife, Katie, after a game against Oakland. About 1,000 fans sat in the lower home run porch in right field, the same place where many of them wait for home runs from the left-handed Hamilton during games.

Facing the crowd from a chair in the Rangers bullpen, Hamilton chronicled the basics: the life of a typical ballplaying teenager in Raleigh, N.C.; losing the stewardship of his parents in the minor leagues because his mom was hurt in a car wreck; getting injured himself, then starting to hang out at a tattoo parlor (he has 26 he'd like to get rid of).

His wife told of the helplessness trying to reverse Hamilton's spiral, the separation she initiated because she feared for the safety of her and their daughter, the slow process of getting over the anger and frustration and learning to trust him again.

The turning point for Hamilton came in October 2005, after his grandmother confronted him in much the same way his wife and parents had before. It was different coming from her, and now he's counting down to his three-year anniversary of sobriety.

"Everything I heard, she said again," Hamilton told the crowd. "For some reason, God allowed my heart to open up that night and see my grandmother's eyes cry and see that in her face. That's what it took."

Hamilton wasn't afraid to show emotion, stopping to compose himself once during the 30-minute session moderated by Rangers chaplain John E. Spicer. He smoothly fielded questions about his faith and his future ("Baby, I'm here," he told a boy who asked if he would "sign for Texas"). One man didn't have a question. He just wanted to say he was a recovering addict inspired by Hamilton's story.

"Where I'm coming from is no different than a lot of people that have gone through the same struggles," Hamilton said after the man spoke. "It's just that I've got the platform to be able to share what I've been through and how God brought me through it to hopefully inspire people that are going through the same things."

His testimony seems to be resonating. A Dallas-

area pastor referenced Hamilton's saga in a sermon. A rock radio station deejay told his afternoon listeners about Hamilton — hours before the grand home run display in New York.

Dave Czesniuk, director of operations for Northeastern University's Sport in Society in Boston, said one of his high school peer groups mentioned Hamilton as a role model in a discussion about ways to cut down steroid use and cheating in sports.

Imagine that. Hamilton as a role model.

"I think people are genuinely pulling for him," said Jim Johnson, the pastor who used Hamilton to illustrate a biblical message of God delivering his people to freedom. "After my message, I got an e-mail from a guy, who just hearing that message, really confronted his own addiction and how he's getting help. He came clean with his family and is now on his own road to recovery."

The Rangers want to facilitate this rare combination of potential superstar and spokesman for addicts. Now they're talking about bringing groups in for weekly sessions when Texas is at home after the All-Star break. Team president Nolan Ryan said part of the thinking is to manage the mounting requests for Hamilton's time.

"He's very strongly committed to sharing his word with people, but he has to do it around the other demands on his time and his schedule, so it's a balancing act," said Ryan, a Hall of Fame pitcher who is baseball's leader in no-hitters and strikeouts.

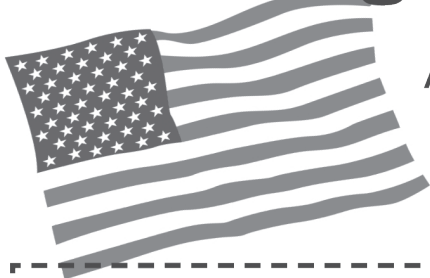
Hamilton is entering his most challenging stretch professionally. He's already played the most games of his career, and his 90-game run with the Reds last year came after playing just 15 games in four seasons.

His home run production is off (outside the Home Run Derby, of course), and he says he hasn't been happy with his swing for a month.

The 27-year-old father of two, with another child on the way, is undeterred when it comes to telling his story.

"Every day I get to do this," he says, "I feel like I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing."

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Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Reverse Psychology

South dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ 8 4 2
♥ K J 7 5
♦ K Q 3
♣ 10 6 3

WEST

♠ A 9 6 5
♥ 3
♦ J 10 9 4
♣ J 9 5 2

EAST

♠ Q J 10
♥ 9 2
♦ A 8 7 6 2
♣ 8 7 4

SOUTH

♠ K 7 3
♥ A Q 10 8 6 4
♦ 5
♣ A K Q

The bidding:
South 1♥ West Pass North 2♥ East Pass

Opening lead — jack of diamonds.

A defender should always be suspicious of any abnormal play made by declarer. Take this case where South made a good play and East failed to find the proper response to it.

South was in four hearts, and West led the jack of diamonds. Declarer saw that he might lose the contract at once if West had the ace of spades, so instead of making the normal play of covering the diamond jack with the queen, he played the three from dummy!

East allowed the jack to win, and West played another diamond. The queen forced East's ace, establishing dummy's king as a trick as South ruffed.

Declarer now cashed the A-K of trumps, discarded a spade on the king of diamonds and later lost two spade tricks to make exactly four hearts.

It would not have mattered had West shifted to a different suit at trick two. Declarer could have established the diamond trick himself, and the outcome would have been the same.

East should have realized that declarer's unusual failure to cover the jack of diamonds was not simply an act of charity on South's part. He should have reasoned that declarer did not want East on lead at trick two because he feared East would shift to a particular suit. Furthermore, it was inconceivable that South would duck the jack with any holding but a singleton diamond.

East therefore should have overtaken the jack of diamonds with the ace and returned the queen of spades. That would have settled declarer's hash very quickly.

East should have reasoned that if South thought it was good for him not to have East on lead, then it was bad for East not to take the lead, and he should have reacted accordingly.

In Sunday's Big Spring Herald



Sitting a spell

All across America, a renewed sense of community is bringing back traditional neighborhoods and front porches. This architectural icon is once again becoming a comfortable gathering place for family and friends. Plus, mastering a martial art and polynesian chicken.

American Profile

► News Briefs

2 killed in Houston stairwell collapse

HOUSTON (AP) — Two young boys, who had been playing a game of Hide and Seek on a sultry summer night, were killed and a third was injured when a balcony and a second story stairwell collapsed on them at their southwest Houston apartment complex, authorities said.

"It appeared the children were either on top or underneath (the stairwell), we're not sure," Houston Police Department spokesman John Cannon told The Associated Press Thursday morning from the scene. He said the Harris County Medical Examiner's office would try to determine the positioning of where the kids were at the time.

Houston fire officials said a 4-year-old and a 10-year-old died in the accident that occurred about 7:40 p.m. Wednesday at the Westwood Fountains apartment complex. Assistant Fire Chief Omero Longoria said a 9-year-old was taken to the hospital with a broken leg.

"The 10-year-old and the 4-year-old are not related. We are dealing with three separate families," Longoria said.

A spokesman at Texas Children's Hospital said no information was available on the surviving boy's condition.

Woman accused of burning twins with water

ABILENE (AP) — A 21-year-old woman has been charged with injury to a child after authorities say she severely burned her twin infants with hot water.

Shanobia Elaine Dilligard was arrested Tuesday night at Dyess Air Force Base and was free on \$7,500 bail Wednesday, according to Taylor County Jail records.

A telephone number for Dilligard could not be found and Taylor County Jail officials said they could not release any information on whether she had an attorney.

