

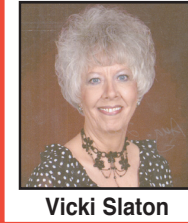


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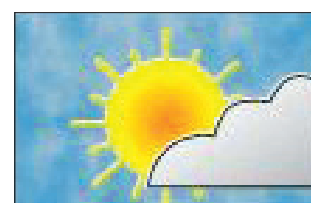
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BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY

JULY 14, 2009



VOLUME 104, NUMBER 190

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Tommy Tilley prepares to grill hamburgers during a fund-raiser to benefit the Eagles Lodge Saturday afternoon.

HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Filing fees increased

Funds generated for mediation center to target school truancy problem

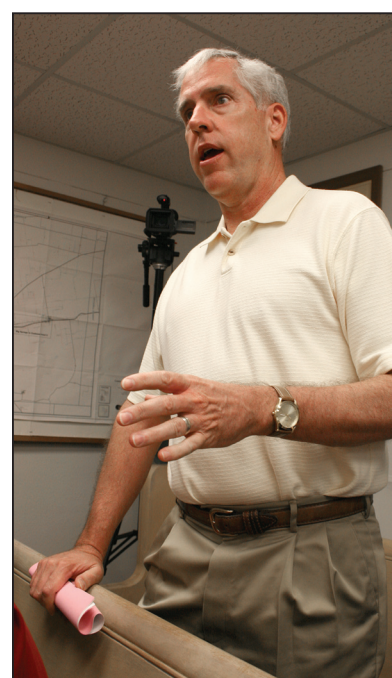
By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Local judges will have a new tool available to them in the battle against truancy, as Howard County commissioners voted unanimously Monday morning to increase court filing fees to pay for a mediation program targeting non-attendance.

The program, run by Lubbock-based Dispute Resolution Center and funded with grant money, recently popped up on the county's radar during a meeting between local law enforcement officials, according to County Judge Mark Barr.

"The justices of the peace, myself, the school truancy officer, the sheriff and chief of police and Josh (Hamby, county attorney) get together once a month and talk about what's going on in the community as far as law enforcement (is concerned)," said Barr. "The director of the juvenile probation program told us about this and we met with Mike Smith from Lubbock. It sounded like something that will give us another tool to deal with truancy and juvenile problems."

"Lubbock County has a grant, and for us to be part of that grant we have to pass this



HERALD Photo/Thomas Jenkins

Local attorney and professional mediator Tim Yeats expresses concerns for the implementation of new fees on court-filed suits in Howard County to fund a program aimed at decreasing truancy in local schools.

resolution, which would add \$5 on to all suits filed in the offices of the justices of the peace and \$15 for all county and district court suits. That gives us access to the grant,

See **FEES**, Page 3

From storm-tossed Alabama clinic to U.S. surgeon general

DESIREE HUNTER

Associated Press Writer

BAYOU LA BATRE, Ala. — Battered and flooded by Hurricane Katrina, this coastal Alabama fishing village was in wreckage four years ago when Dr. Regina Benjamin began assessing her patients' needs. Trouble was, her little health clinic had been flooded and they couldn't come to see her.

So she went to them. She could be seen "going door-to-door in all that mud and sewer, just a mess from her head to her toes with boots on," Stan Wright, one of her patients, said Monday, hours after Benjamin was nominated by President Barack Obama to be U.S. surgeon general.



Benjamin

"It'd be way before we'd open the roads up for traffic and I was concerned she was going to run into a big washout hole or something, but she'd put on her rain coat and boots and get her little doctor's bag and say, 'I'm going to go check on my patients,'" said Wright, the town's mayor.

People across the bayou voiced pride that Obama had reached into a rural, economically struggling area for a physician to become the nation's top doctor.

"I'm shocked. It's good news. Nothing that good ever happens in the bayou," said Jason

See **DOC**, Page 3

County secures autopsy services

By **THOMAS JENKINS**

Staff Writer

With the Texas Tech University Medical Center prepared to stop performing autopsies at the beginning of next month, Howard County commissioners approved a "back-up" plan Monday morning that consists of a contract with another Lubbock forensic firm.

Commissioners gave the go ahead for a contract with Lubbock-based South Plains Forensic Pathology, a con-

tract that will give the court some breathing room until a more permanent autopsy provider can be nailed down.

"We've always sent our autopsies to University Medical Center (in Lubbock)," said County Judge Mark Barr. "However, (the medical examiners office at) UMC is closing down Aug. 1. We have been approached by a company, Southwest Forensics, and they are going to be over here in Odessa. They have a little better rate and we want to use them, however, they may not be open until October."

"So we're going to have to have some kind of agreement in place with South Plains Forensic Pathology. This is

See **COUNTY**, Page 3



HERALD Photo/Thomas Jenkins

Howard County commissioners discuss approval of a contract with a Lubbock-based forensics firm during Monday morning's meeting. The county is preparing for the closure of the Lubbock County Medical Examiner's Office, which has been performing autopsies for Howard and other surrounding counties for years.



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Obituaries

Neomia McGee Rice

Neomia McGee Rice, 59, died Friday, July 10, 2009, at an Abilene area medical center.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at the First Baptist Church in Hamlin with pastor, the Rev. Eddie Jordan; senior pastor, the Rev. Dr. Leo F. Scott; and the Rev. Jesse Hooper officiating. Burial will follow in Hamlin Cemetery, directed by Elliott-Hamil Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 14, 2009, at the funeral home.

Mrs. Rice was born in Hamlin May 12, 1950, to Armstead (A.M.) and Arthelia (Cookie) McGee. She attended school at Oscar DePriest in Hamlin. Neomia lived in many different cities throughout Texas until she moved to Bakersfield, Calif., where she lived until 2008 when she became ill and moved back to Texas. She was a CNA until retiring. She was a co-founder and Mother of the Church at Mountain Top of Praise Full Gospel Church in Bakersfield, Calif.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Armstead and Arthelia McGee; a brother, Thomas Fry; and a sister, Pearl Hunter.

Survivors include her five children, Billy McGee (Phyllis) and Bobby McGee (Renee), all of Big Spring, Coy McGee of Bakersfield, Calif., Waylon McGee of San Francisco, Calif., and Renea Ervine (James) of Abilene; three sisters, Gloria Cork (James) of Midland, Martha McGee of Hamlin and Kathy McGee of Big Spring; one brother, Ray McGee Sr. of Big Spring; a brother-in-law, Willie Hunter of Hamlin; 11 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; her husband, Thomas Rice of South Carolina; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Memorials may be sent to the American Cancer Society, 209 South Danville, Suite B-107, Abilene 79605; or Hendrick Hospice Care, 1682 Hickory Street, Abilene 79601.

You may sign the guestbook at www.mem.com

Take Note

• Big Spring High School will be offering the exit level TAKS retest Wednesday through Friday at the high school. Please bring picture identification with you to the high school library at 8 a.m. Testing schedule is: Wednesday, Math; Thursday, Science; and Friday, Social Studies.

• The American Legion Post 506 will host a fish fry from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday at the lodge, 3203 W. Highway 80. Carry outs will be available. Delivery will be available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. by calling 263-2084. Plates are \$10 each. Everyone is welcome.

• The Permian Basin Foundation has awarded West Texas Opportunities funds through the Texas Resources for Iraq Afghanistan Deployment fund. West Texas Opportunities will assist current and former military personnel serving in Iraq or Afghanistan and their families. Funding will serve Howard, Martin, Andrews, Borden, Dawson, Ector, Fisher, Gaines, Glasscock, Midland, Mitchell, Nolan, Scurry and Upton counties. For more information, contact Diana Martinez or Debbie Wilson at 110 Johnson in Big Spring or call (432) 267-9536.

• An account to defray funeral costs for the family of Justin Hernandez has been set up at Western Bank — formerly known as First Bank of West Texas — located on FM 700. Hernandez was killed in a shooting May 29. For more information, contact the bank at 267-1113.

• Area residents are invited to participate in Vacation Bible School events being offered by the Southern Baptist Churches of Big Spring. Listed are the churches, dates, times and ages included:

Baptist Temple, July 20-24, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., ages 4 through sixth grade.

Hillcrest Baptist, July 26-30, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., ages kindergarten through sixth grade.

• Road to Recovery, a free service for those in the Big Spring area taking cancer treatments at Allison Cancer in Midland, is still in operation. The coordinator and phone number to call have changed. To get a ride to cancer treatment in Midland, please call Amy Carnes at (432) 334-6121, which is the American Cancer Society office in Odessa. If Amy is out of the office, you may leave your information with Melissa. An alternate number to call is 1-800-ACS-2345, which is the regional patient services offices; they will relay your information to Amy for the local drivers.

• The Big Spring High School class of 1979 is seeking classmates to attend our 30-year reunion Sept. 18-19. Please contact Debbye Salazar ValVerde at debbyev@bigspringchamber.com or Cheryl Carter Joy at joycheryl79@hotmail.com with any contact information, be it an e-mail address or physical address.

Police blotter

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

- STERLING MCINTOSH, 26, of 1110 E. Sixth St., was arrested Monday on a local warrant.
- ROXANNE KESSLER, 31, address unknown, was arrested Monday on a charge of assault Class C — family violence.
- MARIAN DAVIS, 39, of 2005 S. Monticello, was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxication.
- THEFT was reported: in the 2300 block of Wasson. in the 400 block of Gregg Street.
- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported: in the 1300 block of Tucson. in the 2900 block of W. Highway 80.
- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 600 block of Nolan.
- ASSAULT — FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD was reported in the 500 block of Douglas.
- ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE was reported: in the 1400 block of Stadium. in the 1300 block of Tucson.

Sheriff

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 66 inmates at the time of this report.

- MARIAN DAVIS, 39, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- ROXIANN KESSLER, 32, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- STERLING MCINTOSH, 26, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a local warrant.
- MICHAEL RENTERIA, 39, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of failure to appear and failure to maintain financial responsibility.

Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 2900 block of W. Highway 80. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported near the intersection of Wasson and Randolph. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1200 block of Jeffrey. Service refused.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 600 block of N. Gregg Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 900 block of S. Main. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 800 block of Gregg Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 3700 block of Wright. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of Third Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 700 block of W. Interstate Highway 20. Service refused.

Support Groups

TODAY

• The Path, faith-based addiction recovery, meets at 6:30 p.m. at Spring Tabernacle Ministries, 1209 Wright St.

• Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. and closed discussion meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

• Al-Anon, 615 Settles for family members and friends of alcoholics meets at 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

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

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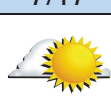
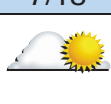
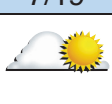
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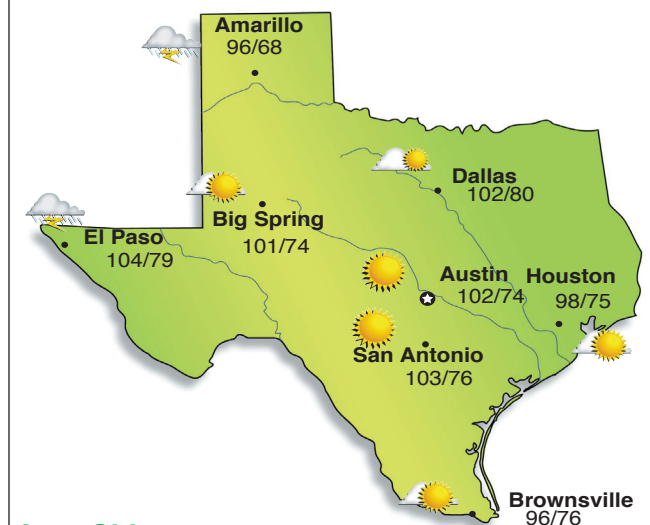
Local 5-Day Forecast

Wed 7/15	Thu 7/16	Fri 7/17	Sat 7/18	Sun 7/19
				
101/74 Mostly sunny skies. Near record high temperatures. High 101F.	100/75 Mix of sun and clouds. Highs 98 to 102F and lows in the mid 70s.	99/74 More sun than clouds. Highs in the upper 90s and lows in the mid 70s.	96/74 Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 90s and lows in the mid 70s.	94/73 Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 90s and lows in the low 70s.
Sunrise: 6:50 AM Sunset: 8:53 PM	Sunrise: 6:51 AM Sunset: 8:53 PM	Sunrise: 6:51 AM Sunset: 8:53 PM	Sunrise: 6:52 AM Sunset: 8:52 PM	Sunrise: 6:53 AM Sunset: 8:52 PM



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Texas At A Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	102	76	sunny	Kingsville	101	76	sunny
Amarillo	96	68	t-storm	Livingston	99	74	t-storm
Austin	102	74	sunny	Longview	99	77	pt sunny
Beaumont	94	76	t-storm	Lubbock	101	73	mst sunny
Brownsville	96	76	mst sunny	Lufkin	97	75	t-storm
Brownwood	102	74	sunny	Midland	102	76	mst sunny
Corpus Christi	97	79	sunny	Raymondville	100	76	mst sunny
Corsicana	100	77	pt sunny	Rosenberg	98	75	mst sunny
Dallas	102	80	pt sunny	San Antonio	103	76	sunny
Del Rio	103	79	sunny	San Marcos	102	75	sunny
El Paso	104	79	t-storm	Sulphur Springs	100	79	pt sunny
Fort Stockton	98	74	mst sunny	Sweetwater	102	75	mst sunny
Gainesville	102	78	pt sunny	Tyler	99	76	pt sunny
Greenville	100	77	pt sunny	Weatherford	103	77	sunny
Houston	98	75	mst sunny	Wichita Falls	106	76	mst sunny

Bulletin Board

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

WEDNESDAY

• Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• 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, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.

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

THURSDAY

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

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

• Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association meets at 5:30 p.m. in the Big Spring City Council Chambers, 307 E. Fourth.

Lottery

Results of the Texas

Two Step drawing

Monday night:

Winning numbers

drawn: 1-12-23-29. Bonus

Ball: 29.

Number matching four

of four, plus Bonus Ball:

0.

Results of the Cash 5

drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers

drawn: 5-14-17-22-26.

Number matching five

of five: 1. Prize: \$23,917

Winning ticket

purchased in: League

City.

The winning Daily

4 numbers drawn

Monday afternoon by

the Texas Lottery, in

order: 6-5-4-2. Sum It Up:

17.

The winning Pick

3 numbers drawn

Monday night by the

Texas Lottery, in order:

3-7-4. Sum It Up: 14

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Harrelson criticizes use of cats by Tech center

LUBBOCK (AP) — Actor and animal rights activist Woody Harrelson is criticizing use of cats for medical training at the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center.

Harrelson, who's a native of Midland, wrote that cats have been purchased from an animal shelter for what he calls "cruel medical training exercises."

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, which provided a copy of Harrelson's letter Monday, says it has filed a complaint with the school in Lubbock to end the practice.

KOSA-TV reports the cats are purchased from a shelter in Odessa.

Texas Tech officials told KCBT-TV that cats are used to practice anesthesia, so the animals are not conscious and do not suffer.

A Health Sciences Center spokeswoman did not immediately respond early Tuesday to a message from The Associated Press for further comment.

FEES

Continued from Page 1

which, in turn, funds this mediation center."

Barr said the program, which looks to intercede in truancy issues and mediate a solution, could save taxpayers plenty of money in the end, even if it just saves one child from dropping out of school and turning to a life of crime.

"It's a very large problem, with truancy," said Barr. "And the JPs don't have anything they can possibly do to make the situation better. I know the schools are all for it. I think it's a very worthwhile opportunity. It's something we can do to put some bite into truancy. I see a lot of juvenile cases, and Tim (Yeats) sees a lot of juvenile cases, and I see this (program) as a benefit."

"The mediators actually put the families into contact with those that can help them, similar to 2-1-1, where there are all of these agencies. A lot of these parents don't know where to turn. We've talked about this and talked about this. If you have a kid and he's in trouble in junior high, you've already lost him. However, if

you can start in the second or third grade and get the problem solved, then we have a chance. If we can save one kid, we can save \$25,000, which is what it costs to send them to the Texas Youth Commission."

D. Gene Valentini, spokesman for Dispute Resolution Center, said the list of counties joining the program is growing, and the positive impact of the center is having on young people is encouraging.

"We've had a grant for the last two years and we've been focusing on juvenile issues, and our priority has become, almost by default, truancy issues," said Valentini. "The primary problems we began to identify were with truancy and all of its subparts, such as problems at home, issues at school and with law enforcement. So we have seen some real benefits by focusing on the truancy matters."

"We mediate between the kids and their families, as well as the kids and other parts of the community that sometimes pop up. This year alone, we've already touched (the lives of) 200 kids, and it's growing. There are a lot of things that can be done and we

DOC

Continued from Page 1

Ngam (NAM'), 20, who is not a patient at the clinic but like many others is familiar with it.

After Katrina ruined the non-profit clinic — as another hurricane had done several years before — Benjamin laid out medical charts to dry in the post-storm sun and pointed out the need for electronic records that would be invulnerable to hurricanes.

Rebuilt by volunteers, the clinic burned down just as it was about to reopen after Katrina. Awarded a \$500,000 MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" last fall, Benjamin promised to use the money to help finish the job.

Today, the temporary clinic is a small brick building next to City Hall with a wooden ramp leading to its door. Behind it stands another building three times its size that will be the new clinic, which is to be completed when more money comes in.

On Monday, the 52-year-old Benjamin pledged to take her fight from the rural, impoverished outpost to the top tier of American medicine so that "no one falls through the cracks."

Her focus has long been on preventable disease and she will continue in that line. It's a cause she knows personally and three times over. Her father died with diabetes and high blood pressure, her mother died of lung cancer after years of smoking and she lost her only brother to HIV.

feel this is a very effective approach. We're excited about Howard County participating. Hockley County just came in, and we expect some more counties to join in that want to utilize the services of this network as well."

Valentini said the mediators used in Howard County would most likely be local people.

"We prefer to use local folks. That means we're going to have to do some training, and we have some planned for the end of August," said Valentini. "My hope is that we can get two or three people from Big Spring or Howard County that can potentially be trained as mediators and not get into a commute situation. I think the program will fail if we're totally reliant on out-of-towners or folks out of Howard County."

"One of the techniques we've initiated in Lubbock and Hockley counties and we've found to be effective is to have someone actually in the JP courts. That seems to be a real turning point, so we've been attending all truancy activities in both counties," said Valentini. "After the initial information is obtained working with the school

or the court, the mediator sits down and works out a resolution that's satisfactory and meets the parameters of the court. So the child and the school district are benefiting. The youngest I'm aware of we've had come into the system were six and seven years old."

Local attorney and mediator Tim Yeats said he's unsure how the program will have the promised effects on local youth, but welcomed any chance to reach children in danger of dropping out.

What he doesn't welcome, however, is the additional burden the new fees will put on area taxpayers filing court suits.

"I think the proposal is a raising of fees across the board. That's divorces, or anything else filed in district court, county court or the JPs' courts," said Yeats. "I can envision a situation in district court because Judge Moore (Judge Robert H. Moore III, 118th District Court) refers everything to mediation, and he has the power to select a mediator. And I can certainly see a situation where someone says, 'Why should I pay so-and-so

for mediation when free mediation is part of my filing fee?"

"I think what you end up with if you plan to use it simply for truancy and juvenile (matters), which sounds great, is taxing a whole group of people who are filing district court cases, which are civil cases, such as divorces. I don't know how much that comes up to, but according to the resolution all of that money from the \$5 and \$15 fees goes to Lubbock County in return for them providing these mediation services. It's not a huge part of my business, and I'm not going to miss it if I don't get any more mediations, but it seems a little unfair when you're taxing a whole group of people out there, especially in district court, that won't get any benefits out of these services."

Yeats' objection prompted Commissioner Jimmie Long to ask if the bill could be passed along to those usually at the heart of the problem, the parents.

"Why can't the fee be assessed to the families for the mediation if it's ordered by the JPs and our district officers?" asked Long. "Isn't that

the way it is now?"

Justice of the Peace Kathryn Wiseman said most families experiencing truancy problems are already in economic straits.

"Most of the families involved are very low-income families," said Wiseman. "Many of them are single mothers with five to six children. They already cannot afford it. I can't tell you how many of the cases dealing with parents contributing to the non-attendance I had to issue a warrant on and they served jail time simply because they don't have the money to pay it. This is a portion of the problem, that they are low-income families that don't have the money to begin with."

"I see no problem with assessing that fee to all courts, because, eventually, that kid is going to end up in district court or county court if we don't take care of the problem now," she said firmly.

COUNTY

Continued from Page 1

only an option to use their services. This contract doesn't mean we have to use them, and we really need a backup plan anyway."

Barr said the contract doesn't require the county to pay any fees unless the government entity uses their services.

Justice of the Peace Kathryn Wiseman said she's raised the rates charged by South Plains Forensic Pathology, and they are similar to what the county was already paying UMC, which housed the Lubbock Medical Examiners Of-

fice for quite some time.

"I thought their (South Plains Forensic Pathology) fee schedule was pretty stiff, but it is comparable to what we were paying," said Wiseman. "The basic autopsy is \$2,000 and it goes up from there. Infants are always \$2,500, and when they have to come testify it's always higher."

