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THE PAMPA NEWS

Monday, July 11, 2005

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School finance: Senate OKs tax measure

AUSTIN (AP) — Texans would shell out more for booze and cigarettes, but slightly less in school property taxes under a school finance proposal the Texas

Senate approved early Monday. The chamber struggled behind closed doors, delaying floor debate for about six hours before finally bringing

the measure to the chamber for public debate. The proposal passed 20-8. The bill still must be negotiated with members of the House in a conference

committee before the session ends July 20. Democrats in the 31-member chamber were opposed to increasing the sales tax rate by more than

half of a percent, but Republicans opposed a voter referendum that would allow a business tax that includes a
See TAX, Page 2



Pampa News photo by BEN BRISCOE

Rodeo Club rodeo

Dalton Childress competes in the calf riding event at the Junior Rodeo Cowboys Association event, which took place at the Top O' Texas rodeo grounds on Saturday.

Gulf Coast avoids hefty damage from Dennis

NAVARRE BEACH, Fla. (AP) — With a sigh of relief, Gulf Coast residents began hurricane cleanup — again.

Hurricane Dennis hit the storm-weary Florida Panhandle and Alabama coast on Sunday with less force than forecasters feared, sparing the region the widespread destruction caused by Ivan last September.

There was scattered flooding in Florida and Georgia, and more than 680,000 customers in four states were without power, with some likely to be out for three weeks or more. However, officials reported little major structural damage.

"I think we dodged a pretty large bullet," said Nick Zangari, a restaurant and bar owner in Pensacola. "I think people took

'I think we dodged a pretty large bullet. I think people took more precautions the second time around.'

— Nick Zangari
Restaurant and bar owner

more precautions the second time around."

It was already business as usual Monday morning for casinos along Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

Dennis quickly weakened to a tropical depression. By late Monday morning

it was centered over northern Mississippi and moving north-northwestward at 15 mph, and was expected to eventually stall over the Ohio Valley, the National Weather Service's Hydrometeorological Prediction Center said. Rain fell across parts of the mid-Mississippi, Tennessee and lower Ohio valleys and into the Carolinas.

One band of rain stalled over Georgia and Peachtree City, a suburb of Atlanta, got more than 6 inches in 18 hours, the National Weather Service said. "We could still see another few inches; it's just not moving," weather service meteorologist Eric Avila said Monday.

The weather service said other rainfall
See DENNIS, Page 2

Meeting advance

Ordinances, property bids on city agenda

By MARILYN POWERS
Staff Writer

Pampa City Commissioners will vote on two ordinances and four bids for delinquent tax property at their 4 p.m. meeting Tuesday, July 12 in the city commission chambers at City Hall.

The second and final reading of Ordinance No. 1434 granting Atmos Energy Corporation the franchise for delivery, sale and distribution of natural gas for the City of Pampa will be read.

Ordinance No. 1437 will also be read for the second and final time. The ordinance grants an access easement across the city park which is adjacent to the 1100 block of North Hobart. The easement is on behalf of Pampans for Progress L.L.C. concerning rebar for improvement of a roadway.

Robert Cain has submitted four bids for four delinquent tax properties. See CITY, Page 2



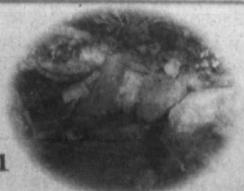
Pampa News photo by MARILYN POWERS

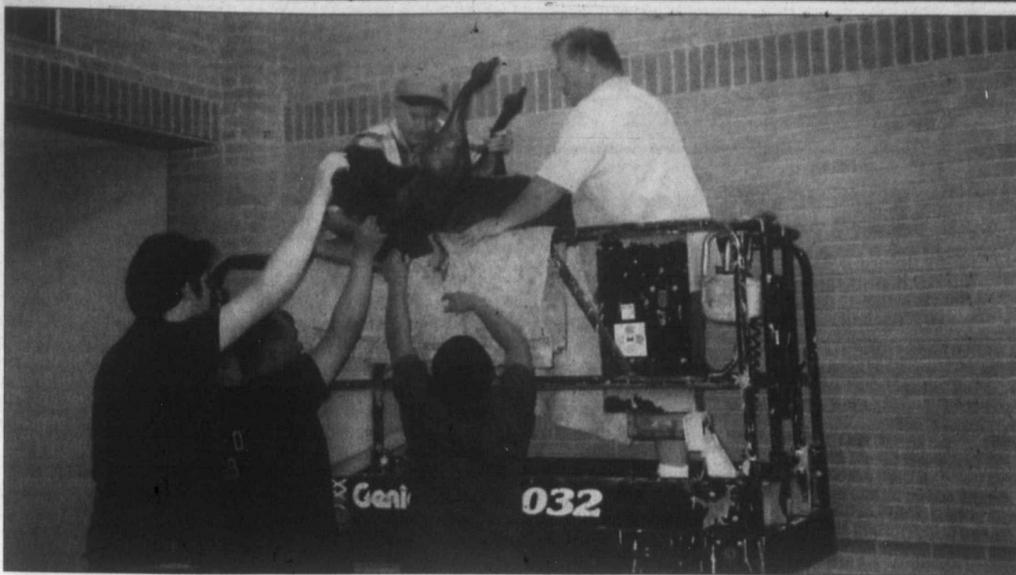
Mud Bog

Bob Paul, above, of Amarillo was one of four entrants in Saturday's Mud Bog to make it completely through the trench. His time was 6.6 seconds. Paul was one of 92 entrants to run in the event, which had been rescheduled from the "Burnin' the Bricks in June" weekend due to weather.

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'Flight' statue

Readying a pair of bronze geese for "flight" in the foyer of M.K. Brown Academic Center at Clarendon College-Pampa Center are artist Richard Thompson, top left, and helper Tommy Ladd, of Schaffer Bronze Art Foundry of Arlington. Also assisting from below the lift are Keven Hernandez, left, a CCPC student, Nick Millikan and Bernardo Casanova, both Pampa High School football players and ASTRA Club members. The completed sculpture, "Flight to Enrichment," extends across the foyer wall and was mounted just in time for a reception honoring new Assistant CCPC Dean David Bradford slated between 2 and 4 p.m. Tuesday, July 12.

Rehnquist keeps senators guessing on future plans

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid widespread rumors and speculation, senators are split on whether Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist will join Sandra Day O'Connor in retirement and give President Bush multiple appointments to the Supreme Court.

O'Connor announced plans to leave the high court two weeks ago and speculation is swirling about the future of the 80-year-old Rehnquist, who has thyroid cancer.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said senators had discussed with O'Connor a scenario under which she might consider changing her mind if Rehnquist retired and Bush offered to make her chief justice.

"The response that I heard was that she said she was flattered, that she didn't say no," Specter, who was not among that group, said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation." "I think it would be quite a capping to her career if she served for a time, maybe a year or so."

Still, Specter said he thinks Rehnquist will stay on. "My own analysis is that the chief is not going to step down as long as his health holds up," he said.

"Being engaged in a bout with cancer myself, I know that it's good to get up every morning and have something that you have to do, something that is important to do," he said.

But Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, Specter's predecessor as Judiciary Committee chairman, offered a different opinion.

"I expect by the end of the year that he will retire because I think he's really wanted to," he said on

NBC's "Meet the Press." "That's my sense, but I've been wrong before."

Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the committee's senior Democrat, thinks Rehnquist will remain on the bench.

"He enjoys being chief justice," Leahy said. "He's really shaped it into a strong chief justiceship. And I don't think he wants to leave."

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., another committee

'My own analysis is that the chief is not going to step down as long as his health holds up.'

— Sen. Arlen Specter
R-Pa.

Agriculture

ID tags to work like electronic 'Social Security Cards' for bovine population

By BLAIR FANNIN
Texas A&M News/Public Affairs

THRALL — It's not Social Security for cattle, but the proposed electronic ear tag to be used as part of the National Animal Identification System would act much like a Social Security card.

