

MONDAY

May 1, 2000

WEATHER

Tonight:



PARTLY CLOUDY
TONIGHT 47°-49° TUESDAY 74°-77°

Lions Club seeks camp participants

Local Lions Club members are seeking individuals to participate in the Texas Lions Camp at Kerrville.

The camp is a week-long event, especially tailored toward the needs of physically disabled children.

For an application or an opportunity to borrow and view a videotape showing the Texas Lions Camp, call Paul or Pat Smith at 268-1270.

WHAT'S UP...

TODAY

- Texas Tech Exes meeting, 6 p.m., Sparenberg Building, 309 South Main.
- Big Spring Evening Lions Club, 6:30 p.m., 1607 East Third.
- Disabled American Veterans, 6:30 p.m. at 610 Abrams. Anyone interested in being an officer is asked to attend.
- Gospel Singing, 7 p.m., Kentwood Center, 2805 Lynn.
- Big Spring Chapter and Council, R.A.M., 7:30, at the Masonic Building 221 1/2 Main St.

TUESDAY

- Intermediate line dance classes, 9 a.m. Senior Citizens Center.
- Coahoma Senior Citizens luncheon, 11 a.m., Coahoma Community Center.
- Big Spring Rotary Club, noon, Howard College Cactus Room.
- VFW Post No. 2031, VFW Hall, 7 p.m.
- Big Spring Chapter No. 67, Orders of the Eastern Star, 7:30 p.m., Masonic Lodge, 219 Main St.

WEDNESDAY

- Optimist Club, 7 a.m., Howard College Cactus Room.
- Senior Circle Big Spring Mall walkers meet 9:15 a.m. in front of movie theater box office.
- Big Spring Downtown Lions Club, noon, Howard College Cactus Room.
- Line dancing, 1 p.m., Senior Citizens Center, Industrial Park.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie, 7 p.m., Eagles Lodge, 704 West Third.

THURSDAY

- Gideons International, Big Spring Camp No. U42060, Hermans, 7 a.m.
- Big Spring Senior Citizens Center Art Classes, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. for 55 and older.

INSIDE TODAY...

- Abby 9
- Classified 8-9
- Comics 10
- General 3,5
- Horoscope 9
- Obituaries 2
- Opinion 4
- Sports 6

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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.

Early voting in council, trustee elections concludes Tuesday

By **BILL McCLELLAN**
News Editor

As early voting nears completion for school district boards and city council positions in Howard County, the pace has picked up at the polls.

According to the county clerk's office at Howard County Courthouse, some 125 ballots have been cast in the contested election for Howard College trustee while 80 have been cast in the Big Spring Independent School board race for District 2.

John Freeman, owner of Freecom, and Michael R. Niklasch, owner of A&M Composites, are both hoping to fill that at-large Howard College board seat, currently held by Sue Partee, who decided not to seek re-election.

The Big Spring ISD District 2 election pits insurance agency owner Tommy Churchwell against auto parts dealership owner Terry Wegman. Incumbent Larry Hollar decided not to run. Only those residing in District 2 are eligible to

cast a ballot in that election.

Early voting ends at 5 p.m. Tuesday at the courthouse for citizens eligible to vote in those two elections. Citizens will have one more chance after that to cast a ballot. Saturday is election day and polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Those planning to vote Saturday in the Big Spring ISD election should do so at the Big Spring High School cafeteria. That's also the voting place for city residents voting in the Howard College election. For

residents outside the city, there are several voting places for the college election:

- Box 104-105: Knott Fire Station.
- Box 207: Coahoma Community Center.
- Box 208: Forsan High School.
- Box 304: Elbow Elementary School
- 407, 409: Sand Springs Lions Club Community Center.
- 408: Vincent Baptist Church.

Forty-seven people have voted in the Big Spring City Council's District 6 race, which

has incumbent Greg Biddison being challenged by Brenda Davis, Tom Guess and Judy Robertson. Early voting is being held at City Hall. On Saturday, the voting location will be Big Spring High School cafeteria.

Candidates for the three at-large positions up for election on the Coahoma ISD board are Eddie Cordes, Eddie Corse, Ronnie Dodson, Jody Reid and James L. White. As of today, 67 ballots had been cast during

See **VOTING**, Page 2

For Haynes, taking care of others is the key

Editor's Note: This is the third in a weekly series of articles on volunteers of the Crossroads.

By **LYNDEL MOODY**
Staff Writer

For some family members of critical care patients, waiting is the hardest part — and someone to listen to them, hold their hand or just make sure the coffee is hot, may make the difference.

Steve Marie Haynes volunteers at Scenic Mountain Medical Center twice a week in the intensive care unit waiting room, keeping the coffee hot, the water pitcher filled and listening to patients or family members who need to talk.

"Volunteering gives you back 10 times as much as you give and maybe more than that," Haynes said. "It is a fulfilling way of life. That is what life is all about."

From the 1950s until 1989, Haynes traveled all over the country for the Red Cross disaster service and was responsible for feeding and finding shelter for disaster victims. "I started out in family service and was the first one on the scene," she said. "I had to pull them together. The first thing to do is to feed them and find shelter so they can have a moment to collect themselves."

VOLUNTEERS OF THE CROSSROADS



Volunteer Steve Marie Haynes, left, visits with Joyce Bruton and her son, Richard Bruton. The Brutons have a family member in the intensive care unit at Scenic Mountain Medical Center.

I really learned about human nature and what people will do for each other," she continued. "People are really wonderful under pressure and will help each other." While in Dallas, she met a man working in the Veterans Administration system that would later become her husband.

"Jack was recruiting volun-

teers to work with dying patients and the family of dying patients," Haynes said. "He had such a capacity for helping people because he would just listen to people and be there for them."

That is the whole thing," Haynes continued. "You're there when people need you to talk with and to listen. The medical personal are very good

and they have answers but sometimes people are looking for a way through it. You can be an answer for their need."

