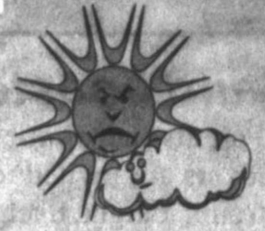


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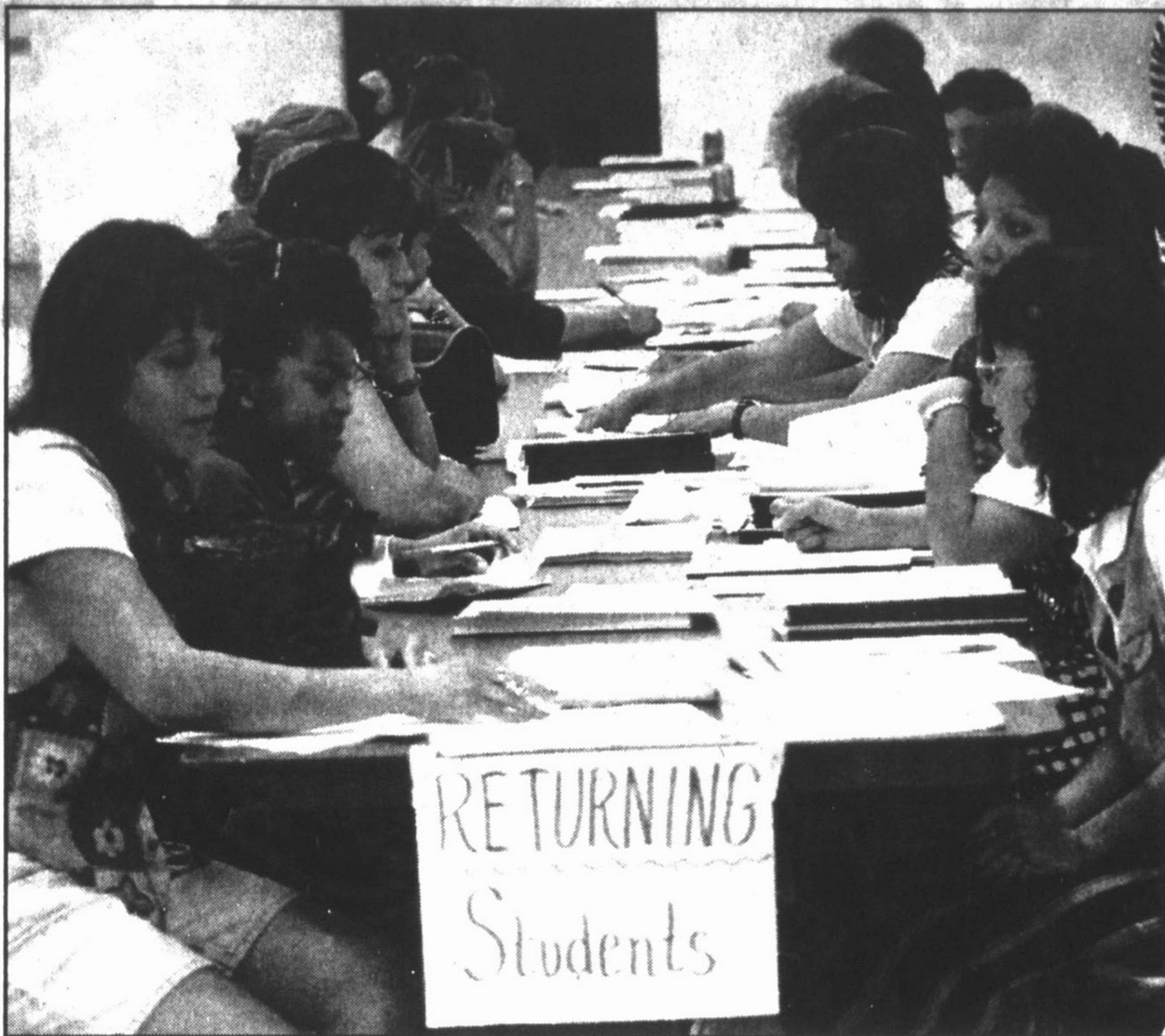
# Hereford Brand



97th Year, Vol. No. 17 Deaf Smith County, Texas

Tuesday, July 29, 1997

10 Pages 50 Cents



## Registering for school

Approximately half the students expected to attend Hereford elementary schools were registered Friday and Saturday when the process was held for the first time at a central location. Registration was at the Hereford Independent School District Intake Center and allowed parents to take care of all requirements in one stop. This was especially helpful for parents who have several children attending different schools.

