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SPORTS

Diving prelims

Familiarity proved to be the best preparation for the winners in the preliminaries at the U.S. Indoor Diving Championships at Mabee Memorial Aquatic Center Tuesday./1C

State of the Economy

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THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2001

Vol. 74, No. 41

Fowl miracle



Tim Fischer/Reporter-Telegram
Twelve-year-old Alyssa Smith, left, and Jane Sullivan, 13, play with the duck they hatched. The two found a set of eggs at Wadley Barron Park and successfully hatched one of them. The two have named the duck, Keiko, Japanese for "blessed."

Girls learn lesson of life through birth of duck

By Kasey Kelly
MRT Correspondent

Everyone thought they were foolishly wasting their time. But Alyssa Smith, 12, and Jane Sullivan, 13, never gave up hope.

"And now we're the proud parents of Keiko," said Miss Sullivan, as she lovingly admired a little bouncing ball of fluff whose name means "blessed" in Japanese. "He's our little miracle."

The girls who found three eggs during Spring Break at Wadley-Barron Park welcomed their own Easter miracle as they successfully hatched a lively duck on April 11, just four days before Easter Sunday.

The birth has brought about many life lessons for the two girls. "It's different than having a puppy. One day you pick up an egg, and after weeks of hard work you have a duck," Miss Sullivan said. "It's a tremendous responsibility."

The girls built an incubator for their eggs, following the direc-

tions of local bird specialist, Midge Erskine.

"She (Ms. Erskine) was very helpful," Miss Smith said. "If it weren't for her, we would have fried our eggs."

The eggs had to be kept at temperatures between 97-103 degrees and rotated at least three times a day. Moisture was also a very important element to the eggs.

Most mothers will attest that newborns don't sleep through the night. Keiko is no exception.

For that reason, the girls take turns caring for the duck at night. "One night he kept me up and eventually I got so tired I yelled at him," Miss Sullivan said. "Ten minutes later I woke up and had to go to him because I felt so guilty for yelling."

Eventually, the girls learned a small trick of motherhood. With the comfort and warmth of a small, cotton sock, the hatchling will doze off for a few more minutes of peaceful sleep.

After many sleepless nights, Miss Smith decided she never wanted to have a child of her own.

Please see DUCK/4A

Brown's tax cut recommendation comes under fire

By Stewart Doreen
Staff Writer

Dale Brown's proposed 10 percent property tax cut, a main component of his conservative agenda, was on the firing line Wednesday, and his opponents came out shooting.

At the mayoral forum conducted by the Midland Apartment Association, Mike Canon and Bill Dingsus took issue with Brown's tax plan which would cut the city's property taxes 10 percent over three years. They claim the tax cut, one of the more tangible topics of the mayoral race, wouldn't necessarily be the success Brown believes it would be.

"We saw that a few years ago in the county, there was an effort, in fact there was significant cutting by Jeff Norwood (who is running Brown's campaign) of the budget," Canon said. "When Jeff left office, there were problems that had to be taken care of by Judge (Bill) Morrow when he came onto the new commissioner's court. I am concerned the same type of attitude could result in the same type of problems with the city. I am not sure that is healthy."

Dingsus added, "Dale may know more places he can cut a budget since he was on the Council for so many years (1995-2000), and I assume he noticed those positions that were unnecessary, but I wonder why he didn't eliminate them at the time."

The fourth candidate, Thomas Flournoy, said there should be no property taxes. Midland City Manager Rick Menchaca has said Brown's cut in the property tax is not a win-win situation. Brown has stated he would not cut fire or police budgets. That means cutting from the non-essential services like parks, animal control and street repair.

"You can make as many reductions as you want, but with reductions in taxes come reductions in service," Menchaca said. "The way we look at it is 'Yes, you can cut, but are you willing to give up the level of quality of services you are receiving?'"

Midland has enjoyed a recent period of subtle property tax relief. For six straight years (including the years Brown was on Council), the tax rate has been lowered, but never significantly. In 1995, the tax rate was 67.4 cents per \$100 valuation. That corresponds to a 2.3-cent drop across six years. Brown wants to multiply that by nearly five over a span of the next three years. He also has made that an integral part of his platform, because he said Midlanders can visualize the results.

"I knew it would (get people's attention)," Brown said. "Midland is a conservative town, and conservative values include being frugal and holding people accountable for their actions."



Tim Fischer/Reporter-Telegram
Mayoral front-runner Dale Brown and his wife, Rita, go to cast their ballots Wednesday afternoon on the first day of early voting.

Please see TAX/4A

Fed gives Wall Street shot in arm after unexpected rate cut

From Staff and Wire Reports

WASHINGTON — Acting in an emergency conference call, the Federal Reserve moved Wednesday to bolster the flagging economy by cutting interest rates by half a point for the fourth time this year.

It marked the most aggressive credit easing during Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan's nearly 14 years at the helm and sent a clear message that the central bank is prepared to do whatever it can to prevent a recession.

Wall Street, which had given up hope that the Fed would cut rates again before its meeting on May 15, soared on the news.

The Dow Jones industrial average enjoyed its third biggest one-day point gain in history, rising by 399.10 points, or 3.9 percent, to close at 10,615.83. The

technology-heavy Nasdaq rose 8.1 percent, its fourth best percentage gain, to close at 2,079.44.

Midland stockbroker Tim Bryson said the rate reduction was a surprise but "not that much of a surprise. The Fed had been hedging."

The response, he said, was probably more of a surprise.

What gives him reason for optimism, Bryson said, is the fact that Cisco Systems had issued an earnings warning on Tuesday but its stock actually rose Wednesday.

"When it quits dropping, that's a good sign," Bryson said, adding positive earnings reports had been made by companies in different sectors, from Philip Morris to Johnson & Johnson.

He speculated the Fed decided to make the surprise cut because "I think they had seen some things that were worse than

When the Federal Reserve lowers interest rates

Lower interest rates are intended to encourage spending and economic growth. Best-case scenario:

1 Fed lowers rates, decreasing amount banks have to pay for loans



2 Banks lower the prime lending rate, the benchmark for many consumer and business loans



3 Lower loan costs spur consumers to buy houses, cars, other items and businesses to lower prices, expand



4 Economy grows at a faster rate



SOURCE: AP

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they had thought."

But he doesn't expect another surprise rate cut.

"I don't know if we should look for another one or not," he said. If there is one, Bryson said, "then we should go back to business as usual, studying earnings."

His clients have held steady during the

turmoil and today, Bryson said "every-one breathed a sigh of relief."

Bobby Cruces with the Midland office of First Union Securities said his company attributed Wednesday's results to the interest rate cut and "nascent optimism about profit prospects."

The jump in technology issues, Cruces and First Union said, "convinced

investors to revisit their pessimism about prospects in that sector."

The move, First Union said, startled a market increasingly skeptical about Greenspan's leadership and quotes Abby Joseph Cohen, investment strategist with Goldman Sachs as saying, "I think

Please see FED/4A

A look inside

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TODAY

Partly cloudy with high in mid-80s.

Weather on 4A

Ed Todd

Lessons learned: Beware of pranks and mischief.

Local page 1B

Off the wire

■ U.S. says China talks must focus on plane./2A

■ Helms, others hold first ever meeting with Mexican senators./10A



03647-00001

Convicted murderer requests a new trial

By Luis Garcia
Staff Writer

After submitting a guilty plea on the first day of his jury trial, convicted murderer Louis Douglass Halley, 43, of Midland filed a motion to request a new trial. Halley claims his legal counsel did not adequately represent him at court.

Halley is serving a life sentence for the murder of Johnny Okrasinski.

According to witnesses at the trial, at about 5 p.m. on Jan. 28, 2000, Okrasinski was leaving work. Halley approached him, chased him around a mini-van, jumped on top of the vehicle, and fired multiple shots at him.

He struck Okrasinski three times in the upper body with rounds from a .30 caliber revolver. Okrasinski died at a local hospital later that day.

At the trial, Halley said he killed Okrasinski because he thought that Okrasinski had raped two women. "The only way I could put a stop to this man (Okrasinski) was to kill him," Halley said.

"I would kill him and kill myself to make up for the life I took," he added.

The two women, who testified at the trial, denied Okrasinski had raped



Halley

Please see NEW/4A

'Breakthrough' could uncover billions of barrels of Basin oil

By John Paul Pitts
Oil Editor

A geophysical expert said Wednesday that a major intellectual breakthrough in the processing of 9C multi-component seismic, could result in the discovery of billions of barrels of additional oil and gas in the Permian Basin.

Jasha Cultreri, exploration manager for Vecta Exploration Inc. of Midland said the intellectual breakthrough is the result of a three-year, \$15 million research project conducted by Vecta, the University of Texas and industry partners.

In a presentation to the Society of Independent Earth Scientists (SIPES), Wednesday, Cultreri said the breakthrough will allow oil and gas operators to find potential drilling targets that could not be imaged by conventional 3-D seismic. While 3-D seismic was the major breakthrough 20 years ago that was responsible for finding billions of barrels of oil in structural traps, Cultreri said the new technology would allow producers to actually image the more porous sections of rock formations where oil and gas are found. The 3-D technology could only image structural oil and gas traps within the formations.

"I think we are on the edge of a whole new era," said Decker Dawson, of Midland-based Dawson Geophysical. "This technology is where

Please see OIL/4A

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U.S. says China talks must focus on plane

By Barry Schweld
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After a rocky first round, the United States is threatening to break off talks with China on U.S. surveillance flights unless the Chinese start discussing the return of the Navy reconnaissance plane detained for nearly three weeks.

The United States hopes to gain from the talks in Beijing at least the return of the aircraft that made an emergency landing in southern China April 1. The crew was held for 11 days and released only after protracted negotiations.

"Nothing was settled. ... There was no progress on the issue of return of the airplane," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said after the opening 2 1/2-hour session.

The U.S. ambassador, retired Adm. Joseph Prueher, will meet with Foreign Ministry officials and "he will tell them it makes sense to continue to meet only if there's productive discussion about return of the aircraft," Mary Ellen Countryman, a White House spokeswoman, said.

"We look to the Chinese to take a positive and constructive attitude at these meetings," Boucher said.

"When we and the Chinese can talk from the basis of fact rather than from a basis of rhetoric, we're going to be better off," Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's assistant for national security, said on MSNBC.

Bush met with Rice and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld at the White House, while Secretary of State Colin Powell was host at a State Department luncheon with Vice President Dick Cheney, Rumsfeld and Rice, on negotiations with China and other foreign policy issues.

The U.S. negotiating team in Beijing planned to return Friday to Washington, even if Prueher gets talks on the plane restarted Thursday, the official said.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., long a critic of China,

blamed former President Clinton for China's tough position in the negotiations. "After eight years of Bill Clinton, the Chinese communists believe we are cowardly and unprincipled, and what that is resulting in is belligerency and aggression," he said.

The EP-3E Aries II made an emergency landing in southern China after colliding with a Chinese fighter jet. From the outset, the Bush administration has insisted its surveillance operation was legal.

China, by contrast, has insisted the plane swerved, causing the collision, and that the surveillance was improper and must cease. The Chinese pilot was lost.

The senior Chinese negotiator, in a statement read on the main evening news broadcast, said, "The U.S. side should bear the full responsibility for the incident, make clear and responsible explanations to the Chinese people, stop reconnaissance flights in the space adjacent to Chinese coastal areas and take effective measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents."

Even as American and Chinese negotiators met in Beijing, U.S. officials in Washington were weighing the kind of weapons that might be sold to Taiwan, which China considers a breakaway province that must be reunited with the mainland.

A senior administration official said President Bush's foreign policy advisers had recommended deferring sale of Aegis-class



AP Photo
U.S. Ambassador to China Joseph Prueher, right, arrives at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing Wednesday. Teams of U.S. and Chinese negotiators are meeting for talks Wednesday on the return of a U.S. spy plane and the collision that killed a Chinese fighter pilot.

destroyers while providing Taiwan with other, less-advanced weapons.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the president would make a decision by next Tuesday, when he is due to meet with a Taiwanese delegation.

But Boucher said no recommendations had been submitted to Bush. "There's a process of review and discussion that's under way, and that continues," the spokesman said.

The administration has tried to separate consideration of a weapons package from the dispute over U.S. reconnaissance flights. But China resents the arming of Taiwan, and its sentiments are bound to have an impact on the relationship, just as U.S. criticism of China's human rights record does.

The White House called the initial meeting in Beijing "not pro-

ductive."

"We made our case and they made their case," spokesman Ari Fleischer said as Bush toured an elementary school in Waterbury, Conn.

Chinese officials had advised the United States to expect straightforward negotiations, an approach the State Department welcomed. But the Chinese also declined to say whether they would discuss return of the plane, which was filled with top-secret surveillance equipment.

The \$80-million plane is believed to remain at the Hainan island air base where it made an emergency landing. Satellite photos indicate China has examined the aircraft's listening devices and other electronics.

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Social Security, Medicare, top federal spending list

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly half of the \$1.6 trillion in federal domestic spending last year paid for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the Census Bureau said Wednesday.

Uncle Sam spent \$781 billion on the three government benefit programs in fiscal year 2000, according to two annual bureau reports released late Wednesday. Social Security alone accounted for \$444 billion, up 7 percent from the pre-

vious year.

Overall, the \$1.6 trillion spent by the federal government was up 6 percent from fiscal 1999, the Census Bureau said.

California — the most populous state in the nation — received the biggest chunk of funding, \$176 billion. It was followed by New York, Texas, Florida and Pennsylvania.

New York City, meanwhile, took in \$47.2 billion, more than any other city or county in the country.

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Study

By Stephanie H. ...
Associated Press

Implanting ear tubes in hundreds of toddlers does not appear to improve hearing and learning, a study suggests.

The tiny tubes are eardrums to help children can build up in a cavity during an infection, further infection fluid can cause hearing is concern that the language and other will suffer if the tubes are not inserted for weeks or months.

But whether the actually harms or not certain; previous produced inconsistent results.

In a study in England, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry researchers in Pittsburgh found that two groups of toddlers who had ear tubes inserted in their ears after a guideline — and one group that did not — were inserted. The study found that the children who had tubes inserted for speech, in grammar and behavior were better than those who did not.

"The bottom line was that any difference in mental outcome could not be measured," Dr. Jack L. Paradise, of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said.

The study only looked at children who were specifically treated for infections. It was conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

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Dillard's welcome
SHOP MON

Study: Implanting ear tubes in children doesn't improve development

By Stephanie Nano
Associated Press

Implanting ear tubes — an operation done on hundreds of thousands of toddlers each year — does not appear to improve their speech and learning development and may not be worth the risks and the cost, a study suggests.

The tiny tubes are inserted in the eardrums to help clear the fluid that can build up in a child's middle ear during an infection and to prevent further infections. Because the fluid can cause hearing loss, there is concern that the child's speech, language and other development will suffer if the fluid persists for weeks or months.

But whether that hearing loss actually harms development is not certain; previous studies have produced inconsistent results.

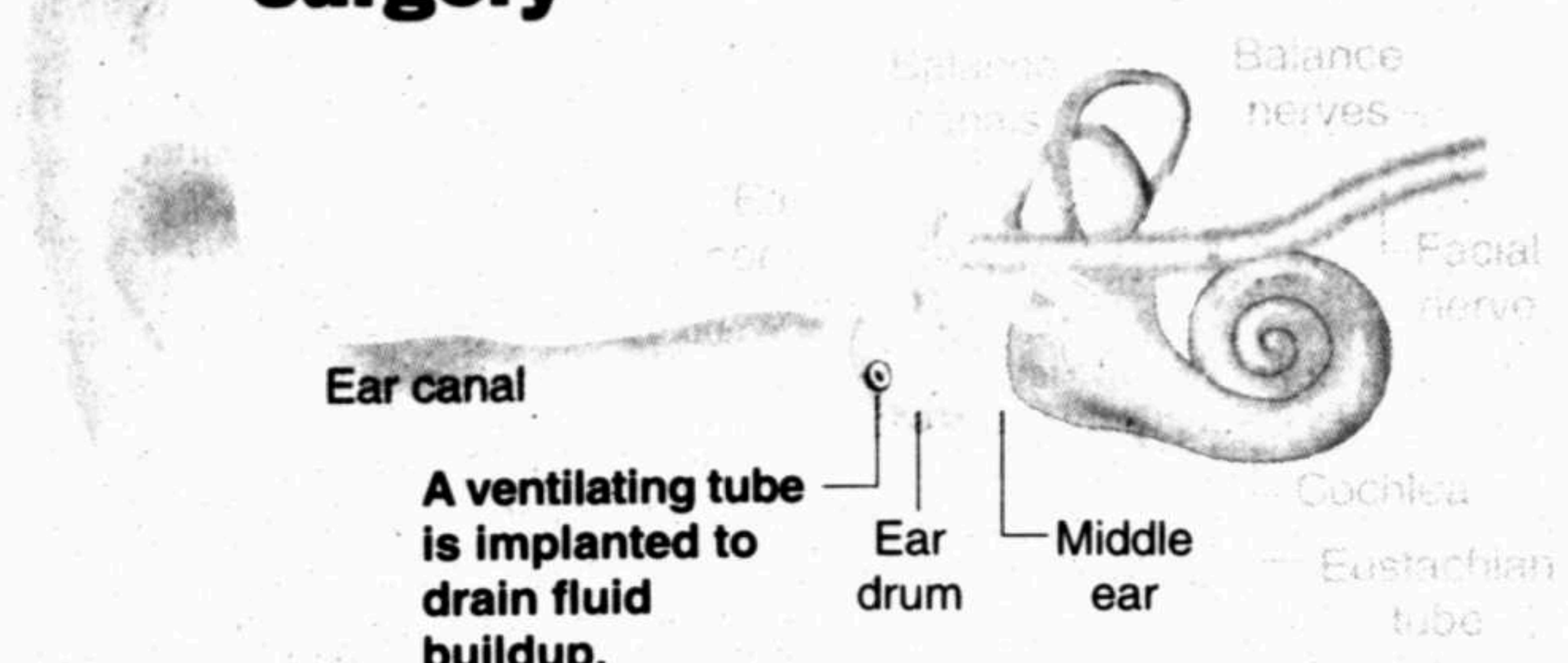
In a study in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, researchers in Pittsburgh looked at two groups of toddlers: those who got ear tubes after three months of fluid in their ears — the standard guideline — and those who waited up to nine months before tubes were inserted. The children were tested for speech, language, learning and behavior when they turned 3.

"The bottom line was there wasn't any difference in the developmental outcomes as best we could measure them at age 3," said Dr. Jack L. Paradise of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

The study only looked at children who were candidates for tubes because of lingering fluid, not specifically to relieve chronic infections. It was funded by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, the

Reevaluating ear surgery

An operation performed on toddlers to clear the fluid that can build up in the middle ear may not be worth the risks involved, according to a study released Thursday.



SOURCES: American Academy of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery; New England Journal of Medicine

AP

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and two drug makers, SmithKline Beecham Laboratories and Pfizer.

The researchers cautioned that longer periods of fluid or more severe hearing loss than those studied could affect development and that problems not apparent at age 3 might surface later. Paradise said the children were tested at 4 and the results are being analyzed, and testing at 6 is under way.

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery estimates that 700,000 children undergo the procedure each year at an estimated cost of \$2,000. The tubes have been used since the early 1960s.

Paradise said there is a small risk of complications from the anes-

thesia. Also, he said, the tubes sometimes leave perforations in the eardrums or scar them, or cause chronic drainage from the ear.

"If tubes were absolutely harmless and free, then I think you might say, 'Well, let's have the tubes to be sure,'" Paradise said. "But tubes themselves carry risk and, of course, there's cost involved. So it becomes a matter of ... which set of risks would you rather take?"

Paradise said he would hold off inserting tubes if the only concern was developmental problems from hearing loss.

A New York pediatric otolaryngologist, Dr. Max M. April,

said the Pittsburgh study was narrowly focused. He noted that about half of all tubes inserted are because the child has repeated ear infections, and the study did not look at infections.

In addition, "at age 3, it's very difficult to test developmentally," April said. "And yes, they don't see a difference in waiting. But it's a hard test to make a major statement about."

"Information at 6 years will be very helpful because at 6 years, first-grade, developmental testing is much more accurate and that will be a very important study," he said. The Pittsburgh researchers

enrolled 6,350 healthy infants from 1991 to 1995 and monitored them for ear infections and buildup of fluid. If the fluid persisted for three months, the children were randomly assigned to one of two groups if their parents agreed.

One group got ear tubes right away. The second group waited and got tubes at six months if they still had fluid in both ears or at nine months if fluid remained in one ear.

In all, 402 children from the two groups were tested when they turned 3. The researchers found no significant differences in their development. The researchers also compared the youngsters with children in the study who were not considered for tubes, and again

found no difference.

In a related study, researchers in Toronto reported that removing a child's adenoids or tonsils and adenoids when ear tubes are implanted substantially reduces the likelihood of more hospital stays and operations because of ear infections. They said more study is needed to determine which children would benefit most from the additional surgery.

On the Net:

New England Journal of Medicine: <http://www.nejm.org>
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery: <http://www.entnet.org>

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WEATHER

Midland forecast

3-day forecast



Today
Partly cloudy
High 86
Low 52

Friday
Cloudy
High 88
Low 59

Saturday
Partly cloudy
High 90
Low 59

For today, expect areas of morning low clouds, which will become partly cloudy skies by the afternoon. The high will be 85 to 90, with a gusty southerly wind at 10 to 20 mph.

Tonight, look for partly cloudy skies with a low near 60.

The forecast for Friday calls for partly cloudy skies and a high near 90.