Dr. Jason Cleere, Texas Cooperative Extension beef cattle specialist, recently told producers at the Stiles Farm Field Day a lifetime number assigned to the tag will help trace an animal's path throughout the supply chain.

"It's like a Social Security number for that cow," he explained.

In the event of a foreign animal disease, tracking the animal's movement could be as quick as 48 hours, he said.

The small, read-only tag has copper wire and a computer chip bound inside. The tag will feature a visual set of numbers on the outside and will also be encoded with the same numbers to be read electronically.

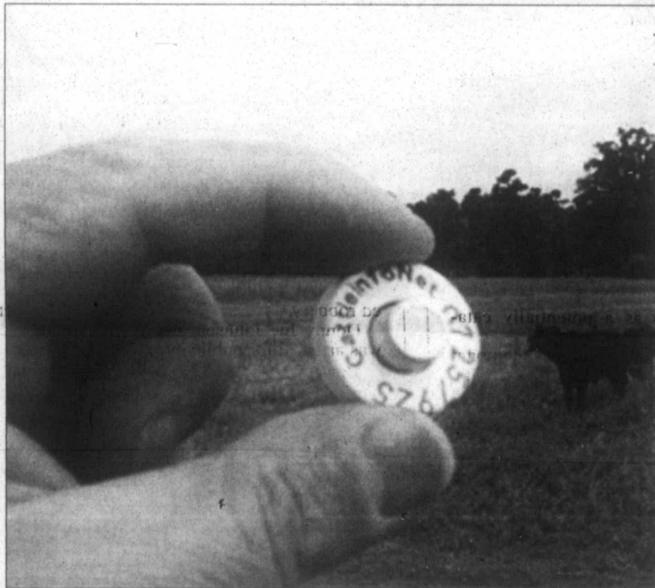
Cleere said ranchers will not need to worry about purchasing additional equipment to read the tags.

"There's been a lot of questions from folks saying 'this is going to put the small people out of business,'" he said. "You won't have to buy expensive computer equipment. If you are a small operator, you are not going to have to have a reader or a computer. You can still physically write that number down and transfer by paper."

Ear tagging and general questions

'You won't have to buy expensive computer equipment. If you are a small operator, you are not going to have to have a reader or a computer.'

— Dr. Jason Cleere
TCE beef cattle specialist



(Texas Agricultural Experiment Station photo by BLAIR FANNIN)

Dr. Jason Cleere, Texas Cooperative Extension beef cattle specialist, told producers at the Stiles Farm Field Day a lifetime number assigned to the tag will help trace an animal's path throughout the supply chain.

on how the system will work were explained by Cleere during the field day's beef session.

Most cow-calf producers wanted to know who would be responsible for tagging their cattle once it becomes mandatory prior to sale.

"The reality of it is you need to start thinking about how you are going to tag these animals," Cleere advised. "Not everybody has a good set of pens to work cattle in."

Perhaps an even bigger question was why such an identification system was developed in the first place.

"A lot of individuals think the system started out with the first case of BSE (mad cow disease) in December of 2003," Cleere said. "It started before that. They officially announced the plan in January 2003 and it was in response to the Homeland Security Act."

"With that case of BSE in December, that's when it was put on the forefront. The whole overall goal is

to trace those animals and see where they have been."

Though currently voluntary, agriculture officials are encouraging producers to register for premises identification numbers through the Texas Animal Health Commission. This unique number will help trace an animal back to its origin, and will allow producers in the future to purchase electronic ear tags for their cattle as part of the national identification system, Cleere said.

The registration process for premises identification is fairly easy, he said, and can be done on the Web, or by phone, fax or mail.

"One of the things we're telling producers is this is a changing and evolving program," Cleere said. "What beef producers can do now is go ahead and register their premises or operations."

See CATTLE, Page 10

NASA's countdown clocks ticking down next launch

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — For the first time since the Columbia tragedy, NASA's countdown clocks were ticking down the hours, minutes and seconds to launch, heightening the anticipation for a Wednesday liftoff of Discovery.

The countdown for the first space shuttle flight in 2 1/2 years began Sunday evening as Hurricane Dennis battered the Florida Panhandle off to the northwest. The mission's seven astronauts flew in from

Houston on Saturday evening, a day early.

While Cape Canaveral was spared, Dennis still threatened to interfere with NASA's plans, with a week of thunderstorms on the horizon. Forecasters were hoping a ridge of high pressure would provide a break in the weather, however, and offered up fairly decent 70 percent odds for an on-time afternoon launch.

"It sure does feel good to be back in the saddle again. It's been too long," said pay-

load manager Scott Higginbotham.

Test director Jeff Spaulding said excitement had been "building and growing" ever since the space agency overcame fuel-tank difficulties that prompted a launch delay a few months ago.

"It's only recently, I think, that it's all come to fruition where we can see the light at the end of the tunnel," Spaulding said.

"There's some excitement for people to get back to

launching again and also, I think, maybe a quiet reserve as well, just remembering where we've been. But we all do feel confident that we've done it right."

Discovery will be making its first flight in four years when it takes off for the international space station with much-needed supplies and replacement parts.

Even before Columbia broke up during re-entry on Feb. 1, 2003, Discovery had been undergoing an extensive overhaul.

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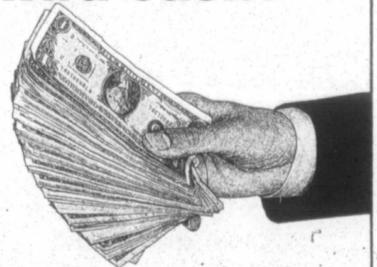
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Viewpoints

Some observations on returning home ...

I visited Pampa a few weeks ago, the first return to my hometown since leaving some 27 years ago. My sister and her husband from California joined my wife and me in Amarillo for the wedding of a daughter of close friends and we decided to drive to Pampa and reconnect with as many people as possible.

I kept hearing over the years how Pampa had changed.

"You won't recognize the place, David," many told me.

So I was prepared for the worst as we hopped grain elevators between Amarillo and Pampa on U.S. 60 (I forgot how far you can see in the Panhandle). As we approached Pampa, I was preparing for disappointment.

We drove to several friends' houses and discussed our terrific times together. Returning to the house on Christine Street where I grew up was wonderful, and the current owners graciously welcomed us and showed us around the house.

They said they looked at several places when considering houses but when they walked into this one, it felt like home. I knew exactly what they meant and was gratified that they have taken such wonderful care of the house and property.

I connected with a friend who drove me around town and discovered that many of my friends and classmates have stayed in the area. The high school gleamed in the bright sun and walking

through the hallways of the building brought back fond memories. (I believe the auditorium seats are the same ones that were there when I attended!)

In the journalism room, I chatted with the current teacher and told her how my journalism teacher (now deceased) had heavily influenced my career decision. Visiting with my high school history teacher and his wife at their home was a true pleasure as we reminisced about the probing discussions we often had in Room 206. A visit with the former high school librarian was equally fulfilling.

David Irwin

Guest Columnist



I stopped by KGRO, where I worked part-time as an announcer in high school and shared good stories of working in radio. A tour of the Gray County Court

House was quite pleasant, and I visited with some friends there who help keep the county and the justice system running. I saw the name of a classmate on the window of a downtown law office and another on an insurance agency and walked into both offices unannounced. The memories we exchanged were tremendous.

We stopped at Celanese where my father worked before retiring after 44 years

with the company. I had heard about the devastating explosion many years ago but the physical signs of recovery were impressive.

It was odd to see old hangouts missing like Caldwell's Drive-in as well as other landmarks like Pampa Junior High School and Highland General Hospital. It was good to see, however, that other development had occurred.

On the way out of town, I was struggling to reconcile the experience of my visit with the gloomy impression others had given me of the town. Then it hit me: It's not the physical or economic environment that define a community but rather the character of its people.

Yes, Pampa has changed. The population is half of what it was when I was

there, and the city is struggling with a number of issues. What small town isn't? But the residents are still friendly, genteel, sincere and helpful and these qualities were a powerful and refreshing reminder of my years there.

