



Conference center study results are due Monday

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

Members of the Big Spring Conventions and Visitors Bureau board of directors are holding their collective breath, as the results of a feasibility study on the construction of a hotel conference center is slated for presentation Monday.

Set for 5:30 p.m. Monday at the Dora Roberts Community Center, the presentation should take approximately 30 minutes, according to CVB Director Dana Baker.

Baker said the need for the feasibility study was first pointed out by members of the community.

"The CVB board of directors was approached by people from the community who were interested in looking at a convention and hotel visitor center," said Baker. "They approached the CVB so we could fund the project because we thought it was a quality project that could really work for our area."

"They went out and found an organization that works internationally, specifically for towns like Big Spring. From this, we now have a rough draft."

The presentation of the study will be made by Paul Sajovec, senior vice president with HVS Convention, Sports & Entertainment Facilities Consulting.

"They came to our town

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RING THE BELL



Wednesday, representatives from ALON USA Energy Inc. (NYSE:ALJ), gathered to "ring in a new era" during the opening bell ceremony at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) to commemorate the listing and initial trading of the company's stock. The company's common stock began trading on the NYSE under the ticker symbol "ALJ" on July 28. Pictured from left are Shraga Biran, ALON USA founder; Robert Britz, NYSE president and Co-COO; Jeff Morris, ALON USA president and CEO; and David Weissman, ALON USA chairman.

LAP confirms times for 2nd VAMC hearing

Key event set from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sept. 1 at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

The Local Advisory Panel (LAP) for the Big Spring VA Hospital Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) project has confirmed times for the Sept. 1 hearing concerning the facility.

The hearing, is slated from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. at Dorothy Garrett

Coliseum and will be the second of four such meetings planned to help gather public comment on the realignment effort, which could have a drastic affect on the long-time Big Spring facility.

"This meeting is a very important one for gathering feedback from the public," said John Fears,

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Mental health needs for veterans growing, chamber board hears

More importantly, Big Spring VAMC poised to play major role in treatment

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

As the Local Advisory Panel for the Big Spring VA Medical Center gets ready to hold its second meeting in reference to the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) project Sept. 1, it appears the new "catch phrase" is going to be options.

That's the message delivered to the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce Wednesday afternoon, as Shelley Smith, chief executive

"...there's no better site to deliver these services than right here in Big Spring, Texas."

Smith

officer for West Texas Centers for MHMR, said the current data being used in the study sup-

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United Way's Dine out Day will get under way this week

Special to the Herald

The United Way of Big Spring and Howard County is asking for the public to participate in "Dine Out Day for United Way" again this year.

For the third year in a row, a different restaurant will be recognized each Friday as the

United Way's "Restaurant of the Week." Each of the restaurants will donate a portion of their sales to the United Way.

Last year, the program was a successful fund-raiser for both the restaurants and the United Way, according to Cheryl Truskowski, chairman of the Dine Out Day event.

This Friday, Al's and Son Bar-B-Q will begin this year's fundraiser by hosting a steak night. Al's and Son is the first restaurant in this popular series of 14 that will participate.

The United Way helps 15 local agencies, American Red Cross, West Texas Chapter; Boy's Club of Big Spring; Buffalo Trail

Council; Boy Scouts of America; CASA of West Texas; Council on Aging (Meals on Wheels); Dora Roberts Rehabilitation Center; Howard County Humane Society; Isaiah 58; Northside Community Center; Salvation Army; Victim Services; Westside Community Center; Westside Day Care

Center; West Texas Girl Scout Council; and YMCA of Big Spring.

For more information, contact the United Way at 267-5201.

If a local restaurant wishes to participate in Dine Out Day and has not been contacted, they are asked to call Truskowski at 267-1113.

Fair queen contest deadline extended through workday Friday

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

Organizers of the Howard County Fair Queen contest have extended the entry deadline for the event.

Nancy Howard, one of the event's directors, said interested persons have until 5 p.m. Friday to enter the event, which is one of the mainstays

of the annual county fair.

"We have a great prize package this year," Howard said. "We want those girls to enter because they can win so many things."

The contest is open to residents of Howard and adjoining counties. Entrants must be of high school age or be attending Howard College or SouthWest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf,

and must have never been married or had children, Howard said.

The winner of this year's contest will win a \$300 scholarship to Howard College, a photo session and one free 8-inch-by-10-inch photo from J Renee Photography, a month's free tanning at Tanique Tanning Salon, a gift from Faye's Flowers, and the traditional

tiara, dozen roses and banner.

First runner-up will receive a \$200 scholarship to HC, while second runner-up will receive a \$100 scholarship.

Howard said all contestants will receive a gift package for entering.

Interested young women can pick up entry forms at the county 4-H office at the county courthouse, Posey Cotton Co.,

and Faye's Flowers.

For more information, contact Howard at 353-4448 or Janice Barnes at 353-4434.

The queen contest will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Municipal Auditorium.

The event is free to the public, Howard said.

The Howard County Fair begins Wednesday at the the county fairgrounds.

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Find us online at:
www.bigspringherald.com

To reach us:

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

AUCTION SET TONIGHT

The Fourth Annual Howard County Humane Society Auction, featuring lots of autographed memorabilia, expense-paid trips and more, will be held at 7 p.m. today in the Dora Roberts Community Center.

Items for auction will be available for preview at 6 p.m., and fajitas and libations will be available, said Jo Stone, coordinator.

All proceeds go to the local Humane Society. Last year's auction brought in about \$47,000 for the animal shelter. The local Humane Society currently houses about 147 dogs and more than 50 cats.

COMING THIS WEEKEND



ranch, the word "cancer" is never mentioned, and children are treated as if they are just like their healthy counterparts as they ride horses and enjoy other ranch activities.

Cover Story: Talk show host Don Imus has turned his ranch in Ribera, N.M., into a summer camp for children who are cancer survivors. At this working

A GUMMY SITUATION

ALBUQUERQUE (AP) — It was disgusting, but not a felony. A dental student who sent some chewed bubble gum along with a money order to pay a speeding ticket has been found innocent of felony counts of mailing a threat. The wad of gum was treated as a HAZMAT incident when a worker at the Santa Fe Motor Vehicle Division office opened the envelope. A note with the gum read: "Caution Touch at your own risk or use gloves. Ha-ha." An attorney for 24-year-old Rosemary Ho argued it was "the stupid act of a young girl," not a terrorist threat. The federal jury agreed.

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 8 a.m. Wednesday and 8 a.m. today:

- **MICHAEL SEAY**, 26, of 204 S. Runnels, was arrested Wednesday on four local warrants.
- **JAY BILLINGSLEY**, 39, of 510 Jeffrey, was arrested Wednesday on a charge of driving while license invalid.
- **MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ**, 29, of 3209 Auburn, was arrested Wednesday and held for the U.S. Marshal Service.
- **HOWARD FOSTER**, 29, of 1002 N. Main Street, was arrested Wednesday on a Howard County warrant and charges of failure to identify and a parole violation.
- **NICHOLAS BYRNE**, 18, of 608 E. 15th Street, was arrested Wednesday on charges of driving while license invalid and driving under the influence by a minor.
- **JOE ERNEST VALENCIA SR.**, 42, of 2002 N.E. Third Street, was arrested Wednesday on charges of failure to identify, resisting arrest and a Howard County warrant.
- **ERIC ANTHONY VALENCIA**, 20, of 801 W. FM 700, was arrested Wednesday on a charge of

Sheriff's report

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

- **JASPER MCCARTNEY**, 30, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of theft by check.
- **EMIEL JOZEF VANDERMISSEN**, 47, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a judgment/sentence for possession of a controlled substance.
- **ROY D. STEWART**, 51, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on charges of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, fraudulent use/possession of identifying information, 18 counts of credit/debit card abuse and 18 counts of tampering with government records license/seal to defraud or harm.
- **GEORGE CHAPMAN COKER**, 53, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.
- **THOMAS FAY**, 65, was arrested Wednesday on a charge of public intoxication.

Weather

Tonight—Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 70s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Friday—Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 90s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Friday night—Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 60s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Saturday—Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 90s. Southeast winds around 10 mph.

Saturday night—Partly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 60s.

Sunday—Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the lower 90s. The chance of rain is 20 percent.

Sunday night—Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 60s.

Monday—Partly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 90s.

Monday night—Partly cloudy. Lows around 70.

Tuesday—Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 90s.

Tuesday night—Partly cloudy. Lows around 70.

Wednesday—Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 90s.

• **EDUCATION AND EDUCATORS IN HOWARD COUNTY** opens at Heritage Museum with a reception from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. Saturday. Call 267-8255 for more information.

• **DONATIONS OF NEW STUFFED TOYS FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES** are being accepted through Sep. 1. Drop off new, up to 18-inch stuffed toys at any fire station or at one of the EMS booths at the Howard County Fair. Cash donations to purchase stuffed toys are also being accepted. For more information, contact Joel Miller at 267-4082 or 213-1221.

• **DONATIONS TO DEFRAY COSTS OF FUNERAL EXPENSES FOR 14-YEAR-OLD ISIDRO GONZALES** are being accepted at Myer's & Smith Funeral Home. He died Aug. 12 from leukemia. Make donations directly to Meyers & Smith at P.O. Box 2760, Big Spring 79721-2760.

• **THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY** need good condition books for an annual sale. Paperbacks and large print items are especially needed. Donated books can be delivered to the library weekdays during regular operating hours. If unable to bring the books to the library, call 263-4980 and request a pick up. All money from the sale goes to purchase items not included in the library's regular budget.

• **SAM SOLEYN, FORMER SPEAKER AT LIVING WATER FELLOWSHIP** will be speaking at the Dora Roberts Community Center at 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. Sunday. For more information, contact Jim Alexander at 457-2202.

• **HOWARD COUNTY FAIR WEB SITE** is www.howardcountyfairoftexas.com

• **THE MOBILE MEALS PROGRAM** that delivers meals to the elderly and homebound needs volunteers to deliver meals. If you can spare one hour per week to deliver eight or 10 meals, you are needed. About 85 to 90 meals are prepared, packaged and delivered to recipients within the city limits of Big Spring. If you can volunteer, please call 263-4016 before 3 p.m.

• **ROAD TO RECOVERY**, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive

assault/family violence.

• **CHRISTOPHER LEE FUQUA**, 34, of 2604 Richmondell, was arrested Thursday on a charge of driving while intoxicated - third or more offense.

• **THEFT** was reported:
- in the 1100 block of Stanford.
- in the 400 block of Birdwell Lane.
- in the 1700 block of FM 700.
- in the 200 block of Marcy.

• **RESISTING ARREST, SEARCH OR TRANSPORTATION** was reported in the 2500 block of Gregg Street.