Jack became interested the Red Cross, and the couple began traveling the country to the disaster areas when needed.

Jack worked for the Big
See **VOLUNTEER**, Page 2A

Hangar 25 Air Museum plans to extend weekend hours

By **CARL GRAHAM**
Staff Writer

Beginning this month, the Hangar 25 Air Museum will be extending its hours, due mostly to the donation of time from several local volunteers.

According to Susan Lewis, museum coordinator, the new hours of operation will begin on Saturday.

"We are excited about our opportunity to open on Saturday and Sunday starting in May," said Lewis. "It's been our goal for some time and we are grateful for the people who have come forward to donate their time to make this possible."

Lewis said the Saturday hours will be from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. while Sunday hours have been set for 1:30 p.m. until 4 p.m. The hours on Sunday will allow time for volunteers and visitors to attend church if they desire

and still have time to visit the museum.

"We are so glad to be able to open on the weekends because this is when families come to visit and people have more time," said Lewis. "We just could not do this though if not for our group of volunteers offering their time."

Lewis is in charge of putting together all the exhibits and coordinates the volunteer services. She said the museum is still in need of items to display, especially anyone who may have items from service in the

WAF, WASP, or any other units females served in.

Lewis said she is keeping a log with all the volunteer hours being kept track of and volunteers will be recognized annually for their time given.

The following individuals have volunteered to work on Saturday: Kathy Dunn, Margarita Durand-Hollis, Tom Guess, Jeanine Huskey, Darrel Reagan, Reta Spradling, Robert Underwood and Binie and Edna White.

See **MUSEUM**, Page 2

Howard College will offer post nursing training course

By **GINA GARZA**
Staff Writer

A growing demand for registered nurses trained in operating room procedures prompted Howard College to seek approval for a special course available this fall for the first time.

"We are really excited about offering this course. This is an area where a shortage of qualified nurses exists, and we anticipate the local hospitals to respond by sending their nurses to us for this special course," said Cindy Stokes, Howard College dean of nursing.

The course, Introduction to Perioperative Nursing, is open to registered nurses who are pursuing a career in the operating room.

"That is the tentative course name. It's a post nursing training course, open only to those who are registered nurses now," she said.

Scenic Mountain Medical Center Chief Nursing Officer Mary B. Shelter said training operating room nurses "in house" is a very expensive program.

"We are really excited about Howard College offering this course, because this program meets one of our specific needs," said Shelter at a recent advisory council meeting for the Howard College nursing programs.

"It takes a minimum of 90 days of full-time training before a nurse can be ready to take call and work in the operating room. The Howard College program will replace a great deal of the in-house training, so this benefits both the nurse and the hospital," she said.

See **NURSING**, Page 2

Park

Big Spring officials plan scaled-down version now

By **BILL McCLELLAN**
News Editor

A downtown park where visitors can learn more about Big Spring and local residents can relax a bit may become a reality later this year.

Though plans on a larger park fell through for lack of a Texas Department of Transportation grant, city officials haven't given up on the project — it will just be smaller, at least for now.

"We're looking at a very scaled back version," said Leigh Corson, city planning coordinator.

Last year, the City of Big Spring, Moore Development For Big Spring and Cornell Corrections came up with \$125,000 to fund demolition of the old Permian Building, which stood at the corner of Second and Scurry. That demolition cost \$101,881.52, leaving \$23,118.52.

Officials plan to put those funds with another \$25,000 pledged from the Industrial Foundation to begin work on the park.

Due to the limited funds and the county's request for more downtown parking, the initial park itself will be at the southwest corner of Third and Scurry. The northwest corner of Second and Scurry — where the Permian Building stood — will be double seal coated and used for parking.

The key reason the park will be facing Third Street is because that street is also a highway — Business 20 — which means some assistance is available through TxDOT to

See **PARK**, Page 2



CORSON



Energas employees Manuel Baeza, Richard Nix, and Rick Clark test for a gas leak that was reported at 207 West 17th. The crew located the leak and was able to take care of the problem.

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Northwest Texas town pounded by tornadoes

ELBERT (AP) — A small Northwest Texas town in the path of one of at least four tornadoes that went on a weekend rampage has lost its cotton gin and other businesses as well as several homes.

At least three mobile homes were destroyed, as was the Elbert Gin, in Sunday night's storms. Several homes were also moved off their foundations.

The twister tore down power lines to the town of 150 people and crews worked to restore electricity.

"We've got the power crews out there right now trying to get things working," said Ron Sadler, dispatcher for the Throckmorton County Sheriff's Department.

Barns in the town about 50 miles southwest of Wichita Falls were also destroyed. Golfball-size hail accompanied the fast-moving line of thunder-

storms that swept an area from the Oklahoma-Kansas border to South Texas.

There were no reports of serious injuries. But Sadler said a truck was blown onto its side by the high winds. The driver, whose identity was not yet available, was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment of minor injuries then released, he said.

The twister hit around 6 p.m., "but we got plenty of warning, got everybody notified," said Sadler. "We got word to them and got them into cellars."

Three twisters were also confirmed by the National Weather Service in neighboring Young County, with one reported to be a half-mile-wide funnel cloud near Olney.

Two tornadoes moved past the town of 3,300 and another touched down in the western part of the county, said Steve Fano, a weather service meteorologist in Fort Worth.

Gary Barnett, deputy chief of the Young County Sheriff's Office, said damage was minor. He said fallen electrical lines blocked routes into the towns.

Three miles east of Oklaunion in eastern Wilbarger County, a farm may have taken a direct hit from a tornado, according to Wichita Falls Times Record News reports from Vernon.

A mobile home, three barns and a shed were destroyed on the farm, owned by Robert Kimbrew, located on U.S. 287. Kimbrew's brick home was damaged and four grain bins were moved by the high winds.

A car belonging to Kimbrew's farm hand, who lived in the mobile home, was also destroyed in the storm.