It was a good visit to my hometown, and I was not disappointed in the least. I'll try not to wait so long before visiting again.

Irwin is a Pampa native and a 1970 graduate of Pampa High School. He graduated from the University of Tulsa and has a master's degree from the University of Missouri. He is a freelance writer, editor and educator and lives with his wife and two sons in Rochester, N.Y.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, July 11, the 192nd day of 2005. There are 173 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

Fifty years ago, on July 11, 1955, the U.S. Air Force Academy was dedicated at its temporary quarters, Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado.

On this date:

In 1533, Pope Clement VII excommunicated England's King Henry VIII.

In 1767, John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States, was born in Braintree, Mass.

In 1798, the U.S. Marine Corps was formally re-established by a congressional act that also created the U.S. Marine Band.

In 1804, Vice President Aaron Burr mortally wounded former Treasury

'There are philosophies which are unendurable not because men are cowards, but because they are men.'

— Ludwig Lewisohn
German-born English author and artist (1882-1955)

Secretary Alexander Hamilton during a pistol duel in Weehawken, N.J.

In 1864, Confederate forces led by General Jubal Early began an abortive invasion of Washington, D.C., turning back the next day.

In 1934, President Roosevelt became the first chief executive to travel through the Panama Canal.

In 1977, the Medal of Freedom was awarded posthumously to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1979, the abandoned U.S. space station Skylab made a spectacular return to Earth, burning up in the atmosphere and showering debris over the Indian Ocean and Australia.

In 1980, American hostage Richard I. Queen, freed by Iran after eight months of captivity because of poor health, left Tehran for Switzerland.

In 1985, Nolan Ryan of the Houston Astros became the first pitcher in Major League Baseball to strike out 4,000 batters as he fanned Danny Heep of the New York Mets.

Ten years ago: The U.N.-designated "safe haven" of Srebrenica fell to Bosnian Serb forces. The United States normalized relations with Vietnam.

Five years ago: A Middle East summit hosted by President Clinton opened at Camp David between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.



Playing Soviet part in Muslim world

Once upon a time in a mountainous land far away, a superpower came to the aid of a government that shared its political philosophy. No one dreamed that an insurgency made up of Muslims could possibly prevail against the military superpower.

Yet that's what happened in Afghanistan, and it produced several results: It created a cadre of Muslim fighters who called themselves mujahideen; it created the mythology surrounding Osama bin Laden and his organization, al-Qaida; and it made the United States, which had helped recruit and arm the mujahideen, feel it had paid back the Soviet

Union for its help to the Vietnamese.

It's too bad that Washington is a city in which nobody seems to have any long-term memory. If someone did, it might occur to him that we are in Iraq playing the role the Soviet Union played in Afghanistan. We are the invading superpower and are every day providing on-the-job training for terrorists and jihadists who want to take a shot at us. And, for that matter, they haven't stopped shooting at

us in Afghanistan either.

No other large power — so far — is providing money and weapons to the insurgents, at least none that we know of. Iraq was an open-air ammo dump, and one of the gross blunders we made was not blowing all that stuff up. The insurgents seem to have plenty of ammunition and plenty of money. Given the Bush administration's preference for belligerency over diplomacy, it's not hard to imagine in the future help coming to the insurgents

from Iran and North Korea, and possibly even China.

Five times in his recent speech, Mr. Bush tried to tie the war in Iraq to the attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. What is deceptive about that is that prior to our invasion of Iraq, there were no connections whatsoever between Saddam Hussein and the attacks on us. But, like Afghanistan, Iraq will play a role in future attacks because we are training a whole new generation of terrorists.

While Vice President Dick Cheney insists the insurgency is in its last throes,

See WORLD, Page 5

Charley Reese

Columnist



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It is past time to repeal the death tax

Elimination of the levy, as proposed by the president, makes the most sense.

President Bush hasn't had much luck with his plans for Social Security private accounts and guest worker program for immigration, but it appears action on another front, reducing or eliminating the estate tax, is in the offing, and that's good. The estate tax, sometimes called the death tax, is paid by an estate when a person dies. The President's 2001 tax cut included a phased elimination of the tax, from a 55 percent top rate that year to 0 percent in 2010.

But in 2011 the plan calls

for the tax to return to 55 percent. The House voted in April to repeal the tax entirely much the best position. The Senate now is working

on a compromise, according to a recent Wall Street Journal report, that would boost to \$3 million "the amount per person that is exempt from taxes" from the current \$1.5 million.

Differences within the Senate remain on the top death-tax rate. Sen. John Kyl, R-Arizona, for exam-

ple, wants the exemption to be \$15 million, with a top rate of 15 percent, the same as the current capital gains tax. As with judicial nomi-

nees, the problem with a full repeal of the death tax in the Senate is filibusters.

Unlike in the House, the Senate Republican majority cannot enact the repeal by itself but needs the votes of from six to eight Democrats. Democrats are in the mood to compromise, Raymond Keating said, because they fear that in

2006 the same voter backlash they faced in the 2004 election, Keating is the executive director of the Club for Growth, a free-market group.

He said the backlash is especially strong in farm states and which contributed to the defeat of then-Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota last year. The death tax, Keating explained, especially hits hard families that own property-intensive businesses, such as farms, which have much invested in barns, land and equipment. The tax often forces the family to

See TAX, Page 5

Texas Thoughts

The Odessa American

Terror Attacks

Londoners still searching for missing

LONDON (AP) — Amid new security jitters, commuters returned to work Monday in London, the start of the first full week since bombers killed at least 52 people on a bus and subway trains.

Many travelers said they would defy the attackers by using public transportation as normal, but some were too afraid and took taxis instead.

"I ... will not let the attacks put me off," said computer consultant Paul Williams, 42, as he prepared to board an underground train in central London. "As far as I am concerned, it is just a normal day at work."

But Ted Wright, chairman of the British Poultry Council, said he was taking a taxi to avoid the subway system. "In light of what has happened, I have decided to take a taxi. It will probably cost an extra six pounds (\$10.70), but should hopefully put my wife's mind at rest," he said.

Three bombs that exploded Thursday on subway cars and one that ripped apart a bus killed at least 52 people and injured 700, as authorities continued the laborious process of retrieving remains.

Scotland Yard said Monday it had identified the first of the victims — Susan Levy, 53, of Hertfordshire, outside London. Later Monday, London's University College said one of its cleaning service employees, whom it identified as Gladys Wundowa, 51, also was among the dead.

Forensics experts have warned that it could take days or weeks to put names to the bodies, many of which were mangled in the blasts.

Transit officials said the number of passengers using the system Monday morning was back to normal. However, a few sections of the underground rail system affected by the attacks remained closed, and the number of shoppers in central London has fallen by about 25 percent since the attacks, the British media reported.

Underscoring how tense London remained, police closed several streets where most government offices are located — including Parliament, the Foreign Office, and 10 Downing St., where Prime Minister Tony Blair lives

and works — for about a half-hour Monday after a suspicious package was found. It contained no explosives.

Police later issued a security alert at the King's Cross subway station near the site of one of last week's bombings, urging people to leave the area. BBC television said authorities found a suspicious package at the station.

Mayor Ken Livingstone took the subway to work Monday to send the message that Londoners should "carry on."

"We are going to work. We carry on our lives," he said. "We don't let a small group of terrorists change the way we live."

For investigators, Monday was another pressure-packed day of sifting through subterranean debris, checking tips from the public and identifying the dead and missing.

Police said three men — all Britons — arriving at Heathrow airport were arrested early Sunday, but immediately dismissed speculation of their having a break in the investigation. The three were released late Sunday night.

British intelligence officials met over the weekend with their counterparts from the United States, Canada and about two dozen European countries to brief them on the attacks and the investigation, police said.

Security officials in Poland said Monday they searched the home of a British citizen of Pakistani origin in the eastern Polish city of Lublin in connection with the bombings. Poland's Internal Security Agency did not release the man's name and he was not arrested.