"We don't have a fee schedule from Southwest Forensics yet. When their representative came and talked to us, it was quite a bit less. Plus, their turn around — the rate they can get the autopsy report to us — is a lot quicker. It's within three weeks, instead of two months,

which is what it's been with UMC. They are supposed to be open Sept. 1, and that's when our contract with Texas Tech ends on Aug. 31."

Wiseman also commented on the lack of timeliness from the UMC office in the past.

"They have been so slow. I never really could tell what the problem was," said Wiseman. "I think one of the problems is they kept having turnover in staff."

Texas Tech Health Sciences Center officials announced the school's intentions to end its contract to manage the Lubbock County Medical Examiner's Office almost a year ago, following a slew of com-

plaints filed against the examiners office for allegedly performing illegal autopsies.

A complaint filed with the Texas Medical Board last year by Austin-based document researcher David Fisher alleges the Lubbock County Medical Examiner's Office committed fraud on an epic scale over the past 15 years, along with allegations of conspiracy between Texas Tech University and the Lubbock Hospital District.

"This guy in Austin, has he checked them (South Plains Forensic Pathology) out? Is he going to let them operate?" asked Commissioner Jerry Kilgore with a

grin.

"I really don't know," said Wiseman. "He's still in contact with us."

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

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MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL
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Margarita Juarez Rosas, 63, died Friday. Funeral service were at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Myers & Smith Chapel with burial at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.
Rosie Hernandez, 27, died Sunday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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EDITORIAL

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

-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

Congress really needs to meddle with BCS mess?

A specter is haunting college football — the specter of communism. So says U.S. Rep. Joe Barton, R-Ennis. In a May subcommittee hearing on NCAA Division I college football post-season play, Barton unloaded his latest salvo against the godless Bowl Championship Series that allowed the University of Oklahoma to play for a national title despite being beaten by the University of Texas.

"It's like communism," Politico.com quoted Barton as saying. "You can't fix it."

Joining Barton in the crusade to make the world safe for playoff democracy is Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah. Hatch's home state University of Utah Utes went undefeated last year and also didn't earn an appearance in the January title game.

"The BCS system is anti-competitive, unfair and, in my opinion, un-American," Hatch told Salt Lake City's Deseret News.

Even President Barack Obama summoned a little pigskin outrage. "I'm going to throw my weight around a little bit," he said on CBS' "60 Minutes." Eight teams. That would be three rounds, to determine a national champion. It would add three extra weeks to the season."

Let's stipulate that the BCS format stinks, that Division I football is alone among major sports in not crowning a champion based on a meritocratic playoff and that Obama's proposal makes eminent sense. Is this really something we want the government to fix? And if we do, do we really want Congress holding BCS hearings now?

Unemployment has hit a 26-year high. Iran is spinning more centrifuges. South Korea says North Korea is responsible for an unprecedented cyber attack on the United States.

American troops are deployed to two theaters of war. The nation is facing exploding deficits and has a pressing need for health care reform, entitlement reform and immigration reform. But the Senate Judiciary Committee's Antitrust Subcommittee and its ranking member, Sen. Hatch, are on the job tackling the red menace of the FedEx Orange Bowl.

Perhaps Congress should just follow the precedent of 2009 and institute a government takeover of college football. That's what some people call socialism and un-American unless, of course, it fixes a problem you want solved.

THE EXPRESS-NEWS
SAN ANTONIO

LETTER POLICIES

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A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

May our emotions and opinions be shaped by You, Lord.

Amen

Health care reform needs right solution, not simply a politically expedient one

Nearly everyone acknowledges that our health care system needs reform. We are particularly aware of this in Texas, which is a leading example of how our system isn't working for so many patients.

Texas, unfortunately, has the highest percentage of people without health insurance coverage in the nation. In fact, at a whopping 6 million, the number of uninsured Texans is roughly the same as the entire population of the state of Wisconsin!

This poses a huge challenge for our physicians, nurses and hospitals — and our taxpayers who are paying the high costs of uncompensated care for the uninsured. Also affected are the working families who can't get the basic care they need because insurance is unaffordable and health care costs are soaring.

Something as sweeping and consequential as health care reform needs the right solution, not a politically expedient one. Many of the proposed fixes moving through Congress are misguided.

While we need reform, we must take care not to undermine what should be the foundation of health care in America — patient choice, affordable coverage and the highest quality of care.

The Senate may soon consider legislation put forth by the administration that solves little and creates a massive public health system. It will reduce patient choices, drive insurance companies out of business and have minimal impact on the uninsured population. It will cost taxpayers more than \$600 billion and cut \$400 billion out of doctor and hospital reimbursements in Medicare and Medicaid.

One of the most troublesome aspects of the legislation, which

embodies the Obama administration's broad health care reform agenda, is the massive government expansion it would enact.

A cornerstone of the plan is a government-run "option," or a federal insurance provider that is intended to compete with private health care insurers.

Proponents maintain that a government-run insurer could provide cheaper coverage for Americans. Despite initial statements that Americans who like their doctors and health care plans will get to keep them, the president recently acknowledged that if employers drop private coverage in favor of the government-run option, patients would have no choice but to switch the plans and lose access to the physicians that they have come to trust.

Under the Obama plan, 15 million Americans are poised to lose their private coverage. When our goal is to increase health insurance coverage, proposals that will actually reduce coverage defy common sense.

Furthermore, we must consider whether bureaucracy-run insurance is the best way to administer health care delivery. Government-managed entitlement programs like Medicare and Medicaid don't make a strong case for the "public option."

In fact, billions of taxpayer dollars are wasted on fraud and abuse in Medicare each year. The program pays out more than it takes in, and by 2017, it will be totally broke. Worse yet, there is little indication that Medicare beneficiaries enjoy the choices that administration officials would like us to think a government-run system offers.

Today, 40 percent of physicians turn away Medicaid patients because the system is poorly administrated and it has a weak record of reimbursement.

We can do better, and for the long-term health of Americans, we must do better. Any reforms must reduce costs and increase

access — this will not be accomplished through a government takeover of our health care system.

The right approach must encourage competition that is based on transparency and value, making health insurance a buyers' market in which patients have affordable choices and know what plans cost and what they offer. The right approach will support employers and small businesses so they have affordable options to offer their employees and their families.

The right approach would offer tax credits to those who buy individual policies. The right approach must prevent insured taxpayers from absorbing the costs of uncompensated care, which currently raises Texas families' insurance premiums by over \$1,500 annually. The right approach will allow Americans who are happy with their coverage to maintain the quality care they need with physicians they trust.

And the right approach must actually accomplish the goal of removing barriers to medical care for all those who need it — including our 6 million uninsured in Texas.

Anything that does not address those fundamental components will not fix the problem and could actually make it worse.

We must not be pressured to rush an ill-conceived plan through the Senate in the same manner that the Democratic leadership forced the American public to swallow the economic "stimulus" plan earlier this year.

Americans now realize the stimulus plan was oversold, and they are not seeing the promised return on one of our nation's costliest investments ever.

Now, with the health of millions of Americans in the balance, Congress cannot afford to get health care reform wrong.

Kay Bailey Hutchison is the senior U.S. Senator from Texas.



KAY
BAILEY
HUTCHISON



Having to rethink term limits issue

When California voters rejected five measures on the May 19 special election ballot, but passed a sixth measure that barred legislative pay raises in budget deficit years, the message to Sacramento was clear: Voters did not like what Sacramento had to offer.

I thought that the 1990 term-limit measure that restricted Assembly members to three two-year terms and state Senate members to two four-year terms would produce better representation in Sacramento. I thought term-limited lawmakers would pass better budgets. Instead, legislators have passed budgets later than ever and more gimmicks each year — until gimmicks no longer could hide the gaps between income and spending.

The state budget mess has prompted me to rethink term limits. Maybe it's not a plus when roughly one-third of Assembly members and one-half of state senators are no longer eligible for re-election.

State Sen. Abel Maldonado, R-Santa Maria, believes the answer is for voters to pass his

open-primary measure on the June 2010 ballot. Primary a la Maldonado would pit the top two vote-getters — even members of the same party — against each other in the general election.

Under the system now, Maldonado explained, Democrats have to woo the hard left to win their party's primary; Republicans likewise have to win the hard right — with the result that most lawmakers are "working very hard making 13 percent of their electorate happy." But if voters chose between the top two vote-getters, lawmakers would have to reach out to all constituents, not just to their party's overly influential base.

I called Bob Stern of the Center for Governmental Studies — my go-to guy on good government — and he suggested that I rethink my rethinking on term limits.

Stern referred me to his center's 2007 report "Termed Out: Reforming California's Legislative Term Limits." It found that term limits brought fresh faces to Sacramento and reduced the potential for corruption — but suggested longer term limits to enhance legislators' expertise.

Rather than term limits, Stern blames the two-thirds vote needed to pass a budget for the state's fiscal woes. He also faulted voters' reluctance to make shared sacrifices. Look at President Obama, Stern added: "Cutting

taxes and raising spending. What does that tell people? You can have it all."

Besides, every time I might go for longer term limits, state lawmakers cook up some underhanded scheme like last year's Proposition 93, which would have extended terms to 12 years, while selling it as a tougher measure. Such dishonesty cannot be rewarded with a yes vote.

But if voters think they were voting against Sacramento in May, Stern noted, they should notice that the problem is not "just the people who are there — because you're bringing in new people all the time and they're not doing any better than the people they're replacing."

Maybe the problem isn't term limits, but voters in a state where some oppose spending limits, others oppose higher taxes, but all agree they should not have to compromise.

I've heard from voters who saw their no-on-everything stance in May as a repudiation of politicians who haven't gotten the job done — odd, as passage of the May measures would have encouraged compromise.

In May, we got the government we deserved — and it still wasn't good enough for us.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsaunders@schronicle.com.

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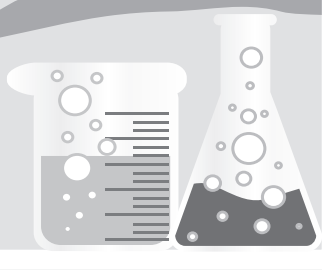
THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- 1863: CIVIL WAR DRAFT RIOTS BEGAN IN NEW YORK CITY.
- 1930: THE FIRST WORLD CUP SOCCER COMPETITION BEGAN. IT TOOK PLACE IN URUGUAY.
- 1977: A 25-HOUR BLACK OUT OCCURED IN NEW YORK CITY. IT RESULTED IN RIOTING AND LOOTING.

SCIENCE FACT!



TRUE OR FALSE?
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COULD HAVE BEEN
RECYCLED AND REFURBISHED
FOR FUTURE USE.

ANSWER: TRUE

New Word

DIGITAL

using signals
represented by
digits

How they SAY that in...

ENGLISH: Talk

SPANISH: Charla

ITALIAN: Conversazione

FRENCH: Entretien

GERMAN: Gespräch

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the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: CELL PHONE

SLYLOCK FOX and COMICS FOR KIDS

BY BOB WEBER JR.

