

BIG SPRING

HERALD



INSIDE

Garden City looks to get back to action after bye week

Page 1B

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND

Roads out of Houston at standstill

By KRISTEN HAYS

Associated Press Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of people were frantically trying to escape the nation's fourth-largest city early today as Hurricane Rita closed in on Texas, but interstates were at a standstill for up to 100 miles and gas shortages were reported.

More than 1.3 million residents in Texas and Louisiana were under orders to get out to avoid a deadly repeat of Hurricane Katrina.

The Category 5 storm weakened slightly this

Gov. Rick Perry early today ordered southbound traffic on Interstate 45 shut down and all eight lanes redirected north out of the city for 125 miles.

morning, and forecasters said it could be down to a Category 3 — meaning winds as high as 130 mph — by the time it comes ashore

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A sign on I-45 expresses a common feeling as residents of Galveston prepare for the arrival of Hurricane Rita.

KRT photo/Rodger Mallison

Local VA police officers assist Katrina-ravaged coast

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

A group of employees at the Big Spring VA Medical Center were among the first people to provide security and assistance to the hurricane-ravaged cities of New Orleans and Biloxi, Miss.

VA police officers Ron Allen and Gary Sleight and groundskeeping aide Robbie Cadenhead recently returned to Big Spring after a week in

the Gulf Coast area hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina.

Allen and Sleight were tasked to provide security at the New Orleans VA hospital, located a block from the Super Dome in the downtown area. Cadenhead, meanwhile, was dispatched to the Biloxi-Gulfport area of Mississippi to help with cleanup efforts there. The experience, they all agree, was one they'll never forget.

Allen and Sleight arrived at

"We were ordered to defend our property and stand our ground," Allen said. "We weren't going to kill anyone over food and water, but we were going to defend our property."

—Ron Allen



the New Orleans VA hospital on Sept. 4. The building, surrounded by four feet of water, had been evacuated of patients and staff. There was no plumbing or running water, and the

only electricity was provided by emergency generators.

The scene, Allen said, was a giant assault on the senses.

"The smell (was overpowering)," he said. "It was a mix-

ture of gasoline, diesel, sewage and death."

The 32 VA police officers guarding the building were the only significant police presence in the area, and the only staff at the hospital, Sleight said.

While stories of rampant looting in New Orleans were common, it was not a problem at the hospital.

"When people walked up and saw three or four people with

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TRAFFIC MISHAP



Herald photo/Steve Reagan

Big Spring Police Department and Emergency Medical Service personnel assist the driver of this pickup after a one-vehicle accident on West Third Street Wednesday afternoon. The driver refused medical assistance.

Reclassifying BSISD as rural means \$1.2 million to district

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

What's the difference between being considered rural or urban? To the Big Spring Independent School District, it's about \$1.2 million.

The U.S. Department of Education recently reversed its classification

of BSISD as a small urban district, making it eligible for additional federal education funds.

DOE had originally classified Big Spring as an urban district because the city's 2000 census showed a population in excess of 25,000. In that case, the school district would not be eligible for

Title VI funds earmarked for smaller districts.

But BSISD, with assistance from Congressman Randy Neugebauer, fought the ruling, saying that the census had included prison population in its count. Without counting prisoners, Big

See BSISD, Page 6A

Chamber mulls VA Hospital, effort to aid Katrina victims

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

The ongoing Hurricane Katrina relief effort and the Sept. 1 Capital Asset Realignment

for Enhanced Services (CARES) hearing held by the Veterans Administration topped

the agenda at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce meeting Wednesday afternoon.

Chamber President Joe Concienne said the chamber, which produced a VA Task Force to study and provide information for the CARES Commission, decided to

provide the manpower when key community leaders were chosen to sit on the Local Advisory Panel (LAP), which severely limited their abilities to campaign to keep the medical center in Big Spring.

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WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

—Harvest Festival: Heart of the City Park; Friday, 6:30 p.m. to midnight; Saturday, 7 a.m. to midnight. Music, food, farmer's market, games and more.

—Alzheimer's Memory Walk; Old Settlers Pavilion, Comanche Trail Park. Saturday. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. The walk begins at 9 a.m.

—Harvest Saturday at Scenic Mountain State Park. Hay rides for children and the young at heart. Saturday at 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Park entrance fee: \$2 adults.

—Fund-raiser for Vietnam Memorial. Eagles Aerie No. 3188, 703 W. Third. Saturday at 6 p.m. Hot dog and hamburger supper, silent auction.



This photo of a Big Spring sunset was last week's winner of the Herald's Photo of the Week contest and appeared on the cover of Sunday's Diversions section. Due to production problems Friday, the cover of that section had to be printed in black and white, and we here at the Herald believe it deserved to be printed again so readers could see it in color.

Courtesy photo/Geraldine Lopez

Crews schedule item pickup for District 5 residents Friday

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Who would think spring cleaning extended all the way into September?

The city of Big Spring, of course.

City crews are getting ready for the fifth of six scheduled large item pick up days — this one targeting city District 5, represented by councilwoman Joann Knox — with Friday the next date slated in the local government's war on trash.

Beginning in the spring, the program helps area residents get rid of old appliances, furni-

ture and other items they may be without the means to transport to the municipal landfill.

"Some of the more typical items we pick up are tree branches, appliances that don't work anymore, couches and mattresses," said Todd Darden, director of public works for the city of Big Spring. "Those are the kind of things that we can take to our landfill and we're allowed to pick up. We can't pick up any household hazardous waste. That means any kind of chemicals including lawn chemicals, car batteries and tires and things of that nature.

"It's a widely used program. We're trying to target people who are elderly, handicapped or otherwise don't have the means to get these large items to our landfill. This is a service the city is going to provide as a courtesy to those people and give them the opportunity to get things off of their premise they might not be able to otherwise."

Darden said customers need to be aware of gas, water and electricity meters and lines when they put their large items out to be picked up in an effort to protect their services and the city employees helping with the

program. "The reason we need people to be cognizant of where those meters are is because a lot of time we have to bring in equipment to pick those large items up," he said. "If you cover the meters up, it's hard for us to know where they are. Using the equipment makes the pick up go quicker and we want to make sure our employees are safe while they are picking these things up."