A man with British and Moroccan nationality mentioned as a possible suspect told The Guardian newspaper in an interview published Monday that he had nothing to do with the blasts.

"Over 30 years I have lived in Britain, I have never been involved in violence or crime," said Mohamed Guerbouzi, who was convicted in absentia in Morocco in 2003 and sentenced to 20 years in prison in connection with the Casablanca terrorist bombings.

"I'm scared for my safety," Guerbouzi said.

'We are going to work. We carry on our lives. We don't let a small group of terrorists change the way we live.'

— Ken Livingstone
Mayor

Community happenings

Pampa Community Concert

Association Presents "Live on Stage" 2004-05 concert series includes the following programs: Edgar Cruz, guitarist, Oct. 23; Susan Egan, Broadway vocalist, Feb. 18, 2006; St. Petersburg Classic Ballet, March 4, 2006; and The Coats, vocal harmonic band, April 30, 2006. Additional concerts, featuring with other performers, have been scheduled in area towns. For more information on any of these events or a complete area concert schedule, contact Ronnie Holmes, PCCA president, at 665-2631. PCCA memberships are available.

The Texas Department of State Health Services

will be offering immunization clinics for vaccines that give protection against several childhood diseases including polio, diphtheria, lock jaw (tetanus), whooping cough (pertussis), measles, rubella, mumps, HIB (haemophilus influenzae Type B) and chickenpox (varicella). Flu vaccines may also be offered at designated clinics. The TDH will charge money to help with the cost of keeping the clinic open. The amount charged will be based on family income

and size, and the ability to pay. The following clinics will be offered: 9:30-11:45 a.m. and 1-4 p.m., July 6 and 20, TDH, 736 S. Cuyler, Pampa.

• **At 8 a.m., Saturday, July 9**, Tom Moss will headline the Cowboy Poetry Breakfast at the Big Texan in Amarillo. The event will feature cowboy/girl poets, singers, musicians and storytellers in round robin style.

• **The USS Long Beach CGN-9 Association, Inc.**, is organizing its 2005 reunion Sept. 11-19 at San Francisco, Calif. For more information, contact Don Shade at (866) 352-2469 or LBCGN9@aol.com. Further details are also available at www.uslongbeach-assoc.org on the World Wide Web.

• **USS Maddox Destroyer Association** Reunion is planned Sept. 15-18, 2005, in Mobile, Ala. For more information, contact Cliff Gillespie at (714) 960-5283.

• **USS Columbus CA-74/CG-12/SSN-762** reunion is planned Sept. 21-25 in San Antonio. For more information, contact Allen R. Hope, President, 3828 Hobson Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46815-4505; e-mail hope4391@comcast.net.

World

Continued from Page 4

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said the insurgency could last 12 years. The Bush administration cannot seem to get its story straight. At any rate, the facts don't back up Mr. Cheney.

To use the same time span the president used to talk about progress, last year attacks averaged 40 a day; they are now averaging 70 a day. Since we turned over sovereignty (remember how that was supposed to knock the wind out of the insurgents?), 885 Americans have been killed, 74 coalition soldiers have died, and 482 ear bombs have killed 2,176 people and wounded another 5,500. All told, at least 12,000 Iraqis have died and 1,735 Americans have been killed since we arrived in Iraq.

I remember the neoconservatives saying not to worry, that Iraqi oil revenues would pay for the invasion and occupation. Don't worry, they said, we will be welcomed with flowers and candy. It's no wonder Washington prefers to operate in the Alzheimer's mode, because memory would cause some people to be held accountable for their mistakes and bad advice.

The really sad thing about the president is that he seems to believe that a democratic government in Iraq is nirvana and that once achieved, its brilliant light will spread over the Middle East and, like a genie's magic, change the hearts and minds of 200 million people. He

seems not to know that Iran has a democratically elected government and it still doesn't like us. Even if a democratic government in Iraq survives, which I predict it will not, it will not solve any of the other problems in the Middle East.

In the meantime, I'm sure little ads are appearing on the Internet saying: "If you aspire to be a terrorist or a jihadist, come to Iraq and get on-the-job training at killing Americans. No need to hurry. They will be here a long time."

'If you aspire to be a terrorist or a jihadist, come to Iraq and get on-the-job training at killing Americans. No need to hurry. They will be here a long time.'

Tax

Continued from Page 4

sell a farm that has been owned for generations.

And lets remember that the death tax often is a triple tax: first income is taxed during a person's lifetime, then if money is invested and withdrawn its charged the capital gains tax, and finally the money is hit with the estate tax

after a person's death. Those favoring the death tax counter that estates money often has been sitting in tax shelters.

"Given the prevalence of untaxed capital gains in large estates, the estate tax serves as a backstop to the income tax, providing a way to tax income that otherwise would avoid taxation altogether," argued a June 17 analysis by the Center on Budget Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank.

But when the death tax returns in full force, its top rate will be 55 percent, compared to 35 percent for the income tax and just 15 percent for the capital gains tax. The liberal Tax Policy Center claims getting rid of the tax would "cost" the government \$52 billion in 2015. But Keating said getting rid of the tax would eliminate current tax shelters, such as expensive insurance policies, that currently keep investments bottled up.

Thus freed, the money could be invested in business expansion to create jobs, which in turn would pay income and other taxes. "This is a tax our economy cant afford," Keating said. "The distortions it causes are far greater than the revenue it collects. President Bush is insisting on full repeal. We believe that is the correct position because this is one of the worst taxes ever. The president should stick to his guns."

Girl dies when LAPD officers shoot armed man after he opens fire

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A toddler was shot and killed when her father used her as a shield in a gunbattle with police following an hours-long standoff, officials said. The man also died and an officer was wounded.

The man killed Sunday night after an hours-long standoff was identified as Jose Raul Lemos, and the girl, about 17 months old, was his daughter, police said. The officer, who was not immediately identified, was shot in the shoulder and was expected to recover.

"He was using the baby as

a shield," Assistant Police Chief Jim McDonnell said.

"We showed a tremendous amount of restraint, but unfortunately the suspect's actions dictated this," he said. "It's a true tragedy."

It was unclear who fired the shot that hit the girl, but officers were struggling with the thought that they killed a baby, he said.

"The officers are taking it very hard," McDonnell said. "Anytime you have a baby killed, it takes its toll."

The standoff began at around 3:50 p.m. when officers responded to an area in

South Los Angeles west of Watts after residents reported an armed man standing near an intersection with a toddler and behaving erratically and aggressively.

There were three exchanges of gunfire between police and Lemos, who was about 35, McDonnell told reporters. In the final exchange, at around 6:20 p.m., Lemos held the girl as he shot.

"We did everything we could to hold our fire," McDonnell said.

At one point, Lemos retreated into an apartment

building, where police said he held the girl hostage.

Police called in a SWAT team and tried to speak with the man; when they at one point attempted to help a neighbor escape the area, he fired at them and they fired back, McDonnell said.

Under police regulations, officers may only fire "when it reasonably appears necessary" to protect themselves or others from death or serious injury.

The man had a 9 mm handgun and a shotgun and was intoxicated on drugs and alcohol, police said.

4-Hers travel to Waco for stock show 'bonanza'

Five Gray County 4-Hers recently participated, a news release said, in a stock show called "The Belt Buckle Bonanza" held at Waco.

The five 4-Hers were Kelby Rucker, Ashley Lucas, Courtney Crawford, Meagan Crawford, and Kellan Quarles.

In Show A steer competition, Lucus placed fifth, Medium Simmental; Rucker placed sixth, Heavy Angus; Courtney placed seventh, Heavy Chi; Quarles

placed eighth, Medium Shorthorn; and Meagan placed 11th, Heavy Charlaois.

In Show B steer competition, Rucker placed fifth; Lucus placed sixth; Courtney placed eighth; and Meagan again placed 11th, all in their respective categories.



