

BIG SPRING HERALD

Reflecting A Proud Community

TUESDAY
March 18, 1997

50 cents

Moore begins second Enterprize Challenge today

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

The official start of Moore Development for Big Spring's second Enterprize Challenge program will be at 5 p.m. today during a workshop at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce for those interested in the participating in this year's challenge.

The workshop will be conducted by David Shipman of the Panhandle Small Business Development Center in Amarillo.

The purpose of the workshop will be to answer questions about the challenge and to show participants how to develop a business plan.

Pam Welch, assistant director of Moore Development, said the meeting

is being conducted by an outside third party because Moore does not want to give the impression that it is telling those interested in the challenge what to do.

A total of \$30,000 in grants were awarded to two local businesses last year for further development of their products.

Paul Hopper accepted a \$20,000 grant on behalf of Russ Rutledge and Fiber Composite Inc. for the purpose of purchasing a radio frequency (RF) unit for producing fiberglass products, and Chris Chaney, owner of Chris Chaney Creations, was awarded a grant of \$10,000 to continue creation of a new line of jewelry called "Cotton Boll Jewelry."

This year the total amount of grants

awarded in the Enterprize Challenge has been increased to \$50,000.

Local residents interested in the Enterprize Challenge must submit a business plan summary to Moore by April 2, and a business plan of no more than 20 pages long to Moore by Aug. 4.

All business plans will be screened for compliance with guidelines set by Moore's Business Retention and Expansion Committee. Entrants will make a presentation of their plans by Sept. 30 and be interviewed by a panel of three outside judges not associated with Moore.

Results of the challenge will be presented to Moore's board of directors at its Annual Meeting in October.

According to Welch, the only major change in this year's challenge is the

increase in the amount of grant to be awarded.

"Everything is still the same as last year," Welch said. "The plans submitted must be of a basic business."

Basic businesses are defined as those that primarily export products or services outside the Big Spring area, thus, bringing new money into the local economy.

Under the rules, entrepreneurs must document that at least 75 percent of their company's sales would be outside Howard County. Several examples of a basic business include manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, headquarters, aviation maintenance, air cargo and food processing.

Entrants into the challenge can be either a start-up business or an exist-

ing small business with \$1 million or less in annual sales.

Winners of the challenge may only participate once every three years and people who have filed for business or personal bankruptcy protection are not eligible to receive grant awards.

People who have been convicted of a felony, or a Class A or B misdemeanor are also not eligible.

Rules of the challenge also state entrants must have an acceptable credit rating and that relatives of the judges, Moore staff, Moore directors, BDC staff or the Big Spring City Council are ineligible to participate.

Interested person wanting more information about the Enterprize Challenge should contact Moore offices at 264-6032 or the BDC at 264-5164.

Burglars hit college amid spring break

By KELLIE JONES
Features Editor

Someone took advantage of the fact no one was at the Howard College campus during spring break, stealing two computers, a television, a telephone and cash.

Dennis Churchwell, director of purchasing at the college, reported someone broke in at the college and took two Toshiba laptop computers, a cellular telephone, a television/VCR and \$100 cash. The total amount stolen was worth \$7,327.

Big Spring Police Capt. Lonnie Smith said the suspect or suspects could have used a key to gain entry to the building.

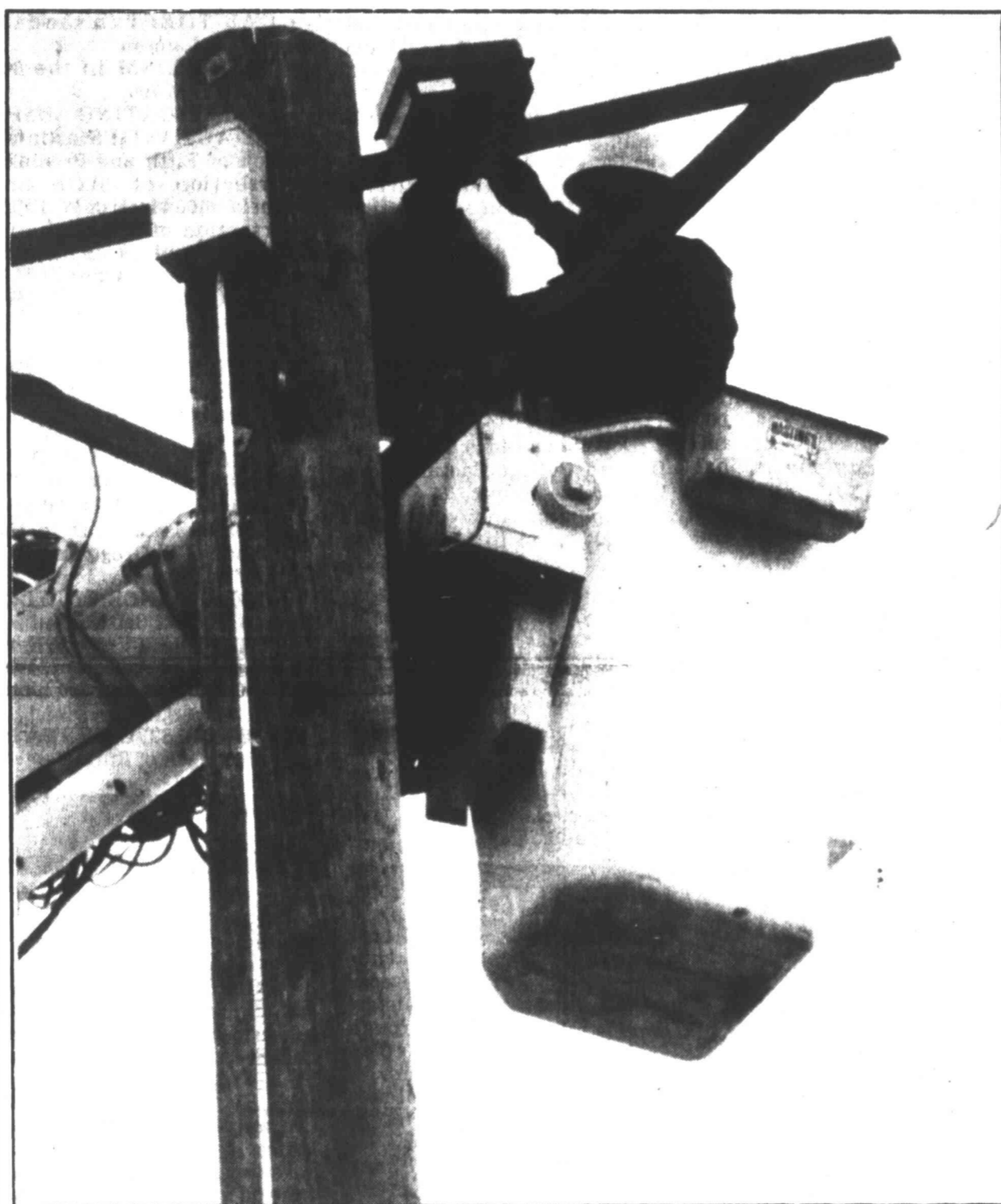
"We are investigating the incident," Smith said. "There could have been forced entry but that could also be old damage, so a key may have been used."