Riding out the storm on Kimbrew's farm was a Euleus man who had a narrow escape. Sitting in his car, John V. Burnside watched the barn next to him disintegrate under the

force of the storm. The mobile home behind him exploded, sending a six-foot length of two-by-four through his rear window and into the back seat, inches from where he was sitting.

There were broadcast reports of another tornado Sunday evening five miles southwest of the Jack County town of Bryson, but it was not immediately confirmed by the weather service, Fano said.

Around 3:15 p.m., National Weather Service spotters saw a funnel cloud four miles west of Paducah in Cottle County, but it apparently never touched ground. No damage was reported.

The heavy weather formed along the leading edge of a warm front that pushed eastward through the state. Along with the tornadoes, the storms dropped golf ball- to tennis ball-sized hail.

Senate set for showdown on firearms and vouchers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats, angry that gun trigger locks and other safety measures remain stalled in juvenile justice legislation, now have a new vehicle big and popular enough to push their cause for weeks: education.

And, as debate begins today, federal school aid programs may get caught in the cross hairs.

"You can't separate safety and security in schools from the issue of the availability and the accessibility of guns," Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said in an interview. "The public understands that school violence prevention is a complex issue. The American people are increasingly demanding that we take action."

On Friday, the two sides set up "war rooms" in the Capitol Building to highlight their differences on who should control \$20 billion in federal K-12 grants. The Democrats replicated a classroom with student desks and chairs to hold interviews and Internet chats that coincide with President Clinton's Midwestern schools tour, promoting class-size reduction and after-school funding. Republicans planned online chats and events to tout the flexibility they say they're giving parents and schools with voucher proposals and block grants.

"There is a clear difference between us on who should set the priorities; people are going to want to know both sides," said Joseph Karpinski, a spokesman for Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., chairman of the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee. Jeffords is bringing the main proposal to his colleagues and must oversee the debate. Kennedy is the leading Democrat on the panel. "We would hope it could stay a pure debate on education,"

Karpinski said. Kennedy said he and others will be united in making gun-control proposals, adding that guns used in the Columbine slayings were acquired by the teen gunmen through loopholes in laws governing gun shops.

"When you talk about security and safety in schools, most of us have historically looked at smaller class sizes, after-school programs, and better trained teachers, but part of this whole thing is having schools free from easy accessibility to guns," Kennedy said.

House lawmakers will soon consider a school safety bill without trigger-lock requirements.

Democrats have long tried to attach gun control to other bills, but they weren't successful until the 1999 renewal of federal grants to states for juvenile delinquency programs. However, the House and Senate plans failed to match: a Senate-passed bill set a 72-hour background check on gun-show sales and a House bill shrank the wait to 24 hours.

A House-Senate conference committee has been assigned to reconcile differences; normally when there are such differences on complex legislation, members and their advisers meet privately to work out a compromise. But politics intensified disagreements. Democrats unhappy with the pace of negotiations have demanded that House and Senate negotiators meet openly — hoping the public glare will prod them into action.

Meanwhile, Democrats and Republicans have a wide enough gulf to bridge in rewriting the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which helps schools pay for programs ranging from boosting poor children's grades and test scores to training their teachers.

White House prepared to disclose and fix e-mail glitch

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House officials prepared to tell Congress as early as February 1999 about a glitch in their e-mail system and to begin retrieving thousands of unarchived messages that might be relevant to investigators. But they never followed through, an internal memo shows.

The memo, a set of talking points for testimony before congressional appropriators, laid out the history of the problem. It disclosed that presidential aides had solicited a bid on Oct. 20, 1998, from contractor Northrup Grumman to retrieve e-mails that weren't archived because of the glitch.

The contractor proposed "a design to recover the missing records," Karl H. Heissner of the White House Office of Administration wrote on Feb. 5, 1999. "The approximate cost for the system design is \$802,000."

Although officials had a proposal in hand, they waited until this year to begin retrieving the missing e-mails and reviewing them to determine if they

should have been handed over to lawmakers and federal prosecutors who had subpoenaed documents in the Monica Lewinsky, political fund-raising and Whitewater investigations.

Heissner's memo, obtained by The Associated Press, also suggests he was reluctant to tell Congress about the status of official document requests to the White House both from lawmakers and "litigants against the government" — because the internal statistics showed such requests were on the decline.

"We may not want to call attention to the issue by bringing the issue to the attention of Congress because last year's hours consumed by ... staff amounts to only a little over 500, this year's hours consumed so far amounts to only 65, and the level of requests appears to be declining," Heissner wrote.

He added for emphasis, "Let sleeping dogs lie." The e-mail file is expected to play a key role in hearings later this week before the House Government Reform Committee, which is investigat-

ing the controversy.

White House officials blame a "disconnect" between their technicians, who diagnosed the e-mail problem, and their lawyers, who apparently did not understand that the glitch might affect pending subpoena requests.

Jim Kennedy, spokesman for the White House counsel's office, said Heissner's memo showed presidential aides never intended to hide the problem and were prepared to answer questions about it.

"We have seen no documents that in any way suggest that the e-mail problem was hidden from Congress," Kennedy said.

White House officials said they believe Heissner's "sleeping-dogs-lie" comment was simply expressing a desire not to encourage the Republican-controlled Congress to send more subpoenas and document requests.

As for the delay in retrieving unarchived e-mails, White House officials say they placed the project behind more pressing problems, such as ensuring

that the Executive Office of the President was Y2K-ready.

Still, lawmakers, independent counsel Robert Ray and Justice Department officials are trying to determine whether the delays in retrieving e-mails and informing investigators about thousands of possibly relevant documents was part of an effort to obstruct crucial investigations of the president. The White House denies any wrongdoing.

The White House also has an obligation under federal law to preserve all official records of the presidency.

Heissner's February 1999 memo to fellow Office of Administration staffer Dorothy E. Deal provides extensive detail about the history of the e-mail glitch — information that wasn't given to Congress until just weeks ago.