• **FAILURE TO IDENTIFY AS A FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE** was reported:

- in the 2500 block of Gregg Street.
- in the 500 block of Goliad.

• **DISORDERLY CONDUCT** was reported in the 500 block of Lamesa.

• **ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE** was reported:

- in the 800 block of FM 700.
- in the 2100 block of Runnels.

• **ASSAULT WITH INTENT TO CAUSE BODILY INJURY/FAMILY VIOLENCE** was reported in the 200 block of W. Marcy.

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department reported the following activity:

• **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1900 block of Simler. One person was transported to SMMC.

• **MEDICAL** was reported in the 500 block of Sunset. One person was transported to SMMC.

• **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

• **MEDICAL** was reported in the 200 block of Veterans Boulevard. One person was transported to the Big Spring State Hospital.

• **STRUCTURE FIRE** was reported in the 2600 block of Albrook.

Lottery

Results of the Lotto Texas drawing Wednesday night: Winning numbers drawn: 2-6-23-30-36. Bonus Ball: 43. Number matching five of five, plus Bonus Ball: none. Number matching five of five: 4. Prize: \$5,977. Number matching four of five, plus Bonus Ball: 11. Prize: \$1,972.

Number matching four of five: 472. Prize: \$98. Number matching three of five, plus Bonus Ball: 421. Prize: \$97.

Number matching three of five: 17,314. Prize: \$5. Number matching two of five, plus Bonus Ball: 5,440. Prize: \$5.

Number matching one of five, plus Bonus Ball: 23,667. Prize: \$3.

Estimated jackpot for Saturday night drawing: \$40 million.

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Wednesday night: Winning numbers drawn: 6-12-29-30-34. Number matching five of five: none. Matching four of five: 104. Prize: \$457. Matching three of five: 2,802. Prize: \$12. Matching two of five: 31,414. Prize: \$2. Next Cash 5 drawing: Thursday night.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Wednesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 1-3-1

Take note

cancer patients to treatment in Midland. This requires just a few hours commitment each month. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call LaWanda Hamm at 263-7827.

• **BIG SPRING HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1995 10-YEAR REUNION** is set for Homecoming weekend. For information about the events, contact bshs 1995@yahoo.com or call Amanda or Stacie at 267-1353.

• **CLASS OF 1970 35th ANNIVERSARY HOMECOMING** set for September. All classmates should send an e-mail address to Clarinda Harris Wright at richardwright@cox.net. For more information, visit www.bshsalumni.com/SiteMap/htm.

• **THE BIG SPRING HIGH SCHOOL OLD-TIMERS** (those who graduated before 1940) are planning a reunion for the annual BSHS Homecoming Sept. 16-17. Anyone able to attend a reunion Sept. 17 should call 432-267-2900 and leave phone and address information.

• **HOWARD COUNTY CHILD WELFARE BOARD** is seeking financial donations to provide support for children in Howard County who have been removed from their home due to abuse or neglect. Contact Patti Richard at 432-559-6953 or mail donations to HCCWB P.O. Box 3101 Big Spring, 79721.

• **LEGAL AID OF NORTHWEST TEXAS** is accepting appointments for 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month. Individuals seeking legal advice for matters concerning family law, divorce, custody and child support issues, social security cases, employment and housing may contact the office to schedule an appointment. Criminal cases are not accepted. Anyone recently served with legal documents should call the office immediately at 800-926-

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Bulletin board

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

TODAY

• Behind the Red Shield event at the Salvation Army. Call 267-8239 for more information.

• Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane. Call 267-6479.

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

• American Legion Post 506 meets at 6 p.m. Call 263-2084 for more information.

• Rackley-Swords 379, Vietnam Veterans of America meets at 7 p.m. in the Sparenburg Building, 309 S. Main St.

• Big Spring Masonic Lodge No. 1340 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 2101 Lancaster.

FRIDAY

• Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m. at 1019 Nolan St. Members bring their own lunch. Call 267-1037 or 267-7281 for more information.

• AMBUCS meet at noon in La Posada Restaurant. • Greater Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Spring City Senior Citizen's Center country and western dance from 7:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. featuring Monroe Casey and the Prowlers. All area seniors are invited.

SATURDAY

• American Legion Post 506 fish fry from noon until 3 p.m. \$7 per plate and carry-out is available. Public is invited. The post is located at 3203 W. Highway 80. Call 263-2084 for delivery.

• "Education and Educators in Howard County" opens with a reception from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. at Heritage Museum.

• Big Spring Shrine Club meets at 6:30 p.m. at Goliad and First streets for a meal with a meeting to follow.

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

• Big Spring Squares. Call 267-7043 or 263-6305 for more information.

Support groups

THURSDAY

• Narcotics Anonymous, non-smoking discussion meeting, 8-9 p.m., at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1001 Goliad.

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

• Alzheimers Support Group meets at 2 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at The Texas State Veterans Home, 1809 N. Hwy 87. For more information call Orand Carroll 268-8387.

FRIDAY

• AA open discussion meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Noon open Big Book study meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

5630 or 432-686-0647.

• **A SAVINGS ACCOUNT TO BENEFIT LOVE FROM HOME** has been established at Citizen's Federal Credit Union. Love From Home is a local effort to provide personal items needed by the soldiers serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Contact the credit union at 267-6373 to contribute funds to offset the cost of postage for the packages mailed to the soldiers.

• **CHRIST'S COMMUNITY CHURCH** is looking for infant cars seats to be given to needy families. Call Karen at 263-3517 or the church at 263-5683.

• **BIG SPRING AND SURROUNDING** counties are in critical need of foster families. Foster parents are the caretakers for the children in the community who have been abused or neglected. For more information on becoming foster parents or adoptive families, call the Children's Protective Services office at 263-9669.

• **SPRING TABERNACLE CHURCH**, 1209 Wright, has free food for the area needy. Distribution is scheduled from 10 a.m. to noon every Thursday.

BIG SPRING HERALD

www.bigspringherald.com

Reflecting A Proud Community

432-263-7331

(Main switchboard)

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BY THE MONTH HOME DELIVERY: Evenings and Sunday, \$6.85 monthly; \$83.42 yearly (includes 10% discount for yearly).

MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$12.50 monthly Howard & Martin Counties. \$13.25 elsewhere.

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Cornell: Investigation continues into altercation at Flight Line Unit

HERALD Staff Report

Five staff members were injured, with one requiring hospitalization, following an altercation at the Cornell Corrections Flight Line Unit over the weekend, according to a press release made available to the Herald Wednesday afternoon.

According to the statement, dated Aug. 15, the altercation began at 8:30 p.m. Saturday when sev-

eral staff members at the Big Spring Correctional Center's Flight Line Unit were assaulted by inmates.

"One staff member did sustain injuries that required hospital treatment and four other staff members sustained minor injuries," the report reads. "No inmate injuries were reported. Minor facility damage was reported."

"Cornell prison officials

and additional staff responded to the facility and the Big Spring Police Department also responded to assist with outside perimeter security. An investigation is being conducted by prison personnel and no further information is available."

Big Spring Fire Department responded to a report of a fire at the unit at 11:11 p.m. Saturday but did not enter the facility.

LAP

Continued from Page 1A

LAP Chairperson. "At this meeting, the options developed by the VA contractors will be presented to the general public and others for their feedback."

"According to the process, the contractor, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), was asked to use their best technical judgment to develop the options after listening to stakeholder input from the LAP meeting, stakeholder mail, Web site comments and individual

meetings."

Fears said the Sept. 1 meeting could be a pivotal part of the process, which will decide the fate of the local facility.

"This is perhaps one of the most important meetings in this whole process, since it will allow us to gather feedback from the community on what is being presented," said Fears.

Public comment is slated from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. during the hearing, with PwC expected to explain its proposed "options" for the facility during the morning hours. U.S. Congressman Randy Neugebauer is expected to be in attendance.

In December 2002, former VA Secretary Anthony Principi established the VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission to provide a review of the national plan to realign the DAV's health care system.

In its massive report, the commission suggested that a feasibility study concerning the Big Spring facility be conducted. Specifically, the commission suggested that a study be made to see if the Big Spring facility should be closed and services moved to a new care center that would be constructed near Midland or Odessa.

Not to be singled out, 17 other VA facilities nationwide were also chosen for study.

Principi later approved the award of a contract for PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to conduct business plan studies of the sites. Wednesday's meeting was the begin-

ning of the process locally.

"We are looking to the public to tell us if these options will help move us in the direction of providing the best services we can for our veterans in the Big Spring and surrounding communities," said Fears.

The public will have the opportunity to provide feedback via open testimony at the meeting, the Internet site located at www.va.gov/cares or via postal mail. All non-electronic correspondence should be sent to: VA Cares Studies Big Spring, PO Box 1427, Washington Grove, Md. 20880-1427.

Once the options are presented at the public meeting, any member of the Big Spring community will have 14 days to submit additional comments either in writing or via the Internet. According to VA officials, all public comments will be incorporated in the report provided to the VA Secretary for consideration.

According to Shelley Smith, CEO of Shelter Texas Centers for MHMR, participation from the community will be crucial during the Sept. 1 meeting.

HOUSE FIRE



Big Spring Fire Department personnel battle a house fire on the 2600 block of Albrook Monday afternoon. No one was injured in the fire, which was apparently caused by an electrical short in the kitchen, BSFD Fire Marshal Carl Condray said.

Herald photo/Steve Reagan

VAMC

Continued from Page 1A

ports a decline in inpatient and surgical needs, and a dramatic increase in mental health and substance abuse programs.

"What they've done is projected outward to years 2013 and 2023, and they identified increases in psychiatry and substance abuse programs, other mental health inpatient programs and residential rehab and domiciliary," said Smith. "In the beginning, everyone wanted to bring back the medical and surgical. If we had presented that idea to them, it would have been dead on arrival. What they are seeing is a sharp decline in those services. What they are seeing an increase in is mental health and substance abuse areas. So it's quite evident they're pondering how to take care of those needs in the coming years."

Smith said the shift to mental health services for the local VA Hospital isn't far-fetched at all.

"They're currently providing substance abuse services, so it would be an expansion of those services," said Smith. "They would be adding the residential or psycho-social

residential rehab program and it would be adding the long-term domiciliary program. Those are not currently provided.

"They're also not providing in-patient psychiatric care. We're not suggesting they bring that back. What we're saying is when the people in these other services need that type of care, we contract with Big Spring State Hospital."

While such a shift in services might seem drastic to some, Smith said the need for medical and inpatient services could very well increase, bringing back medical and surgical services.

"In the long-term domiciliary, a lot of those patients might have mental health needs, but a lot of them might just have complicated medical needs," said Smith. "So the domiciliary isn't exclusively for the mental health patients. We would continue the medical services currently being offered at the VA, and potentially enhance those services as the needs of these new patients arise, and they might need an increased level of medical care."