He added detectives aren't revealing what part of the college was broken into because they want to keep some information confidential in case someone calls into CrimeStoppers. Smith explained that officers need to have something that wasn't reported to the public to verify what the person is saying is true.

One of the Toshiba laptops is white and the other is gray, while the cellular phone is black. If you have any information about this crime, you are urged to contact CrimeStoppers at 263-TIPS or the police department at 264-2550. Callers will

Please see BURGLARY, page 2

NEW LIGHTS



HERALD photo/Jonathan Garrett
Alfred Williams of Electric Maintenance and Construction of Midland hangs one of the lights at Coahoma High School's baseball field.

Wednesday is final deadline for race filings

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Wednesday is the final day for interested persons to file to run for city council positions in District 2, District 4 and District 6 as well as for three positions up for re-election on the Big Spring Independent School District (BSISD) Board of Trustees.

The deadline to file to run for a council seat is 5 p.m. Wednesday.

As of today, District 2 Councilwoman Pat DeAnda is being challenged by Oscar Garcia; District 4 incumbent Councilman Tom Guess is being challenged by Tommy Tune; and the District 6 seat, where incumbent John Paul Anderson is not seeking re-election, Randy Mason is the only candidate to have filed.

Also as of today, school board members Don Baker (District 2) and Steve Fraser (at-large member) are running unopposed and Larry Hollar (District 4) is being challenged by Steve Jeter. Fraser was appointed last fall to fill the seat left vacant by the

resignation of Dan Wise and is required to run to fill the one-year unexpired term.

Local voters will again use a central voting location in the May 3 elections and will cast ballots in the Big Spring High School cafeteria from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Persons seeking a council position are not required to live in the district they seek to represent, but those seeking school board positions are.

To beat the filing deadline for seeking a council seat, interested persons may file to run in the finance office at City Hall. Candidates wishing to run for a school board seat may file in the BSISD business office at 708 11th Place before 4:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Early voting in city and school elections begins at 8 a.m. April 14 and continues through 5 p.m. April 29.

Early ballots in the city council election may be cast in the finance office at City Hall and ballots in the school board election may be cast in Howard County Clerk Margaret Ray's office.

Sale of dealership awaits Chrysler Corp. approval

Sales manager says business won't close
By JOHN H. WALKER
Managing Editor

The sale of Big Spring Chrysler is waiting on approval from Chrysler Corp. and is expected to be finalized between mid-April and the first of May, according to an official of Lynn Alexander Autoplex in San Angelo.

Sales manager Chuck Potts said the sale, which was first reported in Sunday's *Herald*, will result in the name of the dealership being changed to Fiesta Dodge-Chrysler-Jeep-Eagle but that the dealership will not be closed for remodeling as detailed in the story.

"The dealership will remain open," Potts said. "It will not be

closed for one minute and there won't be any lapse in sales or service."

Potts, who said he and his family will be moving to Big Spring in conjunction with the sale, said that customers and potential customers won't notice any difference in the day-to-day operations at the dealership.

"We intend to run a first-class facility and provide the best in sales and service," he said.

Alexander owns and operates Lynn Alexander Autoplex and All-American Chevrolet in San Angelo and sells Lincoln-Mercury, Nissan, Dodge, Jeep, Eagle, Chrysler and Chevrolet products.

Big Spring Chrysler is owned by Otto Meyer, who opened the dealership in October 1992.

Please see SALE, page 2

Finch retracing Earhart flight 60 years later

BURBANK, Calif. (AP) — The re-creation of Amelia Earhart's last flight took an educational pit stop to show off the vintage silver Lockheed Electra airplane and the woman who plans to fly it around the world.

Millionaire businesswoman Linda Finch was at the controls of the shiny twin-engine aircraft when it landed Monday at Burbank Glendale Pasadena Airport.

The plane, which took off from Oakland a few hours earlier, is a fraternal twin to the one Earhart flew from the same Oakland airfield to Burbank 60 years ago on March 17.

Others have completed the

Earhart flight, but not in an Electra.

Finch landed just before 3 p.m., taking a big bounce before setting down. She heads for Tucson, Ariz., on Wednesday.

"Well, I don't know if I should admit it in front of everybody, but the last two or three (landings) I made were really perfect and I think I got a little cocky and wasn't paying enough attention," she said of the bounce.

Finch, 46, of San Antonio, Texas, restored the plane and sheltered it in the same hangar from which Earhart's craft was rolled out on St. Patrick's Day in 1937.

"Amelia had a message that she wanted to deliver to people of her time and we want to do the same thing with our project," Finch said. "She believed that everyone should be able to have their dream, and be able to set limits that are higher than sometimes we set for ourselves."

The flight will take about 2 months, cover about 26,000 nautical miles and visit 20 countries. Finch plans to end her flight in Oakland in May.