"Records management, mandated by law, requires among other things that incoming and outgoing e-mail meeting certain criteria to be considered federal records to be archived for future retrieval," the memo said.

A&M bonfire collapse report due Tuesday

COLLEGE STATION (AP) — Administrators of Texas A&M university are promising a bonfire collapse report that examines what went wrong as 12 Aggies were killed and 27 others were injured, but others say the special commission's conclusions aren't detailed enough.

Findings from a special commission's five-month, \$1.6 million investigation into last year's collapse are due out Tuesday.

But the report will not answer one of the most frequently asked questions — concerning the Aggie tradition's future — or recommend any ramifications in the aftermath of A&M's deadliest accident, according to the Bryan-College Station Eagle.

It reported that university President Ray Bowen must decide whether the bonfire, which has drawn more than 70,000 people on pre-game nights before the Aggies face the University of Texas, will continue.

Bowen has said he will draw on input from students, both

former and current, as well as opinions of administrators, regents and families of those affected by the tragedy to make that determination in coming weeks or months.

"We all want to know what happened; the families especially need to know," Donald Powell, chairman of the A&M system board of regents, told the newspaper in today's editions. "The families of those who died and those who were injured are foremost in our minds right now. Our hearts and our minds continue to be with them, and, of course, will be on Tuesday."

The commission's five members, who have a single charge of determining what caused the tragedy, will meet for the last time starting at 1 p.m. Tuesday at A&M's Reed Arena. Members will listen to a detailed report from its chiefs of staff, who organized four teams of engineering and other consultants for the inquiry.

The "best people in the world" have been assigned to

the investigation, said Leo E. Linbeck Jr., a Houston construction executive who is leading the special commission.

Linbeck said he is sure that the report will be thorough and without bias.

University of Kentucky professor John Thelin, an expert in policy- and decision-making by universities, said the commission will probably conclude there was no malice or intent in the collapse.

"They will confine it to technical remarks. But the problem isn't technical. The problem is cultural," Thelin told the Austin American-Statesman. "Can you really anticipate that anyone wants to clean house on this?"

The newspaper said some questioned whether an outside investigation not paid for by the university will be conducted to determine if any blame needs to be assessed.

Two other outside investigations still pending are also limited in scope, the newspaper said.

Texas teachers association seeks higher salaries

FORT WORTH (AP) — Members of the Texas State Teachers Association are pledging to fight harder for higher pay, improved benefits and better working conditions for public school employees in the next five years.

A group of about 600 educators met Saturday for the association's 121st annual convention at the Hyatt Regency DFW hotel.

"We've been so passive as a group," said Lauri Rule, a 24-year educator at O.D. Shackelford Junior High School in Arlington.

"That's why, we still lack in benefits and pay. It's time to take an active role," she is quoted as saying in Sunday editions of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

State lawmakers have pushed to boost the salaries.

Last year, the state gave a \$3,000 raise to all public school teachers. But Texas still ranks 35th in the nation in teacher pay. The average salary of a

Silver Lake Elementary School in Grapevine.

"What people need to know is that there are thousands of contracts settled every year without a strike," said Miller, who is president of the association region that includes the Arlington, Birdville, Grapevine-Colleyville, Hurst-Euleless-Bedford and Keller districts. "And it's been the perception that it was because of those teachers, when it could have been a stubborn school board that didn't bargain in good faith that caused the strike."

North Texas leaders said they would welcome collective bargaining, in which teachers would sit at the negotiating table with area school boards.

But Texas teachers generally have considered collective bargaining synonymous with political conflict, said Michael Miller, a reading specialist at

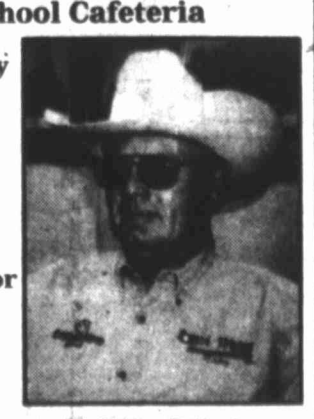
Association members said the increase is not enough to compensate teachers and other school employees for their work.

North Texas leaders said they would welcome collective bargaining, in which teachers would sit at the negotiating table with area school boards.

But Texas teachers generally have considered collective bargaining synonymous with political conflict, said Michael Miller, a reading specialist at

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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.

John H. Walker
Publisher
John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Debbie Jensen
Features Editor
Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

School, city elections need your vote now

No matter where you live in Howard County, there is an election going on this week. Early voting in area council, mayoral and education boards ends Tuesday around the area. Election day is Saturday.

Some of the elections are limited to a portion of residents only. That's the case in the Big Spring Independent School District, where Tommy Churchwell and Terry Wegman are seeking the District 2 post. Only those citizens residing in the district are eligible to cast a ballot.

That's true also in the Big Spring City Council race for District 6. Only residents of the district can cast a ballot for one of four office-seekers — incumbent Gregg Biddison, Brenda Davis, Tom Guess or Judy Robertson.

A much broader voter base comes into play in the Howard College trustee election, where John Freeman and Michael R. Niklasch are seeking an at-large seat on the board. Anyone residing within the college district may cast a vote.

That includes Coahoma and Forsan residents, who also have separate elections. Coahoma residents have five candidates vying for three places on the school board. They are Larry Cordes, Eddie Corse, Ronnie Dodson, Jody Reid and James L. White. Four candidates are seeking two at-large posts on the Forsan ISD board. They are incumbent Lewis Boeker, Barney Hise, Paul Spence and Robert Wash.

Coahoma candidates for three at-large city council seats are incumbent Eleanor Garrett, write-in candidate Craig Ferguson, Randy Overton, Paulette Lindsey and Dan Shelborne. Forsan has no contested alderman race, but Mayor Jim Buske is getting a challenge from Shane Sayles.