The twins, a boy and a girl, suffered second- and third-degree burns on their legs and buttocks when they were placed in a scalding hot bath in March.

The babies, then 8 months old, have been placed in foster care along with their older sister, who was 19 months old at the time, said Marleigh Meisner, a spokeswoman for Child Protective Services. All three children are now doing well, she said.

Dilligard originally told police that she had been running a bath for the baby boy and placed him in before checking the water's temperature, according to police.

She said she discovered the water was too hot only after she put the baby girl in, but told police the girl did not suffer any injuries.

Doctors examining the boy reported that the burn patterns did not match her story. Dilligard later told police she placed the boy under a faucet of running hot water because he had "messed up his diaper," the complaint said.

Suicide in N.M. was similar to CSI episode

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — It was a death shrouded in mystery, prompting the lead detective to rent an old episode of "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" featuring an odd but similar clue — a revolver found near the body, tied to balloons in an apparent effort to make the weapon float away.

State police said Wednesday they solved the case in eastern New Mexico that featured similarities to an October 2003 episode of the popular show.

At first, investigators suspected homicide when Thomas Hickman, 55, of North Richland Hills, Texas, was found dead March 15 along U.S. 84 southeast of Santa Rosa, his mouth covered by duct tape.

Evidence soon directed them elsewhere. The clue that linked the case to the TV series: six or seven white balloons were found entangled in a cholla cactus, some 30 feet from the body.

"We're not saying it's a copycat of the TV show," New Mexico state police Lt. Rick Anglada said. "We have no way to know he actually saw the episode. However, the lead agent kept hearing from people that there was a similar case from 'CSI.'"

So the detective rented the show and took notes.

"There were similarities in the episode, where a character did tie helium balloons to a gun and hoped it would float away," Anglada said.

Medical investigators ruled the death a suicide, Anglada said, and additional evidence led detectives to conclude the scene was a ruse intended to look like a homicide.

President Bush to visit Northern California to survey damage caused by wildfires

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The White House said President Bush will visit Northern California on Thursday to get a first-hand look at the wildfires that have ravaged hundreds of square miles and strained the state's firefighting resources.

The president was expected to travel to Redding to get a briefing on the wildfires, then take an aerial tour to survey fire damage in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, according to

White House officials. Bush also plans to attend a private Republican fundraising event in Napa.

Firefighters continued to battle dozens of blazes around the state, most sparked by a massive lightning storm three weeks ago. The more than 2,000 wildfires that have burned nearly 1,400 square miles since June 21 have combined to create what officials are calling the single largest fire event recorded in California history.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has declared a state of emergency in 12 counties affected by the wildfires and called in the California National Guard to help.

Pope Benedict XVI says 'insatiable consumption' squandering natural resources

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — The world's natural resources are being squandered in the pursuit of "insatiable consumption," Pope Benedict XVI said Thursday in a speech urging followers to care more for the environment and reconnect with the principle of peace.

Benedict, speaking to more than 200,000 pilgrims gathered for the Roman Catholic church's youth festival, expanded on a theme that has led him to be dubbed "the green pope." The crowd, massed on a disused wharf in Australia's largest city, regularly erupted in cheers that gave the event the feel of a sporting event.

"Some of you come from island nations whose very existence is threatened by rising water levels; others from nations suffering the effects of devastating drought," the pope said, referring to global warming.

He noted that during his more than 20-hour flight from Rome to Sydney he had a bird's eye view of a vast swath of the world that inspired awe and introspection.

"Perhaps reluctantly we come to acknowledge that there are also scars which mark the surface of our earth: erosion, deforestation, the squandering of the world's mineral and ocean resources in order to fuel an insatiable consumption," he said.

'Mad Men,' 'Damages' vie for Emmy bids Thursday; 'The Wire' has last chance for glory

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Mad Men" and "Damages" have a shot at Emmy nomination history.

AMC's 1960s Madison Avenue drama and FX's legal thriller, both semifinalists for the Emmy nods that were to be announced Thursday, could be the first basic cable series to get best-series bids.

"The Wire," the critically acclaimed HBO drama about police and drug dealers in Baltimore, had one last shot at ending years of Emmy snubs after wrapping its final season.

TAX

Continued from Page 1A

cluded because their taxes aren't maxed out. That's the way I understand it. We can get that half-percent," said Simer. "And once we get that half-percent in, if the city does annex something they can't take it away."

According to information on Window on State Government — a Web site provided by Texas

Comptroller Susan Combs — the district must use the sales tax revenues to perform the following functions of the district:

- the construction, maintenance or improvement of roads or highways;
- the provision of law enforcement and detention services;
- the maintenance or improvement of libraries, museums, parks or other recreational facilities;
- the provision of services that

benefit the public welfare; or • the promotion of economic development and tourism.

As far as eligibility for the creation of the tax district is concerned, the comptrollers site also says, "A county with a population of less than 45,000 is eligible to create a county assistance district if the county does not contain a city that has a 4A or 4B development corporation, or the county contains territory of a transit authority created

under Chapter 451 or 452 of the Texas Transportation Code."

Big Spring Economic Development Corporation, a 4A development agency, currently operates in Big Spring. The permissible rates for the district sales tax are 1/8, 1/4, 3/8, or 1/2 of 1 percent.

County Judge Mark Barr encouraged the court to look for legal advice on the matter.

"I think what the legislature had in mind here, especially east of Interstate 35, is these towns

that are expanding their city limits so fast and so far, it gives the county an opportunity to get their half-percent before the city gets it," said Barr. "We may have to get a little clarification on this. Let's write these questions down and let the county attorney look at them."

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

POLLS

Continued from Page 1A

cessibility is questionable. I've talked to Father Gulley and they have offered use of the St. Thomas parish hall, and as far as I can see it meets all of the accessibility issues. It's an idea we're looking at. I'm anticipating an increase in the number of voters in that precinct for the election, and while we've used the fire station for years and years, we've had a lot of complaints about it."

Bloom said use of Life Church, located on FM 700, and the Kentwood community center, located in the Kentwood Community, are both issues that have to be addressed before the presidential election.

"While it's been really well received and the vot-

ers love it, the church has sold the building to Lone Star Bank," said Bloom. "It's questionable. I've talked with Ron Brooks and he has said we're welcome to use it, however, come November it may be under renovation. We will have to re-evaluate that one after the remodeling is finished to see if it is adequate for the number of voters.

"Kentwood (community center), I can tell you right now, it doesn't meet accessibility standards. It's owned by the First Methodist Church. I haven't contacted anyone with the church on a formal basis, but I don't believe they are in the mood to put the money out there to bring it up to code. We've gotten by with it in the past because we've offered curbside voting, but that is not accept-

able under federal guidelines. As a backup, I've talked to the manager at Big Spring Mall, and we're welcome to use it. I don't want to make it a permanent change because I'd like to see how it goes, but I feel like we may have to use it for the November election."

Bloom said issues with Forsan High School and Elbow Elementary also need to be addressed.

