

Moore board tables funding requests for now

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

Financial assistance for the local Fresh Start Program and the Big Spring Retiree Committee topped Wednesday's agenda for the Moore Development board of directors, with the board opting to hold off on both matters. Paul Pryor, director of the Big

Spring Housing Authority and the Crossroads Housing Development Corporation, presented the board with the Fresh Start Program, a joint-project between the CHDC and SouthWest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf.

Pryor requested a \$40,000 loan from Moore Development to help "jump start" the program, which takes dilapidated build-



Pryor

ings in the Big Spring area and utilizes student labor to rehabilitate the structures.

"I've had inspectors come in and tell me these students, who are working for a grade, do better work than most contractors," Pryor told the

board. "Since the program began, we've rehabilitated nine homes, eight of which we've been able to sell for an average price of about \$25,000.

"This program not only benefits the students that participate in it and the home buyers, it benefits the community by taking these homes and putting them back on the tax rolls."

Pryor said the \$40,000 he was

requesting would be used to purchase building materials for the program's next few projects.

Despite support from board member Joyce Crooker, who made a motion to approve the loan, the remaining board members failed to offer a second, killing the measure — this time.

See MOORE, Page 3A



These feral cats, which were trapped by BSPD Animal Control Officers Wednesday morning near the Comanche Trail Park entrance on S. Highway 87, get ready to make the trip to the municipal animal shelter.

Feral felines pose growing problem near park entrance

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

Animal Control officers with the Big Spring Police Department had their hands full Wednesday morning, as the group worked to clear out a den of wild felines near Comanche Trail Park.

With nearly a dozen feral cats already caught before noon and scores still milling around the rear of a building — located at the corner of Whipkey Drive and South U.S. Highway 87 — the total num-

"People have been coming out here and feeding these cats, so when they see a car drive up they immediately think it's dinner time. So they began to swarm out of the woods and surrounding area."

—Lt. Robert Fitzgibbons

ber of untamed cats living in the area remains unclear, according to Animal Control Supervisor Lt. Robert Fitzgibbons.

"It's hard to tell just how many of them may be out there," said

Fitzgibbons. "It could just be a few more than you see here, and it could be hundreds. It's just hard to tell at this point."

See CATS, Page 3A

Time for building?

Coahoma RCCI may look at constructing new homes

By STEVE REAGAN
Staff Writer

COAHOMA — Having torn down several dilapidated structures, Coahoma residents are now turning their attention toward building.

In early December, residents took the wrecking ball to four structures — three houses and a storage building — that had been condemned by the city.

Although more demolitions are under consideration, residents are start-



Foresyth

ing to turn their thoughts to building, rather than razing, houses and other structures.

Spearheaded by the Rural Community College Initiative, a collection of community leaders interested in community development, Coahoma residents are

See RCCI, Page 3A

Police clear almost 30 mischief cases after teens taken into custody

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

The Big Spring Police Department has been able to close the books on several criminal mischief cases this week after taking several local juveniles into custody. More arrests are likely.

Three male juvenile suspects, ages 14, 14 and 15 years, were arrested Monday in connection with what Sgt. Tony

Everett, public information officer with the Big Spring Police Department, described as "numerous cases."

"Between December and January there were 29 cases of criminal mischief," said Everett. "They involved damage to vehicles, residences and Christmas decorations. Damage estimates at this time are approxi-

See TEENS, Page 3A

Big Spring ISD trustees set public hearings tonight

By STEVE REAGAN
Staff Writer

Big Spring Independent School District trustees will conduct a pair of public hearings when they hold their monthly meeting at 5:15 p.m. tonight at the high school board room.

The first hearing will be to get public feedback on a proposed change to the 2006-07 school calendar that would

result in school beginning a week earlier in August than it was in 2005.

Superintendent Michael Downes said the district has tentatively planned to begin the next school year Aug. 14.

"The best reason for this is it would allow us to balance the semesters and give us the opportunity to end the first semester prior to the Christmas holidays," Downes said. "It also would allow us time for obser-

vance of some federal holidays throughout the school year."

Tentative plans for the next year's calendar include days off for Columbus Day, Martin Luther King Day and President's Day, along with the normal two-week break for Christmas, four-day spring break and various other off days, Downes said.

BSISD officials would have to receive a waiver from the Texas Education Agency to

start school before Aug. 21, but those requests are routinely granted. Trustees should finalize the 2006-07 school calendar in March, Downes said.

A second public hearing will be held to discuss results from the district's Academic Excellence Indicator System report for the 2004-05 school year. The AEIS report — sort of a "report card" for the school district — tracks how well the district performed in a variety

of areas, including academics, graduation rates, financial accountability and the number of criminal and violent acts that occurred on BSISD campuses.

The only action item on tonight's agenda is consideration of a limited liability contract with the Scientific Learning Corp.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331, ext. 234.

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TOMORROW 59°-61°

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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.

BANQUET TICKETS

Tickets for the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce banquet are on sale at the chamber office.

The banquet is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum. Tickets are \$27 per person through Saturday.

No tickets or reservations will be accepted after Saturday. Tickets will not be available at the door.

Guest speaker will be Pat McGaughey of McGaughey Enterprises Inc. on "Maximizing Your Chamber Membership."

RSVP or pick up tickets at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, 215 W. Third, or call 263-7641.

HAMAS WINS MAJORITY

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Hamas won a huge majority in parliamentary elections as Palestinian voters rejected the longtime rule of the Fatah Party, throwing the future of Mideast peacemaking into question, officials from both major parties said Thursday.

Palestinian leaders huddled to determine what role the Islamic militant group will play in governing the territories.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas will ask Hamas to form the next government, with his defeated Fatah Party weighing whether to form a partnership or serve in the opposition.

See Page 3A

MEAL OR MENACE?

LYNDONVILLE, N.Y. (AP) — Bird enthusiasts flocking to catch a glimpse of the rare Northern Hawk Owl are aggravating nearby homeowners.

It seems some of the enthusiastic bird lovers are bringing mice and setting them free in surrounding fields, hoping to see the owl swoop down and hunt.

But while some of the mice have been fortunate enough to escape, homeowners are complaining that some rodents are fleeing right into their houses.

Yates Supervisor Russ Martino is encouraging bird lovers to refrain from bringing the rodents with them on their visits.

Obituaries

Teddy Ray Covington



Brought into this world Sept. 21, 1940, and adventured further to Heaven Jan. 23, 2006, Teddy Ray Covington was born to R.B. and Opal Covington in Dawson County.

Teddy served in the United States Air Force from 1958 until 1962. He was employed at Cosden Refinery from May 2, 1963, until retirement May 30, 2000. He married Marilyn Kay Moon Jan. 22, 1966, and she preceded him in death Oct. 21, 2004.

He has left behind a son, Mitchell Ray Covington; two daughters, Connie Jo Campos and husband, Danny and Judy Newton Patterson and husband, David, all of Big Spring; one brother, Ed Covington of Big Spring; one sister, Mary Dority of Maine; six grandchildren, Jada Pillow, Jon Campos, Chance Newton, Jaycee Newton, Dharma Jo Campos and Cobey Campos; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He loved hunting, fishing, God and his family. He was preceded in death by one son, Adam Wayne Covington, his father and mother, R.B. and Opal Covington, and one brother, Rolen B. Covington.

Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, 2006, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Don Snipes, pastor of Baptist Temple Church, officiating.

Honorary pallbearers are Chuck Cawthon, Ronnie Richardson, Walter "Mudd" Burchell, Jamie Scott and the Greg's Grill staff.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at www.npwelch.com.

Paid obituary

Avis L. Powell

Avis L. Powell, 85, of Big Spring, formerly of Bolckow, Mo., died Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2006, in Colorado City. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Friday, Jan. 27, 2006, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Dr. Randy Cotton, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, officiating. Additional services will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2006, at the Barr-Merrick Funeral Home in Burlington Junction, Mo. Interment will be Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2006, at Ohio Cemetery in Burlington Junction, Mo.

The family will receive friends today from 5 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home.

She was born Oct. 30, 1920, in Mount Moriah, Mo., to Glenn and Ethel Wright Prater. She married Willard E. Powell May 21, 1945, and he preceded her in death April 18, 1979.

Avis was a homemaker and worked at Shady Lawn Rest Home in Savannah, Mo., for many years. She was a member of Birdwell Lane Baptist Church.

She will be greatly missed by her four children, Glennnda Wilson and husband, Dennis of Colorado City, Wilda Langford and husband, Bob of Big Spring, Earl Powell and wife, Kathy of Sunrise Beach, Mo., and Charles Powell and wife, Patricia of Del City, Okla.

She is also survived by two sisters, Jennie Grace and Lois Gray; three brothers, Jerry Dale Prater, John Prater and Richard Prater; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

She was also preceded in death by three brothers, Ruben Prater, Harlan Prater and George Prater.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at www.npwelch.com.

Paid obituary

Leslie McMullen



Leslie McMullen, 51, of Big Spring died Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2006, at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas. Funeral services are 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27, 2006, at Myers & Smith Chapel with the Rev. Ken McMeans, pastor of College Baptist Church, officiating. Burial will be in Mount Olive Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. today at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

He was born Dec. 24, 1954, in Midland to Ambalene and Howard McMullen. He worked for S.W. Bell Telephone from 1979 until 2004. He was a lifetime resident of Big Spring and was a Baptist.

He was preceded in death by his father, Howard McMullen.

He is survived by one daughter, Angela Denise McMullen of Big Spring; mother, Ambalene Crocker of Midland; one sister, Judy Sidoni of Midland; stepfather, Eddie Crocker of Midland; and one nephew.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersandsmith.com.

Inez Margaret Thurman

Inez Margaret Thurman, 90, of Arlington, formerly of Big Spring, died Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2006, in Arlington. Funeral services are 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, 2006, at the Wade Family Funeral Home Chapel in Arlington. Graveside service is 1 p.m. Monday, Jan. 30, 2006, at Trinity Memorial Park in Big Spring.

The family will receive friends Saturday from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. at Wade Family Funeral Home.

She was born June 12, 1915, to Irvin and Lois Head in Konawa, Okla. She raised her family in Big Spring and moved to Venus, then moved to Arlington two and a half years ago.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Joe Ben Thurman, sons, Marion Lee Thurman and James I. Thurman, three brothers and two sisters.

Survivors include daughter, Peggy Henson and husband, Lynn of Arlington; brothers, Carl Wayne Thurman and wife, Jean and Bobby E. Thurman and wife, Ethel; sister, Goldie Anderson; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; and several nieces and nephews.

Arrangements are under the direction of Wade Family Funeral Home in Arlington.

Jonathan J. Stone

Jonathan J. Stone, 58, of Big Spring died Friday, Jan. 20, 2006, in Big Spring. Funeral services are 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, 2006, in the Chapel of Nelson-Berna Funeral Home in Fayetteville, Ark., with the Rev. Clark Snow officiating. Burial will follow at the Friendship Cemetery in Springdale, Ark.

Visitation is 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. Friday with the family present from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m., at the funeral home.

He was born March 31, 1947, in Springfield, Mo., the son of Lester and Stella (Epps) Stone. He was retired from the Fayetteville Veterans Hospital, a veteran of the United States Army and a member of First Baptist Church in Big Spring.

He is survived by his wife, Thelma Stone of the home; one son, Brian Stone of Lowell, Ark.; one daughter, Paula Michelle Hunter of Pittsburg, Kan.; one brother, Charles N. Stone of Chetopa, Kan.; one sister, Ruby Young of Springfield, Mo.; his mother, Stella Stone of Chetopa, Kan.; and two grandchildren.

Local arrangements were by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersandsmith.com.

Clara Ferguson

Clara Ferguson, 69, of Big Spring died Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2006, at her residence following a long illness. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

William 'Bill' Winters

William "Bill" Winters, 73, of Big Spring died Thursday, Jan. 26, 2006, in a local hospital. His services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Virgie Johnson

Virgie Johnson, 92, of Stanton died Thursday, Jan. 26, 2006, in a Midland Hospital. Her services are pending with Gilbreath Funeral Home of Stanton.

Police blotter

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

- JOSEPH MICHAEL COOK, 27, of 1508 Wood, was arrested Wednesday on charges of theft and public intoxication.
- NINFA GARCIA, 50, of 1409 Oriole, was arrested Thursday on a charge of public intoxication.
- THEFT was reported:
 - in the 1900 block of Highway 87.
 - in the 1500 block of Fourth Street.
 - in the 200 block of Marcy.
- ASSAULT/CLASS C was reported in the 700 block of 12th Street.

Sheriff's report

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

- MICHELE PRICE, 33, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of theft.
- LEONEL MADRID VALENZUELA, 34, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid.
- SALOME MENDOZA-BARRERA, 45, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of failure to appear.
- JAMES RANDLE GONZALEZ, 21, was arrested Wednesday by DPS on charges of possession of marijuana - two ounces or less, no driver's license and no liability insurance.
- ROLAND JABIER ARECHIGA, 32, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid.
- JOHNNY RAY DUPRE, 36, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for possession of a controlled substance.
- FREDDIE RAMOS, 20, was arrested Wednesday by DPS on charges of injury to a child/elderly/disabled, criminal negligence, driving while intoxicated with a child under 15 years of age in the vehicle, no valid driver's license and resisting arrest, search or transportation.