Early voting is being held at the county courthouse in the Big Spring ISD and Howard College trustee races and at Forsan High School for the Forsan mayor's race. All others are being held at the administrative offices of their respective entities: Big Spring and Coahoma city halls and Coahoma and Forsan ISD administration buildings.

Saturday, early voting will be at the community center in Coahoma for Coahoma ISD and city elections; Forsan High School and Elbow Elementary schools for the Forsan ISD and city elections; and Big Spring High School cafeteria for the Big Spring ISD and Big Spring City Council elections. Howard College will have voting boxes at Big Spring High School cafeteria, Knott Fire Station, Coahoma Community Center, Forsan High School, Elbow Elementary, Sand Springs Community Center and Vincent Baptist Church.

We encourage all eligible Howard County citizens to take the time to vote. Whether it be city or education board, these elections help to shape the quality of life in our county.

LETTER POLICIES

- The Herald welcomes letters to the editor. Please:
- Limit your letters to no more than 300 words.
- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- Letters of a political nature will not be published.
- 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

If they can't read, computers won't help

In his debate with Bill Bradley at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, N.Y. earlier this year, Vice President Al Gore called for federally supported "Info Stamps" — based on the model of food stamps — to ensure that poor children have access to personal computers.

Gore did not develop the theme on that occasion but recently at an appearance at Morehouse College in Atlanta, a prestigious, historically black institution, he went into detail.

Speaking in the chapel, which is named for Martin Luther King Jr. and flanked by former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young — once a top King aide — and by King's son, Martin Luther King III, Gore identified himself with King, who had famously spoken of his "dream" from the "mountain." The biblical allusion, of course, is to Moses at the end of Deuteronomy viewing the Promised Land from the highest peak on Mount Nebo and, no doubt, also to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Gore proclaimed that we are now atop another mountain — meaning prosperity, surpluses and the "information revolution."

"If we take this mountaintop moment," he said, "and squander the resources that we call a surplus on a tax cut for the wealthy, on a risk that is designed not to lift up those in need but to give more to those who have much, what will happen to those who are waiting

for the help that ought to be extended to them?"

(I will not pause here over the malice imputed by Gore to his opponents with his use of the word "designed," or his characterization of tax surpluses as a "resource," or his claim that there is something vicious in returning taxpayer overpayments to the taxpayer, or his habitual demonization of the "wealthy.")

The want ads, Gore continued, are filled with high-paying jobs that cannot be filled because of inadequate training. And, he went on,

"Simultaneously, we have hundreds of thousands and millions who have the ability, the curiosity, the desire to learn and to succeed but have not had the opportunity and the access."

There Gore painted with a rather broad brush, but we'll let that pass for the time being. What is his solution?

Big surprise: The solution, he said, will come from the federal government, which will place computers with Internet access in every classroom and library to train teachers in new technologies, to integrate the computers into the full scholastic curriculum, to build computer-training centers in needy communities and to bring Internet access to every household.

From this mountaintop he proposed that the nation establish a national goal of making every student computer literate by eighth grade. As usual, he did not quote a price on all this, but we'll let that go because it is not the main point here.

And, to be sure, studies are showing that although Internet access is spreading rapidly, a gap is developing that correlates with income, between

those who have access and those who do not. Gore wants everyone out there on the "information superhighway," as he put it during the 1996 campaign. Line up for your Info Stamps.

But the problem of those hundreds of thousands and "millions" who cannot get those jobs listed in the want ads is not that they lack access to the Internet and not that they lack computer literacy, but that they lack ordinary literacy and ordinary mathematical skills, just for starters.

Computer literacy is all very well, but it does not begin to touch the problem of those who cannot qualify for entry-level jobs in the current full-employment economy.

If you could count on ordinary literacy, learning how to access the Internet would be a cinch. Such programs as America Online instruct the user at an elementary level, step-by-step, to use the program. Students refer to these levels of programs as being "proof." Of course, if you are not literate enough to read what comes up on the screen, then we have a problem that is not going to be solved by Gore's vision from the top of Mount Nebo of a computer in every pot, or garage, or whatever.

The problem of the students that Gore has in mind has many dimensions. First of all, it has to do with the atmosphere in the household in which these children come to consciousness and then grow up. Do the parents — or parent — read books, newspapers or magazines, and do they talk about them? What is the quality of conversation in that household? The extent of the vocabulary used? The awareness of public affairs? How

many hours per day is the television on? Do the parents insist that schoolwork be done? Is good performance in school rewarded?

Outside the home, the quality of the local subculture is important, too. Is achievement in school highly regarded? Or is it denounced and condemned? What are the admired goals of this subculture? Does it regard a Ph.D. more favorably than athletic success? Are books discussed?

And, of course, the quality of the school and the classroom is important. Safety is much more important than fresh paint or classroom size. And alertness in the classroom is important, too. What is possible in the school is heavily influenced by the child's home environment and what happens in his or her neighborhood.

Finally, we have the quality of instruction itself. Are the teachers competent, engaging, energetic, effective? By what criteria is their performance judged? Are teachers tested? Is excellence tangibly rewarded? Where is the accountability?

All such questions, of course, are intransigently resisted by the teachers unions, the AFT and the NEA, from which, again of course, Gore receives lavish and undivided support. These unions care more about job security than about educational results.

And, again of course, Gore is adamantly opposed to vouchers (so is the AFT and the NEA), which would introduce options and competition into the public schools.

Up on his mountain, Gore is just blowing smoke. Marie Antoinette, when told about a shortage of bread, legendarily said, "Let them eat cake." Gore is telling those who aren't learning, "Eat computers."



JEFFREY HART



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Is this panda diplomacy or panda blackmail?

The giant panda has long captured our imagination, and it has arguably become the most loved of endangered species on earth, and therefore one of the most costly. The Chinese Wildlife Conservation Association now charges \$1 million per year to rent a pair of pandas.

In China, giant pandas symbolize peace, in part because their diet consists primarily of bamboo.

