

INSIDE
Bledsoe facing the music after getting off to terrible start.
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VOLUME 102, NUMBER 249

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2006

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND

Arson suspected in Sands field house blaze

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

ACKERLY — Arson is suspected in a fire that heavily damaged the athletic field house at Sands High School and destroyed most of the school's football equipment.

Wayne Blount, superintendent for the Sands school district, said the fire occurred between 11:20 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Monday, shortly after the field house had been vacated.

Firefighting units from Ackerly, Lamesa and Lenorah responded to the scene, Blount

"We won't be able to use it (field house), at least for the near future. I'd be surprised if we get back into it this football season."

Wayne Blount
Sands ISD Superintendent

said.

No injuries were reported, but damage to the facility was extensive.

"We won't be able to use it, at least for the near future," Blount said. "I'd be surprised if

we get back into it this football season."

Blount did not have a damage estimate, noting that insurance adjusters will be on site this afternoon to make a determination.

Of more immediate concern, at least to football players and fans, was damage done to uniforms and equipment.

Blount said that the fire destroyed most of the varsity and junior varsity equipment — including helmets and shoulder pads.

The lack of equipment forced the cancellation of football practice Monday and left school officials scrambling to find replacements in time.

Athletic Supply, which contracts with the district for most football equipment, quickly shipped replacement helmets,

pants and other uniform features, while Lamesa ISD contributed helmets for the junior high team.

In addition, Rydell, which supplies shoulder pads to the team, is "rush-shipping" a supply of those articles.

For the time being, football players will dress and shower in the basketball locker rooms adjacent to the school gym, Blount said.

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

HOWARD COUNTY REMEMBERS 9/11

People from all walks of life join in remembrance

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

Emergency response personnel stood together with citizens from every walk of life Monday evening, as the Hangar 25 Air Museum held a special remembrance ceremony in honor of the five year anniversary of the tragic Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the United States.

Representatives from the Big Spring Fire Department, Howard County Volunteer Fire Department, Big Spring Police Department and several other agencies gathered on the museum's front lawn to remember the terrorist attack and the toll it took on the American people, from one coast to the other.

"My husband had just told me that a terrible accident had happened in New York," said Big Spring City Council member Gloria McDonald, "and we were discussing why, on such a beautiful day, was this plane so far off course. About that time we saw the second plane hit the second tower. We knew then that our lives have changed."

"And as we thought about it and talked about it like so many of you probably did sitting in front of the television the entire day, the third and fourth plane struck, and we just knew that our lives had changed drastically."

McDonald, who later read a special proclamation from the city of Big Spring honoring the day, said the effects of the attack are still being felt, especially in America's

airports and borders.

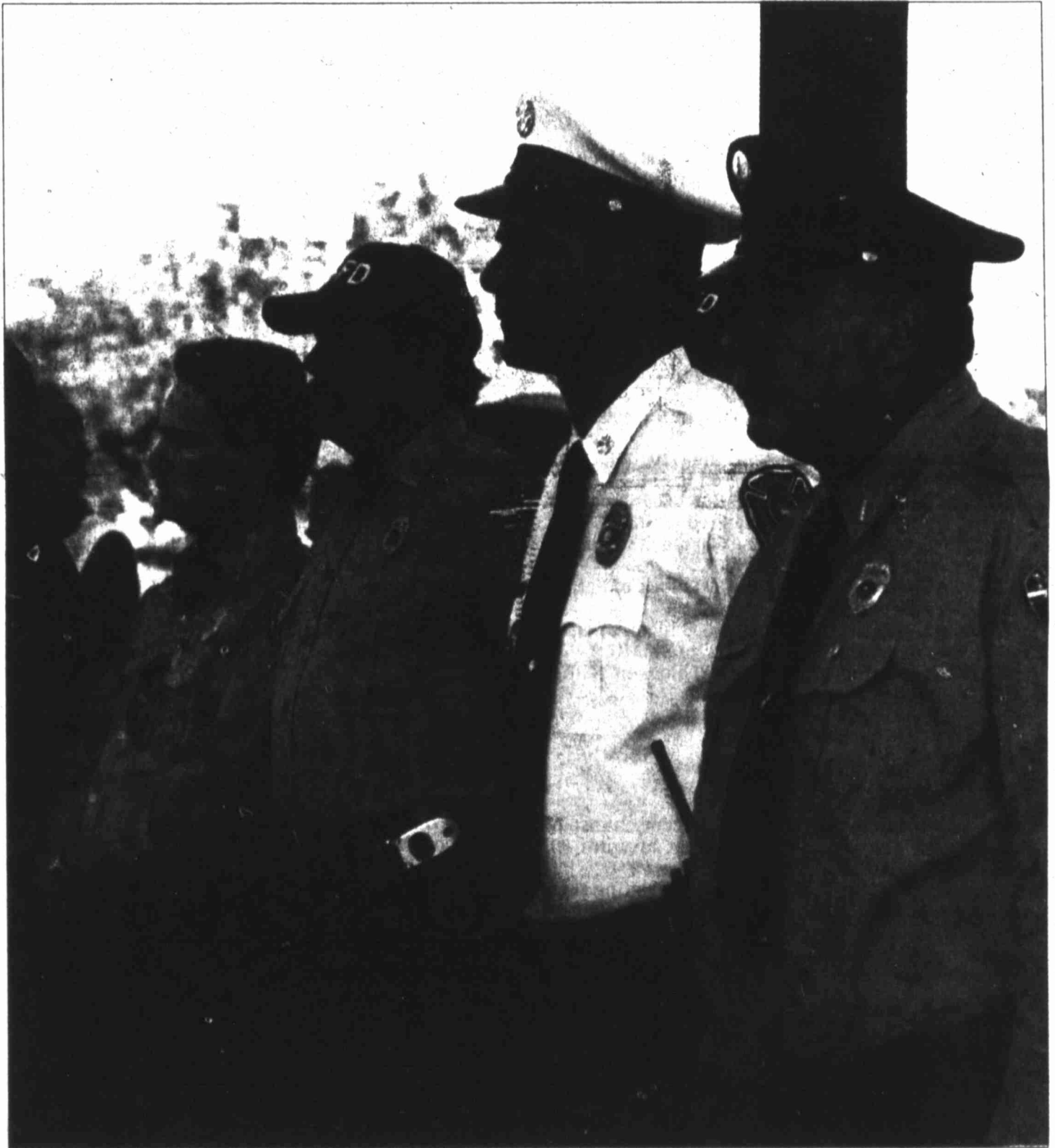
"We knew security at our borders would be different. We knew taking a flight would be different," said McDonald. "Shoes that I had worn on planes many times suddenly didn't pass... Key chains with objects that were considered harmless two weeks before couldn't get through. Now we're even going to bottles of water, baby formula and hand cream and other things that can't be brought on a plane."

Museum Director Heather Wallace, who coordinated the event, said there is a very strong lesson to be learned, both in the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and its aftermath.

"I want to thank everyone for coming this evening to stand together as equals, as Americans sharing a common sadness," said Wallace. "A sadness that through devastation reminded a country a country that only by standing together can we overcome."

"Now more than ever, as we march forward in a world of uncertainty, we need to instill in the minds of our youth what it means to be an American. The lives taken and the blood shed for freedom's sake shall never be lost in vain so long as we remember. We must remember the lessons learned, hear the memories shared and thank those that have directly impacted our free state."

"As we have reached the five year anniversary of a day so many would prefer to forget, I challenge everyone to remember. Remember despite



Representatives from local fire departments and law enforcement agencies stand quietly during a special Sept. 11, 2001, remembrance ceremony Monday evening at the Hangar 25 Air Museum.

the pain. Remember how you felt when the news broke, how you felt as the death toll rose and we learned that 2,973 souls were lost. Remember how you felt, as an individual and as an American. Remember and honor the lives lost and reinforce the meaning of American citizenship — that we

stand tall and proud — and most importantly that we stand together full of passion and compassion, and we do so full of strength."

Big Spring Fire Chief Brian Jensen encouraged everyone to remember the tragic day, not just on its anniversary, but every day.

"I want to thank you for being here and your remembrance," said Jensen. "We do have a war on terror and it's touched every one of us... This does effect each and every one of us. Do not ever forget. Keep on remembering."

Local musical group The Spiritual Echo per-

formed "God Bless America" and "Amazing Grace" during the remembrance, with local resident Jose Gonzalez closing out the event by playing "Taps."

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

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Commissioners OK smoke evacuation system

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

Howard County commissioners approved more than \$39,000 in expenditures for the smoke evacuation system in the county jail during their Monday meeting, bringing the facility closer to state compliance.

Commissioners approved \$19,875 for components of the jail's fire alarm system, as well as \$20,000 for modifications to the jail's heating and cooling system to bring in fresh air in the event of a smoke problem.

According to project coordinator and

local architect Phil Furqueron, the additions and modifications to the system won't make it perfect, but it should make it functional.

"It's going to work better and it will be closer to what we're after," said Furqueron. "Once it's been tested, we'll probably have to tweak it — maybe add a fan or smoke head here and there — but they key is getting 100 percent fresh air in there, which is what we're concentrating on now. I think we're on the road to coming up with a workable system up there. Not a great system, but one that's adequate."

The system failed during a fire evacu-

ation drill several months ago, when it was discovered the existing smoke evacuation system was ineffective.

"We had horrible problems getting the smoke out," said Sheriff Dale Walker following the drill. "The stand-alone systems we have in place simply didn't remove the smoke. We're going to have to make some serious modifications to the equipment we have up there."