On Friday night, look for partly cloudy skies and a low near 60. For Saturday and Sunday, expect partly cloudy skies with a chance of thunderstorms. The forecast calls for lows between 55 to 60, and highs around 85 to 90.

Temperatures on Wednesday reached a high of 71, and a low of 46. The record high for April 18 was 96, set in 1948. The record low was 34, set in 1998.

Yesterday's precipitation

Rainfall Wednesday .00 in.
Rainfall Tuesday .46 in.
Total for month .27 in.
Total for year 2.71 in.
Normal total (year to date) 1.98 in.

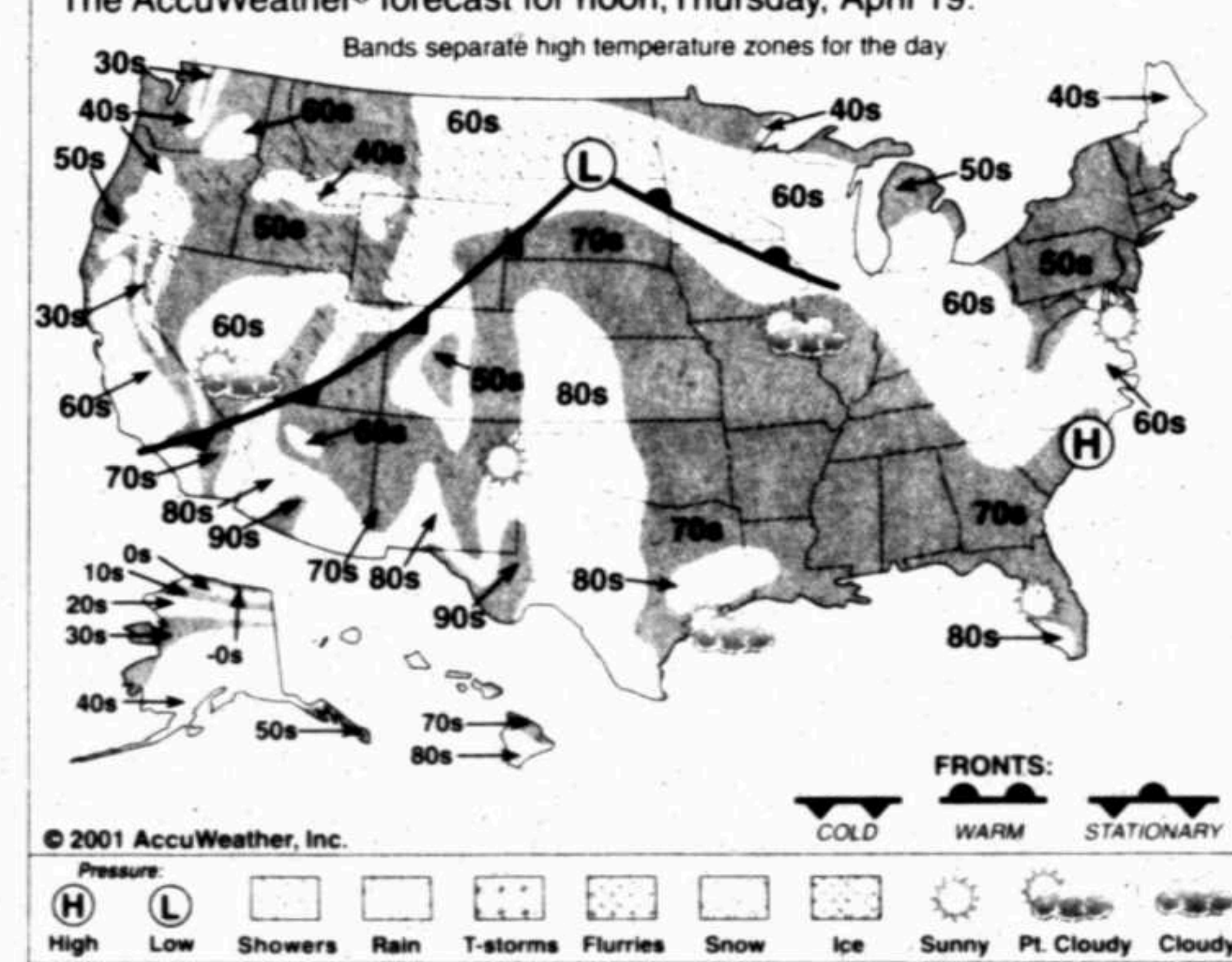
Yesterday's temperatures

High 71
Low 46
Normal high 80
Normal low 50
Sunrise 7:16 a.m.
Sunset 8:20 p.m.

National forecast

National weather

The AccuWeather® forecast for noon, Thursday, April 19.



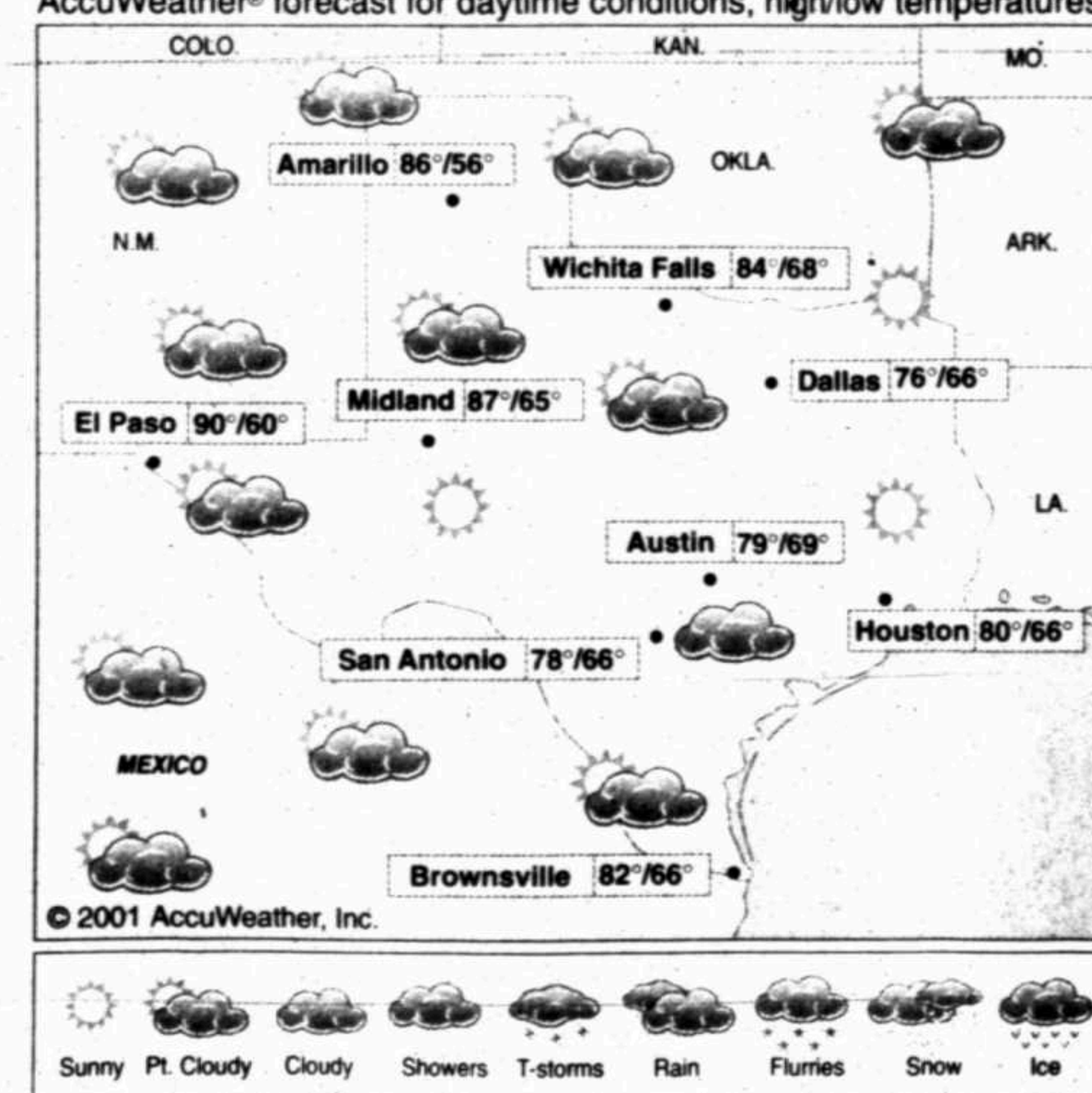
United States temperatures

Temperatures indicate Wednesday's high and overnight low to 8 p.m. Eastern Time			
City	Hi	Lo	Prc
Albuquerque	79	42	cl
Atlanta	60	34	cl
Baltimore	51	37	05
Baton Rouge	67	39	cl
Birmingham	63	35	cl
Bismarck	70	30	cl
Boise	70	42	cl
Boston	53	34	cl
Bridgeport	55	39	cl
Buffalo	41	29	cl
Burlington, Vt.	44	28	cl
Charleston, S.C.	63	35	cl
Charlotte, N.C.	59	32	cl
Chattanooga	62	36	cl
Chester	76	34	cl
Chicago	55	26	cl
Cincinnati	54	26	cl
Cleveland	47	33	cl
Colorado Springs	79	31	cl
Concord, N.H.	50	36	cl
Daytona Beach	63	46	cl
Denver	79	39	cl
Des Moines	61	31	cl
Detroit	53	29	cl
Erie	41	33	cl
Evansville	58	26	cl
Fairbanks	39	31	cl
Fargo	62	33	cl
Flagstaff	70	34	cl
Flint	53	27	cl
Fort Wayne	53	30	cl
Fresno	78	52	cl
Grand Rapids	49	29	cl
Green Bay	54	26	cl
Greensboro, N.C.	53	32	cl
Helena	93	37	cl
Honolulu	84	71	cl
Indianapolis	56	26	cl
Jacksonville	66	37	cl
Juneau	53	41	04
Kansas City	63	32	cl
Lake Charles	68	44	cl
Las Vegas	88	69	cl
Lexington	54	28	cl
Little Rock	67	40	cl
Los Angeles	73	55	cl
Memphis	62	39	cl
Miami Beach	76	64	cl
Milwaukee	49	28	cl
Mobile	68	41	cl
Montgomery	66	35	cl
Nashville	59	35	cl
New Orleans	66	51	cl
New York City	53	42	cl
Oklahoma City	64	34	cl
Orlando	69	50	cl
Philadelphia	51	35	03
Phoenix	96	68	cl
Pittsburgh	46	30	cl
Pueblo	84	28	cl
Reno	70	38	cl
Richmond	53	38	cl
Sacramento	71	48	cl
St. Louis	62	34	cl
Salem, Ore.	60	47	05
Salt Lake City	79	55	cl
San Diego	66	57	cl
San Francisco	65	50	cl
San Jose	72	51	cl
San Jose, Calif.	76	34	cl
Seattle	57	43	15
Shreveport	68	38	cl
South Bend	51	26	cl
Springfield, Mo.	62	27	cl
Tallahassee	66	41	cl
Toledo	53	30	cl
Tucson	95	59	cl
Tupelo	62	34	cl
Washington, D.C.	51	37	14
W Palm Beach	72	61	cl
Yuma	94	68	cl

State forecast

Thursday, April 19

AccuWeather® forecast for daytime conditions, high/low temperatures



NEW: Law requires judge to have hearing to introduce new evidence

(From 1A)

them, and an Odessa psychologist claimed Halley suffered from a mild case of bipolar disease.

Prosecutors working the case said a new trial is unlikely. Eric Kalenak, assistant District Attorney, said Halley has few options.

"Halley has to show that his attorneys did not represent him well, or that he has mitigating circumstances that deserve less punishment than what he got," Kalenak said.

"There's not a lot of wiggle room here," Kalenak added. "You can't contest whether or not the person did it."

According to Texas law, the district judge has to have hearings to introduce new evidence in the case. The information will be sent to the Texas Court of Appeals, which will decide if a new trial is necessary later in the year, Kalenak said.

FED: Cut made during tele-conference

(From 1A)

investors have been annoyed that Greenspan lowered rates further. They were being entirely unfair to Greenspan."

"Tactically, this was a masterful stroke on the part of the Fed because the markets had completely eliminated the possibility of a Fed cut before the next meeting," said David Jones, chief economist at Aubrey G. Lanston & Co. in New York.

The Fed's decision to cut the federal funds rate, the interest that banks charge each other, to 4.5 percent will translate into lower borrowing costs for millions of Americans.

Commercial banks immediately followed suit with a half-point cut in their prime lending rate, pushing the benchmark for many consumer and business loans down to 7.5 percent, the lowest level in more than six years.

In a brief statement announcing its decision, the Fed said it was concerned about recent declines in business investment in new plants and equipment, one of the major driving forces in the record 10-year economic expansion.

A further decline in investment spending, combined with the negative effects on consumer spending from a falling stock market and with economic weakness in other countries, "threatens to keep the pace of economic activity unacceptably weak," the Fed said.

"This is exactly the right decision, made at exactly the right time," said Gordon Richards, chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers. "It is much-needed adrenaline for a weak economy."

The big Wall Street rally on Wednesday was the most positive immediate response

since the Fed began the series of rate reductions on Jan. 3. Its reduction that day, the first cut outside of a regular meeting since the Asian crisis of 1998, triggered a 300-point Dow rally.

The market was disappointed in the next two rate cuts, which came during regularly scheduled Fed meetings, especially the March 20 announcement when investors had been hoping for a bigger three-quarter-point Fed move.

Analysts said Greenspan and his colleagues clearly had investors in mind in the timing of Wednesday's move, hoping to bolster consumer confidence, which has been sagging as Americans watched trillions of dollars of paper wealth evaporate over the past year.

The rate decision was made during a telephone conference call among Fed policymakers beginning at 8:30 a.m. EDT. The announcement of the change came shortly before 11 a.m.

Greenspan has said in congressional testimony this year that the biggest threat of a recession would come from a sudden plunge in consumer and business confidence, which could be triggered by a steep stock market sell-off.

The Fed announcement said risks to the economy remained "weighted mainly toward" weakness rather than inflation, and analysts took that language to signal further rate cuts were likely. The Fed was given maneuvering room by Tuesday's benign report on inflation which showed consumer prices were up just 0.1 percent in March.

Many analysts believed the next rate cut would occur at the Fed's regular May 15 meeting, but they were uncertain whether it

would be another half-point cut or Greenspan's more normal quarter-point reduction. The rate size will depend on upcoming indicators, the analysts said.

While job losses in March were the largest since 1991, other recent indicators have presented a mixed picture. The government said this week that industrial production rose an unexpectedly strong 0.4 last month, the first gain after five straight losses and a signal that the worst may be over for manufacturers.

The trade deficit narrowed dramatically in February, but a key gauge of future activity, the index of leading indicators, fell for a second straight month in March, according to two reports released Wednesday.

Many analysts who had worried that the gross domestic product could turn negative in the first quarter are now revising their forecasts to show growth perhaps as strong as 1.5 percent. A recession is often defined as two consecutive quarters of falling GDP.

Martin Regalia, chief economist of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said he was growing more optimistic that the country would avoid a recession.

"Some have said the Fed's moves between meetings indicate that the central bank knows something that we don't and they're running scared. I don't believe that at all," Regalia said. "Our forecast has us avoiding a recession with growth rebounding as the year progresses."

On the Net:

Federal Reserve: <http://www.federalreserve.gov>

TAX: Brown wants to start cuts at City Hall

(From 1A)

In the year 2000, Midland had a property tax rate of 65.10 cents per \$100 valuation. It was better than Odessa's 65.99, but was higher than several other comparable-sized cities.

The tax rate in Abilene was 58.09 cents per \$100 valuation. The tax rate in Amarillo for 2000 went much lower, 28.7. In Tyler, the property tax rate hovers around, 27.0.

The difference is noticeable. In Midland, an owner of a \$30,000 house would pay nearly \$200. In Amarillo, the same person would pay \$86.

So, yes, there are high property tax rates, but according to Menchaca, there is a reason for the difference. He states that Amarillo and Tyler both use a half-cent tax which goes specifically toward tax relief. In 1997, Midlanders voted down a proposal which would have dedicated a quarter of a cent toward property tax relief.

With such a tax in place, \$3.1 million would have been raised to help bring down property taxes in the most recent completed fiscal year.

Menchaca also noted that businesses leaving the basin have not helped the attempt to relieve the burden. Economic development efforts are under way to bring more businesses into the area, but again in 1997, Midlanders voted down an effort to pass an economic development sales tax which would have created a fund to help entice businesses and speed up the development process.

According to Brown, lower property taxes will help jump-start the economic development effort. Brown says businesses shy away from cities like Midland with a high property tax rate.

Brown's property tax comments on Wednesday started with streamlining City Hall. He will not

talk about specific areas of where those cuts will take place, only stating the "essential areas" like police and fire will not be cut and the parks will continue to be watered.

He added that the place to start inside City Hall is with personnel. Currently, City Hall employs approximately 890 people and 70 percent of the \$47.8 million general fund goes toward salaries.

Through attrition, Brown thinks he can lower that number and save money.

"It is appropriate for the city manager to make his proposal as far as specifics and we will be glad to work with him," Brown said. "I have some ideas, but it is not appropriate to do more than say that in the management ranks, the same kind of work that was done in the city manager's office surely can be done in other places."

"Using attrition, I think there is a way to get there," Brown added. "I have talked about privatizing opportunities which will be there that do not require people to lose their jobs."

Currently, there is one position in City Hall which makes a salary of \$100,000 or more. That belongs to Menchaca, the city manager. After that, there are 15 positions with an annual salary of \$75,000 or more, and 42, with a salary between \$50,000 and \$75,000 annually.

"Dale says he is going to cut taxes by 10 percent," Dings said. "That calculates to more than \$2 million is going to be removed from the budget. He says he will do it by reducing some of the positions in management at City Hall. I don't think we have 20 \$100,000-year jobs we can eliminate."

"I would love to be able to cut property taxes and love to cut all of our taxes, but before I say I will cut a tax I will indicate where it will come from in the budget and

Day 1 of early voting sees low turnout

From Staff Reports

The first day of early voting did not attract a large turnout as only 411 voters went to the polls to decide, among other things, Midland's next mayor.

The 411 number was far below the 1,175 who went to the polls on Day 1 of early voting for last year's school bond election.

For many, the low turnout on Wednesday was to be expected since a very large number of Midlanders are still undecided in the mayor's race.

According to a Reporter-Telegram/NewsWest 9 mayoral poll which was released Tuesday, 40 percent of respondents remain undecided. Dale Brown was the front runner with 21 percent of the vote. Mike Canon captured 17 per-

cent and Bill Dings 14 percent.

Early voting for the city and Midland Independent School District school board races continues today at the Midland County Election Administration building, 707 W. Washington Ave.

The early voting period will take place at 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays through May 1. Those opting not to vote early can cast their ballots on May 5 (election day) at numerous locations throughout the city.

Pat Eastup, elections administrator for Midland County, has asked voters to bring their voter registration card or other forms of identification.

Potential voters can call 688-1222 if there are any questions.

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OIL: Technology yet to be tested on drill bit

(From 1A)

3-D seismic was 20 years ago," Dawson Vice President Howell Pardue, said the process would allow geophysical companies to image compartmentalized areas of a reservoir. "Remember," said Dawson, "we still have as much oil in the ground as has been produced. It's just a matter of finding it."

The new technology, is about double the cost of conventional 3-D seismic, but should reduce drilling risks and result in more discoveries. It will also be helpful for identifying bypassed oil in reservoirs.

The seismic breakthrough has been proven in field tests by successfully correlating a one-square mile seismic shoot over known Morrow production in New Mexico, but so far it has not been tested with the drill bit.

"That will be the test," said Paul Pause, a Midland geologist and director of the Permian Basin Graduate Center. "You have to drill before you get a well." Pause said, "you only have a theory until the drill bit proves it."

Decker Dawson said two good discoveries, using the technology could throw the door wide open for the new seismic breakthrough, but even after the door is opened it will still have to become commercially economical. "That's the way it was with 3-D, everybody knew about it, but it took years to become economical."

Vecta Exploration was formed specifically for the purpose of utilizing the new technology in exploration plays, said Armand "Chip" Smith, a principal in the company. Smith said the company is in the process of lining up industry partners to drill three projects and the first one would be about six months away.

Besides Smith and Cultreri other principals in Midland-based Vecta Exploration are: John Beecherl, president; Tom Coffman, head of corporate development; Allen Gilmer, co-inventor of the 9C multi-seismic technology and Robert Beecherl, co-director of land and development.

DUCK: Girls discover clever way to get baby duck to sleep at night

(From 1A)

"No kids," she said vehemently as she remembered her many nights of little or no sleep.

But this special encounter with nature has taught both girls that sometimes things are worth waiting for.

Although their parents didn't hold out much hope the eggs would hatch, the girls never lost

faith that soon they would witness what many believed was impossible, the birth of Keiko.

"My mom has said from the beginning I think they're dead," said Miss Smith "But we never gave up."

Only one egg has hatched so far, but both girls are anxiously awaiting the first small crack in the egg that leads to life.

Correction

An incorrect telephone number was given for Comfort Zone 500 in Wednesday's Business Scene column. The correct number is 522-1630.

Pick 3 Texas

AUSTIN (AP) — The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Wednesday by the Texas Lottery: 2-3-4-12-23-50. Estimated Lotto Texas jackpot: \$19 million.

Correction

In an article appearing in Wednesday's edition, the number of daily departures by Southwest Airlines out of Midland International Airport was inaccurately reported. The correct number is 15. The Reporter-Telegram regrets the error.

Lotto Texas

These days, any leader worth his salt is breaking a sweat

By Calvin Woodward
Associated Press

Government can be fattening for world leaders. They get to eat their nation's best cuisine every day. They're schlepped about in limousines.