Finch has spent the last two years rebuilding and modernizing the plane. She even borrowed rare parts from another Lockheed Electra on display at

the Western Aerospace Museum in Oakland.

Finch will make some concessions to progress. For one thing, she'll be wearing hearing protection.

"These engines are actually larger than those intended for this model aircraft," Finch said of the two massive Pratt & Whitney Wasp engines that power her Lockheed Electra. "It's the loudest airplane I've ever flown."

Finch will have other advantages over Earhart, who vanished with her navigator, Fred Noonan, 22,000 miles into the

Please see FLIGHT, page 2

Police at Pantex Plant walking picket lines

AMARILLO (AP) — Security officers are on strike at Pantex, the nation's primary assembly and disassembly plant for nuclear weapons.

A supplemental guard service was on duty today.

The strike was called late Sunday night after members of the union voted 227-74 in favor of rejecting a new contract offered the guards by Mason & Hanger Corp., which operates the plant.

Pantex spokeswoman Vanesa Hamilton said the corporation

already has offered the International Guards Union of America Local 38 the best possible proposal.

She said Monday there is nothing else to offer and that Mason & Hanger have no plans to restart negotiations.

Union president Mike Stumbo said union members will continue to picket until the contract dispute is resolved.

A supplemental guard force, comprised of supervisory security personnel from the Pantex Plant and other DOE facilities,

will stay on the job as long as necessary, Hamilton said.

The Metal Trades Council handles contract negotiations for Pantex production and maintenance workers and is a separate bargaining entity from IGUA. Its president alleged Monday that security infractions had occurred since the auxiliary guard force took over operations at midnight Sunday.

"I am not comfortable with an auxiliary guard force protecting this nuclear weapons facility," president Frank W. George Jr.

said. Hamilton said Pantex guards earn about \$50,000 annually in gross income, not including fringe benefits.

Members of the local disputed that claim. Stumbo said he found the \$50,000 salary very attractive and worth negotiating toward, but he said it does not reflect actual guard salaries. He said he would have to work about 1,000 hours of overtime to earn \$50,000 in a year.

The average annual salary for a guard is about \$32,000.

INDEX

Abby.....7
Classified.....6-7
Comics.....8
General News.....3
Horoscope.....7
Opinion.....4
Sports.....5

TODAY'S WEATHER

68 ▲ Highs 34
Lows ▼

Today: Partly cloudy and cooler. High in the upper 60s. Low in the 30s.

Wednesday: Sunny. High in the lower 70s. Low in the lower 40s.

Extended outlook: Thursday through Friday, fair. Highs in the 80s. Lows in the 40s. Saturday, cooler. High in the 70s.

Vol. 93, No. 133

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Clinton accepts Lake's request to quit as CIA nominee

WASHINGTON (AP) — Having firmly decided to abandon the fight to head the CIA, a gloomy Anthony Lake walked into President Clinton's private study and said, "I'm sorry. You know why I'm here."

The president, casually dressed, his injured leg elevated, already had gotten word that his closest foreign policy adviser over the past four years wanted out of an increasingly nasty confirmation battle.

"I want you to stay and fight," an angry, almost despondent Clinton told Lake, as recounted by White House press secretary Mike McCurry. "You'd be a great CIA director." Then, however, the president added, "I'll respect your personal judgment."

The 20-minute White House meeting closed a bitter, four-month confirmation battle that has left the nation's vast intelligence apparatus without a director, split the customarily bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee and infuriated White House aides loyal to Lake, who for four years was Clinton's national security adviser.

"I'm surprised," Sen. Orrin Hatch, a Utah Republican, said today. "I think he would have made it through the process. I personally liked him, wanted to vote for him and probably in the end would have," Hatch said on NBC's "Today" show.

Committee chairman Richard Shelby, a critic of Lake's nomination, said today that, "Initially I was surprised. But after considering everything, this was a controversial nomination from the outset."

"I never was out to get Mr. Lake. It was not personal with me," Shelby said.

There were no immediate indications that new and damaging revelations about Lake were to emerge, but Lake's management of the NSC staff had caused a senior Democrat on the Intelligence Committee to question whether he could be confirmed.

The withdrawal was surprising because Lake had weathered several GOP attacks on his finances and on his role in allowing Iranian arms into Bosnia to emerge relatively unscathed from last week's confirmation hear-

ings. The hearings were to have concluded this week, and Republicans on the intelligence committee had said privately he probably would be confirmed.

Lake and Clinton briefly discussed options for a new nominee to head the CIA but McCurry declined to provide any details. One obvious candidate would be Acting CIA Director George Tenet, an intelligence community veteran. Last week Lake said he planned to ask Tenet to stay on as top deputy.

McCurry quoted the president as saying Lake's treatment at the hands of the Senate committee was "inexcusable" and said Clinton was "angry and close to being despondent" in his meeting with Lake.

In a letter to Clinton signed simply, "Tony," Lake said his reasons for withdrawing stemmed not from fear of any new revelations but from weariness with the "political circus" his nomination had become. Lake said he was convinced that under Shelby, the confirmation process faced "endless delay."

"After more than three months, I have finally lost patience and the endless delays are hurting the CIA and NSC staff in ways I can no longer tolerate," Lake said. He said his nomination had become "a political football in a game with constantly moving goalposts," and he said the intensely political climate surrounding the confirmation process showed that "Washington has gone haywire."

TEXAS BRIEFS

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bank officials, FBI discuss rise in robberies, bad checks

DALLAS — It's time to initiate a high-tech war against the brazen robbers and sophisticated con artists who are preying on Texas banks, federal authorities and bank officials say.

Bank representatives, FBI agents and federal prosecutors met Monday to discuss plans to upgrade equipment, create a computer database and re-evaluate security procedures.

Since the beginning of this year, the FBI reports there's been 52 bank robberies in North Texas — one every day and a half. That pace is almost three times ahead of last year at this time.

The regions surrounding Houston and San Antonio also have reported big jumps in robberies since the year began.