As for swaying PwC away from its hard data, Smith said that approach is a lost cause.

"When we met with the

team leaders at PwC, they are totally committed to this data," said Smith. "They believe strictly in the data and there were a couple of points we tried to argue and we didn't get very far with that. They are convinced this data is accurate."

Smith said she and others presented the "option" to representatives of PricewaterhouseCoopers in Philadelphia, Pa., recently, and she hopes to see it as one of the possible avenues PwC is expected to present Sept. 1.

"Absolutely," Smith said confidently. "It's our hope that PwC and the LAP (local advisory panel) will consider it as a very viable option."

"We can do this," she said. "Big Spring has a long history of these type of services. We have a trained workforce in Big Spring that's used to working with this type of population and that enjoys working with this population. People that have spent their entire careers working in this field, and they're right here in Big Spring. So there's no better site to deliver these services than right here in Big Spring, Texas."

The Sept. 1 LAP meeting is set from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

Regardless of the results, Baker said she and the CVB board are optimistic about the idea.

"We're always optimistic and we always want the best for our community," said Baker. "But sometimes we have to sit back and look at the reality of things. And that's why this organization is coming in and giving their perspective."

CENTER

Continued from Page 1A

and looked at the options. They did statistical data, and now we're getting ready to receive the overall presentation from them," said Baker.

So what's the verdict? "I'm not going to blow it," said Baker with a laugh. "You're just going

to have to come Monday and find out. They will present their findings Monday, and that's what we're looking for."

"We'll be looking at their findings... We wanted this company to actually come and present what they looked at and why they looked at it, and what they found and what the possibilities are. What they see in our future."

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Forsan Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:30 P.M. on August 29, 2005, in Forsan ISD Board Room, Forsan, Texas. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rate

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	Local Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$1.50000	\$0.00	\$1.50000	\$4,849	\$1,325
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$1.37533	\$0.16875	\$1.54408	\$6,177	\$1,346
Proposed Rate	\$1.50000**	\$0.16875	\$1.66875	\$6,342	\$1,346

*The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both.

The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of the district.

**6.5 cents of the Maintenance & Operations tax rate represents taxes for maintenance tax supported debt (which is required to be treated as debt and not for operations) in accordance with Section 45.108 of the Texas Education Code.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$41,042	\$41,727
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$17,834	\$18,382
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1.50	\$1.66875
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$267.51	\$306.75
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$39.24

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence home- stead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Rollback Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is \$1.66875. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of \$1.66875.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$2,039,015
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$ -0-

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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.

Susanne Reed
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

Farmers Market provides great local produce

We hope you are taking advantage of the West Texas Producers and Farmers Market, going on through October at the Heart of the City Park each Tuesday and Saturday.

It's a great place to get some home-grown produce such as tomatoes, squash, okra, peppers, black-eyed peas, canteloupe and watermelon. Vendors also offer eggs, honey, jams, jellies, fruits and pecans.

From time to time, vendors offer baked goods, soft drinks and even novelties.

The farmers market was started two years ago and has been a success, although organizers hope to see an increase in the number of producers.

Producers begin setting up between 7 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. adjacent to the park, located at Scurry and Third in downtown Big Spring. The market is usually open until near noon but customers are advised to arrive early for the best selections.

The farmers market is a great way to give Crossroads area producers and gardeners a place to sell their goods and customers the unique experience of shopping outdoors and selecting the freshest, "home grown" vegetables and other products.

Be sure and check it out this Saturday.

LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

- 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.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to editor@bigspringherald.com

An August to forget for president?

For George Bush, August may turn out to be the cruelest month.

First there is the matter of Cindy Sheehan. On Aug. 6, Ms. Sheehan showed up outside Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, demanding the president come out and talk to her about the death of her son in Iraq. So far, he has refused.

Yes, she already has met once with the president. Yes, there might be some truth to the accusations that others are trying to use her for their own political agendas. And, yes, it does look a little odd that she has a public relations firm working for her.

But so what? The poor woman has lost a son. Which makes this a lose-lose situation for the president. If he gives in and meets with her, he might be asked to meet time and again with other grieving parents. If he refuses to meet with her, he might look callous and uncaring.

Personally, I don't think the president is callous or uncaring, but I think the war is increasingly boxing him in.

His low poll numbers are a result not just of more losses in Iraq, but a de-coupling of Iraq from the war on terrorism in the mind of the public.

One of Bush's most successful tactics during his re-election campaign in 2004 was coupling the fighting in Iraq with the fight against terrorism in the United

States. It did not really matter why we were in Iraq (the mythical weapons of mass destruction as a reason to go to war no longer counted), but by fighting the insurgents in Iraq, Bush said, we were fighting the terrorists who would do us harm at home.

The public no longer seems to see (or believe) there is much of a connection, however. Some argue that by fighting in Iraq we are actually taking resources away from safeguarding the homeland.

Others say the British are fighting in Iraq and that did not save them from a recent terrorist attack.

All of this is driving down Bush's popularity, while making a reduction of forces in Iraq by the congressional elections of November 2006 almost a political necessity. But can we really draw down forces from Iraq at a time when the insurgency seems to be growing in strength and effectiveness? There are those who argue we need more, not fewer, forces in Iraq. (Though where we would get those forces and how we would equip them is a real question.)

If all this were not bad enough, there were the two lead stories in The Washington Post and The New York Times on Sunday.

The Post story was headlined: "U.S. Lowers Sights On What Can Be Achieved in Iraq."

It said: "The United States no longer expects to see a model new democracy, a self-supporting oil industry or a society in which the majority of people are free from serious security or economic challenges, U.S. officials say."

Pointing out that August is already the worst month for National Guard and Reserve fatalities since the war began, the story goes on: "Washington now does not expect to fully defeat the insurgency before departing, but instead to diminish it, officials and analysts said. There is also growing talk of turning over security responsibilities to the Iraqi forces even if they are not fully up to original U.S. expectations, in part because they have local legitimacy that U.S. troops often do not."

Then there was The New York Times story. It was headlined: "U.S. Struggling To Get Soldiers Updated Armor."

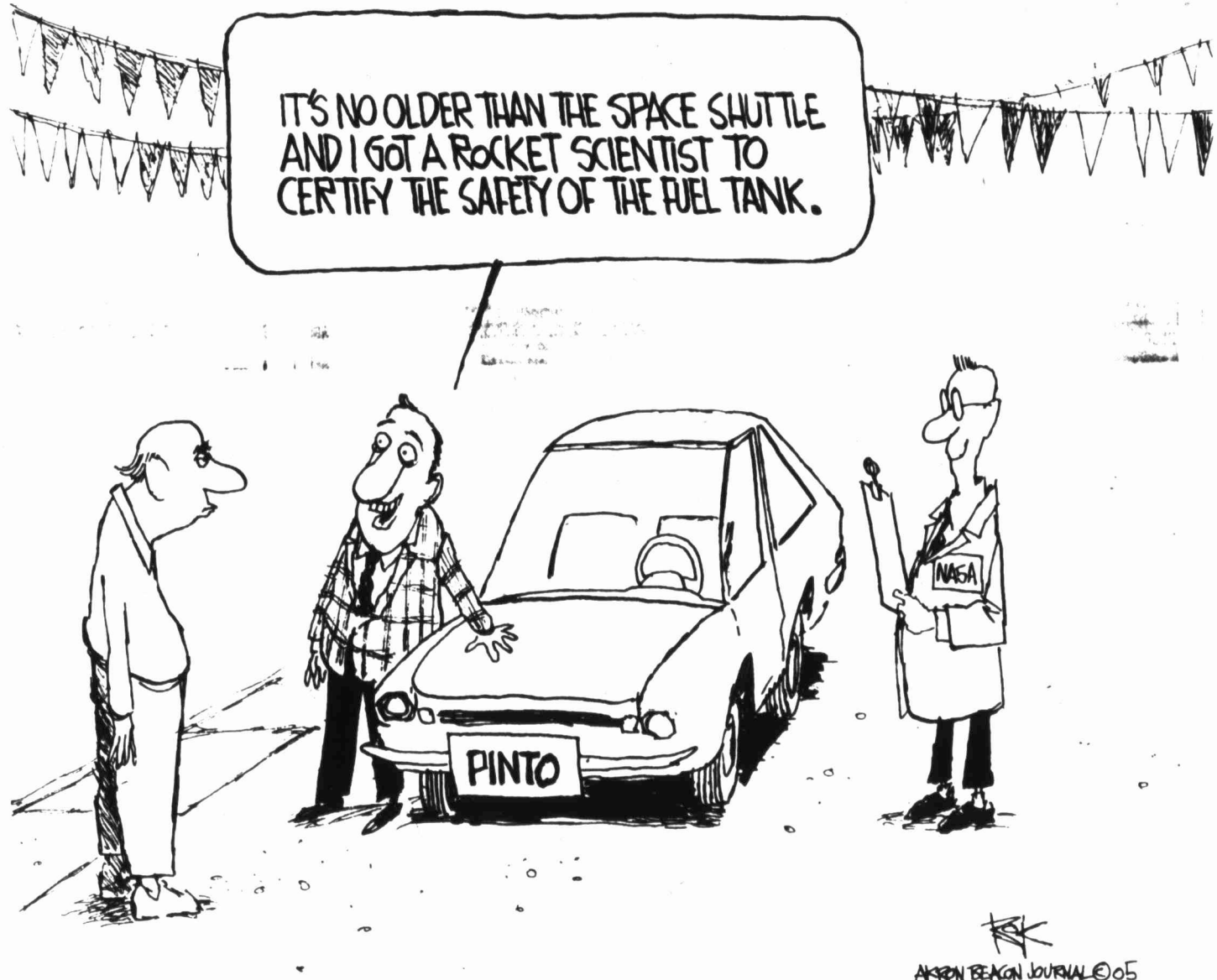
The story began: "For the second time since the Iraq war began, the Pentagon is struggling to replace body armor that is failing to protect American troops from the most lethal attacks by insurgents."

This is not the kind of story you want to read if you have a loved one in Iraq. This is not the kind of story you want to read if you are a military recruiter trying to get young Americans to join up and fight in Iraq. This is not, in fact, the kind of story anybody wants to read.

Usually, August is a slow month for the news. This August, however, has been all too busy.

To find out more about Roger Simon, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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Lawsuits SLAPP-ing down our freedom of speech

Editor's note: Molly Ivins is on vacation. The following column was first published in January 2000.

Eternal vigilance is the price of ... um, well, guess we can't say that anymore. We might get sued.