When Western Hemisphere leaders gather in Quebec City this weekend, some of Canada's best chefs will cook, richly, for them. Temptations exist outside of summits, too: When German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder developed a taste for curry sausages a few years ago, he saw his waistline take a turn for the worst.

But times may be changing from the days when Israel's Ariel Sharon, now prime minister, got a box of Slim Fast as a gift and chugged down three cans of the chocolatey diet beverage in one sitting.

Today's generation of leaders is making an effort to emphasize vigor over vittles.

So it seemed when a dozen Associated Press reporters around the world looked into the exercise regimens of national leaders.

President Bush's exercising involves a battery of gym machines, free weights and a treadmill. Steak is the forbidden love of Vice President Dick Cheney, the red meat banished on doctor's orders after his spate of heart problems. He exercises, too.

The White House is not the only house where leaders are working out or limbering up.

VIPs are taking to judo mats in Moscow, squash courts in Egypt, tennis courts in Britain, the Tigris River of Iraq, and even a hole in the ice in Finland to get in shape or stay that way.

Mornings in Bangladesh find Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina up early, practicing yoga. After a splash of water on her face and feet, she is ready for prayers and her nation's business.

Russian President Vladimir Putin says he sets aside almost an hour for swimming and other exercise in the morning and tries to do an additional 90 minutes of workouts later in the day.

But his physical rituals peak on the judo mat; he has a black belt.

"When I am with other people practicing judo, I feel as though I am with close relatives," Putin, 48, told athletes at a Japanese sports center last year.

He promptly went out on the mats and got thrown by a 10-year-old girl. History does not record whether he took the fall on purpose.

Bush, 54, has a routine that includes 155 pounds on the bench press for his chest, the same weight on the lateral pull-down for his back, and three sets of 10 curls each with free weights, says Anne Womack, his spokeswoman.

Plus, he tries to run four times a week and can cover a mile in a brisk 7 minutes, 30 seconds, inside the house or out.

"The brother's doing all right," said an impressed Marques Haden, assistant manager of a Bally's gym in Washington, scanning the president's workout list. "Keeps you pumped up."

"He can run faster than some guys I play football with."

Leaders seem trimmer than in the years of tottering Soviet leaders and plump Westerners, epitomized by former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, a cookbook author and renowned feaster who weighed 365 pounds in 1998, the year he was defeated.

After the German government moved to Berlin from Bonn in 1999, the new chancellor grew fond of the city's currywurst, a sausage piled with curry powder and ketchup. Schroeder's girth paid a price, and his wife Doris made him give it up.

For athleticism in German



AP Photo
Then Texas Gov. George W. Bush waves as he returns to the governor's mansion after a morning jog in this Nov. 19, 2000 file photo, in Austin. President Bush, 54, tries to run four times a week, often on a treadmill but outside when he can. He covered three miles on a recent weekend run outdoors and can do a mile in a brisk 7 minutes, 30 seconds.

"I'm probably as fit now as when I left university, because for a long time in my 20s and 30s I didn't bother much," British Prime Minister Tony Blair, 47, a man of many athletic interests, told a magazine.

Others make daily activity a prerequisite, too, even if it is not of the pulse-pounding type.

Hasina, 54, spends an hour doing yoga or walking in reflective solitude.

"I feel so relaxed after doing the yoga and washing my face and feet before saying the fazr (morning) prayer," she told AP. "It's a wonderful way to begin the day."

If horse racing is the sport of kings, swimming is the sport of prime ministers and presidents. Lebanese President Emile

Lahoud, 64, swims in the morning. Chinese President Jiang Zemin, 74, wore paisley trunks for a Hawaii ocean swim en route to Washington a few years ago, back when U.S.-Chinese relations were warmer.

Finnish President Tarja Halonen, 57, is a pool regular, too. She also takes an occasional dip in the Baltic Sea through a hole in the ice.

In black swimsuit and white cap, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein swam across the Tigris River three times in 1997, at age 60, to show his vigor. Iraqi swimmers now celebrate that day every year.

Aides are often eager to advertise the boss' activities, especially when political opponents tend to be younger.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, 67, a skier and golfer who took his first snowboarding lesson for his 65th birthday, was often photographed in athletic pursuits during the last election.

Blair's main rival, Conservative Party leader William Hague, 40, practices judo with his chief

of staff, Sebastian Coe, former middle-distance runner and Olympic gold medalist.

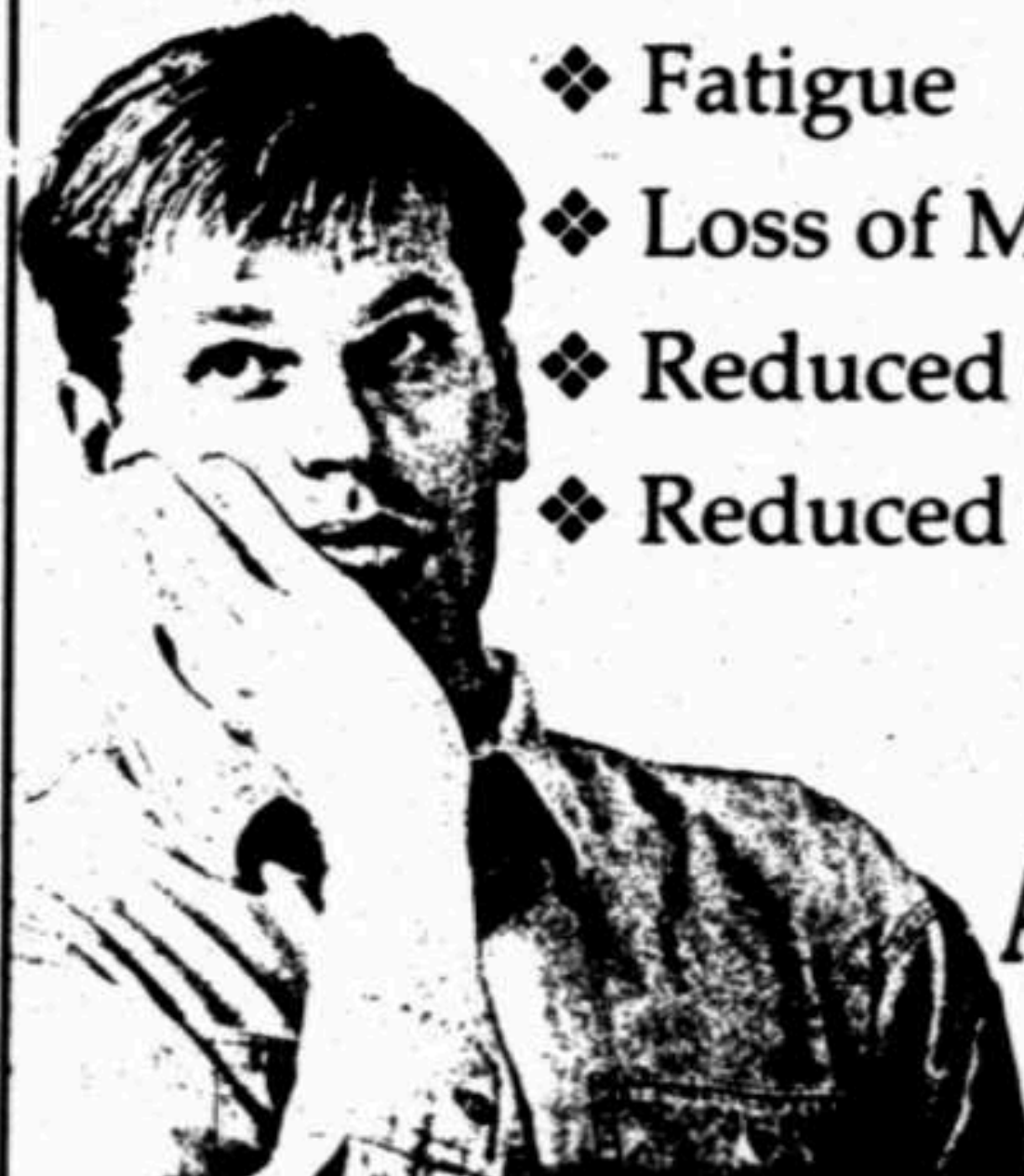
Hague's fighting-fit appearance was complicated, however, when he recently owned up to drinking an astonishing 14 pints of beer a day as a young man.

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government, the star goes to Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, 52, a once-chunky figure who finished in the top third of the Berlin marathon last year.

When British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Bush met the press at Camp David in Maryland earlier this year, Blair had already been to the gym there that morning and the president was going there next.



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Pentagon-ordered panel says Osprey can continue but not ready for use

By Eun-Kyung Kim
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — A Pentagon-appointed panel recommended the Marine Corps' troubled V-22 Osprey program continue but with "bare minimum" production because of serious concerns about the aircraft's safety and design.

The panel agreed Wednesday that the Osprey was the best aircraft suited for Marine missions but plans to advise the Pentagon the aircraft needs various repairs and redesign work before it can return to flight.

"The V-22 is probably the best answer available," panel member Norman Augustine said. "It's not ready today, though, for operational use — not close to it."

The panel will brief Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on the recommendations, which came after the second of two public hearings, on Tuesday.

The Marine Corps commandant, Gen. James L. Jones, said he shared the concerns expressed by the panel and that the service will closely examine the recommendations.

"Although there are many issues to be resolved, I am encouraged by the panel's recommendation to pursue further development and fielding of the V-22," Jones said in a statement. "This is a capability our nation needs to meet the operational requirements of the 21st century."

The Osprey has the unique

'Although there are many issues to be resolved, I am encouraged by the panel's recommendation to pursue further development and fielding of the V-22.'

— Gen. James L. Jones,
Marine Corps commandant

ability to take off like a helicopter, rotate its propellers 90 degrees and fly like an airplane. The Marine Corps hopes to use the Ospreys to replace an aging fleet of helicopters.

Although original plans called for the production of more than 450 Osprey, only eight have been built so far — and all were grounded after a Dec. 11 crash in North Carolina that killed four Marines. The accident was one of two fatal crashes that put the fate of the aircraft program in jeopardy. The other crash killed 19 Marines on April 8, 2000, during a training exercise outside Tucson, Ariz.

The panel also considered whether to cancel the Osprey program and start from scratch but decided the option would be too expensive.

"This airplane can do the job, and can be made to work," said panel chairman John Dailey, a retired Marine general.

But he agreed with Augustine that production should be dramatically slashed while changes are made to the Osprey's design, training and safety.

Among the problems cited were a software glitch in the air-

craft's computer software and a need to redesign inside the plane's engine casing, where mechanics have found hydraulic problems. The plane also must go through more rigorous testing before it can be considered for day-to-day use.

"By any standard, I would describe this as a troubled program," Augustine said. "Four crashes and 23 lives lost. That's a troubled program."

The panel plans to publish its final report on the Web on April 30, a day before the Senate and House Armed Services committees are scheduled to hold hearings on the findings.

At a separate news confer-

ence, the wives of several Marines killed in Osprey crashes called on the government to bar the aircraft from making any flights until all safety problems are addressed. They said they were "reasonably satisfied" with the panel's recommendation.

Connie Gruber said the panel's findings have exonerated the crewmen from blame.

"From what we heard today, how could their names not be cleared?" she said. Gruber also urged Congress to pay heed to the panel's recommendations and stay focused "without regard to cost or politics."

The Osprey is built by Textron's Bell Helicopters unit and Boeing Co. An attorney representing 14 of the victims' families said he planned to file a lawsuit, charging the contractors failed to admit problems it found with the aircraft and relay them to the Marines.

The Council for a Livable World, a frequent critic of the Osprey and other Pentagon programs, said the Osprey program

should be killed.

"The Osprey's numerous technical problems show that nothing short of a complete redesign of the aircraft, which is prohibitively expensive, will fix these problems," said John Isaacs, the organization's president.

ident.

Vice President Dick Cheney tried to cancel the Osprey program while he was defense secretary during the administration of President Bush's father, but Congress overturned his decision.

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Police in child

By Virgile Ah
Associated Press

COTONOU, questioned passage that sparked a suspected child clues Wednesday scores of children to be aboard.

The Nigerian Etireno, which officials originally Benin two weeks 250 children destined, docked in day, but reports were aboard.

The disembarkation were questioned a criminal inquiry launched on whether the slaves along the Africa.

"The captain and his crew are still because we need investigation," Degan, head of the ment's child "That's all we can do."

Government requested foreign supply "any possible on whether the trafficking in said on condition."

The vessel firm headlines last week announced that a child slaves h away from two was headed back.

Benin said it off by officials Cameroon, who been prevented last week.

Passengers a Etireno confirmed indeed been turned Douala, as well capital, Libreville because it was slaves. The boat n't have proper passengers had willingly, in sea.

The ship's N Lawrence Onom trafficking child he has nothing t Some U.N. workers speculate dren might have

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Police question passengers in child slave boat situation

By Virgile Ahissou
Associated Press

COTONOU, Benin — Police questioned passengers from a ship that sparked a frenzied hunt for suspected child slaves, seeking clues Wednesday to the status of scores of children once thought to be aboard.

The Nigerian-registered MV Etireno, which U.N. and local officials originally thought left Benin two weeks ago with 100 to 250 children destined for the slave trade, docked in Cotonou Tuesday, but reportedly few children were aboard.

The disembarked passengers were questioned as part of an official inquiry launched Wednesday on whether the ship carried child slaves along the coast of West Africa.

"The captain of the Etireno and his crew are still confined aboard because we need them for the investigation," said Martin Degan, head of the police department's child protection unit. "That's all we can say for now."

Government officials also requested foreign diplomats to supply "any possible assistance" on whether there had been any trafficking in slaves, diplomats said on condition of anonymity.

The vessel first grabbed world headlines last week when government officials in Benin announced that a ship loaded with child slaves had been turned away from two African ports and was headed back to Cotonou.

Benin said it had been tipped off by officials in Douala, Cameroon, where the boat had been prevented from docking last week.

Passengers and crew of the Etireno confirmed the vessel had indeed been turned away from Douala, as well as from Gabon's capital, Libreville — but not because it was carrying child slaves. The boat apparently didn't have proper documents and its passengers had traveled abroad willingly, in search of work.

The ship's Nigerian captain, Lawrence Onome, denies he was trafficking child slaves and says he has nothing to hide.

Some U.N. officials and aid workers speculate that the children might have been thrown

overboard, although there is no evidence to suggest that. Others say the Etireno was confused with a second ship, whose name and whereabouts remain a mystery.

"We are pleased, extremely pleased. We'll do whatever we can to facilitate and move the process along," said Nicolas Pron, a senior official with the U.N. children's fund in Benin, after hearing the police inquiry had begun.

The ferry, once known as the Nordby, was built in Denmark in 1969 and shuttled between Danish ports until it was sold three years ago to the Nigerian company, Titanic Investments, said Gert Jacobsen, a spokesman for the Scandlines shipping group. At the time of its sale, its name was changed to Etireno.

The boat has a capacity of 400 passengers, but Social Protection Minister Ramatou Baba Moussa said its handwritten manifest listed 139 names, including seven children.

Aid workers said they took a number of unaccompanied minors from the ferry to two children's homes in Cotonou, where they were allowed to eat and rest before being interviewed by police. It was not immediately clear how many of the children were aboard.

UNICEF officials said 31 children were taken from the ship and placed in homes. The Swiss-run Men of the Earth charity, which runs one of the homes, put the number at 43.

The U.N. children's fund on Tuesday ordered its offices along Africa's western coast to stay alert for the possibility that the child traffickers they sought might turn up elsewhere.

But on Wednesday there was still no news of another ship.

Despite efforts to end child trafficking, the trade remains a serious problem on the continent, particularly in West and Central Africa.

Parents living in some of the poorest countries on the planet are sometimes willing to sell off their own children for as little as \$14 — often in the belief the children will be educated and find employment. Most end up instead as prostitutes or slaves in coffee and cocoa plantations.

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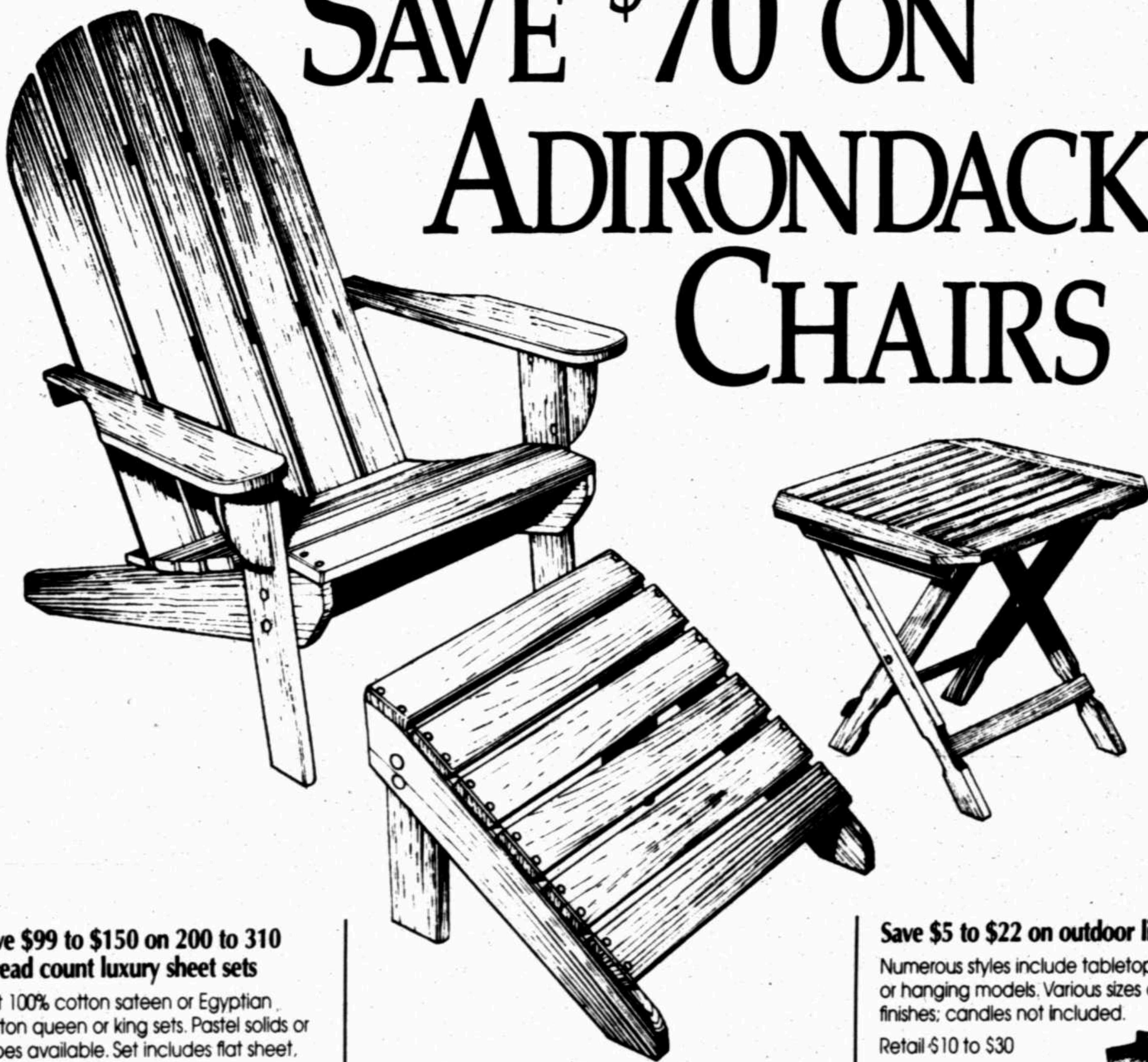
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'State of Economy' provides chance for looking ahead

With the announcement of Cingular Wireless coming to town and the creation of roughly 1,000 new jobs in Midland, it seems like everyone is buzzing about the economy.

A Midland Reporter-Telegram/NewsWest 9 poll earlier this week showed 62 percent of those polled believe economic development ought to be the city's top priority.

Those who are interested in talking about the economy ought to plan to attend "The State of Midland's Economy 2001" beginning at 8 a.m. Friday at the Midland Center.

We've said it over and over again. Midland must diversify its economy if we hope to thrive over the next several decades.

It would seem the new Cingular Wireless facility, a call center to be located in the former Builders Square building on the west side of town, is a step in the right direction. City fathers elected to provide \$1 million in incentives in order to attract the company, which is a venture jointly owned and operated by SBC Communications and BellSouth. The money will be drawn from city reserves in the water and sewer fund, primarily because the community doesn't have sufficient economic development fund resources on which to fall back.

We happen to think it's a terrific investment, particularly because the Cingular Wireless facility is expected to generate \$45 million for the local economy.

We have previously said we believe Midland is enjoying a brief window of opportunity with oil and natural gas prices at a level which is proving quite profitable for producers. But this window of opportunity won't be open long.

Economic development continues to be the driving topic of discussion among our city candidates up for election on May 5.

Everyone has a stake in our community's economic future. We're all in this together. One of the key presenters at Friday's conference will be Angelos Angelou of AngelouEconomics who led the recent Midland Assessment and Action Plan study. It's a fascinating study of where we have been, and, more importantly, where we could be headed.

Friday's program offers a chance to come together, share different points of view and to learn about the opportunities and challenges we face.

For more information about "The State of Midland's Economy 2001" you can contact the Midland Chamber of Commerce at 683-3381.

We hope you will join in the discussion at Friday's conference.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, April 19, the 109th day of 2001. There are 256 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history:

Fifty years ago, on April 19, 1951, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, relieved of his Far East command by President Truman, bid farewell to Congress, quoting a line from a ballad: "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away."

On this date:

In 1775, the American Revolutionary War began with the battles of Lexington and Concord.