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services reported the following activity:

- TRAUMA was reported in the 1800 block of North Highway 87. One person was transported to the VAMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of Wallace. Service was refused.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the 165 mile marker of Interstate Highway 20. Service was refused.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 500 block of West 17th Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 700 block of Johnson. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of West Third Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- GRASS FIRE was reported near the intersection of Baylor and Interstate Highway 20.

Support groups

THURSDAY

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

Bulletin board

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

TODAY

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

FRIDAY

• Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at 1019 Nolan St. 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.

• Spring City Senior Citizens 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

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

MONDAY

• Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. 21 meets at 5 p.m. in the Dora Roberts Rehabilitation Center, 306 W. Third, for weigh-in. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. Call 1-800-392-8677 or 263-0391 or 263-1758.

• Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. TX 1756 meets at 5:30 p.m. Monday in the 11th and Birdwell Lane Church of Christ. A different program is offered every week, and anyone 7 years old or older is welcome to attend. Please enter through the northwest door. Call 263-2786 for more information.

• Evening Lions Club meets at 6:30 p.m. in La Posada Restaurant.

• Prospector's Club work night begins at 7 p.m. at 606 E. Third.

TUESDAY

• Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room.

WEDNESDAY

• Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Senior Circle meets at 10:30 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center for Sit and Be Fit Chair Aerobics. Those 50 years and older are invited to attend. Call 268-4721.

• Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Line dancing begins at 1 p.m. at the Spring City Senior Citizen's Center in the Industrial Park. Call 267-6966 or 267-1628.

• Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.

• Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge at 703 W. Third.

Weather

Tonight...Mostly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Friday...Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the lower 60s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Friday night...Partly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the lower 40s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Saturday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s. West winds 10 to 15 mph.

Saturday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s.

Sunday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 60s.

Sunday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s.

Monday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 60s.

Monday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 30s.

Tuesday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s.

Tuesday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 30s.

Wednesday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s.

Lottery

Results of the Lotto Texas drawing Wednesday night: Winning numbers drawn: 1-10-17-30-41. Bonus Ball: 34.

Number matching five of five, plus Bonus Ball: 0. Estimated jackpot for Saturday night drawing: \$56 million.

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Wednesday night: Winning numbers drawn: 3-12-23-26-37.

Number matching five of five: 1.

Prize per winner: \$30,446.

Winning tickets sold in: Pearland.

Next Cash 5 drawing: Thursday night.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Wednesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 2-8-6

BIG SPRING HERALD

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Seven children killed when truck slams car into school bus in Florida

LAKE BUTLER, Fla. (AP) — A car full of children headed home was crushed between a truck and a stopped school bus, killing the seven adopted children just two miles from where they lived.

Investigators were trying to understand why the driver of a truck hit the car from behind, pushing it in to the bus that was carrying nine students.

Everyone in the car was killed Wednesday, including the 15-year-old girl who was driving illegally. Tina Mann told CNN that her niece, who had a learner's permit, had dropped off another child and was taking her siblings home "to get ready to go to church."

"Even though she was an underage driver, it's my understanding she did not cause the accident," Mann told CNN. "The same thing would have happened had there been an adult in the car with her. We'd just have one more death in the family."

The victims in the car were identified by authorities as 15-year-old driver Nicki Mann; Elizabeth Mann, 15; Johnny Mann, 13; Heaven Mann, 3; Ashley Kenn, 13; Miranda Finn, who was either 8- or 9-years-old; and Anthony Lamb, who was almost 2 years old.

Five of the students onboard the bus were taken to University of Florida's Shands Hospital in Gainesville. Three were in serious condition and two were in fair condition, hospital officials said Wednesday night.

Meat distributor sentenced for placing false labels on chicken

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A San Antonio wholesale meat distributor was fined \$40,000 for mislabeling frozen chicken in an attempt to dodge a 2002 Mexican ban on Texas chicken.

Allen Jackson "A.J." Hausman, 58, had pleaded guilty on behalf of himself and his company, Almacenes de Tejas, to four misdemeanor charges of violating the federal Poultry Products Protection Act.

A federal judge on Wednesday also sentenced Hausman and the company, which does business at ADT, to three years probation.

In 2002, Mexico banned chicken from Texas after some chickens raised in the state tested positive for exotic Newcastle disease, a type of bird flu.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture accused Hausman's company of removing the original labels from 858 cases of frozen chicken from a Texas producer. The company then put labels stamped with a federal mark of inspection for an Alabama producer, according to court records.

Former officer accused of filing false hurricane claim

TEXAS CITY (AP) — A former police officer accused of falsifying a hurricane assistance claim with the Federal Emergency Management Agency has been named in a federal indictment, authorities said.

John Wesley Holiday, who worked as a Texas City policeman until November, claimed he was forced because of Hurricane Rita to move from a home in Galveston to live with family and friends in Texas City and that he was forced to lose work. The Galveston County Daily News reported in Thursday's editions.

He was accused in the indictment of filing a false claim and one count of mail fraud.

Holiday appeared in federal court in Galveston on Wednesday.

U.S. Attorney Chuck Rosenberg said an assistance check was mailed to Holiday, who could face up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if convicted of filing a false claim. He could face up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if convicted of mail fraud.

Prosecutors attempt to link soldier to drug money

FORT BLISS (AP) — The fingerprints of a soldier accused of smuggling cocaine from Columbia to the United States were found on a plastic bag of money linked to the operation, a witness for the prosecution said.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Rosas is charged with money laundering and using, importing and distributing cocaine for his role in the alleged drug ring. Prosecutors say that Rosas directed the operation from a U.S. base in Columbia where he was stationed as part of an anti-drug force.

Rosas, a member of the 204th Military Intelligence Battalion, has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

On Wednesday, prosecutors said the bag of money was found when they intercepted an envelope Rosas allegedly sent from Columbia to another soldier in El Paso. The envelope contained a key and a letter with directions to a storage unit where the money was found.

The prosecution also called forensic experts, who said vials of white powder found in Rosas' quarters at the U.S. base in Columbia tested positive for cocaine, as did bricks of white powder seized on a plane that landed at Biggs Army Airfield in El Paso.

Houston outlaws renting rooms for prostitution

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston police said a new city ordinance making it illegal for motels to rent rooms knowing they're intended for prostitution will help crack down on the illegal sex trade.

The Houston City Council unanimously approved the law on Wednesday despite some reservations that motel clerks would be unfairly held responsible for prostitution they didn't know about.

Capt. Steve Jett, head of the police department's vice division, said the ordinance puts a high burden of proof on police and prosecutors. Police will have to show that a motel employee knew a room was going to be used for prostitution, he said.

Hamas wins majority of parliament seats

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Hamas won a huge majority in parliamentary elections as Palestinian voters rejected the longtime rule of the Fatah Party, throwing the future of Mideast peacemaking into question, officials from both major parties said Thursday.

Palestinian leaders huddled to determine what role the Islamic militant group will play in governing the territories.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas will ask Hamas to form the next government, with his defeated Fatah Party weighing whether to form a partnership or serve in the opposition.

A Hamas government, without Fatah as a moderating force, would greatly complicate Abbas' efforts to restart peace talks. The Islamic militants, who carried out dozens of suicide bombings and seek Israel's destruction, have said they oppose peace talks and will not disarm. Israel and the United States refuse to deal with Hamas.

The top Hamas leader, Khaled Mashaal told Abbas his group is ready for a political partnership, Hamas said.

In a first sign of pragmatism, Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar said the group would extend its year-old truce if Israel reciprocates. "If not, then I think we will have no option but to protect our people and our land," he said.

Fatah legislator Saeb Erekat said the party does not want to join a Hamas government. "We will be a loyal opposition and rebuild the party," Erekat said, after meeting with Abbas.

But Nabil Shaath, another senior Fatah lawmaker, said the party's leadership would make a decision later in the day.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice the U.S. position on Hamas as a terrorist organization has not changed despite the election outcome.

"You cannot have one foot in politics and another in terror," told an

international conference in Davos, Switzerland via a telephone hookup from Washington. "Our position on Hamas has therefore not changed."

She said she had called Abbas as well as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni.

"The Palestinians have a constitutional process that they will now follow. We ask all parties to respect this process so that it can unfold in an atmosphere of calm and security," Rice said.

Abbas' office said she told him that the Bush administration "will continue supporting the elected president and his policies," said Nabil Abu Rdeneh, an Abbas aide.

Abbas was elected separately a year ago and remains president. However, the Palestinian leader has said he would resign if he could no longer pursue his peace agenda. The Cabinet and legislature must approve any major initiative by Abbas, giving Hamas tremendous influence over peace moves.

MOORE

Continued from Page 1A

"This falls into workforce training," said Board President Richard Steel. "I'd like to see a workforce training committee formed so we could take a closer look at this."

Board members agreed to create the committee, with details expected to be worked out at a later meeting.

The Big Spring Retiree Committee, an ad-hoc committee formed through the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce to explore ways to attract retirees to the area, also made a presentation

to the board.

Retiree Committee members Charles Beil and Frank Parker presented board members with an ongoing plan to market the Big Spring area as a retirement destination.

"We're sending them to former residents of Big Spring," said Parker. "We've used lists gathered from graduating classes at Big Spring High School, as well as lists of people that were stationed here at Webb Air Force Base. They know us best."

"The strongest point Big Spring has going for it economically is it's a good place to live. So who knows that better than people that used to

live here and are now retiring from their jobs?"

Retiree Committee members asked Moore Development board members to pledge \$50,000 to their cause, which will utilize direct mail and a presence on the World Wide Web to hopefully lure former residents to what Beil described as an "alternative to Phoenix."

The board voted to table the issue, opting to take a closer look at the economic development funds currently set aside for promotions.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

RCCI

Continued from Page 1A

looking at way to erect new homes in the area.

"I think it's fair to say that the (December) cleanup was a huge success," Jan Foresyth told the group at this week's RCCI meeting. "What's next... is that as you tear down those buildings, you'll have to the opportunity to build some new ones."

To give the residents

further information on the subject, Paul Pryor, director of Crossroads Housing in Big Spring, discussed various ways of constructing moderately priced homes in the Coahoma area.

As part of its effort in Big Spring, Crossroads Housing constructs or refurbishes houses, then sells them to persons on fixed incomes. Pryor's group also is able to attract federal and state grant money to help offset construction costs of new housing.

"Coahoma has kind of become a bedroom community for Big Spring," Pryor said. "We need to get some of the people who work in Coahoma to buy housing here."

Availability is currently the biggest stumbling block to that plan. Coahoma Mayor Bill Read noted that there are few if any homes for sale in the community. Also, available lots for construction are not exactly prime sites for new houses, he noted.

The RCCI group will

determine just how much land is available for new housing, and Pryor agreed to help with applying for grant money to help in the effort.

On a related note, the RCCI group announced that it will hold a slogan contest in Coahoma. More details will be announced soon, Foresyth said.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331, ext. 234, or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com.

CATS

Continued from Page 1A

Fitzgibbons said the cats were first noticed by city code enforcement officers surveying the area for possible clean-up efforts.

"The code enforcement officers came out to look at the area," said Fitzgibbons. "People have been coming out here and feeding these cats, so when they see a car drive up they immediately think it's dinner time. So they began to swarm out of the woods and surrounding area."

"One person described it as something out of a horror movie. There were just so many of them, and they were all around the vehicle."

Fitzgibbons said the animals will be lured into traps and taken to the city's animal shelter,

where their future is uncertain at this point.

"So many of these cats are feral and have never had human contact, there's no way to adopt them out," said Fitzgibbons. "Those animals will have to be humanely euthanized. However, there may be some kittens or less wild cats in the group that may be able to be adopted. We're hoping to be able to find them good homes."

The cats represent a very real danger, according to Fitzgibbons — a danger that's only encouraged when local residents feed the animals.

"If one of these cats gets in a tussle with a rabid skunk, it's going to pass the virus along to all of the other cats in this group," said Fitzgibbons. "And while these animals shy away from human contact now, they certainly wouldn't if they

became rabid. It represents a danger to the everyone in this area, especially the residential areas nearby.

"People have brought boxes out here with blankets in them," he said, pointing to a row of cardboard boxes near the edge of the wooded area. "They come out here and feed them as well. What they don't understand is they're encouraging these cats to group together, and none of them are spayed or neutered. So each female is going to have eight to 10 kittens, and every female in that litter will have about the same. It just grows out of control at some point."

For more information on animal adoption, contact the BSPD at 264-2550.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

TEENS

Continued from Page 3A

mately \$25,000. These arrests also cleared cases involving theft, theft of a firearm and the burglary of a local business."

Everett said the juvenile suspects have been

placed in the custody of juvenile authorities while the investigation is ongoing, with more arrests deemed "probable."

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

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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

Good to see development of Moss Lake

We'll admit to some mixed feelings about plans to construct off-road vehicle trails and tracks at Moss Creek Lake, but the bottom line is we're happy the city is wanting to do something to attract visitors to the area.

The city council's stamp of approval of a \$150,000 Texas Parks and Wildlife grant Tuesday was a positive move to get the wheels rolling on this project. Next will be archeological, historical and environmental studies and that should go smoothly, assuming, of course, there are no endangered water snakes swimming through the lake's waters.