Mostly when we think of threats to free speech, it's government actions or laws we have in mind — the usual bizarre stuff like veggie libel laws or attempts to keep government actions or meetings secret from the public.

Sometimes you get a political case, like then-Gov. George W. Bush's effort to stop a Bush-parody site on the Internet. The parody, run by a 29-year-old computer programmer in Boston named Zack Exley, annoyed Bush so much that he called Exley "a garbageman" and said, "There ought to be limits to freedom." (That's not a parody — he actually said that.)

Bush's lawyers warned Exley that he faced a lawsuit. Then they filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission demanding that Exley be forced to register his parody site with the FEC and have it regulated as a

political committee.

This fits in with the four instances in which faculty members at the Bush School of Government and Public Service in our fair state were reprimanded at the behest of Bush associates for saying less than glowing things about our then-governor.

But this is petty stuff compared to corporate efforts to curb free speech.

SLAPP suits (for "strategic lawsuits against public participation") are a serious menace to free speech. The latest example is a real prize: The Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports, has already spent \$10 million defending itself against a lawsuit filed by Isuzu Motors Ltd. because, eight years earlier, Consumer Reports rated the Isuzu Trooper "not acceptable" for safety reasons. And the case has not yet reached trial.

And that is the real menace of SLAPP suits. It's not that corporations win them, but that they cost critics so much money that the critics are silenced — and so is everyone else who even thinks about raising some question about a corporate product or practice.

Isuzu claims that CU's reports are "not scientific or credible," but the company's internal memo states that the "lawsuit is a PR tool" and "when attacked, CU will probably shut up."

According to a study by two University of Denver law professors, "Americans by the thousands are being sued, simply for exercising the right to speak out on public issues, such as health and safety."

New York Supreme Court Judge J. Nicholas Cobella told PR Watch in Madison, Wis.: "The longer the litigation can be stretched out ... the closer the SLAPP filer moves to success. Those who lack the financial resources and emotional stamina to play out the 'game' face the difficult choice of defaulting despite meritorious defenses or being brought to their knees to settle. ... Short of a gun to the head, a greater threat to First Amendment expression can scarcely be imagined."

PR Watch also quoted George Pring and Penelope Canan, authors of the 1996 book "SLAPPs: Getting Sued for Speaking Out." "Initially, we saw such suits as attacks on traditional 'free speech' and regarded them as just 'intimidation lawsuits,'" the two authors say. "As we studied them further, an even more significant linkage emerged: The defendants had been speaking out in government hearings, to government officials or about government actions. ... This was not just free speech under attack. It was that other and older and even more central part of our Constitution:

the right to petition government for redress of grievances, the 'Petition Clause' of the First Amendment."

Some examples of SLAPP suits from PR Watch:

— In Las Vegas, a local doctor was sued for his allegation that a city hospital violated the state's cost-containment law.

— In Baltimore, members of a community group faced a \$252 million lawsuit after circulating a letter questioning the property-buying practices of a local housing developer

— In West Virginia, an environmental activist was sued for \$200,000 for criticizing a coal-mining company for activities that were poisoning a local river.

— In Pennsylvania, a farmer was sued after testifying to his township supervisors that a low-flying helicopter owned by a local landfill operator caused a stampede that killed several of his cows.

— In Washington state, a homeowner found that she couldn't get a mortgage because her real-estate company had failed to pay taxes owed on her house. She uncovered hundreds of similar cases, and the company was forced to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in back taxes. In retaliation, it sued the woman for slander and dragged her through six years of legal harassment



MOLLY IVINS

News briefs

Cow tramples man to death

CHRISTOVAL (AP) — A 72-year-old Central Texas ranch foreman was trampled to death by a cow while he was feeding some cattle Wednesday morning, authorities said.

The cow inflicted severe injuries to Eugene Barber's chest, said Russell Smith, Tom Green County justice of the peace.

"It's not uncommon," Smith said of the incident. "Once in a while you have a cow that is cantankerous."

The cow turned on Barber as he was feeding it, then it bowled him over, said ranch owner Mary Lee Butts.

"She just mauled him," Butts, who witnessed the attack, said.

"He was a very hard worker who was always willing to do what was asked."

Butts said she did not know what would happen to the cow.

No injuries reported in blast at Borger chemical plant

BORGER (AP) — Federal safety officials continued their investigation Wednesday of an explosion at a chemical plant that sent flames shooting more than 100 feet into the sky.

No injuries were reported from the Tuesday night explosion at the Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. plant.

Fire crews from the plant extinguished the blaze in about an hour and 15 minutes. The company said the explosion occurred in a brine storage disposal tank.

Investigators from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, who were in Borger Tuesday doing audits on other companies, began looking into the cause of the explosion, OSHA's area director Richard Tapio in Lubbock said Wednesday.

Some residents left their homes because of concern about the potential for another explosion or the release of toxic gas. The company said there was no danger to the surrounding community.

Man sentenced to death for killing his former boss and a woman

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A 21-year-old son of Christian missionaries has been sentenced to death by lethal injection for the double murder of a former boss and a woman in an apartment he mistook for his boss'.

Noah Espada apologized to the families of the victims Wednesday after being sentenced to death. He had been convicted Aug. 9 for the 2004 capital murders of Sandra Ramos, 29, and Luther "Luke" Scott, 30.

"Above all, I don't think words can express the meaning of the sorrow I feel. I want you all to know, though, that no matter what happens, I won't ever forget what I did. I won't ever look at myself in the same way," Espada said. "As a matter of fact, I hate myself the way you hate me. I have no excuse. I'm sorry."

Scott was Espada's former boss at a popular River Walk nightclub.

Espada said in confessions revealed during the trial that he killed Scott because he had been fired two weeks beforehand.

He said he killed Ramos two days earlier when he broke into the wrong apartment looking for Scott.

Jury convicts Army reservist of abusing one detainee

FORT BLISS (AP) — An Army reservist whose attorneys argued the military didn't train him properly has been convicted of beating an Afghan

detainee so badly that his leg muscles were all but destroyed.

An all-male jury of four enlisted soldiers and three officers deliberated two hours Wednesday before convicting Pfc. Willie V. Brand of assault, maltreatment, maiming and making a false official statement in connection with an attack on a detainee known as Dilawar at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan while Brand worked in a detention center there in December 2002.

The jury acquitted Brand of other charges that he abused a second detainee, Habibullah. Both prisoners died in December 2002, just days after arriving at the detention center north of the Afghan capital of Kabul.

Homicide charges against Brand, a military police officer from an Ohio-based reservist unit, were dropped earlier this year.

When the punishment portion of the trial resumes Thursday, Brand faces a range from no punishment up to 16 years in military prison. He was taken into custody Wednesday night.

Christie's to auction LBJ's 1964 Lincoln

HOUSTON (AP) — Lyndon B. Johnson was known for driving his cars around his Hill Country ranch like all-terrain vehicles, scaring the cattle. Historians say he loved to drive and drive fast. And he often drove in a white Lincoln Continental convertible.

One of his Continentals — a 1964 version — will be on the auction block Thursday at Christie's in Monterey, Calif.

The car is expected to garner as much as \$60,000, about nine times its original price.

The Lincoln will be among 48 other cars, which may attract higher bids, but there's value in history.

"In collecting terms, having an interesting ownership, it's hard to put a value on that," said Mark Donaldson, a

Christie's car specialist. "But it does make the car more attractive than one that was owned by just an average Joe."

Jurors receive case at center of first Vioxx trial

ANGLETON (AP) — A Merck & Co. lawyer urged jurors at the end of the nation's first Vioxx-related civil trial to consider what would happen to the century-old company if it knowingly created deadly drugs.

"Would that be good business? Would that make sense?" asked Gerry Lowry before both sides handed the case to jurors after hearing several hours of closing arguments Wednesday.

But plaintiff's lawyer Mark Lanier said Merck should have told doctors and consumers "the good, the bad and the ugly" about Vioxx long before pulling the drug from the market last year.

When those arguments ended, jurors who have spent more than a month hearing medical jargon-filled testimony finally got the chance to stop listening and start deliberating. The jury of seven men and five women left for the day, and were to begin deliberations Thursday.

Lanier, who represents the widow of a Texas man who died in 2001, accused the New Jersey pharmaceutical company of practicing denial and deception for the past decade, minimizing safety concerns about Vioxx to reap billions of dollars in annual profits.

FBI flier says Jeffs possibly sighted in Florida

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Fugitive polygamous-sect leader Warren Jeffs may have been sighted in Leesburg, Fla., a new wanted flier circulated by the FBI said.

Leesburg was among a handful of places where Jeffs, possibly accompanied by his bodyguards and some of his followers, has been thought possibly to be hiding.

GOOD WORKS



Courtesy photo
Big Spring State Hospital Volunteer Council received a \$1,000 grant from the local Wal-Mart, part of the company's community grant program. Becky Thomas, left, Susan Williams and Roman Weathermon, co-manager of Wal-Mart, present the grant to Doris Hulbregtse, Mark Barr and Stacy Barr representing the BSSH volunteer council.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Glasscock County Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:00 p.m. on August 29th, 2005, in the board room. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rate

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$1.428	\$0.000	\$1.42800	\$9,873.00	\$357
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$1.406	\$0.000	\$1.406	\$9,917.00	\$307.00
Proposed Rate	\$1.46570	\$0.00000	\$1.46570	\$10,645	\$312

*The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$43,940	\$43,940
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$20,150	\$20,150
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1.428	\$1.46570
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$287.74	\$295.34
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$7.60

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence home-stead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Rollback Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is \$1.4657. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of \$1.4657.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$2,733,015
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$ - 0 -

Dodge boldly revives Charger name with new four-door model

By MATT NAUMAN

Knight Ridder Newspapers
With its 2006 Dodge Charger, the Chrysler Group seeks to continue the momentum it started last year with two bold newcomers, the Dodge Magnum wagon and the award-winning 300C sedan.

It also revives a classic name from the muscle-car era.

But it's not running away from the fact that all the old Chargers had two doors and this new one has four.

That's hard to disguise, after all.

"It's not about two or four doors," Joe Eberhardt, Chrysler Group's executive vice president of global sales, marketing and service, said earlier this year. "It's about looks. It's about performance. It's about functionality."

It's also about reality. Two-door muscle cars were very popular in the '60s and '70s. Names like Challenger, Super Bee, Superbird, GTO, Mustang, Camaro and, yes, Charger remain part of today's automotive lexicon. But these days, with the advent of minivans and sport-utilities that offer plentiful cargo and passenger room, cars are being designed that mimic those traits. And, to many, four doors means function.

The automobile-information Web site www.edmunds.com offered details on 182 2004-model-year passenger cars — 125 had four doors, and only 74 had two doors. (Some models offer both two- and four-door versions.) Judy Wheeler, Dodge's marketing director, said two-door models accounted for 80 percent of the car market back in the 1960s. Nowadays, it's about 15 percent.