In 1782, the Netherlands recognized American independence.

In 1933, the United States went off the gold standard.

In 1943, during World War II, tens of thousands of Jews living in the Warsaw Ghetto began a valiant but futile battle against Nazi forces.

In 1945, the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "Carousel" opened on Broadway.

In 1982, astronauts Sally K. Ride and Guion S. Bluford Jr. became the first woman and first African-American to be tapped for U.S. space missions.

In 1989, 47 sailors were killed when a gun turret exploded aboard the USS Iowa.

In 1993, the 51-day siege at the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas, ended as fire destroyed the structure after federal agents began smashing their way in; dozens of people, including leader David Koresh, were killed.

In 1995, a truck bomb destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people and injuring hundreds. Timothy McVeigh was later convicted of federal murder charges and faces execution next month.

In 1999, the German parliament inaugurated its new home in the restored Reichstag in Berlin, its prewar capital.

Ten years ago: Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev arrived in South Korea for talks with President Roh Tae-woo. Evander Holyfield won a unanimous decision over George Foreman to retain boxing's heavyweight title in Atlantic City, N.J.

Five years ago: On the first anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, hundreds of mourners paused for 168 seconds of silence at the site where the federal building once stood.

GEORGE WILL

Get real facts before knocking 'profiling'

WASHINGTON — It is former Sen. Eugene McCarthy's axiom: Anything said three times in Washington becomes a fact. So it now is a fact, universally attested and detested, that racial profiling is a widespread police tactic. Everyone says so, especially since the disturbances in Cincinnati set off a riot of television chatter, many of the chatters having no direct knowledge of that city, or of policing.

Even George W. Bush has made an obligatory genuflection at the altar of the conventional wisdom — "Racial profiling is wrong and we will end it in America" — and Attorney General John Ashcroft is encouraging the rapidly increasing trend of states requiring police to record racial data on traffic stops and searches. So who is Heather Mac Donald to cast decisive doubt on the prevalence, even the existence, of racial profiling?

She is the indispensable journalist. If you question that characterization, you have not read her just-published collection of essays, "The Burden of Bad Ideas: How Modern Intellectuals Misshape Our Society." Read it after you read her latest dissection of such an idea, "The Myth of Racial Profiling," in City Journal, published by the Manhattan Institute.

Ms. Mac Donald distinguishes, as anti-racial profiling crusaders rarely do, between "hard" and "soft" profiling. The latter uses race as one factor among others in estimating criminal suspiciousness. As when, Ms. Mac Donald says, police have intelligence

that in the Northeast drug-shipping corridor many traffickers are Jamaicans favoring Nissan Pathfinders.

Charges of racial profiling usually arise from data about traffic stops, data that supposedly vindicate complaints that minorities are victimized merely because they are "driving while black." But data about "disproportionate" stops of minority drivers are worthless without additional information that would be necessary to substantiate the charge that "too many" minority drivers are being stopped, searched and arrested.

Most anti-profilers concede that most stops arise from an actual traffic violation (e.g., the Pathfinder is speeding, or has visible illegal defects, such as nonfunctioning lights). So, Ms. Mac Donald writes, it is pertinent to know whether disproportionate numbers of minorities drive recklessly, or drive defective vehicles, or drive at times when, or in places where, police are, for good law enforcement reasons, particularly attentive. And the validity of the data purporting to document "disproportion" depends on comparisons of the amount of driving done by different racial groups, so that stops per man-mile, rather than just stops per person, could be compared. Do minorities commit more of the kinds of traffic violations that most attract police attention? Data about intoxication, and involvement in injury and fatality accidents, suggest so.

Ms. Mac Donald says that of course there is "soft" profiling in the sense that some vehicles are stopped because, in addition to some infraction, the driver and the kind of vehicle and the direction and the number and type of occupants fit the profile of a drug courier. Yet many anti-profilers insist, as does Sen. Robert Torricelli from the corridor state of New Jersey, that there is no evidence "that certain eth-

nic or racial groups disproportionately commit crimes. They do not."

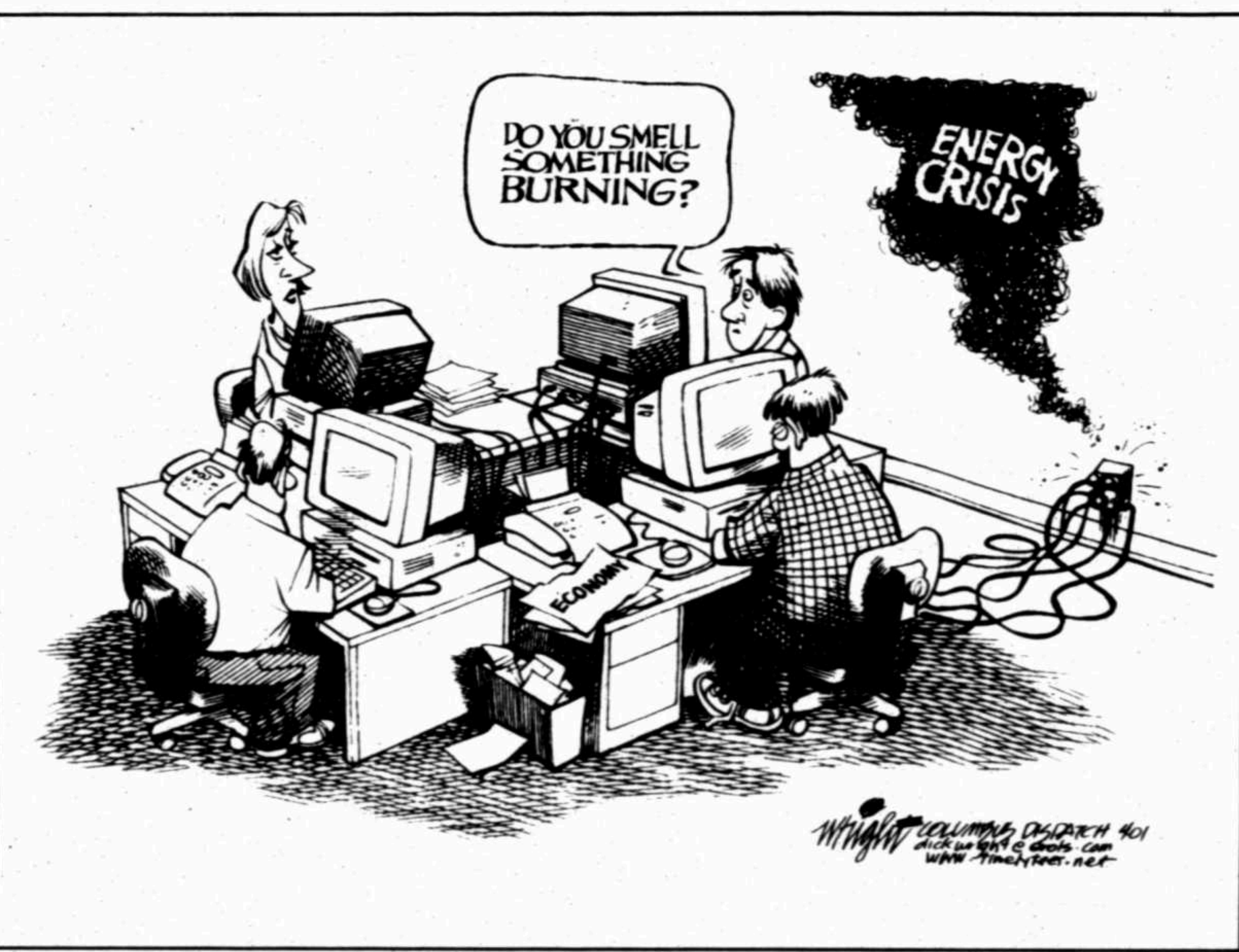
But of course they do. And once a traffic stop is made, any subsequent search of the vehicle is apt to be triggered by behavioral cues (nervousness, conflicting stories) on the part of the vehicle's occupants, cues having nothing to do with race or ethnicity.

In 1999, during hysteria about profiling, then-Gov. Christine Todd Whitman fired New Jersey's state police superintendent because he uttered a truism often confirmed by the Drug Enforcement Administration — that minority groups dominate cocaine and marijuana trafficking. Ms. Mac Donald reports that New Jersey's state police "no longer distribute a typical felony offender profile to their officers" because such profiles might contribute to what the state's attorney general calls "inappropriate stereotypes" about criminals. Here "inappropriate" is a synonym not for "inaccurate" but for "inconvenient."

It is an awkward fact, but it is a fact even though there may not be three Washingtonians rash enough to utter it: Felons are not evenly distributed across society's demographic groups. Many individuals and groups specialize in hurling accusations of racism, and police become vulnerable to such accusations when they concentrate their efforts where crime is.

If that accusation begins to control policing, public safety will suffer — especially the safety of minorities in violent and drug-infested neighborhoods. Those neighborhoods, where the primary complaint against the police usually is that they are too few in number and too tentative against predators, are not the neighborhoods where anti-profiling crusaders are apt to live.

George Will's column is distributed by Washington Post Writers Group.



LETTERS

Illegal immigrants cause drain on social service money

On March 6, I read an article in the Dallas Morning News that covered the political scrutiny Lt. Gov. Bill Ratliff has come under referring to illegal aliens as immigrants. He then talked about how these "immigrants" are bleeding the money of the social services such as hospital care, schools and the courts. Ratliff quickly came under fire from the Hispanics in the Texas congress and the Hispanic lobby. Ratliff then retracted his quotes, saying he meant the federal government was not subsidizing the expenses of these services for allowing the immigrants into the country. Ratliff also said it was the federal government that was at fault for allowing the immigrants to come in at such a rapid rate. I too, agree, we need to do a better job of keeping these immigrants out, but it is not the federal government's fault. I think it is horrible any politician comes under this much criticism for being essentially right. This however, is just a macrocosm of what happens all the time on a national scale for members of both parties. In America, we can no longer state the problem, who is to blame for it, and how to fix it, but rather make sure not to step on too many toes on their way to trying to fix the problem. What Ratliff clearly meant, and what any person close to the problem can see, is it is the illegal immigrants and not the federal government using the social service money.

Eric Winston

Schools need to keep three-tier system for better education

As to the issue of taking away high school's advanced level classes, I personally must speak out. Being a senior at Lee High School, I have experienced all three levels of classes — honors, advanced and general. Because of this, I have a strong opinion that the three-tier system should remain, but be improved. When I attended a general class, I was personally unchallenged, bored and made good grades with little to no effort. In my

opinion, some of the brighter students were so bored, they actually did worse than they would have in an advanced or honors class.

To the contrary, some of the "average" students did have problems, which seems to suggest they would not be able to do well in an advanced class. Honor classes are even more demanding than advanced classes. These classes go at a very fast pace and rely upon the individual initiative of the students. Honor students can learn their material at a fast pace without becoming bored by the repetition required in general classes.

Instead of eliminating advanced classes so the average student can be more challenged in general classes, I suggest general classes be more demanding while recognizing advanced and honor classes are needed for those students who are more self-motivated and willing to work harder. Certainly, given the diverse nature of a typical student body, more than a two-tier system is needed to meet the needs of all the students. Finally, we should educate to the highest common denominator. Although there is a place and need for everyone in this world, we cannot discount the need to educate our most gifted and motivated students who will be our future leaders.

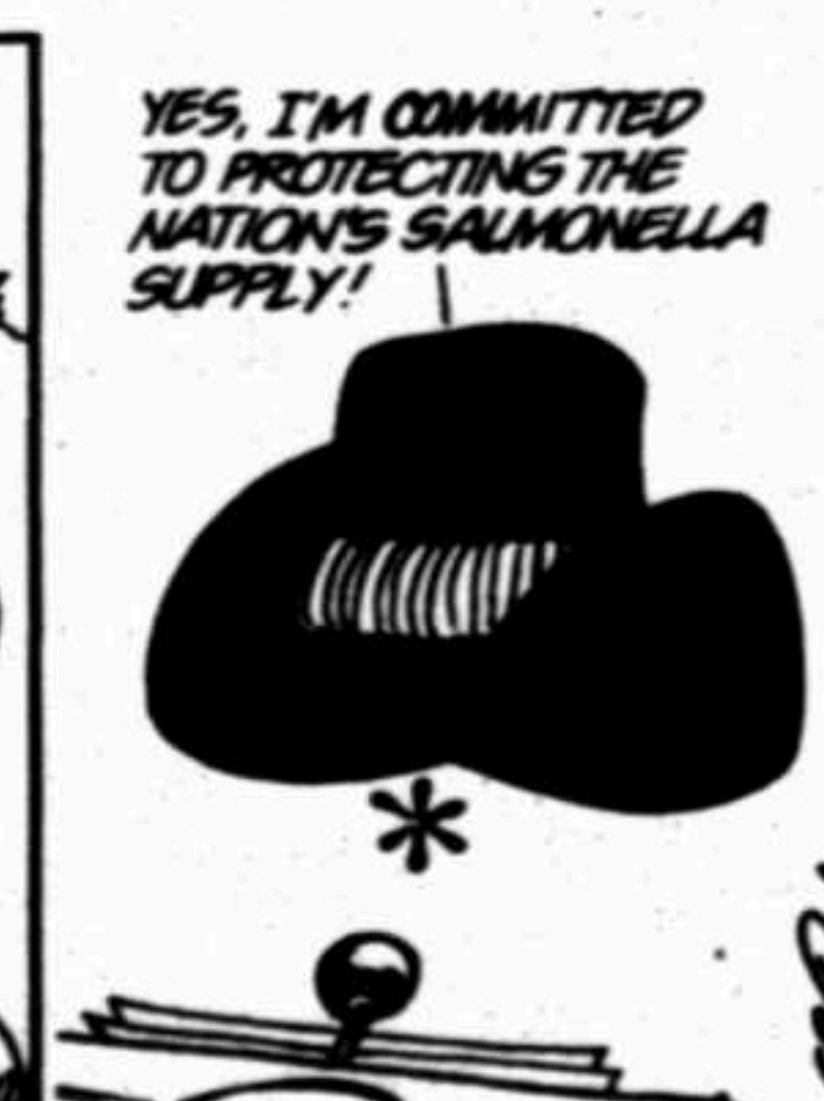
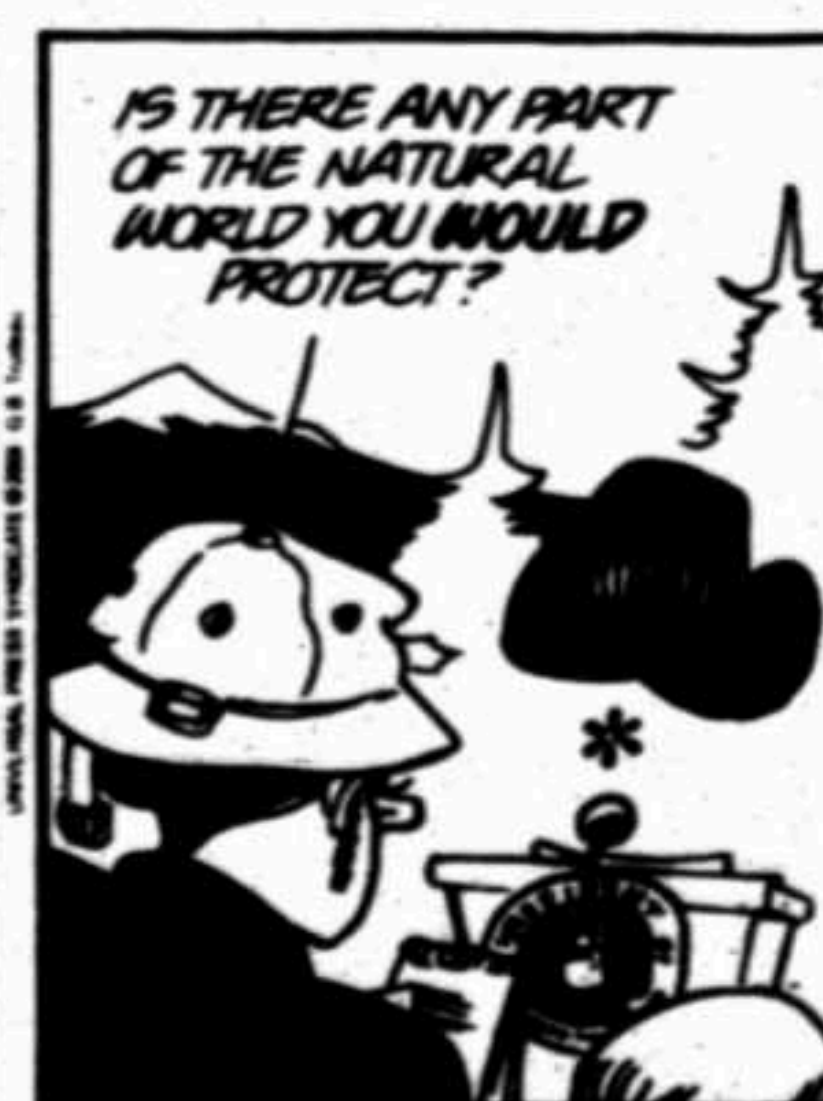
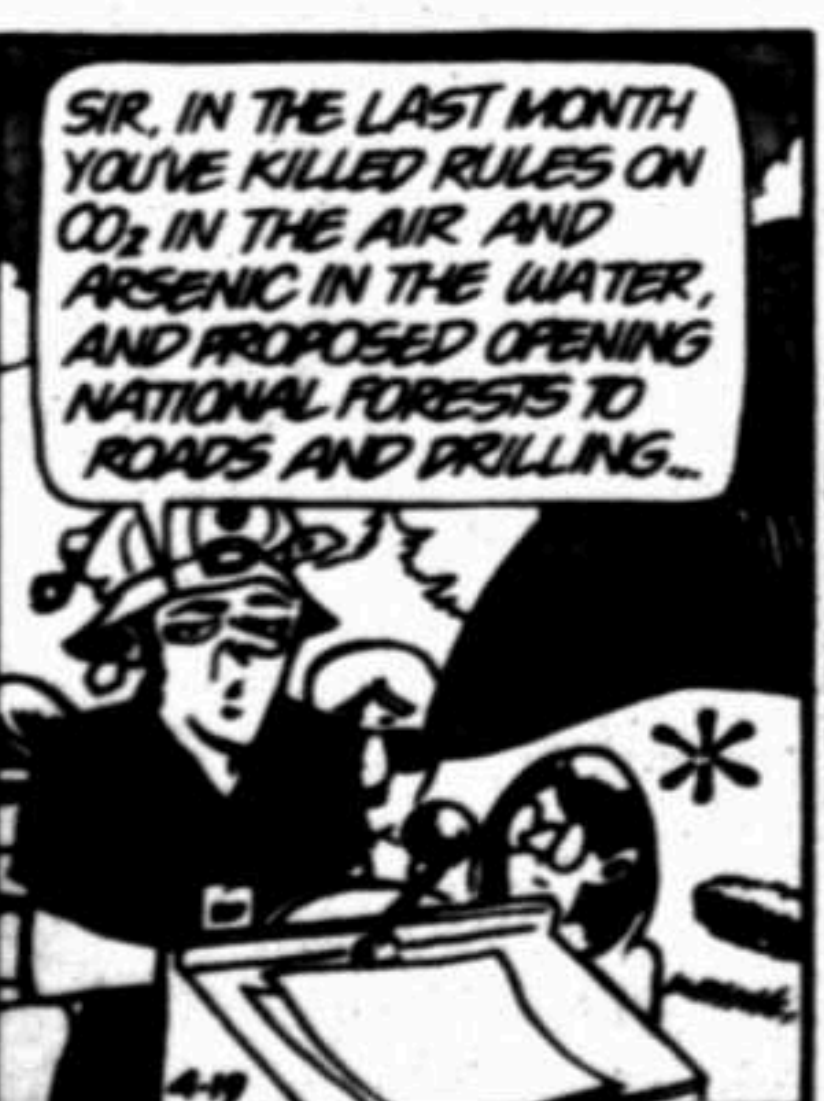
Garrett S. Wilson

Brown attacked for tackling tough issues for Midland

Leadership is about tackling the tough issues. Dale Brown has tackled some of the tough issues with fresh ideas and a positive vision for Midland's future. I am sure he will draw attack; good leaders always do.

Getting results for our tax dollars is such a common sense approach, but so often forgotten by our elected representatives. It takes someone with the courage to speak out and provide leadership to get the job done. I hope Midlanders will be able to see through the attacks to elect this man of courage and vision.

Terry Ellis



CAL THOMAS

More money is not only cure to reading worries

The report cards keep getting worse. Recently, the U.S. Department of Education released the latest test results on how well (or, to be more accurate, how poorly) students in government-run schools read. The results indicate that less than a third of our fourth graders are proficient in reading and the gap between the best and worst readers is widening.

Secretary of Education Roderick Paige understated the case when he said the evidence shows that federal education policy has not adequately addressed the needs of low-achieving students. "After spending \$125 billion of Title I money (that's the government's main education program for the poor) over 25 years, we have virtually nothing to show for it," said Paige.

So what is government's solution to this scandalous news? Why, spend more money, of course. Members of Congress in both parties and President George Bush want to substantially increase spending for the Education Department — which already has a budget higher than any other federal agency.

A tentative agreement has been reached between the Senate and the White House to allow parents of students in persistently failing schools to demand private tutoring paid for with federal dollars. This would mean that in schools failing children, taxpayers would be paying twice: once for the schools that are failing to teach kids how to read and again for tutors who will be teaching them what the failing schools should have taught them in the first place.

After so much has been spent on government schools, it's an outrage that millions of fourth-graders perform below basic reading levels.