It is hoped that construction can begin this summer, which is certainly encouraging news.

Frankly, we go to the lake to relax, maybe do a little fishing and sometimes some hiking. So the thought of four-wheelers kicking up dust with engines roaring isn't exactly our idea of a peaceful setting. We were a bit more in favor of this project when it seemed to be on a smaller scale. Now, according to our understanding, the off-road vehicles would not be confined to the southwest area of the lake property, but could encompass a much larger piece of real estate.

However, we realize the popularity of off-roading is strong and attracts folks from teenagers to grandmas. The sport could be a major draw to the area.

The other truth is, Moss Creek Lake has not — at least in recent years — attracted a large number of visitors. It's a popular place during the summer months, but is way under utilized most of the year. Part of that could be that we've never seen a concentrated effort to market the lake. Many people have no inkling that the small body of water even exists, and that includes people we have talked to within 75 miles of Big Spring.

Off-road course or not, that might not change if the city doesn't actively promote the lake and what it has to offer.

All in all, we're glad the city is making an effort to attract visitors to the lake and our area in general. We're still standing here with our fishing pole, but who knows, maybe a motocross bike is in our future.

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@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

LETTER POLICIES

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- 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.
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A very curious form of optimism

Unlike our president, who spent Martin Luther King Day paying respectful tribute to MLK and Abraham Lincoln, Democratic Party notables, Hillary Clinton and Albert Gore, used the holiday as another opportunity to character-assassinate President George W. Bush.

Just when we were beginning to think Hillary Clinton had found her voice — albeit a decidedly phony one — as a mature, seasoned politician poised for a presidential run, she reverts to those cacophonous utterances that find little resonance beyond her embittered but indispensable base.

If one could momentarily suspend his powers of discernment, he could almost sympathize with a woman saddled with the dilemma of trying to sound reasonable without permanently alienating that cabal of reliably unreasonable malcontents. But alas, Hillary obviously has no real beef with her base on principle, and from time to time, it insists she demonstrate her loyalty by paying homage to its cynicism and hysteria.

During a speech at the Canaan Baptist Church of Christ in Harlem, the fair-skinned wife of the first black president wasted no time proving her bona fides by exhibiting her penchant for negative hyperbole in critiquing the president and Congress.

She said, "We have a culture of corruption, we have cronyism, we have incompetence. I predict to you that this administration will go down in history as one of the worst that has ever governed our country."

And, never passing up a chance for political exploitation, Hillary offered up some racially charged red meat to the Hurricane Katrina evacuees in attendance. She apolo-

gized "on behalf of a government that left you behind, that turned its back on you" — a government, I suppose, she denies being a part of when it suits her immediate interests.

But as regrettable as Hillary's remarks were, they were anemic compared to the rantings of that poster boy for instability Albert Gore, who, you may recall with horror, came within one state's electoral vote of being president.

Gore, remembered for declaring that "there is no controlling legal authority" when caught with his hands directly in the middle of a fundraising scandal, was quick to call for an independent investigation into "President Bush's spying program," about which there truly may be no clearly controlling authority.

Of course, Gore doesn't need to wait for an independent investigation. He has already concluded that "the president of the United States has been breaking the law repeatedly and insistently."

Despite the incontrovertible fact that Bush briefed congressmen on his surveillance program, Gore shamelessly said he "secretly assumed that power anyway, as if congressional authorization was a useless bother."

Further displaying his unique gift for chutzpah, Gore yelled, "A president who breaks the law is a threat to the very structure of our government."

He must be making exceptions for serial perjury, suborning perjury, obstruction of justice and, yes, criminal violations of campaign finance laws. Indeed, this proud vice president under the president who made a sport of mocking the rule of law said, "It is imperative that respect for the law be restored."

Then, picking up on the Democrats' latest mantra demonizing President Bush as a megalomaniacal dictator, Gore characterized Bush's attempts to intercept Al Qaeda phone calls for the purpose of protecting America's secu-

rity as a "constitutional power-grab by the president."

Continuing with this theme, Gore said, preposterously, "The president's judicial appointments are clearly designed to ensure that the courts will not serve as an effective check on executive power." I just have to wonder if Gore really thinks enough people are impressionable enough to believe that President Bush, who will leave office in three years, is appointing judges to augment his power rather than to restore integrity to the Constitution.

And, though separate bipartisan commissions concluded the Bush administration did not pressure the CIA or other intelligence agencies to exaggerate their reports of Iraqi WMD, Gore brazenly accused the administration of silencing dissent, censoring inconsistent information and demanding conformity from all executive-branch employees.

He said, "CIA analysts who strongly disagreed with the White House assertion that Osama bin Laden was linked to Saddam Hussein found themselves under pressure at work and became fearful of losing promotions and salary increases."

After accusing President Bush of virtual tyranny and depicting America as on the brink of ruin, Gore closed by protesting, "I am filled with optimism that America is on the eve of a golden age"

Old Albert could have fooled me. He sounds more like George Bernard Shaw's description of a pessimist — one who "thinks everybody is as nasty as himself, and hates them for it."

Either way, I just hope Albert and Hillary continue to spread their contagious optimism between now and November 2008.

To find out more about David Limbaugh, please visit his Web site at www.davidlimbaugh.com. And to read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.



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We need to face the facts, folks

AUSTIN — We live in interesting times, we do, we do. We can read in our daily newspapers that our government is about to launch a three-day propaganda blitz to convince us all that its secret program to spy on us is something we really want and need. "A campaign of high-profile national security events," reports *The New York Times*, follows "Karl Rove's blistering speech to national Republicans" about what a swell political issue this is for their party.

The question for journalists is how to report this. President Bush says it's a great idea and he's proud of the secret spy program? Attorney General Gonzales explains breaking the law is no problem? Dick Cheney says accept spying, or Osama bin Laden will get you?

Or might we actually have gotten far enough to point out that the series of high-profile security events is in fact part of a propaganda campaign by our own government? Should we report it as though it were in fact a campaign tactic, a straight political play? The Republicans say spying is good for you, but the Democrats say it is not — equal time to both sides?

Perhaps we have some obligation to try to sift through what it means that our government is spying on us in violation of the law and the Constitution.

Then there's the problem of reporting within the context of

this administration's other propaganda efforts. "We do not torture," and, "We are not running a gulag of secret detention centers," are two of the more recent examples, superceding the golden oldies — like the smoking gun in the form of a mushroom cloud.

Furthermore, the Rove offensive is not to admit that we are indeed running a gulag of secret detention camps, but to attack those who point it out and put them under investigation for revealing government secrets and helping the enemy. Even without the intimidation, how do you report something claimed by George W. Bush as though you hadn't recently heard him say he would support John McCain's amendment barring torture — and then turn around and claim that he has the right to violate that law?

I genuinely appreciate the response by real conservatives on this issue — the libertarians, the true heirs of Barry Goldwater, the all-government-is-bad grumps. It's called principle. But I am confounded by the authoritarian streak in the Republican Party backing Bush on this.

The warrantless wiretaps reportedly covered thousands of calls, and the information obtained was widely circulated among federal agencies.

I know one guy who is now on the federal no-fly list. His sin? Co-authoring an unflattering book about Karl Rove. What a menace to national security he is.

One of the odder features of our time is that much of our political debate is cast in "moral" terms, with such helpful authorities as Pat Robertson holding forth on whom we should assassinate next. A more useful contribution from

this direction comes from Jimmy Carter in his new book, "Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis."

I am a great admirer of Carter's and glad to hear his soft Southern Christian voice once more. But it occurs to me that in his quiet way, many of his arguments are as pragmatic as they are moral.

As one with considerable faith in the common sense of Americans, it occurs to me we may yet rescue ourselves from this bootless skunk match over morality by using plain sense, instead. Many of Carter's points center on the fact that our war on terrorism is not working. Iraq is not working (hard to even count the ways). Major terrorist attacks themselves more than tripled from 2003, to 655 attacks in 2004. Our support in the Middle East sinks lower and lower. The region is not becoming more democratic.

What would happen if we had not a political, but a pragmatic debate about all of this: We have made a horrible mess of this entire war on terrorism, now how do we fix it? What do we do?

Because we are stuck with this administration for another three years, I think it important to begin to get past the defensiveness and drawing attention away and blame games that big messes provoke. And part of that calls on American journalism to get over reporting the Bush administration as though it were a credible source. We need to face facts.

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



MOLLY IVINS

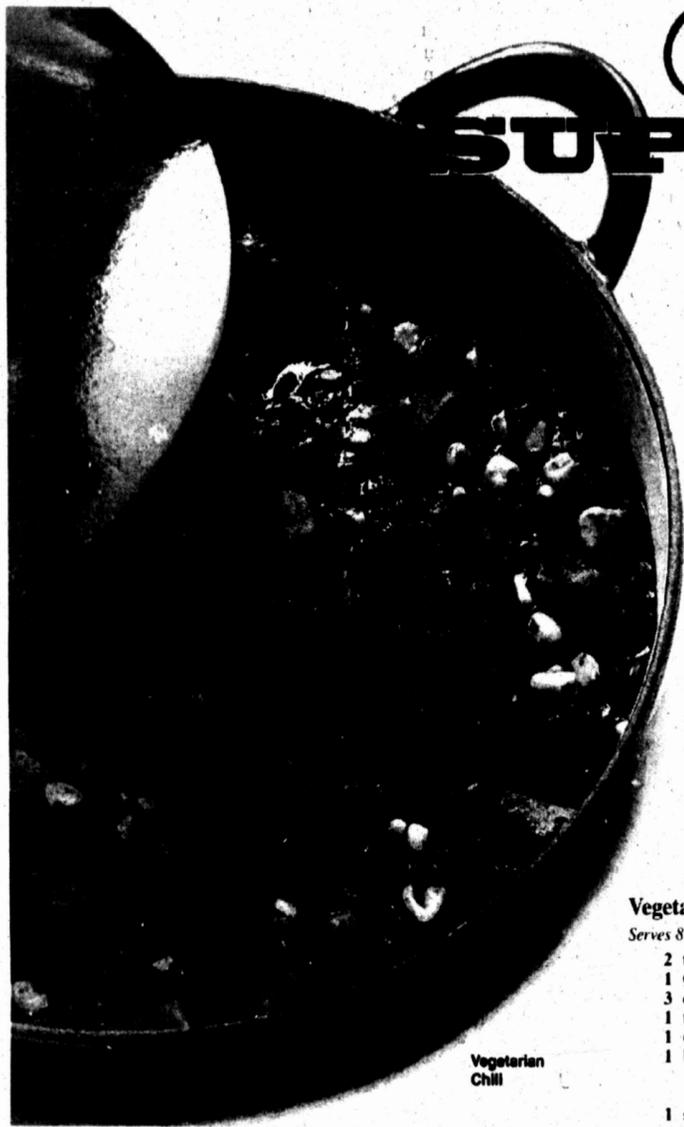
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Vegetarian Chili

Oh-So-Sweet SUPER SUNDAY CHILI PARTY

Traditional Texas, Cincinnati Turkey and Vegetarian Chili score big with football fans.

By Aliza Green

FAMILY FEATURES EDITORIAL SYNDICATE

Chili originated as a way to make great-tasting, tough cuts of meat tender, so it's easy on the budget and tastes even better if made ahead. Just about the only thing chili fanciers agree on is that chili originated in Texas, not Mexico. For fresh, juicy crunch, top chili with chopped sweet onions. To top up those delicious juices, serve with warm cornbread, and round out the meal with colorful slaw.

OSO Sweet onions (mild enough for children and older folks, with no tears or onion-breath) are grown at the foot of Chile's Andes Mountains, where perfect growing conditions produce large, juicy onions with record-high sugar content, crisp texture and mild flavor that doesn't kick back. They contain so little pyruvic acid — the substance that causes tearing, harshness and indigestion — that they are gentle enough raw for chili, sandwiches or salads; versatile enough to caramelize, sauté, grill, fry or roast. Onions contain naturally occurring phytochemicals that can reduce the risk of cancer and protect against heart disease.

Fire up a big "bowl of red" on Super Sunday with zesty OSO Sweet onions, in peak season just in time for the big game — no tickets needed for this chili-lovers feast.

"Anybody that eats chili can't be all bad."

Said about Billy the Kid

"Wish I had time for just one more bowl of chili."

Alleged last words of Kit Carson, frontiersman

Chili Fun Facts

- Chili was called "Soup of the Devil" by Spanish priests who warned against the passion provoked by hot chile peppers, thereby making it immensely popular.
- The first chili powders were concocted around 1850 by chuckwagon cooks on the trail to feed cowboys.
- In the late 1800s the Texas prison system was renowned for its chili. Freed inmates often wrote for the recipe, saying what they missed most was a really good bowl of chili.
- Till the 1930s, San Antonio's "Chili Queens" sold homemade chili from colorful wagons in the main plaza. By the 1930s there was hardly a town in Texas that didn't have its own chili parlor.
- Dave Chasen, of Hollywood's famed Chasen's Restaurant, personally cooked up his secret-recipe chili prized by stars like Clark Gable and Elizabeth Taylor every Sunday.

