

BIG SPRING HERALD

"Reflecting a proud community"

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TUESDAY
September 8, 1998

Tonight



TONIGHT WEDNESDAY
63°-65° 89°-92°

Free eyeglasses to be dispensed

The Big Spring Evening Lions Club has free eyeglasses for all adults the second Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon at the Big Spring Evening Lions Club bingo building, 1607 East Third.

All adults needing eyeglasses who don't have the income to purchase the exam or glasses are welcome.

For more information call Al Valdes or Bob Noyes at 267-6095.

WHAT'S UP...

TODAY

□ Quarterback Club, 7 p.m. All football parents and fans welcome.

WEDNESDAY

□ Line dancing, 1 p.m., Senior Citizens Center, Industrial Park. Call 398-5522 or 267-1628.

□ Optimist Club, 7 a.m., Howard College Cactus Room

□ Big Spring Downtown Lions Club, noon, Howard College Cactus Room. Call Terry Hansen, 264-5175.

□ Eagles Lodge Ladies Auxiliary, 7 p.m., Eagles Lodge, 704 W. Third.

THURSDAY

□ Kiwanis Club, noon, Howard College Cactus Room. Call Billy Smith, 267-6479.

□ Big Spring Senior Citizens Center art classes, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. for 55 and over.

□ Evening line dancing class, 6:30 p.m., Spring City Senior Center. Enter north gate (Simler drive), cross first intersection, building on left, park in east parking lot and enter by east door. For more information call Dorothy Kennemur at 398-5522 or e-mail at drkbigspring@xroadstx.com

□ Gideons International Big Spring Camp No. 4206, Hermans, 7 a.m.

□ American Legion Auxiliary, 7 p.m. Call 263-2084.

□ Christmas in April, noon, Lion's Club Den, 1607 E. Third. Call Bob Noyes at 267-6095.

□ Friends of the Library, noon, Howard County Library. Call Loraine Redman at 264-2260.

□ Big Spring Newcomers Club, contact Karen Brewer for time and location, 268-9944.

□ Masonic Lodge No. 598, 7:30 p.m., 219 Main.

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Vol. 94, No. 275

To reach us, please call 263-7331. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call 263-7335 before 7 p.m. on weekdays and 11 a.m. on Sunday.

No recalled Blue Bunny ice cream found at local Wal-Mart store

By MARSHA STURDIVANT
Staff Writer

Wal-Mart Supercenter officials here have not found any recalled ice cream, but are making sure if they do it won't reach the shelves.

"We checked all of our inventory, as well as today's deliveries, and haven't found any of the recalled product," said Wal-Mart Store Manager Kelly Sikes. "Evidently we never received any of the cartons in question."

Employee Manuel Iturralde had begun checking half-gallon cartons of Blue

Bunny Ice Cream on Saturday, looking for specific cartons of Hi Lite Caramel Pecan ice cream.

Retailers began checking for the ice cream, a product of Wells' Dairy of Le Mars, Iowa, because the producers ordered a recall of Hi Lite Caramel Pecan.

Some cartons of the flavor were found to contain peanuts, although the nuts were not listed in the product's ingredients. Consumers found peanuts in the ice cream and reported their findings to the Food and Drug Administration, which ordered the recall.

The product was recalled because per-

sons allergic to peanuts would not know they were in the packaging and could suffer severe allergic reaction.

"People want to get what they pay for, and they've got to have the right items (listed on the carton)," said Jim Snyder, assistant manager for Wal-Mart.

Upon learning of the recall, Snyder immediately directed Iturralde to begin checking the half-gallon cartons of Blue Bunny Hi Lite Caramel Pecan that were on the shelves in the ice cream section of the local store.

Iturralde was instructed to check the 16-character bar code on each carton for the ending number 8147 or 8161.

"It looks like we don't have any, but we will go through each one," he said last weekend. "Usually, when something like this happens, they (the producers) will get in touch with us super fast, usually before you (a news release) knows it."

"It could be that we weren't sent any and that's why we weren't notified," Snyder said.

The producers deliver Blue Bunny Ice Cream to the local store about six days each week, he said. All available stock was to be checked for the serial numbers.