"The challenge was to do a four-door that looks as cool as a two-door," Eberhardt said.

And to do one that's as successful as the 300 and Magnum and doesn't disgrace the Charger name.

The first Charger arrived Jan. 1, 1966. Among the available engines was a 425-horsepower, 426-cubic-inch Hemi, so-called for the hemispherical shape of its combustion chamber. In 1969, the Dodge Charger Daytona won its first NASCAR race. But, in rather quick fashion, fueled by changing emissions regulations and the oil crisis, the muscle-car era started waning. The last Charger with a Hemi was sold in 1971. By 1978, the rear-wheel-drive Charger ended production.

When Chrysler tells the story, the timeline jumps from 1978 to 2006.

But in reality, Chrysler sold a front-wheel-drive version of the Charger, a twin of the Plymouth Turismo and based on the Omni and Horizon, from 1982 to 1987.

This new Charger, the company's top executives insist, is more authentic.

Its front end with a chrome cross-hair grille — a Dodge signature — wide air inlet and integrated fog lights has something of a "sneering look to it," Wheeler said.

The Charger's long hood, short deck and high rear haunches give it an aggressive, sporty appearance.

It's built on the LX platform that's also used by the 300 and the Magnum. All three cars share engines and other mechanical parts and are built at the same Canadian factory.

In a May visit to San Francisco, Chrysler President and Chief Executive Dieter Zetsche said using the Charger name was "somewhat evoking this great success, this legacy, the success of the past, like we did with the Hemi engine. On the other hand, we make it very clear this is not a replica. It's a very contemporary car, which can measure itself against any cutting-edge-technology car of today."

And, Zetsche said, the number of preorders before the Charger went on sale in May (more than 25,000), plus the number of people who are aware of this car, put it ahead of the 300 at the same point in the launch of that product.

In 2004, Chrysler sold 39,217 Magnums and 112,930 300 models. So far, in the first five months of 2005, Magnum sales are up 1,044 percent and 300 sales are up 119 percent. Both cars went on sale in early 2004.

At the Inn at Oyster Point in South San Francisco in June, Wheeler asked, "Why put the name Charger on a vehicle in 2006?"

The answer, she said, is because Dodge can and because it should.

Surveys show 70 percent of people still associate the Charger name with Dodge — even though it has been out of production for 28 years (at least, based on Chrysler's logic above).

"It's too much of an icon to walk away from it," she said.

The new model will come in three versions, plus some interesting special models.

The base SE model with a starting price of \$22,995 comes with anti-lock brakes, traction control, 17-inch tires and wheels, a five-speed automatic transmission and a 250-horsepower V-6 engine.

At \$25,995, the Charger SXT adds a tuned suspension, a split back seat, leather-covered steering wheel and shift knob, a six-speaker, 276-watt Boston Acoustics audio system and a chrome grille.

The top-line Charger R/T has the 340-horsepower, 5.7-liter Hemi V-8 engine, leather seats, 18-inch aluminum wheels, dual exhaust and further suspension tweaks. It'll sell for \$29,995.

"We're not being shy," said Wheeler. "This vehicle is about performance."

Additionally, there will be a Road/Track Performance Group version that'll have wider tires, Nivomat shock absorbers, a performance steering gear and more. The Daytona R/T package adds special design cues and heritage paint colors. Both of these will feature a 350-horsepower Hemi.

The Chrysler Group



also intends to get back into the law enforcement business, offering a Charger police car in the fall. And also coming in the fall is the Charger SRT-8, a higher-performance model with 425-horsepower, 6.1-liter Hemi V-8.

Chrysler executives won't predict how well the new Charger will sell, but they've added a third shift to the Brampton,

Ontario, assembly plant. The plant's previous capacity, before adding a third shift and 900 more workers, was 240,000 units.

The success of the Magnum and 300 was enough to boost Ontario ahead of Michigan as North America's top vehicle-making state or province in 2004 — an auto-industry first.

Wheeler said the aver-

age Charger buyer will be 46, with an annual household income of \$85,000. About 65 percent of buyers will be men.

At the recent Mopar Rally, an annual car show staged in Fremont, Calif., by the Mopar Alley Chrysler club, the new Charger was parked not far from a row of classic Chargers.

Gil Garcia, who owns a 1966 Charger with a 426

Hemi, doesn't have much interest in the new version.

"It's not like the old cars," said Garcia, a long-time muscle-car fan and a Fremont resident who is retired from the grocery business. "It's like a new car with the name Charger on it."

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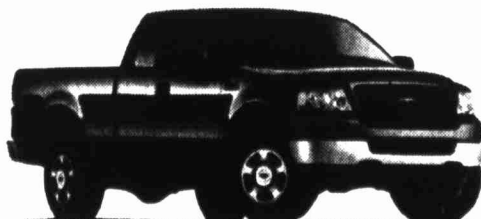
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Do you have an interesting sports item or story idea? Call Troy Hyde at 263-7431, Ext. 237. Email results to: sports@bigspringherald.com

Page 1B
Thursday, August 18, 2005

IN BRIEF

Signups for football to occur all summer
The Crossroads Youth Football Association signups are currently underway and will continue throughout the summer.

For more information, call Daphne Castilaw at 714-4686.

B.S. travel football team now forming

The Big Spring Youth Football Travel League is now being formed for anyone in grades three through six who would like to play.

If interested, contact Randy Phillips at 267-7141 or Denise Carillo at 816-1685 or 263-1945.

Softball warm-up to LULAC announced

A warm-up softball tournament to get ready for the annual LULAC tourney will take place Saturday and Sunday at Cotton Mize Field.

The tourney has a \$110 entry fee per team and the first, second and third place teams will win T-shirts and trophies.

For more information or to sign up, call Abel Rios at 432-213-2115 or Amador Rios at 816-3484.

B.S. youth soccer signups announced

The Big Spring Youth Soccer Association will begin its annual sign-up session Monday.

The sign-ups will take place through Saturday. They will take place at All-District Printing Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and at the Big Spring Mall Saturday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The league is open for children ages four through 13. The cost is \$45 for the first child and \$40 for each additional child.

For more information, contact Jamie Scott at 213-0430 or All-District Printing at 263-4647.

YMCA to host youth volleyball league

The Big Spring YMCA is holding registration for youth volleyball through Aug. 20. The registration fee is \$40 per player and covers all expenses including a team jersey and player awards.

For more information, contact Pete Thiry at 267-8234.

Country club sets two person scramble

The Big Spring Country Club has announced an over 90 scramble will take place Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m. both days.

The two person teams combined age must be 80 or higher. The entry fee is \$50 plus golf cart, but private carts are welcome.

The entry fee includes a BBQ Saturday.

For more information, call the pro shop at 267-8344.

Dallas still trying to find answers at right tackle

By JAIME ARON
AP Sports Writer

OXNARD, Calif. (AP) — Although the biggest drama at Dallas Cowboys training camp lacks the hysteria of the Terrell Owens saga, there is a bit of a soap opera feel about it.

Call it, "As The Right Tackle Turns ... And Turns ... And Turns ..."

So far, there are four candidates: a sixth-round draft pick, a second-rounder from last year who hardly played as a rookie and the two guys whose performance last season sent the team looking for other options.

There could be more candidates, too. Coach Bill Parcells has a list of out-of-work linemen who are only a phone call

Dallas Cowboys
Remaining preseason games:
Monday (8:00 a.m.) vs. Houston, 8 p.m.
Aug. 27 vs. Houston, 8 p.m.
Sept. 1 vs. Jacksonville, 8 p.m.

away. He'd rather not, but he will if he can't settle on a starter soon.

How soon is part of the drama.

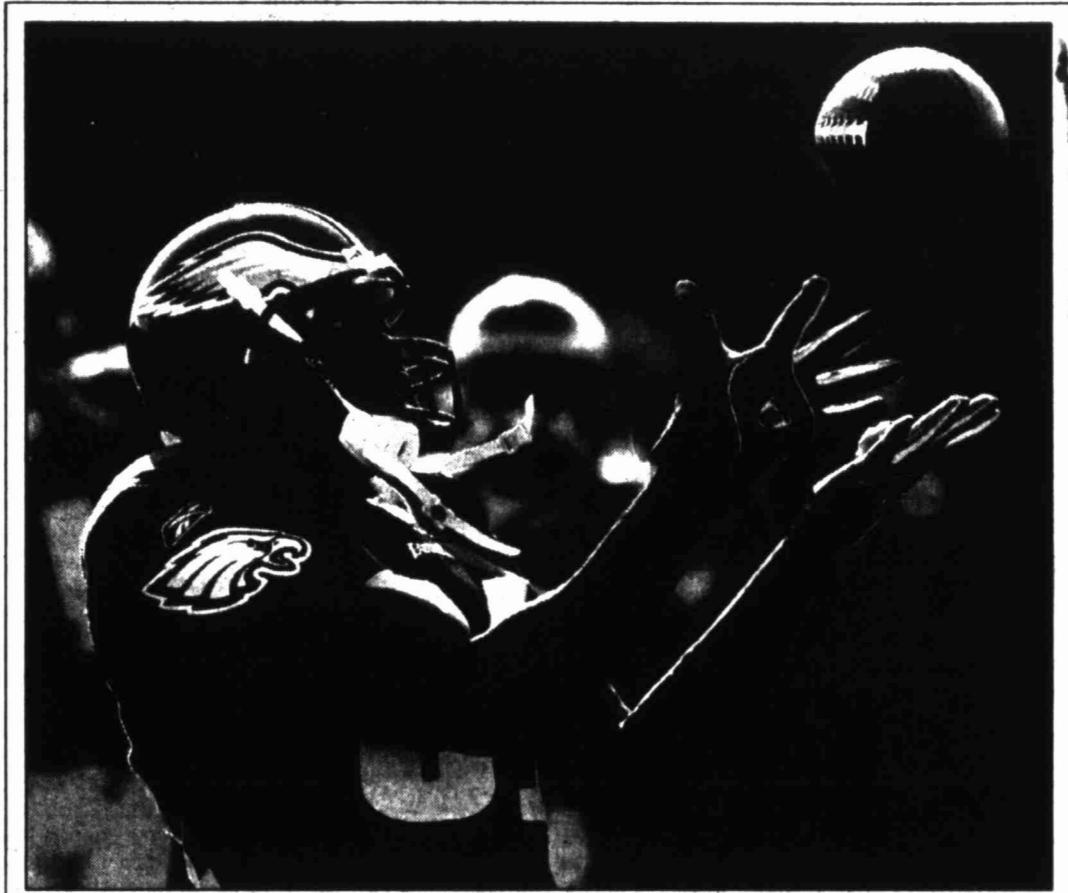
Parcells acknowledges that right tackle is his

biggest question mark, yet he keeps saying it's not time to panic. If he's still flummoxed after the third preseason game, a week from Saturday, then panic — or at least strong concern — can set in.

