

The

Hereford Brand



98th Year, Vol. Number 169 Deaf Smith County, Texas

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

10 Pages 50 cents

BUSH 2000

Texas governor lays groundwork for bid for the White House

AUSTIN (AP) — Republican Gov. George W. Bush says formation of a presidential exploratory committee — to raise money and measure voter support nationwide — won't distract him from his day job.

Moving to disarm potential critics, Bush said Tuesday that he plans to keep working at the Texas Capitol until the Legislature concludes its current session, which ends May 31.

"I've got to finish the legislative session. I've told you all numerous times that I'm going to stay home, fight for the tax cuts, fight for a bill to ... end social promotion (of students) and do my job as governor. Then I will begin to travel around the nation and to listen to people," he said.

Democrats were quick to question his promise.

"I will set up an exploratory committee to begin raising funds and more formally explore the prospect of running for president."

Gov. George W. Bush,
March 2, 1999

"He made a commitment to the people of Texas he would focus on this session before he thought about running for president," said Molly Beth Malcolm, who chairs the state Democratic Party.

And yet, for several weeks now, Bush has been meeting with policy experts, fund-raising operatives and fellow Republican politicians, she said.

"It's certainly going to get worse and worse," Mrs. Malcolm said. "As he has an exploratory committee, there will be more and more people coming in to visit. He has a day job that right now is the most critical thing — looking out for the citizens of this state who elected him as governor."

Lt. Gov. Rick Perry, also a Republican, rallied to Bush's side. "He will continue to be a strong, effective governor of Texas, working with legislators of both parties," Perry said.

The governor's advisers have said they expect him to remain in Texas perhaps until June 20 — his deadline for signing or vetoing bills.

"I don't have a formal date in mind yet," Bush said of a timetable for deciding whether to run. "I do know that, first things first, I'm going to start raising money to determine

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BUSH at a glance



NAME — George Walker Bush.
PARTY — Republican.
AGE — 52. Born July 6, 1946.
EDUCATION — Bachelor's degree, Yale University; master's in business administration, Harvard Business School.
EXPERIENCE — Texas Air National Guard; managing general partner of the Texas Rangers baseball team, 1989-1994; founder, CEO of Bush Exploration, a Midland-based oil and gas company; defeated Democratic Gov. Ann Richards in 1994; re-elected governor with 69 percent of vote in 1998.

First candidate files for a spot on May 1 ballot

By Don Cooper

Hereford Brand Managing Editor

One candidate has filed for a spot on the May 1 municipal election ballot.

Tom Coneway filed for re-election as Place 3 commissioner. Coneway, who filed Tuesday morning for another two years on the Hereford City Commission, was unopposed in 1997 when he made his first run for the post.

A well surveyor and farmer, Coneway resides at 142 Kingwood.

The period for filing for the election began Feb. 15; the filing will end March 17.

Other positions on the ballot are mayor and Place 1 commissioner.

The incumbents are Bob Jossierand, mayor, and Silvana Juarez, Place 1 commissioner.

Jossierand was elected mayor in 1993, succeeding the late Tom LeGate. He was unopposed for re-election in 1997.

Juarez is the senior member of the commission, having been elected in 1987. In 1997, she defeated challenger Mary Carillo.

The polling place on Election Day will be the community center.

Early voting by personal appearance will be 8 a.m.-5 p.m. April 14-27 at county clerk's office.

Applications for mail-in ballots should sent to County Clerk David Ruland, Deaf Smith County Courthouse, Hereford 79045. The applications must be received on or before April 23.

Deaf Smith County Hospital District

Voters in the Deaf Smith County Hospital District will choose three directors when they go to the polls May 1.

Incumbents are Mal Manchee, who also serves as president of the hospital board; Chip Guseman and Chris Leonard.

The directors will be elected at large.

Petitions for positions on the ballots may be submitted between March 12 and April 1.

Candidates may pick up petitions for a spot on the ballot at the administration office of Hereford Regional Medical Center, 801 E. 3rd. The petitions, with the signatures of 25 registered voters, must be returned to the administration office by 5 p.m. April 1.

Early voting by person will be at the Deaf Smith County Clerk's Office, Room 203 of the county courthouse, 235 E. 3rd.

The polls will be open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. May 1. Polling will be at the Hereford Community Center, 100 Ave. C.

HISD board

Five positions on the Hereford Independent School District's board will be on the ballot when school district voters go to the polls May 1.

In addition to the expired terms of current trustees, the ballot will include the unexpired term of Karen Sherrrod, who resigned as District 1 trustee.

Board members whose terms expire are Charlie Arrellano, District 2; David Charest, District 4; Tracy Straughan, District 5; and Jeri Bezner, District 7.

Voting will take place at the Community Center. Absentee voting will be April 14-27 in the Deaf Smith County Clerk's office at the courthouse, 235 E. 3rd.

The deadline for filing is March 17.



BRAND/Don Cooper

Getting ready to pour — Construction workers prepare the site before the concrete slab is poured for the new Tech-Prep center on the north side of the Hereford High School campus. The new center is being built with funds from a \$14.3 million grant which Hereford Independent School District received last year.

Drought

West Texas counties hope, pray for rain before planting season

By Chris Newton

The Associated Press

West Texas farmers, devastated by the 1998 drought, needed a wet winter to replenish and soften their fields if there was any hope of a bountiful harvest in 1999. Now winter is almost over, and the skies have been little help.

Since Jan. 1, most areas across the region have received less-than-average rainfall. Conditions around Big Spring and San Angelo are critical, with rainfall totals already more than an inch below normal.

"The farther south you go, the worse it gets," National Weather Service meteorologist Lance Goehring said. "But

even to the north, we have only received one storm near the end of January. Beyond that we're dry as well."

Big Spring, San Angelo, Odessa and Midland have all gotten less than an inch of rain this year, while Lubbock and Amarillo are slightly wetter than usual. But even the rain the northern areas received came in a single spurt — not especially helpful for softening the ground since much of it becomes runoff, researchers say.

Hereford has received 2.13 inches of rain since Jan. 1.

Carl Anderson, a Texas Agricultural Extension Service researcher, said the southern regions haven't received drought-breaking rain since

last summer.

"We've seen a continuation of the dry conditions that plagued the area all last year," Anderson said. "But it is even more critical now, because without rain soon you set up the possibility that this summer could be worse. There is still plenty of time for things to turn around. It just doesn't look great from where we are right now."

Worse yet, forecasters predict that substantial rainfall won't come anytime soon in the region.

Earlier this week, the *Big Spring Herald* reported that nearly 750 people from Howard County and surround

See DROUGHT, Page A10

Court grants SEC's request

Former Hereford resident among defendants whose assets are frozen

By Don Cooper

Hereford Brand Managing Editor

A U.S. district court in Dallas has granted the federal Securities & Exchange Commission's request for a permanent injunction against a former Hereford businessman and several other individuals in connection with a scheme to bilk more than 100 investors out of \$14 million, according to the SEC case attorney.

Robert A. Brunig, trial attorney for the SEC Dallas Division, said Tuesday the injunction also freezes the assets of the defendants.

The federal suit was filed Nov. 18, 1998, in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas.