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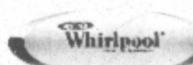


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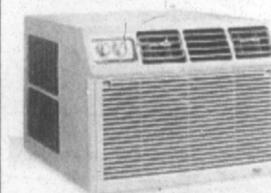


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Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: My wife spends all her spare time with a female friend I'll call "Cassandra." Last August they went to Nicaragua for two weeks, at Cassandra's expense. They are planning a trip to Puerto Rico next month. Again, Cassandra is footing the bill. They spent a week together in Louisville at a church-sponsored activity. They give each other oil massages in our bed and make frequent bets with each other with the massages as the payoff.

They spend as much as three hours a day communicating, whether it be via phone, e-mail or text-messaging. They see each other a minimum of once a week, plus at church, and we live 50 miles apart. When they're together, I can repeat a question four times or more and never be acknowledged. They make special dinners and buy each other gifts. The items my wife receives are many times what we can afford. When they're on the phone or e-mailing, dinners have been burned and normal things that should be done around the house don't get done.

Do you think there is something I should be concerned about here? -- **WONDERING IN ILLINOIS**

DEAR WONDERING: Yes, I do, because you do not appear to be first on your wife's list of priorities. You and she -- and probably her girlfriend -- are overdue for a long and very frank talk.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I expect our first child in three months. His mother is already pressuring us to let her baby-sit, and eventually have the child for summers and vacations. The problem is, her negligence and poor judgment while raising her own children led to them both being physically and sexually abused. She continues to be friendly with anyone who will be friendly with her, including the family members who abused her children.

There is no way I'll ever let her be alone with my child. My husband supports my feelings. But we don't know how to tell her that her services are not needed or wanted

without causing hurt feelings. -- **SETTING LIMITS IN WISCONSIN**

DEAR SETTING LIMITS: When she asks to baby-sit, tell her nicely that you already have made other arrangements. Ditto for extended vacations. Explain that she's welcome to visit when it's convenient for all of you. However, if she insists on knowing why she can't take the baby, repeat exactly what you have told me. Your child's safety is more important than your mother-in-law maintaining the fantasy that her children's upbringing was normal.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married for three years. His 27-year-old daughter, "Jan," wants him to give her a wedding reception because at the time she was married, two years ago, they were not on speaking terms. (She was married by a justice of the peace with no family present.)

Jan now has two small children. I think at this late date, a wedding reception would not be appropriate. I have suggested we give her a generous cash gift as a belated wedding gift -- and she can do what she wants with the money, including throwing herself a party. My husband dreams of giving her the memories of a reception with her dad. What do you think? -- **AGAINST IT IN ILLINOIS**

DEAR AGAINST IT: Considering that Jan was not even speaking to her father at the time of her marriage, it's presumptuous of her to be hitting her father up for a reception now. A cash gift would be more generous; and a "wedding reception" under these circumstances would be a charade.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

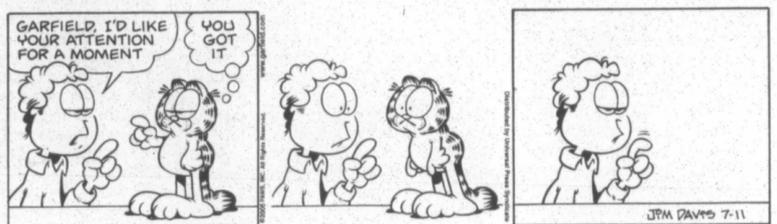
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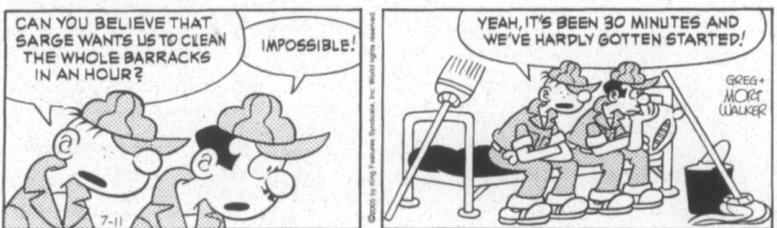
Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

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By THOMAS JOSEPH

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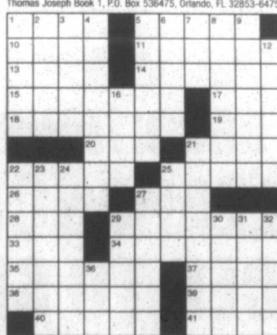
- 1 Attired since
- 5 First veep 1949
- 10 Prefix with 40 Sides in a sphere
- 11 Rodeo rope
- 13 Poker player's declaration
- 14 Deceives
- 15 Non-wizards in the Harry Potter books
- 17 Ignited
- 18 Talented tot
- 19 Have a bite
- 20 Area-code precoder
- 21 Hudson of "Almost Famous"
- 22 Reduce to powder
- 25 Fall drink
- 26 Protracted
- 27 Icarus, to Daedalus
- 28 Gym rat's six-pack
- 29 Taps
- 33 Tennis-court sight
- 34 Joins
- 35 Visit unexpectedly
- 37 Eight: Prefix
- 38 Long step

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- 9 Fill up
- 12 Sway
- 16 Songbird
- 22 Secreting
- 23 "Mona Lisa"
- 24 Forthcoming
- 25 Bit of change
- 27 Parts of books
- 29 Play-ground
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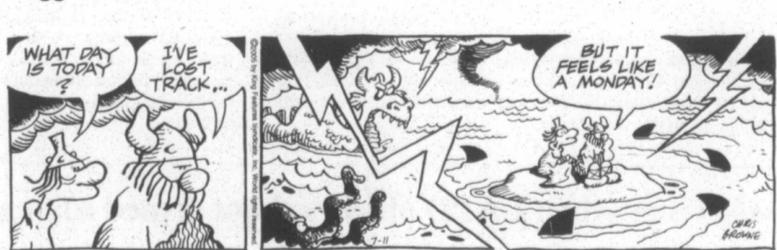
By Bil Keane



B.C.



Haggar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



Sports Day

Foster proves too much at Redneck Race Track

By MICHAEL J. STEVENS
Sports Editor

Despite promoter Lewis James' best efforts to prevent it, the dirt was flying at Redneck Lawnmower Race Track Saturday afternoon as the sun and brisk Panhandle breeze thwarted James' track grooming.

Still, it made for some very exciting racing.

Jerry Foster seemed to be in the zone most of the afternoon, taking the first two heat races of the day.

The third heat race was unkind to Foster, as it was to Frank Clason and James Jeter. Neither Foster, Clason or Jeter was able to finish the 5-lap race.

Foster would regain his rhythm just in time to win the main event, finishing ahead of Randy Swires. Clason came in third while Jeter took fourth.

The next scheduled event is July 23.

Redneck Lawnmower Race Track
July 9, 2005

Heat Race 1
1st Jerry Foster
2nd Randy Swires
3rd James Jeter
4th Frank Clason

Heat Race 2
1st Jerry Foster
2nd James Jeter
3rd Randy Swires
4th Frank Clason

Heat Race 3
1st Randy Swires
DNF James Jeter
DNF Frank Clason
DNF Jerry Foster

Main Event
1st Jerry Foster
2nd Randy Swires
3rd Frank Clason
4th James Jeter



James Jeter leads Frank Clason through a turn at Redneck Lawnmower Race Track Saturday afternoon.



Pampa News photo by BEN BRISCOE

Danny Escalante looks the ball into his glove during Pampa's game against Littlefield Saturday afternoon. Pampa won the game 21-11, but was later eliminated from the tournament by Seminole.

Host Pampa makes exit from State tournament

The 2005 West Texas State 9-10 Babe Ruth Tournament got under way at Pampa Optimist Park Saturday with game one featuring Plainview and Seminole. Plainview took the win by way of the 10-run rule with the final score being 25-7. Pitcher Gus Lucero went the distance for Plainview en route to the win.

The second game of the day pitted host Pampa against Littlefield. Pampa, on the arm of pitcher Kaden Sander, cruised to a 21-11 win in four innings (run rule).