"I know somebody is going to step up and play that position," offensive line coach Tony Sparano said. "When they do, it'll be the right person

because they've won the job fairly and squarely."

The competition seems to be mainly between rookie Rob Petitti and Torrin Tucker, the primary starter last season. Second-year player Jacob Rogers has blown his chance with slow-healing, seemingly minor injuries, while veteran Kurt Vollers has become a valuable backup.



Philadelphia Eagles receiver Terrell Owens works out with the team at their practice facility in Philadelphia Wednesday. Owens returned to the field after being asked to leave for a week by Eagles coach Andy Reid. Reid said he and Owens talked in a meeting and everything so far is fine.

Disgruntled T.O. returns to camp, things fine for now

By ROB MAADDI
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Terrell Owens ran routes, caught passes and joked around with his Philadelphia Eagles teammates — quite a different T.O. from the one booted out of training camp a week ago.

This Terrell Owens smiled, laughed and even tutored some of the younger receivers on the sidelines Wednesday.

"He was fine today. He did a great job," said coach Andy Reid, who gave the All-Pro wideout the heave-ho and told him not to come back for a week.

The new Terrell Owens, however, still couldn't bring himself to talk to the player he needs to be in sync with the most: Donovan McNabb.

For the first time, McNabb — who has maintained his sense of humor throughout the ordeal — said he anticipated talking to Owens at some point.

"I think it's going to happen. I look forward to it happening," McNabb said. "But, again, when we get to that situation, then that's when we will handle it."

The running feud between quarterback and receiver was set aside while they were on the field, at least.

The two stood next to each other in the huddle at times, across from each other at others, and appeared to communicate between plays.

ut they also stood side-by-side while stretching at the end of practice — and didn't say a word.

Owens ran precise routes and caught crisp passes from McNabb.

Owens met briefly with Reid before practice, a condition for his return.

He didn't answer questions from reporters after the morning practice.

"It was a good meeting," Reid said, avoiding questions about particulars. "He did a nice job. He worked very hard."

A message left on Owens' Web site last week said he planned to catch more balls than he ever has and his "on-the-field heroics will far outweigh any off-field criticism."

Owens had 77 receptions for 1,200 yards and a franchise-record 14 touchdowns before severely injuring his ankle late in the season.

Surging Cubs get by Houston, 4-2

By PAUL J. WEBER
Associated Press Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — The Chicago Cubs left Houston banged up but in better shape.

Nomar Garciaparra homered one inning before leaving the game with a stiff lower back, but the shortstop and the formerly fading Cubs were feeling better after beating the Astros 4-2 on Wednesday night.

Garciaparra said his injury was not serious, and the Cubs won their second straight behind 8 1-3 innings from Carlos Zambrano to win the series after arriving in Houston having lost six straight on the road.

Garciaparra said he felt his back tighten up after lunging to catch Orlando Palmeiro's hard line

drive in the second inning.

He said he felt OK when he hit his solo homer two innings later, but decided to leave in the fifth after having trouble moving around in the field.

Zambrano (10-5) wasn't feeling entirely well, either, but the hard-throwing righty hardly showed it.

Despite battling flu-like symptoms, Zambrano allowed two runs and three hits and struck out 10 for his third win in four starts. He homered leading off the third, his first of the season.

Zambrano is 6-1 in his last 10 outings.

The Cubs have won five of seven to get back in the NL wild-card chase after losing eight straight. Chicago trails the Astros

by 5 1/2 games.

Ryan Dempster came on with one out and one on in the ninth and got himself out of a bases loaded jam for his 18th save by getting Brad Ausmus to ground out to end the game.

Roy Oswalt (14-10) gave up four runs and eight hits in seven innings. After a stretch of going 9-2, Oswalt is 0-2 with a 4.67 ERA in his last four starts.

The Astros have dropped four of their last five, scoring a total of three runs in the losses. Houston got plenty of run support for Wandy Rodriguez in its 12-4 win Monday, but have gotten a total of three runs for its three aces — Oswalt, Andy Pettitte and Roger Clemens.

Young shuts down Indians with heater

Other Young homers in first inning to lead Texas past Cleveland

By TOM WITHERS
AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — His fastball is more than adequate, and Chris Young is capable of blowing it by major league hitters. The Texas rookie's changeup, slider and curve are about average and need work.

But Young has a weapon that teams who haven't faced him can't prepare for.

"He's got something you can't teach," Rangers manager Buck Showalter said, "and that's releasing the ball at a 6-foot, 10-inch angle."

Young cut Cleveland's hitters down to size for eight shutout innings, allowing just two singles as the Rangers snapped an eight-game losing streak with a 3-0 victory Wednesday night.

The 6-foot-10 Young, the tallest player in Rangers' history, was too much for the Indians, who only had videotape and scouting reports to go on before seeing the 26-year-old in person. They'll have to wait until next time to try and figure out Young (10-7).

Cleveland didn't get a runner to third base off the right-hander, who walked one, struck out seven and retired 15 of the final 17 batters. Francisco Cordero worked the ninth for his 27th save.

Since a shaky start in New York on Aug. 7, Young has been using bullpen sessions to work on keeping his fastball down.

"I had one goal," he said, "to throw at their knees or lower."

The Indians, who were shut out for the fifth time at home this season, didn't do much more than flail weakly at Young's pitches.

"We had trouble picking the ball up a little," Cleveland manager Eric Wedge said. "He's a big guy. He's a little bit sneaky. He hides the ball and has a little hitch in his delivery."

Michael Young hit a two-run homer in the first off Cleveland's Kevin Millwood (6-10) and Phil Nevin connected for a solo shot in the fourth as the Rangers ended a nine-game road losing streak dating to July 30.

Texas improved to 11-22 since the All-Star break, a slide that has all but taken the Rangers out of playoff contention.

"We went through a tough stretch and even though we got one win, it's not over," Michael Young said. "Hopefully, this is a good start."

The Indians, meanwhile, failed to gain ground on AL wild-card

leading Oakland, which lost to Baltimore. Cleveland stayed three games behind the Athletics with its fourth loss in five games and second shutout in three.

And once again, Millwood was on the wrong end of a tough loss. The right-hander's record doesn't come close to showing how well he has pitched in his first season for Cleveland. He gave up four hits, but his only two bad pitches cost him dearly.

The Indians have averaged 3.0 runs in Millwood's 22 starts and have been shut out four times in his last nine outings.

"I don't know what it is," Millwood said. "It's one of those things. There's nothing I can do about it. Whatever happens, happens. As long as I can give my team a chance to win, I've done my job."

Young allowed one hit — Coco Crisp's two-out single in the third — through the first six innings and retired 10 straight before Travis Hafner led off the seventh with a single.

However, Young got Victor Martinez to fly to right, struck out Jeff Liefer and retired Ronnie Belliard on a fly to left.

Cleveland's best threat came in the first when Young put two runners on without giving up a hit.

He plunked Jhonny Peralta in the upper leg with two outs and walked Hafner before striking out Martinez.

"He was throwing his fastball and changeup," Cleveland's Casey Blake said. "He was using two pitches and he pitched a two-hitter. I hate to make excuses, but I think if you asked everyone in here, we all got one or two pitches to hit, but we didn't do anything with them."

Millwood found himself in a familiar hole in the first. After walking lead-off hitter David Dellucci, he hung a 3-1 pitch to Young, whose 18th homer put the Rangers ahead 2-0.

Nevin hit his second homer since coming to Texas in a July 30 trade from San Diego in the second to make it 3-0.

Upcoming Events

Today:
-Big Spring scrimmage @Lamesa, 7 p.m.
-Stanton scrimmage vs. Post, 5 p.m.

Friday:
-Coshoma scrimmage vs. Pecos, 5 p.m.
-Garden City host scrimmage with Grady, Fort Davis and Wellman-Union, 5 p.m.
-Big Spring volleyball @Bay Ball Classic in Abilene

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GARAGE SALE, 2200 Edgemere. Friday, 4:00p.m. -6:00 p.m. Saturday, 9:00a.m.-4:00p.m. Furniture, dishes, material, books, baby clothes 0-3 months & up, bedding, slipcovers, TV, speakers, wood shelf, curtains, adult clothes, decorative items, tablecloths, collectibles.

GARAGE SALE, Friday, 3:00-7 811 East 16th. Clothes, Jeep rims 15x8, household items.

MULTI. FAMILY Garage Sale: 2509 Ann, Saturday & Sunday 8:00-?. Bed linens, stove, refrigerator, school clothes, crafts, home decor., lots of misc. and New items on Sunday.

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Legals

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR FLUID INJECTION WELL PERMIT AMENDMENT
Pure Resources, L.P.
500 West Illinois Ave.
Midland, Texas 79701

is applying to the Railroad Commission of Texas for an Amended permit to inject fluid into a formation, which is productive of oil and gas.
The applicant wishes to amend the Interval of Fluid Injection into the San Andres and Glorieta formations of the Otis Chalk Unit in well number: 4-W. The injection well is located 15 miles Southeast of Big Spring, Texas in the Howard-Glasscock Field, in Howard County, Texas. Fluid will be injected into the two stratas in the subsurface depths of 1600 to 2800 feet and 2800 to 3200 feet, respectively.

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Chapter 27 of the Texas Water Code, as amended, Title 3 of the Texas Natural Resources Code, as amended, and the Statewide Rules of the Oil and Gas Division of the Railroad Commission of Texas.

Requests for a public hearing from persons who can show they are adversely affected, or requests for further information concerning any aspect of the application should be submitted in writing, within fifteen days of publication, to the Environmental Services Section, Oil and Gas Division, Railroad Commission of Texas Drawer 12967, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711 (Telephone 512/463-6792). #4665 August 18, 2005

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

It's the eve of the full moon in Aquarius, and a friendly vibration permeates every nook and cranny of our being. We could even make friends with our enemies — in fact, that would be a wonderful way to bring in the full moon. It can be very inspiring to learn more about the opposition. In doing so, you could decide to drop the fight altogether.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You feel closer to the source of your joy. Take a chance with a Sagittarius or a Virgo. You'll wind up, as the Wallflowers song suggests, "on the beautiful side of somewhere."

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You do your best work when forced by circumstances to be resourceful. Say "yes" to dates, and ask people out. You'll be free to go at your own pace. Avoid the pitfalls of gossip and complaining.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You have so much energy to burn off! Strenuous activities could actually relax you. Doing things with your children, especially sports or hobbies, will bond the relationship. P.S. Grown children still need you.