The litigation names several investment partnerships and individuals, including Quentin Hix, 50, of Dallas; Gene Coulter, 62, of Grapevine and formerly of Hereford; Carolyn Don Kicks, 63, of Sulphur Springs; Carl LaDane Weaver, 46, of Blossom; and Robert Cord, 44, of Seabrook.

Also, Steven C. Roberts; Raymond G. Parr; Willard Veardl Smith; Earl D. McKinney.

The complaint states Cord also is known as Robert F. Schoonover Jr.

According to the SEC complaint, the individuals and companies were "involved in the fraudulent sales of interests in a succession of non-existent prime bank trading

See SEC, Page A9

Lawmaker: Now's time to change state charter

AUSTIN (AP) — Lawmakers should be willing to make changes to the state constitution now, not wait until some crisis demands it, the author of a proposed constitutional rewrite said Tuesday.

"There is widespread belief ... that the Texas Legislature is incapable of grappling with substantive issues in the absence of a crisis," Sen. Bill Ratliff, R-Mt. Pleasant, told the Senate State Affairs Committee.

"I'm not here to tell you we have a constitutional crisis, but I do believe we badly need a new constitution," Ratliff said.

The proposed rewrite by Ratliff and Rep. Rob Junell, D-San Angelo, would trim the 90,000 word document to 19,000 words while greatly expanding the powers of the governor.

It also would combine the state Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals. The governor would appoint district and appellate court judges, removing them from direct partisan elections.

The proposal also would create an executive cabinet of governor-appointed heads of departments of state, interior, public safety and criminal justice, health and human services, education, agriculture, economic development, energy and trans-

portation.

The governor also would appoint the land, agriculture and railroad commissioners. All those now are elected. The lieutenant governor, comptroller and attorney general would remain elected offices.

The governor also would have the authority to intervene in any litigation involving the state.

The governor's office currently holds a fraction of the power most people think it does, Ratliff said.

"They really don't have the power to do the things the people think they're electing them to do," Ratliff said.

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LIFESTYLES

HEREFORD BRAND • Wednesday, March 3, 1999 • A3

Sage gets appointment in Potter County

AMARILLO—Kinann Campbell Sage has been appointed Potter County Extension assistant agent for family and consumer sciences effective March 1, according to an announcement made jointly by Judge Arthur Ware and Texas Agricultural Extension Service district director, Donna Brauchi of Amarillo.

The new agent will join with Potter's Extension education professionals Cheryl Brewer, Jim Allison and Marcel Fischbacher in offices at 3301 E. 10th. She will work with county 4-H and youth, and FCS programs. Sage fills the vacancy created when the former agent, Kelly Rosemann, moved to Lubbock.

"I look forward to working with the 4-H program in Potter

County. My experience in 4-H led to the career choice in Extension education. The P a n - handle has an excellent record of quality 4-H programs. It's good to be back home," Sage said.



Kinann Sage

A native of Deaf Smith County, Sage is a graduate of Hereford High School. She holds a bachelor of science degree in food technology from Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

At Tech, she was a research and teaching assistant in the University's Meats Laboratory and helped prepare meats judging teams for state and national competitions. In 1996, Sage was a member of the judging team. She was elected secretary, then vice president of Tech's Student Agricultural Council, and was active in events such as Ag Fest, Ag Olympics, and Ag Honors, among others.

As an Agri-Techsan, she was the on-campus coordinator for recruitment, and was involved in the Meat Science Association, Collegiate FFA and 4-H chapters, Food Technology Club, and Food Tech Quiz Bowl Team.

She received the LIFT Scholarship, Clayton Fund Scholar-

ship, and J.O. and Mildred Dalton Endowed Scholarship. She was named to the Dean's list in Tech's College of Agriculture, the President's list and the national agricultural Dean's list. In addition, Sage held a summer internship in the quality control laboratory of Arrowhead Mills, Inc. in Hereford.

Previously, Sage was employed by Bell Dairy Products, Inc. as a technician in its quality control laboratory where she conducted tests involving raw and processed milk and milk products.

The new agent was a member of the Deaf Smith County 4-H Club for 10 years, and active in foods, clothing, consumer decision making, public speaking, livestock judging and

leadership programs. She received 4-H's Gold Star award, and scholarships from the 4-H Foundation and Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Association as a graduating senior. She was the high point individual at the Houston Livestock Show Meats Judging Contest.

Her parents, Jim and Brenda Campbell, own and operate American Dusting Company in Hereford. Her family includes brothers Jim Bret of Amarillo, a marketing manager at AQHA and Craig of Hereford, and a sister Chelsea. Sage and her husband, Jay, who is with Performance Products, will reside in Amarillo.

Hospital Notes

Patients in Hereford Regional Medical Center on March 3:

Frank Burns, Nancy Burns, Cynthia Enriquez, infant girl Enriquez, Natalia C. Galicia, James Lee Perez Jr., Willie M. Phipps, Amanda Sandoval, infant boy Sandoval, Mariah H. Tucker.

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Is it ready yet?



Pilot Club members Betty Taylor and Shannon Redwine check the progress of the meat being prepared for the Mexican Stack Supper which will be held from 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Thursday at Hereford Community Center. Pilot Club members have done the cooking for the annual fund-raiser for 14 years, assisted in recent years by Co-Pilot John Bunch, who cooks the beans. Approximately 350 area residents are expected to consume the 100 pounds of ground beef and 25 pounds of pinto beans. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 12. Carry-out is available at no extra charge.

Stanton to speak for fellowship

Hereford Flame Fellowship will present Pat Stanton of Lubbock as speaker at the 7:30 p.m. meeting on Thursday, March 4 in Hereford Community Center.

Stanton has taught the word of God and ministered the prayer of healing for more than 28 years through churches, retreats, seminars, meetings, printed material, radio and television.

She hosted "Rays of Hope" on CBN and Channel 39 in Dallas. She and her husband, Jay, are the founders of the newly organized "Lubbock Rays of Hope."

Meetings of Hereford Flame Fellowship are open to everyone and the public is welcome to attend.

School benefit auction to be held Sunday

St. Anthony's School PTO will sponsor its annual auction beginning at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 7 at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Country Club Road.

Donations for the auction are being accepted at Scott Seed Company or contact Mike or Kim Meiwes at 364-7679.

Junior high students will offer babysitting for those parents attending the annual auction. Donations will go toward the junior high youth activity fund.

Auxiliary purchases items for HRMC

Hereford Regional Medical Center Auxiliary met for its March luncheon meeting with special guests Neva Neuhaus and Ginger McDonald with the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program.

They met with the group to assess its progress with the Seniors for Childhood Immunization program. Auxiliary members are participating and the program is having an excellent showing.

Bonnie Sublett reported 282 hours volunteered and Grace Covington reported 27 baby books distributed.

Patsy Giles, Bettie Dickson and Gene McDaniel were selected as scholarship committee members. Each year the Auxil-

ary gives four scholarships of \$500 each to Hereford High School graduating seniors who intend to pursue a career in the health field.

Members of the Auxiliary hold fund-raisers each year to contribute to the good work being done at HRMC. The Auxiliary has recently purchased a warming light for the nursery, a mammography view box, two shower chairs and stepping stairs for Physical Therapy. The Auxiliary receives requests throughout the year from the various departments.