Pampa knocked a total of 15

hits in the victory. James Thompson, Ty Hutto and Danny Escalante each had two hits. Riley Douglas led the team with three.

In game three, it was Plainview defeating Abernathy by way of run rule, 10-0.

In the nightcap, Pampa faced North Randall County, falling 14-0. Pampa would then take on Seminole in a loser's bracket meeting Sunday. The hosts lost that game 11-8, eliminating them from the tournament.

The tournament continues today with games beginning at 6 p.m.

13-year-olds take second

The Pampa 13-year-old All-Stars played in Canyon Thursday night against Plainview, falling 6-0. Plainview pitching allowed just two Pampa hits, both singles coming off the bats of Reid Bradley and Anthony Allen. Plainview scored three runs in the first inning. Jonathan Robinson came in to relieve Pampa starter Mitchell Killgo in the second

inning and would complete the game on the mound. Killgo gave up one hit, walked two, and struck out one. Robinson gave up three runs on nine hits, walked one, and had one strike out.

Pampa played North Randall County Friday night, who they had beat Wednesday 11-8. Pampa had their number

See **SECOND**, Page 8

STORMY REPORTING

Dennis leaves more than damage behind

As Hurricane Dennis dissipates into little more than a tropical depression, it is time to evaluate the damage left behind and the impact such disasters leave in their wake.

To estimate the Dennis' carnage in terms of dollars and cents is really only guesswork at this time. As is often the case, such estimates cannot be made with any degree of accuracy for days, even weeks following the event so as to allow crews, emergency management teams and others to further evaluate and assess the situation.

However, one of the things storms such as Dennis seem to belch out with increasing regularity is stupid television reporters. Actually, the fault for the comedy that is television disasters and slow highway chases cannot be placed solely on the reporter. Somewhere in the mix is a director responsible for what goes out over the air. A director who has to say, "Wow, this is great. Keep it going."

Well, Sunday morning, I tuned into one of the cable networks that decided to go 24-hour Hurricane Dennis Watch. You got it. A cable network that saw fit to preempt all other programming and go with Dennis. I looked in briefly just to see what in the world they could possibly have to hold my interest. Having lived in Florida, I am experienced in the ways of the hurricane and tropical storm.

The first reporter I watched was standing on a beach, trying to describe the size of the waves crashing behind him. He was trying to project what the storm surge and other hurricane byproducts might be like. What he was doing is repeating what they gleaned from the National Weather Center in Miami. The same folks who issue evacuation and other evasive action notices. The reporter did note residents of the location he was in had been asked to leave, adding many had opted to do so. When the anchor back at the studio asked how he (reporter)

was going to stay safe, the response was something to the effect of, "I'll be going back up to the condo we have rented for our stay here which happens to be on one of the upper floors of the concrete and steel building in which it is located. We should be safe there." That statement alone should define the true reason they were there in the first place. They were there hoping for loss. Hoping to be the first to bring you immediate pain, suffering and misery. If all they really wanted to do was show you the brutal force of the storm, why not plant a few cameras in key locations and leave?

But the report that really stuck out to me was one in which two reporters were trying to explain what Dennis was doing in the location they had chosen to report from. What I found truly comical was both were standing in front of the camera, huddled, trying to outdo one another with their descriptions. They tripped over each other verbally over and over again. There was a lot of wind, most of it coming from their pie-holes.

What you need to understand is the intent of these reports is not to benefit or even inform you. Again, if that were the case, toss up some cameras and let the anchor back at the news desk do the commenting. How professional might it have been to have the anchor explain, "In adhering with emergency management requests, we at (network) have decided to join others in evacuating the location due to the severity of the storm. However, we have placed cameras in locations to help you better understand the force of this storm."

What is the difference between what these idiots were doing and what you might see on the MTV show, Jackass? The most glaring difference to me is at least the producers of Jackass issue a 'do not try this at home' warning.

Michael J. Stevens
Sports Editor



14-15 squad goes 1-1 in Snyder; elimination game on tap tonight

SNYDER--The Pampa Optimist 14-15 Babe Ruth All Star Team does not believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive. They would rather

receive. Saturday, in the West Texas Babe Ruth State Tournament here, the Pampa team made two errors in the first inning which led to two unearned runs and a 3-0 Snyder lead from which Pampa never recovered, losing 5-1.

Sunday, Dimmit committed three errors in the first inning to hand Pampa five unearned runs and a 7-0 lead. Pampa coasted to a 9-5 win and will play Plainview in an elimination game here tonight.

Against Snyder Pampa's only run came when Chase Herrimann reached base on an error and stole second. Dakota Gowin singled to left field and tried for second. He got hung up in a run down which permitted Herrimann to score. Gowin was later erased at the plate, one of two Pampa runners thrown out at home.

Gowin led Pampa's hitting with a single and a double. Heath Skinner got the only other hit for Pampa. Two walks to Blake Sieck and one to Herrimann did not result in any runs.

Pampa was out 5-4 by Dimmit, but Dimmit committed five errors to Pampa's two which made the difference in Sunday's ball game.

Colden Fortenberry picked up the win. He pitched the first four innings and allowed one unearned run and two hits. He struck

out seven and did not walk a batter. Carr relieved in the fifth and pitched two scoreless innings. He allowed two hits, one walk and struck out three. Sieck pitched the seventh inning. He was touched for only one hit but surrendered four runs on four walks and a hit batter. Three of the runs were earned.

With one out in the first inning against Dimmit, Herrimann started the rally with a walk. Fortenberry was hit by a pitch. Gowin singled off the pitcher's glove for the only hit in the inning. Walks to Heath Skinner and John Luke Covalt forced in two runs. Hayden Skinner hit a routine fly ball which the left fielder dropped permitting two runs to score. John Anguiano followed with a ground ball on which the shortstop made a bad throw

to first allowing two more runners home. Anguiano made the seventh run of the inning when the shortstop dropped a fly ball hit by Sieck.

Pampa picked up two more unearned runs in the fourth inning. Fortenberry walked. Gowin was safe on an error. The runner moved up on a passed ball and scored on a two-out double

See **POYC**, Page 8

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Pampa News photo by BEN BRISCOE

Reaching for the ball

Riley Douglas stretches for a ball during Saturday's opening round of the 2005 9-10 Babe Ruth State Tournament being hosted by Pampa.

Second

Continued from Page 7

and defeated them a second time, 16-11. Leading Pampa hitting was Mitchell Killgo with four hits in five trips to the plate. He scored three times and had 7 RBI. Jonathan Robinson walked twice and scored three times. Braden Hunt walked three times, had 2 RBI, and scored four times. Anthony Allen had a single, scored once and had 3 RBI. Reid Bradley walked three times. Zach Shaw had two singles and 2 RBI. Jemal Wheeler added a single. Zach Doan had a single and scored once. Daniel Smith walked

and scored a run. Kade Wilson and Robert Douglas each walked and scored a run. Pitcher Anthony Allen got the win for Pampa, going 5 1/3 innings. He gave up six hits, walked four, and hit a batter. Braden Hunt pitched 1 2/3 innings to close the game. He allowed one hit, struck out four and walked one. Winning this game put Pampa in Saturday's District Championship game against Plainview, who Pampa had beaten twice before. However, the third time was not the charm.

Pampa came away from the tournament with an impressive second place finish and an invitation to play at the State Tournament in Abernathy July 16.

POYC

Continued from Page 7

by Casey Trimble. Covalt and Sieck also had hits for Pampa.

Pampa displayed a tight defense in both games. Against Snyder, Carr cut off a throw from the outfield to nail a batter trying for second. A relay from Hayden Skinner in right field to John Luke Covalt at second to Heath Skinner at third nabbed a batter trying to stretch a double into a triple. Sieck snagged a line drive at shortstop and caught a run-

ner off first for a double play.