"We evacuated the inmates before we actually began pumping the smoke into the cell block. It took less than a minute for the block to fill with smoke and drop

See JAIL, Page 3A

Obituaries

Don Rogers

Don Rogers, 74, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2006, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Mark D. Young

Mark D. Young, 65, of Big Spring, died Thursday, Sept. 7, 2006, in an accident in Africa. His services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Fire/EMS

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

- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 1700 block of Jennings. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 200 block of Fifth Street in Coahoma. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 900 block of Third Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1000 block of Birdwell Lane. Service was refused.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 3100 block of Mountain Shadow Drive. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1400 block of East Sixth Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 2600 block of Fairchild. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1100 block of East 13th Street. One person was transported to the VAMC.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 4000 block of Dixon. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the area of Crossroads Football Field. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 200 block of Galveston. Service was refused.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 3700 block of Wright. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 6800 block of Kyle Road. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1000 block of RR 33. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to the VAMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1100 block of East 12th Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 800 block of Nolan. Service was refused.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 200 block of Nolan. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **PUBLIC SERVICE** was reported in the 400 block of Borden. Service was refused.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1100 block of Stanford. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 1600 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 500 block of Dallas. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 900 block of Father Delaney. Service was refused.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 500 block of N.W. Seventh. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 900 block of Willia. Service was refused.

Weather

Today — Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Highs around 80. Northeast winds around 10 mph.
 Tuesday night — Partly cloudy in the evening then clearing. Lows in the lower 60s. East winds around 10 mph becoming light and variable.
 Wednesday — Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 80s. Southeast winds around 10 mph.

Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:
 Winning numbers drawn: 10-18-23-35-36.
 Number matching five of five: 1.
 Prize per winner: \$31,324.
 Winning tickets sold in: San Antonio.
 Next Cash 5 drawing: Tonight.

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:
 Winning numbers drawn: 2-7-24-25. Bonus Ball: 2.
 Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: none.
 Estimated jackpot for Thursday night drawing: \$1.2 million.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night, in order: 1-9-6

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday afternoon, in order: 9-3-5

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Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 7 a.m. Monday and 7 a.m. today:

- **ATTEMPTED MURDER** was reported in the 1000 block of S. Nolan.
- **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported:
 - in the 1300 block of Gregg Street.
 - in the 200 block of Sixth Street.
- **BURGLARY OF A VEHICLE** was reported in the 200 block of Sixth Street.
- **BURGLARY OF A HABITATION** was reported:
 - in the 1000 block of Stadium.
 - in the 200 block of Washington.
- **ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE** was reported in the 1100 block of Mulberry.

Sheriff's report

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

- **ECTOR BRANDON JARAMILLO**, 20, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on charges of minor in consumption of an alcoholic beverage, violation of a promise to appear and evading arrest or detention.
- **JOSEPH ROBINSON**, 41, was arrested Friday by DPS on a charge of injury to a child.
- **TEDRIC LAMAR MCALISTER**, 30, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on charges of possession of marijuana - two ounces or less and issuance of a bad check.
- **VIRGIL DAVID JAMES**, 49, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of driving while license suspended.
- **ADELA PEREZ DEANDA**, 38, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on charges of failure to appear - aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, motion to revoke probation for theft by check and motion to revoke probation for criminal mischief.
- **STERLING DONALD MCINTOSH**, 23, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of evading arrest or detention with a vehicle and driving while license suspended/invalid - enhanced.
- **MARTY LEE RICHTER**, 20, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid.
- **ANSELMO HILARIO JR.**, 22, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of failure to identify and possession of marijuana - two ounces or less.
- **EDGAR CALVIN SMOKE**, 45, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a ValVerde County warrant.
- **DANIEL FOREST MONDIER**, 22, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on a charge of driving while license invalid.
- **CARLOS BRAIN PINALES**, 33, was arrested Saturday by DPS on a charge of possession of a controlled substance.
- **RICKEY RAY WINTERS JR.**, 20, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on charges of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and possession of marijuana - two ounces or less.
- **LESLIE PAIGE FRYAR**, 31, was arrested Saturday by DPS on charges of driving while intoxicated - second offense and resisting arrest, search or transportation.
- **AUBREY MCDONALD**, 25, was arrested Saturday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated - second offense.
- **JAMES BURLIN WILLIAMS JR.**, 20, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a charge of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.
- **RANDY MIER**, 28, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of criminal mischief and resisting arrest, search or transportation.
- **JOSEPH ALTON MURLEY**, 27, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for delivery of marijuana (two counts).
- **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported in the 100 block of North Second Street.
- **THEFT** was reported in the 900 block of Debra Lane.
- **UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE** was reported in the 2800 block of FM 700.
- **IRMA MORIN YANEZ**, 33, began serving sentence for driving while license suspended.
- **GABRIEL LEE BARRAZA**, 20, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of disorderly conduct/displaying a firearm.
- **JASON LLOYD HENRY**, 28, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a Bell County writ of attachment for non-payment of child support.
- **JESSIE ROGELIO GOMEZ HOLGUIN**, 22, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.
- **BRADLEY DINK LANIER**, 46, was arrested by deputies on a motion to revoke probation.

BIG SPRING HERALD
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Bulletin Board

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

TODAY
 • Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

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.
 • Senior Circle meets at 11 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center classroom for Stretch and Tone. Call 268-4721.
 • Downton Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room.
 • Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.
 • Eagles Lodge Ladies Auxiliary meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge, 703 W. Third.

THURSDAY
 • Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.
 • Coffee Club meets at 10 a.m. in Gale's Sweet Shoppe.
 • Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane. Call 267-6479.
 • Friends of the Library meets at noon in the Howard County Library, 500 S. Main.

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© Puzzles by Pappocom

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box. Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

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One man held in connection with stabbing

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

A Big Spring man remains in custody after allegedly stabbing an acquaintance multiple times in an altercation early Monday morning. James Curtis Brown, 40, was arrested Monday morning on a charge of attempted murder after police officials allege he stabbed 48-year-old Gonzalo Hernandez multiple times at a residence in the 1000 block of Nolan.

According to Sgt. Tony Everett, public information officer for the Big Spring Police Department, the cause of the altercation is still under investigation.

"We received the call at approximately 6:24 a.m.," said Everett. "When police officers arrived on the scene, the suspect — Mr. Brown — was still at the residence. He was arrested and the victim was taken to Scenic Mountain Medical Center, where he was listed in critical condi-

"The attack was prompted by an argument between the two men, but we're not sure what the argument was over yet."
Sgt. Tony Everett
Big Spring PD

tion until recently. According to doctors, he's expected to recover from his wounds.

"The attack was prompted by an argument between the two men, but we're not sure what the argument was over yet," Everett added.

The two men knew each other prior to the attack, Everett said, noting that the case is still under investigation.

Contact Staff Writer
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citydesk@bigspringherald.com

Commissioners approve tax rate, \$12.7 million budget for fiscal year

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

A pair of public hearings concerning the proposed tax rate and budget for 2006-2007 for Howard County drew no public response Monday, as commissioners approved the \$12.7 million budget unanimously.

Commissioners are expected to approve the proposed tax rate, which is 48.787 cents per \$100 valuation — a 5.7 cent drop compared to last year's rate — during their Sept. 25 meeting.

Although the proposed rate is several cents lower than last year's rate, County Auditor Jackie Olson said it will bring in more revenue for the county than last year's levy.

"The effective tax rate has been calculated at 45.002 cents per \$100 valuation," said Olson. "That's quite a bit lower than last year's tax rate, which was 54.546 cents per \$100 valuation. The reason the effective rate is so much lower this year is because values are up. That means taxpayers who didn't see an increase in their property values will actually be

"I think we've done all we can do with it. It looks pretty good."

Gary Simer
Prec. 4 Commissioner

paying less this year.

"The highest the court can go on the tax rate without risking a rollback election — commonly called the rollback rate — is 48.787 cents per \$100 valuation. That would amount to a \$500,000 increase (in revenue) over the effective rate."

Also during Monday's meeting, the court gave its approval to the 2006-2007 budget, which includes a \$150 per month pay increase for county employees across the board and money to pay skyrocketing utilities.

Commissioner Gary Simer said he's comfortable with the budget, saying the county is still "playing catch up" from previous years.

"I think we've done all we can do with it," said Simer. "It looks pretty good. Of course, we had a little bit of money this year, so that really helps because we've had to purchase some things that we've been putting off for years and they are just worn plum out. We're kind of playing catch up, but overall I think it looks good."

Crooker said he's satisfied with the budget as well, and barring any emergency costs, believes it will serve the county's

needs.

"I'm very well satisfied with it," said Crooker. "It covers our needs for the coming year and we shouldn't have any problems, to my knowledge."

Also during Monday's meeting, commissioners approved \$12,231 for a new video surveillance system for the courthouse. The system will be designed and installed by Guardian Security of Lubbock.

Commissioners also approved a 30 percent increase for county retirees for 2007.

Contact Staff Writer
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JAIL

Continued from Page 1A

to zero visibility, and it took almost two minutes before the smoke alarms ever went off. If this had been an actual fire, the inmates would have been choked out by the smoke before the alarm ever went off.

A second problem was identified by firefighters during the drill: The lack of a stand pipe to provide fire fighters with water as they made their way up to the courthouse's fourth floor.

"We've completed the drawings to the stand pipe and it's a little more complex than the fire alarm and smoke evac system," said Furqueron. "You have a four inch pipe full of water, and that's a lot of weight to consider over a four story trip from the first floor of the courthouse. You also have a lot of thrust in the initial blast of water, so you also have to deal with that. So there are a lot more considerations."

"We should have a price on this part of the project in about two or three weeks," said Furqueron. "We're only dealing with one contractor — Anthony Mechanical — which holds the contract with the county. They were very timely in their part in the other systems, so I expect the same when it comes to pricing out the stand pipe."

Commissioner Gary Simer said the \$39,857 price tag for the smoke evacuation system seemed steep.

"It seemed like it was kind of pricey," said Simer. "But it's something that needs to be done and has to be done. So maybe by the time we get this fixed and the stand pipe fixed we can make it work for us for quite a while."