Vegetarian Chili

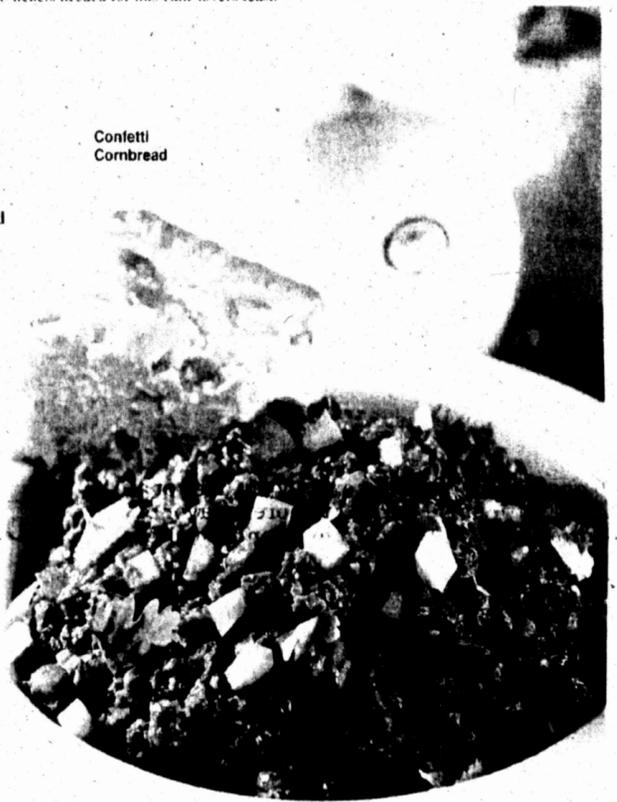
Serves 8

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 OSO Sweet onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, diced
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- 1 (28-ounce) can chopped tomatoes
- 1 butternut squash, peeled and diced (or 1-pound package diced butternut)
- 1 small celery root (celery root), peeled and diced
- 1 (1-pound) bag frozen corn
- 2 (15-ounce) cans dark red kidney beans
- 2 (15-ounce) cans black beans
- Salt to taste
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 2 chipotle chiles in adobo, chopped

Heat oil in large Dutch oven. Add onions, carrots and garlic and cook over medium heat 5 minutes, until crisp-tender. Add tomatoes, butternut squash and celery root and bring to boil. Cover and simmer 20 minutes.

Stir in remaining ingredients, bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until chili has thickened.

Confetti Cornbread



Texas Beef Chili

Texas Beef Chili

Serves 8

- 8 dried ancho chiles, trimmed and seeded
- 3 pounds ground beef, preferably coarse-ground chuck
- 1/4 cup canola oil, divided
- 1 OSO Sweet onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- 2 tablespoons sweet paprika
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 (15-ounce) cans pinto beans
- Salt to taste
- Chopped colorful bell peppers for garnish

Soak dried chiles in 1 quart warm water to soften about 15 minutes. In blender, puree chiles with their liquid. In large Dutch oven over medium-high heat, heat half of oil and brown beef. Remove and reserve.

Add remaining oil to same pan, and lightly brown onion and garlic. Stir in paprika, cumin, oregano and allspice. Add puree, beef, beans and salt to taste, and bring to boil. Cover and simmer 1 hour, or until chili is rich and concentrated. Offer chopped bell peppers for garnish.

Chef's Tip: One secret to great chili is to use coarsely ground beef. Ask the butcher to coarse-grind beef chuck. Dried chile anchos can be found in the Mexican section of supermarkets.

Confetti Cornbread

Serves 8

- 1 OSO Sweet onion, diced
- 2 colorful bell peppers, diced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 pound bag (or 2 cups) frozen corn
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups cornmeal, preferably stone-ground
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 stick unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 6 eggs

Preheat oven to 350°F. In skillet, fry onions and peppers in 2 tablespoons butter till crisp-tender. Remove from heat, stir in corn and reserve. Combine flour, cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, sugar and salt in large bowl.

Lightly beat together 1 stick melted butter, buttermilk and eggs. Pour into flour mixture and whisk together until just combined. Fold in vegetables. Butter 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Pour in batter and bake 45 minutes or until cornbread is set in center.

Veggie Slaw

Serves 8

Dressing:

- 3/4 cup canola oil
- 6 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons coarse mustard
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 2 teaspoons celery seeds
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Vegetables: (or substitute 2 pounds pre-cut slaw mix)

- 1 head curly cabbage (Savoy or napa), shredded
- 1 small head red cabbage, shredded
- 1 pound carrots, shredded
- 2 colorful bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 1 cup thinly sliced OSO Sweet onion

Whisk together dressing ingredients. Toss with vegetables, season to taste and marinate in refrigerator at least 30 minutes before serving.

Five-Way Cincinnati-Style Turkey Chili

Serves 8

- 1/4 cup canola oil, divided
- 3 pounds ground turkey (dark meat preferred for moistness)
- 1 OSO Sweet onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons chopped garlic
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 (12-ounce) can tomato paste, diluted in 1 quart water
- 2 tablespoons chile powder
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 4 bay leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 pound spaghetti

Garnishes:

- 1 (15-ounce) can dark red kidney beans, rinsed, drained and heated
- 1/2 pound sharp cheddar, shredded
- 1 OSO Sweet onion, chopped

In large Dutch oven over medium-high heat, heat half of oil and brown turkey. Remove and reserve.

Add remaining oil to same pot, and lightly brown onion and garlic. Stir in remaining ingredients, seasoning to taste with salt and pepper, and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Bring large pot of salted water to boil. Add spaghetti and cook until "al dente." Drain well and place in large serving bowl. Top with chili (discarding bay leaves). Serve with beans, cheese and onions as garnishes.

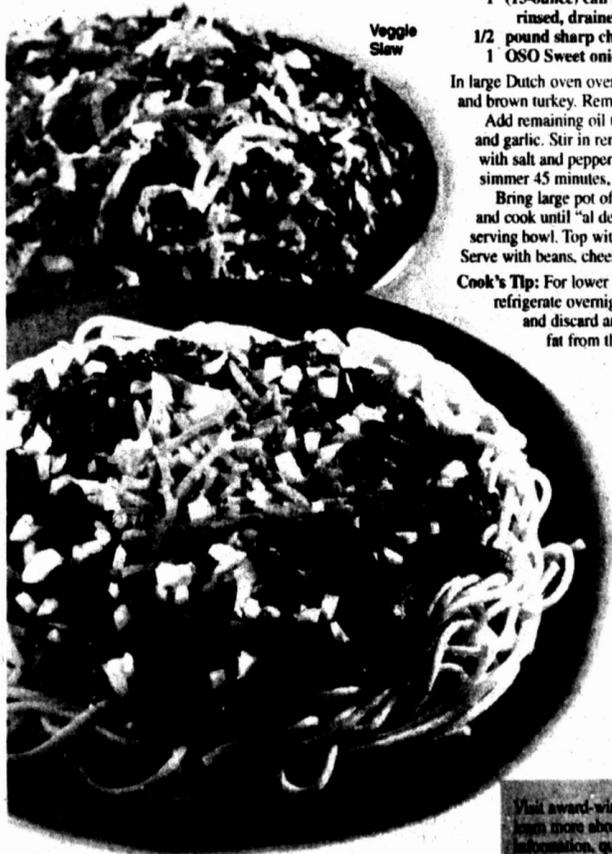
Cook's Tip: For lower fat chili, cool and then refrigerate overnight. The next day, remove and discard any solidified orange-colored fat from the surface.

Chili Garnishes

- Grated cheddar
- Chopped sweet bell peppers and/or jalapeños
- Diced OSO Sweet onions
- Chopped fresh tomatoes
- Chopped cilantro
- Diced avocado
- Sour cream
- Wedges of lime

Aliza Green is author of "Field Guide to Produce" and "Field Guide to Meat" (Quirk Books) and "Beans: More than 200 Wholesome, Delicious Recipes from Around the World" (Running Press).

Visit award-winning sweetonionsource.com to learn more about sweet onions and to get health information, quick tips and terrific recipes.



Five-Way Cincinnati-Style Turkey Chili

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New Raider slightly larger and longer; comes ready for work

By ANN M. JOB

For The Associated Press
Mitsubishi is back, at least back in the truck market.

For the first time since 1996, Mitsubishi is selling a pickup truck in the United States. And this is no barebones vehicle.

The mid-size, 2006 Mitsubishi Raider is powered by a V6 or V3, and the V8 is the most powerful found in any foreign-badged truck.

There's no four-cylinder powerplant here. There's also no small, regular cab version of Raider. This expressively styled truck is offered in larger body styles of extended cab and double cab only, and maximum seating capacity is six.

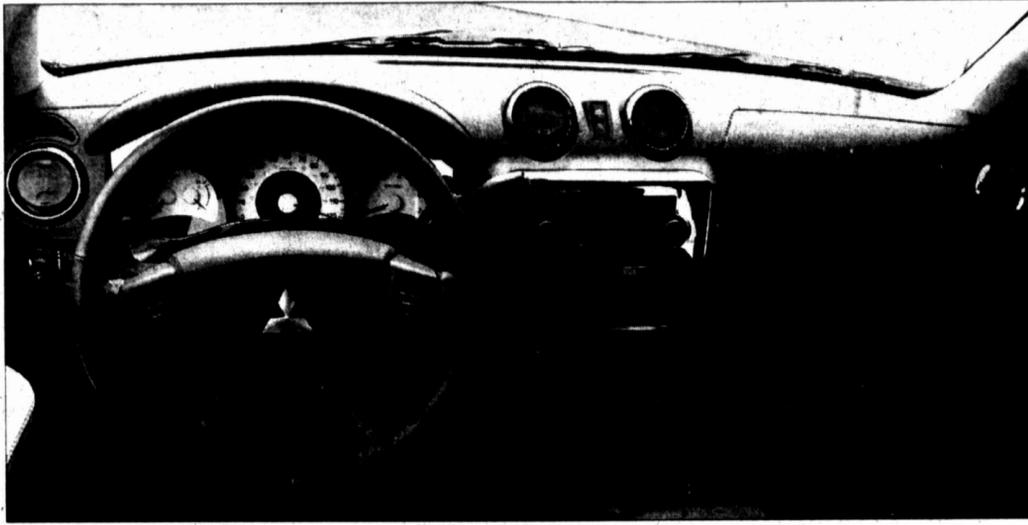
Amenities are plentiful — some standard, some optional. They include Sirius satellite radio, leather-trimmed steering wheel and Bluetooth communication technology.

Another unexpected part of the Raider story: It's based on the mid-size Dodge Dakota pickup.

Mitsubishi and Dodge's parent company, DaimlerChrysler, had planned for the Raider earlier this decade when DaimlerChrysler owned a part of Mitsubishi. This stake in Mitsubishi has since been dissolved, but the Raider contract is being executed.

Starting manufacturer's suggested retail price, including delivery charge, of \$19,825 for a manual transmission, two-wheel-drive, extended cab Raider with V6 is just \$390 more than a base, 2006 Dakota on which it is based.

The lowest-priced Raider with automatic transmission is an



INTERIOR VIEW, 2006 MITSUBISHI RAIDER

extended cab, two-wheel-drive, V6 LS model that starts at \$22,400.

Among mid-size truck competitors are the 2006 Chevrolet Colorado, which has a starting MSRP, including destination charge, of \$15,590 for a base, two-wheel-drive, regular cab model with manual transmission and four-cylinder engine. There's also the 2006 Nissan Frontier, whose V6-powered, two-wheel-drive extended cab model — called the King Cab body style — is similarly priced at \$19,680.

Wondering why consumers might want a Mitsubishi version of Dakota?

Mitsubishi officials said the Raider's unique styling, plus Japanese company branding, should appeal to youthful, male truck buyers who are likely to be import shoppers. They will like Mitsubishi's bumper-to-bumper limited warranty that lasts for five

years/60,000 miles. This compares with three years/36,000 miles for the Dakota.

The Raider is also longer than a comparable Nissan Frontier. Thus, rear-seat legroom of 36.4 inches in a Raider double cab is greater than the 33.6 in a comparable Frontier. But it is a bit narrower than a Frontier, so it has less shoulder room.

There was comfortable room in the test Raider, which was a two-wheel-drive DuroCross double cab with V8 and five-speed automatic transmission.

Power came on quickly, and sometimes quite throatily, when I touched the accelerator. With this kind of response, I didn't wait long to merge into traffic and make passes on the highway.

Both Raider engines have similar performance numbers as they do in the Dakota.

For the 3.7-liter V6, this

means 210 horsepower and 235 foot-pounds of torque at 3,600 rpm. The 4.7-liter V8 has 230 horsepower and 290 foot-pounds of torque at 3,600 rpm.

But there's no high-output V8 that generates 260 horsepower in the Dakota. Also note that the 4-liter V6 in the Frontier produces 265 horsepower and 284 foot-pounds of torque at 4,000 rpm.

The Raider's fuel economy, as you might expect, isn't anything to brag about. But at least all Raiders, with V6 or V8, use regular fuel.