Members present were Janis Bell, Mary Jane Burrus, Lupe Cerda, Ann Cummings, Margaret Daniels, Billee Kelley, Irene Reinart, Mary

Schlabs, Leona Schilling, Quintna Waits, Mary Williamson, Marian Yosten, and Covington, Dickson, Giles, McDaniel and Sublett.

Early Childhood Education Clinic

March 5, 1999
HISD Administration Building
601 N. 25 Mile Avenue

Hereford Independent School District's Special Education Department and Region XVI Service Center are offering a FREE clinic for children 0-5 years of age. This clinic is to identify children who may need early classroom experiences or home intervention in:

- Hearing
- Learning about their world
- Talking
- Using their hands
- Seeing
- Playing like other children

...or may have a PHYSICAL HANDICAP.

Certified specialists will be working with children at the administration building on March 5th from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED and can be made by calling 363-7600.

A Parent or Legal Guardian will need to accompany the child to the screening to provide permission and needed developmental information.

If you need additional information call Annie Mercer at 363-7600.



Clinica Interventiva Para Niños

5 de Marzo 1999
Edificio de Adminstracion
601 N. 25 Mile Avenue

El Departamento de Educacion Especial del Distrito Escolar de Hereford (HISD) y Region XVI Centro de Servicio ofrecera una clinica GRATIS para niños entre 0-5 años de edad. La clinica es para identificar aquellos niños que pueden necesitar educacion o intervencion en casa con:

- Oiendo
- Adaptarse a sus alrededores
- Hablando
- Uso de las manos
- Mirando
- Jugando como otros niños

...o quizás tengan un IMPEDIMENTO FISICO.

Especialistas certificados examinaran a los niños el 5 de Marzo desde las 8:30 am hasta las 5:00 pm. SE REQUIEREN CITAS! Haga su cita llamando al 363-7600.

El padre/madre or guardian debere acompañar al niño para que de permiso y informacion tocante el desarrollo del niño.

Para mas informacion, llame al 363-7600 y pida hablar con Annie Mercer.

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Creators Syndicate

Ann Landers



Dear Ann Landers: You asked your readers for their views on older women marrying younger men and

Ann Landers vice versa. I was married for 28 years to a man my own age. He divorced me and married a woman who was younger than our children. Since then, I have dated men of all ages. The older men I went out with seemed to have no sense of humor and very little passion for life. Many wanted a nurse for their old age and treated me like a dumb blonde.

I am now dating a man who is 10 years younger than I am. He is confident and sure of himself. He is not controlling, jealous or condescending. We can be silly and laugh a lot, and we can also engage in serious discussions. Some of my friends assumed the only thing we had in common was sex. Others told me to be careful because younger guys are usually looking for a mother figure. Nevertheless, anyone who has spent time with us can see that we are well suited to one another.

We share the same values and have similar interests. Whether or not anything will come of this, I don't know, but I enjoy his company and think the world of him. With a relationship as solid as ours, age is irrelevant. — "Older Woman" Out East

Dear Woman: A few years ago, I wrote a book, and one of the chapter titles was "Age Is Only a Number, Baby!" I believed it then, and I believe it now. Some men are old at 25; others are young at 65. It's what goes on between the eyebrows and the hairline and not farther down. Here's more on the subject:

Dear Ann Landers: I am a 24-year-old divorcee and have been dating a 63-year-old widower for the last seven months. He is not a millionaire, nor is he famous, but he has something that is almost impossible to find in men my age these days. I'm talking about integrity, maturity and a sense of responsibility. Best of all, he is a gentleman and knows how to treat a woman.

This man was not looking for a trophy girlfriend. He is very much into physical fitness and wanted a woman who shared his enthusiasm for scuba diving, weightlifting, running, motorcycling and

dancing. Both his family and mine have been supportive of our relationship. My parents saw me leave an abusive marriage, and his children know how much he suffered when his wife of 38 years died after a long illness. They just want us to be happy.

I realize if we stay together, I may wind up being his caretaker and possibly a young widow, but I am perfectly willing to take that risk. — May-December Magic

Dear Magic: This could work because your eyes are wide open and you understand the risks. I wish you all the best. Here's one more on the subject:

Dear Ann: A family in Michigan had three daughters. The youngest, "Stella," married a wealthy man her own age. After a few years, he fell in love with a married woman. Together, they plotted and executed the murder of the woman's husband. Stella's husband is still in prison. Stella died after enduring years of grief.

The second daughter, "Hortense," married a young businessman. During his midlife crisis, he fell in love with another woman and deserted Hortense and their five

children, along with his elderly mother, who lived with them. Grieving over the breakup of the family, his mother and youngest son died.

I married the youngest daughter, "Grace," when she was 24 and I was 46. I was concerned about our age difference and suggested she pick a younger suitor. Taking this as a mark of good character, she said, "Let's proceed." We have been married for 47 years and have two sons. I am now 93, Grace is 71, and we are still dancing. I bless the day we met. — H.B. in Salem, Ore.

An alcohol problem? How can you help yourself or someone you love? "Alcoholism: How to Recognize It, How to Deal With It, How to Conquer It" will give you the answers. Send a self-addressed, long, business-size envelope and a check or money order for \$3.75 (this includes postage and handling) to: Alcohol, c/o Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11562, Chicago, Ill. 60611-0562. (In Canada, send \$4.55.)

To find out more about Ann Landers and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com. ANN LANDERS (R) COPYRIGHT 1999 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

Entertainment, potatoes on menu during supper

The Young Adults Sunday School class of First Presbyterian Church of Hereford will host a baked potato supper with entertainment at 6 p.m. Sunday, March 7 at the church, 610 Lee St.

The entertainment will be quartet singers "Almost Acceptable" from Amarillo. Their show includes gospel and love songs as well as humor. Admission to the meal and

show will be on a donation basis. All donations will go to update the playground equipment at the church. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The #1 To See:
 Jerry Shipman, CLU
 801 N. Main
 (806) 364-3161

At the Center

Senior Citizens

MENUS

THURSDAY-Mexican stack, Spanish rice, pinto beans, salad fixings, tostados, pineapple tidbits; or chicken breast.

FRIDAY-Catfish fillet with lemon juice, creamed potatoes, buttered broccoli, coleslaw, fruit cocktail cake; or Salisbury steak, plain cake.

MONDAY-Italian spaghetti with meat sauce, herbed green beans, tossed green salad, sherbet; or chicken ala king, mixed fruit.

TUESDAY-Chicken fried steak, cream gravy, mashed potatoes, vegetable medley, 7-Up salad, Boston cream cake; or roast pork, plain cake, D'zerta salad.

WEDNESDAY-Chicken strips with gravy, sweet potato patties, buttered black-eyed peas, rosey applesauce, chocolate pudding with whipped

topping; or McRibb, D'zerta pudding.

ACTIVITIES

THURSDAY-Pool classes, exercise class 10-10:45 a.m., oil painting 9-11 a.m., Thrift Store open 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

FRIDAY-Pool classes, line dance 10-11 a.m., Thrift Store open 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Braschler Music Show dinner 4:30-9 p.m.

MONDAY-Pool classes, line dance 10-11 a.m., doll class 1-4 p.m., Hereford Retired School Employees Association 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Nutrition Council 1 p.m.