Commissioner Bill Crooker said he hopes the expense will buy the county peace of mind, in addition to satisfying state requirements.

"I think it's a situation

where it is a must on our part," said Crooker, "in order to satisfy the Texas Jail Commission and to satisfy the life safety features that are incorporated into the jail."

However, the progress may not buy the county time with TAC (Texas Association of Counties), which holds the county's liability insurance policy.

The agency gave the county an Oct. 1 deadline to fix the smoke evacuation system or it would void its policy, a deadline Crooker said he's doubtful they will be able to meet.

"I doubt we'll be able to make that deadline," said Crooker. "It's going to be

difficult to get it accomplished by the first part of November. Hopefully we won't lose much time in the process. This insurance is very important to us."

"I'm not sure if they are going to work with us on this or not," Crooker added. "The Oct. 1 deadline may very well be a drop-dead deadline for this. If it is and we can't meet it, they will reinstate the liability insurance as soon as the work is complete."

Contact Staff Writer
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MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

24th & Johnson 267-8288

Sara Chavarria, 79, died Saturday. Funeral Services were at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Myers & Smith Chapel with burial at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

Lois Mae Britton, 68, died Saturday. Private Family Services will be held at a later date.

Henry Don Rogers, 74, died Tuesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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East dealer. North-South vulnerable.

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♥ 6 5
♦ 9 4 3
♠ A Q 6 5 2

WEST
♦ Q 9 3
♥ Q J 9 2
♦ J 6
♠ J 10 8 3

EAST
♦ 10 6 5 2
♥ 10 7 4 3
♦ K Q 10 8
♠ 9

SOUTH
♦ A K J
♥ A K 8
♦ A 7 5 2
♠ K 7 4

The bidding:
East Pass 2NT West Pass North 3NT
Opening lead — queen of hearts.

One learns early in life that it's often necessary to give in order to receive. Later on one learns that the same principle applies in bridge. Consider this deal where declarer won the opening heart lead with the king and, with eight sure tricks in plain sight, naturally viewed dummy's clubs as the most likely source of a ninth. Accordingly, at trick two he played a club to the queen and returned a club to his king.

But when East failed to follow to the second club, South had to look elsewhere for the extra trick he needed. So he led a club to dummy's ace, returned a spade and finessed the jack. When West turned up with the queen, South was unable to score more than the eight tricks he had started with, and he finished down one.

While it is true that South ran into bad luck in both black suits, the fact remains that he should have made the contract.

Rather than cash the Q-K of clubs, he should have cashed the king of clubs at trick two, then led a low club and followed low from dummy. This play would have guaranteed the contract beyond the shadow of a doubt, since it would have assured that South would score four club tricks.

The recommended line of play is certain to succeed unless the clubs are divided 5-0 — only a 4 percent chance — and even in that event, declarer still has the spade finesse to fall back on. Note also that declarer's willingness to perhaps unnecessarily concede a club to the opponents at trick three is proof positive that it is indeed necessary to give in order to receive.

Tomorrow: Imaginative defense.
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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

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OUR VIEWS

Still time for local business to make plans for Ag Expo

All right, now it's really time for local businesses wanting a unique opportunity to reach local farmers and producers to begin reserving booth space at the 2006 Ag Expo and Appreciation Luncheon set for Thursday, Sept. 28, at the Howard County Fairgrounds.

The Ag Expo and Appreciation Luncheon is sponsored by the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. And as we have noted in this space before, it's an excellent and affordable way for businesses to display their wares to the area's farmers and ranchers.

According to Nancy Newell, executive assistant for the chamber, she and other staffers "are looking forward to working with everyone" on the Ag Expo and want to make it "a really good time for everyone."

Newell said booths — approximately 10 feet by 10 feet in size — will be available for \$100, and include two tickets to the luncheon, as well as exhibitor badges. Additional tickets for the luncheon can be purchased for \$10 per meal.

For more information about reserving a booth or about the Ag Expo, contact the chamber by calling 263-7641.

The expo and luncheon is a one-day event, from 7:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., and is being held in conjunction with the Howard County Fair.

The luncheon will get under way at noon that Thursday under the fair's entertainment tent.

Organizers begin setting up for the luncheon that morning at 8 a.m. and continue through 10 a.m., and will be open to the public beginning at 11 a.m.

As always the expo and luncheon will feature a number of annual awards — the ag producer of the year and the ag business of the year.

While booths must be reserved no later than Sept. 20, a little more than a week away, there's no time like the present to make your plans to join all of us at the Ag Expo and Appreciation Luncheon.

We hope to see you here.

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

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A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

No matter what is happening in our lives, Lord, we are responsible for what we do. May we live with You in our minds and hearts.

Amen

Democrats' gloating premature

I wonder if Democrats are getting the slightest bit nervous about the news — hot off the presses — that Iraqi security forces are actually taking over primary control of defense operations in Iraq. That might not bode well for their prospects to recapture control of Congress.

One of the Democrats' major complaints has been that we have been too slow in training Iraqi troops, thereby delaying the end or significant downscaling of the American presence there. Of course the Democrats' criticism here is not a policy matter, but one of military implementation. So when they blame President Bush for the delays, they are actually blaming the military they claim to support. It is ludicrous to suggest that President Bush wouldn't do everything he could, at the policy level, to expedite the training of Iraqi troops.

This is just one illustration of how events beyond either party's immediate control could have a dramatic impact on the November elections. Things can change weekly in the war, which is why it is risky for Democrats to put all their campaign eggs in the Iraq basket.

Actually, a more accurate metaphor would be that they have put no eggs in the war policy basket, but have been trying merely to destroy the eggs President Bush has placed in the basket. They are relying exclusively on deriding President Bush's policies, while conspicuously and defiantly offering no alternative policy agenda of their own.

When pressed for a plan, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Sen. Harry Reid, and DNC Chairman Howard Dean have all said, in effect, that it isn't

incumbent on Democrats to come up with a plan; their naked criticism is sufficient.

When further pressed, they promised to present a plan but repeatedly missed their deadlines to produce it. Finally, they did present a "plan," which was nothing more than a broad statement of policy goals that were not that different in substance from current policy. They said they wanted to effect a transition of control to Iraqi forces during 2006. Well, who doesn't?

Oh, I almost forgot, they also said their leadership would be "tough and smart," which doubtlessly had Osama quaking in his boots.

The revelation that the Iraqi forces are about to take over — the transition is projected to be completed by the end of 2007 — will take the wind out of the sails of the only semblance of a plan the Democrats have offered. So the news — if it holds — both emasculates their empty criticism and exposes their non-plan as a moot nonstarter.

Apart from this news, I'm still not joining the hand wringers over predictions of a Democratic sweep in November, because before the election they'll have to offer something beyond specious criticism. When that time comes, it will be plain for most to see that they have nothing constructive to contribute.

Even their rainy day demands for immediate (or almost immediate) withdrawal have been shown to be disingenuous. When Republicans called their bluff and forced the issue to a vote, they folded. When critics challenged John Kerry on his irresponsible withdrawal demands, he denied making them, kind of like he denies his liberalism. He sputtered such inanities as "I'm not for immediate withdrawal, but timetables for success," and other such

embarrassing gibberish." It is difficult to take these people seriously on these very serious issues.

Democrats face another obstacle in their salivating quest to regain control: President Bush has begun to fight back with a vigor we haven't seen in months. He has been deliberate, aggressive, assertive and persuasive in his recent war speeches, making it clear that only he and Republicans offer any real credible war leadership.

Democrats are quite upset that President Bush is fighting back, something they don't think he ought to be allowed to do. But he is, and none too soon. He's in their faces, just where he ought to be, remaking the case for utilizing the necessary tools to prosecute the war, like the NSA terrorist surveillance program. It was no accident that he labeled it thus, rather than acquiescing to the Democrats' deceptive mischaracterization of it as "domestic spying" on innocent old ladies. He must continue with similarly direct rhetoric, challenging each and every other myth the liberals have advanced.

While I'm not dismissive of the possibility that Democrats could regain congressional control in November, the elections are still the Republicans to lose. The Republicans' real risk comes from disgruntled conservatives who have threatened to stay home over immigration and domestic spending, which would be a mistake with disastrous consequences for the national interest. Conservatives must not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Unless they do, Democrats will certainly not recapture control.

To find out more about David Limbaugh, please visit his Web site at www.davidlimbaugh.com.

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Shedding a few crocodile tears

Now you know why Aussie crocodile aficionado Steve Irwin called the new TV show he was working on "The Ocean's Deadliest." After years of poking his boyish face and trademark safari shirt, khaki shorts and hiking boots in front of dangerous animals, Irwin likely would have found some small satisfaction in a deadly animal — a stingray with a fatal barb — living up to his PR. Crikey.

With Irwin gone, the world will see a little less swagger. Irwin's enthusiasm was infectious and his love for animals was apparent. You have to admire a man who, trained as a diesel mechanic, parlayed his passion for reptiles into worldwide fame and fortune. Now he leaves behind a wife and two young children, as well as an admirable legacy of donating millions to wildlife conservation.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard called Irwin's death "a huge loss to Australia" and offered to hold a state funeral — which Irwin's family humbly declined. (Be it noted that Irwin had once called Howard "the greatest leader Australia has ever had.")

Many Australians, however, could not stand Irwin. As ex-patriot Germaine Greer wrote in the Guardian, "The animal world has finally taken its revenge on Irwin."

(I first learned about Irwin in 2001, when the guide who took me through Queensland's rain forest

complained bitterly about the croc-hunting showboat. In the rain forest, the biggest crocodile we saw was about a foot long. Later, when pointing to a lizard, the guide quipped, "You can tell your friends that in Australia you saw a lizard the size of a crocodile.")