All items must be by the curb in the city's right-of-way no sooner than 24 hours before the scheduled pick up. Items need to be separated as much as pos-

sible for its trip to the municipal landfill.

Once Friday's pick up is completed, the program will move on to District 6 in October before shutting down for the winter. The program is expected to begin once again in the spring of 2006.

For more information on the program and maps of the six city districts, visit the city of Big Spring Web site at <http://www.ci.big-spring.tx.us>, or call 264-2504 to arrange a pick up.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232.



Herald photo/Steve Reagan

Big Spring VA Medical Center police officers, standing from left, Ron Allen and Gary Sleight have recently returned from New Orleans, where they provided security at the deserted VA hospital. Fellow VA policeman David Baird, standing at right, will travel to New Orleans later this week. Groundskeeping specialist Robble Cadenhead, seated, helped with cleanup efforts in Biloxi and Gulfport in Mississippi.

KATRINA

Continued from Page 1A

shotguns, they weren't going to try to mess with that," Allen said. "There were a lot easier places for them to loot."

Charity Hospital, across the street from the VA, was not as fortunate.

"We did observe some looting at Charity Hospital. We saw people carrying out things like laptops (computers)," Sleight said. "But we had no way of communicating with the local authorities and had to let them go."

"We were ordered to defend our property and stand our ground," Allen said. "We weren't going to kill anyone over food and water, but we were going to defend our property."

Compounding the problems the officers faced was the non-existence of creature comforts.

"Imagine eight days of

using baby wipes for showers," Sleight said. "And it was a week before we got any Port-A-Potties to use."

The only food available to eat was military Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) rations, he added.

Cadenhead's experiences were similar.

"It was just maximum destruction over there," he said of the Mississippi coast. "It was like a nuclear blast went off. Everything that was within two miles of the coast was more or less wiped out."

He described himself as a "jack of all trades" during his two weeks in the area.

"I became a grocery bagger, I was a bucket truck operator, I became a dump truck driver, and I became part of a chain-saw gang," he said.

Cadenhead also described seeing some surreal sights, such as

two men driving along a street in a forklift carrying a large safe. He also described seeing how some industrious person had rigged a fire hydrant with a shower attachment along Highway 90. There, people were taking showers — without the benefit of curtains.

"You'd see things left and right out there that you just couldn't imagine," he said.

Two other local VA police officers — David Baird and Barney Edens — will soon deploy to New Orleans. And other local VA staffers are awaiting word about when and where they will deploy.

"We've heard things are getting better than on a day-to-day basis," said Baird. "The only word we've received is that it will be a very long, drawn-out mission until they get things back up and running."

RITA

Continued from Page 1A

late Friday or early Saturday. But it could still be a dangerous storm.

Highways leading inland out of Houston were gridlocked, with traffic bumper-to-bumper. Gas stations were reported to be running out of gas. Shoppers emptied grocery store shelves of spaghetti, tuna and other nonperishable items.

Gov. Rick Perry early Thursday ordered southbound traffic on Interstate 45 shut down and all eight lanes redirected north out of the city for 125 miles. Local officials warned residents to get out, and told them they would not be rescued if they waited.

"Don't follow the example of Katrina and wait," Harris County Judge Robert Eckels said. "During the storm, we will not be able to get to you."

At 7 a.m. CDT Thursday, Rita was centered about 490 miles east-southeast of Galveston and was moving west-northwest near 9 mph. Wind speed was 170 mph, down slightly from 175 earlier in the day. Forecasters predicted it would come ashore near Galveston.

Storm-surge winds were expected to come Friday afternoon, but White said everyone but emergency responders should leave well ahead of that time.

"Now is not a time for warnings," he said. "Now is a time for action."

Texas Department of Transportation spokeswoman Janelle Gbur said Interstate 45, which is eight lanes and some points and four lanes elsewhere, was all going north to Buffalo. She said the measure had never been taken before.

Gbur said that once I-45 is transformed into a one-way, the same will be done with U.S. 290 going northwest and Interstate

10 going west.

Eckels said he recognized the frustration of evacuee traffic stacked bumper-to-bumper for up to 100 miles north of Houston.

He reminded evacuees that the storm is still 48 hours out, leaving plenty of time for motorists stuck in traffic to complete their escapes.

"We still have time to clean out these roads," he said.

Eckels said there were logistical problems getting tankers to restock gas stations.

Patrolmen along the highway were trying to carry gas to carry gas to people as they ran out, Gbur said.

People unable to escape low-lying areas in Houston on their own were urged to call a city hot line, and White said 10,000 people have called. Throughout the night the city was sending buses to get them out, but people

were still told they needed to count on family, friends and neighbors.

White reiterated that there is no safe place to stay in low-lying and flood-prone areas of the city, and there won't be shelters in the city.



KRT photo/Kelley Chinn

At The Island Community Center in Galveston, evacuees board a bus that will take them to Huntsville to escape Hurricane Rita.

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Elnora Morrison, 87, died Wednesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Susanne Reed
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

Don't miss the hayrides at state park

It's time once again to begin the fall season with an old-fashioned hayride around the top of Scenic Mountain, as Harvest Saturday is once again observed at Big Spring State Park.

A decade-old tradition now, Harvest Saturday is designed as a time for family fun.

Ron Alton, the park's superintendent, notes that his staff also trying to make the hayrides educational, as well.

As riders sit on the hay bales and gaze off the park's bluff during the hayride, a speaker system will allow guides to talk about the plants and the geology of the area.

Rides are set for 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Saturday, beginning near the park's main office, located atop Scenic Mountain.

Those willing to wait around following the rides will also have an opportunity to watch the sun set from atop the mountain — a panoramic sight Alton likens to watching the sunset on the West Coast.

As a matter of fact, there's no reason not to make an afternoon and evening of it, since the park has picnic facilities, as well as a playground and a nature trail.

The only charge for the event will be the normal entrance fee for the park — \$2 for adults with children 12 and younger admitted free.