There is no connection between spending and educational achievement. There is a connection between illiteracy and crime. Numerous studies have found that large percentages of the prison population cannot read well enough to get jobs paying enough to achieve more than the lowest standard of living.

The growing federal education bureaucracy is increasingly incompetent. Last week, the Education Department's chief inspector said that in the final three years of the Clinton Administration, the department lost nearly half a billion dollars in waste, fraud and errors. An audit revealed numerous instances of poor oversight resulting in cases in which money was stolen or improperly spent, and others in which two checks were sent for the same grant, or money was never distributed. The inspector discovered 21 employees could write checks for up to \$10,000 without supervision. An audit found that 19,000 of these checks were written, totaling \$23 million.

The Heritage Foundation's Dr. Stuart Butler says that serious studies of major federal education programs either don't exist or suggest that the programs are unsuccessful.

Failure to read, or to read well, leads to many other problems for students, schools and parents. Reading skills (or the lack of them) develop early. A proper response is for parents to turn off the TV, read to their kids, urge that the historically successful phonics system be taught in schools and lobby for education choice in one form or another, thus empowering parents — not the unions and politicians who have given us the present decrepit system.

Cal Thomas' column is distributed by the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.



Thomas

Drug c

By Ravi N...

Associated Pres

PRETORIA, S. Pharmaceutical settlement talks erment Wednesday are dropping the a law that could copies of AIDS d of South African

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However, h groups say those fall even further generic competi

An official w pharmaceutical o the suit "had resolved" after African governm agreement with largest companie

Those compan of the day co remainder of the involved in the su agreement, said who spoke on anonymity

Only technical ing who will pa remained to be w official said.

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Courty

Drug companies in discussions to drop AIDS lawsuit

By Ravi Nessman
Associated Press

PRETORIA, South Africa — Pharmaceutical giants entered settlement talks with the government Wednesday, a sign they are dropping their fight against a law that could provide cheap copies of AIDS drugs to millions of South Africans.

The suit, postponed until Thursday as the discussions continued, has deeply embarrassed the drug companies since it began six weeks ago. Many have responded by drastically cutting prices on their own.

However, human rights groups say those prices would fall even further in the face of generic competition.

An official with one of the pharmaceutical companies said the suit "had largely been resolved" after the South African government reached an agreement with several of the largest companies involved.

Those companies spent much of the day convincing the remainder of the 39 companies involved in the suit to accept the agreement, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Only technical issues, including who will pay court costs, remained to be worked out, the official said.

International human rights groups and AIDS activists have waged a global public relations offensive against the suit, which they see as an obstacle to securing medication for the nearly 26 million people in Africa infected with HIV.

The law could give South Africa the power to import or produce generic versions of patented drugs — including expensive antiretroviral drugs needed to treat AIDS. An estimated 4.7 million South Africans are infected with HIV.

As the case resumed Wednesday morning after a six-week

postponement, Stephanus Ciliers, a lawyer for the drug companies, asked for a four-hour recess "in hopes that certain discussions that are going on will obviate the need for further proceedings."

When court reconvened at 2 p.m., he was granted a recess until Thursday morning so discussions could continue.

Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang declined to comment on the negotiations as she left the courtroom, which was filled to standing-room capacity with journalists, AIDS activists and union members expecting a settlement.

The pharmaceutical companies had argued that the South African law, which was never implemented, was too broad and unfairly targeted drug manufacturers.

The government, AIDS activists and human rights groups say the drug companies are trying to wring profits out of a public health nightmare that threatens to devastate South Africa and dozens of other poor countries.

The situation has changed drastically since the suit was filed more than three years ago. At that time, the European Union and the United States backed the drug companies and the case had almost no impact on the public's view of the drug companies.

Since then, however, the U.S. government and the European Union withdrew their support for the case, and the pharmaceutical companies have suffered a public relations battering.

"The pressure was just too much for them not to respond

to," said Ellen Hoen, an official with Medicins Sans Frontieres. Zachie Achmat, chairman of the Treatment Action Campaign, a local AIDS activists' group that had filed a brief in support of the government demanded the companies drop the suit immediately, and appealed to the government not

to compromise in the talks. "There's nothing to discuss. The companies must simply withdraw from the case," he said. "We ask the government to stand fully by the legislation, not to give an inch, because the law is on their side, the Constitution is on their side, international law is on their side."

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Helms, others hold first ever meeting with Mexican senators

By Traci Carl
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — In Washington, there is no voice more critical of Mexico than that of Jesse Helms. So the vision of the dour senator posing, smiling and trading jokes with Mexico's foreign minister — a man he once denounced as a communist — seemed surreal.

But it was real, all right. Helms talked of "a future of cooperation, friendship, mutual respect" as he and other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met Wednesday with their Mexican counterparts for the first time.

The North Carolina Republican also played down his past attacks, suggesting that democratic change in Mexico — where Vicente Fox last July became the first opposition candidate ever to win the presidency — had helped change his attitude.

"It is true that over the course of my public life I have criticized certain political leaders of Mexico, and certain government policies those leaders imposed on the Mexican people," he said. "But I am not now, and have never been, a critic of Mexico."

During his meeting with Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda on Tuesday, Helms even sought to smooth over one of the few differences evident in the three-day visit: Mexico's announcement that it would not vote in favor of a U.S.-supported measure condemning human rights violations in Cuba.

But he did offer Mexico advice on its policy toward the communist island, saying the United States does not expect it to be an "agent of U.S. interests in the hemisphere."

"Rather, we ask and hope that Mexico will be a faithful advocate of its own democratic principles — at home, across the globe and particularly on the edge of the Gulf of Mexico, where the last bastion of tyranny in our hemisphere staggers on," he said.

Helms also left smiling after a visit with Fox and said he wants to work more closely on drug trafficking, immigration and human rights — issues on which he and the Mexican government have clashed in the past.

The meeting Wednesday with Mexican senators came as the U.S. Congress debated bills on those same issues, and reflected the growing role of the Mexican Congress under the country's new, strengthened multiparty system.

Drug offenders to be executed weekly to deter trafficking

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Thailand plans to execute drug offenders every week, starting Wednesday, in a bid to deter traffickers.

"From now on we will conduct weekly executions against drugs offenders," Interior Minister Purachai Piemsomboon said Wednesday.

"We are executing convicted narcotics offenders quickly to send a clear signal to drug traffickers that this government is serious about taking tough action against them," he said.

Executions are carried out by firing squads in Thailand.

There are 19 prisoners on death row in Thailand, all of them at Bangkok prison. Eleven were convicted of trafficking in methamphetamines, three of whom were to be executed later Wednesday. For the first time journalists would be allowed to film part of the death the execution, prison officials said.

Purachai did not say whether the weekly plan would bring forward the execution dates. One convicted trafficker was executed last week.

The prisoners condemned to die Wednesday were identified as a 47-year-old man from Hong Kong, a 33-year-old Taiwanese man and a 40-year-old Thai man.

They were convicted of conspiring to smuggle 7.5 pounds of heroin. Further details of the case were not immediately available.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's government, which took power in February, has vowed to crack down on the drugs, which is mostly smuggled from neighboring Myanmar, also known as Burma. Heroin and methamphetamines are considered the leading cause of crime in Thailand.

The army on Wednesday announced it confiscated 7.6 million methamphetamine tablets in the second-largest seizure ever.

A task force ambushed a drugs caravan manned by unidentified gunmen in northwestern Tak province near the Myanmar border on Monday, an army statement said. There were no casualties. It gave no details of any arrests.

In all, 325 convicts in Thailand have received death sentences, 184 for drug trafficking. All but 19 are going through the appeals process. Thailand has executed 298 prisoners since capital punishment was adopted in 1935.



AP Photo
U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., speaks during a press conference at Mexico's Senate Wednesday, in Mexico City. Helms is the latest of several leading Republicans to visit Mexico and praise Fox, who took office Dec. 1 with pledges to fight corruption and create millions of jobs.

tem. Helms is the latest of several leading Republicans to visit Mexico and praise Fox, who took office Dec. 1 with pledges to fight corruption and create millions of jobs.

In January, a delegation of senators led by Texas Republican Phil Gramm proposed a guest-worker program to bring Mexican workers legally into the United States. And in February, President Bush made Mexico his first official foreign trip.

Helms has applauded not only Fox but Castaneda, a former communist who has not minced words in his own past criticisms of the senator. When Castaneda's appointment was announced in November, Helms aide Roger Noriega had expressed disappointment.

There was no sign of that enmity Tuesday, when Helms and Castaneda shared a warm handshake, smiled for photographers and exchanged jokes.

On Wednesday Helms had nothing but good things to say about Fox's administration.

"The best way to discourage illegal immigration to the United States is to encourage in Mexico market reforms and economic opportunity," he said. "President Fox is committed to this, and I am committed to helping him

achieve it."

During the meeting, he urged Mexico to help enforce the U.S.-Mexican border — even as Fox has expressed interest in working toward the eventual free movement of workers between both countries.

Helms described creating "a new era of cooperation ... allowing us to work together to secure our common border and discourage the illegal immigration that serves neither your country nor mine."

Helms is often criticized in Mexico as the worst of a political system that Mexicans don't think highly of to begin with. But his recent actions have led many to reconsider their opinion.

His committee passed a bill this month that would eliminate a process by which U.S. presidents

"certify" that foreign countries are combating drug trafficking to avoid financial sanctions.

Mexico and most other nations have denounced the certification program as insulting and hypocritical coming from the world's largest drug-consuming nation.

On the Net:
Senate Foreign Relations Committee:
www.senate.gov/committees/committee-detail.cfm?COMMITTEE=ID434
Mexican presidency:
www.presidencia.gob.mx/?NL=ang&x18&y6

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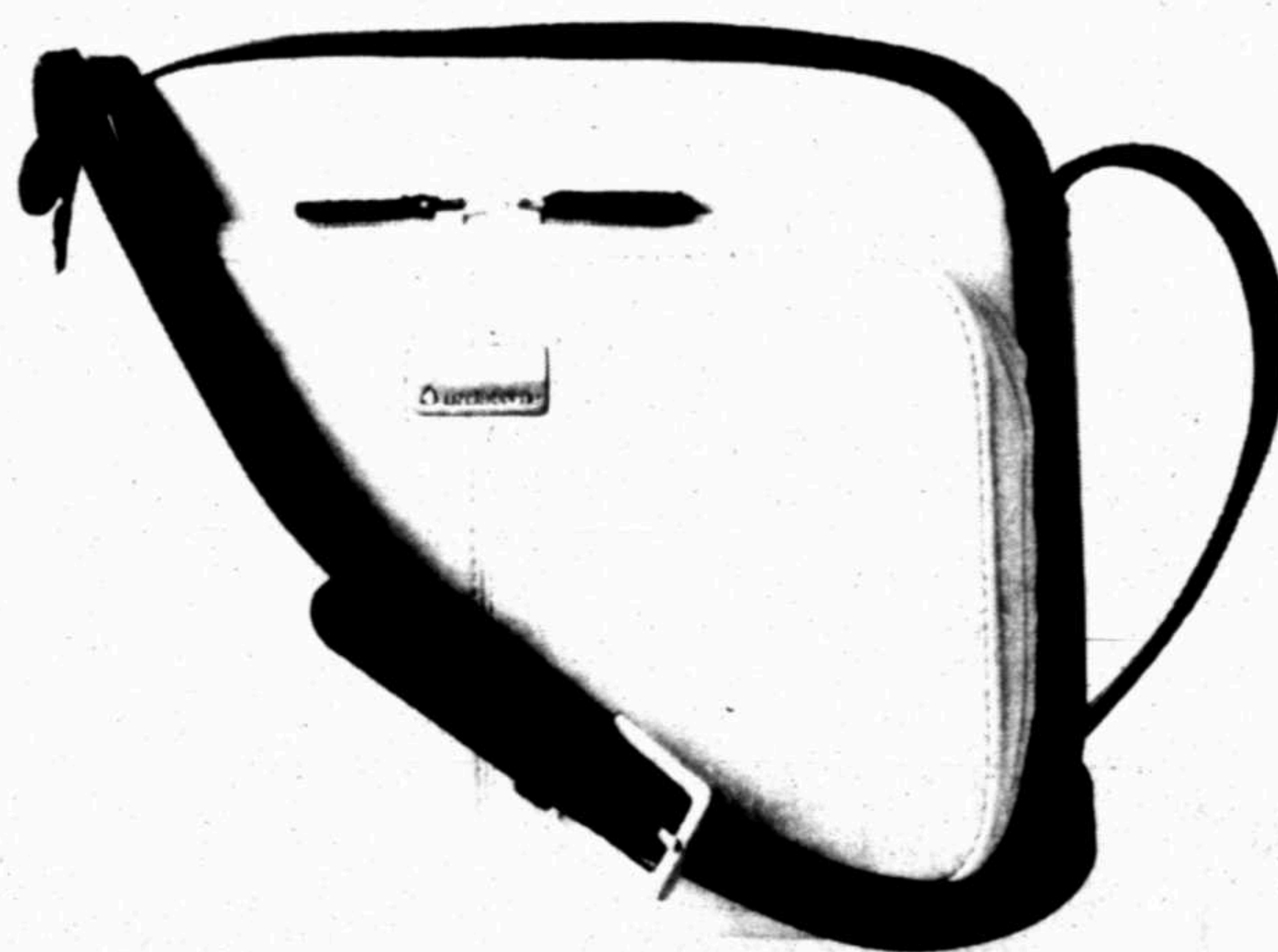
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By Danielle E
Staff Writer

While the teacher's health dominated most Austin, several may affect education of committee a

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By Kasey Kel
MRT Correspondent

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Ed TODD

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State education bills may impact MISD

By Danielle Belton
Staff Writer

While the debate for statewide teacher's health insurance has often dominated most educational debates in Austin, several other important bills that may affect education in Midland are out of committee and on the move.

Bills involving high school curriculum and the school calendar are also making moves alongside the insurance debate. Also, bills involving charter schools and even bills allowing students to administer and carry their own asthma medicine are up for debate.

State Sen. Teel Bivins said he is optimistic when it comes to a bill he is championing, Senate Bill 385. The bill, which Bivins believes could potentially impact the number of students enrolling into Texas colleges and universities, would place greater importance on the recommended high school curriculum.

"The thing that really inspired this bill was research that shows that the strongest indicator of how a student is going to perform in the workplace or in

college is not SAT score, grade point average or class rank but rather the curriculum that they take in high school," said the senator.

Currently in the Midland Independent School District students and their parents must ask that the child be placed in the recommended curriculum that contains more math, science and foreign language courses. Bivins said while few students statewide may enroll in the recommended curriculum, many students who took on the minimum requirements enroll in college. Bivins has argued the recommended curriculum would better prepare students for college and cites facts that some Texas school districts have already begun asking their students to enroll in the more rigorous curriculum.

"We have several school districts in the state asking students to take recommended curriculum on a purely voluntary basis," Bivins said. "That's what Senate Bill 385 would do."

Although the bill proposes students automatically be placed in the recommended curriculum when they enroll in high school, Bivins said students will still be able to opt out and ask to be enrolled

in the minimum curriculum program.

MISD superintendent Joseph Baretti Jr. said Bivins' idea sounds good in theory, but he isn't sure he would support such a bill.

"I had my children take the (recommended) courses," Baretti said. "But I hesitate to dictate what parents should do with their children."

Baretti also pointed out that the rigorous recommended course level leaves less room for electives like band. He said parents may not be too interested in the state legislating their children's workload at school, especially when the state only makes up half of the cost.

He said regardless of the bill's outcome, he hopes parents stay involved in their child's education so they can help determine which curriculum load is best for the student.

"Reality is, if the parents are involved as we like them to be, they can make an informed decision on their child," he said.

Bivins' bill has already passed through the Senate's education committee and is currently being read by the House's Public Education Committee. Baretti was not

sure what direct impact the bill could have on MISD high school students if passed, but currently more than 70 percent of MISD students are enrolled in the recommended curriculum.

According to MISD guidance and counseling director Glenn Woods, the number of MISD students enrolled in the program has steadily go up every year for the last two years.

State Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr.'s bill addressing school calendar issues is one of the few school calendar bills still out in the hunt.

Senate Bill 108, which recommends an August 21 start date for all school districts in Texas, has survived while other bills attempting to regulate the school calendar appear to be permanently lost in committee.

"The Labor Day bills are not making progress," said Joe Cummins, MISD's executive director of administrative services, evaluation and planning. "It appears to have lost favor early in the debate."

Cummins said MISD has been watching the bill closely. Cummins, who puts together MISD's school calendar, said

if the last version of this bill was to pass, it would seriously reduce the number of fall holidays currently enjoyed by students and staff.

"There would be limited holidays available in the fall semester," Cummins said.

First semester would be reduced to a Labor Day holiday and two days off at Thanksgiving if Lucio's bill passes. Cummins said this would be the most likely scenario if the district chose to have the fall semester still end before Christmas and the new year.

He also said even with the reduced number of holidays, there would still be some disparities between the fall semester and the spring semester. A considerable amount of schedule juggling would have to be done in order to meet the state mandated 180 days of classes and keep students and teachers happy.

"A majority of teachers and parents seem to prefer a system that ends before Christmas," Cummins said.

Lucio's bill has also made its way out of the Senate's education committee and into the House's public education committee.

City grants Menchaca power to pick assistant

By Stewart Doreen
Staff Writer

City Manager Rick Menchaca will have no problem picking the next assistant city manager. It will be his choice and his choice alone.

The council approved a resolution on April 10 amending a number of sections of the Midland Personnel Policy. One section states "all department heads, assistant city managers or deputy city managers hired or promoted to the position of department head, assistant city manager or deputy city manager on or after April 10, 2001, shall enter into a written employment contract to be approved by the city manager."



Menchaca

The section also stated that "a first assistant city attorney Please see CITY/2B

Painter elected presiding officer of Bail Bond Board

By Ed Todd
Staff Writer

Midland County Sheriff Gary Painter was elected presiding officer of the Midland County Bail Bond Board when the state-mandated board was created for Midland County at its initial meeting on Wednesday in the Midland County Courthouse.

The sheriff by law accepts and approves bonds. A 1999 statute passed by the 76th Texas Legislature requires that any county with a population of 110,000 or more must create a bail-bond board.

The board's role includes the issuance of licenses to qualified bondsmen, the supervision and regulation of "each phase" of the bonding business, and, among other duties, the conduction of hearings and investigations

Please see BAIL/2B



Tim Fischer/Reporter-Telegram
ABOVE: Jason Diaz relaxes by his bass as he and other Lee High Orchestra students read through the score for "Peter and the Wolf," Monday evening. RIGHT: Almee Mueller, right, and Emily Dunham, both on cello, rehearse for the live Spring gala performance. The musicians will be joined by 11 members from the Midland-Odessa Symphony. The evening also features guest soloists from Ballet Arizona performing excerpts from "Coppelia" with MFB dancers. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. April 21 and 2:30 p.m. April 22 in the Wagner & Brown Auditorium, Allison Fine Arts Building, Midland College campus. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors. Tickets may be purchased at Midland Community Theatre's box office, Cole Theatre, 2000 W. Wadley Ave., through Friday 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Seating is limited to only 500 for both performances.



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Blood shortages can postpone surgeries

By Kasey Kelly
MRT Correspondent

"Most people take their good health for granted," said Lee Patrick, associate executive director with United Blood Services. "But what happens when there is a crisis and there is no blood to be found?"

The Permian Basin is suffering from a severe shortage of blood which has been aggravated by the recent holiday.

"To get the blood supply back to a stable level we would need approximately 100 donors per day for about a week," Ms. Patrick added.

The situation is so bad that Medical Center Hospital in Odessa has had to postpone a number of surgeries until next week.

Renee Henderson Earls, the hospital's director of community relations, said it is an unfortunate situation, but it is a safety precaution that the hospital feels

is necessary at this time.

"It is more dangerous to go into a situation in which there is no blood than it is to postpone the surgery for a short time," Ms. Earls said. "Unfortunately, people wait for a tragedy to occur before they donate blood."

Sarah Lawlin is familiar with that situation.

"It wasn't until someone I loved was in need of blood that I realized how vital this resource is," Ms. Lawlin said. "My husband was in an accident a few years ago and without the generous donations of blood from the blood bank he would have died in the emergency room from his injuries."

"Until it hits home, it's hard to make people realize that blood is used everyday in our community," Ms. Patrick said. "Sometimes it takes drastic situations to motivate people."

O positive blood is especially needed. This type of blood is the most common and for that reason is most readily exhausted.

Blood donor requirements are simple.

To be a donor a person must be at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in good health.

It only takes 10 minutes to donate a pint of blood and many donors feel like the rewards are well worth it.

"You feel good because you've done something good for someone," said Mark Drake. "This is my second time to donate this year, but I plan to do this on a regular basis from now on."

Anyone who would like to give it a try will have a special opportunity on Friday. The Midland Rockhounds are sponsoring a blood drive at Christenson Stadium from 1 to 6 p.m. As a special incentive, the first 100 donors will receive a free pair of tickets to a game and a T-shirt.

Interested persons can also go by any donor center in Midland or Odessa for more information.



Tim Fischer/Reporter-Telegram
Mark Drake, a regular donor, relaxes as he gives blood Wednesday morning.

ED TODD

Lessons learned: Beware of pranks and mischief

Here's another "back-when" remembrance of the good old days, and they really were, mostly.

We were youngsters and, except for radio and an occasional trip to Dallas and Paris (Texas), we were so unlearned in the world's worldly ways. We had heard war songs about "over there." But our real world was right in front of us and right up to the horizons all around us.

And grandparents were so wise and caring and knew just what to do. I remember once after I, mischievous enough, had knocked a wasp nest from the front porch. And the warrior wasps, those pursuit aviators, chased me down as I ran away about as fast as I could and flailing those arms as if to ward off the attack.