Irwin's other legacy is that he has passed onto the world's children the fanciful notion that nature is a theme park. He failed to respect the lethal side of his co-star creatures. "I don't want to seem arrogant or big-headed," Irwin once told The Washington Post's Paul Farhi, "but I have a real instinct with animals. I've grown up with them. ... It's like I have an uncanny supernatural force rattling around my body. I tell you what, mate, it's magnetism."

No, mate, it's delusion. The real surprise is that a crocodile didn't finish off Irwin sooner — just as a bear mauled to death Grizzly People co-founder Timothy Treadwell and his girlfriend, Amie Huguenard, in Alaska three years ago.

When human beings mistake wildlife for Walt Disney characters, they fail to appreciate wild animals for what they truly are — wild. Read: not susceptible to boyish charm.

Add: hungry and fearful. When they are injured, they die. When they can't eat, they die. When they are afraid, they attack. Given their druthers, they'd rather not be around human beings.

That is why the proper way to view wildlife is not in a close shot next to Irwin's round face, but through a long lens, where they can be seen living in their own habitat. A crocodile is a wonder to

behold because it is a crocodile, not because it snaps at Irwin's boot.

Or toward his son. In 2004, Irwin fed a 13-foot crocodile a dead chicken as he cradled his son, Robert, then 1 month old, in the other arm. Australian cameras aired the feeding; public outrage followed. Afterward, Irwin told reporters, "I was in complete control."

Scary. Also in 2004, Australia's Department of Environment and Heritage investigated and cleared Irwin of the charge that he got too close to penguins, whales and seals in Antarctica. Legal issues aside, Irwin changed how television airs wildlife shows. Now, animals aren't entertaining unless there's a comic face mugging next to them.

As "Wild Kingdom's" Jim Fowler told Fox News' Bill O'Reilly, when his show first aired, "people were just content with seeing the animal. Now they want, you know, confrontation with the animal. They want adventure. They want excitement. The technology and the little cameras get right in their mouth. So this stuff is going to continue to happen. It's going to get worse, I believe."

Irwin did not deserve to die — but his death can hardly be considered a surprise. It was the predictable end that followed the marriage of a dangerous hobby with a dangerous conceit — and better Irwin than the baby.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsaunders@sfchronicle.com.

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DEBRA SAUNDERS

Bird Poop:

Thorn the golden eagle runs afoul of nature's defenses

The pickup wandered down the dirt roads as the man checked fence lines and headed toward tomorrow's work. Eighteen miles south of Stanton, the ranch offered an endless assortment of chores. Thanksgiving was only two days away. In his mind, the man was already anticipating the aromas coming from his wife's cooking.



BEBE MCCASLAND

Glancing across the tall grasses, he noticed the largest bird he had ever seen. After he stopped the truck, he watched to see if it would fly. Many minutes passed. The bird remained on the ground. Finally, the man thought about approaching the bird. Turning off the engine, he opened the door, stepped down, and eased to the front of the truck. Since he had been inside the vehicle, he guessed maybe it hadn't noticed him.

The bird turned in his direction. It did not fly. "Something's wrong," he thought, as he reached through the passenger window and grabbed his coat. Slowly he walked toward the large bird. Close enough to try and capture it, the man knew what he would do if he were successful. Taking his jacket, he quickly covered the bird and carried it to the pickup.

With one arm around the bird, he used the other to lift the large Igloo beverage cooler from the truck bed. It was all he had. Lifting the lid, he placed the bird inside the cooler, removed the coat, and

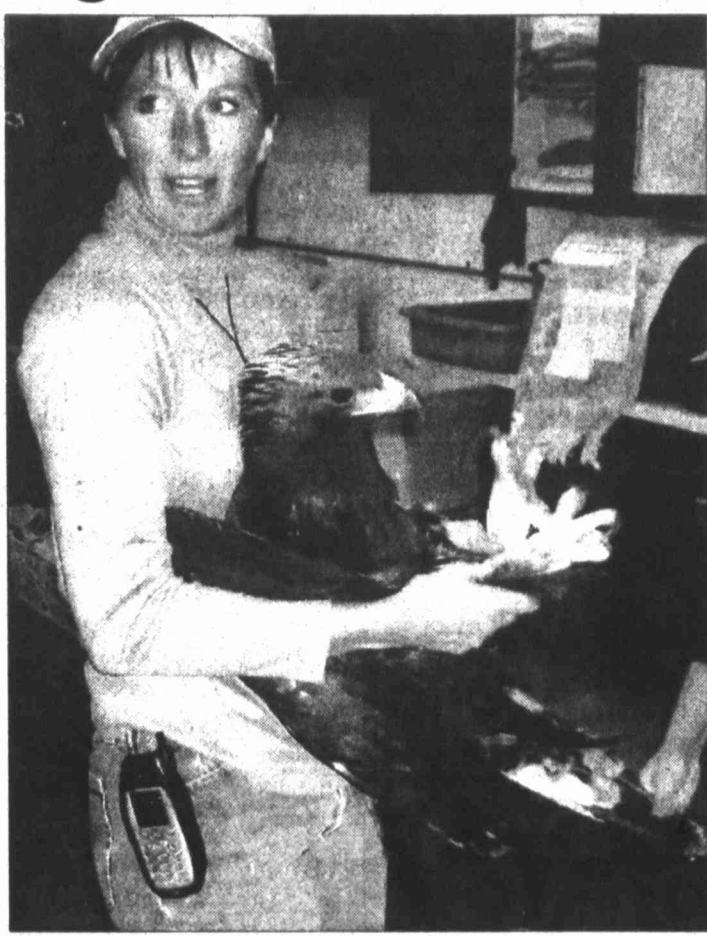
lowered the lid. Once the container was placed on the passenger seat, he dialed our number.

"It's either an eagle or the largest hawk I've ever seen," said Randy McCaleb. Since he had previously brought us a bird of prey, Randy knew to head toward Big Spring. His quick arrival told us he must have flown the distance.

As he walked toward our front porch with a large cooler, we couldn't believe Randy had put a bird in it. He said every two minutes or less, he had raised the lid so it would have enough oxygen. He also checked so often because he didn't want it to die.

Crouched inside and completely filling the container was a first year golden eagle. Looking up at Randy, I gave him the news. "You have yourself an eagle!" Using the coat and wearing leather gloves, I anticipated the struggle and resistance of a healthy eagle as I transferred the bird from the cooler to our carrier. There was none.

Thanking Randy for bringing the eagle to us, we told him we would be in Lubbock at the



While having his feet examined, the eagle, Thorn, is held by Debbie Tennyson, manager of South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.

wildlife center in less than two hours.

He would be kept informed of its progress. When we notified the manager, she said the staff would be ready.

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Discovered in the examination of the eagle were swollen feet and legs. Unable to obtain its food, the bird was weak and unable to fly. Closer observation of the bottom of the feet detected infection from porcupine

quills and cactus thorns. Nature's defense for a mammal and a plant had caused the downfall of another.

Every one realized the eagle would have a

See EAGLE, Page 6A

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a ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Have you ever wondered why we call a rose a rose? Have you ever wondered why we call a chicken a chicken? Have you ever wondered why we name them the way we do? Well, we almost didn't. This story begins at a time very long ago. It was a time when there were not so many flowers. It was a time when there were not so many chickens, or anything else. It was a time long before your Great Grandfather and Great Grandmother were born. The first man to see a flower was so enchanted with it that he knew it would need a special name. The flower was a rose. He decided to call it a chicken. He thought the word "Chicken" sounded nice. After all, no one else had ever heard of or seen a rose or even heard of a chicken. So, for a very long time, a rose was called a chicken. What would you have called a rose? Then this same man saw

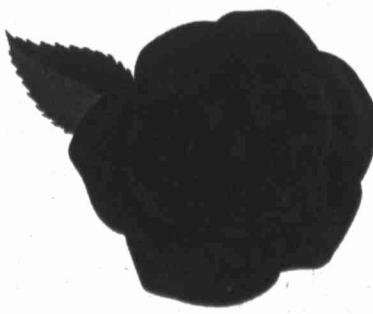
a chicken, and decided it needed a name, too. The word, "Chicken" was already being used, so he decided to call the chicken a "Rose." Does a chicken look to you like it should be called a rose? What would you have called a chicken? This very same man then saw a bird. A small bird. But a very beautiful bird. It was a parakeet. He knew that this was a very special bird and would need a nice name. The word, "Warthog" had never been used, so he called the bird a warthog. What would you have called a bird? Guess what he saw next? He saw a warthog. He started calling all the warthogs parakeets. Have you ever seen a warthog? Have you ever seen a pic-

ture of a warthog? They are really different, aren't they? Would you have called a warthog a parakeet or a parakeet a warthog? Then, this man saw a horse and needing a name for it, he decided to call it a cow. Then he saw a cow and decided to call it a horse. Are you keeping up with this story? Can you imagine all these things being called by a different name? Would you have called a horse a horse or a cow? Would you have called a cow a cow or a horse? As more and more people heard about all the names this man was calling the birds and animals, they decided to help him name a few things, too. They saw a little puppy. The first man wanted to call it a kitten. But the other people wanted to call it a puppy for they had already seen another

animal they thought should be called a kitten. So they voted, and most of the people wanted to call the puppy a puppy so that is what they did call them from then on and that is still what we call them today. They also voted to call the other little animal they had seen "kitten". I am glad, aren't you? One day they were all walking down a path when they came upon a beautiful rose. "What do you call this?" asked one of the people. "I call it a chicken," said the first man. "No, that is not pretty enough for this flower. Let's call it a rose instead." They all voted and decided to call the pretty flower a rose. "But", said the first man, "I have already used the name, CErrose.. The rose is over there, scratching

the ground for seeds." All the other people saw the little animal scratching the ground and making funny sounds. "Let's call him the chicken," said one. They all voted and from then on, called a chicken a chicken. They also decided that the pretty little bird should be called a parakeet, and that the little short animal should be called a

rose? Would a parakeet still be as beautiful if it was called a warthog? Would a warthog still be a warthog if it was called a parakeet? Of course. Would you still like to ride a horse if it was called a cow? Would you still love to drink milk if the cow was called a horse? Yes, I am sure you would. I would! So you see, no matter what we call or name something, it will always be as sweet, as beautiful, and as precious. The rose will always smell so sweet. The chicken,s eggs will always taste so good. The birds will always be such fun to watch. The horse would still be fun to ride. The milk from the cow would still be as good to drink. Even people have names. What is yours? Mine is Bob. I want to tell you that as all the birds and animals are getting ready to go to sleep, so should we. It's late, so "Good Night!