See **RECALL**, Page 2



Amaria Fuller, left, and Catalina Trevino have fun playing "dress up" at the Westside Community Day Care Center.

Schools

Howard County school facilities better than average, report indicates

By MARSHA STURDIVANT
Staff Writer

Howard County schools have an average classroom age of 37 years, 70 percent of the schools have computers in the classroom, and 90 percent of the county's schools have wiring for Internet connections, according to a School Modernization Report from the 17th Congressional District.



STENHOLM

"The federal government contributes 7 percent to the public school, while the state and local contribution is 93 percent. But that 7 percent represents \$98 billion, and I want to see that \$98 billion spent most efficiently," U.S. Congressman Charles Stenholm said in a visit to Big Spring.

His report on the condition of schools in the 17th District features the responses of 203 schools out of 403 possible replies. A total of 31 of a possible 32 counties had at least one school respond to the survey, the report states.

"Overall, we have some problems in many, many areas. We have excellent schools, but

physically, some schools have severe problems that are compounded by the collapse of the oil and gas decline and the agriculture," Stenholm said.

He said that while federal funding to schools only accounts for 7 percent of the total monies spent, the survey was necessary in order to present accurate data for a study ordered by the president.

"When it comes time for districts to be considered for funds, I want the schools in the 17th District to be considered on a level playing field," Stenholm told a group at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. "The only way to do that was to look at the districts through a survey such as this."

Howard County schools reported better than average building features, compared to other schools in the district and the state facilities overall.

However, 60 percent of the plumbing in Howard County schools was ranked as fair or very poor, compared to 26 percent statewide and 46 percent in the 17th District.

Howard County schools responded that 100 percent of the lighting in local schools is good or excellent, compared to 70 percent in the district and 82 percent in the state.

School roofs are 80 percent good or excellent compared to

See **SCHOOLS**, Page 2

Custody trial begins for parents of injured infant boy

By T.E. JENKINS
Staff Writer

Jury selection began early this morning in the 118th District Court to determine the parental rights of a Big Spring couple who pleaded guilty earlier this year to charges of injury to their child.

Bernard and Kristi Myers were indicted on charges of injury to a child in January, following the August 1997 discovery that the 10-month-old boy

had been "shaken," causing various damage to the brain stem.

According to William Dupree, Assistant 118th District Attorney, the injuries were also compounded by the several days that the Myers waited before seeking medical attention for the child.

"It's called 'shaken baby syndrome,'" said Dupree. "The doctors say the baby has a brain stem injury, and he may have vision and motor problems."

Dupree said that declining to

take the child to the hospital was a felony act of omission on their part of the Myers.

"That baby was lying in bed for two or three days," said Dupree. "Any fool could see it was injured, and they didn't do anything. That's injury by omission."

Big Spring attorney John Rheinsfeld will be representing the interests of the child during the civil trial. The Myers will be represented separately, with Bernard Myers being represent-

ed by attorney Scott Ferguson, and Kristi Myers being represented by attorney Troyce Wolf.

The Myers, who were originally indicted on two counts of felony injury to a child in January of this year, had their case resubmitted to a Howard County grand jury in April.

According to Dupree, the charges were resubmitted to allow for a greater range of possible punishment.

Under those indictments, the Myers faced a much wider

range of punishment, ranging from 2-99 years or life.

However, the Myers pleaded guilty to charges of injury to a child in May, and each received seven years probation.

"I never hurt my son," said Bernard Myers, who stands to lose all parental rights to his son.

"I only pleaded guilty because if I didn't, there was a good chance I would never get to see him again. To me, that's the most important thing of all."

Auto sales owner decides to pay fine instead of fight

By T.E. JENKINS
Staff Writer

Red Barn Auto Sales owner Danny Heckler has avoided the worst, as a compromise was finally reached and finalized between him and the Texas Department of Transportation concerning allegations of using illegal dealer tags.

"They have drug this thing out for so long, it was actually cheaper for me to just pay the fine than continue to fight it," said Heckler. "I am currently looking at taking recourse against the Big Spring Police Department for their involve-

ment in the matter." Heckler, who was originally charged with "rolling back" the odometer of a car he intended to sell in addition to using paper dealer tags whose authorization number had expired, agreed to pay \$5,000 in fines.