The wasps, of course, strafed and bombed and hit their target squarely on the back of the neck. Among country boys, that sort of thing happened over and over.



Todd

So, there I was, in reddening pain, not knowing what to do but yell and probably shed a tear or so 'cause I got caught doing something that seemed inviting but not so altruistic. I was destroying the custom-made home of some of God's family-oriented flying critters.

But, Granddaddy Asa Williams, who surely liked his smoking and chewing tobacco, splattered a dab of tobacco and juice over the throbbing wound. And pretty soon, all was well.

Another time, I snuck into Grandmother Althea Williams' medicine cabinet in a darkened hallway and found some sweet-tasting colorful pills in a handy tin labeled "Camelax," or so I recall.

That must have been on a Sunday evening.

The next morning I missed the school bus. I couldn't safely get off the pot, the slop jar, as we called it. Grandmother kept it in the house particularly on cold winter nights. I just remember sitting there, more inconvenienced than embarrassed, since I couldn't move without making a mess. I reckon I couldn't have made it out back to the one-holer outhouse between the farmhouse and the garden.

Grandmother, of course, watched over me. And as ever-loving and sweet and kind and endearing

as she naturally was, I could tell quite readily that she was just a tad distressed that her grandson would be so foolish as to swallow something just because it looked like candy and had a sweet taste. Before the rude consequences, I didn't have the least notion of what Camelax was except it was curiously tasty.

Then, a bit older but still young and naive, I figured that I would be a big boy and do what I had seen those older fellows do at firecracker-firing holidays.

They would take those dime-packaged firecrackers, peel one off, strike a match, and toss it toward the girls. It seemed like fun, sort of scary, but entertaining. The boys and girls giggled, yelled, and laughed.

So, figuring it was time to grow up and be one of "the boys," I suppose, I decided to pull a little trick just outside the country store across the blackland dirt road from my grandparents' farmhouse.

So, I took the firecracker in one hand, a kitchen match in the other, struck the match so that it became a mini-torch, and fired up the fuse on the firecracker.

Of course, I was nervous, suspecting I was doing something I probably ought not to do but found so tempting and, in the moment of a deep breath, excit-

ing. This was to be my first, and last, firecracker prank. In the bit of drama leading up this mischief, I tossed the fiery match and held onto the lit firecracker. At the moment of the blast, I had expected the girls to leap and yell.

Instead, my hand throbbled mightily. And, as I now know, I surely got my just desserts for being such a young rascal. It was a fortunate confusion. I ran and bawled and got something soothing, an ointment or a wet washrag, at my Grandparents' place.

Of course, I neither sought nor got sympathy. Unwittingly, I was my own punishment. I just messed up royally, as we used to say, and thank goodness I did. To harm another would be most tragic and just about unbearable. And I don't recall then telling a soul about my back-fired scheme back then in the 1940s.

Maybe I learned something back then. I hope so: Don't fool with another's home-place, don't swallow anything without checking it out, and beware of the temptations of mischief.

Ed Todd is a staff writer for the Reporter-Telegram.

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CITY: Resolution approved April 10

(From 1B)

ney employed on or after April 10, 2001, shall enter into a written contract to be approved by the city attorney.

These are amendments to the old law that stated an assistant city manager and first assistant city attorney were among the positions that "shall enter into a written employment contract to be approved by the City Council."

Menchaca said he wants to keep with the council-manager form of government, where the council hires five employees — the city manager, city attorney, city secretary and two city judges. To do so, everyone else — i.e. the assistant city manager, department heads, etc. — else reports to those five people.

"There was a clause (in the personnel policies) that the city managers would hire his assistants and the same thing with the city attorney except the council had to approve the severance agreement. Why that is the case I don't know," Menchaca said.

Menchaca added the at-will agreements of the city manager's staff, aside from the city manager, have not been taken to the council recently, even though under policy they should have for ratification.

"We were trying to make sure the reporting lines were clear with the assistants," Menchaca said. "I call it housekeeping. Unfortunately, if you followed the letter of the policy, it was something that was not practiced. We wanted to make sure we were adhering to policy and policy was set."

This is notable, if for no other reason, because Menchaca could choose Director of Development Marcus Johnston or Director of Fleet and Facilities Management Mark Phillips to fill the vacancy left in the city manager office after then

Deputy City Manager Glen Hackler left to become the city manager of Andrews.

"It does (work better for me)," Menchaca said. "I am still looking at some areas."

The City Council passed the resolution with little debate.

"I am comfortable with it," District 4 city councilman Berry Simpson said. "If we had a more contentious relationship it is possible the city manager might put somebody in one of those slots that nobody on the council likes or wants there. It is hard to imagine that happening."

Since Hackler's departure, Menchaca has stated he would downgrade the position to assistant city manager.

Both Johnston and Phillips are vying to become one of the two assistant city managers on the staff (Tommy Hudson is the other). Menchaca has said an announcement could come as early as next week. He also could decide to push what has only been an internal search externally.

The move to transfer the hiring duties from the council to the city manager was a welcomed one to some current council members.

"It is beyond our duties," District 1 council member LuAnn Morgan said. "The only person we are responsible for is him, no one else."

"We shouldn't have been doing it in the first place. When it comes to dollars and cents, we can continue to do all we want. When it comes to hiring and firing, that is his business."

Simpson added, "We try to set policy and not micromanage although we don't mind stepping in if things aren't happening. There is always a balance there with how much of a direct hand we should have."

BAIL: Board members would include Morrow

(From 1B)

into the issuance, denial or renewal of licenses.

"The Sheriff's Office will still accept and approve bonds that come in from bondsmen or people bringing in bonds for their loved ones who are in jail or their clients," Painter said.

The law outlines which precinct, county and state officials or their designees will serve on the board.

For Midland County, the board members would include Painter, Judge John Hyde of the Texas 238th Judicial District Court; County Judge Bill Morrow or a commissioner; a county court-at-law judge, either Al Walvoord or Marvin Moore; First Assistant District Attorney Teresa Clingman who was appointed by District Attorney Al Schorre; Midland bondsman Manuel Lujan who noted he was elected by his peers; Justice of the Peace George Zimmerman who was named to the board by his fellow JPs; District Clerk Vivian Wood; County Clerk Shauna Brown; County Treasurer Jo Ann Carr or her designee; and the presiding judge of Municipal Court for the city of Midland.

The 1999 Texas law says any county with a population of fewer than 110,000 people may create a bail-bond board if a majority of officials who could serve on the board were to vote for the bail-bond board.

The 2000 United States Census placed Midland County's population at 116,009. The county's 1990 census was 106,611. The city of Midland's 2000 population was 94,996, and the city's 1990 census was 89,443.

Until about 10 years ago, Midland County had organized a bail-bond board, but it was dissolved.

Painter noted that the Midland County Bail Bond Board, which is to meet monthly, "will license all bonding companies in Midland County. And if a bonding company is not licensed through the bail-bond board of Midland County, they cannot do business in Midland County."

The Midland-based six private bonding companies approved by the sheriff are to submit renewed financial statements and deeds of trust to the board, Painter noted. Their collateral, including property, which the bondsmen use to write bonds is to be verified by certified public accountants (CPAs), Painter noted.

Property values on the collateral is set at the fair-market value as determined by the

Midland Central Appraisal District.

Many years ago under another appraiser, "There was property being appraised at 20 times the property value," Painter said. "And there was no way we could collect on that" under forfeiture proceedings.

At the organization meeting on Wednesday, the board members appointed a four-person committee to review bail-bond board rules for adoption. Serving on that committee are Sgt. Luis Romero of the sheriff's bail-bond office; Romero's clerk, Becky Collum; Hyde; and Ms. Clingman.

By law, bondsmen are allowed to write bonds totaling up to 10 times the value of their collateral, Painter and Lujan noted. The reasoning for multiplying factor, Lujan said, is that the legislators surmised one out of 10 bonds likely would fail and be forfeited.

The sheriff-approved bail-bonding Midland companies, their largest allowable bond, and their owners and agents, according to the sheriff's records, are:

A-1/RS Bail Bonds, Midland. Maximum allowable bond: \$55,115. Owner-agent: Ronny Smith. Agents: Ellis Smith, Pam Crawford, Ronny D. Smith, Charles Hoeckendorf, Michael Don Martin, Jennifer L. Martin, Charles Hostetter, Maxine Reyes, and Kevin Smith.

Aplicacion De Oro Y Bail Bonds, Midland. Maximum allowable bond: \$11,065. Owner-agent: Manuel Lujan. Agents: Yecenia Brito and Elvira Montoya.

E-Z Terms Bail Bonds, Midland. Maximum allowable bond: \$26,965. Owner-agent: Manuel Lujan. Agents: Yecenia Brito and Elvira Montoya.

Rendon & Associates/One Stop, Midland. Maximum allowable bond: \$55,950. Owner-agent: Mariano Rendon Jr. and Esmeralda Rendon. Agents: Noemi Galindo, Rose Gomez, Yasmin Rodriguez, Melissa Gonzalez, Liliana Moran, and Yolanda Licon.

Tall City/Payless Bail Bonds, Midland. Maximum allowable bond: \$99,190. Owner-agent: Bobby Jackson and Velma Jackson. Agents: Tonya Williams and Susana Rayos.

Tio's Bail Bonds, Midland. Maximum allowable bond: \$15,874. Owner-agent: Freddie Sanchez. Agents: Irene Ortega, Kris Ortega, and Toni Ortega.

OBITUARIES

Jo Dickey

Jo Dickey died at a local hospital on Monday, April 16, 2001.

Funeral services have been scheduled for 1:00 p.m., today, April 19, 2001, at Ellis Funeral Home Chapel with Reverend Steve Cox of Bethel United Methodist Church officiating. Interment will follow in Resthaven Memorial Park, under the direction of Ellis Funeral Home.

Jo Dickey was born September 19, 1925 in Kress, Texas to Hal and Geneva Bridgeman. She was reared and educated in Kress, Tx. and on September 28, 1942, she married J.B. "Bill" Dickey in Clovis, New Mexico. Jo was employed with Panther City

Office Supply for 17 years. Mrs. Dickey was a member of the Moose Lodge, Elks Club, Bethel United Methodist Church, and was an avid bingo player.

Jo was preceded in death by her parents.

She is survived by her husband, Bill Dickey of Midland; her sons, Charlie Dickey of San Antonio and Robert Dickey and his wife, Lanie, of Spring Branch; her daughter, Sherry A. Luna and her husband, Gary, of Gardendale; her brother, Si Bridgeman of Riverside, Ca.; her sisters, Blackie Grantham of Dalhart, Elizabeth Crader of Pueblo, Co., and Sue Glenn of Kress; her 9 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. Serving as pallbearers will be

Obituary & Death Notice policy

There is no charge for death notices of residents or former residents of Midland or for those who have Midland relatives. We also publish death notices for residents of the surrounding West Texas area.

Free death notices include date and place of death, service and burial information, funeral home handling arrangements, date and place of birth, brief biography, survivors and memorials. A longer, more detailed obituary is available for a charge. It may include tributes, expanded biography, organizational associations, notes of appreciation, pallbearers, honorary pallbearers and a photo.

Deadline for both free death notices and paid obituaries is 3:30 p.m. and information must be either received from or verified by a funeral home.

Wade Claybrook, Clayton Hale, and her grandsons, Carl Long, Scott Long, Billy Floyd, and Ray Leeseberg.

DEATH NOTICES

Noreta Livergood

CRANE — Noreta Ann Livergood, 63, died Monday, April 16, at her residence.

Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. today, April 19, at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity in Midland with Rev. Stockton Williams officiating. Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 21, at the Westlawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Borger, with the Rev. Chip Allen officiating. Services are under the direction of Shaffer-Nichols Funeral Home of Crane.

She was born Aug. 30, 1938 in Lamesa. She was a secretary for Tanner Insurance Company in Midland, and had lived in Midland for 20 years. She was secretary of the Insurance Women of Midland, and a member of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity.

Survivors include her mother, Sybil Bennett of Borger; two sisters; Jimmie Goodenough of Gainesville and Marion Brown of Los Cruces, N.M.

Antonia Paredez

BIG SPRING — Antonia Paredez, 94, of Big Spring, died on

Tuesday, April 17, in a local hospital.

Rosary will be said at 7 p.m., today, April 19, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel. Funeral mass will be at 2 p.m., Friday, April 20, at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Interment will follow at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

She was born on Sept. 2, 1906 in Chihuahua, Mexico and married Benito Paredez, Sr. in Aug. 1922 in Big Spring.

She was a longtime resident of Big Spring. She was known as "Little Granny" to her many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, who loved her and will miss her.

She was a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church and a Gold Star Mother.

Survivors include one son, Guadalupe Paredez of Big Spring; one daughter, Carmen Lara of Goldsmith; 28 grandchildren; 67 great-grandchildren and 13 great-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband; one daughter, Magdalena P. Correa and four sons, Benito Paredez, Jr., Sgt. Augustin Paredez, Alfredo Paredez and Pedro Paredez.

Arrangements under the direc-

tion of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home.

Kenneth Cox

LUBBOCK — Kenneth L. Cox, 90, of Lubbock, died Tuesday, April 17.

Memorial services will be held at 3 p.m., Thursday in the Neil Chapel at Carillon with the Rev. Keith Wiseman and the Rev. Raymond Wolfe officiating. Services are under direction of RIX Funeral Directors.

He was born Aug. 17, 1910 in Hollis, Okla., and had lived in Avery, Lamesa, Stanton and Alpine, where he attended public schools and was a 1931 graduate of Sul Ross University. He was married Dec. 14, 1932, in Carlsbad, N.M. to Cordelia Wilkinson.

He was a member and former chairman of the administrative board of First United Methodist Church.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Francine Mayo in 1981, and a grandson, Alex Goff in 2000.

Surviving are his wife, Cordelia; a daughter, Edda Lynne Allen, of Santa Fe, N.M.; six sisters, Rene Hulsey of Polson, Mont., Pauline Owens of Brownwood, Mary Schank of Wichita,

Kan., Jane Ann Ireton of San Antonio, Monette Viau of Spring Valley, Fla. and Sally Robertson of El Paso; a brother, Karl Cox of Rogers, N.M.; three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Memorials are suggested to the Carillon Foundation, 1717 Norfolk Ave., Lubbock, 79416 or to a charity of the donor's choice.

Lorene Hodges

BIG SPRING — Lorene Hodges, 85, of Big Spring died Tuesday, April 17, following a brief illness.

Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Friday, April 20, in Trinity Memorial Park with Myers & Smith Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Hodges was born Feb. 1, 1916, in Temple. She married Alvis Clayton Hodges on April 21, 1934 in Merkel. He died May 6, 1993.

She had lived in Big Spring since 1942. She was a homemaker.

Survivors include one daughter, Marie Daniels of Big Spring; one son, Harlan Hodges of Midland; one sister, Jean Skeen of Tye; two brothers, Bert Harris of Merkel and Bo Harris of Abilene; six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Hate crimes vote halted in House and Senate

By Lisa Falkenberg
Associated Press

AUSTIN — A long-awaited vote on the hate crimes bill was abruptly halted in the House and Senate on Wednesday as the bill's Senate sponsor blamed Gov. Rick Perry for pressuring Republicans to pull their support of the vote.

"It is my understanding that the governor has gotten involved and has discouraged members from voting to bring the bill up," said Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston. He said he had enough supportive votes on Wednesday morning to bring up the bill in the Senate.

Perry denies Ellis' accusation, saying he spoke with Sen. Robert Duncan, R-Lubbock, about the bill but did not pressure him to change his vote.

"I don't think I tried to persuade him," Perry said. He said he told Duncan he was concerned that two Republican senators would not be present Wednesday for the hate crimes vote.

Perry has argued that the proposed hate crimes law would create "new classes of citizens" and

that all Texans are adequately protected under the current law.

After consulting with Ellis, House sponsor Rep. Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston, canceled the scheduled vote before debate began. The vote has been rescheduled for Thursday.

The James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act, named for the black man dragged to death behind a pickup in 1998, strengthens penalties for crimes motivated by race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry. The sexual orientation part of the bill, which enhances protections for gays and lesbians, has been the sticking point for conservatives.

"I'm convinced if members are left to their consciences on this bill, it will pass," Ellis said, adding that he would rather Perry let the legislation run its course. "My preference would be that he not get involved, that he not send out subliminal messages, he not give winks or nods."

Duncan said his talk with the governor didn't sway his decision not to support a Wednesday vote.

"I made my own decision," Duncan said. "I just told Senator Ellis that I couldn't be with

him today without the full membership here."

At least two Republicans, Sens. Florence Shapiro of Plano and Tom Haywood of Wichita Falls, were gone from the Capitol part of the day, said acting Lt. Gov. Bill Ratliff.

Republican Party of Texas spokesman Ted Royer said Ellis was the one using underhanded tactics to further his legislative agenda.

"Senator Ellis' sneaky attempt to ramrod a controversial bill through the state Senate while some members were absent undermines the integrity of the Texas Legislature," Royer said, adding that if Ellis really has the votes to pass the measure, "he should do so in the honorable way, in the light of day with all members present."

But Ellis said waiting for all members to be present for a vote is impractical with lawmakers' busy schedules.

"We would be bringing the wheels of government to a screeching halt if we had a rule that said everybody has to be in the chamber every time a vote comes up."

The House passed the hate

crimes bill last session, but it died in the Senate when critics complained it created unnecessary distinctions for homosexuals.

"I quite frankly will be embarrassed for my chamber and my colleagues if the bill does not pass the Texas Senate," Ellis said. "There's nothing but pure politics that can be used as a reason for not passing the bill... At least we have grown beyond the day in which people were against the bill for purely homophobic reasons and would state it. At least now they have to try and duck behind other issues."

Thompson and Ellis say the current law that punishes crimes committed with bias or prejudice as a motive is not strong enough.

Martin B. Cominsky, regional director for the Anti-Defamation League, said he is disappointed if the governor did intervene in the issue.

"I'm frustrated that the politics aren't letting people see what's practical and what's courageous for the people of Texas," said Cominsky, who flew in from Houston to observe the vote. "Today the politics took a turn that we weren't anticipating."

House panel approves moratorium measures

AUSTIN (AP) — The House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee on Wednesday approved two measures that could halt executions for two years in the nation's most active death penalty state.

The 5-4 vote on two proposed constitutional amendments came a week after a Senate panel endorsed similar legislation.

"We need to ensure that we execute the guilty and let the innocent go," said Rep. Juan Hinojosa, D-McAllen, chairman of the committee. "The spotlight was on with President Bush. The campaign showed various weaknesses in the criminal justice system and we need to fix them."

If the House and Senate proposals are approved by a two-thirds majority of both bodies, the resolutions would put the issue before voters in November.

Texas executed a record 40 inmates in 2000. Six have been put to death this year.

"There's no reason to have a moratorium," said Rep. Robert Talton, R-Pasadena. He voted against the House measures. "We probably have the best system in the country. Period. We are the leaders in penal code and crime and punishment."

If approved, one House proposal, like the Senate measure, would impose a two-year moratorium on executions in Texas while the state studies how it administers the death penalty.

The second House measure would give the governor authority to declare a moratorium.

Also like the Senate, the House committee's close vote on the issue was split along party lines.

Voting yes were Democratic Reps. Jim Dunning of Waco; Domingo Garcia of Dallas; Ann Kitchen of Austin; Trey Martinez Fischer of San Antonio; and Hinojosa.

Republicans Terry Keel of Austin; Rick Green of Dripping Springs; John Shields of San Antonio; and Talton voted against the bills.

Talton said he believed Texas defendants have full and fair access to the courts and that the moratorium efforts this session are politically motivated after the presidential campaign.

Getting the proposals before the full chambers will be a challenge, Talton predicted.

"Those bills will not see the light of day. I think they've seen

all the light they're going to get," he said.

Hinojosa said he was unsure if the bills would be scheduled to go before the full House.

The state's death penalty system came under intense national scrutiny during the 2000 presidential campaign of then-Gov. George W. Bush. Bush maintained that no innocent person had been executed in Texas, a belief shared by his successor, Republican Gov. Rick Perry.

"The governor does not believe a moratorium is necessary," said Perry spokesman Gene Acuna. "He certainly believes there are ways to make the criminal justice system better."

Anti-death penalty groups applauded the committee's actions.

"At a minimum, the governor of Texas should have the authority to declare a moratorium on executions," said Steve Hall of StandDown Texas.

Also on Wednesday, the Senate Criminal Justice Committee

heard testimony on a bill to ban executing mentally retarded inmates who have been convicted of capital murder.

The bill was expected to be left pending as lawmakers raised questions about whether the bill should be retroactive to cover inmates currently serving on death row and the standard for determining an inmate's mental retardation.

Similar legislation passed the Senate in 1999 but never was approved in the House. Of the 38 states that have the death penalty, 13 have banned executing the mentally retarded.

TODAY'S FUNERALS

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Odessa shooting

ODESSA — A man in condition Wednesday, Sheriff's deputy a domestic blot the 5600 block Street. "The investigation County Sheriff son. "We're the brother, who shot him in it was an accident.

An ambulance victim to Midland Hospital, where room doctor injuries. Lawmen release the name of the brother.

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POLICE REPORTS

Compiled from staff reports

Odessa shooting

ODESSA — A 43-year-old Odessa man was in stable condition Wednesday night at Medical Center Hospital after a man believed to be his brother shot him in the abdomen with a handgun, lawmen said.

The shooter remained at large late Wednesday.

At about 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Ector County Sheriff's deputies responded to a domestic disturbance call in the 5600 block of West 16th Street. "The case is still under investigation," said Ector County Sheriff Mark Donaldson. "We're still looking for the brother, we don't know if he shot him intentionally, or if it was an accident."