"It's been my goal to get the polling places out of the schools because of the security issues," said Bloom. "And both of these parking areas are fairly small, and when they have their staff and students there, there really isn't a lot of parking left for the voters. The people in Forsan have really encouraged me to move it to First Baptist Church of Forsan, which is just a

couple of blocks from the high school. I haven't been able to get in touch with the pastor there for an OK; however, a lot of the members of the church are the ones that have said they would like to see it there. In Elbow, Central Baptist Church is right across the street from Elbow Elementary."

Bloom also said problems have been identified with Salem Baptist Church — which may be replaced by the Sand Springs of Jonesboro fire stations — and the Sand Spring Community Center.

"The community center in Sand Springs was recently vandalized," Bloom told the court. "The Lions Club indicated they are not going to renovate the building and later sold it, so it's no longer available. I'm suggesting Sand

Springs Baptist as a permanent change for this polling location, and I'd like to see the Salem Baptist change made permanent as well."

Bloom advised commissioners to table the proposed changes until the court's next meeting, however.

"I have a gentleman coming next week who is with the advocacy group that inspects a lot of our polling places," said Bloom. "So instead of making changes

now and having to adjust them later, I think it would be better to just table it until we can get a stamp of

CHALET

Continued from Page 1A

Donations for the state hospital can also be left at The Chalet or brought to the Community Relations office between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The patients are currently in need of magazines, especially men's magazines. Also needed are small men's clothing and 2X men's and women's clothing.

"We also are in need of luggage for patients who are being discharged," said Christie-Morgan.

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD



By Eddy Pitchford

The Major League All-Star celebration was used by Justin Morneau to remind us of some life lessons. On Monday night, he walked away with the trophy from the Home-Run Derby, much to the chagrin of Josh Hamilton fans. Hamilton set a record in the first round but lost to Morneau in the final round. *Life lesson: It is not how you start; it is how you finish!*

In Tuesday night's game, Morneau scored the game-winning run on a sacrifice-fly by Michael Young. *Life lesson: I can be called safe at home because somebody sacrificed in my behalf!*

"...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Corinthians 15:57)

Morning Sermon: "You Are Sex" Evening Sermon: "Rejected by Men"

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Garage Sales

2 DAY Estate Sale: 401 North College (Coahoma), Saturday & Sunday 1pm-5pm. Too much to list.

2 FAMILY Garage Sale: 2513 Cindy, Saturday 8-? Furniture, clothing, wedding dress (never been worn), knick-knacks and lots more.

2613 CAROL. Saturday, 8:00-12:00. Tons of boy baby & adult clothes, baby gear, lawnmower, household items. NO EARLY BIRDS!!

4 FAMILY Garage Sale: 2711 Larry, Fri. 5-8pm & Sat. 8-12. Lots of clothes, children's clothes, toys, furniture, beds, computer desks, lots of misc.

Garage Sales

4 FAMILY Garage Sale: 3000 Navajo, Saturday 8-? Furniture, Lots of misc. items, children's toys, clothing and lots more. Burritos.

CARPOT SALE: Saturday 6:30a.m.-?, 4218 Parkway. Clothing, tools and misc. items.

GARAGE SALE 6811 East Midway Rd. Saturday from 8am-2pm. Furniture, clothes, decor & lots of misc.

GARAGE SALE: 2807 Apache, Friday 4-7 & Saturday 8-11. 52" HD TV, bar stools, Christmas items, girls clothing, infant (size 6), beds, comforter sets, decorative items and more.

HOTWHEELS FOR Sale. Tons of Treasure Hunts for Sale! 500 Austin. Saturday, 8:00-2:00.

HUGE Garage Sale: Saturday Starting at 9:00-?, 706 Richie Rd., South 87. Must sell everything.

HUGE SALE: Corner of Wason and Warren. T.V., tools, antiques, clothes, construction odds and ends. Saturday 10:00-? No Earlier. CASH ONLY.

MOVING SALE. Furniture, kitchenware, appliances, linens & stuff! Take Salem Exit North and turn Right (East) at intersection of Old Colorado City Hwy & Salem Rd. Stop at first house east of Salem Church and Cemetery. Follow Signs. Saturday 8:00-4:00.

WEERUNS

Childrens Consignments Sale July 16-19 at the Big Spring Mall. Clothing, baby equipment, seasonal & sporting wear, equipment, maternity, anything and everything for children.

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COMFORT INN is now hiring housekeepers. \$7.00/hr. plus bonuses. Fun and Friendly atmosphere. Apply at 2900 East I-20, Big Spring, Texas, 79720.

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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

Fannie, Freddie are too big to fail

We now know the definition of too big to fail.

The repercussions of a failed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac would have been cataclysmic. With most banks and mortgage companies afraid to lend money, the federal government was right to offer clear assurances that Freddie and Fannie would be propped up financially to avert a new lending meltdown.

Freddie and Fannie, as they are commonly known, buy mortgages from banks as investments or to repackage for sale on Wall Street. Last week, fears heightened that the spigots might run dry and that the mortgage giants were nearing insolvency.

The federal government couldn't afford to wait to find out whether those fears were accurate or whether, as Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said, "the market overreaction over the past few days is more based on psychology than reality."

But let's not fool ourselves. The nation's financial and housing markets are still in deep turmoil. No one knows when this crisis will end or the ultimate cost to economic growth and prosperity.

Given the pervasiveness of the mortgage crisis, the federal government must be prepared to act as a backstop for financial markets in extraordinary circumstances while also making it clear to Wall Street that not all risky behavior will draw a taxpayer rescue. Other banks and lending institutions will fail, and the government shouldn't be expected to provide a safety net for all.

There is still much work to be done to restore the credibility of financial markets. The Senate recently passed legislation that would create a stronger regulator for Freddie and Fannie and allow both to buy mortgages to help homebuyers in more expensive markets work through this mortgage crisis. The Fed also is devising new rules to protect homebuyers from questionable lending practices.

These are essential triage steps but are not adequate solutions to a crisis fueled by excessive behavior. Long term, regulators will have to find a better balance between encouraging risk and providing safety. First, regulators must stop the bleeding.

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

- Limit your letters to no more than 300 words.
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- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- 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

Let us be reminded, Lord, that when we feel our torment is too much to bear, you will see us through. Amen

Packages of support for troops

You'd think it would be enough that U.S. forces are showing great progress bringing Shias, Sunnis and Kurds together. But no. They're bridging divisions at home, too, inspiring Americans to unite in a cause greater than themselves, as John McCain is fond of saying.

The cause is simple enough: Help the troops or local civilians. Some of those involved have family on the ground; others just hope to counter the horrors of war by doing good. Some are supportive of the military and their mission; some are opposed to war.

Several nonprofits supporting service members are registered with the Defense Department at www.americasupportsyou.mil. When the site began in 2004, four groups signed up, says Allison Barber, a deputy assistant secretary. Today, there are more than 380.

"The American people just have this insatiable appetite to support the troops and their families," Barber says. That outreach, she says, "is so vital to the overall morale and success of the military."

Lisa Kirstein of Voorhees, Pa., wasn't feeling the love when her son Anthony joined the Army after graduating from high school in 2005. The initial reaction of many was: How could you let your son do that?