## County gets look at unique global positioning device

By JACK STEIN  
Brand Editor

Deaf Smith County Commissioners Court got a first hand look Monday at a new device which will make it easier for emergency services to locate specific areas and homes in the county.

Bobby Hammett showed a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit to commissioners at their regular meeting and explained some of its uses.

Obtained through a Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) program, the device allows precise location of any area in the county to within seven meters, Hammett said.

The GPS unit is held in the hand and can lock on to as many as six satellites in stationary orbits above the earth.

Using information from these satellites the GPS unit determines exact longitude and latitude of its location and this can be plotted on a map of the county.

"You can find an area you are unfamiliar with," Hammett said or you can navigate yourself back if you are in an unfamiliar area."

Uses can include locating houses in case of fire or medical emergency and it can also be used to determine the size of a grass fire by obtaining several measurements.

In the case of medical emergen-

cies, Hammett said measurements from the GPS unit can be transmitted to an emergency evacuation medical helicopter giving the pilot coordinates which would allow him to fly directly to the site of need.

It is also possible the device can be used to determine precise locations of bridges, pipelines and other items which must have permanent records on file with the county.

Hammett, chairman of the county safety committee, was also presented a safety award by County Judge Tom Simmons which had been received earlier from James Cain, Texas Association of Counties Safety Specialist.

The award for 1996 is presented to the county by the Texas Association of Counties (TAC) which administers a Workers' Compensation self-insurance pool for counties and other local governments.

The award was earned for the county's record of involvement and commitment to safety in the workplace.

Deaf Smith County saved approximately \$124,074 in workers compensation costs during 1996 and is rated in the top 15 percent of approximately 350 governmental entities that collectively self-insure under this worker's compensation pool. Only 38 entities were honored for 1996.

Consideration for the awards are

based on:

- safety program elements in place.
- activity and success of the program during the 1996 calendar year.
- support for the program by upper management, governing board or commission which directs the operations of the entity.
- recent loss history
- improvement in the safety program over the previous year.

Commissioners also approved a list of election judges and alternates for the upcoming Aug. 9 special election and those to serve throughout the county for the next year.

Pollyanna Castillo is the judge and (See COUNTY, Page 2)

## 'Iron Lady' will speak in Amarillo

AMARILLO, Texas (AP) - "The Iron Lady" beat out "the Cos" to become the first speaker in a new series sponsored by an Amarillo hospital system.

Margaret Thatcher, Britain's prime minister from 1979 to 1990, will give the keynote address on Jan. 14 in Northwest Texas Healthcare System's "Health of the Nation" series, officials announced Monday.

Mrs. Thatcher, who will charge \$60,000 for her Texas Panhandle debut, came much cheaper than entertainer Bill Cosby, another potential speaker Northwest Texas executives considered.

"Bill Cosby crossed our minds but he wanted \$110,000, and here now Bill is in trouble," chief executive Mike Callahan said. "We were hoping that President George Bush could've joined us, but his schedule was full."

Callahan envisions bringing in a star speaker about once a year for the series. Hospital spokeswoman Carey Mead said Mrs. Thatcher will speak on "her past history, her past work experience and what she has seen as critical events in her career path."

Mrs. Thatcher already had scheduled a trip to Dallas for Jan. 15, Mead said.

Proceeds from the speech, scheduled for the city's civic center, will benefit Children's Miracle Network, Callahan said.

## GOP, White House hail landmark budget deal

By DAVID ESPO  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Republicans and the Clinton administration united today in hailing a landmark deal to remake the face of government by cutting taxes and balancing the budget. "This is a very strong program for the country," Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin said.

"It's a very, very proud moment," Senate Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said. "It's not everything Republicans wanted ... it's not everything the president or Democrats want."

"But it does a lot of good things for the American people," Domenici said in an early morning appearance with Rubin on NBC's "Today" show. "Both of us thought this was better than having seven years of war. You give some, we give some. We did it."

The tax breaks would principally benefit families with children, students and investors.

The agreement also establishes a new program of coverage for children currently without health care. Tobacco taxes would rise to help finance the program.

All sides described the agreement as tentative, subject to the drafting of official legislation. Republicans expressed confidence the package would be on the floor of the House and Senate and passed by the GOP-controlled Congress by Friday at the latest.

"We gave ground. The administration gave ground. And we found common ground," a happy Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said Monday night as the two sides announced a tentative accord.

"We couldn't be more pleased with the outcome," said White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, the administration's point man during a secretive final few days of bargaining.

President Clinton, who was out of town when the agreement was announced, was flying back to Washington overnight and expected to bestow his blessing today.

"I think it will sell itself," House Speaker Newt Gingrich predicted.