After pursuing the matter for nearly a year, the charges against Heckler involving the altered odometer were dropped earlier this year by the agency.

Heckler said he never did roll back the odometer of the 1982 Volvo that police seized. He said that the existing gauge cluster didn't work correctly when he purchased the automobile from National Car Sales in Midland, and that he had it replaced with a used one, explaining the discrepancy in mileage.

Heckler said that the car,

See **FINES**, Page 2



Shawn Reid, left, and Brandon Ramey practiced their team roping skills at the youth horseman's arena recently.

Clinton's lawyers plan own report to try to rebut any Starr conclusions

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton's lawyers are making plans to write their own report on the Monica Lewinsky affair to counter damage to the president's reputation. Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's expected report to Congress. They're asking Starr to provide them an advance peek at his document and time to submit a written reply.

With a report from Starr expected to be sent to Congress, perhaps later this month, the president's lawyers are concerned it will be one-sided and include extensive conclusions and legal analysis instead of simply a listing of facts gathered in the seven-month investigation into the president's involvement with the former

White House intern. The president's lawyers want to produce their own point-by-point response to any Starr document, including their own analysis of the facts. They also want to include more favorable evidence gathered by Clinton's legal team.

David Kendall, the president's personal lawyer, on Monday asked Starr to provide the White House a copy of any report he intends to send to Congress at least a week in advance, so the president has an opportunity to reply.

"Elemental fairness dictates that we be allowed to respond to any 'report' you send to the House simultaneously with its transmission," Kendall wrote Starr.

Officials in Starr's office could not be reached immediately for comment late Monday.

But several Democratic congressmen said Starr should accommodate the president's request.

"It's not only the fairest way, but the best way to find the truth," Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., said on CNN's "Larry King Live" program when asked Monday night whether Clinton should be allowed to review Starr's report in advance and respond.

Rep. Jim Moran, D-Va., who during the weekend said he fully expects impeachment proceedings to grow out of the Lewinsky investigation, said allowing Clinton's lawyers to review and comment on any

Starr report was "an appropriate, professional courtesy" that should be afforded the president.

Some of the president's political advisers have argued for weeks that Clinton's legal team should prepare a separate report countering the special prosecutor's findings in the obstruction of justice and perjury investigation of Clinton's affair with Ms. Lewinsky.

A second, more favorable report would provide Clinton's Democratic allies in Capitol Hill with ammunition to argue against starting impeachment proceedings.

It might also influence public perceptions, some advisers maintain.

House Democrats also have

complained that the Republican leadership will shut them out of any planning on how to handle Starr's report when it is sent to Capitol Hill.

With the House returning from its August recess this week, planning for the expected Starr report was at the top of House leaders' agenda.

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Officials won't let death row inmate donate organs

AUSTIN (AP) — A Texas death row inmate facing execution next month has been blocked by prison officials from donating his organs.

Convicted killer Jonathan Nobles is scheduled to die Oct. 7 for stabbing and killing two Austin women, Kelly Joan Farquhar, 24, and Mitzi Johnson Nalley, 21, after breaking into their North Austin home in 1986.

Nobles told the Austin American-Statesman he is prepared to die for what he did but

also wants to do something positive after "bringing so much darkness into this world." He insisted the donation attempt is not a ploy to have his death sentence commuted.

"People out there who need organs are more than willing to accept inmate organs," Nobles said. "There are sins of commission as well as sins of omission, and for me not to attempt to do whatever I can that's good is wrong of me."

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has an organ

donation policy for inmates that says the state will pay for transportation to a Galveston hospital for the surgery and cover the costs of guarding a prisoner.

But Larry Todd, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, said the policy doesn't apply to death row inmates.

"Death row inmates are not allowed to donate organs," Todd said. "We don't let death row inmates out — end of story."

Larry Fitzgerald, another spokesman for the prison sys-

tem, said prison officials are concerned about the unpredictable nature of both surgery and the justice system.

What if there are complications during or after surgery? What if a death row inmate donates a kidney and has the other fail, then receives a stay of execution?

Outside the walls, no one in the "organ-harvesting" world wants to touch organs from a death row inmate because of fear of passing on disease, as well as ethical concerns.