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Life spans are longer in U.S.-Mexico border counties

By JEFF CARLTON

Associated Press Writer
DALLAS — Residents of three overwhelmingly Hispanic counties along the Texas-Mexico border enjoy some of the longest life spans in the state, according to a Harvard University study.

Hidalgo and Cameron counties, situated on the

Rio Grande, ranked first and second in residents' life expectancy, living an average of 80.2 and 80.1 years, respectively. Neighboring Starr County was fifth, with an average life expectancy of 79.6 years.

A professor at the University of Texas at Austin said the phenome-

non is part of what some demographers and public health experts call the "Hispanic paradox."

"Even though Hispanics have less access to health care, even though they don't use health care too much and even though they have relatively lower incomes, they seem to live longer," said David

Warner, an economist who has studied health care issues among Mexican-Americans.

The Hispanic populations of the three counties ranges from 86 to 98 percent, according to the state demographer.

"It's not too surprising," said Steve Murdock, the demographer for Texas.

"Hispanics often have high longevity that isn't always dependent on their socio-economic status. Their longevity is quite good compared to groups in similar circumstances."

Williamson County in suburban Austin, home of computer maker Dell, Inc., and Collin County,

one of the wealthiest counties in the U.S., each reported an average life span of 79.7 years to complete the top five.

"Counties with greater resources are going to have higher longevity because of access to health care and the ability to pay for it," Murdock said.

EAGLE

Continued from Page 6A

lengthy recovery. They appropriately named the bird "Thorn." At first, a regimen of antibiotics and soaking of the feet several times a day provided improvement. For months, veterinarians would continue to remove quills, thorns, and dead tissue. The feet were bound to protect the healing process.

On Christmas Eve, Art and I had to make an unplanned trip to the center. While there, the manager asked me to help with Thorn. Holding the eagle while she unwrapped his feet, I was overwhelmed at the devotion of all the staff in the treatment of this bird. As my hands held his legs and my arms pressed against his wings, I could readily appreciate the size and potential strength of an eagle. While waiting for the rebinding of its feet, I was instructed in how to administer therapy to the toes. During the drive home after dark, I told Art this was one Christmas Eve I'd never forget.

In the ensuing months, it was discovered that ligaments had been damaged. The eagle was unable to bend its toes. Prostheses, braces and therapy were created to try to correct this problem. One week the eagle

would rally. Then a sudden decline in its condition would occur. The manager consulted with numerous rehabilitation centers to ascertain if any procedure had been overlooked. She was repeatedly told, "You are doing what we would be doing, and more."

From the time of its arrival, Thorn had bonded with the manager. Daily she fed and medicated the bird. When the eagle seemed to give up, Debbie Tennyson stayed with him and even slept beside his cage or in his mew. Somehow, Thorn gained will to continue.

In late summer, Debbie allowed Thorn to exercise in the flight cage.

The eagle could fly the length of the facility, but his landings were hampered by his feet. In early September, I went with Debbie when she took Thorn outside to sit in the sun beside a pond located on the grounds of the center. She indicated there was a possibility that Thorn might not make it. Each time he was in a decline, it was harder to bring him back. The eagle had endured numerous painful treatments, and his will seemed to be failing. Having watched his suffering, successes, and endurance for 10 months, I thoroughly understood her quandary.

On Sept. 13, swelling

feet and a refusal to eat signaled yet another decline. For Thorn, whose perseverance had touched us all, the decision for euthanasia was made. His spirit, his very essence, continue to encourage those who try to save wildlife.

Bebe McCasland is federally and state licensed to rehabilitate wild birds.

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Sports

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Do you have an interesting sports item or story idea? Call 263-7331. Email results to: sports@bigspringherald.com

Page 1B
Tuesday, September 12, 2006

IN BRIEF

Quarterback Club meeting is Monday

Big Spring High School's Quarterback Club will meet at 7 p.m. Mondays at the BSHS Athletic Training Center.

Mark Tissue, the booster club's president, encourages all parents of BSHS football players and fans of the Steers to attend.

For more information, call Tissue at 816-3458.

CGA, Knights to host scramble

The Chicano Golf Association, in conjunction with the Knights of Columbus, will host the 10th Annual Father Delaney Golf Tournament Sunday, Sept. 17 at Comanche Trail Golf Course.

Format is a four-person scramble. Registration deadline is 9:45 a.m. the day of the tournament.

For more information, contact 264-7116.

Lady Steer boosters to meet

The Big Spring High School Lady Steers Booster Club will hold its first meeting of the year at 5:30 p.m. Monday in the Athletic Training Center adjacent to BSHS.

The booster club backs all BSHS girls sports, including basketball and volleyball.

This will be an organizational meeting for the group.

For more information, contact Leslie Whitten at 264-2504 or 816-6764.

Tennis boosters meet Thursday

The Big Spring High School Tennis Boosters will hold their meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday in the BSHS cafeteria.

Cyclists confess to doping

NEW YORK (AP) — Two of Lance Armstrong's former teammates said they used a performance-enhancing drug when they were getting ready for the 1999 Tour de France, according to a newspaper report.

Frankie Andreu, a 39-year-old former team captain, and another teammate who requested anonymity because he still works in cycling, told The New York Times they used EPO in preparation for the 1999 race, when Armstrong won the first of his seven titles in cycling's biggest race.

"There are two levels of guys," Andreu said in a story published on the newspaper's Web site Monday night. "You got the guys that cheat and guys that are just trying to survive."

Andreu said he took EPO for a few races and is admitting the use now because he's worried doping is having a negative effect on the sport.

Both said they never saw Armstrong take any banned substances.

Armstrong overcame testicular cancer to win the Tour a record seven consecutive times and faced constant doping allegations toward the end of his career. He has repeatedly denied using performance-

'Skins miss last-gasp chance vs. Vikes

By JOSEPH WHITE

AP Sports Writer

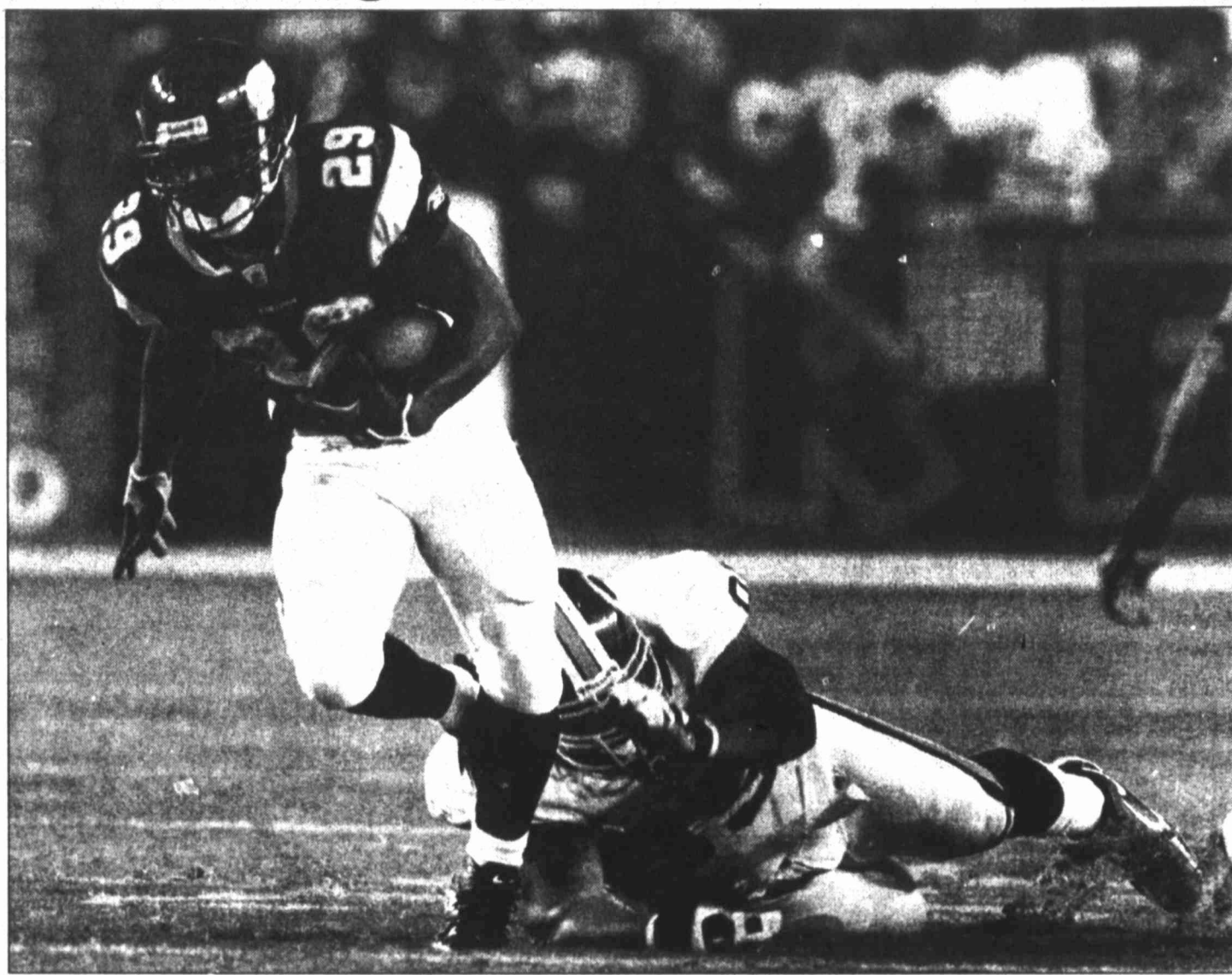
LANDOVER, Md. — The Minnesota Vikings have a new coach, a new attitude, and an old quarterback who knows how to win.