While past Harvest Saturdays have requested donations, Alton said the decision was made to charge the normal entry fee because state park system anticipates facing a \$2 million shortfall this year.

With the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department eyeing the possibility of closing down seven state parks, it is important that Big Spring State Park draw as many visitors as possible.

As a result, we here at the Herald encourage readers to take the opportunity to spend some time outdoors with the family and help out the park.

We believe that will be an important investment not only for your families, but for our entire community.

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions. In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

- In person at 710 Scurry St.
- By telephone at 263-7331
- By fax at 264-7205
- By e-mail Managing Editor John A. Moseley at editor@bigspringherald.com or News Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@ccom.net.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

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

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

May we honor the love You bestow on us, Lord.

Amen

Just wondering what's going on

It must be dreaming. This must be Wonderland, where deficits count as surpluses, and the more you spend, the more you have.

That must be true, because how else could we be fighting a war with no end in sight, with journalists abducted and killed in broad daylight, with government officials openly admitting that they go to work afraid every day, not knowing whether they will come home at night; and then at the same time, go on the biggest public spending spree in our history?

No offense, but when my friend Donna Brazile is the first to sign on, you know it's big.

And it's Republicans who are telling me that you don't have to pay for any of it. None at all.

Isn't that Tony Blankley, the editorial page editor of The Washington Times, telling Jon Kasich, who used to be House Budget chairman, that there is such a thing as a free lunch after all? It is.

You can rebuild all of New Orleans, better than new, while we're being shot at every day in Iraq and rebuilding there, as well — and the beauty of it is, we can cut taxes, run deficits and keep

interest rates low, and it's no more than what any president would do.

It must be a dream. Where's Bill

... But no, this is the New Bush Plan.

It was Bill Clinton who declared that "the era of big government is over." And now it is George W. Bush who has revived it.

As the late, great Paul Tully used to say, "Who'd a thunk it?"

If you define Democrats as people who believe in top-down, big-government-based answers to local problems, where you make the promise first and figure out how to pay for it later, which is not how I would define myself, but is certainly how many of our critics have defined us for years, then the conclusion seems unmistakable that George Bush is a pro-life, big-spending capital D Democrat. He is, admittedly, a pretty rare breed by Democratic standards: socially conservative, fiscally irresponsible — but there seem to be a slew just like him these days among the leaders and talkers on the Republican side. Maybe we should give them their own caucus.

Certainly, any president who presided over the destruction of a major American city would have to also preside over its rebuilding, but Bush has been forced to promise more than most because of his falling poll numbers.

And why are those numbers

falling?

Because he responded slowly, yes. But also because the peace effort is going slowly, worse than slowly, and it's much easier to be angry with the president about New Orleans than Baghdad, because there are no troops to worry that you're not supporting.

The problem is that the same vulnerability that forces him to do more constrains him from paying for it, and thus only increases his vulnerability in the long run.

So Bush doesn't go to New Orleans at all, buzzing it in his 747, instead, and then he goes not once but five times. He ignores the early pleas for help, then promises a \$300 billion aid program to turn it into a true Wonderland.

Next thing you know, they'll be telling me deficit spending is good for the economy, and they'll be calling this a stimulus package.

Some people might say he is trying to throw money at the problem and buy his way out of his troubles. But those people would be his friends, and they don't know what to say. Who can blame them?

To find out more about Susan Estrich, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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SUSAN ESTRICH

GOLF TERMS

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FREE GAME



Colombia's savior deserves another term

Among Colombian-Americans, he is seen as a savior — the only person who has been able to bring their native homeland back from the verge of chaos.

And so when Colombian President Alvaro Uribe comes to the United States and says he would like four more years to keep fighting terrorism, kidnappings, corruption, drug trafficking and guerrilla war, most Colombians say they are anxious to support him.

Since they can vote from the United States in Colombian presidential elections, many are looking forward to casting another ballot for the man who has confronted drug-trafficking guerrillas like no other president.

There is a problem, however. The Colombian constitution only allows presidents to serve for one four-year term. Uribe was elected by a landslide in 2002 and maintains huge approval ratings in the polls. But if they want to reelect him, first they have to amend their constitution.

As Uribe addressed Colombian-Americans in two New Jersey appearances last week, many Colombians were asking — even shouting out of the crowds — for news about efforts to change the constitution.

"Que pasa con la reeleccion? — What's happening with the reelec-tion?" one man screamed as Uribe finished a speech without mentioning the bill passed by the

Colombian Congress last November — legislation that would allow him to run for a second term.

In fact, the Colombian Constitutional Court is deliberating on that bill this week. It will be up to nine magistrates to determine, by Nov. 15, whether the Uribe can seek reelection in 2006.

But Uribe acts like he is already running. In New Jersey, where his campaign is expected to draw many votes and dollars, he was clearly in campaign mode as he kept reciting statistics to illustrate his administration's accomplishments.

He spoke of how the rate of murders, kidnappings, and massacres has gone down dramatically. He spoke of the 400 Colombian mayors who are now able to operate from their municipalities, after having been driven out of their own towns by the guerrillas. He spoke of the hundred of towns that now have police or army protection, after having been abandoned by law enforcement for many years.

Uribe spoke of a recovering economy, with the rates of unemployment and inflation dropping and the rates of investments — foreign and domestic — rising. He said that since lenders have more confidence in Colombia, the country is now able to refinance its high-interest debts.

The president explained that his government is trying to "reinsert" guerrillas back into society if they give up their weapons. But he said he will maintain a "firm hand" against those who continue to defy the rule of law in Colombia.

"As long as they insist on vio-

lence, we will keep turning the screws on them," Uribe said. There were "bravos" from the crowd.

Used to seeing American presidents run for a second term, most Colombian-Americans see no problem with giving Uribe four more years. In Colombia, the polls say most voters feel the same way.

Those who are opposed to his reelection are betraying democratic symbols, because the overwhelming majority want him to run again," said Cesar Augusto Ortega, the man who had shouted "que pasa con la reeleccion?"

Yet, even among those who support the president, some say they constitution should not be changed "just for one man." They say the one-term limit was created to rid the country of bad presidents and should not be changed just because they have a good one.