Trooper finds suspected drug money in auto

STEPHENVILLE (AP) — A husband and wife said they have no idea how \$167,210 in suspected drug money ended up in their vehicle, so police let them go on their way — without the money.

Authorities said the discovery could be the largest in Erath County history.

Department of Public Safety trooper Ken Bratton stopped a 1985 GMC Suburban Saturday afternoon for a suspected traffic violation three miles west of Stephenville on Highway 877.

Bratton said when he questioned the driver, 35-year-old Marcos E. Garcia of Del Rio, and his wife, he received conflicting information.

"Because I was getting conflicting information, I had a reasonable suspicion and asked the driver for permission to search the vehicle," which he gave, Bratton said.

The trooper said a sheriff's drug-sensing dog was brought to the scene and discovered something in the truck's right quarter panel.

When officers searched that part of the vehicle, Bratton said, they found wadded-up bunches of bills that were held together with rubber bands and stuffed behind the right stereo speaker.

Police let the Garcias go because the dog did not react with suspicion when they pulled the money from the truck. If the dog had barked, Bratton said, police could have taken the vehicle.

Officials said they're holding the money until someone can prove ownership and claims it. If no one claims the money, a federal court will award it to the DPS and the Erath County Sheriff's Department.

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15	
14	
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HOW TO PLAY

Select a winner from each of the week's games, listed below. Select in descending order of your CONFIDENCE in your choices. Win points at left for each correct selection toward possible total of 136 points. See complete rules below. You must be at least 8 (eight) years old to enter. To enter, clip along dotted line, then place game entry in POWER POINTS container at co-sponsor's retail outlet(s). Entrants must list name, address and phone number below.

LIMIT: You may enter only one coupon statewide per week.

DEADLINE: 2 P.M. FRIDAY

TIEBREAKER 1 Total points scored (both teams) in COWBOYS game.

TIEBREAKER 2 Total offensive yards (both teams) in this game.

THIS WEEK'S GAMES

Arizona at Seattle	Minnesota at St. Louis
Baltimore at NY Jets	NY Giants at Oakland
Buffalo at Miami	Philadelphia at Atlanta
Carolina at New Orleans	San Diego at Tennessee
Chicago at Pittsburgh	Tampa Bay at Green Bay
Cincinnati at Detroit	Indianapolis at New England
Dallas at Denver	San Francisco at Washington
Kansas City at Jacksonville	Texas at UCLA

POWER POINTS OFFICIAL RULES

- Object of the game is to amass as many of the 136 possible points as you can. Simply review the week's schedule of games, listed on entry form, and decide which game you are SUREST of picking a winner in. Write the name of your projected winner on the 16-point line. If that team wins its game that week, you win 16 points. Write the name of your second-surest winner on the 15-point line, and so on down to the 1-point line, which game you figure to be a toss-up.
- Next, fill in Tiebreaker 1, the total points scored by both teams in the week's designated game. If this step fails to produce a winner, the judges will apply Tiebreaker 2, total offensive yardage from scrimmage in this game. If a winner still doesn't emerge, a drawing will be held among those contestants still tied. Decisions of the judges are final. The weekly statewide winner of the contest will receive \$1,000.
- Any entry form that does not contain a legible name, address, etc., will be disqualified.
- Entries that fail to forecast a winner from each and every game will be disqualified, as will entries that fail to distinguish between the Jets and Giants of New York.
- No points are awarded on tie games or in case any game is not played for any reason during its scheduled week.
- Entering POWER POINTS constitutes permission by contestant for his or her name and photograph to be used for news and reasonable promotional purposes at no charge.
- Employees of this newspaper and their immediate families are ineligible to participate.
- Any inquiry about or protest of weekly results must be made by noon on the Friday following the announcement of winners.
- No purchase necessary. Facsimile game entry forms will be accepted. Enter contest by dropping entry form into POWER POINTS container at participating co-sponsors.
- Weekly deadline for entry will be 2 p.m. Fridays except when noted otherwise on weekly entry form.
- Neither this newspaper nor any co-sponsor will be responsible for legible entry forms or those lost, stolen or damaged in any way.
- Limit: one entry per person per week. Each entry must represent the original work of one entrant; "group" entries, "systems" or other attempts to enter multiple entries will be disqualified. Filling out extra forms and putting your friends' and relatives' names on them violates this rule. Any such entries are destroyed prior to grading.
- Contestants must have reached the age of eight (8) years by the Sunday of any week's play.