TUESDAY-Pool classes, exercise class 10-10:45 a.m., Beltone 10 a.m.-noon, Golden K Kiwanis Club 11 a.m.-1 p.m. NARFE 1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY-Pool classes, ceramics 12:30-4 p.m., "Listen to Your Body" 12:15-12:30 p.m., Thrift Store open 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Hester slated to speak for library open house

Friends of the Deaf Smith County Library will host an Open House at the library on March 8 at 7 p.m. Come visit the land of the barefoot cowboy with guest speaker Jenifer Hester, nurse practitioner from Columbia, South America.

Born and raised in the Texas Panhandle, Hester has lived in Columbia for the last 23 years, bringing health care to the people of more than 124 different Indian tribes.

The Friends of the Library and the staff invite library patrons and friends to travel with her in dugout canoe, bush plane and jeep caravan to see a diverse country, from the coastal regions, to the rainforest, up and down the mountainsides, and across the desert. A variety of pictures and artifacts from Columbia will be on display.

The evening will also include recognition of the library Family of the Year.

Wedding information must be submitted by 5 p.m. Wednesday to be included in the Sunday edition of The Hereford Brand. Wedding information forms, as well as those for engagements, showers and anniversaries, are available at the news office, 313 N. Lee.

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 Q&A
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Screenings set at Sr. Center

Deaf Smith Home Health in conjunction with the VA Roadies and National Home Health Care are sponsoring free community health screenings from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Thursday, March 11 at Senior Citizens Center, 426 Ranger.

Screenings will include glucose, blood pressure, cholesterol and pulse-oximetry testing.

These community health screenings are free and open to the public.

MOOVIES 6
 Sugarland Mall 400 N. 25 Mile Ave., Hereford, TX
 Business Office: 364-0101
 Movie Hotline: 364-8000

8 MM	1:45 & 4:20	7:00 & 9:30
PG13 MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE	1:30 & 4:15	7:00 & 9:40
PG MY FAVORITE MARTIAN	12:45 & 5:00	7:35 & 9:10
R PAY BACK	2:30 & 4:45	7:15 & 9:30
PG13 SHE'S ALL THAT	1:30 & 4:15	7:00 & 9:30
PG13 BLAST FROM THE PAST	2:15 & 4:40	7:10 & 9:30

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SPORTS

A5 • HEREFORD BRAND • Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Portland rises over Utah Jazz

By The Associated Press

The Utah Jazz, coming off two straight appearances in the NBA Finals, have impeccable credentials. The Portland Trail Blazers are looking

to reach the same level.

On Tuesday night, the Blazers just might have begun that climb with a 102-100 double-overtime victory against Utah.

"It was just like playing in

the playoffs," said Portland guard Jim Jackson, who has never been in a postseason game. "For us, in a way, it was a statement game."

Making the biggest statements were Rasheed Wallace

and Isaiah Rider. Wallace scored 22 points and sank two free throws with 17 seconds left in the second overtime. Rider scored five of his 18 points in the second extra period.

"I love crunch time. That's when the big-time players step up," Rider said. "I felt like I was lethargic for a lot of the game, and I wanted to show that I was a gamer, and I had the opportunity."

Portland (10-3) is 6-0 at home. The Jazz dropped to 11-3, their only losses coming on the road.

"Really, we should have been blown out of the game, the way we played," Utah's Greg Foster said. "I think we were lucky just to be in the position we were. Just too many mistakes, too many offensive rebounds for Portland."

Elsewhere in the NBA, it was Miami 85, New York 84 in overtime; Detroit 108, Chicago 78; Sacramento 111, Vancouver 101; Dallas 112, L.A. Clippers 99; San Antonio 99, Houston 82; Indiana 88, Denver 81; Washington 97, Atlanta 77; Cleveland 116, Boston 99; Milwaukee 94, New Jersey 86; and Minnesota 89, Golden State 78.

Heat 85, Knicks 84, OT

At Miami, the matchup of former Georgetown centers featured Patrick Ewing's season-high 31 points and Alonzo Mourning's 28 points, 11 rebounds and seven blocked shots for the Heat. But Ewing missed a 14-footer as time ran out.

Ewing had 16 rebounds and six blocks. But he missed two shots and committed a turnover in the final two min-

See, JAZZ, Page A6

Amarillo team leads Icebreaker field

The second annual Ice Breaker open, sponsored this past weekend by the John Pitman Golf Course Association, was sort of a misnomer.

Unlike the cold and rainy conditions experienced a year ago, a 36-team field had surprisingly ideal golfing weather in the two-day tournament, which adds nearly \$6,000 to the local economy, some observers say.

But that didn't keep the Amarillo team of Mitchell-Burnett from icing a win in the championship flight portion of the tournament with a 60-66-126 total.

The Amarillo duo edged Friona's Brent Loflin-Rick Roden team who scored 65 in the first round and finished with 63, and Amarillo's Bolden-Gaines who followed with a 62-67-129 finish.

In first flight play, Hereford's Butch White and Dwayne Cassels recorded an even 68-68-136 split with Lubbock's Mike Whitworth and Scott Marshall and lost a score card playoff for a second place finish.

Amarillo's Schlegel-Drury followed with a third place finish after scoring 69 on the turn and following with 69 in the second round of play.

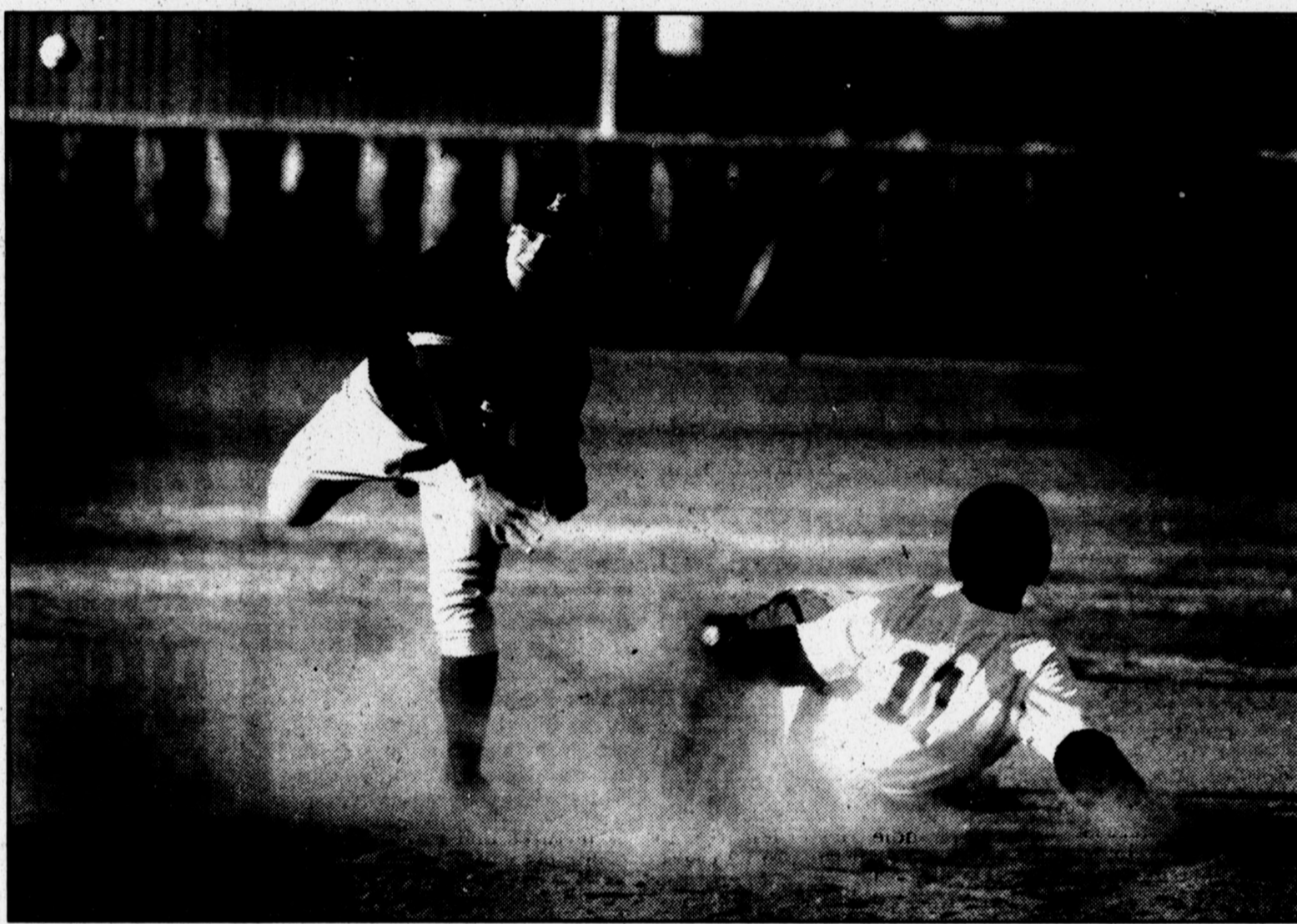
Father son partners Don Leverett and Todd Leverett of Hereford took a 72 in first round play and carded a 67 in the second to win second-flight competition with a total of 139.