You'll notice the Raider's truckish ride. On potholes and rough road surfaces, the test truck bounced and shuddered in characteristic truck fashion and there was wind noise at highway speeds. But on smoother pavement, the ride was better managed, and the truckish behavior was subtle.

Tires are 16 inches on all but the top-of-the-line

Raider XLS Double Cab, which has wheels and tires with 17-inch diameter.

Watch when making U-turns. Like the Dakota, the Raider has a sizable, 44-foot turning circle.

I liked the good views out from the tall-standing Raider, which has a minimum ground clearance of 7.9 inches.

Too bad, though, that the tubular side rails, which are part of the DuroCross package, didn't seem to be aligned properly on the test truck. They rested closer to the truck body at the front doors than they did at the back doors, which meant passengers had different foot space, depending on whether they climbed out from the front or the back doors.

The interior is clean and streamlined, especially for a truck. But it's not quite as stylish as I was expecting, given the exterior.

But this is a truck that's

2006 Mitsubishi Raider

BASE PRICE: \$19,180 for 2WD LS V6 extended cab with manual transmission; \$21,755 for 2WD LS V6 extended cab with automatic; \$23,440 for 2WD DuroCross V6 extended cab; \$23,680 for 2WD LS V6 double cab; \$25,365 for 2WD DuroCross V6 double cab; \$25,440 for 2WD DuroCross V8 extended cab; \$26,710 for 4WD LS V6 double cab; \$27,690 for 2WD DuroCross V8 double cab.

AS TESTED: \$29,775.

TYPE: Front-engine, rear-wheel-drive, five- or six-passenger, mid-size pickup truck.

ENGINE: 4.7-liter, single overhead cam V8.

MILEAGE: 15 (city), 20 (highway).

LENGTH: 219.9 inches.

WHEELBASE: 131.3 inches.

CURB WEIGHT: 4,700 pounds.

BUILT AT: Warren, Mich.

OPTIONS: Premium sound package \$1,440.

DESTINATION CHARGE: \$645.

ready to work.

The pickup bed extends back 6 feet on the extended cab model and 5 1/4 feet with the double cab. The bed is more than 17 inches deep, which is just under the 18-inch depth of the Frontier.

Towing capacity tops out at 6,500 pounds in the Raider with V8, and maximum payload is 1,700 pounds.

Standard safety features on this new truck include anti-lock brakes.

Ford introduces hybrid research vehicle that can run on ethanol

By KEN THOMAS

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Ford Motor Co., extending its push into hybrid technology, said Wednesday it was the first automaker to develop a hybrid research vehicle capable of running on ethanol-based fuels.

Ford was unveiling the Escape Hybrid E85 before journalists at the Washington Auto Show on Wednesday.

The vehicle combines hybrid-electric power with the capability of operating on a mixture of 15 percent gasoline and 85 percent ethanol, a corn-based additive.

"This innovative research program could lead to breakthroughs to significantly reduce our nation's dependence on imported oil while also helping to address global climate

"This innovative research program could lead to breakthroughs to significantly reduce our nation's dependence on imported oil while also helping to address global climate change,"

Anne Stevens
Ford Motor Co.

change," said Anne Stevens, Ford's executive vice president and chief operating officer for the Americas.

Ford, which outlined a major restructuring plan Monday that would cut up to 30,000 jobs and close 14 plants by 2012, has delved deeply into hybrid vehicles.

In 2004, it introduced the first hybrid sport utility vehicle, the Escape Hybrid, and is expected to produce 250,000 hybrids a

year by the end of the decade.

The nation's No. 2 automaker plans to produce 250,000 ethanol-capable vehicles this year, including the Ford F-150 pickup truck, Ford Crown Victoria sedan, the Mercury Grand Marquis and the Lincoln Town Car.

Backers of ethanol say it's a clean-burning fuel that helps Midwest farmers while reducing the nation's dependence on foreign oil and cutting green-

house gas emissions. But critics say the fuel is a waste of \$3 billion a year in state and federal subsidies and question whether ethanol takes more energy to make than it produces.

Ford said the technology offers real potential, estimating that oil imports could be reduced by about 140 million barrels a year if 5 percent of the U.S. vehicle fleet were powered by hybrids using the E85

ethanol fuel instead of gasoline.

The automaker said ethanol-fueled hybrids could also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, estimating the vehicle would produce about 25 percent less carbon dioxide by using the combination fuel.

The vehicle is not currently slated for production, but Ford said it could quickly produce the vehicle if there were improvements to the infrastructure of ethanol pumps around the nation, enough ethanol production and consumer demand.

"If the government and the infrastructure is there, the technology is there today to go as far as we want to go with this," Stevens said during the news conference.

On the Net:
Ford Motor Co.
<http://www.ford.com>

Tire prices on the way up

Industry predicts car tires will become more expensive due to rise in price for key raw materials such as rubber, steel and oil.

Composition by weight

- Carbon black: 28%
- Steel: 15%
- Natural rubber: 14%
- Synthetic rubber
- Fabric, fillers, accelerators, oil

Where materials are used

1. Contact surface: Synthetic and natural rubber
2. Access cover: Nylon, surrounded by rubber
3. Steel cord
4. Textile layer: Rayon or polyester
5. Inner layer: Rubber
6. Carb: Natural rubber
7. Core profile: Synthetic rubber
8. Core: Steel cord surrounded by rubber
9. Bead strengthening: Nylon, aramide

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IN BRIEF

Garrard makes...
The Western Sportsman Club will be holding a...
Sunday, Feb...
miles out on...
Andrews Highway (Highway 176).
For more information, contact 263-1345.

Big Spring L.L. to elect new officers

The Big Spring Little League will hold a meeting to elect new officers Sunday at the Howard County Library.
The meeting will start at 2 p.m.
For more information, contact Chuck Rosenbaum at 263-1792.

Howard announces wear red promotion

The Howard College athletic department will again be implementing a "wear red" get in free during the Hawk men and women's next home game against rival South Plains. Anyone wearing red to the game will get in free of charge.
The game will take place Monday at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum. The women's game will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the top-ranked Hawk men's team will tip off around 7:50 p.m.
Also getting into the game free will be any student who currently attends Bauer Magnet School. Several elementary schools will have the chance to get in free this year as part of another Howard promotion.

Slugger Thomas signs with Oakland

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Free agent slugger Frank Thomas agreed to a \$500,000, one-year contract with Oakland.

Thomas upset over harassment charges

NEW YORK (AP) — Isiah Thomas reacted with indignation over a former team executive's federal sexual harassment lawsuit, which accuses the New York Knicks president of unwanted advances, discrimination and "demeaning and repulsive behavior."

Thomas said he never harassed Anucha Browne Sanders, the Knicks' former senior vice president of marketing and business operations, nor did he discriminate against her or participate in her firing.

Miller headlines U.S. Alpine team

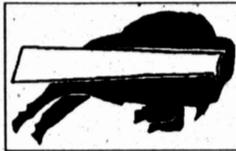
LAS VEGAS (AP) — World Cup winners Bode Miller, Daron Rahmel and Lindsey Kildow head the 10-member U.S. Alpine ski team for the Turin Olympic.
The team's overall medal tally is promising overall. The U.S. Alpine medal winner at the Salt Lake City Olympic.

Forsan JV team suffers first defeat of season

By JEFF LANE

SPECIAL to the Herald
FORSAN — The Forsan JV boys team's win streak stopped at 14 Tuesday night as the Iraan Braves defeated the Buffaloes, 39-36.
The Buffs held the lead throughout and led by as many as 11 until late in the third period.
With three minutes to go in the third, the Braves cut the lead to 26-24 before Russell Strong

nailed a 3-point shot, extending the Forsan lead to five.
But Iraan fought back, scoring the next five points and knotting things up at 29-29 with 1:20 to go in the frame.
Although turnovers had hurt the Buffs and allowed the Braves back into the game, they still held a one-point lead going into the fourth.
Blake Grantham gave the Buffs a three-point



pull to within one with just more than two minutes to go and still had a chance with time running down, but Iraan sank two free shots with 1.1 seconds left to secure the 39-36 win.
Forsan, which dropped to 14-1 on the year, was led in scoring by Jeremy Robbins' nine points.
Grantham added seven and Nathan Ackerson had six.
In JV girls play, the

Lady Buffs lost to the Bravettes, 26-12, as they could not find the range on the offensive end.
The ladies played hard and kept the game tight, but could not pull it out in the end.
Sandi Golleher scored six points and Carissa Jensen added three.
Both teams will participate in the Rankin JV Tournament starting today. The tournament runs through Saturday.

Mavericks take down Warriors in Oakland

By GREG BEACHAM
AP Sports Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. — Avery Johnson cited his Dallas Mavericks' defense and rebounding as the reasons for the victory that sent their coach to the All-Star game.
He also knew the Golden State Warriors helped out just as much with a phenomenally inept fourth quarter.
Jerry Stackhouse scored a season-high 23 points, Dirk Nowitzki added 18 and the Mavericks roared past the Warriors in the final minutes for their sixth straight victory, 102-93 Wednesday night.
Jason Terry scored 16 points for the Mavericks, who got their 17th road victory of the season and improved to 4-0 on their

five-game road trip. After Johnson watched his team trudge through the first half of their first game in three days, he was pleased to see a near-flawless finish.
And the Mavs had plenty of help from the Warriors, who absolutely fell apart in the fourth quarter — missing their first 16 shots and going 10:42 between field goals.
"They missed some shots, but I know we contested them better in the fourth quarter than we did all game," said Johnson, who clinched the right to coach the Western Conference All-Stars in Houston next month. "(The All-Star game) is nothing about
See MAVERICKS, Page 2B



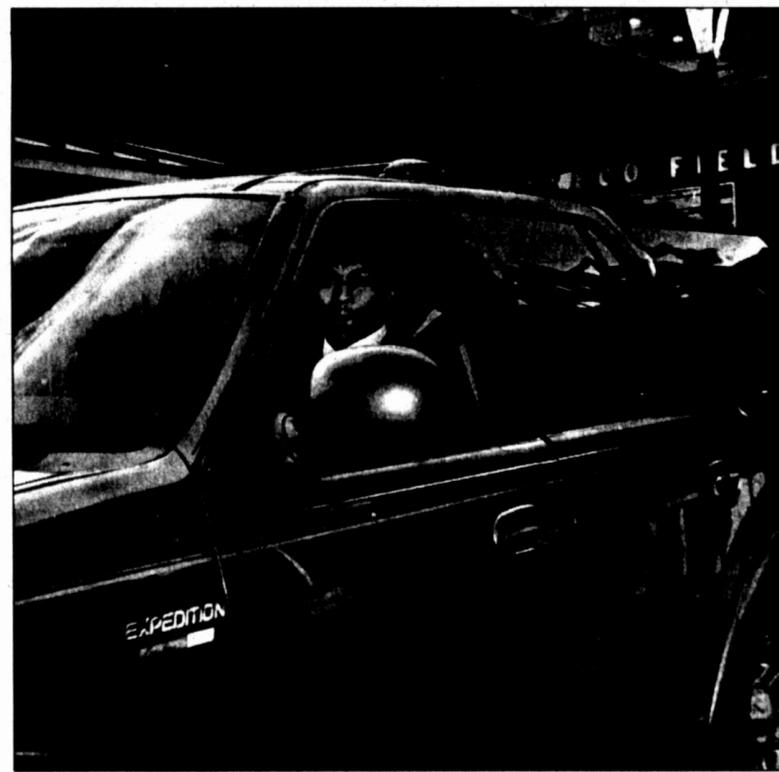
Courtesy photo
Four students from Forsan Junior High School participated in the West Texas Paintball Series tournament last Sunday. The event was a three-man beginner tournament and the team from Forsan (Texas Legion) placed in a tie for fourth overall. From left: JP Barber, Jake Moore, Josh Hatfield and Zack Gillam are the 14-year-olds who made up the team from Forsan. The tournament featured players ranging from ages 17-40. The Texas Legion will next participate in a tournament in April.

Artest finds new home, Pacers get shooter in return

By MICHAEL MAROT
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS — The Pacers couldn't change Ron Artest's act in Indianapolis. After all the volatile forward's troubles, Indiana is hoping a new home will help.
Indiana traded Artest to Sacramento Wednesday for Peja Stojakovic in a deal the Pacers think could help change Artest's reputation as one of the game's most unpredictable characters.
"Maybe this was not the right team for a guy like Ronnie," Pacers CEO Donnie Walsh said. "Really, Ronnie couldn't get out from under it and I hope he does in Sacramento because everyone needs a fresh start."

For Artest, it's more than a new opportunity. It's a chance to rebuild his image as one of the game's best players rather than one of its most notorious.
Since trading for Artest in a trade-deadline deal in February 2002, Artest's career has been fraught with distractions and bizarre incidents. He once kicked a ball into the stands. Another time, he broke a television camera after throwing it to the ground. He verbally sparred with Miami Heat coach Pat Riley during games.
And, of course, he was at the center of one of the worst brawls in U.S. sports history when he charged into the stands at Detroit and fought with Pistons fans. That drew



KRT photo/Charlie Nya, The Indianapolis Star
Indiana Pacers' Ron Artest drives away from Conseco Fieldhouse after meeting with Pacers management about his status with the team and trade negotiations in Indianapolis, Ind., Wednesday. Artest was traded to the Sacramento Kings later that night.