Carr ended a four-run seventh-inning rally by Dimmit by fielding a ground ball at third, stepping on the bag and throwing to Covalt at second for a game-ending double play. Anguiano, Gowin and Hayden Skinner made good catches on outfield fly balls.

Trimble has played without a passed ball at catcher in both games and has blocked numerous errant pitches.

Dr. Kevin Sieck is the manager, and Monte Covalt and Jeff Skinner are the coaches for the Pampa United Way agency team.

All-Star starting lineups announced

DETROIT (AP) — Starting lineups announced Monday for Tuesday night's All-Star game at Comerica Park:

American League

1. Johnny Damon, Boston, cf (.343, 4 HR, 42 RBIs)
2. Alex Rodriguez, N.Y. Yankees, 3b (.317, 23, 72)
3. David Ortiz, Boston, dh (.314, 21, 75)
4. Manny Ramirez, Boston, lf (.275, 22, 80)
5. Miguel Tejada, Baltimore, ss (.329, 19, 62)
6. Vladimir Guerrero, L.A. Angels, rf (.335, 16, 51)
7. Mark Teixeira, Texas 1b (.290, 25, 73)
8. Jason Varitek, Boston, c (.301, 13, 36)
9. Brian Roberts, Baltimore, 2b (.345, 15, 49)
- P. Mark Buehrle, Chicago White Sox (10-3, 2.58 ERA)

National League

1. Bobby Abreu, Philadelphia, rf (.307, 18, 58)
2. Carlos Beltran, N.Y. Mets, lf (.266, 10, 44)
3. Albert Pujols, St. Louis, dh (.337, 22, 69)
4. Derrek Lee, Chicago Cubs, 1b (.378, 27, 72)
5. Jim Edmonds, St. Louis, cf (.272, 16, 51)
6. Aramis Ramirez, Chicago Cubs, 3b (.298, 19, 57)
7. Mike Piazza, N.Y. Mets, c (.260, 9, 36)
8. Jeff Kent, Los Angeles, 2b (.304, 15, 60)
9. David Eckstein, St. Louis, ss (.284, 2, 24)
- P. Chris Carpenter, St. Louis (13-4, 2.51)

2005 MLB ALL-STAR GAME

Carpenter, Buehrle selected as starting pitchers

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Right-hander Chris Carpenter of the St. Louis Cardinals and left-hander Mark Buehrle of the Chicago White Sox will be the starting pitchers in the All-Star game.

Carpenter was given the honor Monday by his own manager, NL skipper Tony La Russa, and will be well rested when he goes to the mound Tuesday night — he hasn't pitched since last Wednesday.

That gives the Cardinals four starters in the summer showcase at Detroit's Comerica Park, the same number as the Boston Red Sox, their World Series opponents last October.

Tied for the major league lead in wins, Carpenter (13-4), who missed the 2003 season following right shoulder surgery, was chosen over Florida's Dontrelle Willis (13-4) and Houston ace Roger Clemens (1.48 ERA).

American League manager Terry Francona selected Buehrle (10-3) over his Chicago teammate, Jon Garland (13-4). Toronto's Roy Halladay (12-4), who leads the league with a 2.41 ERA, might have gotten the ball if his left leg hadn't been broken by a line drive on Friday.

The first batter to face Buehrle will be Philadelphia right fielder Bobby Abreu. Carlos Beltran of the New York Mets bats second and moves to left field from his regular spot in center.

Cardinals slugger Albert Pujols will be the designated hitter and bat third, followed by Cubs first baseman Derrek Lee, St. Louis center fielder Jim Edmonds, Chicago third baseman Aramis Ramirez, Mets catcher Mike Piazza, Dodgers second baseman Jeff Kent and Cardinals shortstop David Eckstein.

Ramirez is starting in place of St. Louis' Scott Rolen, who pulled out of the game to rest his troublesome right shoulder.

Three of the first four AL batters are Red Sox.

Center fielder Johnny Damon leads off, followed by Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez, Boston DH David Ortiz, Red Sox left fielder Manny Ramirez, Baltimore shortstop Miguel Tejada, Angels right fielder Vladimir Guerrero, Texas first baseman Mark Teixeira, Boston catcher Jason Varitek and Orioles second baseman Brian Roberts.

Armstrong surrenders yellow jersey

MULHOUSE, France (AP) — Lance Armstrong surrendered the overall lead in the Tour de France to take some pressure off his team.

The six-time defending champion fully intends to wear the yellow jersey again soon.

Germany's Jens Voigt — not a contender to win in Paris — took the jersey by finishing three minutes ahead of Armstrong in the ninth stage Sunday.

"I felt like (Sunday) might be the day when the jersey would be given away, and it turned out it was," Armstrong said. "We don't need the yellow jersey. We don't need to keep it in the Alps, we need to have it at the end."

Denmark's Mickael Rasmussen won the stage with a gutsy solo ride. He was first over the six climbs, covering the 106.3-mile route from Gerardmer to Mulhouse in eastern France in 4 hours, 8 minutes, 20 seconds.

Voigt finished 3:04 later, just behind France's Christophe Moreau. Armstrong, who had worn yellow for five days, finished in 28th place, crossing the line com-

fortably in a pack with his main rivals — including 1997 champion Jan Ullrich, who crashed during a descent and bruised his ribs.

X-rays taken Monday were negative, and Ullrich will keep racing.

On the first of three punishing Alpine stages starting Tuesday, Armstrong will let Voigt's team do the defending while he picks off riders he considers more dangerous rivals.

"Let's see how the race unfolds," Armstrong said. "The first priority is that the guys feel better and get their confidence back."

Wednesday's stage is one of the hardest this year, with three ascents in quick succession peaking with the monstrous Col du Galibier, the Tour's highest point at 8,677 feet.

The good news for Armstrong is that his Discovery Channel teammates appeared to have recovered quickly from their collapse on a climb Saturday, when all eight abandoned him, unable to match the quick uphill pace. That left Armstrong alone to fend off his rivals.

Earnhardt wins at Chicagoland

JOLIET, Ill. (AP) — Dale Earnhardt Jr. spun his tires while the sellout crowd of about 100,000 howled in approval. Through the clouds of thick, white smoke, it was clear to see that this victory was a long time coming.

"I was worried I was going to go winless this year," Earnhardt said. "Now, let's go out and do it again, win some more."

Earnhardt took the USG Sheetrock 400 at Chicagoland Speedway on Sunday and ended a nearly season-long slump. It was the 16th victory of his career, and his first since last November in Phoenix.

"Early in the race, I figured we had a top 10 car and then, with the adjustments we

made, it was a pretty good top five car," Earnhardt said. "It was a pretty good race for us and I wasn't even thinking about winning it until those last 10 or so laps."

The jubilant Earnhardt celebrated his first win of the year by smoking the tires of his No. 8 Chevrolet and hugging crew members in the infield grass.

"It's been a long time coming, man," Earnhardt said. "It's a lot of emotion, more than I can handle right now. For these guys, all the darts they've had thrown at them this year. It's just awesome. I thought we had a top-10, maybe a top-five car. My guys on pit road won the race for me. Got me out front with two tires."

Victory lap



Checked flag in hand, racer Randy Swires takes a victory lap around Redneck Lawnmower Race Track Saturday in celebration of his heat race win.

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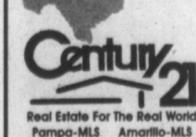
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Colorado residents caught off guard by wildfire evacuation

BEULAH, Colo. (AP) — When Rich Pellecchia tried to return home after a weekend fishing trip, he and his wife discovered a fast-moving wildfire was engulfing 8,000 acres near their mountain neighborhood.

They spent four hours driving in their camper Sunday night trying to find a way home after officials closed roads and urged their neighbors to evacuate. Erratic winds and

sweltering heat had caused the fire to nearly triple in size during the day.

"We have nothing but the clothes we've got on," Pellecchia said. "We didn't get a chance to get any of our things."

"All our pictures are still there," said his wife, Terri.