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.

Chuck Williams
Publisher
Debbie Jensen
Features Editor

John H. Walker
Managing Editor
Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

Everyone needs an equal chance; promote literacy

Today is International Literacy Day — a day set aside by many organizations to bring attention to the importance of reading and literacy.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) began Literacy Day in 1967. Since then, many groups and business organizations, including newspapers such as the Big Spring Herald, have joined the campaign for a more literate America.

One program to help is Newspapers in Education, such as the program conducted in Big Spring and Howard County schools by the Herald, in cooperation with community supporters.

According to the National Institute for Literacy in Washington, D.C., more than 40 million Americans age 16 and over have significant literacy needs. While many can read some basic information, they cannot locate an intersection on a map or understand a bus schedule. They cannot read a newspaper article or an instruction manual.

The National Adult Literacy Survey and its international follow-up, the International Adult Literacy Survey, showed that too high a proportion of American adults tested at the lowest levels of proficiency, and that the U.S. is in danger of lagging behind other developed countries. A graphic example shows that more than 60 percent of frontline workers in the goods-producing industry cannot match information in a text to the required task if any inference is involved. They also cannot integrate information from several sources.

Solutions can begin with us as individuals and businesses, at the local level. We can support literacy by being lifelong learners, and encouraging others to be lifelong learners and improve their own skills.

We can support literacy and education programs by tutoring, or allowing our workers to tutor, in such programs as the one run by the Howard County Library. We can strengthen ties between literacy programs and other community groups, such as homeless shelters and after-school centers.

Most importantly, we can read to our children. Studies show that parents are the most important teachers, and spending at least 30 minutes a day reading to your child can make the difference. Adult education and youth education cannot be separated — they are part of the same effort.

How To Contact Us

In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

- In person at 710 Scurry St.
- By telephone at 263-7331
- By fax at 264-7205
- By e-mail at either bsherald@xroadstx.com or jwalker@xroadstx.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721
- Our normal hours of operation are from 7:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Our offices are closed on weekends and holidays. We publish Sunday through Friday, except Christmas Day.

LETTER POLICIES

The Big Spring Herald welcomes and encourages your letters to the editor.

We ask that you adhere to our policies so that we might have the opportunity to share your opinion with others. Please:

- Limit your letters to no more than 300 words, or about two handwritten pages.
- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- Faxed or computer-generated letters must be signed and also provide telephone number and address.
- We reserve the right to edit letters for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered for publication.
- We do not acknowledge receipt of letters.
- Letters from our circulation area will be given preference.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721.

Taking a closer look at epithets and epitaphs

On the evening of July 28, Mariners' pitcher Randy Johnson threw two fastballs the size of cantaloupes. Visiting Indians whacked them out of the park, and Cleveland won 4-3. A sportswriter for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer commiserated:



JAMES J. KILPATRICK

"Brilliant but fallible. Randy Johnson was all of that last night. His long-winding Mariner career could be summed up in a similar fashion as well. Finally, it might be time to write the epitaph."

An epithet for Randy? Say not so! The writer wanted "epitaph," the kind of message one puts on a tombstone. The nouns are often confused. The Palm Beach (Fla.) Post reported in April: "After exchanging racial epithets, Thompson pulled out a gun and shot Crickenberger." An epitaph would have come not fore, but aft.

Why do these things happen? One explanation lies in simple ignorance: Not everyone learns

early in life to distinguish epithets from epitaphs. Blame may fall upon the blameless spell-checker; the device is responsible only for spelling, not for usage. The usual cause is a writer's inattentive sloth. I know. I've slothed plenty of times myself.

Wake up! On the ball! In Texas, the Tyler Morning Telegraph reported that police were searching for a man who may have kidnapped a 14-year-old girl. He was described as "6-1 and 180 pounds, of white and Japanese descent." Quarrelsome fellow.

On June 7, The Chicago Tribune carried an ad for Carson Pirie Scott: "Expand your wardrobe choices with our great selection of slacks in gabardine and tropical fabrications."