The agreement stood in contrast to more than two years of political combat between the White House and Republican congressional leaders that led to win government shutdowns two winters ago.

Both Clinton and the GOP majorities were returned to office in last fall's election. They settled on a course of compromise that led to the outlines of a tax and budget deal in late spring.

Translating that into the detailed tax and spending bills took several additional weeks.

Republican prevailed on their demand that the new health program bar funding for abortion for eligible teen-agers. Democrats held sway on their demand that welfare-to-work women receive minimum wage as well as protection in federal law

against discrimination and sexual harassment.

While many details were unavailable Monday night, aides provided these broad outlines:

- The tax cut would bestow breaks worth about \$140 billion over five years to families with children, to students and to investors regardless of their personal wealth or income.

The per-child tax credit would be worth \$500, as Republicans originally proposed in their 1994 "Contract With America" campaign manifesto, and would be available to many lower-income working families, as Clinton demanded. The capital gains rate would fall from a maximum of 28 percent to 20 percent.

There would be expanded Individual Retirement Accounts as well as the tax breaks for students that Clinton had demanded.

Spending would be slowed by approximately \$140 billion over five years, enough to balance the government's books for the first time

since 1969. While Medicare would account for the largest share, additional savings also would come from Medicaid, student loans and a variety of other benefit programs. Social Security would remain untouched.

Tens of billions of dollars in additional savings would come from the annual spending bills that Congress will vote on later in the year.

The solvency of Medicare would be extended through the year 2007. Senior citizens would be able to choose from a variety of coverage plans, including not only the current fee-for-service method, but also managed care options. Republicans won agreement for medical savings accounts for about 350,000 seniors nationwide.

Senate-passed provisions to increase the eligibility age to 67, require wealthy recipients to pay higher premiums, and impose a \$5 co-pay for home health care services were dropped.

## Rain causes severe flooding in Colorado

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) - Record-breaking rains brought severe flooding to Fort Collins overnight, washing a train off the tracks and sending a wall of water roaring through one neighborhood. At least two people died.

Water from 10 to 20 feet high roared through the neighborhood near the Colorado State University campus, said city spokesman Brad Hurst. He said at least two people died and authorities feared more bodies would be found.

The storm dumped more than 8 inches of rain in less than five hours. At least seven people were injured.

In the stricken neighborhood, homes were knocked off their foundations and trailers were smashed together, their insides open. Furniture, even a toilet bowl, littered the streets. Water was still rushing down the streets early today.

"The tragedy is that we cannot respond to everybody's needs.

Unfortunately we just don't have the resources to deal with all the problems," said Glenn Levy, the city's emergency management coordinator.

Authorities were checking the Poudre River as far east as Windsor in a search for people who may have been washed downstream. Divers were being brought in from other towns to help.

Crews in boats were evacuating residents of a mobile home park, near where a freight train carrying hazardous materials was knocked off the track.

City Manager John Fishbach said damage would total in the millions of dollars and declared a local emergency in the city of 88,000 people 60 miles north of Denver.

Seven people were treated at Poudre Valley Hospital, five with hypothermia from exposure to the water and two others with serious lacerations caused by blown-out windows.



## Dog days of summer

The heat and humidity plaguing Hereford lately have taken their toll on "Lexy" and the dog population as well as the human population of Hereford. Temperatures are expected to be cooler the remainder of this week. The dog belongs to Cristin Leasure and Manuel Reyna Jr.

## Good news for snorers: new treatment approved

NEW YORK (AP) - Millions of snorers and sufferers of a sleep disorder can rest comfortably now that a new treatment for their conditions has been approved for public use.

Somnus Medical Technologies was expected to announce today that the Food and Drug Administration approved its procedure for controlling snoring and sleep apnea - a halting of breath that can wake sufferers repeatedly or, in rare instances, suffocate them.

The procedure uses radio waves to heat and destroy tissue blocking the airway. Unlike laser surgery, the Somnoplasty technology works at relatively low temperatures and leaves outer tissue - such as taste buds - intact.

Christine Higgins, 48, said her

snoring often drove her husband to sleep in a guest room before she had the first of two Somnoplasty procedures done at the University of Maryland Medical Center in May.

"Now he can sleep with me. Usually he leaves," she said.

Forty million Americans - more than one in seven - suffer from habitual snoring, according to a 1994 report to Congress by the National Commission on Sleep Disorders Research.

Of the 7 million to 18 million Americans who suffer from sleep apnea, an estimated 38,000 die each year of related heart complications, according to the report. Older and obese people, especially men, are particularly at risk, according to researchers.

JULY 29 1997



# Lifestyles

## Del Toro is speaker at meeting

Hereford Toastmasters met for its weekly meeting Thursday in the Ranch House Restaurant.