CANCER (June 22-July

22). Restlessness has its benefits, so don't be discouraged by the need to move. Travel will bring you benefits that are intangible yet very real. Scorpio or Aquarius turns you out to new stomping grounds.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Having a good time with loved ones is underrated. This will help you in the future to quickly resolve issues that unhappy people spend a lifetime fighting about. Work on disagreements only when you are at your best.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You have new ideas about what to do next — don't be afraid to pursue them. Change provides a release from anxiety and tension, even if (heaven forbid!) that change is from bad to worse.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your world is expanding through personal contacts. You'll get a window into how others live. Artistic individuals are especially interesting to you now, and you could be inspired to create an homage.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There may never be a time when you're not working out some kind of mystery in your head. There is wisdom in kidding, dreams and pure fiction. Believe your own stories.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Whatever you concentrate on, you'll get it done. Co-worker relations need attention. Your business and your person-

al life are linked somehow in a good way. One helps the other.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Sticking to the plan might be just plain stupid. Instead, you are flexible, checking to make sure it's working along the way. Popularity at work increases after you are instrumental in getting current policies revised.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Regarding those powers untapped — start tapping them! You'll be reminded about what you owe someone. You could make a trade that helps you settle a debt faster.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Be mindful of the company you keep. The wrong influence makes you act very unlike yourself. The right one brings out your most lovely qualities. An upgrade of one of your possessions makes you feel spiffy.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "I'm really confused about the transit of Saturn into Leo. The articles I've seen on the web seem to be saying that all 12 signs will have no fun at all for the next two years and that our leaders will become more disdainful and less honest. (How is that even possible?) What is your take on this transit?"

What you've read is true. There will be no fun at all for the next two years for anyone, period. Just kidding. Saturn has been in Leo since July 16 and will continue to be

there until September 2, 2007. Saturn is all about lessons. On a large scale, these lessons could come out of the entertainment industry. I think we'll see a lot of life imitating art and art imitating life, and there will be a debate about the responsibility of the media and where to draw the line. As far as our world leaders go, I don't know about them being more disdainful and less honest, but I do think they will use drama to advance their purposes. On a personal level, you can use the Saturn in Leo transit to explore your own "story" and rewrite it in a more empowering way.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Sean Penn showed his Leo loyalty at the last Academy Awards ceremony when he stood up for his fellow thespian Jude Law and defended him against the stand-up routine banter of Chris Rock. It's not that Leo people don't have a sense of humor. But sometimes their tendency toward drama trumps their ability to laugh at themselves or each other.

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

Annie's Mailbox : Advice for those in need

Dear Annie: My husband and I adopted two children out of the foster care system. Our daughter, "Tabitha," is almost 11 and lies to anyone any time it will benefit her. For example, she hates doing homework and will spend an hour lying to us about it rather than the 15 minutes it would take to complete the assignment. She also will lie to her teachers and grandparents to get something she wants or to get out of something she doesn't wish to do.

We have explained to Tabitha that lying is wrong and it hurts the people she lies to. We also told her that if you lie to people all the time, they won't believe you even when you are telling the truth. This, in fact, happens all the time now, and Tabitha gets very angry if we don't believe her. She admits that she wouldn't believe someone who lied all the time, yet she doesn't connect it to her behavior.

It's becoming a very frustrating problem. Tabitha lies so much, we doubt every word that comes out of her mouth. She went through therapy a few years ago, and the therapist basically said that she knows lying is wrong, but she has to be the one who wants to stop. So, Annie, how do you convince an 11-year-old to stop lying? — Lied To in Virginia

Dear Lied To: Tabitha is old enough to understand that her lying results in lack of trust. If she won't stop, it may be beyond her conscious control. Either she still is getting some reward for it (attention, most likely), or she cannot distinguish between her lies and the truth. If you think it is the latter, she needs therapy NOW.

On the other hand, if she is craving attention, you need to work out ways to reward her only for positive behavior, so she wants to change. She needs to feel special when she is being honest, and not receive a flurry of negative notice from her parents because she has told yet another lie. Talk to a counselor who specializes in childhood behavior, and ask for parenting assistance in behavior modification.

Dear Annie: My husband and I have been having the same argument every time a certain couple invites us over. For years, we were good friends with "Jane" and "Joe," but now, because of a series of incidents, he no longer likes them.

Jane and Joe have no idea that my husband's feelings have changed. They still invite us to their parties, and this is when the problems start. I enjoy their company, but I rarely see them these days. When they call, I am hesitant to mention their invitation to my husband. His reply is always the same: "I don't want to go." When I say I would like attend without him, he says, "I wish you wouldn't."

Am I wrong for wanting to spend time with Jane and Joe? I love my husband and hope you can help work this out. — Frustrated and Confused

Dear Frustrated: We're wondering what Jane and Joe did that made your husband dislike them enough to end a long friendship, but even so, you are entitled to have your own friends. However, we advise that you limit the invitations you accept from Jane and Joe, and don't stay too



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

long. Dear Annie: I am a professional, Equity actress and would like to respond to "R.S. in Wisconsin," who attended a play and was annoyed by someone's portable oxygen machine.

Professional actors are prepared to deal with such noise distraction without compromising performance. But more importantly, art was not created only for the able-bodied. It exists to transcend, to teach, to provoke, to entertain and to provide an escape from daily life. Anyone who does their best to be courteous should be allowed to experience live artistic performance. Sometimes you have to sit behind a tall person who obstructs your view, or near those who cough and blow their noses.

Here is what is unacceptable background noise: cell-phone rings, cell-phone conversations and ongoing commentary to your friends in attendance (we can hear you). That is rude, inconsiderate and preventable behavior. But as fellow human beings, we ought to accept the physical realities of those less fortunate than ourselves.

If this woman's breathing device truly interfered with R.S.'s ability to hear the performance, he ought to have approached management at intermission regarding a seat relocation or a complimentary ticket. Most places would be happy to oblige. I hope all people with disabilities will come to the theatre. — Actress in New York City

Dear Actress: Thank you for your compassionate letter. Read on:

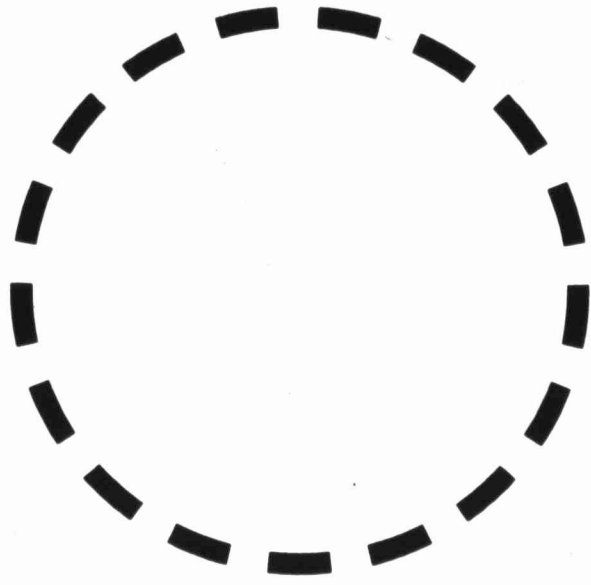
From Florida: Our year-long wait and \$100 tickets to "La Boheme" were spoiled by the oxygen tank hiss behind us. It gasped loudly every 10 seconds, ruining the music for us. We could not change seats. Quiet is required for opera and the symphony, and therefore, they are unsuitable choices for those who cannot comply.

Chino, Calif.: Exactly what does R.S. consider to be a lack of common courtesy? Breathing? Or, perhaps she could turn off the machine, so the play could be interrupted by the paramedics. I regularly attend professional performances and am seated next to a woman who uses a portable oxygen tank. It does not hinder my enjoyment of the performance. As a special education teacher, I applaud those people with disabilities who lead an active life. A lousy attitude is the greatest disability.

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

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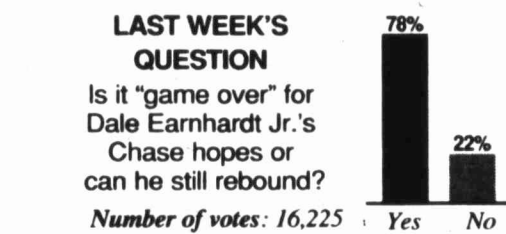
NASCAR driver Tony Stewart, center, and his pit crew celebrate his victory in Sunday's Sirius Satellite at the Glen, Stewart's fifth win of the year.

THIS WEEK'S RACE

GFS MARKETPLACE 400
Where: Michigan International Speedway, a 2-mile paved slightly banked oval located in Brooklyn, Mich.
When: Sunday at 2:10 p.m. (all times ET).
Qualifying is 12:10 p.m. Saturday.
TV: TNT.
Radio: Motor Racing Network.
Purse: \$4,912,254.
Last year's winner: Greg Biffle.
Also this week: Martin Truex Jr. has opened up a 122-point lead over Clint Bowyer in the NASCAR Busch Series standings entering Saturday's race at Michigan.
Worth mentioning: There have been 10 different winners in the past 12 Cup races at Michigan.
The last Chevrolet driver to win at Michigan was Jeff Gordon in June 2001.
Matt Kenseth has a starting average of 23.1 and finishing average of 7.1 in his past 10 races at Michigan.

POLL POSITION

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION
The NASCAR brass is touring candidate cities as an announcement nears on where its multimillion-dollar hall of fame will be built. Do you think that decision has already been made?
Cast your vote at:
www.thatracin.com



STOP 'N' GO

WHO'S HOT
Series points leader **Tony Stewart** has led the most laps in eight of 22 races this season, including six of the last eight.
Rusty Wallace ranked 18th in points after 22 races one year ago. This year he is fourth.
Mark Martin has four top-10 finishes in the last five races, and nine top 15s in the last 10.
Brian Vickers has finished in the top 15 in five consecutive races.



Wallace

WHO'S NOT
Despite five victories this season, **Greg Biffle** has only one top-10 finish in his last seven races.
Jeff Burton has gone 13 consecutive races without a top-10 finish.
Scott Riggs has finished 23rd or lower in nine consecutive races.