What's a tropical fabrication? A fib about the great sirloin steaks of Acapulco.

On June 20, the Tribune carried a theater review of "Childe Byron." The drama critic thought Romulus Linney's play about Lord George Gordon Byron wallowed too much in sex. "By focusing on the purulent, Linney is obviously trying to draw parallels..." Purulent? An infected lesion, oozing pus, is purulent. Five will get you 50 that the critic wanted "purulent."

In Harrisonburg, Va., the

Daily News-Record carried a political item in May. Democratic candidates for Congress, it appeared, want to use the projected federal budget surplus "to sure up the Social Security system." Shore they do.

Anne Hayes, the widow of Ohio State's legendary coach Woody Hayes, died in January. The Columbus Dispatch quoted former quarterback Rex Kern: "She was a wonderful complement to Woody. She was the antithesis of a spouse who supported her husband." It's hard to say what word the gentleman wanted, but it sure wasn't antithesis.

The Los Angeles Times, which is old enough to know better, fell into a familiar trap in January. The story dealt with Betty Currie, personal secretary to President Clinton. In 1992 she worked for political strategist James Carville "in the infamous 'War Room,' the nerve center of the Clinton-Gore campaign."

No matter how one may feel about the president, it's dirty pool to describe the War Room as "infamous."

A truly infamous room would have "an evil reputation brought about by something grossly criminal, shocking or brutal." The word is identified with "an extreme and publicly known criminal or evil act." Writers ought not to use

words unless they have a fairly accurate notion of what the words mean. An unidentified Texas newspaper carried a story on a convict: "His 19 years on death row is (are?) well above the nominal 10 years it takes from the time an inmate is sentenced to death to the time it is carried out."

Nominal? Among the several definitions of "nominal" is "a designated or theoretical size that may vary from the actual; approximate," but nominal usually conveys the idea of trifling or insignificant. Could the writer have meant "normal"? In Raleigh, N.C., in January the News & Observer reported that Vice President Gore was journeying "to the spiritual epicenter of the American civil rights movement." Now, "epicenter" is a fine word in its place, but its place is in journals of geology. An epicenter is "the part of the Earth's surface directly above the focus of an earthquake." Plain old "center" would have served the writer well.

A writer for Knight-Ridder newspapers wrote an obituary on Sonny Bono in January. "We liked him for his self-deprecating comments." Self-deprecating, maybe? Who knows? God and Webster have given us great dictionaries of the English language.

Use them, use them, use them!

ADDRESSES

- **BILL CLINTON**
President
The White House
Washington, D.C.
- **PHIL GRAMM**
U.S. Senator
370 Russell Office Building
Washington, 20510
Phone: 202-224-2934.
- **KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON**
U.S. Senator
703 Hart Office Building
Washington, 20510
Phone: 202-224-5922
- **CHARLES STENHOLM**
U.S. Representative
17th District
1211 Longworth Office Bldg.
Washington, 20515. Phone: 202-225-6605.
- **RON GEORGE W. BUSH**
Governor
State Capitol
Austin, 78701
Phone: Toll free 1-800-252-9600,
512-463-2000; fax 512-463-1849.
- **BOB BULLOCK**
Lt. Governor
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Austin, 78701
Phone: 512-463-0001; fax 512-463-0326.
- **JAMES E. "PETE" LANEY**
Speaker of the House
State Capitol
Austin, 78701
Phone: 806-839-2478, 512-463-3000.



Meanwhile, back in Asia...

Wealth effect has shrunk; will economy shrink too?

By JOHN CUNNIFF
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — For the remainder of this year we will be testing the wealth effect.

"We" includes the entire economy, but in this instance it applies most specifically to stockowners, mutual funds and retailers.

Earlier this year, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter estimated that in just a little over three years, American households added \$4.5 trillion — note the "t" — to the value of their stocks and equity mutual funds.

If you assume there are 100 million to 110 million households, the equity added averaged more than \$40,000 per household, a significant sum considering that many households don't manage to save at all.

Since the stock market rose a good deal after that estimate was made it is a minimum figure, as is the estimate from the same study showing the total of such households assets at

more than \$8 trillion. Providing understandable perspective for such a large figure is a challenge, but consider that it is much more than the U.S. gross domestic product, which is one full year's output of goods and services.