There is some logic to that argument. Perhaps it would make sense for many other countries. But not for Colombia, where good presidents are rare and where Uribe's firm hand is still necessary.

Colombia is no longer on the verge of chaos. But without Uribe's sound stewardship, Colombian-Americans fear their homeland could go back there again.

To find out more about Miguel Perez, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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Feinstein to vote against Roberts confirmation

By **JESSE J. HOLLAND**

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A second Judiciary Committee Democrat — Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California — announced Thursday she would oppose Supreme Court nominee John Roberts as his nomination made its way to the full Senate.

Feinstein, the committee's only woman, said her vote was decided after Roberts refused to fully answer her and other Democrats' questions in his confirmation hearing last week.

"I knew as little about what Judge Roberts really thought about issues after the hearings as I did before the hearing. This makes it very hard for me," said Feinstein, an abortion rights supporter.

"I cannot in good conscience cast a 'yea' vote. I will cast a 'no' vote," she said.

She revealed her vote as the committee prepared to make its official decision later in the afternoon. A vote in Roberts' favor was assured, with the panel's majority of 10 Republicans united for the conservative justice.

The only question was



Senate Judiciary Committee member Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, left, uses his cell phone camera to snap an image of committee chairman Arlen Specter, R-Pennsylvania, on the last day of confirmation hearings for chief justice nominee John Roberts.

KRT photo/Chuck Kennedy

which way some of the panel's Democrats would go.

Feinstein became the second of the committee's eight Democrats to say they will oppose Roberts. Liberal stalwart Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts announced on Wednesday that he will vote against Roberts

in committee and on the Senate floor when the final vote is called late next week.

The Democratic caucus, however, is split on whether Roberts will make a suitable successor to the late William H. Rehnquist, indicating a split among the Senate's 44 Democrats over

whether they can or should mount even symbolic opposition.

The Judiciary Democrats are split evenly so far, with their top Democrat, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, deciding Wednesday to vote to confirm Roberts, and Wisconsin Democrat Herb Kohl announcing

his approval of Roberts on Thursday morning.

Senate Judiciary Chairman Arlen Specter, R-Pa., who called Leahy "my courageous colleague" Thursday morning, said Roberts has the ability to end the Supreme Court's recent 5-4 splits on issues important to Americans.

"I think he has a real sense for building consensus," said Specter, who is an abortion rights moderate.

Leahy and Kohl are not the only Democrats supporting Roberts.

Sens. Tim Johnson of South Dakota and Max Baucus of Montana have announced their support for Roberts. Sens. Ben Nelson of Nebraska and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana have indicated they are leaning toward voting for the nominee. Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota is viewed as a possible vote for him, as well.

Roberts is "very well credentialed," Landrieu said Wednesday.

After the committee's action, Roberts' nomination goes to the full Senate for a final vote next week. The White House wants Roberts to be in place as the nation's 17th chief justice when the Supreme Court begins its new term on Oct. 3.

Leahy was one of four senators who met with President Bush on Wednesday to discuss the second opening on the high court, a replacement for retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

DEA cracks down on Internet sites selling medications illegally

By **SUZANNE GAMBOA**

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Drug enforcement agents said they arrested at least 18 people and halted prescription writing by dozens of doctors and a pharmacist in a crackdown Wednesday on illegal sales of medications over the Internet.

Thirteen arrests were made in Texas and five in Florida. The Drug Enforcement Administration suspended the registrations of 20 doctors and 22 Internet pharmacies in the U.S., including Puerto Rico, to stop them from writing or filling prescriptions.

Agents also shut down at least 4,600 Web sites the suspects controlled, and seized 2,400 checks and money orders written by individuals for \$200 each. They also seized seven luxury cars and

boxes of cash that had not yet been counted in the yearlong multi-agency investigation dubbed "Operation CYBERx."

They have started legal procedures to seize several homes belonging to those arrested, valued at about \$7.85 million.

"E-traffickers are just a modern way of saying drug dealers," DEA Administrator Karen Tandy said in a statement. The arrests were announced Wednesday in a news conference in Dallas.

The sting "puts out of business cyber criminals who were selling powerful narcotics without legitimate prescriptions to anyone with a computer and cash," Tandy said. "This operation makes more Americans aware that buying prescription drugs from these rogue Web sites is illegal and dangerous."

Those arrested largely operated Internet sites where orders were placed or handled.

Among the suspects were five people the DEA alleged were ringleaders. They were identified as Johar Saran of Arlington, Texas; Gaston Blanchet and Gil Lozano of Miami; S. Ted Solomon of Orlando and Steve Rosner of Boca Raton, Fla.

DEA alleged Saran operated 22 Internet "pharmacies" in the Dallas area, allowing him to order the controlled drugs in bulk without suspicion.

The agency also alleged Saran sold codeine cough syrup to local drug traffickers from the back of his warehouses and in one year bought more than 70,000 pints of the syrup, used by high school and college students.

The overwhelming majority of the drugs sold

were pain killers, anti-anxiety drugs such as Valium, and weight loss drugs, DEA said. Most of them cost far more than they would if purchased legitimately and were bought by addicted people. Electronic bulletin boards exist that list Web sites where people can go to buy such drugs without having a legitimate prescription.

The DEA said drug orders were submitted online to thousands of Internet sites, then forwarded to a central site known as an Internet Facilitation Center. The central sites were run by the five people the DEA labeled as ringleaders.

The orders were placed on Web servers where doctors could sign in to approve them. Doctors were paid an average \$20 per order.

The doctor's approval created the appearance of

a doctor-patient relationship required in many states for drug prescriptions, DEA said. Doctors could make up to \$1.7 million approving the illegal drug orders, the agency said.

All information was placed in a database used by pharmacies set up by those involved in the schemes to fill the orders, for a fee of about \$10 to \$15 a prescription for the pharmacist, DEA said. DEA said pharmacies could fill about 5,000 orders a day.

Orders were delivered to addresses that were actually empty buildings.

The drugs were collected from those locations, then repackaged and distributed through a legitimate shipping service. One order placed as part of the investigation was delivered to the DEA building in Fort Worth, Texas.