Upcoming area basketball games

Tonight
Howard College @ Odessa College, 5:50 p.m. and 7:50 p.m.

Friday
Andrews @ Big Spring, 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Coahoma @ Stamford, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Forsan @ Wink, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Grady @ Garden City, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Sands @ Dawson, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

January 30
South Plains @ Howard College, 5:50 p.m. and 7:50 p.m.

January 31
Lubbock Estacado @ Big Spring, 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
*game will be played at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum
Stanton @ Coahoma, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.
McCamey @ Forsan, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Garden City @ Sands, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Klondike @ Grady, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Nalbandian falls in Aussie semis

• Henin-Hardenne to meet Mauresmo in women's title match

By PAUL ALEXANDER
Associated Press Writer
MELBOURNE, Australia — Unseeded Marcos Baghdatis guaranteed his remarkable run at the Australian Open, rallying Thursday to beat No. 4 David Nalbandian 3-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 and reach the final.
With the crowd screaming support, the 54th-ranked Baghdatis guaranteed that he will more than double his career winnings. He will play the winner of Friday's semifinal between top-seeded Roger Federer and No. 21 Nicolas Kiefer.

Baghdatis, a former world junior champion from Cyprus, was serving for the match at 15-15 when rain began pouring down, forcing organizers to close the roof on Rod Laver Arena.
After workers towed off the surface, the 20-year-old Baghdatis missed his first match point on a backhand that was ruled long.
Nalbandian hit a forehand into the net to set up a second chance, and Baghdatis finished it off with his 15th ace, dropping to his knees and bowing his head.
"Just amazing," said Baghdatis, who hadn't made it past the fourth round of his first five Grand Slam events. "I

have to wake up. "Everything was going in. I was just in my own world I think."
He won 17 of the last 21 points.
On the women's side, second-seeded Kim Clijsters had to quit during her semifinal against No. 3 Amelie Mauresmo after spraining her right ankle. Mauresmo, seeking her first Grand Slam title, will face eighth-seeded Justine Henin-Hardenne on Saturday.
The stadium was awash in blue-and-white — looking more like Greece's national day than Australia's — in support of Baghdatis. The dozens of chanting fans who
See AUSTRALIA, Page 2B

MAVERICKS

Continued from Page 1B

me. It just shows the guys that play for the Mavs won some games."

The Mavs have won more than a few: They're 32-10. Dallas overcame a slow start with dynamic play in the final minutes, scoring 15 consecutive points spanning the final two quarters before cruising to its 12th victory in the last 13 trips to Oakland.

"They got off to a pretty good start, and we were pretty much sleepwalking through the first half," said Stackhouse, who hit three 3-pointers for the second straight game. "Really the key was our rebounding and getting them to work on the offensive end. We started to get some second-chance opportunities, and we held them to one shot."

Baron Davis had 26 points and 10 assists, while Troy Murphy added 22 points and 14 rebounds — but Golden State managed just four free throws while Dallas pulled away in front of a booning home crowd. Mickael Pietrus' short hook with 1:47 to play was the Warriors' first field goal of the fourth quarter, ending a 24-4 run by Dallas.

"All of a sudden, we went stone cold," coach Mike Montgomery said. "We just can't sustain the level. Part of it is rebounding, and part of it is free throw shooting. When we learn to play, (and) sustain a level like we're capable of, then



KRT photo/Harry E. Walker, Knight-Ridder Tribune
Houston Rocket Tracy McGrady (1) is defended by Washington Wizard Caron Butler (3) during their game played at the MCI Center in Washington, D.C., Tuesday night. The Rockets defeated the Charlotte Bobcats Wednesday behind 29 points from McGrady.

we'll be able to beat these teams."

The Warriors have lost eight of their last 10, falling into disarray at the midway point of the season after their most promising start since their last trip to the playoffs in 1994.

"We're better than we've been since I've been here, but we're also more disappointed, because we have the talent to be over .500," said Mike

Dunleavy, who scored just eight points in 38 minutes. "You just have to stick with it and fight through it. Who knows how good this team can be or where we'll finish up?"

The Mavericks took their first lead since the opening minutes on Stackhouse's 3-pointer early in the fourth, then went ahead 87-78 on Nowitzki's jumper with 6:51 to play.

Though Jason Richardson finally ended Golden State's scoreless quarter with one free throw moments later, he then left the game clutching his back. Richardson finished with 17 points.

The defeat was another late-game embarrassment for the Warriors, who blew a 19-point lead in the second half of their home loss to the Los Angeles Clippers Monday night.

Devin Harris led Dallas with 11 points in the first half, but sprained his right shoulder with 2.1 seconds left in the first half when he ran facefirst into Mike Dunleavy's pick. Harris was flat on the court for several seconds before walking awkwardly to the locker room.

Golden State led by 11 points in the first quarter when the Mavericks came out in an uncharacteristic shooting slump. Murphy went 8-for-11 in the first half, scoring 17 points.

Rockets 102, Bobcats 78 HOUSTON (AP) — Tracy McGrady scored 29 points in three quarters as Houston snapped a seven-game home losing streak.

Seldom-used Lonnie Baxter added a season-high 18 points and 11 rebounds and David Wesley added 15 for Houston, which improved to 4-13 at the Toyota Center. The Rockets hadn't won a home game since a 91-73 victory over Boston on Dec. 6.

Matt Carroll had 19 for injury-depleted Charlotte, which dropped its season-high ninth straight game.

ARTEST

Continued from Page 1B

the NBA's longest suspension, 73 games plus the playoffs — and marred his image nationally.

In December, Artest stunned teammates and Pacers officials who supported him after the brawl by requesting a trade. That precipitated a month's worth of rumors and created the Pacers' biggest distraction of the season. When Indiana finally appeared to have its deal with Sacramento on Tuesday, Artest reportedly balked at playing for the Kings before relenting after a meeting with Walsh on Wednesday.

The Kings forgave Artest for those indiscretions, betting they could turn Artest into one of the league's best all-around players.

"We're gamblers. So we're going to take a chance on him," Kings co-owner Gavin Maloof said. "All that's in the past. We want to look forward, otherwise we wouldn't have made this happen."

Artest has long been regarded as one of the league's top defenders. He was an All-Star and the league's Defensive Player of the Year in 2003-04.

When he has played, Artest also was a key to the Pacers' offense. He averaged 24.6 points in the seven games he played last year before the suspension, and 19.4 in 16 games this year before being deactivated after his trade demand.

The beleaguered Kings welcomed the acquisition almost as much as Indiana welcomed the end to this saga.

"We're glad it's over with," Pacers president Larry Bird said. "We wanted to be patient with this one because Ronnie is a heck of a player and someone's always going to take a chance on someone like that."

Bird and Walsh decided to keep him until they got the right offer, and Bird said the rumors did cause chemistry problems.

The Pacers were 10-6 with him, 11-14 without him.

Finally, the Kings called

back in recent days proposing a deal that had been rumored in the summer of 2004: Artest for Stojakovic. With an outside shooter who could help the Pacers replace the retired Reggie Miller, Bird and Walsh decided the offer was good for everyone.

"I think what it came down to is that our owner wants to win and, in the end, we did this deal because we knew it would make us a better team," Bird said.

Stojakovic, like Artest, comes with an All-Star pedigree — and almost none of the baggage. The 6-foot-10 Serbian star averaged 18.5 points during his career and has been selected to three All-Star teams.

This season, though, has been Stojakovic's worst in the NBA. He's averaged 16.5 points in 31 games, has been bothered by a bad back.

With the Kings mired in last place in the Pacific Division, the co-owners decided to deal their longest-tenured player for what they perceive one of the league's best all-around talents.

"Our team hasn't performed the way it should," co-owner Joe Maloof said. "We needed to do something. I think the fans in Sacramento were ready for a change no matter what."

Indiana spent several weeks searching for the right deal, nearly sending Artest to the Los Angeles Clippers for Corey Maggette before the Kings called back.

But Stojakovic was too tempting for Indiana.

He joined the Kings as an unheralded 21-year-old rookie in 1998 and could become a free agent this summer if he voids the last season of his deal.

It was Sacramento's fourth major trade in 13 months, following deals involving Chris Webber, Bobby Jackson and Doug Christie. And Kings players welcomed their new teammate.

"I know he might put us over that hump that we need," guard Mike Bibby said. "The way he plays, he plays good defense, he can score, too. Maybe that can pick up the intensity in everybody else."

Florida, three other top 15 teams fall

(AP) — Before the season, Florida was nowhere to be seen on any list of the country's top teams.

The Gators, who lost their top three scorers from last season, didn't crack lists of the top teams in the Southeastern Conference, either.

That all changed with a school-record 17-0 start that saw Florida rise to No. 2 in The Associated Press' poll. Things are about to change again after consecutive road losses to Tennessee and South Carolina, the latter a 68-62 defeat on Wednesday night.

"We're right back to where we were before the season started," Gators coach Billy Donovan said. "We've got to be able to prove ourselves. I think it's very, very evident, we're not a Top 5, Top Ten, Top 15 team."

While Donovan thought the Gators (17-2, 3-2) fought hard in their 80-76 loss at Tennessee last weekend, he didn't see the same intensity from his team against the Gamecocks (11-8, 2-4).

South Carolina had the edge in every category over Florida. The Gamecocks had more rebounds (32-31), fewer turnovers (8-17) and doubled the Gators' five steals.

In other games involving ranked teams, it was: No. 1 Connecticut 66, St. John's 50; No. 8 Illinois 77, Minnesota 53; Marshall 58, No. 9 West Virginia 52; Michigan 72, No. 11 Michigan State 67; No. 14 George Washington 94, Duquesne 78; Seton Hall 83, No. 15 North Carolina State 65; No. 18 Maryland 86, Georgia Tech 74; No. 19

Tennessee 88, Mississippi State 65; No. 20 Boston College 84, North Carolina 74; No. 22 Louisville 67, Cincinnati 50; No. 23 Wisconsin 72, Penn State 43; and No. 24 Oklahoma 82, Baylor 52.

Tarence Kinsey had 19 points for South Carolina, which snapped a nine-game losing streak against the Gators dating to 2001. Florida took a 15-6 lead, but the Gamecocks went on a 20-6 run to take control, leading by as many as 13 in the second half.

"Some might say there was a team in the country that needed a win like this more than we did," South Carolina coach Dave Odom said. "I would argue that."

Taurean Green led the Gators with 17 points, while Joakim Noah had 12, only four in the second half.

Green had two 3-pointers, Walter Hodge added one and Al Horford scored inside as Florida cut a 15-point lead to 67-62 with 38 seconds to go. South Carolina held on despite going 4-of-8 from the free-throw line down the stretch.

Marshall 58, No. 9 West Virginia 52
Mark Patton had 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Thundering Herd (8-9), who beat their in-state rival for the second straight year and ended the nation's longest winning streak at 12 games. West Virginia went on a 7-0 run to tie the game at 48 with 2:08 remaining, but Patton put Marshall ahead to stay with a short jumper with 1:32 left.
Kevin Pittsnogle had 20



KRT photo/Jill Richards, The State
South Carolina's Tre Kelley drives to the basket against Florida's Joakim Noah during first period action at The Colonial Center in Columbia, S.C., Wednesday.

points for the Mountaineers (14-4), who were held to a season low for points in the game played at the Charleston Civic Center.

Michigan 72, No. 11 Michigan St. 67
Daniel Horton scored 23 points and the Wolverines (14-3, 4-2 Big Ten) won their third straight and beat their rival for the second time in 14 meetings.
Maurice Ager had 18 points for the Spartans

(15-5, 3-3), who pulled within two late but failed to score on three possessions.

Seton Hall 83, No. 15 N.C. State 65
Donald Copeland had 22 points and Kelly Whitney added 17 for the Pirates (11-6), who opened the second half with a 14-3 run to take a 54-30 lead.

Tony Bethel had 15 points for the Wolfpack (15-4), who lost at home for the first time this season.

AUSTRALIA

Continued from Page 1B

showed up for every one of his matches had plenty of company this time in a city with a large Greek

population. Baghdatis broke Nalbandian, the reigning Masters Cup champion and 2002 Wimbledon runner-up, early in the first set before the Argentine started ripping winners from both sides.

Nalbandian jumped ahead by a set and 5-1 in the second before Baghdatis started rallying.

The crowd erupted in thunderous cheers as he tied it at 5-5.

He was serving at 15-40

in the next game when holiday fireworks started thundering nearby.

The startled Baghdatis hit a forehand backcourt winner before twisting his ankle while losing the next point and the game.