It is, therefore, a stunning figure, and it stuns none more than those who bewail the low U.S. savings rate, which doesn't include the figure. And by most measures it has had a stunning impact on this year's economy.

That impact could be felt in such areas as steady automotive sales, a sustained level of travel, record real estate sales, record involvement in entertainment, swollen federal tax receipts and fairly strong retailing.

Experience shows that people tend to spend, and even borrow more to spend, when they feel an improved level of wealth from rising assets, such as stocks and home equity. Psychology directly affects consumer economics.

Each month this year, for example, retail sales had post-

ed regular year-over-year improvements — until August. Was it mere coincidence that August was also the month in which stocks began to dive and assets shrink?

Most estimates of the wealth effect's influence suggest that between 2 percent and 5 percent of new affluence converts to new spending power, with most estimates tending toward the larger percentage.

Robert Kearns of David L. Babson & Co., investment counselor and financial planner, observes that the wealth effect may raise consumer spending \$225 billion over three years, or more than \$2,000 per household.

It is such figures that account for the economists' refrain that this expansion is consumer driven. And, of course, it now provokes the question: What happens if the consumer stays home rather than drives?

It's one of the major economic considerations, especially with retailers already preparing for the holiday selling binge that Americans have tra-

ditionally embarked upon. Nerves will be frayed, prayers offered.

One thing that will be watched is the level of interest rates. Two-thirds of households reside in their own homes, in which they have total equity comparable to that which they have in the stock market.

Economic weakness, which some say stock prices forecast, could mean lower interest rates. Lower rates, says R. Layne Morrill, president of the National Association of Realtors, means more affordable home financing.

"Consumers looking to buy homes are definitely coming out ahead," said Morrill, seizing upon the opportunity to contrast housing as a solid investment compared to the whimsical, roller-coaster stock market.

And not just buyers. Owners of homes already have learned that when interest rates fall they can remortgage, lower their monthly costs, and have more spendable dollars than they had before.

But will they spend them?

Mallard Fillmore by BRUCE TINSLEY

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Table with 33 columns representing TV channels (KIMD, KPEJ, KERA, etc.) and rows for different time slots (6:00 PM, 7:00 PM, etc.) listing various programs and their genres.

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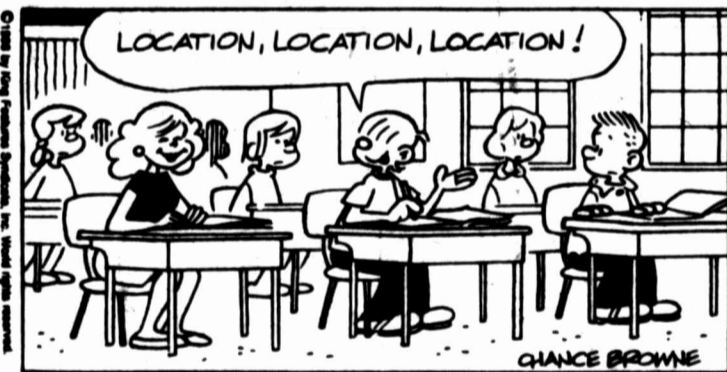
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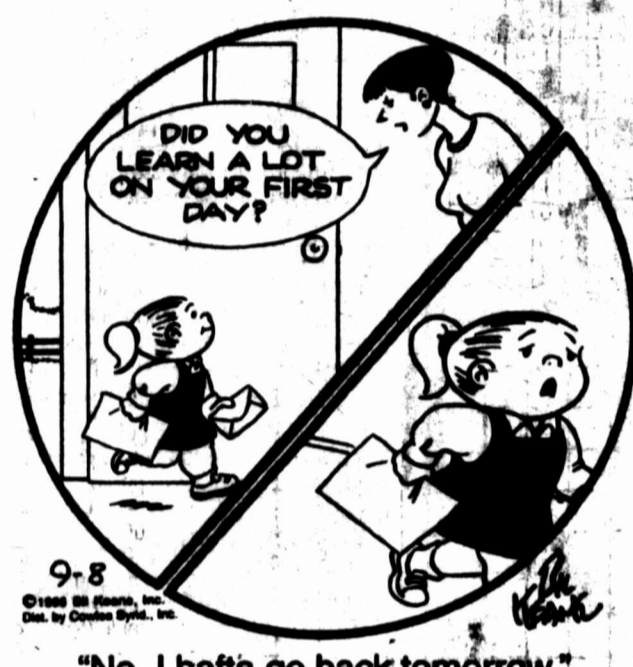
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"No, I hafta go back tomorrow."