Brad Johnson led a 54-yard fourth-quarter drive, capped by Ryan Longwell's 31-yard field goal with one minute remaining, to give the Vikings a 19-16 victory over the Washington Redskins on Monday night.

The victory made Brad Childress a winner in his head coaching debut, and made Johnson a winner for the 66th time as a starter two days before his 38th birthday. Johnson, who completed 16 of 30 passes for 223 yards and a touchdown, has won an impressive 61 percent (66 of 109) of his starts with four teams in his 15-year career.

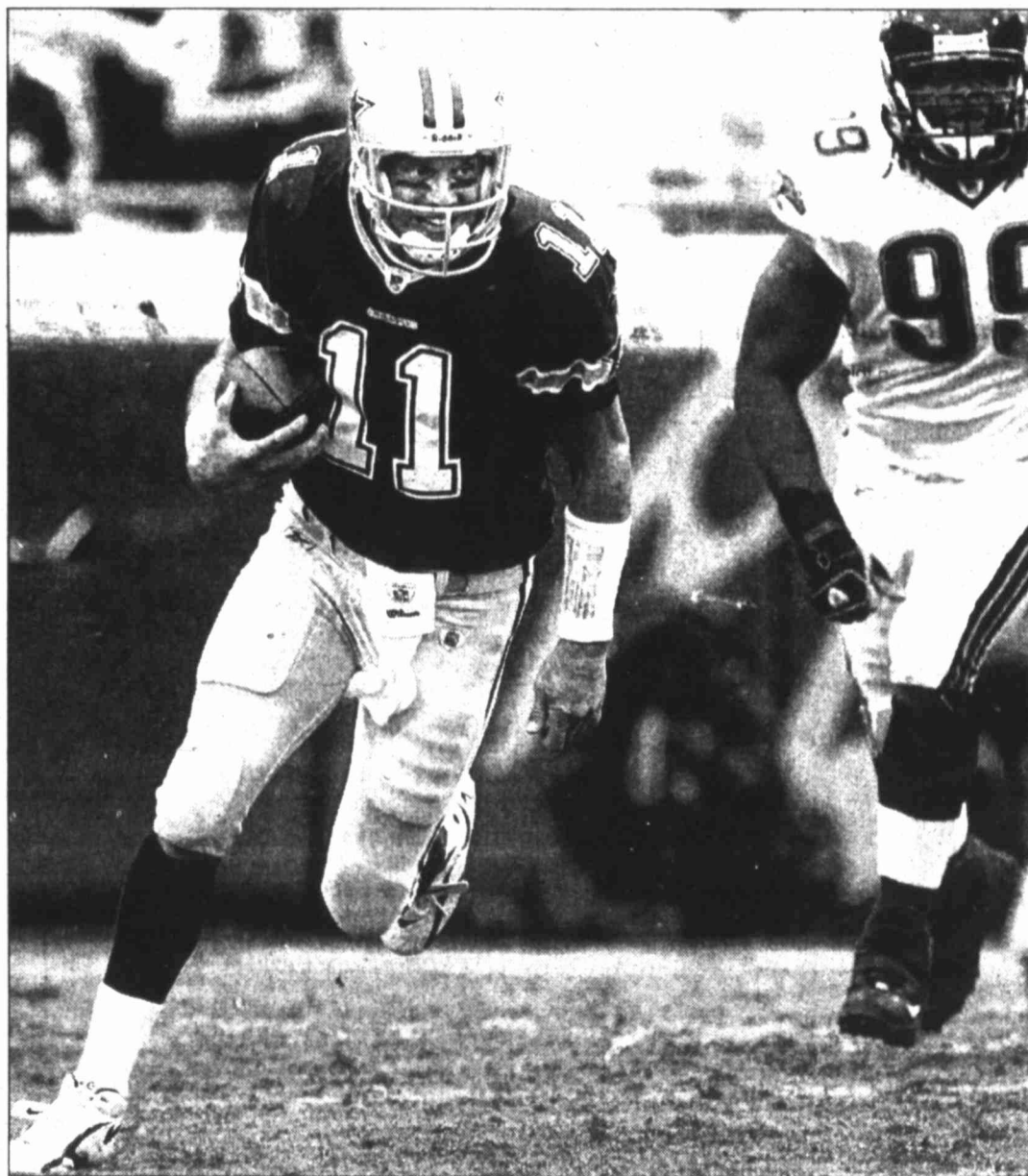
"To win is big, but to not only win, but to win against a team that was in the playoffs last year, in their home environment, Monday night, all the things that go in their favor," Minnesota safety

See VIKES, page 2B



Harry E. Walker/MCT

Minnesota running back Chester Taylor (29) runs past Washington defender Joe Salave'a during the third quarter of the Vikings' 19-16 victory over the Redskins at FedEx Field in Landover, Md. Monday night.



Ron T. Ennis/Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Dallas quarterback Drew Bledsoe (11) scrambles out of the pocket in the third quarter against the Jacksonville Jaguars, Sunday at Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville, Fla.

Bledsoe's position safe — 'right now'

By JAIME ARON

AP Sports Writer

IRVING — Drew Bledsoe put his hands behind his hips, arched his back and grimaced, partly from the pain and perhaps partly to brace himself for the questions he knew were coming — about his lousy outing in the Dallas Cowboys' season-opening loss and about the inevitable cries for backup Tony Romo to take his place.

Bledsoe usually speaks to reporters on Wednesdays, but made an exception Monday because of the circumstances. He said he was merely being accountable, like a starting quarterback should.

He didn't emphasize the words "starting quarterback." Still, his message was clear: This remains his team.

And if you don't believe him, then take it from coach Bill Parcells: This remains Bledsoe's team ... "right now."

Parcells defended his longtime quarterback

Monday, insisting that plenty of others were to blame for a 24-17 loss to the Jacksonville Jaguars. He said Bledsoe will definitely start Sunday night against the Washington Redskins and that calls for him to turn to Romo are premature.

However, Parcells' loyalty to Bledsoe has its limits. By qualifying most of his comments with "right now," he opened the door to the exact speculation he was trying to deny.

Maybe that's why he got so testy about it.

"I told you I was getting Romo ready to play. And at some point in time, I'm hopeful I will be able to play him this year," Parcells said.

"Now, I don't know when, where or under what circumstances. But that shouldn't be the story for today because it's a non-story."

Asked about it again, Parcells said, "Well, I tell you what let's do — you write what you want, I'm going to explain it the best way I can."

Tomlinson runs wild in San Diego victory

By JOSH DUBOW

AP Sports Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. — With LaDainian Tomlinson running through the Oakland defense and Shawne Merriman harassing Aaron Brooks, it didn't matter who played quarterback for San Diego.

Tomlinson ran for 131 yards and one touchdown and the Chargers handed Oakland its second home shut out ever to take pressure off Philip Rivers in his first NFL start, a 27-0 victory over the Raiders on Monday night.

"It was exciting," Rivers said. "I've been waiting for this day for a long time. ... I've said before, I don't care if I

have to hand it off 50 times or throw it 50 times, as long as we win."

With much of the focus on Rivers as he replaces Drew Brees, Chargers coach Marty Schottenheimer put the game in the hands of Tomlinson and his defense, spoiling Art Shell's first game back as Raiders coach.

San Diego beat the Raiders for the sixth straight time and shut them out for the first time in their last 90 regular-season games. When the Chargers won 44-0 in 1961, Al Davis was still an assistant with San Diego.

Tomlinson showed little rust after sitting out the entire preseason.

Carpenter, Cards blank Houston

By R.B. FALLSTROM

AP Sports Writer

ST. LOUIS — Chris Carpenter coasted into the playoffs last season. This year, he's been dominant down the stretch.

Carpenter threw a six-hitter and Ronnie Belliard had four RBIs, helping the St. Louis Cardinals take advantage of a fill-in starter in a 7-0 victory over the Houston Astros on Monday night.

Carpenter has two complete games in his last three starts in a big switch from last season, when he staggered into October with a 9.14 ERA over his final four regular-season starts. The Cardinals clinched the NL Central last year on Sept. 15, which had a lot to do with Carpenter's late slide — and he won the Cy Young Award with a 21-5 record.

"I learned from last year that no matter what the situation was, not to give them away," Carpenter said. "I'm trying as hard as I can to stay locked in and mentally focused on what I need to do."

Juan Encarnacion had two RBIs for the Cardinals, who dominated in the first of seven meetings with the Astros over the final 20 games. St. Louis ended a three-game skid and leads the NL Central by five games over Cincinnati

and six over the Astros, who beat them in the NLCS last year to go to the World Series.

"I think it's important to note," manager Tony La Russa said. "You just can't make too much of it. Enjoy it for a while."

Taylor Buchholz was recalled from Triple-A Round Rock to sub for Andy Pettitte, who was pushed back a day because of a heavy workload and a minor ankle sprain. Buchholz (6-10) made his first appearance for Houston since July 27 and allowed five runs in 3 1-3 innings.

"I thought I'd figured some of this stuff out down in Triple-A and I just went back to doing the same old thing I was doing in the past," Buchholz said.