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THURSDAY

	WFAA (7)	KIND (3)	UNI (4)	KPEJ (5)	KOBA (7)	KTLE (8)	KWES (9)	WTBS (11)	KMLM (12)	KOCV (13)	DISC (20)	AMC (21)	SPK (22)	TNT (23)	BET (24)	DISH (27)	ESPN2 (28)	ESPN (29)	SCFI (34)
6	News (CC)	News (CC)	Pat de Oloro	My Wife-Kids	News (CC)	La Tormenta	News (CC)	Raymond	Joe McGee	News-Letter	Human Fry	Classics	CSI: Crime	Law & Order	Live	That's Raven	With Smith	College	Science Fic.
7	Dancing With the Stars	Dancing With the Stars	Corina Vento y Maria	70s Show	CSI: Crime	El Cuerpo del Daño	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Update/Israel	The Old House Hour	Daddy	Murphy, Brooklyn	CSI: Crime	NBA	Girlfriends	Market: Midan	College	College	Movie: Path of Destruction
8	Comics (CC)	Comics (CC)	Abraham	The O.C.	CSI: Crime	Compass Part Decisiones	News in East	Friends (CC)	Light of the Southwest	Artigue Roadshow	Snakes: The Big Squeeze	Murphy, Brooklyn	MDC	Phonix: Sure at Miami Heat	Movie: Bad II	College	College	Movie: Path of Destruction	
9	Primetime (CC)	Primetime (CC)	Apel y Alton	My Wife-Kids	Without a Trace (CC)	Decisiones	ER (CC)	Movie: The Haunting		Guns, Games and Steel	Tracking	Movie: Sharky's	King of Vegas			Zack & Cody	La-Lalayo	Movie: Fatal Error (CC)	
10	News (CC)	News (CC)	Primer Impacto	70s Show	News	Noticias	News	40 Movie: The Others	Healing	Charlie Rose (CC)	Human Fry II (CC)	Machine	King of Vegas	Basketball: Dallas	In Living Color	That's Raven	Season	Movie: Fatal Error (CC)	
11	Ent. Tonight	Ent. Tonight	La Hora	TBA	Late Late	Late Late	Late Night	40 Movie: The Others	Del Sanchez	Sign Off	Daddy	Movie: and the Band	MDC	CSI: Crime	Movie: Inside the NBA	BET After Dark	Tennis: Ever	Movie: Fatal Error (CC)	
12	Live (CC)	Live (CC)	Amigas y Rivales (BB)	King of the Hill	Late Late	Movie: Coleto Pagado	Conan O'Brien	40 Movie: The Others	Update/Israel	Snakes: The Big Squeeze	Snakes: The Big Squeeze	Movie: and the Band	MDC	CSI: Crime	Movie: Inside the NBA	BET After Dark	ESPN Holly	Movie: Fatal Error (CC)	

DENNIS THE MENACE



"If you're a distant relative, how far away do you live?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Mommy, next time could we get a candle that smells like a chocolate-chip cookie?"

HAGAR



BLONDIE



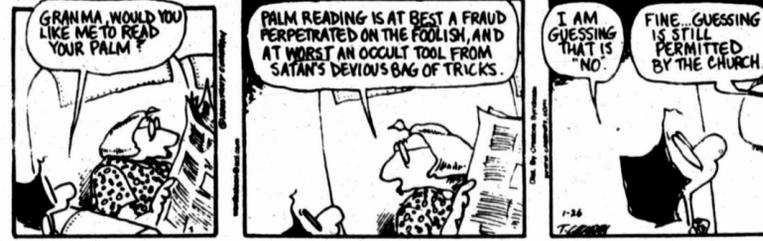
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WIZARD OF ID



AGNES



HI AND LOIS



THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 26, the 26th day of 2006. There are 339 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:
On Jan. 26, 1788, the first European settlers in Australia, led by Captain Arthur Phillip, landed in present-day Sydney.

On this date:
In 1802, Congress passed an act calling for a library to be established within the U.S. Capitol.
In 1837, Michigan became the 26th state.
In 1841, Britain formally occupied Hong Kong, which the Chinese had ceded to the British.
In 1861, Louisiana seceded from the Union.
In 1870, Virginia rejoined the Union.
In 1911, the Richard Strauss opera "Der Rosenkavalier" premiered in Dresden, Germany.
In 1942, the first American expeditionary force to go to Europe during World War II went ashore in Northern Ireland.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Charles Lane is 101. Actress Anne Jeffreys is 83. Actor Paul Newman is 81. Actress Joan Leslie is 81. Cartoonist Jules Feiffer is 77. Sports-caster-actor Bob Uecker is 71. Actor Scott Glenn is 67. Singer Jean Knight is 63. Activist Angela Davis is 62. Rock musician Corky Laing (Mountain) is 58. Actor David Strathairn is 57. Singer Lucinda Williams is 53. Rock singer-musician Eddie Van Halen is 51. Reggae musician Norman Hassan (UB40) is 48. Actress-comedian Ellen DeGeneres is 48. Hockey star Wayne Gretzky is 45. Musician Andrew Ridgeley is 43.

Rhythm-and-blues singer Jazzie B. (Soul II Soul) is 43. Actor Paul Johansson is 42. Gospel singer Kirk Franklin is 36. Actress Jennifer Crystal is 33. Rock musician Chris Hesse (Hooastank) is 32. Actress Sarah Rue is 28. Country musician Michael Martin (Marshall Dyllon) is 23.

Thought for Today: "As long as men are free to ask what they must, free to say what they think, free to think what they will, freedom can never be lost, and science can never regress."
— J. Robert Oppenheimer, American physicist (1904-1967).

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Answer to previous puzzle

ABIF	GAPS	URBAN
SLOE	OVEN	NOISE
KATE	FORA	POINTS
SWALLOW	UP	INGOT
ORES	ALDERS	
ALLOW	DENVER	
HEIFER	BAO	ODIE
SAFFRON	TIDDITS	
ONTO	SIR	DRIVES
NAILED	ANAME	
TAMALE	GRAMPS	
ADELPHI	JAY	WALKER
POLAR	ICE	CREAM
EBERT	DECK	GLIMP
RIEKIS	ISEE	SODA

Newsday Crossword GOING UNDERCOVER by Doug Peterson Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Wear proudly
6 River bottoms
10 Schussing surface
14 Be on the fence
15 Tennis great Lendl
16 Closing part of a piece
17 Fred Astaire's sister
18 Withered
19 Urban reformer Jacob
20 What "X" may mark
23 Not out
24 Hot temper
25 Understanding
26 Panel game show of the '50s and '60s
32 Back street
34 Prefix for angle
35 One-sixth of 34 Across
36 Zip
37 Foucault's Pendulum novelist
40 Gridiron position
42 Archaic exclamation
43 Swiss abstractionist
45 2001 biopic
47 Emmy, e.g.
49 Ulterior motives
53 One, to Juan
54 Actress Long
55 Thick rug
58 Kim Basinger Oscar film
62 Minute amount
63 Delayed

DOWN

1 Cleans, as a deck
2 City near Venice
3 Sated
4 Sub for
5 Family diagram
6 Informal eatery
7 Senator Dirksen
8 Take risks
9 Slips past the doorman
10 Crumple (up)
11 Roulette bet
12 Comics canine
13 "As I ___ saying..."
21 Archaeological site
22 Go out with
27 Hurricane feature
28 Have existence
29 Makes alterations to
30 Persian Gulf bigwig
31 Neck and neck
32 Egyptian cross
33 Leslie Caron role
38 Ecclesiastical doctrines
39 Slangy suffix
41 Family man
44 Send to school
46 Put a match to
48 Ne'er-do-well
50 Ambient music pioneer
51 Downy ducks
52 Denial in Dundee
56 Biography network
57 Lip enhancer
58 Joe Hardy's tempter
59 Full range
60 Best-liked one, slangily
61 Brief message
62 School of thought

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BLAST MASTERS has a position available for "Crew Technician" Must have valid drivers license and pass drug test. Come by 1711 Snyder Hwy., and pickup an application. No phone calls please.

CAITHNESS OPERATING COMPANY - has an immediate opening for an O & M Tech at our West Wind Power Texas Facility. Will train candidate who possess industrial mechanical or electrical experience. Must routinely climb wind turbines in excess of 200 feet. Please send resumes to Caithness Operating Company, Attn: Human Resources, P.O. Box 1690, Inyokern, CA 93527, or fax to 760-764-1318, or e-mail to: djackson@caithnessenergy.com Resumes must be received by January 31, 2006 to be considered.

MIDWESTERN SERVICES, Inc.

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BIG SPRING HERALD

Would you like to spend a month in Brazil, all expenses paid? Time is running out to form a team for the May 1-20 Rotary Group Study Exchange with Brazil. We need three more team members from Howard County.

Since its formation in 1967, the Group Study Exchange program has involved more than 11,000 teams and 50,000 team members. It is one of the best programs Rotary has to provide professional development, international understanding, and cross-cultural friendships.

The ideal candidate is a young professional between 25 and 40 and must not have a family relationship with a Rotarian. You need not speak Portuguese or Spanish, although it would be helpful to have the skills. Contact any Rotarian, or call Jerry Worthy at (432)267-8094.

Help Wanted

DORA ROBERTS Rehabilitation Center has an immediate opening for the position of Office Manager. A successful applicant will have a minimum of 5 years experience in general accounting procedures including payroll, general ledger, accounts payable and accounts receivable management. A minimum of 5 years experience supervising outpatient health-care billing and collections is required. We are looking for a special person who is technically competent, extremely dependable, very caring towards the public and highly dedicated to our special mission of serving the people of Howard and surrounding counties. Other basic skills required include knowledge of computer system maintenance, Word and Excel. Minimum of Associates Degree level of education is preferred. Salary: commensurate with education and experience. Please mail or bring resume to 306 W. 3rd Street, Big Spring, TX 79720 or Fax to 432-267-3809.

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Help Wanted

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MAINTENANCE POSITION AVAILABLE

The Colorado River Municipal Water District has an opening for a Maintenance Worker for the Lake Thomas area. A CDL license and mechanical experience are helpful. District benefits include paid vacation and holidays, sick leave, retirement plan, and group insurance. The District is an equal opportunity employer.

Applications are required to be considered for employment and are available at the District's office, 400 East 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas.

MARTIN CO. Hospital Home Health is looking for a full-time RN and a PRN to join their energetic staff. Must be willing to travel to surrounding areas. Bilingual preferred and salary DOE. Interested parties may call Allison @ (432)756-3259 or fax resume to (432)756-4510.

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BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

The Sagittarius moon inspires a restlessness that could cut the work-day short (or make the lunch hour long.) Conversations that would normally fall into the "brief and breezy" category could get long and involved because people are using communication as a form of escape. Learning about others is more interesting than the tasks at hand.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Destruction is part of growth. So, when the plate cracks, the page rips and clutter falls on the floor, it's just part of the process. However, you don't have to break everything to make something better of yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be contributing to conversations that started long before you were born. Anything you contribute is valuable — as long as it's not boring. Declare death to "boring."

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You still don't have the answer to your problem, but you're closer. Closer counts. Keep making those phone calls and asking for what you need. You'll get there.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Sometimes you do things and are disappointed. Not today. The only thing you could possibly be disappointed about is what you don't do. Go

Tomorrow's Horoscope

through your mental list, and ask yourself what you are missing.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Politics are painfully obvious. You'll notice that people around you fall into two categories: the suck ups who constantly yank the chain of command and those who support their fellows regardless of rank.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The new information that floats your way through friends, media and "the ether" is rather eye opening! Knowing that struggling and suffering are optional, what do you choose?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The things you do for love. It's really quite remarkable. You'd rather be a fool with friends and sweethearts around you than the stoic in the corner having no fun at all.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). No matter how hard you try, you will not be able to read the mind of that mysterious loved one. So, you may as well go forward with however you are feeling. Doubt is uncomfortable, but certainty is ludicrous.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The one you love and the one who loves you is the same person. Wow. That's the kind of miracle that ought not to be taken for granted. Thank your lucky stars.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll alternate between fitting in and not fitting in, and both are wonderful. Your real talent lies in leading others to help you produce — Taurus and Aquarius peo-

ple are the most industrious.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your wheeling and dealing goes well. Finance teaches you about how you really think! The exchange of money is simply an exchange of energy, but it's your feelings about it that give it real power.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're able to fix something that has been broken for a very long time. Such a breakthrough is so exciting that you may be motivated to handle 10 related problems by the week's end.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: A musically motivated Aquarian, Phil Collins has garnered both Grammys and an Oscar throughout his triple-decade career. Aquarians thrive on being unconventional, which explains how an artist like Collins is just as comfortable behind a drum kit as he is at the front of the stage with a microphone in hand. An eventual reunion with his old band-mates of Genesis is inevitable.

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.

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Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie: I have a group of long-term friends, and we all are in our 30s. One girl, "Hilda," is extremely insecure and childish. When Hilda disagrees with someone, instead of discussing it face-to-face, she fires off an accusatory, often insulting, e-mail to the person. This seems to work well for her, since she can get her barbs off without having to look anyone in the eye.

After being the victim of several of Hilda's hurtful missives, I started ignoring those e-mails. However, when I deleted two last week, Hilda went to our mutual friends, saying THEY should talk to me because I am "not communicating with her."

Needless to say, our friends feel put upon, and all of us have discussed how Hilda drives us crazy and we no longer want to be friends with her. Trying to talk about this with Hilda, in person, only produces more accusations and immature yelling, crying and bringing up events that happened years ago.

What do you advise? — High School Was 20 Years Ago

Dear High School: This method works for Hilda, and until you stop putting up with such immature behavior, she will continue. There's nothing wrong with arguing via e-mail, but Hilda shouldn't hide behind her computer while she insults you. Write her back, saying, "Hilda, I would like to talk to you in person." Then give her a time and date to meet you over coffee.