Pat Varner presided at the meeting and served as toastmaster. Clark Andrews led the pledge and gave the invocation.

Timer was Adolfo Del Toro, a guest. Sharon Cramer served as AH counter, grammarian and wordmaster. She introduced the word "assiduous."

Andrews served as topicmaster. Topic speakers and their topics were Margaret Del Toro-"Fascism", Wayne Winget-"History", Varner-"History and Sex", and Cramer-"Boycotting Disney".

The only speaker for the meeting was Margaret Del Toro. Her topic was "Happiness is..." and Wayne Winget evaluated the presentation.

Winget also gave the reading and told the joke.

Cramer served as general evaluator.



## Convention attendees

Martha Jones, president of the Pilot Club of Hereford, is pictured with the 1997-98 president of Pilot International, Lily Tatafu Moore, at the Pilot International Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii.

## President of Hereford Pilot Club attends international convention

Martha Jones, president of the Pilot Club of Hereford, joined more than 1,000 Pilot members from all over the world at the Pilot International/Pilot International Foundation Annual Meeting and Convention, held in Honolulu, Hawaii, July 19-22.

The convention provided participants with many networking opportunities through business meetings and workshops.

Pilot members celebrated a \$25,000 grant given by the Pilot International Foundation to the Ronald and Nancy Reagan Institute for Alzheimer's research.

Attendees also took part in the Pilot Walk, held in Waikiki on July 22, to support the work of the Foundation in the area of brain-related disorders. A "Good Morning America" salute was filmed during the walk.

Founded in 1921, Pilot International is a volunteer service organization of business and professional leaders working together to improve the quality of life in communities throughout the world. The organization's service focus is helping people

with brain-related disorders and disabilities.

The Pilot International Foundation awards thousands of dollars in grants and scholarships each year to further education, research and programs that benefit those affected by neurological diseases and injuries to the brain.

Locally, the Pilot Club of Hereford sponsors the newly chartered Anchor Club in Hereford High School, conducts bicycle safety clinics, holds family game nights and fund-raisers to aid with community projects.

To learn more about the local Pilot

Club, contact Jones at Box 147, Hereford, Texas 79045 or call 364-1070.

## At The Gift Garden

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## Ann Landers

**Dear Ann Landers:** Please print this letter for "His Wife in Maryland." She's the wife who complained that her husband had turned into a lousy father because of the time he spent with the Other Woman. She wrote, "He works a lot of evenings and weekends and is never home for his kids." There must be a few thousand women like her out there who might learn something from what I have to say.

**Dear Maryland:** The night your husband picked me up in that restaurant, I told him he should go home where he belongs. Then, he

gave me a little history. He told me how your birth control "failed" and you became pregnant, even though you knew he wasn't ready for children. And talk about bad luck, it happened again with the second child.

You may have him in your life forever, but you will not make him happy. I don't get him full-time, but believe me, I would treat him like a king if I had the chance. Being a realist, I know I have to settle for whatever time I can get because you come first -- which is as it should be. By the way, I pay for a lot of those

dinners "in good restaurants" because he's concerned about money for the kids' shoes and braces. I am in much better shape financially than he is.

**Why am I in this relationship?** Because, unfortunately, all the attractive, wonderful men out there are married, and I happen to love this one. Just call me -- The Other Woman and Not Ashamed

**Dear Woman:** You didn't ask for my opinion, but I would be failing in my role if I didn't offer it.

The time and energy you are investing in this relationship with this married man represents time and energy that could be better spent with someone with whom you might have a future. Give this two-timing Romeo back to his wife full-time and go in another direction. You deserve better.

**Dear Ann Landers:** I am a 17-year-old girl who has been suffering from depression for the past several months. I noticed a few subtle changes in myself but was unaware of the cause. I was sleeping 12 hours a day, yet I never felt rested. I went to see my doctor about these changes, but her conclusion was that I was not consuming enough iron, and the deficiency in my diet was the reason I was always tired.

Over the next few months, I noticed a prolonged sadness and lack of interest in former hobbies I used to enjoy. I was irritable, had difficulty concentrating, cried a lot for no particular reason and felt worthless. When I decided to do a paper on depression for an English assignment, it became clear to me that I had all the symptoms.

I feel that if my physician had been paying more attention, she could have saved me from a lot of needless suffering by diagnosing my condition earlier. I am attempting to fight this battle on my own. If you print this letter, Ann, I believe it will bring me one step closer to defeating this illness. -- Still Depressed in Oregon

**Dear Oregon:** Please ask your doctor to refer you to a psychiatrist who will prescribe medication for

your depression. People don't have to suffer with depression the way they did in the old days. We now have anti-depressants that can make a world of difference. Also, I hope you will consider counseling. You can be helped, and life will be a lot better as soon as you get the psychological and medical support you need.