Carpenter (14-6) is 4-0 with a 2.27 ERA in his last seven starts. He lowered his NL-leading ERA to 2.84 with his fourth complete game of the season and third shutout, which tied Arizona's Brandon Webb for the major league lead.

"That's kind of the way he's been pitching," La Russa said. "He's such a horse."

See ASTROS, page 2B

VIKES

Continued from page 1B

Darren Sharper said. "That just shows how battle-tested we are. That's what coach has expressed to us all camp. He wants a hardened unit."

The Redskins had a chance to tie the game after Longwell's kick, but John Hall - who has struggled with leg injuries for the last two years - was wide left with a poorly hit 48-yard field goal attempt with 12 seconds remaining.

"My heart was kind of stopping there," Johnson said. "I was tying my shoes getting ready for an overtime game. Fortunately, it went a little wide left for us and turned out great."

Chester Taylor, the Vikings' free agent signing from Baltimore, rushed 31 times for 88 yards and a touchdown, upstaging Clinton Portis' surprise return for Washington. Portis, who spent the week downplaying his chances for the game because of a shoulder injury, entered the game late during the Redskins' first drive and finished with 39 yards on 10 carries.

The loss subdued a Washington

crowd that turned the stadium into a sea of fluttering red, white and blue as they waved American flags to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The attendance was 90,608, a new record for the largest stadium in the NFL, and it included actors Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes in Dan Snyder's box. Cruise's production company recently signed a two-year financing deal with an investment partnership headed by the Redskins owner.

A game that had no turnovers was decided with a winning Vikings drive that began at Minnesota's 33 with 5:34 remaining. A 13-yard pass to Troy Williamson converted a key third down, and 15 yards were added to the play when Redskins safety Sean Taylor grabbed Williamson's face mask.

From there, Chester Taylor carried five straight times to the Washington 13, forcing the Redskins to use all their timeouts before Longwell's winning kick.

The game featured a Hall of Fame coach (Joe Gibbs) against a first-time head coach making his debut, as well as two of the oldest quarterbacks in the league.

Washington's Mark Brunell turns

36 on Sunday.

"I'm always surprised at the little respect that Brad gets," said Redskins tackle Jon Jansen, who played with Johnson in Washington in 1999 and 2000. "He's bounced around to different teams and he's won everywhere he's been, but it doesn't surprise me at all in the game that he had or in the way he leads his offense."

Childress has vowed to change the culture of a Vikings team that was belittled following last year's infamous "Love Boat" party involving several players.

He made a statement before the game by deactivating safety Dwight Smith, who was cited for indecent conduct two weeks ago.

But the Vikings often looked like a team adjusting to a new system. Their mistakes included a mishandled extra point, several drops and untimely penalties, including a roughing-the-passer call on third down that kept a Redskins drive alive.

Still, they were able to beat a Redskins team that unveiled a new offense designed by assistant coach Al Saunders. Saunders' arrival meant Gibbs wasn't calling plays for the first time in his head coaching career.

ASTROS

Continued from page 1B

Carpenter struck out six and walked two, raising his career record against Houston to 5-2 with a 2.52 ERA. He has 24 career complete games and 12 shutouts.

He had been 0-1 against the Astros this season while allowing nine runs in 14 innings. The Astros were shut out for the second straight game, and 13th time overall, after Adam Wainwright worked the ninth.

Carpenter has worked eight or more innings in

five of his last six starts. He's 7-3 with a league-leading 1.47 ERA in 15 starts at home.

Belliard had been in an 0-for-20 slump before his RBI single off Buchholz in the third. His three-run triple off Fernando Nieve capped a five-run inning that put the Cardinals ahead 7-0.

"I had a rough week," Belliard said. "I didn't know I was 0-for-20, but I knew I was 0-for-the-last-six-games."

Encarnacion had an RBI single in the third and drew a bases-loaded walk from Nieve in the fourth.

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Pigskin Picks Entry Form

Team _____ Name: _____
 1. _____ Address: _____
 2. _____ Phone Number: _____
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 6. _____ Tie Breaker - Circle the winner and
 7. _____ note total points scored
 8. _____ **Nebraska at USC**
 9. _____ Total Points _____
 10. _____

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September 5, 2006

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- The world's largest reptile is the saltwater crocodile at 16 feet long and 1,150 pounds.
 - The world's smallest lizard is the Jaragua lizard. It measures just 0.63 inches.
- World Almanac for Kids

KID NEWS

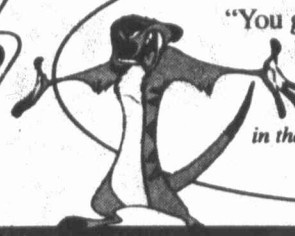
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Chatter Box

"You got to put your past behind you."

— Timon, a meerkat who befriends a lion cub named Simba in the 1994 movie "The Lion King." on imdb.com.



In The News

Panda baby boom!

Five giant panda cubs are born in China

TIME FOR KIDS China welcomed five newborn giant panda cubs in a single week this summer, including one hefty baby and two sets of twins. So far, a total of six pandas have been born in captivity this year.

ONE BIG BABY!

On Aug. 7, the heaviest panda cub born in the history of China's artificial breeding program was delivered at the Wolong Giant Panda Protection and Research Center. The center is located in the Sichuan Province of southwest China.

The chubby male cub weighs 218 grams, which is a little less than half a pound. Most panda cubs born in captivity weigh between 83 and 190 grams at birth.

The birth of the biggest panda baby wasn't the only record set that day. The cub's mother, Zhang Ka, also set a record for the longest delivery — about 34 hours.

The first panda cub born in captivity this year was also delivered at the Wolong center. The cub entered the world on July 22.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL ZOO SI EDU

At birth, panda cubs are a pinkish color and hairless and are about the size of a stick of butter. It took nearly a month for this cub at the National Zoo to develop the distinctive dark markings of a panda.

SEEING DOUBLE

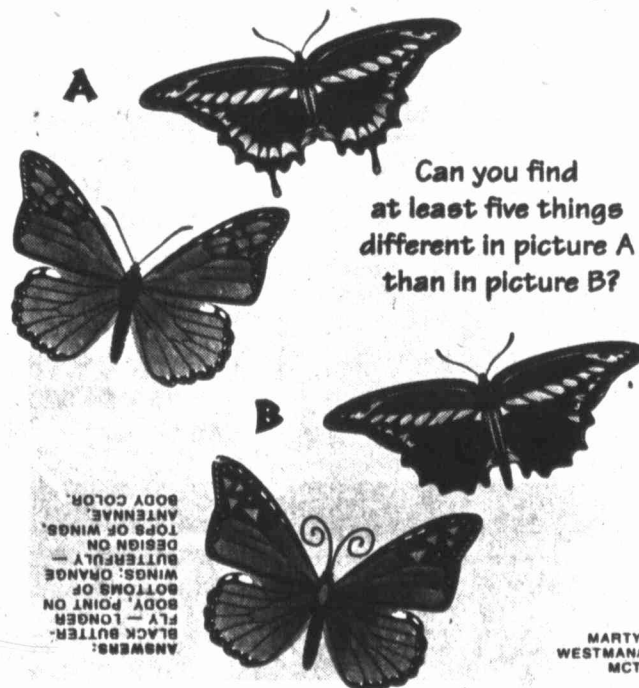
Twin giant pandas, Qi Zhen and Qi Yuan, also helped boost the panda population. The sisters each gave birth to their own sets of twins. The babies were born on Aug. 6 and Aug. 7 at the Chengdu Giant Panda Reproduction and Research Center. Chengdu is the capital of the Sichuan Province.

Giant pandas are one of the world's most endangered species. There are only about 1,600 of the rare animals living in the wild. Giant pandas are found in China, mostly in the mountains of Sichuan. More than 180 pandas live in research centers in China. — Vickie An

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Puzzle Play

MODIFIED BUTTERFLIES



Can you find at least five things different in picture A than in picture B?

ANSWERS:
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BODY POINT ON
BUTTERFLY
WINGS: CHANGE
SHAPES OF
NO WRISGS
BUTTERFLY
TOP OF WINGS
ANTENNAE
BODY COLOR.

MARTY WESTMAN MCT

Move over, Timon. This summer's hit TV show "Meerkat Manor" has fueled a meerkat mania not seen since "The Lion King."

By Iris Kuo, McClatchy Newspapers

Animal Planet's "soap opera with fur" follows the real-life drama of the Whiskers family, which lives in an African desert. Its cast includes ruthless leader Flower, disturbed Youssarian and outcast Tosca.

Since premiering in June, the show has rocketed meerkats to stardom. A second season begins this month, and a movie is reportedly in the works. Animal Planet executive producer Mick Kaczorowski said their popularity stems from the similarities between meerkat and human behavior: "You can almost see their facial reactions in a closeup," he says.

The new focus on the shoe-sized critters has spilled over into real life. There has been an avalanche of interest in the adopt-a-meerkat program at the Fellow Earthlings Wildlife Refuge in California. And zoos report that more visitors want to see them.

At the Fort Worth, Texas, Zoo's Meerkat Mounds on a recent afternoon, siblings Scarface, Dot, Tail and Pinky stood on their hind legs to gaze at visitors. Because the zoo is safe from predators and rivals, its "meerkat mob" is more "Hakuna Matata" than their TV counterparts. "Ours are a little lazy," joked zoo spokeswoman Lyndsay Nantz.

So how do the celebrity meerkats of the Manor compare to their not-so-famous cousins at the Fort Worth Zoo? Take a look.

Meet the new royalty in the animal kingdom, meerkats

MEERKAT FACTS

- Meerkats are about 20 inches long and weigh about 2 pounds.
- They have an excellent sense of smell and eyesight, and are intensely curious, smart and territorial.
- They are mammals and belong to the same family as mongooses.
- They burrow homes in the ground.
- Meerkats are from Africa. As desert animals, they love the heat.
- The dark fur around their eyes acts like sunglasses to reduce the sun's glare.