An ambulance took the victim to Medical Center Hospital, where emergency room doctors treated the injuries.

Lawmen declined to release the names of the victim or the brother.

Aggravated robbery

Jose Luis Jimenez, 22, of Midland was arrested by Midland County Sheriff's deputies at 8 a.m. Tuesday at the Midland Detention Center on a charge of aggravated robbery. No bond.

Probation violation

Steven Bradley Matthews, 40, of Midland was arrested by Midland Police officers at 8:24 p.m. Tuesday in the 1900 block of North Midland Drive on a charge of violating probation. No bond.

Probation violation

Isaac Sifuentes, 20, of Midland was arrested by Midland Police officers at 11:47 p.m. Tuesday in the 3200 west block of Wadley Avenue on a charge of violating probation. No bond.

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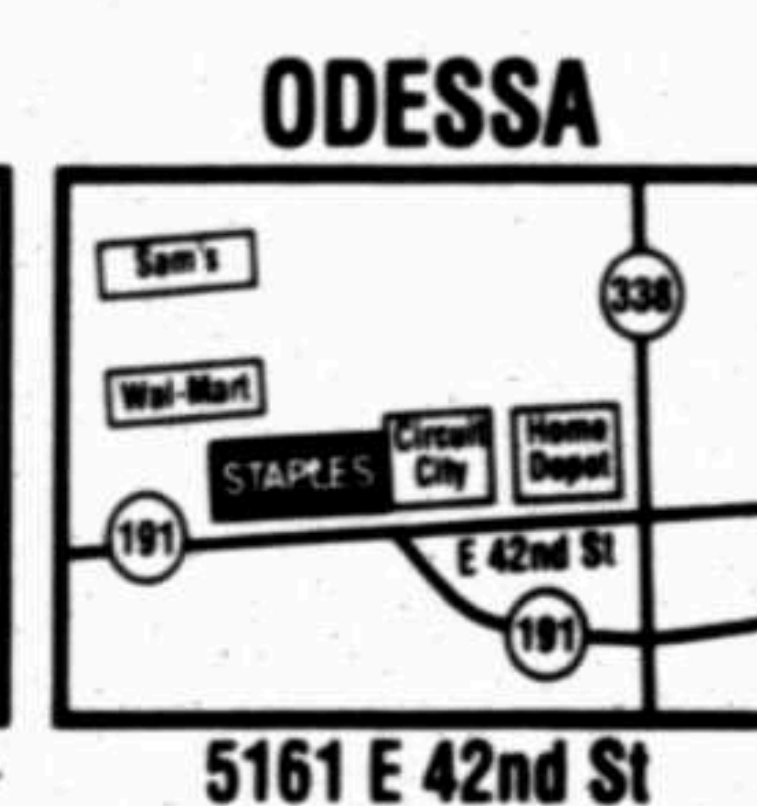
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Why

Over the last year Midland has taken a serious look at its economy. During the year 2000 the Midland Chamber of Commerce and all of our local banks sponsored 5 conferences on Economic Development. These conferences raised many questions and pointed out other communities successes in economic development. It became obvious that we needed to take positive steps. In late 2000 the Midland Assessment and Action Plan was started. Many concerned Midlanders raised money from government and private sources. The money was used to hire Consultants ANGELOU ECONOMIC ADVISORS INC. of Austin Texas. This firm is one of the nation's leading consultants in the area of economic development. They conducted a survey of the Permian Basin's economic situation. During this important conference Mr. Angelou and Dan Houston of his firm will present the findings of the study and their recommendations for future action by Midland. Other speakers with great insight into our economic future such as Ray Perryman will also speak.

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Program Agenda

8:00 Opening welcomes & remarks Recognize Committee Recognize Sponsors Recognize Public Officials Etc. Introduce First Speaker	10:45 Gregg Gothreaux, President Lafayette Economic Development Authority
8:10 Recent Performance of the local economy: Bobby Norman Midland-Odessa Regional Economic Index	11:30 MAAP Strategic Recommendations & Marketing (Angelos Angelou)
8:35 Introduce Next Speaker Current Trends in the Permian Basin Oil & Gas Industry Keith Wiser	12:15 Lunch
9:15 Introduce Dan Houston Midland Assessment & Action Plan (Community Assessment/SWOT)	12:45 Luncheon Speaker Dr. Ray Perryman
9:45 Morning Break	1:15 Panel Discussion Angelos Angelou Dan Houston Ray Perryman Keith Wiser Karr Ingham Kirk Edwards
10:15 Ken Burgess Introduce Angelos Angelou MAAP (Economic Assessment)	2:00 Adjourn



Midland Reporter-Telegram

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By Lee Passi
 Sports Writer

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By Anne M. Pe
 AP Sports Writer

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Pohorenec finishes semifinals at top of field in women's platform diving

By Lee Passmore
Sports Writer

On the list of competitors for the quarterfinals and semifinals in the women's platform event in the U.S. National Indoor Diving Championships at Mabee Memorial Aquatic Center Wednesday, Nicole Pohorenec was listed dead last.

There were 25 other competitors slated to take their turns before Pohorenec as the field would be whittled down to 18 for the semifinals and eventually to eight for Saturday's finals. But a place in line wasn't especially important to Pohorenec.

"I saw that I was last and I don't really have a favorite place to be as long as it's not first," said Pohorenec of Winter Springs, Fla. "You get to see what everybody else before you does and have a better idea of what you have to do."

As little as Pohorenec likes going first in the lineup, she didn't mind finishing there at the end of the day, even though she was always the last one to dive. Pohorenec finished with a total score of 417.72

after her nine dives, giving her the top score after the semifinals and establishing her as the one to beat.

With a score of 376.77 after eight dives, all Pohorenec had to do on the very last competitive dive of the day was avoid falling off the tower to surpass the eighth place score of Michelle Coryell and take a spot in the finals, scheduled for Saturday at 7 p.m. Not only did Pohorenec successfully complete her dive, a reverse 1 1/2 half, she scored enough to surpass Emily Hunter (who had a cumulative score of 407.07) for first place.

The results of the semifinals showed just how fickle the sport can be. Coryell, who was bumped from the finals on Pohorenec's last dive, held a six point lead over Pohorenec for the top spot after the quarterfinals.

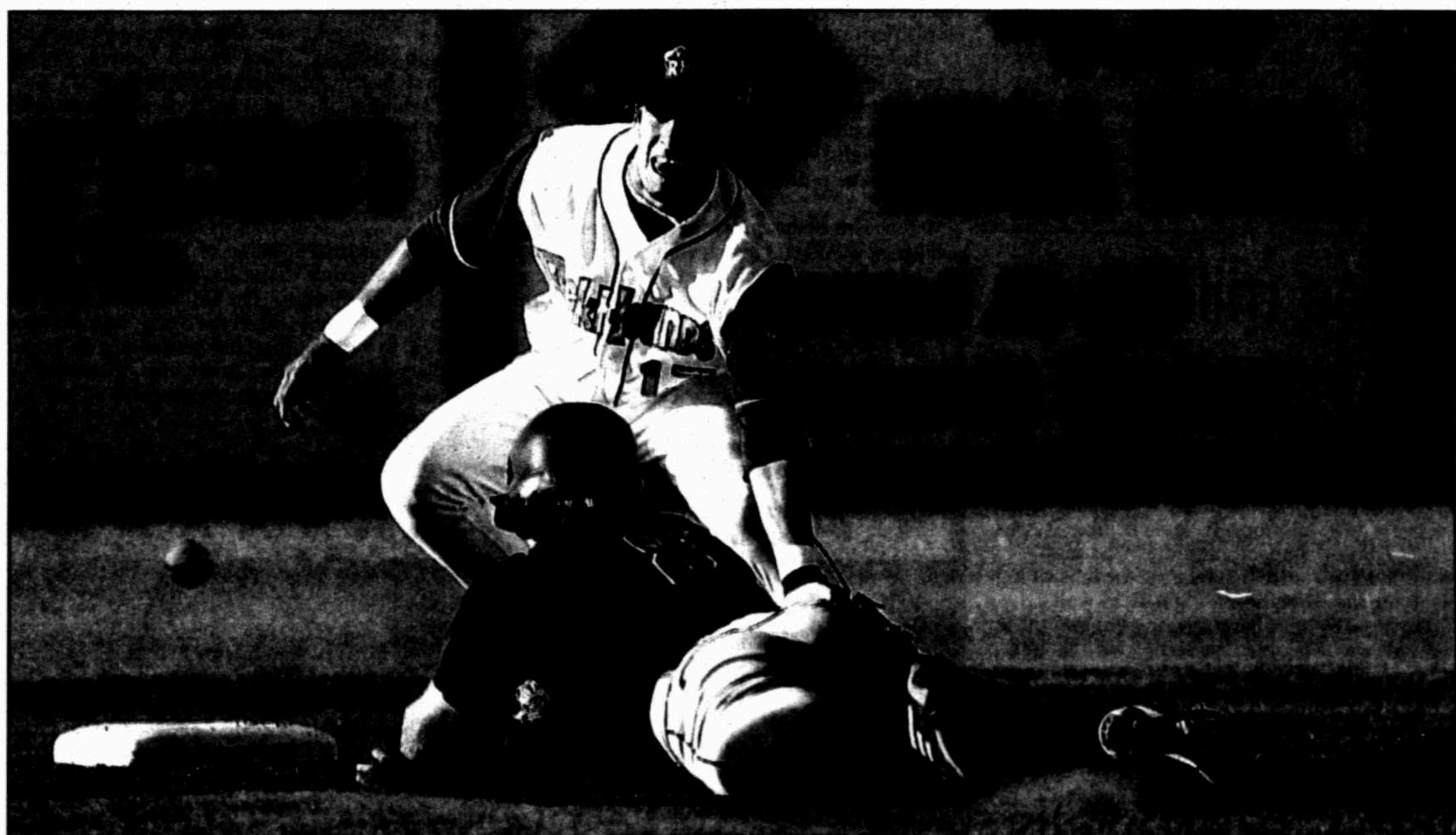
But Pohorenec took the lead at the end of the seventh round of dives, and held it at the end of each of the final two rounds as well. What she did perhaps better than anyone else in the field was avoid a disastrous score in either round.

Please see DIVING/4C



Brian Adamcik/Reporter-Telegram
Danielle Stramandi performs a dive Wednesday at the U.S. National Indoor Diving Championships at Mabee Memorial Aquatic Center.

MIDLAND ROCKHOUNDS



U. Frank Williams Jr./Reporter-Telegram
Round Rock's Eric Bruntlett steals second base as the ball gets away from Midland's Oscar Salazar in the first inning of their game Wednesday at Christensen Stadium. Round Rock defeated the RockHounds, 11-0, and left town with a four-game sweep of the series.

Express pitchers hurl 2-hitter to wrap up four-game sweep of RockHounds

By Terry Williamson
Sports Editor

The Round Rock Express put the finishing broom strokes on the Midland RockHounds at Christensen Stadium Wednesday night with some more lethal arm action.

Round Rock belted Midland by an 11-0 margin to complete a four-game sweep of this Texas League series as Express pitchers Greg Miller and Travis Smith combined for a two-hit shutout.

On Tuesday, Round Rock got a 1-0, three-hit combined shutout from Carlos Hernandez and Jeriome Robertson. Midland garnered only five hits in the last two days against the Round Rock hurlers.

And the Express matched those two-day totals of the RockHounds in the first inning on Wednesday to score four runs. They never looked back.

Miller was making his first start of the season

as he is making a comeback from shoulder tendinitis. Miller, who came to the Houston Astros' organization from the Boston Red Sox as part of the Carl Everett deal, has spent time in the majors.



Miller went five innings to get the win, allowing only one hit, no runs and two walks while striking out five Midland batters. But it wasn't the one-hit showing that excited Miller.

"I'm more pleased that I was able to go five innings than the fact that I gave up just one hit," Miller said. "I really didn't expect to go five innings in my first start."

"This team can really make it easy to pitch. They have scored runs all year. When you get up 7-0 quick, you know you just have to go out there and throw strikes. That takes so much pres-

sure off of you."

Miller gave up only a ground ball leadoff single to Oscar Salazar in the fourth inning, but he retired the next three 'Hounds to get out of that easily. He walked two batters in the fifth with signs of tiring somewhat, but still, Midland couldn't make him pay for it.

"The curveball was my kill pitch tonight," Miller said. "I had a lot of success when I needed it with that pitch."

The Express didn't lose much when Miller was replaced by Smith, who went the final four innings to pick up his first save since rookie ball in 1995.

"It's been a long time since I've had a save," Smith said. "I've been a starter most of my career and now I'm working back out of the pen."

Smith gave up a one out, ninth inning single to Todd Mensik. He had retired 10 batters in a

Please see 'HOUNDS/2C

MHS shakes up Permian's playoff plans

By Terry Williamson
Sports Editor

In what has been a frustrating softball season for Midland High with a host of injuries and six one-run losses in District 4-5A play, the Lady Bulldogs ended the 2001 season Wednesday with a victory that shakes up the league's state playoff race.

Midland High scored three runs in the sixth inning to defeat Odessa Permian, 3-0, leaving the playoff hopes of the Lady Panthers with a big question mark.

Permian desperately needed to win this game, one that would almost have that third place playoff spot wrapped in a neat package. However, the loss and a disturbing final day of action on Friday combine to make Permian's playoff hopes uncertain at best.

Permian is now 5-6 in 4-5A play and has a final date left with league leading and undefeated Abilene High on Friday. San Angelo Central is also 5-6, but it has a date with second place Midland Lee on Friday. And then there is another fly in the Permian ointment since 4-7 Abilene Cooper has a date with last place Odessa High on Friday.

It should be easy to see that this league finish could easily produce a three-way tie for third place to force a three-way playoff next Monday and Tuesday.

Midland High came into this game with elimination already determined. This was the last district game for the Lady Bulldogs, who finished the season at 4-8. If they had won just one of those six one-run losses, they, too, would be in the playoff hunt.

Still, MHS has monkeyed with this 4-5A race and even had a say on how things will end.

Sophomore Rachel Cherry was brilliant while pitching a two-hit shutout at Permian. The Lady Panthers did leave the bases loaded in the bottom of the seventh, but Cherry had little to do with that since two errors behind her produced the situation.

Cherry, however, pitched out of the jam by striking out Savannah Aguirre to end the game. Cherry K'd 13 Permian batters on the day in a stellar outing.

The only two hits to come off of Cherry were a leadoff single by Janel Alvarez in the second and a leadoff single by Michelle Perkins in the fifth. Cherry did hit three batters and walked another.

The two teams fought to a scoreless standoff through 5 1/2 innings before MHS broke through in a big way. Amanda Martin led off the explosion with a walk. She went to second on a wild pitch by Daneille Jennette and then scored on a single by Crystal Martinez.

That would be enough to win the game, but Stephanie Channess added the padding with a two-

Please see SOFTBALL/4C

M	
Softball	
Midland High	3
Od. Permian	0

Bonds in elite 500 HR club

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — His flubbed fly ball is now forgotten. Barry Bonds more than redeemed himself with a historic homer that arched high over the right-field wall and plopped into the bay.

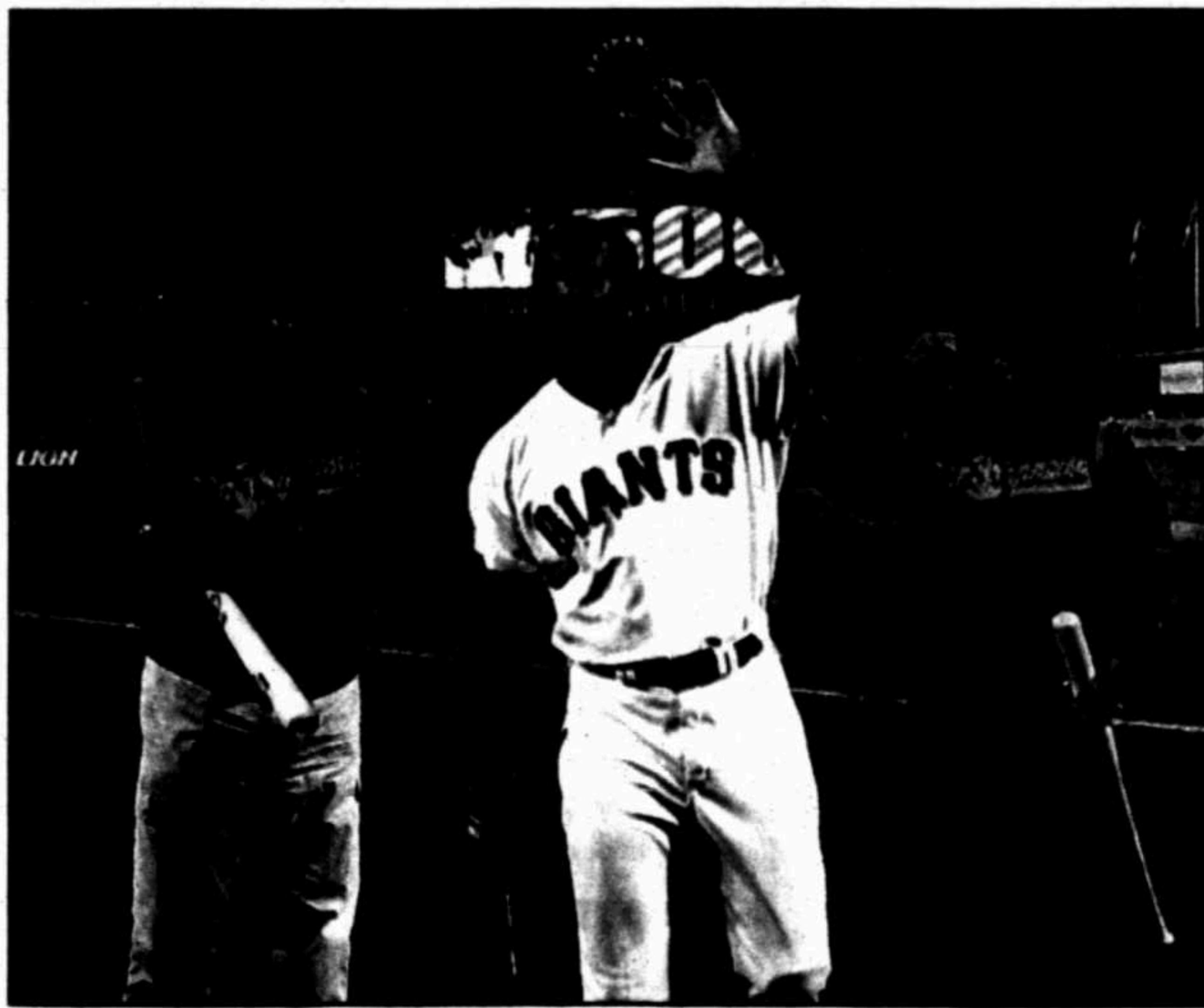
Even he was stunned. Bonds wiped away memories of the error the game before and joined the slugging elite Tuesday night with his 500th home run, just the 17th player to reach the milestone.

The two-run shot at Pacific Bell Park gave the Giants a 3-2 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers and sent Bonds on a joyful home-run trot.

Bonds had hit his 499th on Sunday in Milwaukee, but the three-time MVP and nine-time All-Star dropped Jeffrey Hammonds' eighth-inning fly, allowing three runs as the Brewers beat the Giants 7-4.

Bonds was haunted. The gaffe was replayed extensively as he dealt with the pressure of reaching 500.

"I had such a big, strange incident hap-



AP Photo
Barry Bonds, center, celebrates hitting the 500th home run of his career late Tuesday night in San Francisco. With him are a couple of other noted sluggers: his father Bobby, left, and his godfather, Willie Mays, right.

pen to me in Milwaukee," he said late Tuesday night. "And then a wonderful thing happened today."

As Bonds watched the eighth-inning blast sail out of the park and into San Francisco Bay, he leapt in the air before rounding the bases. Afterward, he was joined by his father, former major leaguer Bobby Bonds; his wife; and Hall of Famers Willie Mays and Willie

McCovey, who also hit 500 home runs. "I wanted to run off the field and hug my wife, my dad, my mom, and to thank the Giants' organization. Then I started looking for Willie (Mays). It was great they came out here," Bonds said.

Mays, Bonds' godfather, hit 660 homers, third on the career list behind Hank Aaron (755) and Babe Ruth (714).

Please see BONDS/2C

Mavs reach 53-win plateau as regular season finishes up

By Jaime Aron
AP Sports Writer

DALLAS — Even at their optimistic best, the Dallas Mavericks never expected this season to turn out this good.

Michael Finley scored 14 of his 24 points in the first quarter as the Mavericks beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 120-100 Wednesday night for their 53rd victory, matching the second-best record in franchise history.

It's the most wins Dallas has had since 1987-88, which is also the last time the Mavs won a playoff game. They return to the postseason for the first time in 11 years on Saturday in Utah.

"I think before the season not a lot of people thought we would get a chance to play in the playoffs, but now that the season is over, people expect us to do more than just make it," said Steve Nash, who had 13 points and seven assists.

"Now they expect us to win and we expect us to win. I think that is the most amazing part of the transformation."

Minnesota finished 47-35 with loss-

es in four of its last five, and all the defeats on the road. The Timberwolves open the playoffs Saturday in San Antonio.



With Dallas' playing for milestones and Minnesota playing out the schedule, the result was predictable. The Timberwolves showed their indifference before tipoff by placing Kevin Garnett on the injured list with a bruised left calf. He'll be back for the playoffs.

"Our best play was that no one got hurt and we got some guys some rest," coach Flip Saunders said. "The season is over and the fun begins with San Antonio."