Operators of the Internet pharmacies averaged more than \$50,000 a day in profits from the drug orders, Tandy said.

The investigation also involved law enforcement officials from the FBI, Internal Revenue Service, Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Attorney's Office, including its Dallas office.

Governor names one-time rival Sharp to head school finance panel

By **APRIL CASTRO**

Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN (AP) — Republican Gov. Rick Perry on Wednesday appointed one-time Democratic rival John Sharp to lead a panel charged with trying to restructure the state tax system that pays for public schools.

Sharp, a former state comptroller who'd been considering a run for governor against Perry next year, said for now he's bowing out of politics.

"The governor's asked us to go to one end of the state to the other, educating the public, including business leaders, school personnel and everybody on what's in the tax code ... to try to build the sup-

port from there so it would be easier for the members of the Legislature to come to a consensus of the majority on this issue," Sharp said.

Using public feedback, the panel will make recommendations to the Legislature, Perry said.

Lawmakers are awaiting a court ruling on a lawsuit brought by hundreds of Texas school districts challenging the way the state pays for public schools. The measure is on appeal before the Texas Supreme Court. A decision is expected within the next few weeks.

Perry called two failed special legislative sessions this summer on school funding and is widely expected to call lawmakers back to the

Capitol to tackle the complex issue again after the court rules.

"So today, I'm asking someone who doesn't have a vote in this building, but who has years of experience in navigating the maze of tax law all over this state, through the halls of this building ... to lead a new effort to make our tax system fair, more modern and more

productive," Perry said.

Sharp ran unsuccessfully against Perry for lieutenant governor in 1998. He also ran for lieutenant governor and lost to Republican David Dewhurst in 2002.

Perry "has given me what I consider probably my last chance to do something historic for the state of Texas," Sharp said.

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Astros hold on to two-game lead in NL's wild card chase

PITTSBURGH (AP) — What looked like an easy night after two innings turned into a struggle for the Houston Astros.

Lance Berkman hit a three-run homer in a four-run first inning and Mike Lamb hit a three-run homer in a four-run second as the Astros built an 8-0 lead and then held off the last-place Pittsburgh Pirates 12-8 Wednesday night.

It was the seventh win in eight games for Houston, which remained two games in front of Philadelphia in the NL wild-card race. The Phillies beat Atlanta 10-6 in 10 innings.

"These guys are unbelievable. They fight you right down to the end," said Berkman, who had five RBIs, including his 20th homer. "They've played us real tough this year."

Roy Oswalt (18-12) allowed four runs, three earned, and nine hits over six innings to win for the fourth time in five decisions. He struck out six and walked two as Houston moved 14 games over .500 (83-69) for the first time this season.

"They're not playing for anything, but they still give 100 percent," Oswalt

said. "They battled. These guys just play one at-bat at a time."

"The important thing is you can't let an 8-0 lead go to waste. The biggest thing is us getting the win. It doesn't matter how we got it."

Pittsburgh cut the lead to 8-4, but the Astros scored two runs off reliever Brian Meadows. The Pirates got within 10-7 on Ryan Doumit's two-run homer off Russ Springer in the seventh and Freddy Sanchez's solo homer off Dan Wheeler in the eighth.

Houston scored two unearned runs in the ninth when Lamb doubled, moved to third on Jason Lane's single and scored when Doumit mishandled third basemen Ty Wigginton's throw home on Brad Ausmus' grounder. Lane moved to third on the error and scored on pinch-hitter Jose Vizcaino's groundout.

Brad Eldred added a solo homer in the ninth for the Pirates.

Kip Wells (7-17) became the first pitcher in the majors to lose 17 games this season. He lasted two innings, his shortest outing since retiring just two batters on Aug. 24 against

St. Louis.

Berkman drove in a run with a sacrifice fly in the second inning and followed Morgan Ensberg's two-out double with an RBI single in the sixth. Lane added a solo homer for Houston in the seventh.

"It was nice for us to keep the offense going, keep tacking on runs through the ninth," Lane said.

Sanchez doubled, moved to third on Jack Wilson's sacrifice and scored on Jason Bay's double in the third inning.