In addition to robberies, bank representatives and FBI officials said they were concerned about a 53 percent jump in check fraud losses in Dallas since 1995.

Inmates say Bailey County Jail is haunted

MULESHOE — Talk about spooky, the Bailey County Jail may have one inmate who would be able to come and go as he pleases.

That inmate is a ghost, residents of the lockup in this West Texas town say.

"Last week a deputy mentioned it to me," Sheriff Jerry Hicks said Monday. "I figured he was kidding, but (the inmates) are really convinced something's back there."

The inmates describe the ghost as a "shadowy being," Hicks said. "At first they thought it was one of the jailers they'd nicknamed 'The Creeper' because she makes no noise on her rounds," Hicks said. "They called out, but there was no answer."

The shadow seems to disappear into a dead end, prisoners have told the sheriff.

Former parole officer sentenced to six years in prison

FORT WORTH — A former state parole officer has been sentenced to six years in prison for accepting cash and sex from the drug dealer she was supposed to supervise.

U.S. District Judge Terry Means Monday sentenced Cynthia Bennett Evans to six years in prison, about twice the term called for under federal sentencing guidelines.

The judge said Evans deserved harsher-than-usual punishment because she abused a position of trust and allowed John "Cold-Blooded" Clay to "peddle his poison."

"Respect for the law will be completely ruined because of people in our community who look at law enforcement officers and see not an upstanding enforcer of the law, but a despicable subverter of the law," Means told Evans.

Study: Hispanics have higher rate of heart disease

DALLAS — For years, doctors were confronted with a contradiction:

Death certificates suggested Mexican-American men were less likely than whites to die of heart attacks even though they had greater risk factors — a higher rate of diabetes, a tendency to be fat around the middle, and less "good cholesterol" in their blood.

"We refer to it as the paradox," said Dr. David Ramsey, a researcher at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.

Now scientists may have figured it out. A study released Monday found that Mexican-Americans do indeed have higher rates of heart disease than non-Hispanic whites. The problem was that the death certificates were widely inaccurate.

The study, published in the American Heart Association journal Circulation, was based instead on medical records.

Mass dog poisoning remains unsolved

FISHERMAN'S PARADISE — Among cedar- and oak-lined hills overlooking the Brazos River, dozens of crosses remind residents that there's trouble in Paradise.

By residents' count, 47 dogs are dead or missing. The poison, strychnine, is an increasingly popular weapon that also killed Texas rodeo horses and other animals this year.

Melissa Drinning recalled the horror of finding three dead dogs in her back yard Jan. 15. A cross in front of her house lists two of the victims, her 6-month-old beagle, Domino, and her mother's year-old Rottweiler, Gypsy.

"I walked down the back stairs and the neighbors' dog — the little white dog Tuffy they had — was dead, lying by the trash can," the teen-ager said. "I saw him and I just started crying, because I loved that dog just like he was my own."

Israelis, Palestinians near showdown

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli bulldozers rolled onto a disputed east Jerusalem hilltop today to begin work on a Jewish neighborhood despite condemnation by the international community and intelligence warnings that the decision would unleash Palestinian riots.

Hundreds of troops, including snipers, took up positions on the hill slated for construction, known to Israelis as Har Homa and to Palestinians as Jabal Abu Ghneim.

Escorted by police, a convoy of flatback trucks carrying bulldozers reached the site at about 2:45 p.m.

Palestinian protesters, huddling in rain-drenched tents on a nearby rocky slope, said they would resist soldiers' orders to leave. One soldier kept a mounted machine gun trained on the

six tents. Other troops had tear gas canister loaded on their rifles.

"Israel is escalating the situation," said Faisal Husseini, the senior Palestinian official in Jerusalem who was among 30 or so protesters. "We feel we must confront their plans."

The building project has become a test of both sides' resolve regarding Jerusalem, the most explosive issue on their agenda.

The final decision to begin work on the 6,500-apartment project came after a morning meeting attended by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, senior Cabinet ministers and security chiefs.

Israel's deputy chief of staff was in command at the construction site, and army helicopters hovered above.

Israel argues it is the sover-

eign in Jerusalem and need not consult with anyone on construction in the city. The Palestinians want to establish a capital in east Jerusalem, the sector Israel captured from Jordan in the 1967 Mideast War and annexed.

As tension grew, the chance of a meeting between Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat appeared increasingly slim, despite American and Jordanian efforts to bring the two leaders together.

Arafat does not want to meet with Netanyahu unless Israel suspends its decision to build in east Jerusalem, the sector the Palestinians claim as a future capital, Palestinian officials said.

"As long as they are building on Jabal Abu Ghneim, there can be no meeting," said the Palestinian Cabinet secretary,

Ahmed Abdel Rahman.

Netanyahu has vowed not to back down, despite last week's international condemnation of Israel by the U.N. General Assembly and warnings by its security chiefs that the construction might trigger violent Palestinian protests and perhaps also attacks in Israel.

"When it comes to Jerusalem, we are ready to confront anyone .. to assert our sovereignty," Netanyahu said Monday. "If we do not stand up to threats over Jerusalem, we will not stand up to threats over anything."

In today's Cabinet meeting, security officials told the ministers that Arafat had given green light for violence against Israel, radio reports said. Police reinforcements were deployed in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel to try and thwart possible terror attacks, the radio said.

GOP signals possible concessions on tax cuts

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Newt Gingrich says the GOP should focus first on the "moral imperative" of balancing the budget, signaling again that Republicans may delay their tax-cutting crusade.

The Georgia Republican's comments Monday to reporters made him the latest GOP leader to suggest the party's effort to pare taxes for families and businesses might wait until after they strike a budget-balancing deal with President Clinton.

Last week, Rep. Tom DeLay of Texas voiced a similar idea. Both men said the issue of paring taxes could be resumed later this year.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., said Republicans would have to be ready to compromise on tax cuts. Lott and

other Senate GOP leaders have proposed reducing taxes by \$193 billion over five years.

"Nothing is off the table," Lott told reporters. "We have to see what we can do to put a package together that will get through and allow us to go on with the" budget process.