Amarillo's Johnson-Clements team had a 72-68-140 for second place and Hereford's Wendell Burdine and N.D. Kelso finished third with a 72-72-144.

The Cole-Cole team of Amarillo hit a score of 75-71-146 to earn a first place finish in the third flight ahead of the Amarillo team of Nelson-Corbell

with 75-76-151 and Hereford's Carlos Mendez-Art Rodriguez who carded a 77-76-153.

Workin' for two



BRAND/Mauri Montgomery

Sending it to first — Hereford second baseman L.J. Vallejo tries to nab a double play after he beats River Road's Adam King to the bag and rifles a throw to first base. Hereford had to settle for its second consecutive tie at Whiteface Field after splitting 9-9 with River Road Tuesday.

Hereford ties with River Road, 9-9

The Hereford boy's varsity baseball team added another tie to its season standing here Tuesday after splitting seven innings of play 9-9 with the River Road Wildcats at Whiteface Field.

The Whitefaces are now 0-2-1 on the year.

Junior Whiteface pitcher George Castillo went six innings with Ramiro Zambrano catching before being relieved in the seventh

by senior Cory Ortiz and catcher Toby Torres.

Hereford had held the Wildcats scoreless for three innings while adding up three runs in the first inning and two in the second for a 5-0 lead.

Both teams left the third frame scoreless before opening up in the fourth inning.

River Road added two runs

See, HEREFORD, Page A6

Hereford girls beat Lady Tigers, 21-15

Lady Whiteface pitcher Monica Dominguez led Hereford from the mound for five innings before being relieved by Vickie Perez as Hereford defeated the Frenship Lady Tigers here Tuesday 21-15.

The win brought Hereford's season mark to 2-3.

Hereford committed four errors that contributed to five unearned runs, but out-

hit Frenship in four frames to clinch the win.

Hereford's Erica Dominguez went 2-2, earned a single and a triple and four RBIs while Salina Hastings went 2-4 with two RBIs to lead Lady Whiteface hitting.

The Lady Whitefaces are scheduled to continue season play in the Lubbock Prairie Dog Softball Tournament Friday.

Adrian's Davis named to All-District 7-1A team



Sehrena Davis

Adrian High School's sophomore point guard Sehrena Davis, daughter of Butch and Sherry

Davis of Hereford, was recently named for the second consecutive year to the District 7-1A All-District team.

Davis paced the Adrian Matadors to a tie for second in the district field after she accumulated a six-point game average, shooting 41 percent from the field and 22 percent from the foul line.

The Matador also earned an average of three re-

See, DAVIS, Page A6

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INSIDE

NBC sweeps its way to top of the ratings

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC has come out on top during the crucial February "sweeps" period, helped by the strength of its Thursday night schedule and popular miniseries like "The 39s."

Tonight's interview of Monica Lewinsky by Barbara Walters on ABC isn't expected to change the standings even though it is touted for sweeps, a key ratings period used to set local advertising rates.

NBC's victory came despite losing last week's prime-time ratings race to CBS, Nielsen Media Research said Tuesday.

Through Sunday night, NBC had a 10.1 rating and 16 share for the month, CBS was second at 9.8 and 16, ABC had an 8.2 and 13, Fox had a 7.1 and 11, the WB had a 3.6 and 6 and UPN was at 2.1 and 3.

NBC Entertainment President Scott Sassa said the surge in viewership on certain nights over the last few weeks was good news for all networks.

"If you provide good programming, you can certainly increase the network share," he said. "We think the networks are really in a good position right now."

Leslie Moonves, president and chief executive of CBS Television, congratulated NBC but also took a swipe at his competitor, saying NBC relied on a "great amount of stunting" to win sweeps.

Sassa said NBC, unlike CBS, stuck to the schedule it set at the start of the year and didn't rely on any last-minute reinforcements.

ABC and Fox were both down in comparison with November sweeps, but that could change for ABC. "It ain't over until the intern sings," quipped ABC Entertainment President Stu Bloomberg.

Big events proved successful for the networks last week. CBS' airing of the

Grammy Awards, while down slightly from last year, was the fourth most-watched show of the week behind the NBC Thursday night trioka of "ER," "Frasier" and "Friends."

Part one of NBC's "Alone in Wonderland" finished sixth for the week for NBC, although its ratings couldn't quite match the level of last May's "Merlin." ABC was successful with its "Sonny and Cher TV movie," "And the Beat Goes On," and CBS hit with "Too Rich: The Secret Life of Davis Duke."

For the week, CBS had a 10.6 rating and 17 share, the highest weekly rating for a network this year excluding Super Bowl week. NBC had a 10.0 and 16, ABC had an 8.2 and 13 and Fox had a 7.6 and 12.

Among the emerging networks, the WB had a 3.6 rating and 6 share, UPN had a 2.1 rating and 3 share and Pax TV was at 0.8 and 1.

NBC's "Nightly News" dominated the evening news competition with a 9.0 rating and 16 share, its widest margin over CBS in nearly two years and over ABC in one year. ABC's "World News Tonight" had an 8.1 rating and 16 share and the "CBS Evening News" was at 7.5 and 15.

A rating point represents 994,000 households, or 1 percent of the nation's estimated 99.4 million TV homes. Share is the percentage of in-use televisions tuned to a given show.