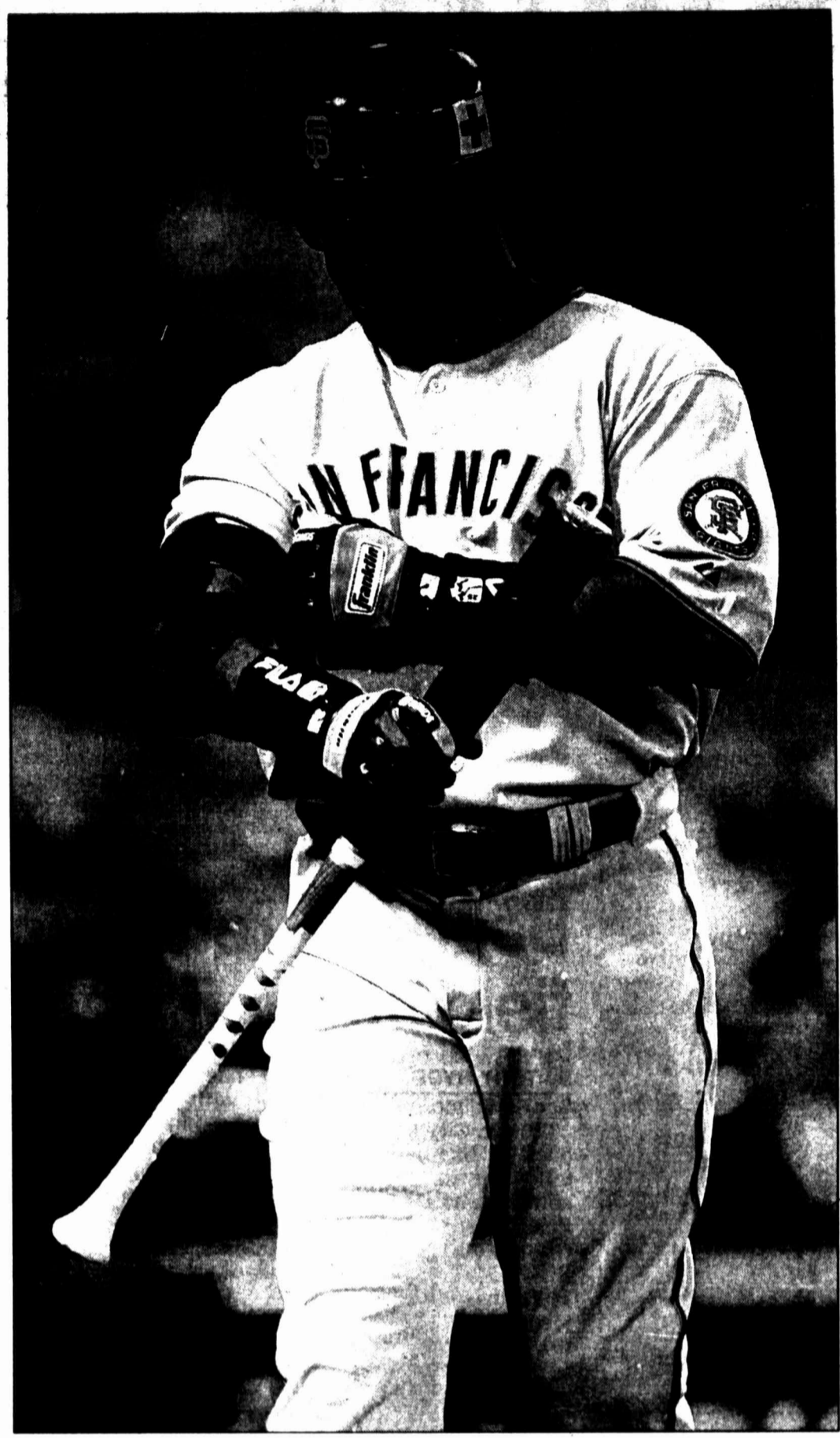
In a two-run fourth, Nate McLouth walked, moved to second on Sanchez's two-out single and scored on Wilson's single. Bay then hit a grounder to third baseman Ensberg, who threw wildly past second baseman Chris Burke and into right field for an error, allowing Sanchez to score.

Craig Wilson led off the Pittsburgh fifth with a triple and scored on Doumit's groundout.

"I thought we had plenty of runs, we had Roy on the mound and things looked pretty good," Houston manager Phil Garner said.

Lamb's homer to right, his 10th, gave the Astros an 8-0 lead and followed Berkman's sacrifice fly. Houston had loaded the bases on Willy Taveras' one-out single and walks to Craig Biggio and Ensberg.

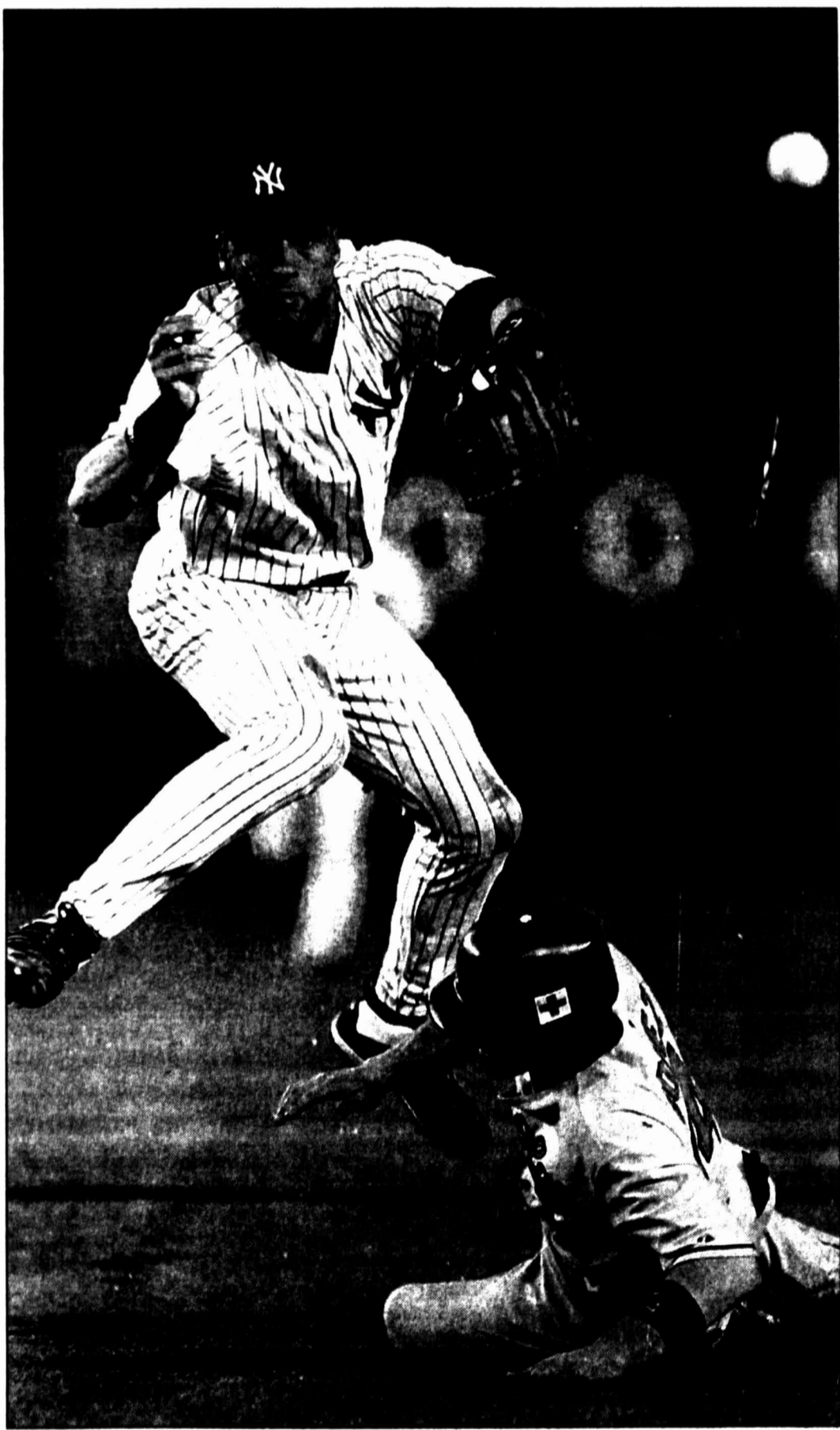
Taveras led off the game with a single and scored when third baseman Rob Mackowiak committed a throwing error on Biggio's grounder.