The GOP leaders' comments came as efforts between Republicans and the Clinton administration to craft a budget deal appear to have slowed to a crawl. In addition, Republicans themselves have remained divided between deficit hawks who want to focus on balancing the budget and conservatives whose priority is cutting taxes.

On Monday, Gingrich joined those who say it may be the wiser course politically to concentrate first on eliminating

federal deficits.

"Let's take tax cuts away for a moment," he said. "Let's just talk about balancing the budget. Now what's the liberal excuse for not balancing the budget?"

"It's very, very important to balance the budget and get as large a tax cut as possible while balancing the budget. But we think that the moral imperative is to balance the budget."

The idea of delaying tax cuts, however, has gone over badly with many conservatives.

House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer, R-Texas, and Senate Finance Committee Chairman William Roth, R-Del., all have said they want to proceed quickly with tax cuts.

Lott said he would begin seek-

ing a budget compromise with moderate Senate Democrats now that talks with the administration have slowed.

He said that while top Republicans would continue negotiating with the White House, GOP leaders also would bargain with Democratic Sens. John Breaux of Louisiana, Robert Kerrey of Nebraska and others who for years have worked with centrist Republicans on bipartisan budget proposals.

Talks with Senate moderates could win Lott bipartisan support for an idea that Clinton has so far declined to embrace: adjusting the way the government measures cost-of-living changes for Social Security recipients, taxpayers and others who receive federal benefits.

Special interests line up to protect tax exemptions

AUSTIN (AP) — Adding taxes to numerous services in Texas could be the end of some industries and higher prices for others, according to business and trade association representatives.

The House Select Committee on Revenue and Public Education Funding began hearing public testimony Monday on a plan to eliminate many of the exemptions to the state sales and business taxes. The new money would be used to increase the state's share of the cost of school funding — and to lower local property taxes.

But representatives from nearly every industry in Texas lined up Monday — and were scheduled to continue today — to tell the committee why taxing their services and goods

would be bad for Texas.

"If there was a severance tax, there would be no lignite industry in Texas," said Clifford Miercort, head of the North American Coal Corp.

"An expansion (of the sales tax) would put us at a competitive disadvantage," said John Eads of the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants.

"It disadvantages decisions made on providing services in Texas," said Dan Hagan, a corporate executive for American Airlines.

Committee members said plenty of good and bad reasons were given for keeping exemptions. But they said what was lacking were alternatives.

If sales taxes aren't imposed on CPAs, someone else will have to pay more, said Rep.

Paul Sadler, D-Henderson, chairman of the committee.

"Who's willing?" he asked.

Sadler said witnesses before the committee are clear on how new taxes would hurt them, but forget that the effort is to lower overall property taxes.

"The benefit for residential property is pretty great," he said.

The proposal would lower all local residential school property taxes from an average of more than \$1.40 per \$100 in value to 50 cents per \$100.

Business taxes would go down from around \$1.40 to \$1 per \$100.

"This is not revenue neutral for everyone," Sadler said. "Someone has to pay more."

Ron Ricks, a vice president for Southwest Airlines, said his company is willing to pay its

share to educate Texas students.

"We're here talking about what's fair," he said.

Camille Accountius, one of the handful of nonexecutives in the room, said a state income tax would be fair.

Gov. George W. Bush has said he would veto such a plan.


But Accountius, a former CPA and a mother of three school children, said if more people understood the income tax and asked for it, Bush couldn't ignore them.

Dolph Tillotson, editor and publisher of the Galveston Daily Tribune, said expanding the current franchise tax would be a fair deal for businesses. Currently, many business don't pay the tax, based on how they are structured.

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Tuesday, March 18th
7:00pm

RSVP 263-1211 extension 463

EDITORIAL

Quote of the Day

"To govern is to choose."
-Pierre Mendes-France

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

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OUR VIEWS

Election filing deadline Wednesday

Filing deadline for city and school district elections is Wednesday and, while the turnout of candidates is better than in some years, a higher level of participation would be better still.

Three candidates have filed the District 2 and two for the District 4 city council seats, while a single candidate has filed for District 6.

On the school board side, there appears to be but a single contested race.

We would hope that all races would be contested — not because we don't like the candidates seeking office or re-election, but because we feel voters should have a choice when it comes to the decision process.

As it stands, both the city and school district, under a new state law, can declare any uncontested races as "decided" before voters ever go to the polls.

And while that procedure was put in place ostensibly to lower the costs of elections, it also circumvents the Democratic process in that it eliminates the right of voters to write-in a candidate.

We've already taken the step of creating a single voting location in an effort to create participation and reduce costs because of the poor voter turnouts we've experienced in the past.

Maybe, just maybe, voters have stayed at home because they didn't like their choices.

This year, in at least three of the six total races, some voters in the city will have a choice.

Here's hoping the field expands before the filing deadline passes.

YOUR VIEWS

Reader calls attention to recent school tax article

TO THE EDITOR:

There was some very interesting misinformation concerning property tax replacement in a recent edition of the *Herald*. (Panel eyes 50-cent rate; no homestead exemptions, *Big Spring Herald*, March 6, 1997.) According to TEA estimates, approximately 3,388,000 K-12 students today enjoy our education system. With the "\$38 billion planned for education spending in the 1998-99 state budget years," no wonder legislators are confused. This would allocate \$11,200 per student for maintenance and operation. No wonder six of the last eight school funding bills passed by legislators in the last decade were declared unconstitutional by Texas Supreme Court. We were aware that the cost of everything had risen in the past, but education costs over 250 percent?

In reality, 1.4 percent of the total property value statewide, after deductions, are \$9.75 billion. This is the amount property taxes contribute toward education, while the state contributes some \$4.75 billion, for a total of \$14.5 billion — for maintenance and operation — an average of about \$4,300 per student. SB-7 stipulated \$4,200 maximum, but Robin Hood made blank check funding a reality, so SB-7 no longer applies.