**Gem of the Day** (Credit Helen Rowland, author of "Reflections of a Bachelor Girl"): Marriage is a lot like twirling a baton, turning a handspring and eating with chopsticks. It looks so easy until you try it.

Feeling pressured to have sex? How well-informed are you? Write for Ann Landers' booklet "Sex and the Teen-ager." Send a self-addressed, long, business-size envelope and a check or money order for \$3.75 (this includes postage and handling) to: Teens, c/o Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11562, Chicago, Ill. 60611-0562. (In Canada, send \$4.55.)

ANN LANDERS (R) COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

## Hospital Notes

Report from Hereford Regional Medical Center on July 28:  
Admitted: Shaloina Wells.  
Discharged: Johnnie Davis.  
Report on July 29:  
Admitted: Donnie Owen, Maria Sotelo.  
Dismissals: None.

## 4-H record books bound for state-wide competition

Deaf Smith County 4-H'ers competed in county and district competition with record books entered in their specific categories of emphasis.

The following books will participate at state competition: Justin Betzen-plant and soil science; Jodie Wilburn-leadership; Miriam Wilks, consumer education; Robin Bell-housing and home environment; and Kylee Auckerman-gardening and horticulture.

Books and placings at county and district include:

- SENIORS**  
Brent Carlson-1st county, participation district-beef.  
Meredith McGowen-1st county, 2nd district-agriculture.  
Amy Perrin-1st county, 3rd district-horse.  
Jantzen Louder-1st county, 2nd district-swine.  
Joanna Brumley-1st county, 2nd district-agriculture achievement.  
Craig Campbell-2nd county-agriculture achievement.  
Cindy Harder-1st county, 2nd district-achievement.  
Erin Louder-1st county, 3rd district-clothing and textiles.  
Jaime Steiert-1st county, 2nd district-home economic achievement.  
Amber Brumley-1st county, 2nd district-citizenship.

- INTERMEDIATES**  
Amy Bell-1st county, Blue district-gardening and horticulture.  
Jerad Johnson-1st county, Blue

- district-beef.  
**JUNIORS**  
Justin Johnson-1st county, Blue district-beef.  
Shayla Wilcox-1st county, Blue district-sheep.  
Kaeli Urbanczyk-1st county, Blue district-food and nutrition.  
Toni Kaye Payne-1st county, Blue district-horse.  
Kesli Urbanczyk-1st county, Blue district-food conservation.  
Dawn Auckerman-1st county, Blue district-food and nutrition.  
Amy Northcutt-1st county, Blue district-horse.  
Seth Hoelscher-1st county, Blue district-swine.  
Amanda Smith-1st county, Blue district-sheep.  
Stephen Edwards-1st county, Red district-swine.  
State record book judging will be held in College Station Aug. 11-12. Winners of the state judging from Districts I and II will be recipients of the Washington, D.C., EXCELL trip in November. This program gives young people the opportunity to enrich their knowledge with sites and events in Washington, D.C., and also to participate in legislative visits.

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### Plaids for fall

Linda Block poses beside the piano in the parlor of the E.B. Black House as she shows one of the fashions for fall from Boots and Saddle that will be featured in the Women's Division style show to be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 5 in the HISD Administration Building. Tickets for the show, with lunch catered by Mary Beth Messer, are \$8.

### Hints from Heloise

Dear Heloise: As a family of six with no dishwasher, we do a lot of dishes by hand. Here are two ideas for conserving water.

• Use the water you run waiting for the hot water to rinse messy dishes before washing or to soak stuck-on food.

• Run only a little hot water into your dishpan at first. Wash a few dishes and run the rinse water from those dishes into your dishpan to finish filling it. — Barbara Johnson, Indianapolis

#### STATIONERY

Dear Heloise: I take my developed pictures of family, flowers, or whatever, and I put them on the copy machine. For 5 cents, I make my own personal stationery, which includes things for my friends to see.

I can put pictures all on one side and then write on the other side. My friends love to see my house, even my picture, on my stationery. — Anne Neale, Berkeley Heights, N.J.

Send a money- or time-saving hint to Heloise, PO Box 795000, San Antonio TX 78279-5000

### To Your Good Health

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I have spasmodic dysphonia. I would like to know as much as I can about this. Is there any treatment? — L.S.

ANSWER: Spasmodic dysphonia is due to a sustained, involuntary contraction of laryngeal muscles. Speech becomes forced, strained and raspy. One treatment is injection of Botox, a watered-down solution of botulin toxin. Don't worry; it's so dilute it affects only the target muscles.