KRT photo/Harry E. Walker, Knight-Ridder Tribune
Barry Bonds of the San Francisco Giants takes off protective gear after walking in the ninth inning against the Washington Nationals at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C., Tuesday. Bonds also homered in his fourth straight and is now just seven home runs behind Babe Ruth for second all-time.

Major League Baseball — wild card standings

| American League | National League |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Division Leaders | Division Leaders |
| • New York Yankees (East) | • Atlanta Braves (East) |
| • Chicago White Sox (Central) | • St. Louis Cardinals (Central) |
| • Los Angeles Angels (West) | • San Diego Padres (West) |
| Wild Card | Wild Card |
| Cleveland Indians — | Houston Astros — |
| Boston Red Sox — 1 | Philadelphia Phillies — 2 |
| Oakland Athletics — | San Francisco Giants — |



KRT photo/Paul J. Bereswill, Newsday
The Yankees' Derek Jeter turns an inning ending double play after getting Baltimore's Chris Gomez out at second in the fifth inning of their game Tuesday at Yankee Stadium in New York. The Yankees defeated Baltimore and moved into first place in the American League East just ahead of the Boston Red Sox.

Angels take control of AL West after come-from-behind victory

By BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer
ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Down, yet never quite out could be the Los Angeles Angels' motto this season.

Pinch-hitter Jose Molina drove in the tying and go-ahead runs with a single in a four-run seventh inning and the Angels rallied to beat the Texas Rangers 6-5 on Wednesday night, their fifth straight victory.

The Angels increased their lead in the AL West to 2 1/2 games over Oakland, which lost 10-4 to Minnesota.

It was their 39th comeback win of the season, engineered by some bench players. The

Angels scored all their runs in the seventh with two outs.

Quinlan, Chone Figgins and Orlando Cabrera all singled before Vladimir Guerrero walked to set up Molina, who batted for cleanup hitter Casey Kotchman.

Esteban Yan (1-1) got the victory, retiring Alfonso Soriano — the only batter he faced — on a flyout in the seventh.

Francisco Rodriguez pitched the ninth for his 40th save in 45 chances.

Scott Feldman (0-1) faced two batters and took the loss, allowing one run, one hit and a walk.

The Angels closed to 5-4 on a bases-loaded, two-run single by Cabrera off Feldman with two outs in

the seventh. Feldman intentionally walked Guerrero, then turned things over to left-hander Brian Shouse. Molina singled up the middle on the second pitch, putting Los Angeles ahead 6-5.

Molina chugged toward first base, pumping his right arm in a rare display of emotion.

Michael Young extended his hitting streak to a career-best 18 games with his 23rd homer off Brendan Donnelly in the seventh.

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MOVING SALE: 1304 Mt. Vernon, Friday & Saturday 8:00-?. King mattress/box spring, 3 piece sectional, double dresser, dining table w/4 chairs, futon and more.

YARD SALE: 5203 Wasson Rd., Saturday 7:00-?. Nothing over a \$1.00.

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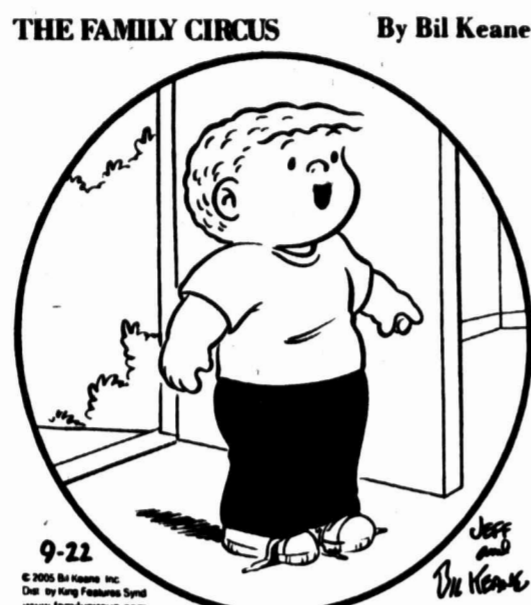
Table with 12 columns (WFAA, KMD, UNI, KPEJ, KOSA, KTLT, KWES, WTBS, KMLM, KOCV, DISC, AMC, SPIKE, TNT, BET, DISN, ESPN2, ESPN, SCIFI) and 6 rows (6-12 PM) listing various TV programs and their channels.