"Many people were not supportive at all," Kirstein says. "When they heard we had a son in Iraq, they were appalled."

With Anthony, now an Army specialist, deployed since October, that attitude has softened. It started with people who wanted to support Kirstein asking, What can we do?

What do you need?

Well, Anthony had some ideas for them. And Treats for the Troops was born.

The first request was pretty simple. Anthony told his family that in the Iraqi schools he visited, the students were lucky to have one pencil for every 10 kids. Would his brother Zach, a student in elementary school, collect pens and pencils and send them over for Anthony to give away?

That was about 100 care packages ago. And Anthony now makes requests for Iraqis and his fellow soldiers: coloring books and Beanies Babies; candy and Slim Jims; lip balm and hand lotion; Frisbees and horseshoe sets; beach chairs and umbrellas.

The support has been overwhelming. One neighbor handed Kirstein a check for \$1,000 — about half her shipping costs so far. David Akers of the Philadelphia Eagles is donating footballs signed by fellow players, Kirstein says, and the Camden Riversharks are giving her 500 decks of playing cards.

The Kirsteins often find donations on their doorstep, but local businesses also have become drop-off points — the Blue Tulip Gift Shop and Skewers Restaurant, both in Marlton, and Bernard's Salon & Spa in Cherry Hill. The Voorhees Police Department accepts items 24/7.

Recently, when Kirstein arrived at the post office with a load of boxes, the people in line started piling money on the counter to pay for that day's shipping.

Kirstein opposed the initial invasion of Iraq, but after being with her son and his friends, after communicating with so many in the military as part of her work with Treats, she now believes the mission must be completed. And a big part of that mission, for her, is supporting the troops.

Constance O'Hearn is opposed to

the war in Iraq — and the one in Afghanistan. All war.

"I believe that resolving problems through military conflict is outmoded and ineffective," says the lifelong Catholic. "It's not what Jesus called us to do."

Yet when a friend's brother, a Marine officer, wrote home in 2003 requesting warm clothes to help Afghans through a rough winter, O'Hearn, of Arlington, Va., stepped up. Since then, as president of the nonprofit Give to the World, O'Hearn and a band of volunteers have helped ship several tons of clothing for troops to distribute to civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their only expense: postage and packing tape.

Like Lisa Kirstein's group, Give to the World sends packages directly to troops in the field, often the local chaplain's office, which then shares the goods based on local needs. O'Hearn says working with the military helps her envision a day when armies shift from war-making to being "a humanitarian and peace force."

For now, though, she's satisfied with the difference her group and others are making, overseas and here at home.

"This effort cuts across all the divides," O'Hearn says. "People from different countries, of different colors, across the political, religious and social spectrums, all work and contribute things to people they'll never see."

"Their goodness is allowing some comforts in life for people. That makes it worth doing."

Kevin Ferris is commentary page editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to him at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by e-mail at kf@phillynews.com.

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The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

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Phone: 202-224-5922

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U.S. Senator
517 Hart Office Building
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Phone: 202-224-2934

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1510 Scurry
Big Spring
Phone: (432) 264-0722

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Phone: (512) 463-2000

• **JOE HEFLIN**
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P.O. Box 2910
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Captive Nations Week: Never forget

Nearly two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism in Eastern and Central Europe, five nations remain "captive" to communism - China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos.

Amid all the hoopla about the Beijing Olympics and the "ohs" and "ahs" over the dozens of skyscrapers soaring above the Chinese capital, we must keep in mind that China is also a land of forced labor camps. These camps constitute a Chinese Gulag - the laogai - filled with an estimated 4 million to 6 million prisoners, including tens of thousands whose only crime was to criticize publicly the communist regime.

These are inconvenient facts for those who want to do business with Communist China, but the truth about communism must be told.

Our Jewish brothers and sisters understand what is at stake. They understand that history must not be forgotten lest it be repeated. They keep reminding the world of the Holocaust, crying, "Never again." So too must we remember the crimes and the victims of communism.

The failure to separate fact from fiction, and myth from reality, when it comes to communism explains, in part, why it persists in Cuba, where the regime silences any opposition; in North Korea,

where the people endure a totalitarian nightmare; in Laos and Vietnam, where the most elementary human rights are denied; and in China, whose leaders still pretend pro-democracy students weren't massacred in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

What is the truth about communism? That it failed to deliver on every one of its promises from the beginning.

It promised bread but produced chronic food shortages and rationing.

It pledged peace but sacrificed young men in wars in far-off lands. It guaranteed the peasants land but delivered them into collectives.

Wherever they came to power, communists killed - in the "killing fields" of Cambodia, where one out of the every six civilians perished; in the "re-education" camps of Vietnam, filled with as many as 1 million people out of a population of 20 million; with the tragic famines that have decimated the population of North Korea for half a century.

It is the mission of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, of which I am honored to be chairman, to educate this generation and future generations about the history, philosophy and legacy of communism.

Our first step was to build and dedicate in June 2007 the world's first memorial to all the victims of communism, more than 100 million of them. It is located in Washington, just four blocks from the U.S. Capitol.

Our second step is to build the Global Museum on Communism,

the first museum on the Internet that will tell the complete story of communism from Karl Marx's "The Communist Manifesto" to current events in communist countries such as China and Cuba. The virtual museum will be launched in early 2009, on the 20th anniversary of the fall of communism in Eastern and Central Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet empire.

Our third step will be the construction of a bricks-and-mortar museum - the United States Museum and Library on Communism - in the Washington area.

Granted, it's an ambitious program, but the times call for boldness and commitment. Communism is not dead but alive and all too well in the captive nations of China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos.

Those who use communism to maintain their power would like us to forget the crimes and victims of communism, past and present. This we will not do, especially as we celebrate the 50th observance of National Captive Nations Week, a time to pledge anew that never again will nations and peoples permit so evil a tyranny to terrorize the world.

Lee Edwards is distinguished fellow in conservative thought at The Heritage Foundation and chairman of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. Readers may write to the author in care of The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

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First Look

2009 Mustang 45th Edition



The 2009 Ford Mustang is so new, very little information has been released about it.

Very few have seen it, and fewer still have had the opportunity to drive it.

This week, I had the chance to spend a week behind the wheel of a brand new 45th Edition Mustang GT Convertible and I'm taking our readers along for the ride.

Here's what I can tell you. It's still available in coupe and convertible body styles — both offered in base and GT trim lines.

Base models are powered by a 4.0-liter V-6 engine (210 horsepower/240 lbs.-ft. torque) and mated to five-speed manual or optional five-speed automatic transmission.

The GT is powered by a 4.6-liter V-8 engine (300 horsepower/320 lbs.-ft. torque) with the same transmission offerings.

VW's choice eases Chattanooga's past auto snubs

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP) — When Volkswagen said yes, a city that shed its reputation for dirty air to become a top outdoors destination forgot years of frustrating rejections by automakers.