Mrs. Rabbit has accused Shady Shrew of stealing her daughter's playset. But Shady insists he's innocent and claims he bought the set last year. He says his nephew comes over nearly every day to play on the swing. What evidence did Slylock Fox observe that led him to doubt Shady's story?



Solution -- If Shady's nephew played on the swing nearly every day, there would probably be an area under the swing where the grass is worn away. There is no worn area, only grass.

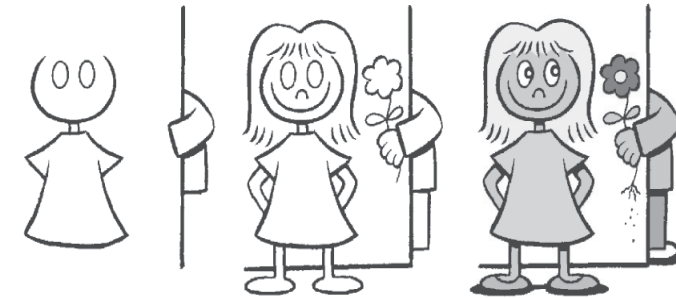
Find six differences between these panels.



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HOW TO DRAW a shy guy with a crush

WEBER 7-12



YOUR DRAWING

Today's terrific artist is Clare C. of Prairie Village, KS



Submit your drawings at www.kidcartoonists.com

Which of the following correctly finishes the sentence: All spiders...

- a) lay eggs.
- b) can fly.
- c) have eight legs.
- d) grow teeth.
- e) spin silken threads.

Answer -- (e) (c) (a) (b)

Answer -- Fin, raccoon tail, bird, star, owl and tooth.

The fourth Find the six differences collection is here. Send \$4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to Six Differences No. 4, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

Bird Poop: A woodpecker family moves in

For years, the mulberry tree had been a nesting site for birds. As varied as their species, the nests often came crashing to the St. Augustine lawn after violent storms. Remnants of grass, twigs, yucca strings, and mud-laced abodes had to be removed before the woman could mow her yard. Kneeling in the front



BEBE
McCASLAND

flowerbed as she pulled unwanted grasses, the homeowner heard a noise coming from one of the lower tree limbs. As the scraping, pounding sounds continued, she decided to investigate. Approaching from the opposite side, the woman slowly inched around the trunk until she spotted a small, black and white bird that was chiseling a quarter-sized hole in a large limb.

Since the bird's pecking and hacking at the inner lining seemed endless, the woman eased away from the tree. As she entered the

house to use the phone, she had a smile on her face.

Another tenant for the tree appeared to be a ladder-backed woodpecker.

"You have to come see this," was stated emphatically as an excited lover of birds called to relate her experience. So as not to interrupt the excavation process, we parked curbside and watched through binoculars.

As the bird removed the debris of its labor, we could see tiny specks and dust covering the bristle-like feathers that protected its nostrils. Withstanding the shock to its skull from the constant pounding, the woodpecker used its hard, pointed bill to create a new home.

While we were occupied with "baby season," the homeowner continued to watch the frenzied efforts. When that activity ceased, she sensed the period of incubation by both parents had begun at the bottom of the tunnel. After weeks had passed, the woodpeckers were seen making numerous trips to and from the hole. Returning from a planned vacation, the homeowner noticed

the parents rushing to different parts of her yard. Her guess that the nestlings were now fledglings proved accurate.

Glancing through the storm door one morning, she noticed one of the young woodpeckers standing on her front porch. Quickly rounding up her cats and a bag of kitty litter, the woman told her protesting pets they would be housebound for a while.

Diligently, the parents fed the youngster on the porch. Approaching its offspring as it stood near the door, the male had just caught a tempting insect. Not anticipating a looming feline on the other side of the glass, the parent tried at the last second to avoid its enemy.

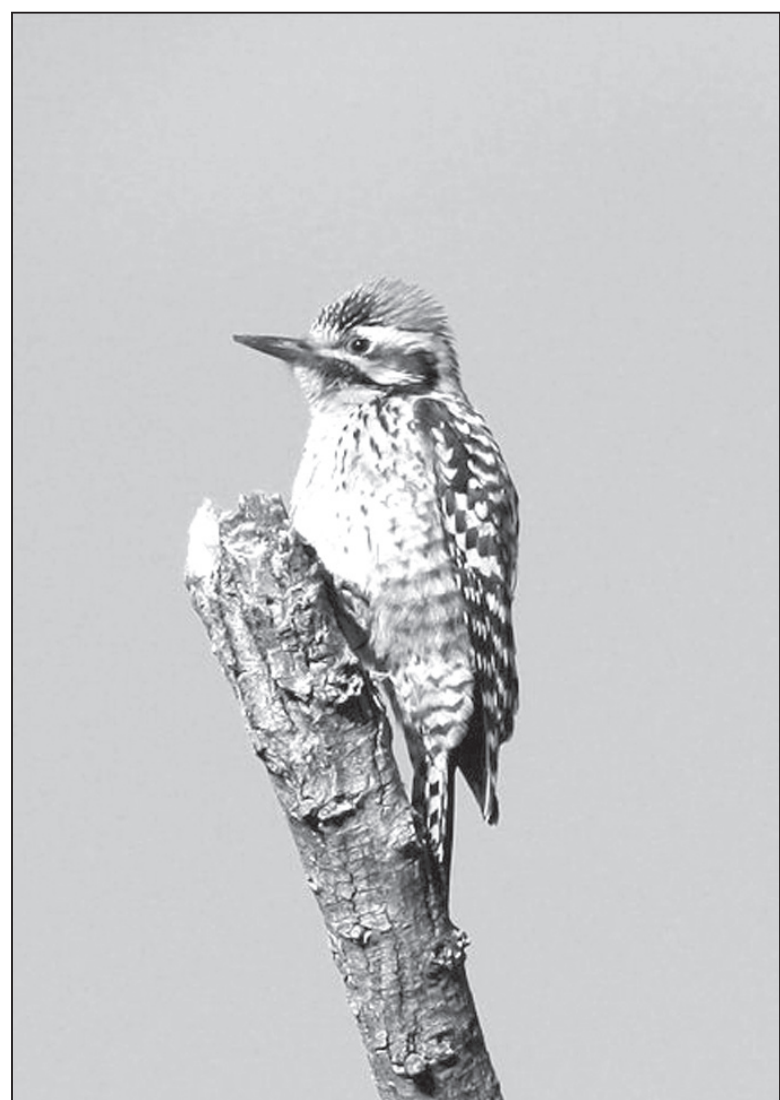
"Thump. A loud thump. It's out cold!" said the woman as she described the impact of the woodpecker. Telling her to support the entire body, I asked her to place it in a box, and keep it quiet, warm, and dark.

When I looked inside her temporary enclosure, I agreed with her that it was a male ladder-back. Its red cap set it apart from the female, who wears a black one. The symmetry of its black back, enhanced with white bars, suggested a ladder in appearance. Spotted with white, its black wings gave an illusion that the zebra

coloration continued. Even its black tail had outer feathers that were barred. Compared to its noticeable black and white striped face, the male's lower parts were an almost dirty white, with blackish spotting on its sides and breast.

Fascinated by its feet, the woman and I knew that not every bird has such a configuration. To move upward, around, and down tree trunks and limbs, the woodpecker has four toes with long, curved nails. While two toes point forward, the other toes are backward. The shorter of the two can be turned at a right angle and assists in the bird's ability to cling to bark.

Several hours later I called the woman. Awake and angry at being enclosed, the woodpecker flew effortlessly in a long enclosure. Not wanting the bird to hurt itself out of frustration, I



Courtesy photo

Searching for larvae of moth and wood-boring beetles, ants, aphids, caterpillars, and flies, the ladder-backed woodpecker extends its long, sticky tongue to capture its prey. Acorns, nuts, berries and cactus fruit are also on its menu. A year-round resident of the southwest, the "desert woodpecker" frequents canyons, mesquite and hackberry trees.

gladly returned it to its family and her yard.

As we watched the ladder-back acquaint with his tree, the woman told of its mate coaxing the errant fledgling off the porch and on to her hedge.

From there, it had slowly worked its way into the mulberry and safety.

Bebe McCasland is federally and state licensed to rehabilitate wild birds.

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

First Things First

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ Q 7 3
♥ J
♦ 10 7 6 4
♣ K Q 10 9 2

WEST
♠ K 6
♥ K 9 7 5 2
♦ Q 8 5
♣ 6 4 3

EAST
♠ 10 9 8 4 2
♥ 8 6 4 3
♦ K 9 2
♣ A

SOUTH
♠ A J 5
♥ A Q 10
♦ A J 3
♣ J 8 7 5

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 2 NT Pass
3 NT

Opening lead — five of hearts.
Many notrump contracts are like a race, with each side trying to be first to set up and run its long suit. However, the temptation to establish a long suit as quickly as possible must sometimes be resisted in the interests of safeguarding the contract.

Consider this deal where West got the defense started on the right track by leading his longest suit, hearts, against three notrump. Dummy's jack held the first trick, whereupon

declarer immediately went after his own long suit, clubs.

East won the first club with the ace and returned a heart, and South suddenly found himself on the wrong end of a losing proposition. The queen of hearts lost to the king, and a third heart drove out the ace.

Declarer ran his clubs but, with only eight tricks in view, had little choice other than to try a spade finesse for his ninth. But when West won the jack of spades with the king and cashed two good hearts, the contract was down one.

In attacking clubs first, South overlooked two major considerations: first, that the opposing hearts represented a distinct threat to the contract, and second, that even after the clubs were established, he would still be one trick short of his contract.

For these reasons, declarer should have delayed playing clubs and instead taken the spade finesse at trick two. If the finesse won, he could then turn his attention to the club suit. But even if the finesse lost, as in the actual case, West would then either have to return a heart into the A-Q or else shift to a different suit, giving South time to establish the clubs.

Proper pacing, not speed, usually determines the outcome of a race.

Tomorrow: Cooperative defense.

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sudoku

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

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

MTV poll: Young people sunny despite economy

By MARTHA WAGGONER
Associated Press Writer

Rick Lagrappe is 19, without a job and living at home in Shawnee, Okla. But he's far from bummed out about life.

Lagrappe described himself as a "very happy" person in an MTV poll of 1,100 young people released Tuesday, and he wasn't alone.

The poll showed that 73 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were generally happy with life, compared with 66 percent in 2007, even though more of them, including Lagrappe, think they'll have a harder time finding work, buying a house and raising a family than their parents did.

"It's just me. I'm a happy person," said Lagrappe, who has lit-

tle cash to spend on gas for his car and has been pressed into service to care for his 6-year-old sister — the "beast."