For the week of Feb. 22-28, the top 10 shows, their networks and ratings were "ER," NBC, 20.2; "Frasier," NBC, 17.7; "Friends," NBC, 17.6; "The Grammy Awards," CBS, 16.6; "Jeop," NBC, 15.0; "NBC Sunday Night Movie: Alice in Wonderland," NBC, 14.8; "Veronica's Closet," NBC, 14.3; "Touched by an Angel," CBS, 14.2; "60 Minutes," CBS, 14.1; "Home Improvement," ABC, 12.9.

'60s star Dusty Springfield dies

LONDON (AP) — Singer Dusty Springfield, whose cool, husky voice fueled such 1960s hits as "Son of a Preacher Man" and "Wishin' and Hopin'," has died after a long battle with breast cancer. She was 59.

Springfield died Tuesday night at her home in Henley-on-Thames, about 30 miles west of London, said her agent, Paul Fenn.

"She was one of the icons of the music industry," Fenn said. "She was one of the most

talented female singers of this century."

Springfield's first hit was 1964's "I Only Want to Be With You," followed by a string of smashes, including "I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself" and "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me."

Springfield's breast cancer was diagnosed in 1994 shortly after she recorded her most recent album, "A Very Fine Love."

She underwent extensive

chemotherapy until 1995, when she was diagnosed as being clear of the disease. But the cancer returned the following year.

Springfield was born Mary Isabel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien in north London on April 16, 1939.

Springfield died 11 days before she was to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at a ceremony in New York, along with Paul McCartney and Bruce Springsteen.

TELEVISION

WEDNESDAY MARCH 3

6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News

THURSDAY MARCH 4

7 AM	7:30	8 AM	8:30	9 AM	9:30	10 AM	10:30	11 AM	11:30	12 PM
Barney	Teletubbies	Sesame Street	Arthur	Zoboo	Barney	Teletubbies	Reading	Mr Rogers	Mr Rogers	Cooking
Barney	Teletubbies	Sesame Street	Arthur	Zoboo	Barney	Teletubbies	Reading	Mr Rogers	Mr Rogers	Cooking
Barney	Teletubbies	Sesame Street	Arthur	Zoboo	Barney	Teletubbies	Reading	Mr Rogers	Mr Rogers	Cooking
Barney	Teletubbies	Sesame Street	Arthur	Zoboo	Barney	Teletubbies	Reading	Mr Rogers	Mr Rogers	Cooking
Barney	Teletubbies	Sesame Street	Arthur	Zoboo	Barney	Teletubbies	Reading	Mr Rogers	Mr Rogers	Cooking

12:30	1 PM	1:30	2 PM	2:30	3 PM	3:30	4 PM	4:30	5 PM	5:30
Body Elec.	Alexander	Art	Finance	Finance	Nutrition	Nutrition	Zoom	Science Guy	Wahbone	Arthur
Body Elec.	Alexander	Art	Finance	Finance	Nutrition	Nutrition	Zoom	Science Guy	Wahbone	Arthur
Body Elec.	Alexander	Art	Finance	Finance	Nutrition	Nutrition	Zoom	Science Guy	Wahbone	Arthur
Body Elec.	Alexander	Art	Finance	Finance	Nutrition	Nutrition	Zoom	Science Guy	Wahbone	Arthur
Body Elec.	Alexander	Art	Finance	Finance	Nutrition	Nutrition	Zoom	Science Guy	Wahbone	Arthur

6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News
News	Ent. Tonight	Life, Camera, Life, Camera	Life, Camera	Famous Families	Famous Families	700 Club	Squirrel Nut	News	News	News

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COMICS

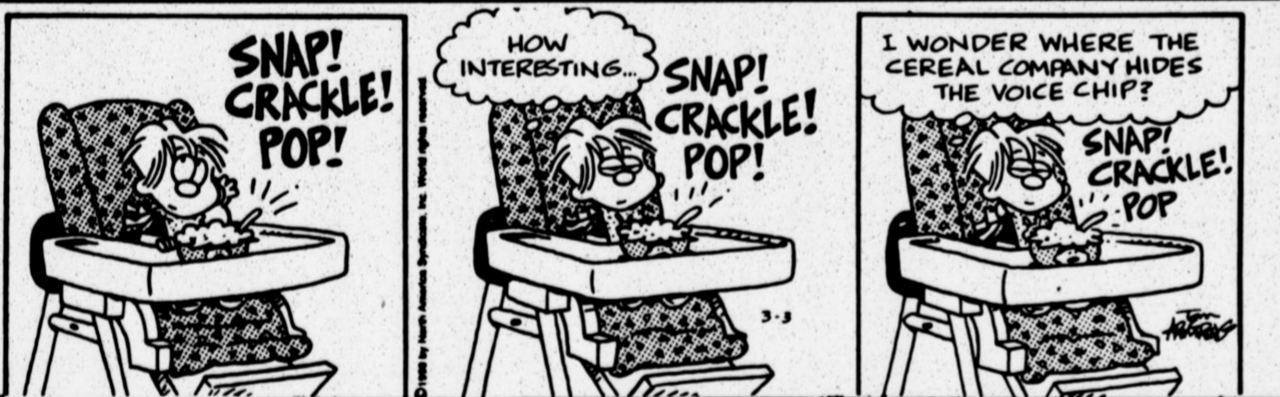
The Wizard of Id

By Brant Parker & Johnny Hart



Marvin

By Tom Armstrong



Blondie

By Dean Young & Stan Drake



Beetle Bailey

By Mort Walker



Barney Google and Snuffy Smith

By Fred Lasswell



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DAILY CRYPTOQUOTES

DAILY CRYPTOQUOTES — Here's how to work it: AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different. 3-3 CRYPTOQUOTE A D Z P A Q Q O V P K P L P B W D A V D Z X L E P V B E Q Z P A H E D E P V R X V B E P O D A Q — Q S N Q F B E X N N P F O Yesterday's Cryptoquote: AH, YOU FLAVOR EVERYTHING: YOU ARE THE VANILLA OF SOCIETY. — SYDNEY SMITH

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Table of market data including CATTLE FUTURES, GRAM FUTURES, METAL FUTURES, and FUTURES OPTIONS with various price listings and market movements.

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO BIDDERS The City of Hereford, Texas, will receive sealed bids in the office of the City Manager until 10:00 A.M., Monday, March 22, 1999, for the purchase of a tractor to be used primarily in themowing and general maintenance of parks in the City of Hereford. Specifications may be obtained at the office of the City Manager, 224 N. Lee, Hereford, Texas 79045 or by calling (806) 363-7100. Bids shall be submitted in sealed envelopes and marked in the lower left hand corner. The right is reserved to reject any and all bids and to waive any informality in bids received. CITY OF HEREFORD, TEXAS By: Chester R. Nolen City Manager