Volkswagen's plans to build a \$1 billion assembly plant and create 2,000 jobs in Chattanooga had radio listeners rejoicing on call-in shows, businesses hanging welcome signs and U.S. Sen. Bob Corker declaring the city "will never be the same again."

University of Tennessee economist Bill Fox said spinoff jobs in Tennessee and neighboring corners of Georgia and Alabama would probably total more than 10,000. It's a welcome blast of attention for a city that once had the dirtiest air in the country. In 1969, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare ranked it No. 1 in particulate air pollution, thanks to smoke-belching foundries trapped by surrounding mountains.

The styling changes are subtle, but with very retro cues from the original Mustang first introduced on April 17, 1964 at the World's Fair in New York.

By the end of that year, Ford had already sold a quarter-million units of the model that would go on to become a muscle car icon. One of the most notable elements of the '09 exterior is the special "45th Edition" badging on the front quarter panel that includes the pony jumping through a horseshoe with the "45th

Edition Mustang" written beneath. Like the exterior, interior changes are also subtle. There is a premium package offered featuring two-tone seat trim and Ford is continuing to offer the 1,000-watt and 500-watt Shaker audio system upgrades.

My test vehicle was also equipped with the optional navigation system, which I absolutely, positively recommend.

That and Sync, Ford's hands-free communication and entertainment software system, are two "must have" options. If you aren't familiar with Sync, it is worth stopping into your local Ford dealership and asking for a demonstration. With just a push of a button, you can receive or make phone calls from your Bluetooth-

enabled cell phone, change the radio station, access your iPod or MP3 player, ask the navigation system to find the nearest fuel station or restaurant and many other things. I highly recommend it.

Getting back to the '09 Mustang. I can also tell you the GT is an absolute blast to drive. I love the low rumble sound of the twin tailpipes and the short-throw manual transmission is made for an open country road with a

lot of twisties. Mustang fans — and muscle car enthusiasts in general — will certainly enjoy the performance of the GT. And since it only rained once during the week, I actually had a chance to put the top down (which is a first, seeing as how I usually only get a convertible to test drive during monsoon season).

I've had a lot of compliments on the car this week as I've driven it around town. Everyone wants to

know more about it and all make a point to express their approval. Two thumbs up for Ford. The '09 Mustang is definitely on my "must drive" list.

Neal White has been covering the automotive industry for more than 15 years and is affiliated with the Texas Auto Writers Association and the Midwest Automotive Media Association. Comments may be sent to Neal at neal.white@wninews.com.

12364

RIDE & DRIVE
with Neal White



THE NUTS AND BOLTS



'09 Ford Mustang Coupe with optional glass roof.

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

MODEL:
2009 Ford Mustang
5-seat coupe, convertible
Rear-wheel drive
Trim packages:
Base, GT
ENGINE:
4.0-L V6 (210 hp/240 torque)
4.6-L V8 (300 hp/320 torque)
TRANSMISSION:
5-speed manual
5-speed automatic
EPA: 17/15 mpg city, 26/23 mpg highway (V6/V8)
FUEL: Regular unleaded

SUSPENSION: MacPherson struts with reverse "L" lower control arms, stabilizer bar (front); constant-rate coil springs, 3-link design with Panhard rod (rear) with hydraulic gas-pressurized outboard mounted shocks.
BRAKES: ABS with traction control system.
LENGTH: 188 inches
WHEELBASE: 107.1 inches
WIDTH: 73.9 inches
HEIGHT: 55.7 inches
TRACK: 61.9/62.5 (front/rear)
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BY HOLIDAY MATHIS
Capricorn moon has a no-slackers policy. She instructs, as a Zen master m i g h t , through the rigors of discipline, organization and hard work. Yet it's the summer season of relaxation. Not to worry. We can settle in and get comfortable in our seats by staying focused and engaged in the most rewarding aspects of our work.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There are generally helpful people around you, but what you need is extremely specific. Will you be able to find the specialist who is perfect for your situation? Start affirming and that person appears.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). See the positive side of people and let their small mistakes and inaccuracies slide. On the lesser issues, it is better to be wrong and having a good time than to be unhappily right.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Honesty is easy when you're comfortable with yourself. You let loved ones see who you really are and request the same of them. Romantic excitement involves someone who's mad about you -- possibly a Capricorn.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You don't like asking for help, but do it anyway. People like you even more after they have helped you than they did before. Tonight, younger people are your teachers, happy to share knowledge.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). With your insatiable curiosity, you draw others out. It's inspiring for you to listen to their tales of tragedy and triumph. Tonight, think about your own story and take pleasure in the uniqueness of it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you don't think you have all the information you need, don't worry. You know all that's necessary. Your feelings tell you which way to go, and

Tomorrow's Horoscope

there is no additional information that will change what you know in your gut.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). That fire sign you know (Aries, Leo or Sagittarius) can sure get your temperature rising. For better or worse, life gets a lot more interesting when this person is around. Your passionate intensity is admired.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A perfectly efficient working environment is easy for you to function in, and also quite boring. You need the stimulus of a creative project with potential to be chaotic and lucrative.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your family wants the same quality of attention you give to your work. And though they won't pay you for it in monetary terms, they pay you in ways that heal your heart.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're in charge of your own schedule, though it won't feel that way if you keep answering the phone and your e-mail in real time. Take steps to make yourself interruption proof.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You have an untamed

drive to entertain. Hopefully you'll find a way to do it that doesn't inspire shock or fear. What you're really going for is laughter and lots of it. The group you're in could use a little lightening up.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Blood runs much thicker than water for Cancer people, as the daughter of Richard Pryor, Rain, knows. Her family heritage, Jewish and African-American, has informed most of her professional endeavors to date, influencing both her acting and her writing. A comedienne in her own right, this Cancer has tapped the best of her roots and made her identity her own.

Holiday Mathis is the author of "Rock Your Stars." If you would like to write to her, please go to www.creators.com and click on "Write the Author" on the Holiday Mathis page, or you may send her a postcard in the mail. To find out more about Holiday Mathis and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Annie's Mailbox ®: Advice for those in need

Dear Annie: My father-in-law has lung cancer, and for over six months I took him to all his doctor appointments and treatments. Then he called me, saying he no longer needed my help, that he had someone else to do the driving and run the errands. I found out later he was mad at my husband over some incident that had nothing to do with me.

I have had no contact with him since. I don't feel I should be punished for something I didn't do. Last week, his youngest daughter called me, informing me that my father-in-law now thinks I hate him, so he hates me, too. She asked that I make amends since his cancer has gotten worse and his days seem numbered.

What am I supposed to apologize for? I might add that my father-in-law is extremely immature and often acts like a spoiled



KATHY MITCHELL MARCY SUGAR

brat if he doesn't get his way. I used to cook for my in-laws until my mother-in-law negatively critiqued my cooking one time too many. I no longer waste my time. I have an extremely weak relationship with my husband's siblings. Any suggestions would be helpful, as I have lost total respect for these people. -- C.

Dear C.: It sounds like you and your in-laws are a good match. You each take offense easily and hold grudges. You don't have to apologize to your father-in-law in order to "make amends." You simply need to forgive him. You may not have many more chances to do this, so please find a way to let go of the unpleasantness not only for his sake, but for yours and your husband's. Pick up the phone. Ask how he's feeling. Say nothing about your disappointment or his attitude. You'll feel better.