MALDEF — Mexican American Legal Defense Education Fund — attorneys have warned that, though they compliment Governor Bush for his efforts to reform taxes, unequal funding will not be tolerated. They warned that litigation would again result from such measures. Texas Legislators may have received the message that band-aiding a problem is not a cure. Human madness is never without reason. People endure only so much injustice, then they explode like an over-inflated balloon.

ROY SIMMONS
Big Spring

Reader corrects mistakes in presidential section

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you very much for the

insert on the United States Presidents. It will be placed in my encyclopedia with other information I have collected on the presidents.

In the interest of historical accuracy, there are three errors that need correcting.

1. James K. Polk
"He was speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives when Texas was admitted to the Union."

President Polk took office on March 4, 1845. Texas was admitted to the Union Dec. 29, 1845.

Though he served as Speaker of the House of Representatives, there is no possibility that he could serve two offices at the same time. Mr. Polk was President when Texas was admitted as the 28th state.

2. Theodore Roosevelt
"Roosevelt, born on Oct. 27, 1958, at New York City, was to become the country's most active president in many years..."

Now anyone knows that a man who died in 1919 could not possibly have been born in 1958. He was born Oct. 27, 1858.

3. John Tyler
"The annexation of the Texas Republic to the United States, and the construction of the first telegraph system by Samuel Morse, were two of the major accomplishments of the Tyler administration."

Texas was not admitted to the Union during Tyler's administration. He left office March 4, 1845, when James K. Polk was sworn in as President, so Polk was president when Texas was admitted.

If students use Presidential Facts 1789-1997 (and I sincerely hope they will), the *Herald* should make the corrections available.

MAMIE LEE DODDS
Big Spring

The *Herald* encourages letters to the editor. Please:

- Limit your letters to no more than 300 words, or about two hand-written pages.
- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721.



Yesterday's geniuses, today's world ...

If the real and righteous Hank Williams were alive and singing today, he couldn't get his standards on the radio.

At least that's the stated opinion of Merle Haggard, who has lived long enough to watch country stars become Chippendale hunks in cowboy hats, as likely to smash their guitars as strum them.

Merle's indictment of contemporary country is right on target. Most new country is crap. But, unfortunately, the music scene is not the only place where pure genius has been replaced by a lot of clear skin, weak writing and clever marketing. Oh, no. Radio's certainly not the only bay with shallow waters.

Walter Cronkite, for instance,

recently told an interviewer that if he were just starting out, he didn't think he could get a job in television. (And Moses wouldn't be qualified to lead a troop of Cub Scouts through a butterfly house.)

But Cronkite is right. That's the way it is. His comment needs no lengthy explanation, either. The disturbing truth of what Uncle Walter says is evident whenever you hear today's chatty, self-congratulatory newsreaders read. The networks' idea of deep-thinking is to intersperse the word "indeed" into the endless, pointless conversation that goes on between every broadcast's Dumb and Dumber.

So, if Hank couldn't get on the radio and Walter couldn't get on TV, what makes us think Ed Sullivan would get his own variety show, or big-eared Clark Gable a romantic lead? Without its retro-recommendation, "Hamlet" might end on Broadway after a two-night run.

Ah, but this is grim business, suddenly discovering that yesterday's geniuses wouldn't

stand a snowball's chance in this hellish world. We want fast and loud and new with color graphics. Anything that takes too much time, too much thought or the least bit of trouble is doomed.

When the tortoise and the hare race these days, the hare always wins. The tortoise is taken out back and shot for breaking slow from the gate.

You will go crazy if you muse too long about the matter, if you start listing the old masters who would never survive, much less thrive, on today's sex-saturated, asinine, achy-breaky playing field.

Some months back now New Yorker magazine had the nerve to publish a long article about what a second-rate hack James Thurber was. That stupid and cruel critique led me to believe that today Thurber couldn't get his work into the magazine he made great.

And if Thurber couldn't make the New Yorker editorial cut, where would that leave his pal, the quieter, more cerebral E.B. White? Wallpapering his hovel with rejection slips, that's

where.

Elzie C. Segar's classic "Popeye" wouldn't stand a chance at the syndicates these days. For the syndicates all know exactly what they want in a comic strip — blatant copies of last year's mega-hits, especially the ones with plenty of licensing potential. Popeye the sailor man would have to be recast as a computer nerd.

Much has been made of how today's politicians must be good on TV to compete successfully for votes. But it's far worse than that.

Thomas Jefferson would bore the socks off a contemporary audience with his long-winded observations on the nature of freedom. To win an election today, the great Jefferson would have to choose Howard Stern as his running mate. (I told you this would get depressing.)

But what can you expect? In a world that allows Rush Limbaugh to think for it, Dr. Laura to analyze it and Billy Ray Cyrus to sing it to sleep, who would want to be proclaimed a success?

Double talk common for defensive politicians

By TOM RAUM
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — There's something about being accused of ethical lapses that turns public figures into courthouse lawyers, spouting qualifications and splitting legalistic hairs.

Vice President Al Gore's convoluted assertion that "there is no controlling legal authority or case" to argue against his soliciting campaign funds from the White House is just one recent example.

President Clinton added to the spate of legalese with this take on the fund-raising hubbub: "I don't believe you can find any evidence of the fact that I had changed government policy solely because of a contribution."

And first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, like her husband a lawyer, weighed in with another trick of the trade of political deniability: the memory lapse.

"I do not recall making any (fund-raising phone calls from the White House) but I'm not going to say absolutely never," she told reporters on Monday. "I just don't recall making any."

Politicians have always had a hard time admitting doing something wrong. And neither

party has a lock on evasion.

Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich earlier this year issued a limited admission to violating House rules regarding the use of tax-exempt money to promote Republican goals, then told the House: "To whatever degree, in any way that I brought controversy or inappropriate attention to the House, I apologize."

But after being slapped with a reprimand and unprecedented \$300,000 penalty, Gingrich blamed his lawyers and called himself the victim of a "double standard" that worked against conservatives.

Gone are the days, apparently, when a politician's denial of wrongdoing can be as straightforward as Richard Nixon's "I am not a crook."