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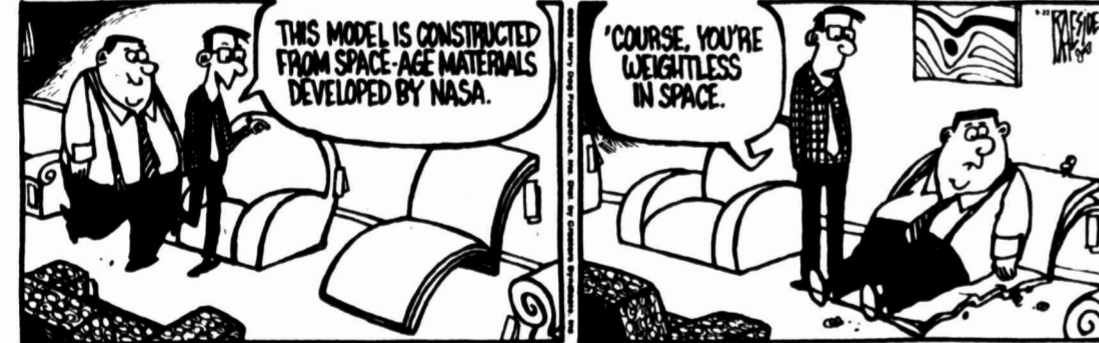
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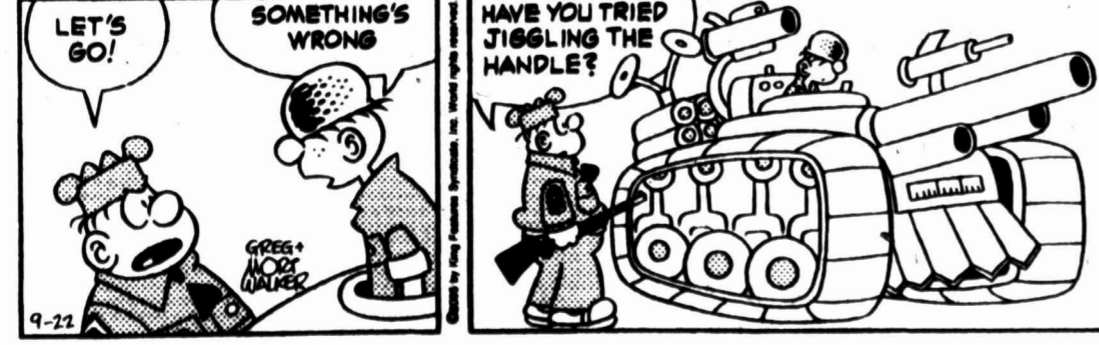
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This Date In History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 22, the 265th day of 2005. There are 100 days left in the year. Autumn arrives at 6:23 p.m. EDT. Today's Highlight in History: On Sept. 22, 1776, Nathan Hale was hanged as a spy by the British during the Revolutionary War. On this date: In 1789, Congress authorized the office of Postmaster-General. In 1792, the French Republic was proclaimed. In 1927, Gene Tunney successfully defended his heavyweight boxing title against Jack Dempsey in the famous "long-count" fight in Chicago. In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb. In 1950, Omar N. Bradley was promoted to the rank of five-star general, joining an elite group that included Dwight D. Eisenhower, Douglas MacArthur, George C. Marshall and Henry H.

"Hap" Arnold. In 1964, the musical "Fiddler on the Roof" opened on Broadway, beginning a run of 3,242 performances. In 1975, Sara Jane Moore attempted to shoot President Ford outside a San Francisco hotel, but missed. In 1980, the Persian Gulf conflict between Iran and Iraq erupted into full-scale war. In 1985, rock and country music artists participated in FarmAid, a concert staged in Champaign, Ill., to help the nation's farmers. In 1989, songwriter Irving Berlin died in New York City at age 101. One year ago: CBS-owned stations were fined a total of \$550,000 by the Federal Communications Commission for Janet Jackson's exposed right breast during the Super Bowl halftime show. Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Fame manager Tommy Lasorda is 78. Musician King Sunny Ade is 59. Actor Paul Le Mat is 59. Captain Mark Phillips is 57. Rock singer David Coverdale (Deep Purple, Whitesnake) is 54. Actress

Shari Belafonte is 51. Singer Debby Boone is 49. Country singer June Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 49. Singer Nick Cave is 48. Rock singer Johnette Napolitano is 48. Opera singer Andrea Bocelli is 47. Singer-musician Joan Jett is 45. Actress Catherine Oxenberg is 44. Actor Scott Baio is 44. Actor Rob Stone is 43. Rock musician Matt Sharp is 36. Rhythm-and-blues singer Big Rubie (Society of Soul) is 34. Actor Tom Felton is 18. Thought for Today: "One of the great lessons the fall of the leaf teaches, is this: Do your work well and then be ready to depart when God shall call." — Tryon Edwards, American clergyman (1809-1894).

Answer to previous puzzle grid with words like COO, CAPER, SALS, RIG, ADELE, ILIAD, ALLINAROW, GIFTS, NEEDS, POUNCE, ERRS, SMIRK, ECHO, BLINDED, YEA, RETILING, INCAS, EMULATE, LUCILLE, SIREN, DATELESS, ILK, CHEERED, NYET, ALIAS, OVAL, YOKING, GNOME, AARON, INTHESWIM, FLUTE, NEWEL, EGO, TENSE, ODORS, LON.

Newsday Crossword

THE FIVE W'S by Fred Piscop Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Across clues include: 1 Cry of disgust, 4 Whey partner, 9 Wrong: Pref., 12 Sugar suffix, 13 Puccini piece, 14 Ditties, 16 Query from the impatient, 18 Composer Berg, 19 Fizzy drink, 20 Query from the lost, 22 Spewed lava, 26 Nincompoop, 27 Comic Caesar, 28 Gym iteration, 29 Fruity drinks, 31 Slice with some sandwiches, 33 Makes tough, 35 Use a spyglass, 36 Query from the famished, 39 Hook's henchman, 41 Rips off, 42 Cocktail nibble, 45 Pianist Dame Myra, 46 Cops' org., 49 Columbus Day mo., 50 Hightail it, 52 Eyes, slangily, 54 Query from the apathetic, 57 Brings into play, 58 Rosemary's Baby author. Down clues include: 59 Query from the adventurous, 63 Leaves in Sarge's superior, 65 Guitarist Paul, 66 Bard's "before", 67 Scattered, as seed, 68 Mag VIPs, 7 Took an oater dare, 8 Figure-skater Cohen, 9 Army mascot, 10 Desktop tray, 11 Nautical distance, 14 Ankle bones, 15 Duke of Cooperstown, 17 Brewpub fixture, 21 Sixth sense, 23 London art gallery, 24 Blissful place, 25 Monopoly stack, 30 Slow-moving mammal, 32 IRS staffers, 33 Big Apple ballpark, 34 "Clean" series win, 36 Reviewed, 37 Lighten up, 38 Ultimatum ender, 39 Threatening looks, 40 Jungle slasher, 43 Maps out, 44 Order of corn, 46 Mortar mate, 47 Like beer or tea, 48 Take stock of, 51 Whimpers, 53 Play on words, 55 Refer to "Scram!", 60 "That smarts!", 61 Yachtzee cube, 62 Brit. ref. work.