Dear Annie: June would have been my 50th anniversary, but my wonderful husband passed away in February. We had been working on a special Christmas card when he became too ill to continue. We were going to send everyone on our list a combined picture of us in our wedding attire and us now. We had so much fun finding the right photos and making copies, and needless to say, my heart is broken that we did not make it.

I have been sending thank-you cards to some of our friends who were so kind to me during this awful time, and I've been including the picture that we intended to use in the Christmas card. My daughters-in-law think I should not be doing that. They say I should send out the Christmas card as originally planned, but, Annie, I just don't think I can do that. In fact, I

don't know that I'll be able to send out any Christmas cards at all. Are my daughters-in-law right? Should I stop sending the picture with the thank-you cards? I still have friends to write. -- Heartbroken

Dear Heartbroken: Please continue to send the picture. Your friends will cherish the memento, and sending it obviously brings you some comfort. If, when Christmas comes around, you would like to send the picture to those who don't yet have it, by all means do so, but you should not feel pressured. By anyone.

Dear Annie: I can relate to "Totally Lost," who is losing interest in his wife because she's gained a great deal of weight. After having three children and gaining more than 100 pounds during those pregnancies, a thyroid test showed that my metabolism was in the dirt. After getting on medication, my chronic depression disappeared, I was no longer tired, and I was eager to do something about my weight. As soon as "Worried" takes his wife to the doctor for a full checkup, he needs to give himself a swift kick in the rear for being such a jerk and start being supportive of the woman who has given him the greatest gift he'll ever receive: his children. -- Erin in Washington State

Dear Erin: Thank you for putting things in perspective. Dear Annie: My husband and his father call each other nonstop and talk about absolutely nothing. My husband tells his dad what kind of money we make, what we're doing, if we're going somewhere, what we are fixing to eat, what we are going to watch on TV, and on and on.

If they can't reach each other within five attempts, they start to phone everyone in the family. My husband treats me the same way. I have to keep my cell phone on 24 hours a day because if he can't locate me repeatedly in a 10-minute period, he becomes furious. And it's invariably because he wanted to tell me a joke or something equally unimportant. On one occasion, I was paying for gasoline and he called 19 times before I got back

into my car where I'd left my cell phone.

What's even more annoying is that my husband and I will make a decision about something, but if his father disagrees, my husband will change his mind and side with Dad.

I am a very private person and don't want his father knowing my business. What's wrong with this picture? -- Going Nuts in Oklahoma

Dear Oklahoma: You know what's wrong. Now you have to decide what you are going to do about it. Your husband and his father are so enmeshed that it is unlikely you will separate them, especially if your husband is unwilling to admit it's necessary. The main problem is not the over-communication. It's that your husband takes his father's side over yours. Gentle discussion may help him understand why this is detrimental to your marriage. Counseling would be helpful, but if he won't go, go without him and find ways to work on his behavior and your reaction, so it becomes less annoying.

Dear Annie: Some months ago, you printed letters from children whose fathers had left their families for another woman. Recently, you printed a letter from "Heartbroken in the South," whose husband went searching for a one-night stand. She asked, "How can an intelligent, educated man who supposedly loves his wife actually go through with such an unspeakable act?"

I wonder if you have received any letters from men who have committed some of these "unspeakable acts" -- and whether they felt justified? I might feel better about my own husband's abandonment if I understood why he thought it was his only recourse. -- DPN

Dear DPN: How about it, men? Want to help her out with your reasoning?

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to annies-mailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611.

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Iraq's al-Qaida fighters now 'furtive terrorists'

By **ROBERT BURNS**
AP Military Writer

COMBAT OUTPOST COPPER, Iraq — It's quiet around here in farm country, south of Baghdad where al-Qaida once held sway. Just months ago U.S. foot patrols through the wheat fields nearby would regularly draw fire — if the soldiers managed first to elude al-Qaida-planted roadside bombs.

"The difference is night and day," says Capt. George Morris, 26. He and his soldiers in Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division walked the area this week to visit a handful of farm families five miles east of the town of Latifiyah, not far from the Tigris River.

And it's not just here. Throughout the country, al-Qaida in Iraq, an insurgent organization thought to be affiliated with the global terrorist network but comprised mainly of Iraqis, has lost so much clout it is close to becoming irrelevant to the outcome of the war. The group has not been eliminated, however, leaving open the possibility of resurgence if the Iraqi government fails to follow up the military gains with civilian services like the irrigation that's badly needed here.

When President Bush announced in January 2007 that he was sending more than 21,000 extra U.S. combat troops to Iraq — mostly to the Baghdad area — as part of a new approach to fighting the insurgency, commanders said their No. 1 focus was degrading al-Qaida's ability to foment sectarian violence.

In the Latifiyah area,

it's not hard to see that goal appears to have been achieved — an accomplishment that adds to the expectation that Bush will be able to further reduce U.S. troop levels this fall.

Iraqi Army Capt. Jassim Hussein al-Shamari, whose men were part of Morris' foot patrol, has one explanation for al-Qaida's fall.

"The people themselves will turn over the terrorists" if they show themselves, says al-Shamari. He's speaking through an interpreter to Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan, a deputy commander of U.S. forces in the swath of once-violent territory stretching south of Baghdad from the Iranian border to Anbar province.

Buchanan sees it much the same way.

"The people are fed up with what they experienced under (al-Qaida's) presence,"

Buchanan said, adding that the key to keeping the terrorist group down is having the government in Baghdad step in and provide more essential services, like the irrigation that farmers in the Latifiyah area find in short supply.

And there is a troubling disconnect between the central government and local leaders.

"The link to the government of Iraq is almost nonexistent here," Morris said.

So it remains an open question: Once U.S. combat forces depart, whenever that may be, will al-Qaida find an avenue for resurgence? It is generally accepted among U.S. officers and intelligence specialists that despite its decline, al-Qaida will remain

in Iraq at some level long after the Americans are gone. The group had no meaningful foothold in the country before U.S. forces invaded in March 2003.

There is no available official estimate of the number of al-Qaida fighters in Iraq. A U.S. intelligence estimate early this year put it at a maximum of 6,000, although it probably has fallen far lower recently. Perhaps more importantly, U.S. officers said in a series of Associated Press interviews over the past 10 days that so many al-Qaida leaders have been captured or killed that its remnants are ineffective.

Col. Al Batschelet, chief of staff for the U.S. command overseeing military operations in the Baghdad area, said that once the leadership began disappearing, lower-level technicians were pressed into duty.

That had the effect of accelerating the group's decline: the technical experts were not as good at organizing and executing attacks, and by taking the lead they exposed themselves to being captured or killed. That, in turn, has left even less-technically skilled fighters to perform the specialized work of assembling bombs like al-Qaida's signature weapon, the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, officers said.