"That's because that Nixon line played so badly," said Wayne Fields, an expert at political rhetoric at Washington University in St. Louis.

"The retreat from moral posturing to legal posturing is a fifth amendment kind of approach," he said. "It's a way of saying: 'I may have done this, but if it's not illegal, you can't do anything about it.' We've gotten used to such legal language across the spectrum."

The result: a lot of "mistakes

were made" rhetoric.

In September 1995, then-Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., issued this qualified apology to the women who accused him of sexual misconduct: "Am I sorry? Of course — if I did the things that they said I did."

President George Bush's first chief of staff, former New Hampshire Gov. John Sununu, got caught using government planes and limousines for personal travel. "Clearly, no one regrets more than I do the appearance of impropriety produced as a result of the events surrounding my recent travel," was his passive defense.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., in a television address after the tragedy of Chappaquiddick in 1969, didn't say he drove his car into the water. "The car that I was driving went off a narrow bridge," he said.

And former Rep. Wilbur Mills, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee at the time, offered a then-novel explanation of why a striptease dancer named Fannie Foxe jumped from his limousine into the Tidal Basin on Oct. 7, 1974.

"I now believe that the fatigue and pressure built up by years of dedicated work for my constituents and for the whole nation had an impact on me far beyond what I sus-

pected," Mills said. He blamed a drinking problem he said was brought on by overwork.

Why do politicians start spouting evasive legalize at the first suggestions of wrongdoing?

"I don't think it's just politicians. I think it's anybody who gets in trouble," said Lyn Nofziger, a former top aide to President Reagan. "But politicians get into trouble more than most people do."

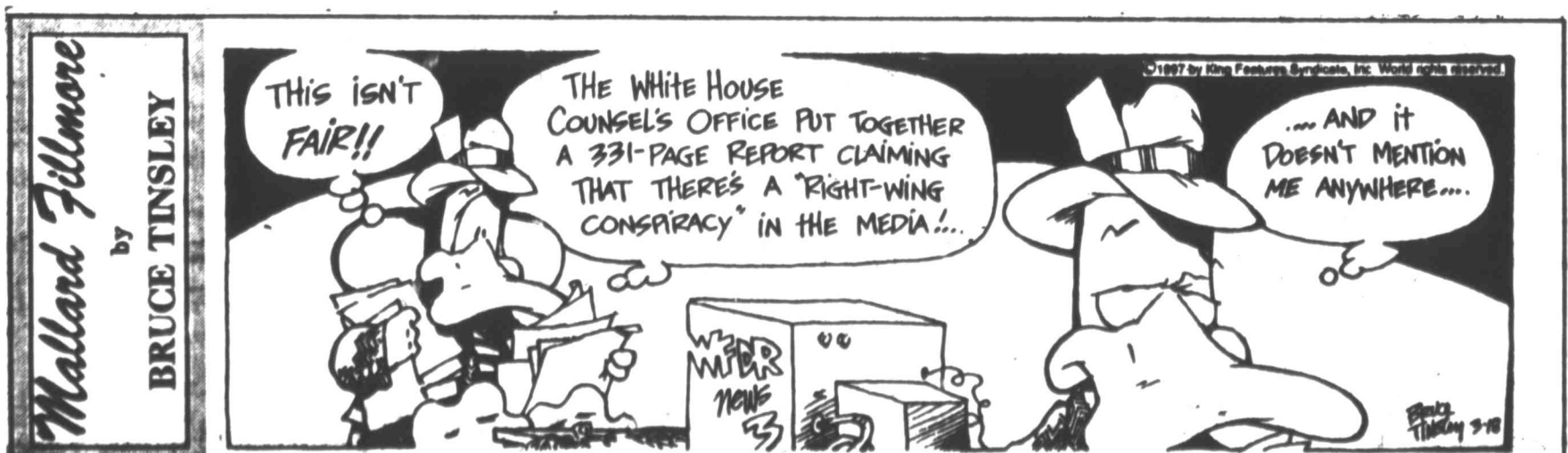
Reagan himself had his own way of wiggling off the hot seat.

When confronted with the Tower Commission report laying blame on him for swapping arms for hostages in Iran, Reagan only partly abandoned his long-expressed denial that such deals were made.

"My heart and my best intentions still tell me that is true," he said in an Oval Office speech on March 4, 1987. "But the facts and the evidence tell me it is not."

"Reagan had a tough time using lawyer-ese to get around things," Nofziger said. On the other hand, it was Reagan who popularized the phrase "mistakes were made." It's a line Clinton had no trouble borrowing.

(Tom Raum covers politics and national affairs for The Associated Press.)



Mallard Fillmore
by
BRUCE TINSLEY

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TUESDAY

MAR. 18

Table with 24 columns representing different TV channels (KMBD, KPEJ, KERA, etc.) and rows for different time slots (6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30) listing various programs.