NOTICE OF WATER QUALITY APPLICATION PERMIT NO. 04052 APPLICATION. Bimbo Cereal Foods, Inc., P.O. box 150, Canyon, Texas 79015, has applied to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) for a new permit, Proposed Permit No. 04052 to authorize the disposal of process wastewater and wash water at a daily average flow not to exceed 100,000 gallons per day via irrigation of 250 acres of land. The applicant proposes to operate a corn flour processing plant. This permit will not authorize a discharge of pollutants into waters in the State. THE OFFICE has made application with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Private Club Registration Permit to be located at 128 Lawton Street, City of Hereford, County of Deaf Smith, and will operate under the tradename of THE OFFICE. Officers are Lucia Guajardo, President, Norma Jean Tarango, Treasurer, Mari Guajardo, Secretary, and Odilia Hernandez, Vice-President. PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC MEETING. Written public comments and requests for public meetings may be submitted to the Office of Chief Clerk, at the address provided in the information section below, within 30 days of the date of newspaper publication of the notice. A public meeting is intended for the taking of public comment, and is not a contested case hearing. A public meeting will be held if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application. CONTESTED CASE HEARING. The TNRCC may grant a contested case hearing on this application if a written hearing request is filed within 30 days from the date of newspaper publication of this notice. The Executive Director may approve the application unless a written request for a contested case hearing is filed within 30 days after newspaper publication of this notice. To request a contested case hearing, you must submit the following: (1) your name (or for a group or association, an official representative), mailing address, daytime phone number, and fax number, if any; (2) applicant's name and permit number; (3) the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing;" (4) a brief and specific description of how you would be affected by the application in a way not common to the general public; and (5) the location and distance of your property relative to the proposed activity. Requests for a contested case hearing must be submitted in writing to the TNRCC Office of the Chief Clerk at the address provided in the information section below. You may also submit your proposed adjustments to the application/permit which would satisfy your concerns. If a hearing request is filed, the Executive Director will not issue the permit and will forward the application and hearing request to the TNRCC Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting. INFORMATION. Written hearing requests, public comments or requests for a public meeting should be submitted to the Office of the Chief Clerk, MC 105, TNRCC, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087. For information concerning the hearing process, please contact the Public Interest Counsel, MC 103, the same address. For additional information, individual members of the general public may contact the Office of Public Assistance at 1-800-687-4040. General information regarding the TNRCC can be found at our web site at www.tnrcc.state.tx.us. Issued Feb. 26, 1999 /s/ LaDonna Castañuela, Chief Clerk Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission

SEC

From Page A1 programs." The SEC claims these sales involved more than \$14 million from investors in Texas and 17 other states. When it filed the complaint, the SEC requested the court to freeze the defendants' assets. The request was granted, and the court also ordered all defendants to provide a full accounting for the investment funds and appointed a receiver to control the assets. The permanent injunction also continues those orders. The companies involved in the complaint are listed as: • Funding Resource Group; • MVP Network Inc., also known as MVP Network (Trust); • FMCI Trust; • Funders Marketing Co. Inc.; • Fortune Investments Ltd.; • Winterhawk West Indies Ltd. The SEC contends the defendants "raised \$14 million by telling investors that these programs were successful, that their funds were completely secured by guarantees issued by banks or insurance companies, and that the investments would generate returns between 6 percent and 18 percent per month." However, the SEC claims the trading programs didn't exist and there were no security guarantees. Also, the SEC charged "these defendants used most of the investor funds for their own benefit and the benefit of the relief defendants, Howe Financial Trust and Treds Financial Trust, and for payments to other investors." Coulter formerly was agency manager of Texas Farm Bureau in Hereford. He served in that position for about 10 years before leaving the firm in 1983 to begin a private insurance venture in the central Texas area. A trial date has not been set.

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Bush

From Page A1 whether or not there is an interest beyond just people coming to Austin." In the immediate future, the exploratory committee will concentrate on raising money. Bush said, something he has done a lot of in his two gubernatorial campaigns. Campaign finance records show that he raised about \$16 million in his 1994 challenge of Democratic Gov. Ann Richards, and \$17.7 million for last year's re-election campaign. Bush declined to specify how much money he hopes to raise, although news reports have suggested his goal is a \$20 million war chest. "I have an idea about what would be the ideal amount of money," Bush said. "It'll have to be enough to make sure that we can get out of Texas and get to the early (primary) states and to be able to endure on March the 7th" when the multistate "Super Tuesday" primary is scheduled. Bush sounded the "compassionate conservatism" themes that have become his trademark. Alternating between English and Spanish, he said his national vision would echo his Texas record. "I'll have a plan to encourage prosperity. But I want to make sure prosperity is for everybody, not a handful. I want prosperity to spread its wings all across America. I don't want anybody left behind. And so, that'll be part of the vision I talk about." While considering whether to run, the 52-year-old governor often has cited his worries about the impact of a national campaign on his family — wife Laura and their twin 17-year-old daughters. "Those of you who cover me every day know that I don't make this decision lightly. I've carefully considered its ramifications. I've talked to Laura and Barbara and Jenna," Bush said, his wife at his side. "I dread criticism of my husband," Mrs. Bush said. "I know he'd make a great president." No son of a former president has been president himself except John Quincy Adams, who served from 1825 to 1829.

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INSIDE

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
News roundup

Clinton, Democrats roll out legislative agenda before GOP

WASHINGTON — President Clinton and congressional Democrats are rolling out an ambitious legislative agenda, looking to gain a tactical advantage over Republican lawmakers still wrestling with their plans. Clinton scheduled a meeting today with House and Senate Democrats to present their 1999 "Families First" agenda, a four-page political wish list topped by a bid to set aside 77 percent of projected federal budget surpluses for Social Security and Medicare.

The agenda closely tracks the priorities Clinton articulated in his State of the Union address in January: modernizing schools and improving accountability of local school systems, approving a "patients' bill of rights" on health care, expanding pension benefits, increasing the minimum wage, dispatching more police officers to fight crime and offering several small, targeted tax reductions for purposes such as caring for a child or an elderly relative.

Today's gathering at the Library of Congress was reminiscent of a pep rally the Democrats held a year ago, and White House spokesman Barry Toiv said its purpose was much the same as last year's — to put on a Clinton-led display of Democratic unity.

Besides Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, who will pursue the Democratic presidential nomination next year, also was addressing the group, along with House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota.

The gathering comes as congressional Republicans try to glue together their legislative priorities. So far, they have identified goals such as a tax cut, a military pay raise and reforms to Social Security and education but have reached no consensus on how to go about reaching them.

Lewinsky may be called for McDougal

WASHINGTON — In a move that would intensify interest in her upcoming trial, lawyers for Whitewater defendant Susan McDougal are considering summoning Monica Lewinsky and another figure from the recent impeachment drama to testify as defense witnesses, sources familiar with the trial say.

The sources, who spoke only on condition of anonymity, said Mrs. McDougal's defense team is discussing whether to subpoena Ms. Lewinsky and Julie Hiatt Steele to testify about their experiences with prosecutor Kenneth Starr. Both women have been critical of the independent counsel's tactics.

Mrs. McDougal, the former business partner of President Clinton and his wife, Hillary, is set to be tried next week in federal court in Little Rock, Ark., on criminal contempt and obstruction of justice charges for refusing to cooperate with Starr in the Whitewater investigation.

The sources said that subpoenas have not yet been requested from U.S. District Judge George Howard, who is overseeing the trial, but that Starr's office was aware of the defense team's idea.

Summoning Ms. Lewinsky would transform Mrs. McDougal's trial from a sideshow in the long-running Whitewater investigation to a major event. Mrs. McDougal's lawyers probably would have to show that Ms. Lewinsky and Ms. Steele have testimony directly relevant to the alleged offenses.