Giant pandas can grow to five or six feet and males weigh up to 225 pounds. Their natural habitats are the bamboo forests of China, which usually grow at elevations of between 8,500 feet and 9,800 feet. In the wild,

pandas have a life span of 18 to 20 years, but in captivity they can live as long as 30 years.

There are only about 1,000 pandas left in the world, so in 1984, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service named the giant panda an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The 140 nation signatories of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora also provide protection, and the Chinese government imposes life sentences for anyone caught poaching pandas. Even so, their numbers have continued to dwindle.

Man, the panda's greatest foe, continues to encroach and destroy their bamboo forests. And despite the Chinese law, poachers continue to hunt pandas for their pelts. But perhaps the greatest threat comes from man's interference with biology called population fragmentation. Pandas are divided into approximately 32 geographically separated subpopulations.

This results in inbreeding, which is genetically harmful and causes fertility problems.

The giant panda breeds between the ages of 4 and 10. The mating season is in the spring, and cubs are born three to five months later. Currently, 124 pandas live in zoos in China and North Korea, and approximately 20 live in other zoos abroad.

Many attempts have been made to mate pandas in captivity, but with little success. The problem for female pandas is that few of them exhibit normal estrus behavior, and males exhibit little interest in females. The first successful birth in captivity outside of China occurred in 1980 at a zoo in Mexico City. There have been five panda births in the United States, including a set of twins born to Hsing-Hsing and Ling-Ling at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., but none of the cubs survived more than a few days.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adopted a new policy

in 1998 that allocated most of the profits from the exhibition of pandas to research. FWS also froze the importation of pandas from 1993 to 1998 because many zoos in the United States were simply applying for short-term panda rental deals. So, as of November 1999 there were only five giant pandas in U.S. Zoos. The San Diego zoo has a young breeding pair and a cub on loan. The Atlanta zoo also has a young breeding pair.

The National Zoo in Washington, D.C., has just signed a deal to rent a young pair of pandas for 10 years for \$10 million. Any cubs born to them will also belong to China. But the deal is not immune from politics. The head of panda research at Peking University, Pan Wenxi, said, "If the United States moves one more step toward favoring Taiwan's position over China's, then there will be problems."

Is this panda diplomacy or panda blackmail?



JACK ANDERSON



Virginia

VIRGINIA BEACH — When Maureen the dramatic photo Gonzalez being removed from the Miami relatives, justice had been done. At least, she said old Cuban boy had ed with his father, Gonzalez, after on days. Dabbagh has more than seven her daughter, who ed by her ex-hu whose whereabouts unknown. "All (Attorney G Reno said is let D let him have his Dabbagh said. "It's for me or for any who has had their ed. That's all I daughter back." The Virginia B hasn't seen Nadia s 1992, when the gir years old. She has so much as a pho now 10, since she



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Virginia mom's custody battle in stark contrast to Gonzalez case

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (AP) — When Maureen Dabbagh saw the dramatic photos of Elian Gonzalez being forcibly removed from the home of his Miami relatives, she thought justice had been done.

At least, she said, the 6-year-old Cuban boy had been reunited with his father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, after only about 180 days. Dabbagh has been waiting more than seven years to see her daughter, who was abducted by her ex-husband and whose whereabouts are unknown.

"All (Attorney General Janet) Reno said is let Dad have him, let him have his son back," Dabbagh said. "It's no different for me or for any other parent who has had their child abducted. That's all I want — my daughter back."

The Virginia Beach woman hasn't seen Nadia since October 1992, when the girl was only 2 years old. She hasn't even seen so much as a photo of Nadia, now 10, since she was taken by

Dabbagh's ex-husband, Mohamad Hisham Dabbagh.

And despite having legal custody of Nadia in both the United States and Syria, Maureen Dabbagh has repeatedly run into roadblocks in her efforts to get her daughter back.

"At least Elian's father could see that his son was alive and healthy," she said. "There are no recent photographs of my daughter, so I have no assurance that she is really OK."

Several recent phone calls made to Mohamad Dabbagh at his last known employer in Saudi Arabia were not returned.

Since Nadia was taken, Dabbagh has dedicated much of her time to lobbying politicians, monitoring e-mail and making phone calls in the hope of bringing her child and others like her back to the United States.

She has formed P.A.R.E.N.T. International, or Parents Advocating for Recovery Through Education by

Networking Together. Since 1994, the group has helped bring home more than 200 children abducted to foreign countries by one of their parents.

Dabbagh and hundreds of other parents will meet in Washington, D.C., May 11-13 for an international abduction conference. They will also hold a candlelight vigil outside the White House.

But Dabbagh said she has very little hope of getting her daughter back through traditional government channels, citing questionable ties between the U.S. and Syrian governments and a lack of enforcement of child abduction laws in both countries.

Charles Pickett, Dabbagh's case manager with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, said she has worked as hard as any parent he's ever met to get her daughter back.

"Regretfully, what I have found is that it is hard to find somebody in the other country

that's willing to walk the extra mile to get the child back," Pickett said.

Dabbagh says the Clinton administration has essentially ignored two resolutions introduced by U.S. Sen. Charles Robb, D-Va., asking for her daughter's safe return.

So she has taken more drastic measures, including a 36-day hunger strike. But most government officials took little notice, she said.

"It's as if my government thinks the life of my child is expendable," she said. "If they think the life of my child is expendable, why shouldn't I risk everything to save her? ... What do I have to lose?"

More than 1,100 active cases of child abduction are now filed with the State Department.

The United States does not give up on any cases involving missing children, but it cannot break the laws of other countries when trying to locate and bring American children home, a State Department official said.

Prosecutors seek death penalty, still hope to find woman's body

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)

When Girly Chew Hossencoff failed to show up for work at Bank of America nearly eight months ago, her co-workers knew they would likely never see her again.

Her boss called police. Within hours, her bloody clothing was found along a rural highway and her purse was found in the middle of an Albuquerque street. Damp carpet with bleached-out bloodstains was found at her home.