The Dystonia Research Foundation can give you an in-depth explanation of the condition and a run-down of treatment options. You can call the foundation toll-free at (800) 377-3978.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I have been

taking Paxil, an antidepressant, for more than two years.

I am having trouble discontinuing the drug. If I stay off for more than a week, I get nauseated and dizzy, and I have ringing in my ears. Does this mean I am addicted to Paxil?

My doctor says I will have to come off it more slowly. — C.J.

ANSWER: There is little information on Paxil dependence. Current data do not indicate it is an addicting drug. It is not what's known as a "controlled substance." Controlled substances have the potential for addiction.

Your doctor's suggestion seems sensible. You should wean yourself off the drug more slowly.



### Taste test

Mark Griffin, Tanner Black and John Griffin help with preparation of crepes (and taste test as they go) for the Toujours Amis Crepe Sale which will be held in conjunction with the Town and Country Jubilee on Aug. 8-9 at the Community Center. In addition to crepes (chocolate, strawberry and praline), sandwiches and soft drinks will be offered, as well as coffee and doughnuts on Saturday morning.

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## Today in History

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Tuesday, July 29, the 210th day of 1997. There are 155 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:**  
On July 29, 1981, Britain's Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

**On this date:**  
In 1588, the English soundly defeated the Spanish Armada in the Battle of Gravelines.

In 1890, artist Vincent van Gogh died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in Auvers, France.

In 1914, transcontinental telephone service began with the first phone conversation between New York and San Francisco.

In 1948, Britain's King George VI opened the Olympic Games in London.

In 1957, the International Atomic Energy Agency was established.

In 1957, Jack Paar made his debut as host of NBC's "Tonight" show.

In 1958, President Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act, which created NASA.

In 1967, fire swept the USS Forrestal in the Gulf of Tonkin, killing 134 servicemen.

In 1975, President Ford became the first U.S. president to visit the site of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz in Poland as he paid tribute to the camp's victims.

Ten years ago: Testifying for a second day before the Iran-Contra congressional committees, Attorney General Edwin Meese strongly defended his inquiry into the affair.

Five years ago: Former East German leader Erich Honecker was arrested on his return to his homeland and charged with manslaughter; he was later permitted to leave after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The U.S. 400-meter freestyle relay team won the gold medal at the

Barcelona Summer Olympics.

One year ago: China held a nuclear test explosion that it promised would be its last, just hours before international negotiators in Geneva began discussing a global ban on such testing. At the Atlanta Olympics, Carl Lewis won the gold medal in the long jump, becoming only the fifth Olympian to win gold medals in four straight games. Michael Johnson won the 400-meter dash, Allen Johnson the 110-meter hurdles.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Lloyd Bohner is 73. Actor Robert Horton ("Wagon Train") is 73. Former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum Baker, R-Kan., is 65. Actor Robert Fuller is 63. American Red Cross President Elizabeth H. Dole is 61. ABC News anchorman Peter Jennings is 59.

Actor David Warner is 56. Rock musician Neal Doughty (REO Speedwagon) is 51. Marilyn Tucker Quayle, wife of former Vice President Dan Quayle, is 48. Rock musician Simon Kirke (Bad Company) is 48. Documentary maker Ken Burns is 44. Rock singer-musician Geddy Lee (Rush) is 44. Rock singer Patti Scialfa (Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band) is 41. Actress Alexandra Paul is 34. Country singer Martina McBride is 31. Rock musician Chris Gorman (Belly) is 30. Actor Wil Wheaton is 25. Rhythm-and-blues singer Wanya Morris (Boyz II Men) is 24. Actor Stephen Dorff is 24.

**Thought for Today:** "When I rest, I rust." - Fritz Thyssen, German industrialist (1873-1951).

**Bridal Registry**

*Rachael Balderaz  
Edgar Gallegos*

<i>Kimberly Sims Peter Iannelli</i>	<i>Trisha Munoz Ysabel Ledezma Jr.</i>	
<i>Leslie Billingsley Brody Lipperman</i>	<i>Joan Bookout Eddie Allsup</i>	<i>Cecilie Ramirez Juan Hernandez</i>
<i>Belinda Arroyos Ricky Trevizo</i>	<i>Charee Godwin Kerry Smith</i>	<i>Beci Elam Josh Liscano</i>

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# Non-partisan elections suggested by Bullock for board of education

AUSTIN (AP) - State Board of Education meetings have become so rancorous that Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock once suggested members should be appointed instead of elected. Now he's suggesting non-partisan board elections instead.

"I really think elected's OK, but to run on non-partisan ballots," Bullock, a Democrat, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "There are certain things in Texas that are just flat non-partisan" - such as education.