Mrs. McDougal, who along with her late ex-husband, James, formed the Whitewater land venture with the Clintons, is charged with defying a judge's order and refusing to answer Starr's questions before a federal grand jury investigating Whitewater.

8 kidnapped tourists killed after abduction

KAMPALA, Uganda — Ugandan and Rwandan soldiers set out on foot patrols today in a joint manhunt for the Rwandan rebels who hacked to death eight foreign tourists visiting a lush jungle famous for its rare gorillas.

Two Americans, four Britons and two New Zealanders were killed Monday after the Congo-based Hutu rebels raided several tourist camps in the area made famous by the 1988 film "Gorillas in the Mist." More than a dozen foreigners were kidnapped in the rebels' crusade to undermine Rwanda's Tutsi-led government and its ally, Uganda.

At least six other tourists escaped, but three were still missing. Their nationalities were not known.

Austin-bound!



Courtesy Photo

Heading for state -- Members of the Vega Lady Longhorns board the bus Tuesday as they headed to Austin for the Class A state basketball tournament. The Vega squad, which posted a 22-7 record this year, are the Region I champions and are going to the state tourney for the first time since 1975. When the Lady Longhorns got to Hereford, they were greeted by the Hereford Hustlers who turned out to cheer the team on.

Drought

From Page A1

ing areas gathered to pray for rain.

"We rely on the rain here and we rely on God for that rain," said Big Spring Mayor Tim Blackshear, who opened the West Texas Rain Rally that included group prayer and such hymns as "Victory in Jesus" and "Amazing Grace."

Trinity Baptist Church pastor Randy Cotton asked believers to join together in groups to beseech God for rain, the Herald reported.

"This is a great crowd, and we serve a mighty good God," Cotton said. "It's not that He's trying to hurt us. He's trying to get our attention."

The final effects of the 1998 drought, which began last May by most estimates, are just now being calculated.

The drought reduced the Texas cotton crop by 32 percent from 1997. Corn yields were down 23 percent, grain sorghum 43 percent and hay 37 percent. Harvest prices for cotton declined by more than 10 percent from the previous year, corn by 10 percent and grain sorghum by 16 percent.

Farmers predict those dependent on agriculture will have to consider permanent changes in the way they work the land if the drought persists through this year.

"Things will have to change if this year is anywhere near as bad as last year," said Lubbock cotton farmer Randy Marcus. "I don't know of anyone that can handle another year with almost no rain."

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House OK's plan to help farmers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House is trying to ease a farm credit crunch by making as much as \$500 million available to guarantee loans to farmers and ranchers.

Under a bill passed Tuesday by voice vote, the money is not to be lent directly to farmers but is to be used to back up loans and ward off default.

The Agriculture Department is running out of money to make loans at a time when demand for them is high because of natural disasters and low commodity prices.

The money also is intended to help farmers until Congress has a chance to vote on whether to grant President Clinton's request for \$153 million in extra money this year for emergency loans and for hiring temporary government workers to handle a heavy demand for disaster help.

Use of the money targeted in Tuesday's House bill is limited until April 1 to a program for beginning farmers and ranchers. After that, the government may make it available to anybody eligible for USDA-guaranteed loans.

The House bill would make the money available for loan guarantees immediately because the funds are not being used and are not expected to be used, according to a statement released by the Republican House Conference.

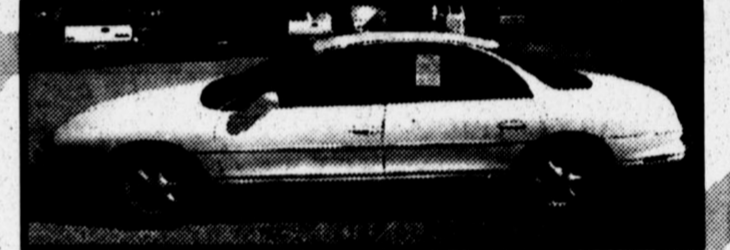
The legislation also requires the agriculture secretary to give priority to guaranteed loan applications from beginning farmers and ranchers under any additional money Congress allocates for this fiscal year.

No corresponding bill has yet been introduced in the Senate.

The House measure's sponsor, Agriculture Committee chairman Rep. Larry Combest, R-Texas, said he's holding Washington bureaucrats accountable for "failing to deliver farm disaster aid to producers authorized by Congress nearly 4 1/2 months ago."

The department's plans for distribution of disaster relief payments means farmers probably won't see the money until May.

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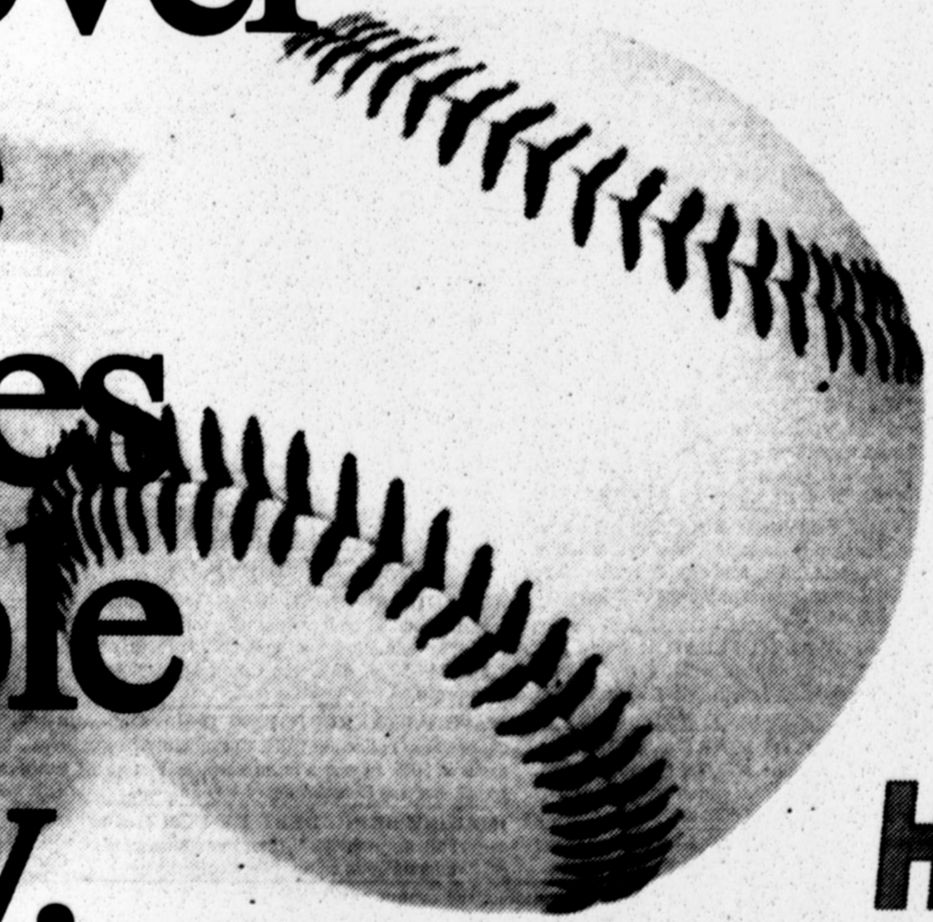
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