Lagrappe graduated from Dale High School in May with plans to join the Navy. But at 6 feet tall and 240 pounds, he says he's too heavy, so he's thinking about applying for a job at a nearby casino. First, he has to babysit his sib Angelina while his mother has surgery on both knees.

"I'll have the little one here at home, and I'll be taking care of her until Mom recovers," he said. "I wish I could do more, though."

One reason for Lagrappe's positive state of mind: he's "very happy" with his relationships with his family and friends, according to the poll.

Compared to 2007 results, the poll, which included young people ranging in age from 13 to 24, showed respondents are less happy with the amount of money they have — 36 percent to 31 percent, with 53 percent saying they believe it will be harder to find a job than it was for their parents, compared to 30 percent two years ago.

Fifty-nine percent said they'll have a harder time buying a house, compared to 41 percent in 2007, and 48 percent said it will be harder to raise a family.

Of respondents ages 13-17, 75 percent said they were happy, up from 65 percent two years ago.

and 72 percent of those

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NL trying to end AL's 13-year All-Star dominance

RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

ST. LOUIS — Names change, not the result.

Trying to predict the MVP of the All-Star game? Turn to the American League.

From the Alomar brothers to Pedro Martinez to Cal Ripken Jr. to J.D. Drew, the junior circuit has provided most of the thrills over the past dozen years.

When San Francisco's Tim Lincecum throws the first pitch to

Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki on Tuesday night at the new Busch Stadium — after President Barack Obama's ceremonial toss to Cardinals star Albert Pujols — the NL will be seeking its first win in 13 years.

"We're just going to try and keep going out there and give ourselves a chance to own that home field advantage for whoever gets in the World Series," Minnesota Twins closer Joe Nathan said. "We'd like to keep this streak alive one more year."

Welcome to one of the most one-sided rivalries in sports, what's

become the American League's annual domination of the NL.

Even a pregame pep talk by Ernie Banks didn't help the NL last year at old Yankee Stadium, where Michael Young's sacrifice fly at 1:37 a.m. gave the AL a 4-3, 15-inning victory.

Now 11-0-1 since its 1996 defeat at Philadelphia — the longest unbeaten streak in All-Star history — the AL has cut the overall gap to 40-37-2 and hasn't lost in six meetings since the winning league started receiving home-field advantage in the World Series.

"We would love to be able to snap that streak," said Philadelphia first baseman Ryan Howard, a St. Louis native. "It always seems like they kind of pull it out towards the end of the game but, you know, hopefully this year it will be different."

Couldn't be more different from 1966, the last time the stars met in St. Louis. The National League was in the midst of winning nine straight All-Star games and 19 of 20.

See **ALL-STARS**, Page 12

Prince for a day

Fielder outslugs Rangers' Cruz for Derby title

MIKE FITZPATRICK

AP Baseball Writer

ST. LOUIS — Prince Fielder's approach at the plate is perfect for the Home Run Derby.

"I'm not quite sure about my mechanics. I just know I have to swing hard," Fielder said. "In high school, a lot of people told me to swing easier and everything, but I just don't know how to do that."

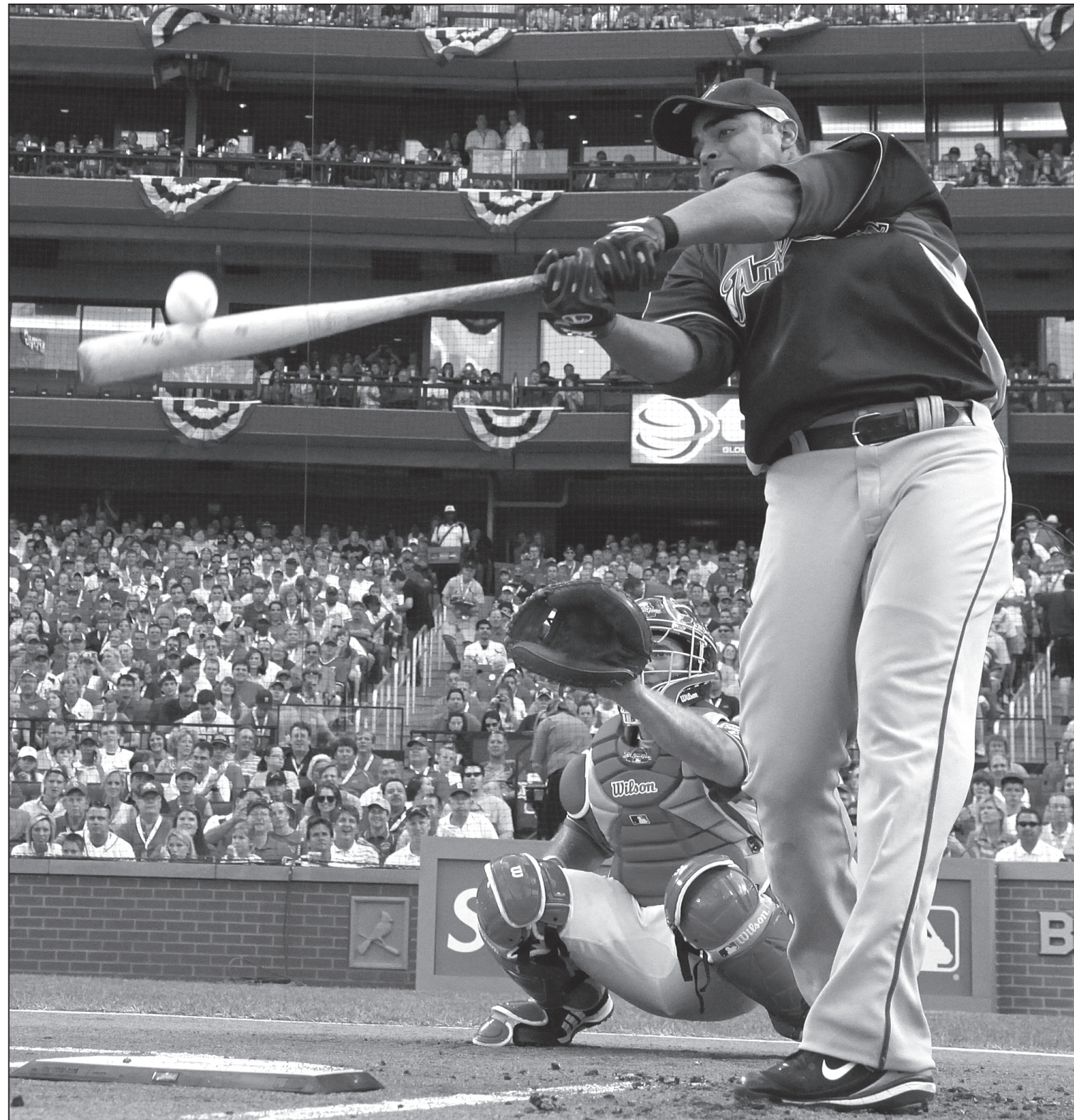
He sure knows how to hit.

With hometown slugger Albert Pujols and Ryan Howard eliminated early, Fielder won the derby Monday night with a steady power display that included a jaw-dropping drive estimated at 503 feet.

The Milwaukee Brewers' first baseman topped Texas outfielder Nelson Cruz 6-5 in the finals at Busch Stadium to take home a title that St. Louis fans hoped would go to one of their own.

"It's what I expected. This is Albert's stadium and Ryan is from here," Fielder said. "I was just happy I was able to put on a show and I'm glad I won."

Pujols, the Cardinals' big first baseman, and Howard, who grew up in the Gateway City and plays for the Philadelphia Phillies, were knocked out in the second round.



AP photo/Morry Gash

American League outfielder Nelson Cruz of the Texas Rangers hits during the first round of the MLB Home Run Derby in St. Louis Monday. Cruz finished second in the contest, falling to Prince Fielder of the Milwaukee Brewers in the final round.

See **DERBY**, Page 12

Nocentini defends lead in Tour de France's 10th stage

LIMOGES, France (AP) — Rinaldo Nocentini of Italy set off in the yellow jersey Tuesday as cyclists rode without earpieces to prevent easy communication with team cars in the 10th stage of the Tour de France.

The flat, 120.9-mile trek between Limoges and Issoudun favors sprinters.

Seven-time champion Lance

Armstrong started the stage in third place, trailing teammate and rival Alberto Contador of Spain by two seconds. Nocentini leads Contador by six seconds.

Tour organizers said banning earpieces could inject drama into the race, forcing riders to devise tactics on their own instead of being given instructions by radio from their team

cars.

Many riders, including Armstrong and Contador, have expressed their discontent at a measure they see as dangerous.

"I can't hear anything, I don't know anything ... I feel naked," Armstrong joked as he got off his Astana team bus and mounted his bike to go to the start line. "I think it's a lot to do about

nothing."

Astana team director Johan Bruyneel had campaigned for the ear-piece ban to be overturned, but it was upheld and is also scheduled for Friday's tricky 13th stage — which features one big climb which could see many attacks.

Teams are still pressuring organizers to overturn Friday's ban.

Sports in brief

Howard College hosting three baseball camps

The coaching staff of the 2009 National Champion Howard College baseball team is lending its services to baseball camps for three different age groups beginning July 20 and lasting through July 23 at Jack Barber Field, located on the Howard College campus.

The first is called the Rookie League Camp and is for players ages 6-8 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. each day. Cost is \$100 if it is paid by Tuesday and goes up to \$125 after that date.

The Texas League Camp is for ages 9-12 and is from 10 a.m. to noon each day. Cost is \$125 by Tuesday and \$150 thereafter.

The Big League Camp is for ages 13-18 and lasts from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Cost is \$150 by Tuesday and \$175 if paid after that date.

Howard College baseball camps are skill intensive teaching camps. They are designed to create a

fun environment to improve skills and develop a love for the game. Group and individual instruction will be provided by the Howard College coaching staff and players. Emphasis is placed on fielding and hitting techniques.

For more information, call the Howard College athletic office at 264-5040.

Coahoma Bulldogs Football Camp set for July 28-30

Bulldog Stadium is the site for the Coahoma Bulldogs Football Camp set for July 28-30 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. each day.

The camp is for ages 8-years-old through incoming eighth graders. Cost is \$20 if paid by July 15 and \$25 after that date.

The camp will be coordinated by the Coahoma football coaching staff. Campers will be divided into age, skill and position groups and will work with the fundamentals of football specific to their

offensive and defensive positions.

For more information, contact Head Coach Stacey Martin at 394-4535.

Country club site for 2-person tourney

Big Spring Country Club will host a two-person low-ball golf tournament July 25-26, officials announced.

Entry fee is \$60 per player plus golf cart. Private carts are welcome. Entry includes a barbecue meal on the course July 25.

Practice rounds will be available the day prior to the tournament's start.

The tournament will feature a shotgun start at 1 p.m. both days. The field will be flighted by first round scores.