The triggering mechanisms of al-Qaida's bombs have become less sophisticated and less effective, Batschelet said. Also, vehicle-borne IEDs used to contain hundreds of pounds of explosives, but they now typically are only 25 pounds.

"They just can't get the material any more to do what they want to do," Batschelet said. "But they

still try. So we are unable to say that we've defeated their will" to continue their acts of violence.

Col. Bill Hickman, commander of 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, sees much the same thing in the neighborhoods of northwest Baghdad where his soldiers have witnessed a dramatic decline in violence this year.

"There are still disrupted cells of al-Qaida in our area," he said in an interview. "So they're active, but they're not as effective as they used to be. And their IEDs are small IEDs now."

As for eliminating al-Qaida entirely in Iraq, "That's probably not achievable," said Batschelet.

Although U.S. and Iraqi forces have put enormous pressure on al-Qaida by pursuing its leaders with relentless raids informed by improved intelligence this year, an even more important factor, arguably, was the decision by Sunni Arabs who had opposed the U.S. occupation to ally with the Americans against al-Qaida.

Whether those newfound allies — dubbed Sons of Iraq by their Americans benefactors — remain in opposition to the Sunni extremists, or decide to switch sides again, will tell much about al-Qaida's future in Iraq.

Either way, however, the moment seems to have passed when al-Qaida could prevail in this conflict. It has been forced out of its original strongholds in Anbar province, and more recently it has lost Baghdad and the northern city of Mosul, although it still can pull off a deadly attack there and elsewhere.

Stephen Biddle, an Iraq watcher in Washington at the Council on Foreign

Relations, said in an interview that without an urban hideout, al-Qaida is reduced to the role of being "furtive terrorists."

"If they don't have an urban area with a friendly population that can enable them to operate" — and from which to recruit fight-

ers — "then they're going to be isolated terrorist actors," Biddle said. Thus, eliminating them entirely need not be the goal of U.S. commanders and the Iraqi government.

"That's not central to the outcome of the war," Biddle said.



AP photo/Sebastian Abbot

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Janis patrols a street in west Baghdad's Ghazaliyah neighborhood. That soldiers are looking outside Iraq for a battle is a testament to how much has changed from a year ago. Attacks in Iraq were at their peak then, but have since fallen to four-year lows.

Some U.S. soldiers in Iraq yearn to be in Afghan war

BAGHDAD (AP) — Spc. Grover Gebhart has spent nine months at a small post on a Sunni-Shiite fault line in western Baghdad. But the 21-year-old soldier on his first tour in Iraq feels he's missing the real war — in Afghanistan, where his brother is fighting the Taliban.

With violence in Iraq at its lowest level in four years and the war in Afghanistan at a peak, the soldiers serving at patrol station Maverick say Gebhart's view is increasingly common, especially among younger soldiers looking to prove themselves in battle.

"I've heard it a lot since I got here," said 2nd Lt. Karl Kuechenmeister, a 2007 West Point graduate who arrived in Iraq about a week ago.

Soldiers who have experienced combat stress note that it is usually young soldiers on their first tour who most want to get on the battlefield. They say it is hard to communicate the horrors of war to those who haven't actually experienced it.

"These kids are just being young," said Sgt. Christopher Janis, who is only 23 but is on his third tour in Iraq. "They say they want to get into battle until they do, and then they won't want it anymore."

That soldiers are looking elsewhere for a battle is a testament to how much Iraq has changed from a

year ago, when violence was at its height. Now it's the lowest in four years, thanks to the U.S. troop surge, the turn by former Sunni insurgents against al-Qaida in Iraq, and Iraqi government crackdowns on Shiite militias.

At least 29 U.S. soldiers died in Iraq last month, and there were 19 deaths in May — the lowest monthly toll for American troops since the war began in March 2003. By comparison, in Afghanistan, 28 Americans died in June and 17 in May, but there are four times as many U.S. troops in Iraq.

The relative calm is apparent in Baghdad's Ghazaliyah neighborhood, patrolled by troops stationed at Maverick from the 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division.

Instead of facing gunfire and roadside bombs, the soldiers' armored Humvees are chased by waving children as they weave through streets crowded with pedestrians out to shop or just to stroll.

Some of Maverick's troops saw combat a few months ago when they helped the Iraqi army take over the Ghazaliyah office of anti-U.S. cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in a battle complete with gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades.

But their days in Ghazaliyah have mostly been filled with routine patrols.

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5 :PM	News ABC	News ABC	Locura	Simpsons King-Hill	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News NBC	Friends Raymond	Granger Brad	News Business	Cash Cab	2: Judgment Day, Edward Furlong	CSI: Crime Scn			106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Wizards of Waverly Hills	NASCAR	SportsCenter	
6 :PM	News ABC	Jeopardy! Fortune	Premios Juventud 2008 Celebra 5	Simpsons Two Men	News CBS	12 Coronas	News NBC	Raymond Hagee	News-Teacher Made	News-Teacher Made	Cash Cab	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order			Blk Car	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Strongest	NFL Live	
7 :PM	Ugly Betty	Ugly Betty	Premios Juventud 2008 Celebra 5	You Smarter?	American Dog	El Jaramento	News NBC	Israel Sprna	Texas MythsBusters	Texas MythsBusters	MythsBusters	Movie: Jaws, Richard Dreyfuss	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order			HELL DATE	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Strongest	NFL Live
8 :PM	Grey's Anatomy	Grey's Anatomy		You Can Dance	CSI: Crime Scn	Victoria	News NBC	Engvall My Boys	Antiques Roadshow	Antiques Roadshow	Deadliest Catch	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order			BET Awards '08	Montana Suite Life	Series of Poker	Wizards at Crews	
9 :PM	Hopkins	Hopkins		TMZ	Swingtown	Sin Senos	News NBC	Movie: Dumb & Dumber, Lauren Holly	Soundstage	Soundstage	Dirty Jobs	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order				Wizards of Waverly Hills	Series of Poker	Wizards at Crews	
10 :PM	News ABC	Nightline	Impacto	Two Men	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News NBC	Israel Van Impe	Charlie Rose	Charlie Rose	Movie: Jaws 2, Murray Hamilton	UFC Countdown	Law & Order				Wizards of Waverly Hills	MLL La-crosse: All-Star Game.	Baseball Tonight	
11 :PM	Insider Jimmy Kim-mel Live	Insider Jimmy Kim-mel Live	El Pantera	Law Order: CI	Late Late Show	Decisiones de Famosos	News NBC	Sex & Dr.	Smiley	Smiley	MythsBusters	MAN	Law & Order				Wizards of Waverly Hills	MLL La-crosse: All-Star Game.	Baseball Tonight	
12 :AM	News ABC	SpoCen (35) Extra	Niña Amada Mia	RENO 911 Lopez	Insider	Programa Pagado	News NBC	News LightWrd	Deadliest Catch	Deadliest Catch	Movie: King Kong, Charles Grodin	Movie: The Thomas Crown Affair, Denis Leary	Movie: Batman & Robin, Chris O'Donnell				Wizards of Waverly Hills	MLL La-crosse: All-Star Game.	Baseball Tonight	
1 :AM	Paid	Paid	Clasicos Humor	RENO 911 King-Hill	Entertain Paid	Pelicula:	News NBC	Light of the Southwest	Dirty Jobs	Dirty Jobs			Movie: Batman & Robin, Chris O'Donnell				Wizards of Waverly Hills	MLL La-crosse: All-Star Game.	Baseball Tonight	

DENNIS THE MENACE

7-17

"MR. WILSON IS GOING TO THE HOSPITAL FOR SOME TESTS, DENNIS."