Her estranged husband, Diazen Hossencoff, and his 46-year-old girlfriend, Linda Henning, are charged with murder in a case that has made headlines in Mrs. Hossencoff's native Malaysia. Bail for each was set at \$2.5 million.

In November, a grand jury handed down a 27-count indictment against Hossencoff and a 20-count indictment against

Henning, that includes charges of murder, kidnapping, conspiracy and evidence-tampering. No trial date has been set.

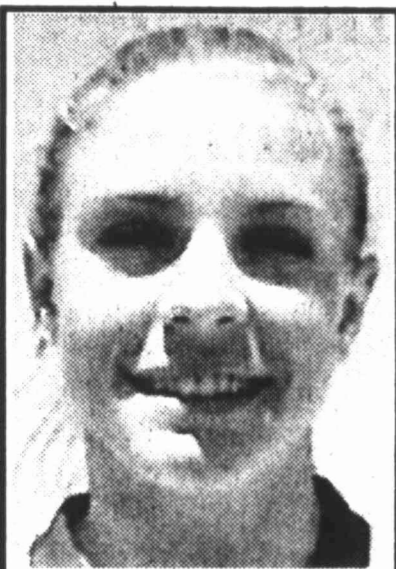
The defendants could face the death penalty if convicted, prosecutors say, although the defense disputes that. It is rare for defendants to face execution when the alleged murder victim is missing.

Both defendants maintain their innocence.

FBI agent John Schum said bank employees told him that Mrs. Hossencoff, 36, reported threats by her 34-year-old husband of six years over the couple's final years and "that if she ever disappeared, they should expect the worst."

"She was very afraid of him. She feared for her life," said her boss, Kathy Freeman.

Hossencoff, who also vanished when his wife disappeared, was arrested Sept. 21 in Charleston, S.C.



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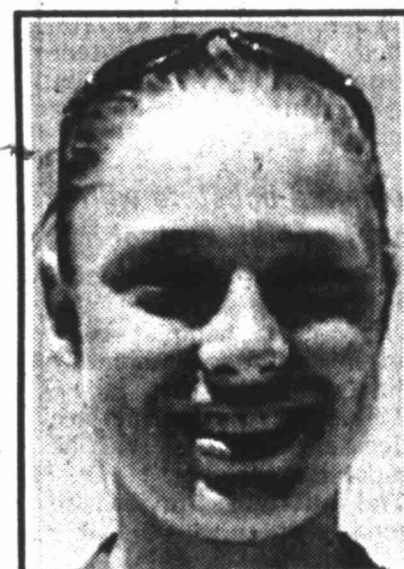
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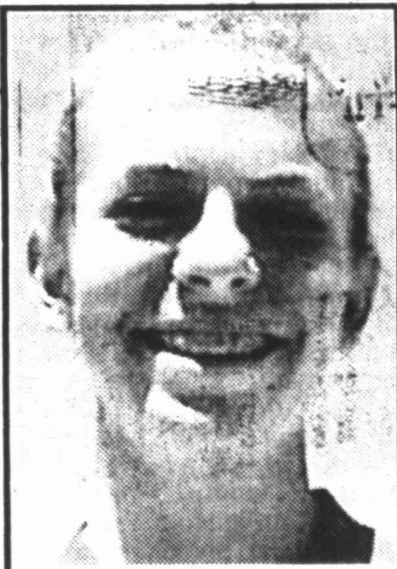
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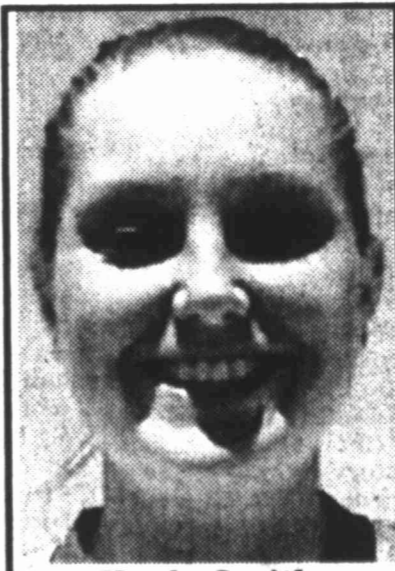
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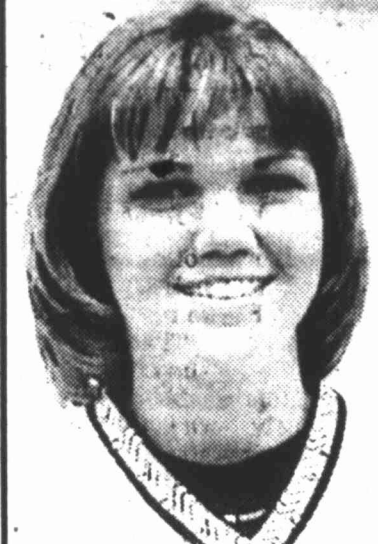
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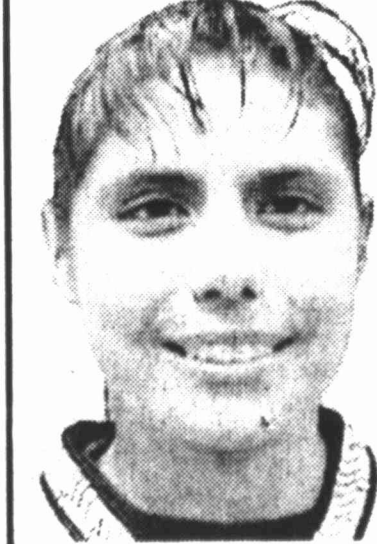
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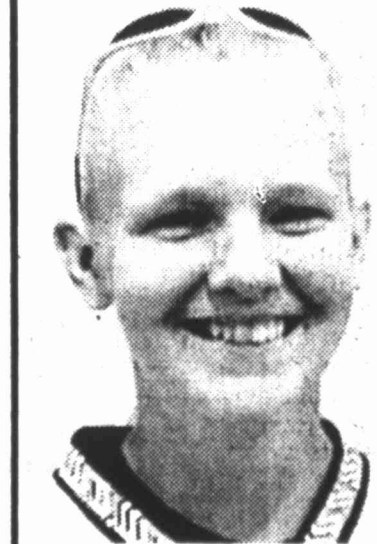
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Table with 24 columns representing different TV channels (KMI, KPE, KERA, etc.) and rows representing time slots (6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30) with program listings.