The blaze was threatening 750 houses, outbuildings and other structures in the town of Beulah

and its surrounding ranching community, nestled in very dry terrain in the Wet Mountains about 150 miles south of Denver. It was unclear how many people decided to leave.

About 5,000 people have been evacuated in Pueblo and Custer counties in southern Colorado since the lightning-sparked blaze was discovered Wednesday, said Rocky Mountain Area

Coordination Center spokeswoman Jen Chase.

Evacuated residents were told to bring their horses, llamas and other livestock as well as dogs and cats to the grounds of the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo.

The fire was feeding on ponderosa pine and gambel oak, some of the most flammable wood in the West. The fire generated so much smoke at one point that aircraft

weren't able to get close enough to drop retardant on its center.

No injuries had been reported and no homes had burned Sunday.

Cars and trucks packed with clothes, food and personal belongings were parked along a stretch of rural highway as evacuated residents from the Beulah Valley, about 25 miles southwest of Pueblo, watched black smoke rise from the mountainside.

San Diego faces new challenge: City lacks mayor because of federal charges against interim candidate

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A nagging question looms ominously over this seaside community that has adopted the moniker "America's Finest City." Who exactly is in charge?

San Diego Councilman Michael Zucchet was scheduled to take over as interim mayor of a city that has long prided itself on clean government. Or maybe he won't. His federal trial on charges of accepting illegal campaign money from a strip-club owner was set to go to a jury as early as Tuesday.

'We won't have a mayor until the first part of December.

That creates a city government going into the most dangerous part of the river. We don't have anyone steering the boat.'

—Michael Aguirre
City Attorney

Voters have been mulling over a replacement for Mayor Dick Murphy, whose abrupt resignation just months into his second term takes effect Friday. If, as expected, no one wins a majority in a July 26 election, the top two finishers would face a November runoff.

That means an interim mayor likely will run City Hall until the year is almost over. Who that leader will be remains an open question.

"There is nobody at the helm, nobody," said Steve Erie, a political scientist at the University of California at San Diego.

City Attorney Michael Aguirre shared the senti-

ment noting that "we won't have a mayor until the first part of December. That creates a rudderless city government going into the most dangerous part of the river. We don't have anyone steering the boat."

Cattle

Continued from Page 3

This can be done now before it's mandatory."

Once tagging of cattle does become mandatory, Cleere said, it's important producers be prepared. He

said producers need to start thinking about facilities and how to comply with the program.

The tags are expected to cost \$1.50-\$2, Cleere said. He also advised producers that it would be best to "tag cattle at home" rather than using a tagging service that would tag animals.

"The more your cattle are handled, the more shrink (weight loss) you're going to have," he said. "Some producers are castrating calves soon after birth. You could tag them then, or you could wait until the day before you decide to sell."

The tag retention rate is greater than 95 percent, according to Cleere.

Full implementation of the national identification system isn't until 2008, pending federal funding, but Cleere and other Extension beef specialists are encouraging producers to become familiar with the system.

Dr. Ted McCollum, Extension beef cattle specialist in Amarillo, has put together a publication that answers many questions about premises registration. It can be found on the Web at http://animalscience.tamu.edu/ansc/publications/beef-pubs/animal_premises_id.pdf.

The identification system will also be discussed in depth at the Aug. 1-3 Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Short Course. For registration or more information, contact Texas A&M department of animal science at (979) 845-6931.

For information on applying for a premise identification number, visit the Web at http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal_id/index.shtml or call (800) 550-8242.

Safety paramount when practicing prescribed burns

SONORA — While prescribed burning is effective for controlling undesirable woody plants and cactus species, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station researchers say landowners also should learn safe and effective ways to use fire as a management tool.

Dr. Butch Taylor, director of the Sonora Experiment Station, said many ranchers began to use fire as a tool for vegetation management after joining the Edwards Plateau Prescribed Burning Association. Members are trained on safe and effective methods of prescribed burning.

"They also can benefit from the practice of neighbor helping neighbor to increase the safety and reduce the cost of prescribed burning," Taylor said.

Dr. Mort Kothmann, Experiment Station researcher, said when ranchers use fire without adequate training, experience, equipment and personnel, it "can be very dangerous to non-target

landowners and county governments is needed to allow the flexibility for landowners to conduct reclamation burns during the hot summer time."

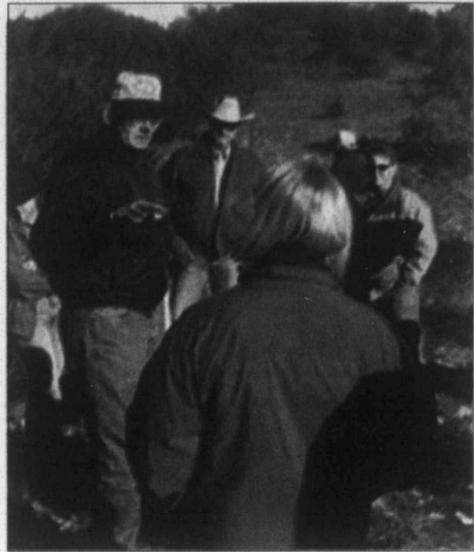
County governments should work with local landowners to develop "sound policies and procedures for the application of prescribed burning for vegetation management," Kothmann said.

"Landowners have a right to burn on their private lands in the absence of a 'burn ban' and counties have the right to establish a burn ban on all outdoor burning," he said.

These rights can come into conflict when optimal conditions for conducting a prescribed burn are the same conditions that trigger the county government to impose a burn ban on the county, Taylor said.

"The landowner-county government relationship has worked well in Sutton County," Taylor said.

For example, landowners can conduct prescribed burns during burn bans if they are members of and have a prescribed burn



(Texas Agricultural Experiment Station photo by Blair Fannin) Dr. Mort Kothmann, left, a Texas Agricultural Experiment Station rangeland specialist, leads a discussion on native grasses and talks about the benefits of prescribed burning at the Sonora research station. The Academy for Rangeland Management hosts workshops on prescribed burning each year at the Sonora station.

county government policy for burning during burn bans would be reviewed."

Some individuals might view this landowner-county government relationship as too restrictive, Taylor said.

However, the prescribed burning standards of the association represent the minimum safety requirements for prescribed burns.

"These standards are established to ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken, preventing prescribed burns from escaping the perimeter of the burn area and to minimize the effects of smoke emissions as outlined in the burn plan," Taylor said.

A written prescribed burn plan must be completed before the prescribed burn, he said. This written plan also must meet the standards of the burn association and provide "reasonable assurance" that the prescribed burn will be confined to the predetermined area.

"And it must be conducted in a manner that will accomplish the land management objectives," Taylor said.

Prescribed burning during any season of the year

is serious business, Taylor said, especially during burn bans. In order to maintain the confidence of the general public regarding prescribed fire, "landowners must be responsible for their actions."

"To ensure that prescribed fire is a viable option in the future, landowners must work together and with county governments to ensure that prescribed fire meets landowner objectives and government rules and regulations," he said.

A long-term, sustainable fire program requires an active training program for landowners, Kothmann said. Each landowner who expects to use fire should attend prescribed burn schools and gain experience from qualified prescribed burners.

"Working together, landowners can develop a 'fire-culture' within their county that supports safe and effective application of prescribed fire," he said.

For more information, contact Taylor at (325) 387-3168 or Kothmann at (979) 845-5575.

—Story courtesy Texas A&M News/Public Affairs

'Landowners have a right to burn on their private lands in the absence of a 'burn ban' and counties have the right to establish a burn ban on all outdoor burning.'

— Dr. Mort Kothmann
Researcher

property and to people."

"Before ranchers exercise their right to burn on their land, they also need to exercise their responsibility to become adequately informed and gain experience in the safe and effective use of fire as a management tool," he said. "A positive, proactive relationship between

plan approved by the Edwards Plateau Prescribed Burning Association.

"The ability to burn during burn bans is a function of the association's safety record," Taylor said. "If members of the association become careless in their application of prescribed fire, I'm sure the

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