For more information, contact the BSCC pro shop at 267-5354.

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Announcements

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Applications are required and are available at the District's office, 400 E. 24TH Street, Big Spring, Texas 79720, by calling (432) 267-6341 or crmwd.org

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1608 SUNSET 2 Bdrm, 1 bath, CH/A, fenced yard, garage. \$550. month, \$500. deposit. Call 432-213-4647.

2401 ALABAMA, 3 bedroom, 1 bath, CH/A, recently updated, \$750.00 month. Call (432)631-5557 or 661-9712.

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

The Aries moon gives an energetic push and it's up to us to temper the boost with a positive focus and good manners. Use your power to excel, not to rush. And increase your awareness of others around you. Better to err on the side of caution than to step on anyone's toes. Pretend you have all the time in the world to get where you're going.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You enjoy a good game, especially one that you or your partner made up. The rules to these emotional matches may not be spelled out, but you both have a creative sense about how to play.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). If loved ones seem jumpy around you, it's because you have a slight edge to your voice. Get some overdue "me time." Don't wait until you're dangling off the cliff to

realize you're at the end of your rope.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Unexpected visitors will arrive; pleasant enough, but they still disrupt your day. Go with the flow. There's little you can do about it that you wouldn't regret later. You're a hospitable person at your core.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Someone close to you who is getting into shape will inspire you to do the same. Your body responds quickly to whatever program you try and you will also be mentally stronger for the endorphin release.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You know what you want to happen on this day, but you are not totally in control of the schedule. The needs of your loved ones play heavily into your balancing act. It makes you happy that you are able to seize these chances to give.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (JULY 14). You have a gift for conveying who you are, what you do and what you want. You generate excitement and support wherever you go.

The next 10 weeks bring a slew of new professional contacts. Love is your main focus in the fall. One relationship blossoms as another relationship heals. There's a big purchase in May. Libra and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 37, 10, 4, 33 and 1.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's easy to make wrong assumptions about people, especially if they remind you of someone you knew in the past. Try to resist jumping to conclusions. Ask questions.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're quite impressionable. Wherever you go, you'll match the energy of the room. When you're the only one in the room, you'll still pick up on the feeling your surroundings are emitting. So visit beautiful places.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You are a magician, and there's nothing you can't pull out of your hat. Making the trick happen requires repetitive practice and a little bit of luck. If others think the illusion is real, let them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A natural

reaction to stress is to retreat from the source of tension. When you feel yourself withdrawing from a situation, do so consciously. Try and pinpoint exactly what is causing you to feel anxious.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's no fun to explore your options if someone is closely observing your every move. Whether it's an overly attentive store clerk or a friend who's too involved in your dating life, let others know that you need space to shop.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Lately it's been more difficult than usual for you to manifest what you desire, but you'll have a breakthrough today. Suddenly, you're an expert at shaping your fantasies into something you can actually put your hands on.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You change someone's life just by being you — you don't have to do a single thing more. Therefore, the act that is all about making you happy may actually be

the most selfless you can do now.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "I'm a female graphic designer and I work in an office with mostly women. One of my co-workers, a Leo, constantly takes credit for my ideas. For instance, I'll say something in a meeting to the group and then five minutes into the meeting, she'll say the same thing. The worst part is that she generally gets a better reaction to what she says than I do. And no one sticks up for me or even acknowledges that she is repeating me. What should I do? I'm an Aquarius."

Aquarius, you are the Idea Girl of the zodiac, so kudos to you for having so many good ones and getting yourself into an environment where you can express them! Now work on your presentation. Sounds like your colleague is utilizing her innate Leo gift for presentation to capture the attention of the group. What is she doing that's working? Is it her timing in the meeting? Is it her

volume or physical animation? It's probably a combo. Give her a dose of her own medicine by emulating her presentation style when you pitch your next big idea. Oh, and next time she steals your thunder, simply, clearly and audibly state to the group: "Didn't I just say that five minutes ago?"

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Renowned Shakespearean stage actor Patrick Stewart is perhaps best known for his role as Captain Jean-Luc Picard on "Star Trek: The Next Generation." His sun in sensitive Cancer is intensified by a psychic Scorpio moon, then made even more dramatic by Mercury, Mars and Pluto in theatrical Leo. The stars indicate that Stewart is likely to get swept into a passionate romance this year.

If you would like to write to Holiday Mathis, 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.

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Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie: My father was sick for several years before he died. Dad told me that he and my mother were leaving their entire estate to me, their only child. He even showed me their wills.

I took many days off of work to help care for Dad. After he died, I took time to assist my 85-year-old mother.

Because of that, my retirement income was lowered substantially. I also used half of my savings to "buy" early retirement in order to care for Mom.

I never mentioned to my parents what this sacrifice was costing me. I reasoned I would recoup some of the loss with my inheritance.

Recently, Mom told me she is going to rewrite her will, dividing the estate between my husband, our two children and me.

She says my kids need

the money more than I do. Annie, my adult children are financially stable.

I helped them through college and gave them money for their first home, which is more than my parents did for me.

When I explained to Mom that I was counting on that money, she said I am selfish and shouldn't expect to be paid to take care of my own parents.

I am the only one who consistently helps my mother, and she still expects me to take her shopping, to the doctor, etc., and I do.

But now I feel used. I am 62 years old and suddenly uncomfortable facing old age with the small amount of savings I have. Am I being selfish? — *Ungrateful Daughter*

Dear Daughter: No. Had your parents said nothing about a will, we are certain you would

still have taken care of them, although probably not to the extent that your retirement was in jeopardy.

Mom reneged on a promise, which is not only hurtful, but puts you in a financially precarious state. There is nothing wrong with saying so. Keep in mind that, barring divorce, you and your husband will share that part of the inheritance and, at some point, you likely would have left some to your children anyway.

Please try to forgive your mother so this doesn't curdle your relationship.



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

brother doesn't want to warn Ted that he's playing with fire, you can't force him to speak up. Stay out of it.

Dear Annie: My brother owns a business with "Ted." Ted is married and has three kids, but he's fooling around with another friend's girl. We've all seen the flirting and noticed Ted's truck at her house. Her boyfriend would go crazy if he knew. I think my brother should tell Ted that we all know and eventually his wife is going to find out. He refuses, saying it will come out when it comes out. What do you say? — *Frank*

Dear Frank: If your

brother doesn't want to warn Ted that he's playing with fire, you can't force him to speak up. Stay out of it.

Dear Annie: This is for "Midwest Farmer's Wife." Being married to a farmer is hard work, but it helps to be flexible. Certain operations (planting, spraying, harvesting) must be done at specific times, and you have to work your butt off to finish them.

Our kids and grandkids have birthdays, anniversaries and school programs, and they know we can't always be there, but will do something special with them later to make up for it.

When we missed our granddaughter's 7th birthday party, her response was, "I'm sorry you can't come, but it's really neat Papa is getting his corn planted so I can visit in the fall and help him drive the com-

bine." Six weeks later we made a trip to see her.

We have lived our entire married life rearranging schedules to fit with the work that has to be done.

Plan your trips for the "off-season," and your hubby might make the effort to join you. Instead of whining about the horrid hours he puts in, take supper out to the field and join him for a 15-minute break.

We make every occasion special when we have the time. — *A Farmer's Wife Who Loves Her Farmer*

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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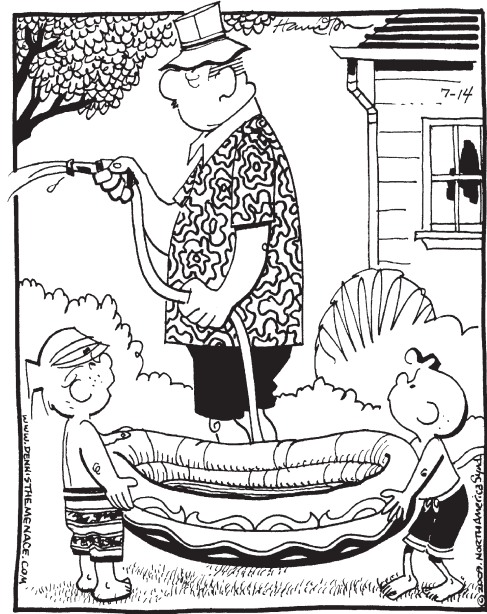
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5:PM :30	News ABC	News	Locura	Lopez	News	Noticias	News	Raymond	Scrivner	BBC	Cash Cab	Chisum, Christopher George	CSI: NY	Bones	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Montana	Horn	SportsCenter	
6:PM :30	News	Jeopardy!	Gancho	Two Men	News	12 Cora-zones	News	Seinfeld	Dr. Young	News-Lehrer	Deadliest Catch	CSI: Crime Scn	CSI: NY	Movie: Diary of a Mad Black Woman, Shemar Moore	Montana	WNBA Basketball: Sparks at Sun	Series of Poker		
7:PM :30	The Superstars	The Superstars	Nombre Amor	MLB Baseball: All-Star Game.	NCIS	Más Sabe el Diablo	Am. Road Trip	Fam. Guy	Israel	Nova (DVS)	Deadliest Catch	Movie: Rio Bravo, Ricky Nelson	CSI: Crime Scn	Bones	Ways Die	HawthoRNe	Suite Life	FIVB Volleyball: World League	Series of Poker
8:PM :30	Better Off Scrubs	Better Off Scrubs	Mañana es	Big Brother 11	Rostro Pobres	America-Talent	Fam. Guy	Light of the Southwest	Nova sciencNOW	Deadliest Catch	Deadliest Catch	MAN	HawthoRNe	BET Awards '09	Suite Life So Raven	Strongest Man	SportsCenter		
9:PM :30	Primetime	Primetime	Aquí y Ahora	48 Hours Mystery	Victorinos	Law & Order: SVU	Office	Israel	Deadliest Catch	Movie: Two Mules for Sister Sara	MAN	HawthoRNe	CSI: Crime Scn	Saving Grace	Life De	NFL Live	SportsCenter		
10:PM :30	Nightline	Nightline	Impacto	News	Noticias	News	Seinfeld	Israel	Deadliest Catch	Movie: The Coogan's Bluff, Susan Clark	Alaska Exper.	Disorderly Con.	Cold Case	The Deal	Emperor Dragon	Final Elim.			
11:PM :30	Insider	Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Casa de la Risa	Law Order: CI	Late Late Show	Decisiones de	Late Night-Jim	Sex & Smiley	Ministerio-Vida	Off Air	After the Catch	Amazing Video	Cold Case	College College	Replace Kim	NHRA Drag Racing: Mile-High Nationals	Baseball Tonight		
12:AM :30	News	Paid	Mujer...	Friends	Pagado	Poker After Dark	Pelicula:												

DENNIS THE MENACE



"CAN YOU FILL OUR POOL? MY DAD SAYS OUR WATER BILL WAS TOO HIGH LAST MONTH."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Which am I supposed to do, 'Go to my room' or 'Have a timeout'?"