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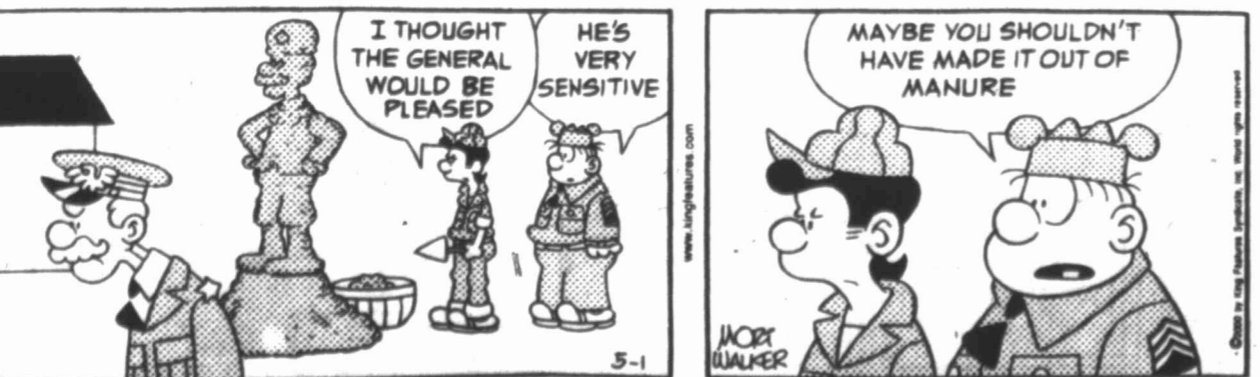
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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS Today is Monday, May 1, the 122nd day of 2000. There are 244 days left in the year.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS 1 Threadbare 5 Much ado about something 10 Liberal or fine follower 14 Words of understanding 15 Herb with aromatic seeds 16 Ardor 17 Melt 18 Ransack 19 Space starter? 20 Successful predecessor 23 Fencing swords 24 Nuisances 25 Climbs 28 Information 30 Cry of pain 31 Riyadh resident 33 Oklahoma town 36 Espionage milieu 40 180 degrees from NNW 41 Fermenting agent 42 News source? 43 Kuwaiti leader 44 Roams stealthily 46 Bit 49 Stirring device 51 Entertainment maxim 57 Overwhelming defeat 58 Stringed instruments 59 Wheel shaft 60 Old Gaelic 61 Leg joint 62 Golf gadgets 63 Equal 64 Wind-borne soil 65 Slaughter of baseball 7 Fissures 8 Scandinavian capital 9 Coral formation 10 Decorative bush 11 Staggers 12 Fortune cards 13 Delays 21 Copy 22 Of the eyes 25 Cries 26 Signals 27 Soreness 28 Tune for two 29 Commercials, briefly 31 Antares or Betelgeuse, e.g. 32 Sounds of delight 33 Afresh 34 New or raw follower 35 Queries 37 Oread 38 "Agnus" 39 Stretch out 43 Annual holiday 44 Marshall's bands 45 Decay 46 Threat 47 Task 48 Practice recycling 49 Fire giveaway 50 Tugs 52 Elliptical 53 Sot 54 Beasts of burden 55 Butter substitute 56 Untouchable Eliot

In 1786, Mozart's opera "The Marriage of Figaro" premiered in Vienna.

In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition was officially opened in Chicago by President Cleveland.

In 1898, Commodore George Dewey gave the command, "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley," as an American naval force destroyed a Spanish fleet in Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War.

In 1931, New York's 102-story Empire State Building was dedicated.

In 1931, singer Kate Smith began her long-running radio program on CBS.

In 1941, the Orson Welles motion picture "Citizen Kane" premiered in New York.

In 1948, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) was proclaimed.

In 1967, Anastasio Somoza Debayle became president of Nicaragua.

In 1971, Amtrak - which combined and streamlined the operations of 18 intercity passenger railroads - went into service.

In 1998, Eldridge Cleaver, the fiery Black Panther leader who later renounced his past and became a Republican, died in Pomona, Calif., at age 62.

Ten years ago: Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev and other Kremlin leaders were jeered by thousands of people during the annual May Day parade in Red Square.

Five years ago: Charges that Qubilah Shabazz, the daughter of Malcolm X, had plotted to murder Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan were dropped as jury selection for her trial was about to begin in Minneapolis. President Clinton defended his choice for surgeon general, Henry Foster, as a "pro-life, pro-choice doctor."

One year ago: Despite protests, the National Rifle Association held its annual meeting in Denver 11 days after the Columbine High School shootings. The "Liberty Bell 7," the Mercury space capsule flown by Gus Grissom, was found in the Atlantic 300 miles southeast of Cape Canaveral, 38 years after it sank. An amphibious boat sank at Hot Springs, Ark., killing 13. Charismatic, a 30-1 shot, charged to victory in the 125th Kentucky Derby.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Glenn Ford is 84. TV personality Jack Paar is 82. Actor Dan O'Herlihy is 81. Former astronaut Scott Carpenter is 75. Country singer Sonny James is 71. Singer Judy Collins is 61. Actor Stephen Macht is 58.

Big Spring Herald advertisement with contact information: 915-263-7331 (Main switchboard), 915-263-7335 (Circulation calls only), (Fax) 915-264-7205. Lists staff members like John H. Walker, John A. Moseley, Edwin Vela, Tony Hernandez, Dianne Marquez, and their roles.