Inform her that the way she handles disagreements has made it impossible to resolve issues and you think such things should be discussed in



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

person without dragging your mutual friends into it. Be friendly but firm. If she cries, yells or otherwise becomes unpleasant, say goodbye politely and leave.

Dear Annie: Now that the holidays are over, I had to write about the worst case of re-gifting ever. A friend of mine gave me a piece of crystal. She confessed that she was re-gifting and said I should feel free to give it to someone else. The box had her name written on it in ink. Worse, the card she gave me was blank. She said I should re-gift that, too.

Sure gave me a warm and fuzzy feeling about our friendship. I wish she hadn't bothered. — Disappointed in Torrance, Calif.

Dear Torrance: Tacky, but at least she was honest. And better than trying to return it, only to discover that it was a free gift from the bank for opening a new checking account.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com. © 2006 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

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INFUSED WITH CONFIDENCE

After a strong '05, Ford teams believe they can drive the new Fusion to the championship

By DAVID POOLE
Knight Ridder Newspapers

It is probably difficult for Jack Roush to view things as such, but perhaps it was a blessing that none of his five Ford teams managed to win the 2005 Nextel Cup championship.

Certainly Roush would have enjoyed having the champion in his employ for a third straight season, following Matt Kenseth's 2003 title and Kurt Busch's in 2004. But if he'd completed a three-peat, surely Roush would be looking forward to 2006 wondering what he could possibly do for an encore?

At least with Tony Stewart edging both Greg Biffle and Carl Edwards by the same 35-point margin, the Roush teams have something higher to shoot for after all five of them made last year's Chase for the Nextel Cup.

But doing that once was fairly miraculous to start with, let alone matching it in 2006.

"I doubt whether we'll have five cars in the Chase this year," said Biffle, whose dramatic victory over teammate Mark Martin in the finale at Homestead gave him a circuit-best six victories on the season and gave Roush his 15th victory as a team.

"That was pretty extraordinary last year," Biffle said. "I hope everybody runs that well again, but odds are that one of us may have some trouble along the way."

Roush's teams, along with those fielded by Robert Yates Racing and the Wood Bros., have a new model to compete with this season.

Ford has parked the Taurus in favor of the Fusion, and predictably the early reviews are favorable from the teams that will be using them.

"The Fusion, I think, is going to be a lot better car for us," Biffle said. "(But) we're still just in the preliminary aspects of figuring it out and we had pretty much optimized the Taurus."

Elliott Sadler, who made the Chase in its inaugural year in 2004 but missed it last year in his No. 38 Yates-owned Fords, said what he hopes fans notice about his Fusions this year is where they're running.

"I hope they see more of us running up front, that's what I hope to see," said Sadler, who went winless last season. "The Fusion has a slicker look. ... When you walk up to it it's just a neat-looking vehicle, so I hope that they'll see the Fusion as a sportier car, and if we run up front more, they'll definitely get to see it more."

Sadler and Jarrett aren't depending only on the new car to help them improve over 2005, when Sadler finished 13th in the standings and Jarrett wound up 15th despite getting the Yates teams' only win at Talladega in the fall.

Both have new crew chiefs, with Tommy Baldwin working with Sadler and Richard "Sluggo" Labbe leading Jarrett's No. 88 team.

"We've improved our team immensely in a lot of areas," Jarrett said. "We have a better product with the Ford Fusion. We have a better engineering staff than we've ever had at Robert Yates Racing, and we have two very



Ford driver Dale Jarrett gets ready for a testing session at Daytona International Speedway.

hungry crew chiefs that have come in to take over and lead this group. So I would say that the potential is there for both teams to be in the top 10 and make the Chase, it's just a matter of us going out and making that happen now."

Things aren't completely the same at Roush, either. The team has a significantly different driver lineup than it expected it would be preparing for 2006.

First of all, Mark Martin is still in that lineup. Martin began 2005 with every intention of making it his final full-time Cup season. But circumstances intervened and Roush needed Martin to remain in the No. 6 Fords for one more year. Martin finished fourth in the standings in 2005 and said he'd be thrilled if his performance this year could match a season in which he won the Nextel All-Star Challenge and a points race at Kansas while making the Chase and piling up 19 top-10 finishes.

The other new face at Roush is Jamie McMurray. After winning at Charlotte in October 2002 while subbing for an injured Sterling Marlin, McMurray went three full seasons with Chip Ganassi Racing without a victory. He comes into 2006 with a 112-race winless streak and takes over in cars Busch drove last year before bolting to Penske Racing South's Dodges for 2006.

"All of my teammates won races last year, and the car that I'm in won races last year," said McMurray, whose Fords will run the No. 26 instead of the No. 97 Busch used. "So I've thought about that a lot. I thought, 'What if you go halfway through the season and you don't win a race or you go all year and don't win?' But I've thought that for the last three years, so it's not really any different."

"I think mentally you're a lot more positive because

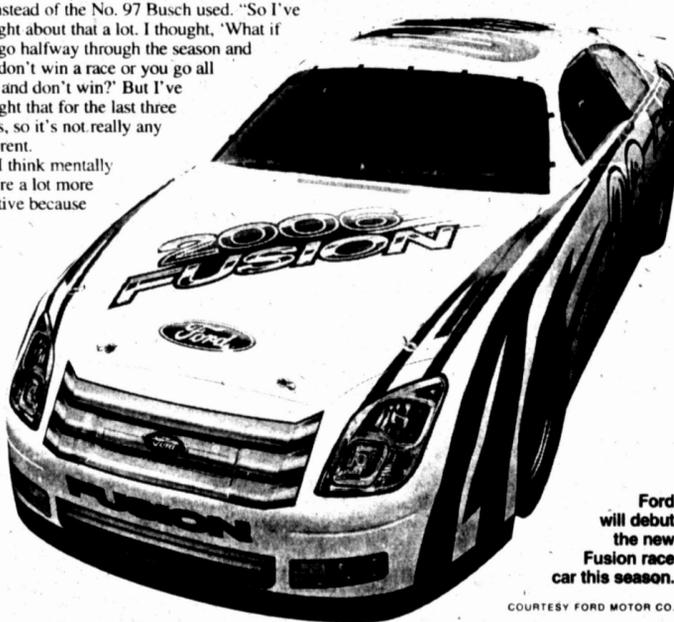
you know that the cars you're in are capable of winning because that's their record. ... Racing, regardless of what people say, is a mental sport. If you believe you can win, if you're in a car that can win, you more than likely will. If you have a negative attitude, typically you don't get very good results."

Kenseth is back in the No. 17 Fords after rallying late in the summer to make the Chase last year. And Edwards, the breakout star of the 2005 season who won four Cup races in his first full season, will be ranked by many, along with Biffle, Stewart and Jimmie Johnson among the favorites to win this year's title.

Ricky Rudd is out of the Wood Brothers' No. 21 Fords after stepping away from full-time Cup competition following the 2005 season, but remarkably the team actually has a slightly older driver in that ride this year.

Ken Schrader, 51, brings crew chief David Hyder with him from BAM Racing to replace Michael McSwain. McSwain moved up to a team manager's position from which he'll oversee the Woods' transition into a new partnership with ST Motorsports that's aimed at eventually moving them into the multicar team ranks.

Kevin Lepage will also drive Fords in 2006, the No. 61 cars owned by Jeff Stec.



Ford will debut the new Fusion race car this season.

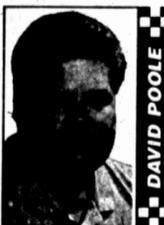
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Toyota's entry into NASCAR raises the level of competition

Here's what the attitude of competitors, owners and fans should be to the recent announcement that Toyota will race in the Nextel Cup and Busch series beginning in 2007: Bring it.

Even before particulars of Toyota's plans were revealed Monday at NASCAR's research and development center in Concord, N.C., fans on some of the sport's message boards were swearing they'll never watch another race once "foreign" cars are allowed in.

What? There was a time when most people never saw, touched, ate or wore anything produced more than 20 miles from home. But that was six generations ago, give or take a round of "begats." There are places like that today, but you go there by a yak-drawn



DAVID POOLE

cart. The term "global economy" isn't just something made up for political campaigns. It's the reality in which we live our lives.

Dodge is an American automobile nameplate, but its parent company is a citizen of the world. Chrysler was taken over by Daimler-Benz, a German company, in 1998. The new

DaimlerChrysler's headquarters is in Detroit, but its Web site lists divisions in more than two dozen countries and regions around the globe.

NASCAR has lived through a similar transition. Brilliant people used to build some darn fine race cars under shade trees or in grease-puddled garages with only a couple of buddies hanging around to hand them a wrench or hold a light.

But the buses carrying more than

200 motorsports media around Concord this week won't be stopping at places like that. Today's NASCAR shops get bigger and better every year, and car owners can't make money fast enough to spend on the latest gizmos and gadgets to help them compete.

Car owners are traveling to Europe, Japan and anywhere else they might find something to buy or somebody to hire that might help their cars pick up a couple of tenths of a second. This is not an elective.

There are those who'll say that Toyota's entry into NASCAR's top series will drive everybody's costs up, will upset the competitive balance of the sport or will generally cause the Earth to wobble off its axis.

Assuredly, Toyota's arrival marks a major change in the sport.

Even though the car it will race, the Camry, has been the best-selling car in America for eight of the past nine years, even though Camrys are assem-

bled in a plant in Georgetown, Ky., and even though Toyota employs around 140,000 people in America today, it's still a Japanese car company.

That's different for a sport that's as American as the flag, apple pie and crushing credit card debt.

Toyota will come in with every intention of winning, and to do that it will go after top teams, top drivers, top crew chiefs, top mechanics and top fabricators. Since coming into the Truck Series it has helped move the cost needle upward, supplying all of its teams with their cars, engines and engineering support by functioning almost as one team.

In Nextel Cup, however, Toyota will not directly sponsor any teams.

It will not centralize its Cup operations, either. Instead, Toyota team owners like Bill Davis and Michael Waltrip will build and own their own cars while getting support from the manufacturer the same way Ford, Chevrolet and

Dodge teams do now. Some teams will get more support than others from Toyota, too, just as is the case with the other manufacturers.

Yes, teams now in the sport may have to pay their key people more to keep them. Eventually, that labor market will find its own equilibrium, and people who can't or won't play at that level will lose out. That's called capitalism.

On the track, Toyota will do everything it can to go fast. It will work as hard as any other manufacturer does to find the limits of the rules NASCAR places on its cars and engines. It will try to assemble great teams of drivers, owners and crews with the goal of winning every pole, every race and every championship. That's called competition.

America used to be pretty good at both of those things. Starting in 2007, we'll get to see if NASCAR's teams still are.

POLL POSITION

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

Which of NASCAR's Ford drivers do you think will be on top at the end of the Nextel Cup season?

Cast your vote at: www.thatstracin.com

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

The Chevrolet teams are looking to lead the way again in NASCAR Nextel Cup racing. Which of the Chevy teams do you think will stand out in 2006?

Number of votes: 7,172

Team	No. of votes	Percent
Hendrick Motorsports	3,353	47%
Dale Earnhardt Inc.	1,774	25%
Joe Gibbs Racing	903	13%
Richard Childress Racing	635	9%
MB2 Motorsports	331	4%
Another team	176	2%

STOP 'N' GO



Carl Edwards, left, and Brad Parrott won five races in the Busch Series last season.

Roush Racing, Brad Parrott part ways

Brad Parrott, who led NASCAR Busch Series rookie Carl Edwards to five wins and a third-place finish in points last season, has been released by Roush Racing, the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer has learned.

Parrott did not travel with the No. 60 Busch team last Friday morning for its scheduled test at Daytona International Speedway, several team officials confirmed.

Bob Osborne, Edwards' crew chief in the Nextel Cup Series, is in Daytona currently working with the Busch team.

A permanent replacement for Parrott is expected to be named within the next day or so, sources said.

One possibility is Pierre Kuetzel, currently the car chief for Edwards' No. 99 Cup team. Kuetzel is also in Daytona on Friday for the test, team officials said.

Parrott, 38, has worked for a variety of teams, including other Roush and Robert Yates Racing operations. In 2004 Parrott assumed the role as crew chief for Roush's No. 60 driven then by Greg Biffle. Last season, Edwards took over the driving duties with the team.

Edwards is one of several Cup drivers planning to run complete Nextel Cup and Busch series schedules in 2006.

— Jim Utter

ChampCar's Paul Tracy to race five Busch races

ChampCar Series star Paul Tracy, who has flirted with stock-car racing for the past several seasons, has a deal to run in five NASCAR Busch Series race this year.

Tracy is scheduled to drive the No. 34 Chevrolet for Frank Cicci Racing with Jim Kelly in the season's first Busch race at Daytona on Feb. 18. He'll also enter at Mexico City on March 5, Las Vegas on March 11, Indianapolis Raceway Park on Aug. 5 and California on Sept. 2.

"I'm very excited about my first opportunity to race in NASCAR," said Tracy, who has won a Champ Car Series race at the Mexico City track.

Tracy tested in a car owned by Richard Childress last year at Michigan International Speedway.

— David Poole

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