"I HOPE YOU GET ALL A's."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

7-17

"I'll play dodgeball if nobody throws a ball at me."

HAGAR

BELIEVE ME, THERE IS A SECRET TO BEING HAPPILY MARRIED!!

AND IF I FIND OUT WHAT IT IS... I'LL LET YOU KNOW!

BLONDIE

I'VE BEEN THINKING, MR. B... CAN I REALLY TRUST MY PARENTS? THEY KEEP FLIP-FLOPPING ON IMPORTANT ISSUES

BACK IN MAY, THEY CUT BACK ON MY LUNCH COOKIES TO FUND THEIR OWN BIG-SPENDING SPECIAL INTEREST...

HAVE YOU BEEN WATCHING A WHOLE LOT OF TV POLITICAL ADS, ELMO?

YEAH, WHY?

BC

SO, HOW WAS YOUR DATE LAST NIGHT?

TERRIBLE! HE WAS ALL HANDS.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

IT MEANS HE HAD GREAT DEFENSIVE MOVES.

WIZARD OF ID

JERRY! CAN I BUY YOU A BEER?

NAH, I QUIT DRINKING AFTER MY WIFE LEFT ME

HOW COME?

I LOST MY MOTIVATION

AGNES

SO... WHAT IS LITTLE ZANAKSIA UP TO TODAY?

SHE FOUND BUGS IN HER JAR OF DRIED-UP MUSTARD CHIPS, AND HER HOUSE MADE OF CHEERIOS BOXES IS QUICKLY DISSOLVING IN A STORM.

... LEAVING HER TOES EXPOSED TO FAMISHED CROWS, WHO ARE GIVING THEM A GOOD BEAKING, TRYING TO DECIDE IF THEY ARE LUNCH.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD PUT IN AT LEAST A LITTLE HUMOR.

I DID! SEE? THE CROWS END UP EATING THE MUSTARD CHIPS BECAUSE THEY SMELL BETTER!

HI AND LOIS

PHWEET!

DITTO STOLE A COOKIE!

DOT IS A "WHISTLE BLOWER"!

THE OTHER COAST

I'VE DECIDED TO REDUCE MY HYDRO-CARBON EMISSIONS TO ZERO.

NO MORE WOOD STOVE, NO MORE CAR, NO MORE BACKYARD BARBECUES...

IF WE ALL DID THE SAME, THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE WOULD BE PRISTINE.

YOU MAY WANT TO TELL THAT TO MOTHER NATURE.

SNUFFY SMITH

WHAT'S TH' HURRY, LOWEEZY?

GASP!...PANT!...I COME RUNNIN' AS SOON AS I SEEN TH' SIGNAL FER "GOSSIP ALERT!!"

OOPS--SORRY, I SHOULD'VE WARNED YA I'D BE WASHIN' MY RED BLANKET T'DAY !!

BEEBLE BAILEY

BEEBLE, YOU LEFT YOUR MOP AND BUCKET!

THOSE AREN'T MINE

WELL, WHOSE ARE THEY?

THE ARMY'S

I REALLY SHOULD WORK ON BETTER EXCUSES...

...BUT THEN, THAT WOULD BE LIKE... WORK!

This Date In History

President Truman met in Birmingham, Ala., to endorse South Carolina Gov. Strom Thurmond.

In 1968, Disneyland opened to the public in Anaheim, Calif.

In 1968, a coup in Iraq returned the Baath Party to power, five years after it was ousted.

In 1975, an Apollo spaceship docked with a Soyuz spacecraft in orbit in the first superpower link-up of its kind.

In 1981, 114 people were killed when a pair of walkways above the lobby of the Kansas City Hyatt Regency Hotel collapsed during a "tea dance."

One year ago, Senate Democrats launched an all-night debate on the Iraq war. VA Secretary Jim Nicholson abruptly resigned in the wake of charges of shoddy health care for veterans injured in the Iraq war.

Today's Birthdays: TV personality Art Linkletter is 96. Comedian Phyllis Diller is 91. The former president of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch, is 88. Jazz singer Jimmy Scott is 83. Actor Donald Sutherland is 73. Actress-singer Diannah Carroll is 73. Rock musician Spencer Davis is 66. Rock musician Terry "Geezer" Butler (Black Sabbath) is 59. Actress Lucie Arnaz is 57. Actor David Hasselhoff is 56. Rock musician Fran Smith Jr. (The Hooters) is 56. Singer Phoebe Snow is 56. Television producer Mark Burnett ("Survivor," "The Apprentice") is 48. Actress Nancy Giles is 48. Singer Regina Belle is 45. Rock musician Lou Barlow is 42. Hip-hop singer Guru (Gang Starr) is 42. Contemporary Christian singer Susan Ashton is 41. Actor Jason Clarke is 39. Singer JC (PM Dawn) is 37. Rapper Sole' is 35. Country singer Luke Bryan is 32. Actor Eric Winter is 32.

Thought for Today: "Life has taught me that it is not for our faults that we are disliked and even hated, but for our qualities." — Bernard Berenson, Lithuanian-American art critic and author (1865-1959).

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Newsday Crossword

GOING TO PIECES by David W. Cromer
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

- Cribbage piece
- Playing area
- Emulate coyotes
- Cutting tool
- Present one's case
- Objet d'art
- Watch a
- House-window sign
- Have the lead
- Puppy's bite
- Throbs
- Holds in high regard
- Era
- Program interruption
- Subterranean spot
- Requiring payment
- Pan Am rival
- Bring together
- Elmo fan, maybe
- Drum major's prop
- ROTC grads
- Major ISP
- Femme
- Really quickly
- Currier colleague
- Erode
- Singer
- Med. scanner
- Columbia Pictures cofounder
- Blame
- Salon stuff
- Some account execs

DOWN

- Out of style
- Ways to go
- Reach
- Miles away
- Durable one
- Self-centered sort
- Gravy flaw
- Telephone trio
- Baseball-team member
- Unrefined finds
- Sommelier's concern
- Scores
- Cookie-jar tidbit
- Voice a belief for one
- French infinitive
- Praise extravagantly
- Shrine subjects
- Jazz singer
- James
- GI offense
- Welles role
- Pick and choose
- Pro opposer
- Baron's superior: Abbr.
- Rec-room collection
- Angler's need
- Storage area
- Engage in ___ of wills
- Threshed grain
- Less despotic
- Perrier rival
- Examine thoroughly
- "That's obvious!"
- Cooking herb
- Popular lunch hr.
- Fictional whaler
- Miner's bonanza
- ___ mater
- Thick head of hair
- A good time
- Give it a go

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