HAGAR



MY MEMORY IS GETTING SO BAD THAT DR. ZOOK SAID I SHOULD MAKE LISTS OF ALL THE THINGS I HAVE TO DO!



DID YOU MAKE A LIST? YES



WHERE DID YOU PUT IT? I CAN'T REMEMBER

BLONDIE



ONE THING I DON'T WANT AROUND ME IS A BUNCH OF SPINELESS 'YES MEN!' EVERYBODY GET THAT? WELL? YES OR NO?!

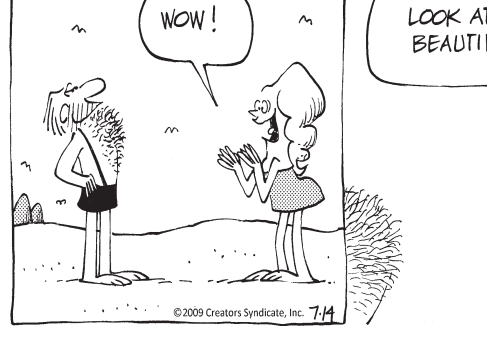


BOY, I HATE IT WHEN HE PLAYS THOSE STUPID MIND GAMES AT OUR MEETINGS!



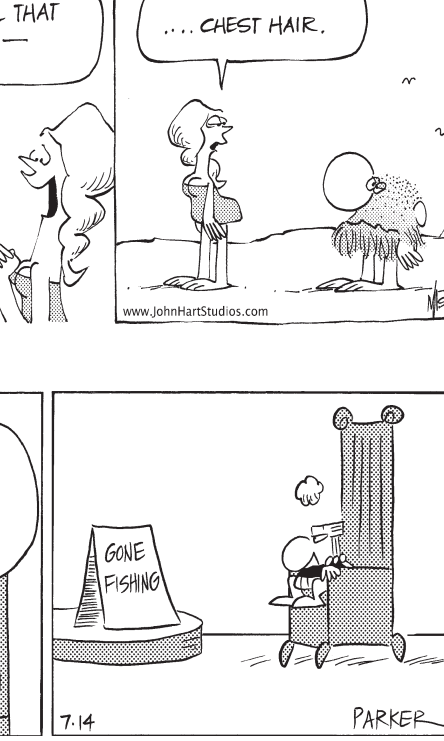
SOMETIMES I THINK HE JUST ENJOYS TOYING WITH US!

BC



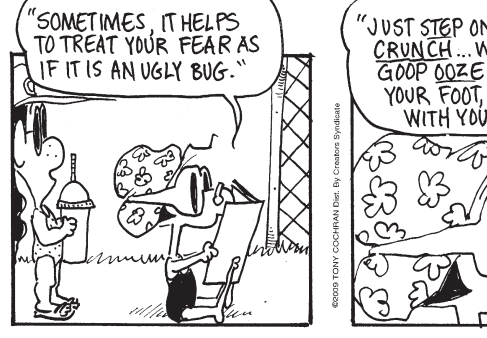
WOW! LOOK AT ALL THAT BEAUTIFUL... CHEST HAIR.

WIZARD OF ID

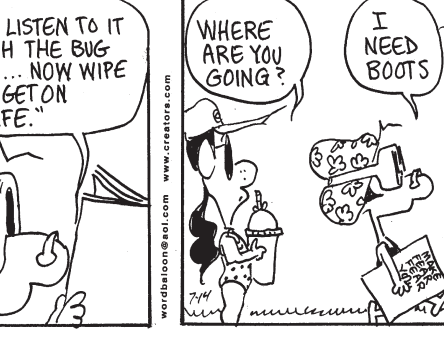


DO YOU WANT ME TO JUGGLE OR TELL JOKES? I DON'T KNOW... SURPRISE ME

AGNES

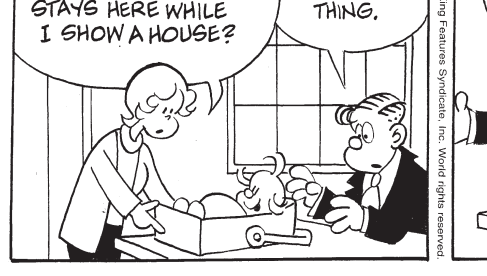


"SOMETIMES, IT HELPS TO TREAT YOUR FEARS AS IF IT IS AN UGLY BUG."

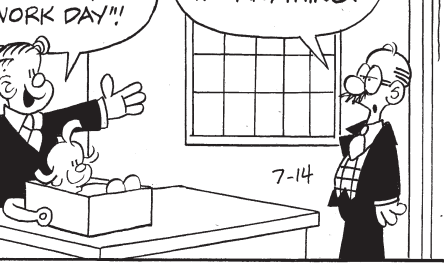


"JUST STEP ON IT... LISTEN TO IT CRUNCH... WATCH THE BUG GOOP Ooze OUT... NOW WIPE YOUR FOOT AND GET ON WITH YOUR LIFE."

HI AND LOIS

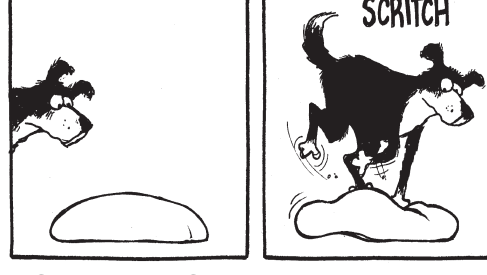


WON'T YOUR BOSS OBJECT IF TRIxie STAYS HERE WHILE I SHOW A HOUSE? I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING.

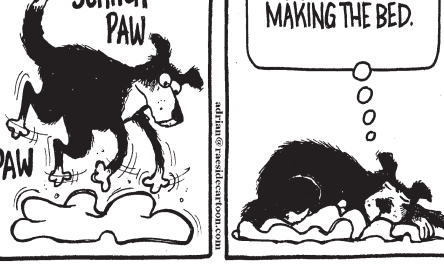


IT'S "BRING YOUR BABY TO WORK DAY"! NOBODY TELLS ME ANYTHING.

THE OTHER COAST

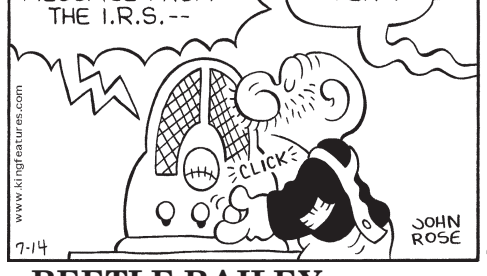


SCRATCH SCRATCH

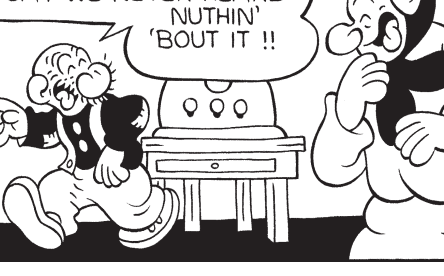


PAW SCRATCH PAW SCRATCH PAW

SNUFFY SMITH

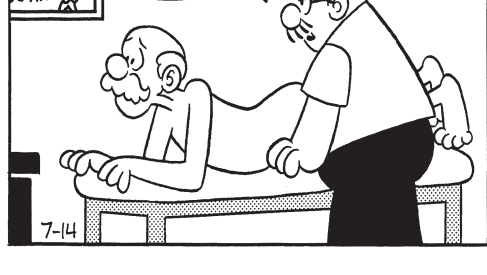


STAND BY FOR AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE I.R.S. -- PAW!! WHAT'D YA DO THAT FER?



SO WHEN THEY COME A-KNOCKIN' WE CAN SAY WE NEVER HEARD NUTHIN' 'BOUT IT!!

BETLE BAILEY



THIS MAY HURT A LITTLE



I WAS JUST PUTTING ON SOME SKIN CREAM

This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, July 14, the 195th day of 2009. There are 170 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 14, 1789, during the French Revolution, citizens of Paris stormed the Bastille prison and released the seven prisoners inside.

On this date:

In 1798, Congress passed the Sedition Act, making it a federal crime to publish false, scandalous or malicious writing about the U.S. government.

In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry relayed to Japanese officials a letter from President Millard Fillmore, requesting trade relations. (Fillmore's term of office had already expired by the time the letter was delivered.)

In 1881, outlaw William H. Bonney Jr., alias "Billy the Kid," was shot and killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett in Fort Sumner, N.M.

In 1908, the short film "The Adventures of Dollie," the first

movie directed by D.W. Griffith, opened in New York.

In 1913, Gerald Rudolph Ford Jr., the 38th president of the United States, was born Leslie Lynch King Jr. in Omaha, Neb.

In 1921, Italian-born anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were convicted in Dedham, Mass., of murdering a shoe company paymaster and his guard. (Sacco and Vanzetti were executed six years later.)

In 1933, all German political parties, except the Nazi Party, were outlawed.

In 1958, the army of Iraq overthrew the monarchy.

In 1966, eight student nurses were murdered by Richard Speck in a Chicago dormitory.

In 1978, Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky was convicted of treasonous espionage and anti-Soviet agitation, and sentenced to 13 years at hard labor. (Sharansky was released in 1986.)

Today's Birthdays:

Playwright Arthur Laurents is 92. Actor Dale Robertson is 86. Actor Harry Dean Stanton is 83. Actress Nancy Olson is 81. Actress Polly Bergen is 79. Former football player Rosey

Grier is 77. Actor Vincent Pastore ("The Sopranos") is 63. Former music company executive Tommy Mottola is 60. Rock musician Chris Cross (Ultravox) is 57. Actor Jerry Houser is 57. Actor-director Eric Laneuville is 57. Actor Stan Shaw is 57. Movie producer Scott Rudin is 51. Singer-guitarist Kyle Gass is 49. Country musician Ray Herndon (McBride and the Ride) is 49. Actress Jane Lynch is 49. Actor Jackie Earle Haley is 48. Actor Matthew Fox is 43. Rock musician Ellen Reid (Crash Test Dummies) is 43. Rock singer-musician Tanya Donnelly is 43. Actress Missy Gold is 39. Olympic gold medal snowboarder Ross Rebagliati is 38.