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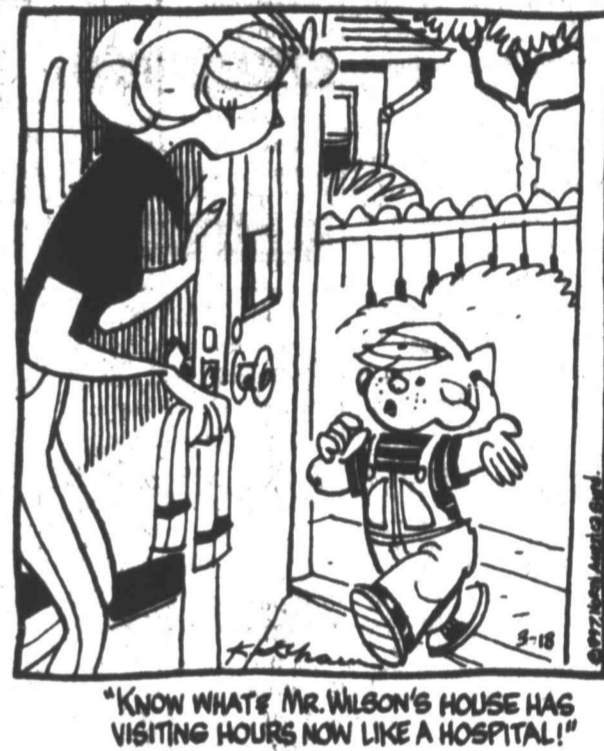
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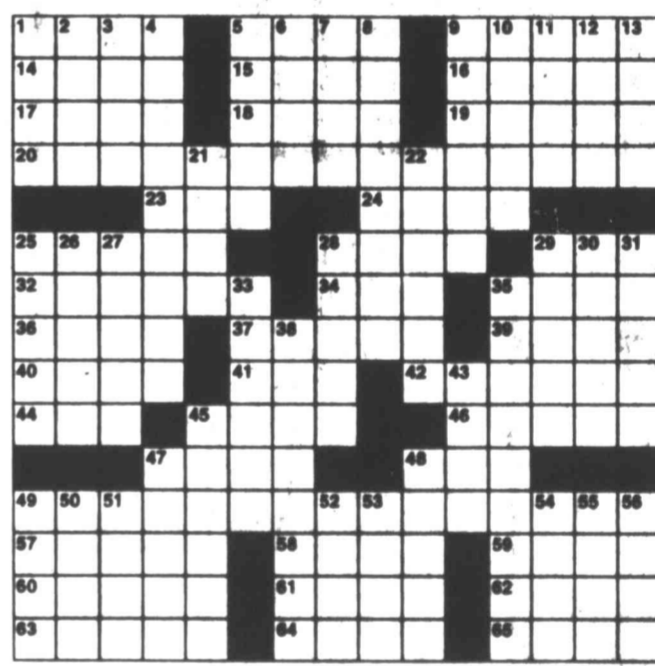


THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS Today is Tuesday, March 18; the 77th day of 1997. There are 288 days left in the year.

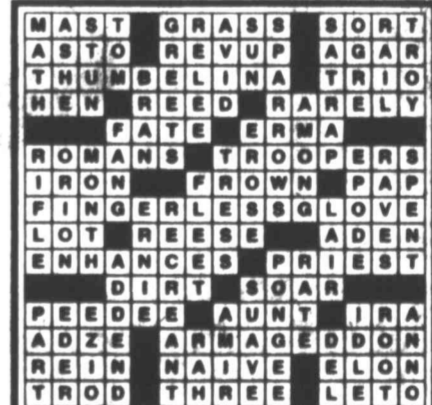
THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS 1 Gullet part 5 Metal refuse 9 Ungainly 14 Rajah's lady 15 Form circles 16 "Home" 17 Film star Jannings, of old 18 Eskimo's abode: var 19 Subway coin 20 Impossible dreams 23 Preserve 24 Begged 25 Wild 28 Dutch settler 29 Yale 32 Loves deeply 34 Greek letter 35 Lend of tennis 36 Decorate, in a way 37 War or cedar end 39 Goddess of victory 40 Some bills 41 Crew need 42 Child minder 44 Chinese "way" 45 Sine 46 Outline map 47 Discharge 48 Comprehend 49 Wayne film 57 More than enough 58 Unless, legally 59 Footnote abbr. 60 Kind of campaign 61 Jack of Westeros 62 Ms. Turner 63 Rash 64 Refute 65 Cart



by Alvin L. Becker 03/18/97

Monday's Puzzle solved:



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- DOWN 1 Ship hands 2 Branchlike parts 3 Indigo 4 Deuces, often 5 Hair 6 Company symbol 31 Not active 33 Char 35 Where animals belong? 38 Obeyed 43 Clinched 45 Diner 47 Part of a chair 48 Like an eel 49 Plethora 50 Austen heroine 51 Mimics 52 Trickery 53 "No man - island" 54 Construction piece 55 Famed galleon 56 June 6

Advertisement for Big Spring Herald, including contact information, office hours, and a list of staff members.

Denmark used a shortwave transmitter to converse with a government radio post about six miles away in what is believed to have been the first broadcast by a "ham" operator. In 1922, Mohandas K. Gandhi was sentenced in India to six years' imprisonment for civil disobedience. He was released after serving two years. In 1931, Schick Inc. marketed the first electric razor. In 1937, more than 400 people, mostly children, were killed in a gas explosion at a school in New London, Texas. In 1940, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini held a meeting at the Brenner Pass across the Alps, during which the Italian dictator agreed to join in Germany's war against France and Britain. In 1959, President Eisenhower signed the Hawaii statehood bill. In 1962, France and Algerian rebels agreed to a truce. In 1965, the first spacewalk took place as Soviet cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov left his Voskhod 2 capsule and remained outside the spacecraft for 20 minutes, secured by a tether. In 1974, most of the Arab oil-producing nations ended their embargo against the United States. Ten years ago: Susan Butcher won her second consecutive Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, covering the distance from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska, in 11 days, 2 hours, 5 minutes and 13 seconds. Five years ago: South African President F.W. de Klerk claimed victory for his reforms a day after a whites-only referendum on whether to end apartheid. National Football League owners voted to drop the use of instant videotape replays to settle disputed calls during games. One year ago: Rejecting an insanity defense, a jury in Dedham, Mass., convicted John C. Salvi III of murdering two women in a pair of attacks at two Boston-area abortion clinics in December 1994. Last November, Salvi committed suicide in his cell. Today's Birthdays: Actor Peter Graves is 71. Author George Plimpton is 70. Composer John Kander is 70. Author John Updike is 65. Former South African president F.W. de Klerk is 61. Country singer Charley Pride is 59. Singer Wilson Pickett is 56. Actor Kevin Dobson is 54. Actor Brad Dourif is 47. Singer Irene Cara is 38. Singer Vanessa Williams is 34. Olympic gold medal speedskater Bonnie Blair is 33. Rock musician Jerry Cantrell (Alice in Chains) is 31. Rock singer-musician Miki Berenyi (Lush) is 30.