Meerkats live about six years in the wild and 12 years in captivity.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Zoo: A sibling family of four lives at the Meerkat Mounds exhibit at the zoo, which has an indoor area. The zoo can't add new meerkats because they are so territorial. "It'd be like World War III," says zoo curator Ron Surratt.

Manor: The family of about 40 shares many-chambered burrows in the scorching Kalahari Desert of southern Africa.

CHOWTIME

Zoo: Zookeepers feed them cat chow, fruits, vegetables and insects, and they snap up the bugs around their mound.

Manor: Go on foraging trips daily for scorpions, millipedes and other food.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Zoo: Respond to a bell that zookeepers ring for mealtimes. "They're very bold; (it's unusual) for an animal their size to come up to someone my size," Surratt says of the meerkats, which surround him when he enters their enclave.

Manor: Have adjusted to the humans and cameras following them around the desert. "We're like furniture to them," says show spokeswoman Pam Bennett-Wallberg.

PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS?

Zoo: Mostly, they fight over food. There's no competition from other mobs for land or mates, but they'll get into skirmishes over the last mealworm.

Manor: They fight each other (and members of rival gangs) for mating privileges, dominance, territory and food.

FAMILY VALUES

Zoo: In the relative safety of Meerkat Mound, eldest female Scarface doesn't have to aggressively manage her family the way Flower must. Tail is the only male, and he is neutered, so he's off the hook when it comes to battling other Romeos.

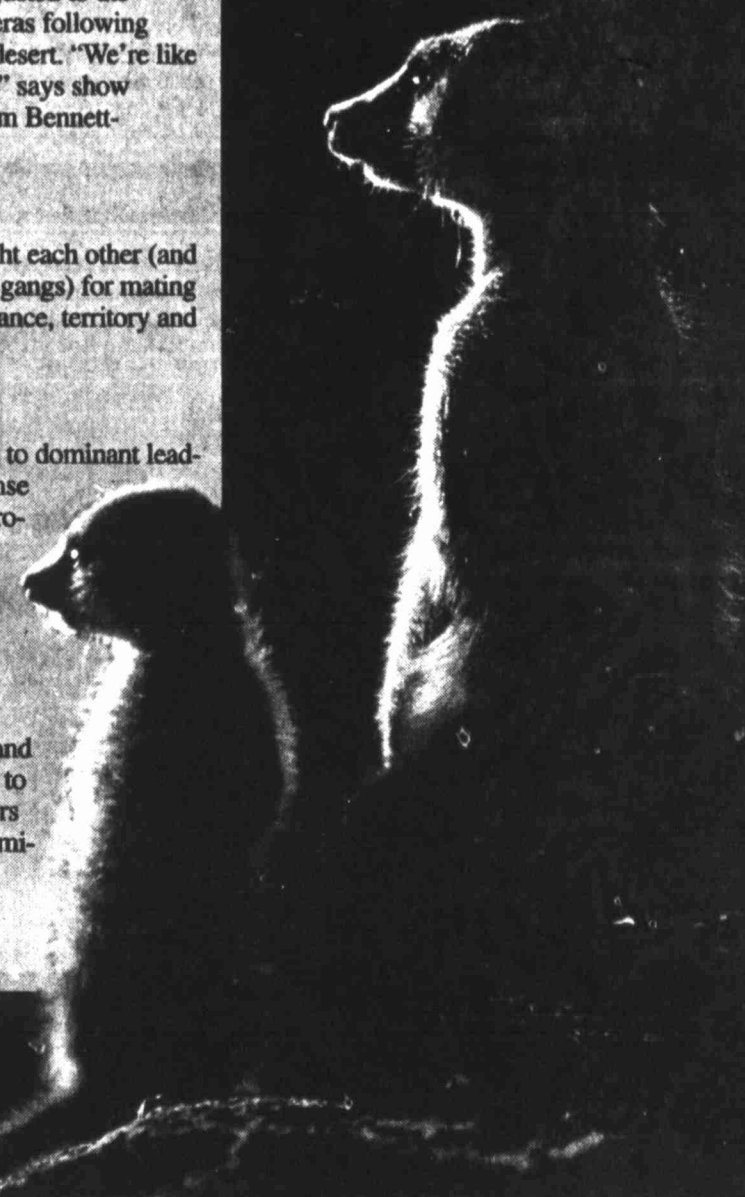
Manor: Kowtow to dominant leaders, the no-nonsense Flower and her protective mate, Zaphod.

STAND-UP GUYS

Zoo: Are protected from predators, so the standing function is mostly reserved for scoping out zoo visitors.

Manor: Often stand on their hind legs to watch for predators and competing families.

SOURCE: FORT WORTH ZOO (WWW.FORTWORTHZOO.COM)



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Tomorrow's Horoscope

Mercury, the master of messages, moves into the diplomatic realm of Libra. His motto as he transits the Libra path is: "with liberty and justice for all." Legal efforts go exceedingly well under this influence, which lasts through Oct. 1. We're more willing to compromise and strive for the highest common interest.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You become more powerful through your silence than any words could make you. It's not difficult to do once you realize the effortless and copious benefits of saying nothing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It takes great daring to follow your whim. It also takes listening skills, directed inward, since your impulses are more like whispers than shouts now. Your reward is pleasure and discovery.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Whoever said that life isn't a dress rehearsal hadn't seen the contents of your closet. Who to be or not to be has far more to do with your interior than your exterior. Today is for working on your character.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're like the sage on the mountaintop. Your pursuit of inner peace is admirable, but how do designer labels fit into the picture? Reconciling your spiritual practice and commercial interests will be a challenge.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). A new character enters the stage of your life. Is this person destined to be a bit player or to take a leading role? It's up to you. The beginning stages of a relationship set the tone for the rest.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The stars highlight your ability to be unwavering in your dedication. Wanting something that's irresistible to you is key. Tonight, you're too busy to worry what others think of you, which is so attractive.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're thinking more about what you want than about what you'll have to do in order to attain that goal. This is good, since the former will drive you, and the latter will only overwhelm you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Intuitively, you create much-needed structure in your work. Perhaps you sign up for a course or enlist the help of a tough teacher. The benefits of rigorous discipline will be numerous.


SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You realize for the first time that you're involved in a task that's not worthy of you. The sooner you break free, the better. Scorpio people can help you in this matter.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You pour your attention into someone with an arresting personality. Perhaps this fascination will be short-lived. That's all the more reason to make it memorable.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You won't be the only one to benefit from your success. Once you know that others want you to succeed, you have a license to go full steam ahead.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Introspection gets tedious. You're ready to throw the attention off of yourself and onto a project. You'll still be learning about yourself, but you'll be having more fun doing so.

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6	2	7	1	8	5	3	8	4

TUESDAY

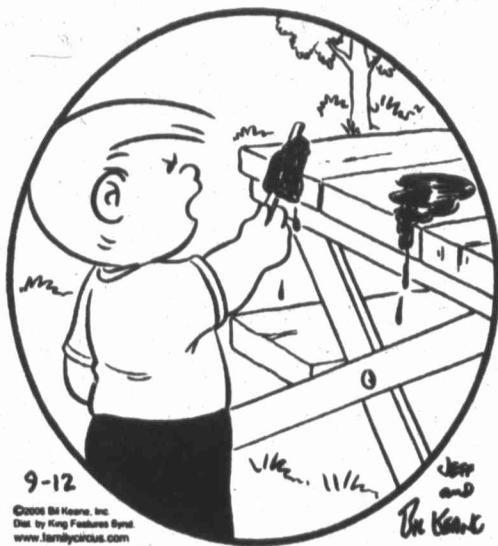
Table with 24 columns representing different TV channels and their respective programming for Tuesday, Sept 12, 2006.

DENNIS THE MENACE



"THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL IS GREAT, BUT THE LAST DAY IS EVEN BETTER."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"I just left my popsicle on the table for two minutes! Dumb of global warming."

HAGAR



BLONDIE



BC

COW PERSONS and NATIVE AMERICANS



WIZARD OF ID



AGNES



HI AND LOIS



THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 12, the 255th day of 2006. There are 110 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Sept. 12, 1609, English explorer Henry Hudson sailed into the river that now bears his name.

Sen. John F. Kennedy married Jacqueline Lee Bouvier in Newport, R.I. In 1960, Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy addressed the issue of his Roman Catholicism...

Rock singer-musician Ben Folds (Ben Folds Five) is 40. Rock musician Larry LaLonde (Primus) is 38. Rock singer Liam Gallagher (Oasis) is 34.

Answer to previous puzzle: RASP, WASH, GORMO, ERIE, OREO, COMED, GEEK, OLEO, BOISE, INGODORDER, PAS, STEEDS, VAM, GAFEM, ITSM, OLES, PAVE, MOPER, FAR, LAPEL, PORT, BUNG, ALERT, BLUR, INSECT, COIL, HEATER, DIE, CLUTTER, FREE, RODEO, SHOE, LORE, UTURN, ERAS, AVID, GAPES, RUDE, TEEB.

Newsday Crossword

SQUARE MEALS by Sally R. Steir

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'BIG SPRING', 'VOLUME 1', 'CC', 'Thomas 1 new city ordinance owners n', 'VM', 'PC', 'By JOHN Managin', 'A spec vance h for Frit Spring Memor Hangar team to MIA R observar', 'This importa us.', 'e Groves, publicit the VM(hold a Nationa Recogni we're v we've bo in coop people really e vance th "After added," we tak', 'IND', 'Classifi', 'Featur', 'Obtuer', 'Opinion', 'Sports', 'To req Please a.m. to if you n 263-731 noon 9