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Answer to previous puzzle

RACED	CRAB	CHOP
ASONE	REDO	LOGO
MILD	FLAVOR	EURO
PAD	LOTS	DEARER
WANE	SEER	
LOCATE	STRETCH	
ADORE	SPAS	HOER
NORM	HEM	EPEE
DRAW	SEEP	DWELL
SLEETED	GRASSY	
LEAP	PREY	
STICKY	SUES	HAH
HOB	SUNNY	SMILE
ITEM	OKOK	ERROR
NOTE	NEWS	DIETS

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Baker's cookie quantity
 - 6 Gush, as a volcano
 - 10 Variety of pear
 - 14 Nebraska city
 - 15 Unlikely to bite
 - 16 ___ now (so far)
 - 17 Prepare, as a present
 - 18 Dry as a desert
 - 19 Consider
 - 20 Be very thrifty
 - 21 Calms down
 - 23 Otherwise
 - 25 ___ and mean (efficient)
 - 26 Game tile with white dots
 - 30 Corp. bigwigs
 - 32 Quaint oath
 - 33 Great riches
 - 36 Charged atom
 - 39 Become angry
 - 42 Thumbs-up vote
 - 43 Betrays, as a felon
 - 44 TV emcee Trebek
 - 45 Husband or wife
 - 46 Eat
 - 48 Do damage to
 - 50 Walking speed
 - 52 As much as possible
 - 55 Ziti or ravioli
 - 60 Merely
 - 61 Saudi, for instance
 - 62 Earthling
 - 63 Enjoy a newspaper
 - 64 Informal greeting
- DOWN
- 1 Short haircuts
 - 2 Run ___ (go wild)
 - 3 Metered vehicle
 - 4 Pal
 - 5 Come to pass
 - 6 Men-only parties
 - 7 French city, slangily
 - 8 Give off
 - 9 Gets married
 - 10 Moves just a bit
 - 11 Gig for a soprano
 - 12 Beer mug
 - 13 Provide for free, for short
 - 22 Hawaiian hello
 - 24 Suitable for dieters
 - 26 Resist boldly
 - 27 Stare at
 - 28 Spring months
 - 29 Bride or groom phrase
 - 30 Nile queen's nickname
 - 31 Cultural, as cuisine
 - 34 Suffix for kitchen
 - 35 Sounds of satisfaction
 - 36 Doing nothing
 - 37 Bullfight cheers
 - 38 First in line
 - 40 Portrait holder
 - 41 Remind too much
 - 45 Dr. Jekyll's alter ego
 - 47 Your sister's son
 - 48 Beehive product
 - 49 Map book
 - 50 Theater productions
 - 51 Facing the pitcher
 - 52 Ripped
 - 53 "Very funny!"
 - 54 Part of the eye
 - 56 Mystical glow
 - 57 Too confident
 - 58 Paper-rip repairer
 - 59 Picnic pests

HOLD IT by Sally R. Stein Edited by Stanley Newman

www.stanxwords.com

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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Ravens WR Mason announces retirement

BALTIMORE (AP)—Ravens wide receiver Derrick Mason told a sports Web site on Monday he's retiring from the NFL.

"After 12 years, I have seen it all and done it all," Mason told jocklife.com. "Right now, I am content with the decision I am making. All good things come to an end, and I am ready to see what else life has to offer."

But Mason has not informed the team of his decision.

"For any player to retire, he has to send a letter to the NFL stating this. Derrick Mason has not done that," said Kevin Byrne, the Ravens' senior vice president of public relations.

Mason's agent, Peter Schaffer, did not immediately respond to a phone call and e-mail from The Associated

Press.

But Schaffer's partner, C. Lamont Smith, told jocklife.com, that Mason "advised me that after careful and deep thought he had made a decision to retire from professional football. ... Given that Derrick just reached this decision on Friday, he has not as of yet filed official papers with the league offices."

Smith said Mason would decline any interview requests over the next two weeks.

Mason, 35, played a key role in helping Baltimore reach the AFC championship game last season.

He started all 16 games and led the Ravens in receptions (80) and yards receiving (1,037). He then added 12 catches for 190 yards and a touchdown in three playoff games.

Mason played eight seasons with the Tennessee Titans and four years with the Ravens.

Last season he became the 31st player in NFL history to reach 10,000 career yards receiving.

He insisted the announcement had nothing to do with his drive during the offseason to get a better contract.

"I have made enough money, more than enough money," Mason said.

Without Mason, Baltimore's most accomplished wide receivers are Mark Clayton and Demetrius Williams.

"We're losing a great player," Ravens running back Le'Ron McClain said. "I hope every receiver plays like him, practices like him and acts like him."

Jets release veteran tight end Bubba Franks

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP) — The New York Jets have released veteran tight end Bubba Franks.

Franks caught six passes for 47 yards in eight games, including four starts, after signing with the Jets last season. He missed eight games due to a hip injury, and was unable to participate in offseason practices and minicamp because of a knee injury after re-signing with New York.

The move Monday leaves the Jets with Dustin Keller, who had a promising rookie season, and undrafted free agents J'Nathan Bullock and Jack Simmons as the only tight ends on the roster. James Dearth, who

began his career as a tight end, works exclusively as the team's long snapper.

Franks has 262 receptions for 2,347 yards and 32 touchdowns in nine seasons, including eight with Green Bay.

Franks is a 1996 graduate of Big Spring High School, where he stood out as an All-State tight end.

He went on to play for the University of Miami, Fla., earning Freshman All-American honors in 1997 and was named an All-American in 1999.

He was drafted 14th overall by the Packers and was named to the Pro Bowl three times.

DERBY

Continued from Page 7

"I wish I would have put on a better show for our fans," Pujols said. "I was nervous a little bit."

This year's All-Star festivities were supposed to belong to Pujols in his home ballpark. But Fielder snatched the spotlight in baseball's annual warmup for Tuesday night's Midsummer Classic.

With three outs remaining in the final round, Fielder smacked a drive onto the grassy hill in center field to clinch the crown.

He posed for a moment with his bat held high, then embraced Brewers teammate Ryan Braun near home plate.

Fielder started out using a bat that belonged to injured Milwaukee teammate Rickie Weeks, then switched to Braun's stick.

"It was a little longer," Fielder said.

"Once I grabbed his bat, it felt pretty good."

Fielder, the son of former big league slugger Cecil Fielder, became the youngest player to hit 50 homers in 2007 at age 23. But that season, he was eliminated in the first round of the Home Run Derby at San Francisco.

"I knew what to expect this time so I was a little more relaxed," he said. "I think it's very competitive. I don't think (any) of the guys would be here if they weren't. But it's fun at the same time."

Fielder and Cruz both made their major league debuts in 2005 with the Brewers — and each has 22 home runs this year. Cruz, enjoying a breakout season, was a late addition to the All-Star roster because of an injury to Los Angeles Angels outfielder Torii Hunter.

Fielder finished with 23 home runs, most in the contest, and hit the four longest shots of the night.

"He had a very nice rhythm," said batting practice pitcher Sandy Guerrero, Fielder's minor league bat-

ting coach. "He kept his cool, he relaxed."

Pujols, who leads the majors with 32 homers, needed a late rally just to avoid elimination in the first round. With one out to work with, he connected on consecutive swings to force a three-player swing-off for the final spot in round 2, sending the red-clad crowd of 45,981 into a high-fiving frenzy.

One fan in the bleachers lent a helping hand, too, appearing to reach over the right-center fence to catch one of Pujols' homers. During a game it might have been ruled fan interference, but there's no video replay in the derby.

Carlos Pena hit one homer in the five-swing tiebreaker and Joe Mauer was shut out. So when Pujols homered twice he moved on — but not for long.

Looking fatigued, he managed six homers next time up for a two-round total of 11, easily surpassed by Fielder, Cruz and Howard, the 2006 derby champ.

"I didn't feel any pressure. I mean, I think the only pressure you feel in a Home Run Derby is that you just want to try and get at least one," said Howard, who picked an old favorite for his batting-practice pitcher. "It was a lot of fun for me to have my summer ball coach (Deron Spink) out there because it was a special experience for him. It meant more to me to have him out there than just about anything else."

Fielder's longest shot was a 503-foot drive to right-center that disappeared between two sections of bleachers.

"I'm just happy. It was pretty cool to actually win one," he said.

During the first round, Cruz hit a drive into the fourth deck in left field, never accomplished during a game at 4-year-old Busch Stadium.

Brandon Inge, Adrian Gonzalez, Pena and Mauer were knocked out in the first round. Inge became the eighth contestant to get shut out since the current format was adopted in 1996.

ALL-STARS

Continued from Page 7

First on Monday night came the Home Run Derby, when sluggers

with bulging biceps hit drives approximating the shape of Eero Saarinen's parabolic Gateway Arch, which rises to 630 feet. Pujols was knocked out in the second round, and Milwaukee's Prince Nelson Cruz 6-5 in the final. Fielder hit the longest drive of the night, a 503-footer to right-center that drew gasps from the crowd of

45,981.

Even when the All-Stars aren't playing in a stadium filled with crimson-colored seats, NL players seem to see red more often than not when they meet their AL counterparts. Since interleague play began in 1997, the AL had a 1,673-1,534 advantage, according to STATS LLC.

This year's season series went 137-114 to the junior circuit, its sixth straight winning record and ninth in 13 years.

"Is there more talent in the American League than the National League? Not necessarily," Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon said. "I think it's just two totally different styles of baseball, and when you put those up against each other for one game, our style seems to come out ahead."

AL dominance has not carried into October. While unbeaten in the last 12 All-Star games, the AL has won seven of the past 12 World Series. But those are best-of-seven matchups, so regular-season totals are probably a better barometer.

"For whatever reason, the numbers have been what they have been for the last 10 or 12 years. I don't think it's a true assessment of how well the game is played in the National League," said career saves leader Trevor Hoffman, who squandered a chance to end the NL drought three years ago in Pittsburgh, when he allowed Michael Young's go-ahead, two-run triple with two outs in the ninth.

All-Star victories have taken on increased importance because of the connection to the

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World Series. In 18 of the last 23 Series, the team with home-field advantage has gone on to win.

Imagine what must be going on in the mind of AL starter Roy Halladay. With the Toronto Blue Jays willing to consider trades, he could help the AL get home-field advantage, then get dealt to an NL contender.

"Going into the post-season, it was nice to know that we had home-field advantage throughout. We just did not utilize it," said Tampa Bay's Joe Maddon, the AL manager. "It definitely takes on a different shape because of all of that. I'm all for it. I think it makes this moment a lot more interesting, I'll tell you that. And a little bit tighter, I'll tell you that, too, because you're playing for the entire league."

Yankees captain Derek Jeter takes the contrary view, preferring the team with the better record get the extra home game. That would pose logistical challenges for baseball, which wants to finalize hotel and travel plans as far in advance as possible.

But maybe that's thinking too far ahead for too many people.

On Monday, Howard was basking at the attention in his hometown.

He thought about hitting a St. Louis landmark and, no, it wasn't the Gateway Arch, which rises temptingly beyond the right-center field fence but in reality is several blocks away. Rather, he remembered his Little League days at the suburban Ballwin Athletic Association. He was 12 or 13, and the home run is still talked about.

Where did the drive down the right-field line land?

"Red Lobster," he said.

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