— Jim Utter

BY THE NUMBERS

NEXTEL CUP POINTS LEADERS
The top-40 drivers as of Aug. 14:

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1. Tony Stewart	3,113	21. Michael Waltrip	2,282
2. Jimmie Johnson	3,008	22. Jeff Burton	2,274
3. Greg Biffle	2,861	23. Casey Mears	2,096
4. Rusty Wallace	2,855	24. Bobby Labonte	2,094
5. Mark Martin	2,782	25. Ricky Rudd	2,063
6. Kurt Busch	2,692	26. Mike Bliss	2,010
7. Jeremy Mayfield	2,684	27. Kyle Petty	1,980
8. Ryan Newman	2,646	28. Sterling Marlin	1,971
9. Jamie McMurray	2,599	29. Ken Schrader	1,963
10. Carl Edwards	2,593	30. Jeff Green	1,951
11. Elliott Sadler	2,590	31. Scott Riggs	1,940
12. Dale Jarrett	2,590	32. Dave Blaney	1,937
13. Jeff Gordon	2,526	33. Scott Wimmer	1,817
14. Kevin Harvick	2,523	34. Travis Kvapil	1,767
15. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	2,430	35. Jason Leffler	1,538
16. Matt Kenseth	2,428	36. Mike Wallace	1,521
17. Joe Nemechek	2,386	37. Robby Gordon	1,352
18. Brian Vickers	2,349	38. Bobby Hamilton Jr.	1,341
19. Casey Kahne	2,324	39. Kevin Lapage	1,085
20. Kyle Busch	2,290	40. Terry Labonte	689

BUSCH SERIES POINTS LEADERS
The top-20 drivers as of Aug. 13:

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1. Martin Truex Jr.	3,441	11. Jason Keller	2,574
2. Clint Bowyer	3,319	12. J.J. Yeley	2,533
3. Reed Sorenson	3,222	13. Johnny Sauter	2,324
4. Carl Edwards	3,085	14. Stacy Compton	2,305
5. Kenny Wallace	2,969	15. Greg Biffle	2,301
6. Denny Hamlin	2,911	16. Randy LaJoie	2,297
7. David Green	2,726	17. Justin Labonte	2,205
8. David Stremme	2,705	18. Jon Wood	2,197
9. Paul Menard	2,697	19. Stanton Barrett	2,089
10. Ashton Lewis	2,643	20. Kevin Harvick	2,009

TRUCK SERIES POINTS LEADERS
The top-10 drivers as of Aug. 13:

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1. Dennis Setzer	2,400	6. Jimmy Spencer	2,089
2. Ted Musgrave	2,222	7. Matt Crafton	2,017
3. Bobby Hamilton	2,188	8. Mike Skinner	1,998
4. Ron Hornsaday	2,133	9. Ricky Craven	1,982
5. David Reutimann	2,114	10. David Starr	1,976

N. CT RACE: Aug. 24, O'Reilly 200, Bristol, Tenn.

RAKING UP THE POINTS

BY DAVID POOLE
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The season's second Nextel Cup race at Michigan International Speedway completes a nine-week spin cycle that has tumbled the series standings dramatically. On June 19, Tony Stewart was one point above 11th place in the standings and Kevin Harvick was ahead of Stewart, Rusty Wallace and Kurt Busch.

Two months later, Stewart is on top of the standings and pulling away. Wallace has racked up more points than anybody other than Stewart in that stretch to all but lock up a spot in the Chase for the Nextel Cup with just four races left before the cutoff.

Harvick, meanwhile, finds himself 70 points out of the top 10 and needing to pass four people in four races to make the Chase. Stewart's incredible surge over the past two months is clearly the sport's biggest story since the last race at Michigan, the site for Sunday's GFS Marketplace 400.

Since finishing second to Greg Biffle on June 19, Stewart has won five of seven races. He'll come back to Michigan this week looking for a third straight win, having tied Biffle for the most wins this season with his triumph Sunday at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International.

Stewart has scored 1,432 points in the past eight races, only 89 fewer than the maximum possible. That's 485 more points over that span than Jimmie Johnson, who led Stewart by 380 points going into the first Michigan race but now trails by 105.

But the margin between drivers at or near the top of the standings will mean nothing after four more races. Following the 26th race at

Richmond, the leader's total will reset to 5,050 points and he will go into the 10-race Chase with only a five-point lead over second, with the rest of those running for the title in five-point increments behind that.

"You have to keep your eye on the ball," said Johnson, who at one point last year had a big lead in the standings before slipping to second behind teammate Jeff Gordon at the Chase cutoff. "You always have to try to make the most out of a bad day. You've got to collect points regardless of the point system."

Johnson faltered early in the Chase in 2004, then went on a hot streak similar to the one Stewart is enjoying this year by winning four races in a five-race stretch. His rally fell short, however, and Kurt Busch won the championship by eight points.

"Last year, I thought at times I had a different format or mindset," Johnson said. "But in the end it still added up to gaining points. In a 10-race schedule, you can look at it as having to be more consistent or you can look at it and say you've got to win races."

"Last year, we won a lot of races but came up eight points short. Kurt (Busch) had a solid 10 races and ended up being the champion. So I think there are some things that are different, but at the end of the day you've got to get points."

It's especially critical, of course, for those drivers who're in the tight battle near the bottom of the top 10 to collect points.

Going into the weekend, only nine points separate Jamie McMurray, Carl Edwards, Elliott Sadler and Dale Jarrett who're now in the ninth through 12th spots. Jeff Gordon is only 67 points out of 10th and Kevin Harvick is just three points behind Gordon.

To succeed in the Chase, drivers realize that every point counts

Numbers game

Top 10 in points earned in the season's past eight races among Chase for the Nextel Cup contenders:

Rank/Drivers	Points
1. Tony Stewart	1,432
2. Rusty Wallace	1,141
3. Matt Kenseth	1,066
4. Mark Martin	1,048
5. Jeremy Mayfield	1,025
6. Kurt Busch	1,011
7. Dale Jarrett	966
8. Jimmie Johnson	946
9. Jamie McMurray	929
10. Greg Biffle	922

PROJECTING THE CHASE

If the drivers contending for spots in the Chase for the Nextel Cup finish the next four races at Michigan, Bristol, California and Richmond in the same positions they did earlier this year, here's how the points would look after 26 races:

Rank/Driver	Points
1. Tony Stewart	3,745
2. Greg Biffle	3,524
3. Jimmie Johnson	3,492
4. Rusty Wallace	3,363
5. Mark Martin	3,291
6. Elliott Sadler	3,195
7. Kurt Busch	3,169
8. Ryan Newman	3,145
9. Jamie McMurray	3,113
10. Kevin Harvick	3,111

MISSING THE CUT

11. Jeremy Mayfield	3,101
12. Carl Edwards	3,093
13. Dale Jarrett	3,027
14. Matt Kenseth	2,930
15. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	2,890
16. Jeff Gordon	2,835

— David Poole

RANKINGS

THAT'S RACIN'S TOP PICKS

1. Tony Stewart (car No. 20): In the nine-race stretch from Martinsville to Pocono, he averaged a 19th-place finish. Add up his past eight finishes and the total is 19. Last week: 1.

2. Jimmie Johnson (car No. 48): Rebounded from a poor Indy showing with a nice Watkins Glen finish. Last week: 2.

3. Greg Biffle (car No. 16): Only one top-10 finish in the past seven races — but he has won five races this year. Last week: 3.

4. Rusty Wallace (car No. 2): Mr. Consistency has earned 106 points or more in all but one of the past 13 races. Last week: 4.

5. Mark Martin (car No. 6): Has gradually built a 192-point cushion between him and the Chase cutoff

point. Last week: 5.

6. Jeremy Mayfield (car No. 19): If he makes the Chase, his seventh at Sonoma and 11th at the Glen will be parts of the reason why. Last week: 7.

7. Kurt Busch (car No. 97): You can't help but wonder what impact his deal with Penske might have on the remainder of this year. Last week: 6.

8. Ryan Newman (car No. 12): All of a sudden these guys don't seem all

that safe as the Chase cutoff draws nigh. Last week: 8.

9. Jamie McMurray (car No. 42): Nine points isn't a safety net, but at least he's that far inside the Chase line right now. Last week: 11.

10. Carl Edwards (car No. 99): Victory isn't out of the question at Michigan and would be a big boost for this team. Last week: 9.

For the rest of the top-40 rankings, go online and visit www.thatracin.com.

All bets are on NASCAR hall going to Kansas City

Reporters are trained to be skeptical. But skeptical is only a half-step from cynical, and the two are not the same.

After deciding to write about this week's visits to the cities most everyone believes to be the three top candidates to land the NASCAR hall of fame — Atlanta; Charlotte, N.C.; and Kansas City, Kan. — I looked up those words. Skeptical is defined as "marked by or given to doubt; questioning." That's a perfect description of what reporters are supposed to do. You doubt everything until you question it and convince yourself that you're as close to the truth as you're going to get.

The definition of cynical is "believing or showing the belief that people are motivated chiefly by base or selfish concerns."

In other words, you think everything is crooked.

That brings us to the NASCAR hall of fame. Frankly, my nine seasons of covering stock-car racing's governing body makes it considerably difficult not to be cynical about the process that apparently will reach critical mass over the next few days.

I've seen the shell game NASCAR has played with Nextel Cup race dates, the process its spin doctors dubbed "realignment" that has shut down North Carolina Speedway and robbed Darlington Raceway of the Labor Day weekend date it had occupied since 1950.

I've heard tales from team owners who thought they had a sponsor ready to sign the dotted line only to have

those companies balk after NASCAR moved in to get a piece of the action and ran the total cost up to a point where the sponsors walked away.

Maybe I am wrong, and I really hope I am. Maybe the people I talk to about this hall of fame process have become jaded about the company that's playing judge and jury here.

But what those people tell me is that this is, and has been from the start, a done deal.

The NASCAR hall of fame? Kansas City, here it comes.

Without going into the financial details, suffice it to say that when Kansas Speedway was built, the taxpayers of Wyandotte County, Kan., made a big investment in stock-car racing's success in their corner of the world. Millions of dollars in bonds and tax incentives later, they had themselves a race track.

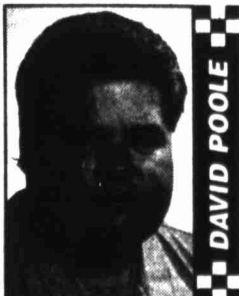
The passion has apparently not faded from the sweetheart relation-

ship between ISC/NASCAR and the governmental agencies there, and to be perfectly honest, I believe the people who tell me that the hall of fame is going to be the latest trinket exchanged in that relationship.

In fact, it wouldn't surprise me if the Nextel All-Star Challenge winds up as part of the deal, too. Kansas wants a second Cup date and NASCAR isn't keen on adding to its 36-race schedule. If the hall of fame winds up in the Midwest, a mid-May weekend with an induction ceremony and an all-star race would work out nicely.

I do not doubt that the contingent who visited Atlanta, Charlotte and Kansas City believed they reviewed the proposals with an open mind — and with the charge to make a recommendation that NASCAR will take to heart.

But I'll also bet you \$5 that some of them are at least skeptical.



DAVID POOLE