"DADDY'S GOING ON A BUSINESS TRIP. HE'S NOT RUNNING AWAY."

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

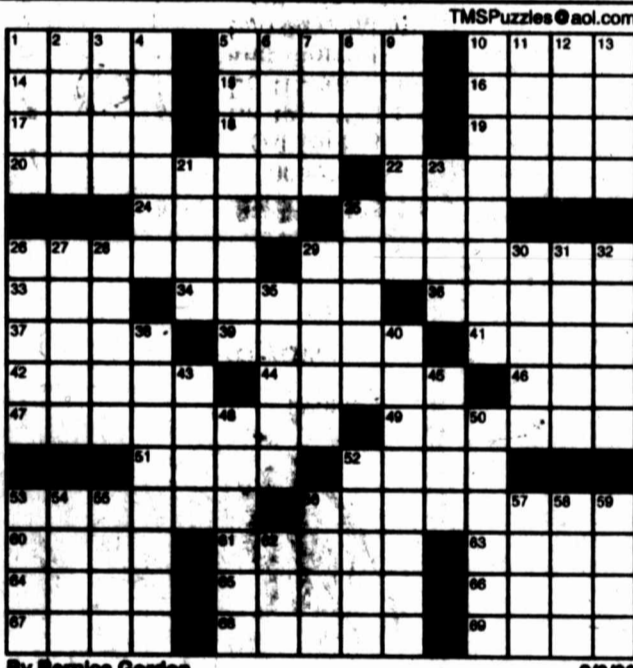
Today is Tuesday, Sept. 8, the 251st day of 1998. There are 114 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Sept. 8, 1935, Sen. Huey P. Long, "The Kingfish" of Louisiana politics, was shot and mortally wounded; he died two days later. On this date: In 1565, a Spanish expedition established the first permanent European settlement in North America at present-day St. Augustine, Fla.

In 1664, the Dutch surrendered New Amsterdam to the British, who renamed it New York. In 1892, an early version of "The Pledge of Allegiance" appeared in "The Youth's Companion."

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Tito's last name
5 Syrup source
10 False gpc
14 New Jersey or California city
15 French bity
16 Moses' mount
17 Landed
18 Cook food by heat
19 Impartial
20 4-time U.S. Open winner
22 Leveled
24 Kuwaiti leader
25 Close at hand
26 Rabbit colony
29 Winner of 80+ PGA events
33 Flightless bird
34 Unclothed
36 Castle feature
37 "Fernando" singers
39 Lawful slang
41 Vaccines
42 Hat attachments
44 Navigational system
46 Freedom, briefly
47 U.S. Open winner from South Africa
49 Fine cotton threads
51 TV award
52 Dull
53 Herb for felines
56 Senior-tour golfer
60 Pigmented part of the eye
61 Lucky people?
63 Bigfoot's shoe size
64 Finest
65 Lothario's cousin?
66 Dr. Zhivago's beloved
67 Discomfort
68 Zatopeks and Jennings
69 Hit the dirt



- 2 Part to play
3 Horse deity
4 Stringed instrument
5 On the edge
6 Boisterously
7 Outline
8 Paul of guitars
9 Value
10 Fiery pits
11 College bigwig
12 Theatrical award
13 Nobelman
21 Augustus
23 Immense
25 Low point
26 Intermesh
27 Dark yellow
28 Tennis player
29 Some lilies
30 "The Seven Year Itch" star
31 Eagle's home
32 Olive
35 Gene or Grace
36 Etruscan
37 Fox hunt cries
43 Partial (prof.)
45 Long and Peeples
48 Magnate's purview
50 Police badge
52 Swiss city
53 Castro's country
54 With, in 15A
55 Pianist John
56 Guitarist Hendrix
57 Toothed device
58 Architect Saarinen
59 Jump
62 CD add-on?

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