Some, however, question how non-partisan elections would improve matters.

The 15-member board currently includes nine Republicans and six

Democrats, but the battles haven't been between parties. Rather, they have been between a bloc of six Republican board members backed by religious conservatives and the rest.

Some board members backed by religious conservatives have objected to a state law curtailing their authority in such areas as textbook content and waged a strong fight on the state curriculum rewrite, contending that the process had been intruded on by a national group and the federal government and that the rewrite wasn't rigorous enough.

In this year's legislative session, Bullock suggested changing to an appointed board, saying the current

panel had "gone a little far to the right." Bills also were filed to abolish the board or drastically curtail its powers. But the measures didn't pass.

State Board of Education Chairman Jack Christie of Houston, a Republican who's not aligned with the social conservatives, said Bullock's proposal "is not a bad idea. It's something I would not object to."

But Christie said his first choice would be to ensure voters are educated on board candidates and the importance of the office.

"I think it would be OK to maintain partisan elections under those circumstances," he said.

Board member Donna Ballard of The Woodlands, labeled a leader of the social conservative bloc, said it would be difficult to run a campaign in a district that accounts for one-fifteenth of the state without a political party structure.

"On a race this size, I think the structure of the parties helps to get the word out," she said Monday.

In addition, she said, political party platform ideas can influence State Board of Education votes.

The 9-6 voting split on major issues, she added, shows "this is about education. It's not about party politics."

House Public Education Chairman Paul Sadler, D-Henderson, said of non-partisan board elections, "I don't see the point ... I don't know that that improves the board in any way, form or fashion to do that."

# Cosby submits to paternity testing

NEW YORK (AP) - Bill Cosby gave blood for a paternity test and challenged the 22-year-old woman claiming to be his out-of-wedlock daughter to do the same to prove he is not her father, his lawyer said.

Attorney Jack Schmitt said the entertainer was responding to lingering questions about whether Autumn Jackson, 22, is his daughter, and to reports she is considering hitting him with a paternity suit.

"The trial ended, but the court of public opinion did not," Schmitt told The Associated Press. "He felt it was time to settle this once and for all ... It's time to end the nonsense."

Schmitt announced Cosby's offer while appearing on CNBC's "Riviera Live" Monday night, three days after Ms. Jackson was convicted in a \$40 million extortion plot against the actor.

Schmitt said Cosby had blood drawn for a paternity test as the "Riviera Live" show was airing. He also called for Ms. Jackson and her mother, Shawn Upshaw, to submit their own blood samples.

Cosby, Schmitt said, thinks the test will show that Ms. Jackson's father

is Jerald Jackson, whose name appears on her birth certificate.

Ms. Jackson's attorney, Robert Baum, said he would contact her to see if she would accept Cosby's offer.

"I can't speak for my client, but I certainly will speak with her," Baum said while appearing on the cable show. "I am going to have this conversation with her first thing in the morning."

Ms. Jackson and two co-defendants were convicted Friday of threatening to sell her story to the tabloids unless Cosby paid her \$40 million. She is free on bail, but faces up to 12 years in prison at her Oct. 22 sentencing.

During her trial in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, Cosby admitted having sex with Mrs. Upshaw in the mid-1970s and to giving money to her and her daughter to keep the mother quiet about the brief affair. He said he told the girl he was not her father, but would be for her a father figure.

Baum contended that Ms. Jackson was raised to believe that Cosby is her father and that she had a legal right to his money.

# Home health care fraud rampant in four states

WASHINGTON (AP) - Rampant home health care fraud found by Medicare in four states likely is prevalent throughout the country, investigators told Congress.

"We have every reason to believe that similar conditions exist in other states," George F. Grob, deputy inspector general in the Health and Human Services Department, told the Senate Aging Committee Monday.

Forty percent of all home health visits to senior citizens in California, Illinois, New York and Texas should not have been paid for by Medicare, according to a report by the General Accounting Office assessing the results of recent HHS investigations.

And a fourth of the companies that provide such care in the four states, plus Florida, have abused or

defrauded Medicare or misused taxpayer money, the report found.

Overall, home health care - used increasingly by elderly Americans as the average hospital stay's duration has dropped - is losing billions a year because of fraud and waste.

HHS, which oversees the program, does an inadequate job of policing the companies that provide care, the study found.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, who chairs the committee, said the testimony suggested "fraud, waste and abuse are rampant," and called for the formation of a strike force to find the worst cases.

"There is no doubt in my mind that we can take a big bite out of it by focusing on the biggest offenders," he said.

The Clinton administration and many in Congress also are trying to craft a long-term solution, including a system that would set standardized payments in advance for each type of home care.

An aging population and shorter hospital stays have contributed to home health care's growth in recent years. In theory, such services save money - and improve quality of life - by keeping people out of more expensive hospitals and nursing homes. In reality, costs have spiraled: Medicare now spends about \$18 billion on such care, up more than 500 percent in the last six years.

In 1990, there were 5,656 home health agencies participating in Medicare; by 1996, more than 9,800. Meanwhile, the government screens very few claims before paying bills and does virtually no on-site visits to check work, the GAO study found.

Medicare now pays for up to 35 hours of "medically necessary" visits to the homebound elderly each week. Nurses and therapists bring skilled care, and aides help with daily activities such as getting in and out of bed and using the toilet.

Agencies are paid for each visit they make. Doctors are supposed to approve treatment but often don't check back to see if it should continue.

# Auto club reimbursement illegal in Texas says Morales

AUSTIN (AP) - Auto clubs offering benefits such as roadside assistance must provide the services directly or through a contractor and cannot reimburse members for help provided by others, according to Attorney General Dan Morales.

The legal opinion released Monday could force many of the state's 52 auto clubs, including AAA Texas, to change their service plans, according to Guy Joyner, head of legal support at the secretary of state's office.

Joyner said all of the companies' licenses, issued through the secretary's office, expire Aug. 31. Those offering reimbursements for services, or a combination of reimbursements and direct or contract services, will have to change their service plans before getting renewed, he said.

Many auto club officials, including a spokeswoman for AAA, said they were not familiar with the ruling and could not comment. Most said they would change their plans if required.

Secretary of State Tony Garza and Insurance Commission Elton Bomer together asked Morales whether reimbursing auto club members for services not provided directly by the club or through a contractor is allowed under the state law governing auto clubs.

They contended, and Morales agreed, that charging people a fee in exchange for a guarantee to reimburse them for services provided by

someone else is the business of insurance companies, not auto clubs.

Bomer said the cost of getting reimbursements from some auto clubs is far higher than buying insurance for such services.

For example, Bomer said, for up to \$2 per vehicle, insurance companies can sell Texans towing coverage. That would pay up to \$40 per tow job.

"Some auto clubs typically charge sums between 20 and 100 times greater than the approved rate," Bomer and Garza wrote.

The state auto club law lists the services that can be provided by auto clubs. It includes reimbursements for bail bonds and legal fees related to traffic incidents, towing, roadside assistance, travel and touring information and accidental injury and death benefits insurance.

The insurance must be handled by a group insurance plan issued to the club for its members.

"We believe that the fact that the Legislature described legal fee reimbursement as a service supports our view that the Legislature did not intend generally to permit automobile clubs to contract to reimburse to members for expenses incurred in obtaining any other services," Morales wrote.

As the state's top attorney, Morales' legal opinions hold the weight of law unless overturned by a court or the Legislature.

# Estranged wife found video tapes of rape

DALLAS (AP) - Nancy Sera fought back tears as she talked about a tape she accidentally discovered last month after going to her estranged husband's home to pick up a video camera when he wasn't home.

When she pushed the play button, she thought she was going to see a video of her second child's birth. Instead, she discovered a recording that authorities say shows her estranged husband raping three unconscious women.

"It's devastating," Mrs. Sera, 31, said Monday, shaking her head. "It was just so shocking, I was shaking."

Steven Sera, a 39-year-old traveling businessman, allegedly used Rohypnol, the so-called date rape pill, to knock his victims out. Authorities said the tape discovered shows him having sex with women from Texas, Arkansas and Missouri.

He has been charged in the Texas and Arkansas cases.

"First and foremost, it destroyed my family," said Mrs. Sera, who is raising the couple's two daughters, who are 3 months old and nearly 5. "I've gone through a lot of hatred that he could be so cruel because he

did this while I was pregnant with our second child. I don't think he had any regard for me, my daughters, women in general, that he could be so vile and so heinous."

Mrs. Sera, who sued for divorce in February alleging adultery, said she watched part of the tape June 13 before contacting her lawyer and turning the tape over to a private investigator, who gave it to police.

Sera, a lumber company owner, was arrested two weeks later and charged with sexual assault for the alleged attack on a Colleyville woman.

He posted bail and was arrested about two weeks later in Texas on an Arkansas warrant charging him with rape, attempted rape, kidnapping and drugging a person. He is now jailed without bail in Arkansas.

Sera's Arkansas attorney, Clint Huey, questioned the tape's authenticity. But prosecutors said it clearly shows Sera committing the crimes.

Jack Pate, Mrs. Sera's attorney, said at least three other women "have come forward who had something to do with Sera in some capacity."

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