Finley personally outscored Minnesota for much of the first quarter and the Mavericks led by as many as 17. The margin was 31 by the third quarter as Dallas, playing its final regular-season game in Reunion Arena, won its fourth straight.

Finley made 10 of 14 shots, including

Please see MAVS/4C

LOCAL SPORTS

MCA golf wins TCAL

KERRVILLE — Midland Classical Academy won both the boys and the girls Texas Christian Athletic League Class 2A golf championships at the Shriner Municipal Golf Course on Wednesday.

For the boys, Matt Tower took individual medalist honors and K.C. Stallings finished third. Other members of the boys team included Bo Ritchie, Dustin Barker and Gary Johnson.

For the girls, they swept the top three medalist spots respectively with Kendall Doan, Hillary Posey and Emily Minor. The other team member was Deonna Pyaett.

The teams were coached by Jon Snell and Tyler Beard.

Mid. Christian qualifies 24

DENTON — Both Midland Christian boys and girls track teams finished second at last week's TAPPS District 1-4A meet and qualified 24 individuals for the region meet in Denton starting today.

For the girls, who were second with 121 points, Angie Berryhill goes in as a favorite having won three individual events at district. Berryhill won the 100 meter intermediate hur-

dles (15.56 seconds), 300 low hurdles (47.65) and pole vault (10 feet, 6 inches).

The other individual winner for the Midland Christian girls was Hayley Whiteside, who won the triple jump with a leap of 33-11. Whiteside was also on the winning 800 relay team with Dani Adams, Melissa Donnell and Kendyl Washburn (1:51.00).

The boys finished second with 151 points. Midland Christian's David Guerrero was the high point individual for the meet, winning the 100 (10.88) and the 200 (22.52), and was also on the winning 400 relay team with Cad Davis, Tony Joseph and Thomas Minihan (43.75).

Other boys winners for Midland Christian included James Vallee in the 800 (2:05.00), Justin Kuethe in the pole vault (10-6) and Chase Feeler in the long jump (20-1 3/4).

Midland Christian qualifiers for region meet: Katie Arnold, Carly Crockett, Marice Deffenbaugh, Danielle Dobbs, Allison Savendra, Brian Nevans, Jake Price, Jamie Beehney, Jacob Cannon.

MUGS holding ceremony

The Midland United Girls Softball Association is holding its opening ceremonies this evening at 5:30 p.m. at the Ulmer Park Complex.

There will be 47 recreation teams and 17 competitive teams for girls ranging in age from 4

to 18. The fast pitch teams will total over 700 participants.

MCC ladies win match

ODESSA — The Midland Country Club Ladies team defeated the team from The Club at Mission Dorado Wednesday in a challenge match at Mission Dorado.

Midland Country Club won with a net team score of 71.92, beating out Dorado's score of 75.00. Beth Brimer had the low gross score for MCC with an 89 while Betty Perkins had the low gross for Dorado with an 86. Betty Ewan had the low net score for MCC with a 66 while Susie Meador had the low net for Dorado with a 72.

Last day to buy banquet tickets

Today is the last day to purchase tickets for Saturday's banquet sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at First Baptist Fellowship Hall featuring University of Texas quarterback Major Applewhite.

Tickets, which are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, are available at Stadium Sporting Goods. The banquet, which begins at 6 p.m., will also feature an auction where the winner will receive a UT football helmet signed by Applewhite.

Rays fire Rothschild, hand McRae manager's position

By Fred Goodall
AP Sports Writer

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Hal McRae didn't expect good news when his telephone rang at 7 a.m.

He had been tipped off that Larry Rothschild had been fired as manager of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and it wouldn't have surprised him if changes in the coaching staff were being made, too.

"I didn't know what to think," McRae said, recalling the conversation Wednesday with general manager Chuck LaMar.

"I was shocked when Chuck asked me to manage the ballclub and to come over as soon as possible to discuss the situation. I thought the worst. I thought: 'What, me too? What did I do?'"

Hired as the Devil Rays' bench coach last November, McRae takes over a team that stumbled to three consecutive last-place finishes under Rothschild and a 4-10 start this season.

He didn't make any bold predictions, just the promise to do whatever he can to turn the club's performance around.

"The only reason you take a job is because you think you can do the job," said McRae, who managed Kansas City from May 1991 through 1994, posting winning records in three of his four seasons.

"I feel I'm better prepared to manage now. When I managed in K.C., I hadn't managed before. I had gone from a player to a manager, and my difficulty was I wasn't far enough removed from being a player to manage," he said. "Now, I have some experience."

I'm more mature, more understanding and think more like a coach than a player. ... I thought I proved I could manage my final year in Kansas City, which was too little, too late."

He played 19 major league seasons with the Royals and Cincinnati Reds, batting over .300 six times and appearing in four World Series. He was 286-277 as manager of the Royals and spent six seasons as a hitting instructor for Cincinnati and Philadelphia before accepting a job with the Devil Rays last fall.

Rothschild's firing, the first of the 2 1/2-week-old season, came in the wake of the Devil Rays' 10-0 loss to Boston in their 499th game. He had been the manager for every one, compiling a 205-294 record.

"Hopefully we hit rock bottom and from here it will change," the 47-year-old manager said after the game, in which Tampa Bay made two more errors and allowed six unearned runs to boost its total to 24 in 14 games.

All but two of the unearned runs had come in the team's 10 losses.

"Baseball is a tough business. Things happen," first baseman Fred McGriff said. "I think probably deep down inside, Larry is probably happy and relieved. I'm pretty sure everything was getting to him. I'm sure he'll resurface and be fine."

First-base coach Jose Cardenal also was let go. Bullpen coach Terry Collins was shifted to third base coach; third base coach Billy Hatcher moved to bench coach; Lee May replaced Cardenal at first base; and Darren

Daulton was promoted from catching instructor to bullpen coach.

LaMar, who concedes he has made some poor personnel decisions that have impeded the club's progress, said there was no single reason for Rothschild's dismissal. He insisted the move wasn't made because of the team's record or a growing rift in the clubhouse between the players and former manager.

"I felt the team under Larry competed as hard as it could compete until the last two weeks," said LaMar, who stunned many — including Rothschild — when he retained the manager after last season.

"I know we've gotten off to a tough start and it would be easy to say Larry's the scapegoat. But that's not the case. ... Our personnel decisions, good and bad, have been well documented, so it wasn't based so much on wins and losses as it was just a feeling that this club needed to head in a different direction."

Rothschild was hired as the Devil Rays' first manager after serving as pitching coach for the then-World Series champion Florida Marlins.

The Devil Rays were nearly flawless in opening the season with an 8-1 victory over Toronto, but it was pretty much all downhill after that. After playing sloppily and losing the second game of the series 11-8, the Blue Jays took the finale 11-0.

The skid reached seven games when the Devil Rays dropped the first five games on a 10-game, 11-day road trip that may have sealed Rothschild's fate.

BONDS: Giant reaches milestone

(From 1C)

(714). McCovey is 11th with 521. Joe Figone, piloting an inflatable power boat, scooped up the ball after it splashed into McCovey Cove — an inlet of the bay — with a hand-held net.

Bonds said they were in "negotiations" with Figone over the

ball, which some have estimated to be worth more than \$500,000. Figone, a former groundskeeper for the Giants at Candlestick Park, did not return phone calls Wednesday.

Rich Aurilia started the eighth for the Giants with a triple off Dodgers reliever Terry Adams. Bonds was hoping for at least a fly ball to score Aurilia, tying the game.

The pivotal pitch to Bonds was a 2-0 slider. The sellout crowd let out a gasp as the ball came off his bat, flew high over the right-field wall and dropped into the water.

"Barry has a flair for the dramatic," McCovey said. "I thought he would hit in a situation like this."

Bonds said, "I couldn't believe I hit it."

"Everything was in slow motion. It looked like it was stopped in midair," he said.

He looked up at the fans sitting behind the right-field wall. "Then I saw it went past those people," he said, "and I thought, 'Wow! I did it!'"

Bonds is the first player to reach 500 homers since Mark McGwire did it in 1999.

'HOUNDS: Team falls

(From 1C)

row until Mensik got his hit.

"I didn't even know that we had a one-hitter going," Smith said. "I do know that this is the best pitching staff I've ever been around. These guys don't go out there thinking they are going to win, they know they're going to win. It just makes it so much fun going to the park."

Offensively, Round Rock got three hits each from Eric Bruntlett, Roy Huffman, Jason Lane and Colin Porter. Charley Carter and Carlos Maldonado each got two hits in the 18-hit attack. Maldonado drove in three runs.

All 11 runs scored without the aid of a home run, a rare oddity at Christensen Stadium with the wind blowing out.

The Express has now won 10 consecutive games and now head to El Paso, a team that has won only one of 14 games this season.

Midland will now begin a new series with the San Antonio Missions today at 7 p.m. The Rock-

Hounds are still looking for their first home win of the season.

Justin Lehr, who won his first two decisions with Midland, took the loss, giving up nine hits in five innings and five earned runs. Reliever Chris Enochs gave up five runs in 2/3 innings. Bryan Mazur and Claudio Galva finished up, shutting down the Express over the final three innings of play.

Round Rock 11, Midland 0	
Round Rock	ab r h bi
Bruntlett ss	6 2 3 1
Huffman 3b	4 2 3 1
Berros 2b	1 0 0 0
Lane lf	5 3 3 1
Carter 1b	4 3 2 2
Porter cf	5 0 3 2
Morillo dh	5 0 0 0
Maldonado c	5 0 2 3
Logan rf	5 1 1 0
Alfaro 2b	3b 5 0 1 0
Totals	45 11 18 10
Round Rock	ab r h bi
Miller W-10	5 0 1 0 0 2 5
Smith S-1	4 0 1 0 0 0 3
Midland	400 025 000 —11
E-Mensik, Hochgesang, DP-Midland 1, LOB-RR 9, Midland 5, 2B-Lane, Carter, 3B-Porter, SB-Bruntlett, Salazar.	
IP H R ER BB SO	
Round Rock	
Miller W-10	5 0 1 0 0 2 5
Smith S-1	4 0 1 0 0 0 3
Midland	
Lehr L-2-1	5 0 9 6 5 0 3
Enochs	0 2 5 5 5 2 0
Mazur	2 1 3 0 0 3 1
Galva	1 0 1 0 0 0 0
WP-Enochs, HBP-by Miller (Hochgesang), T-2-41, Attn-2,150.	

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Hidalgo cf 4 2 2 1 S
Dwight rf 4 0 0 0 S
Amaro c 4 0 0 0 B
Truby 3b 3 0 1 1 A
Rylands p 2 0 0 0 K
Wfrk p 0 0 0 0 K
Blinn p 0 0 0 0 O
Mered p 1 1 1 0 O
Muckin p 0 0 0 0 E

Totals 31 4 6 4 To
Houston 020
Pittsburgh 100
E-Lugo (3), DP:
LOB-Houston 3, Pitt
Hidalgo (3), Vander Wal
Meares (2), HR-Abreu (3),
go (4), Vander Wal (3),
CS-Kendall (4), S-Bagwell

Houston
Rylands L-0-1 5-23
Wfrk p 1 0 0 0 0
Bottelner 1
Muckson 1
Pittsburgh
Truby 3b 3 0 1 1 A
Arroyo W-2-1 2
Manzanillo 1-23
Sauerbeck 1-3
Silva
HBP-by Manzanillo
2-34 A-20-339 (37.8)

CUBS 4, PHILADELPHIA 3

First game
PHILA
ab r h bi

Giville cf 5 1 3 0 E
Tlee 1b 5 0 0 0 M
Rolen 3b 4 1 1 0 B
Abreu rf 4 0 0 1 3
Lbrth cf 4 0 1 0 Z
Burrell lf 5 1 3 2 G
Man 2b 4 0 2 0 M
Rollins ss 4 0 2 0 F
BChen p 2 0 0 0 F
Ducy p 1 0 0 0 G
Padilla p 0 0 0 0 T
Kuhn p 1 0 1 0 O
Bittaco p 0 0 0 0 F

Totals 39 313 37 Tot
Philadelphia 010
Chicago 202
E-MOAnderson
Philadelphia 12, Chic
roll (3), 3B-Eyoun
HR-Burrell (2), SB-
Rolen (1), SF-Abreu

Philadelphia
BChen L-0-1 5-23
Padilla 1
Bottelner 1
Chicago
Tapan W-3-0 5-23
Duncan 2-3
Fierro 1-1
Farnsworth 1-3
Fassero 5-7 1-1
T-2-39 A-0 (39.8)

CUBS 5, PHILADELPHIA 2

Second game
PHILA
ab r h bi

Rollins ss 4 0 1 0 B
Tlee 1b 4 0 0 0 M
Rolen 3b 3 1 0 0 B
Abreu rf 3 1 0 0 S
Burrell lf 4 0 0 0 M
Ducy cf 4 1 1 0 Z
Kuhn 2b 4 0 1 0 H
GBritt c 3 0 2 0 G
Wolf p 1 0 0 0 E
Man 2b 4 0 2 0 M
Crosby p 0 0 0 0 F
Brook p 0 0 0 0 F
Gomes p 0 0 0 0 O
TPerz ph 1 0 0 0 O
Cramer p 0 0 0 0 O
Lbrth lf 1 0 1 0 Z

Totals 33 3 6 3 Tot
Philadelphia 000 0
Chicago 100 3
LOB-Philadelphia
2B-GBennett (1), L
Hundley (2), HR-
RBWhite (3), S-Bere

Philadelphia
Wol L-0-3 4-1
Crosby 0
Brook 2
Gomes 1
Cramer 1
Chicago
Bere W-3-0 8-4
Fyffe
Fassero 5-8 1-3 1
Crosby pitched to 2 b
5th, Bere pitched to 2 b
T-2-54 A-26-793 (3)

EXPLOS 7, MONTREAL 6

NEW
MONTREAL
ab r h bi

Bronson cf 4 1 1 0 L
Vidro 2b 5 1 2 3 M
Tate 3b 3 1 0 0 B
Mdrca 3b 1 0 0 0 Z
Vgrr rf 4 1 1 0 V
Sggnr lf 0 0 0 0 P
Svans 1b 5 1 1 0 B
Bridley lf 4 0 1 0 D
OCbra ss 4 1 2 1 P
Barrett c 4 0 1 0 O
Vazquez p 3 1 2 0 T
Stewart p 0 0 0 0 O
GMota p 1 0 0 0 T
Urbina p 0 0 0 0 W
Totals 38 712 77

Montreal 013 3
New York 010 0
E-Tate (4), Bridle
(1), DP-New York 1,
al 7, New York 6, 2B-
3B-OCabrera (1), H-
SB-Bridley (2), OCab-

Standings
EASTERN CONF
Atlantic Div
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z-Philadelphia 56 26
x-Miami 50 32
x-New York 48 34
x-Orlando 43 39
Boston 36 46
New Jersey 26 56
Washington 19 63

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 Amanda Coetzer (4), C
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 6, 6-4.

NHL Playoffs

Maple Leafs 3, Senators
 Ottawa 1-0
 Toronto 2-1
 Period 1: Ottawa 1-0
 Lacroix, Fisher, 2-30. To
 result 1 (Berg, Yushkevich
 3, Toronto, Perrault 2 (Bere
 2, Toronto, 1-0.
 McCabe 1 (Sundin, Robert
 Third Period—None
 Shots on goal—Ottawa 1
 Toronto 10-11—23
 Offsides—Ottawa 0-1
 Toronto 1 of 4 Goals—Ottawa
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Capitals 4, Penguins
 Washington 1-1 1, 2
 Pittsburgh 0-1 1, 2
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 Rice—310 001 000 —
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 Stein—Hercules, Billy, Jack
 Phil Barzila (8) and Phil G.
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Transactions

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 Randy Kleis to Columbus.
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National League
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COLLEGE
NCAA—Placed Northern football program on probation for using ineligible players for using ineligible players to ensure the university for institutional control because changed the player's grades.
AMERICA EAST C
NCE—Added: Birmingham men's assistant basketball coach.
CINCINNATI—Announced: Mick Cronin, men's basketball coach, to take position with Louisville.
NEW HAMPSHIRE UN
—Announced G Ty Conkle three-year contract with the Oilers of the NHL.
SOUTH CAROLINA—D Pat Fleming from the football unspecified rules violations.
TEXAS-EL PASO—Suspended Eugene Costello from the basketball indefinitely, after being marijuana possession.

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It's the only truth
world event for me



Findings

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COLLEGE
NCAA—Placed Northern Iowa football program on probation for failing to provide adequate safeguards for using an ineligible player.
INSURED—The university has agreed to give the state a financial control because it changed the player's grades.
AMERICA EAST C
ANCE—Added: Birmingham men's assistant basketball coach.
CINCINNATI—Announced: formation of Mick Cronin, men's basketball coach, to take position with Louisville.
NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIV.
ANCE—Announced G Ty Conkle, three-year contract with the Oilers of the NHL.
SOUTH CAROLINA—Dr. Pat Fleming from the football team to take over as an unspecified rules violator.
TEXAS-EL PASO—Suspended: Eugene Costello from the basketball team indefinitely, after being found guilty of marijuana possession.

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100

MAVS: Dallas wins

(From 1C)

3-for-4 on 3-pointers, and hit the bench for good early in the fourth quarter. When the game ended, he flung his shoes into the crowd. He later emerged in the locker room wearing sunglasses.

"This is my playoff look," the usually subdued Finley said. "This is a good feeling to know there's a tomorrow. It's great for the organization. It's going to be good to go to practice tomorrow."

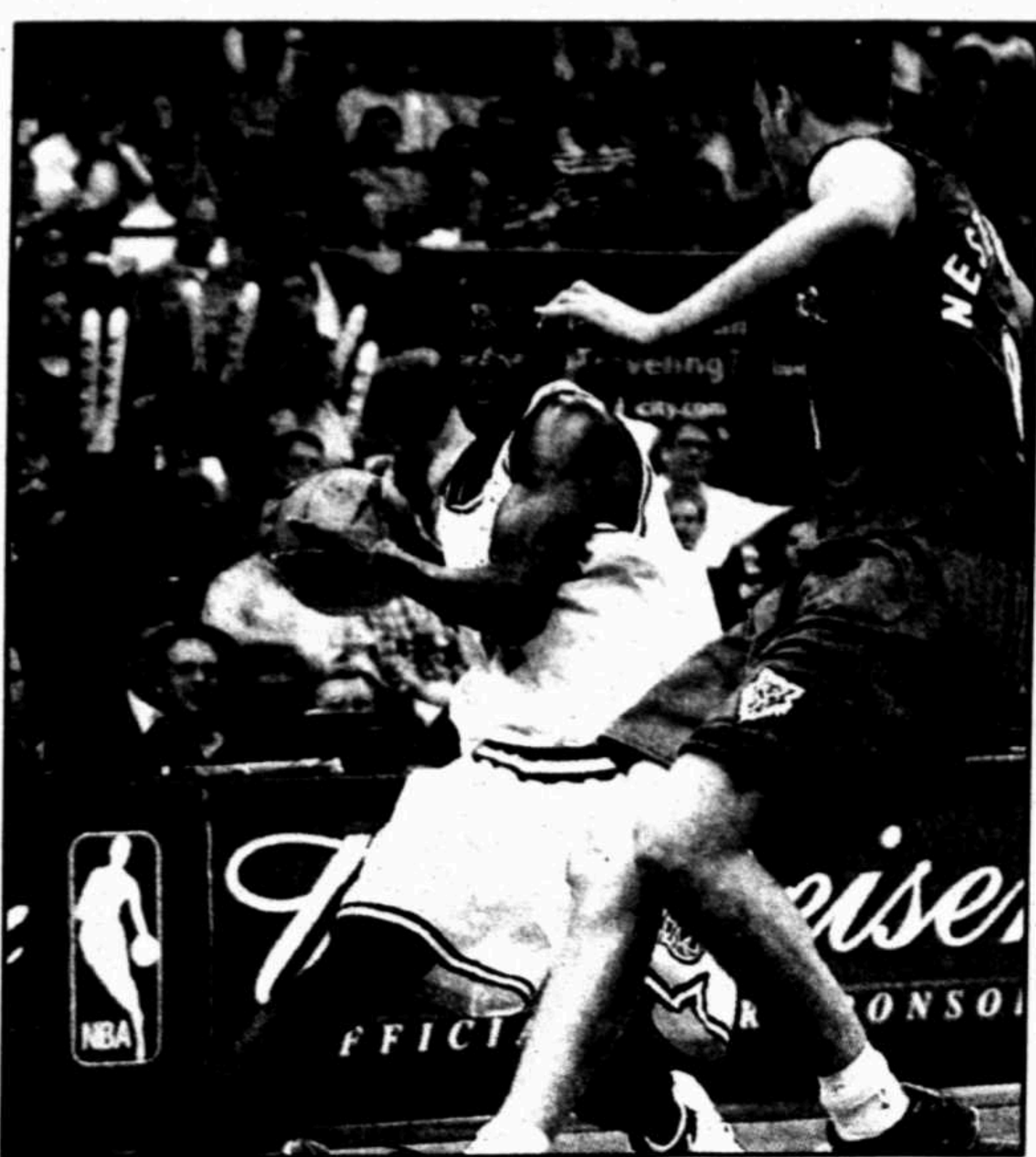
The Timberwolves emptied their bench by halftime and the Mavericks did so by the third quarter. Every player on both teams scored.

At one point in the second quarter, Dallas had players from five countries on the court: Dirk Nowitzki (Germany), Steve Nash (Canada), Eduardo Najera (Mexico), Wang Zhizhi (China) and Vernon Maxwell (United States).

Wang played a season-high 17 minutes and scored 13 points. And, for the second time in his eight-game career, he hit the basket that guaranteed Mavericks fans free chulupus, drawing thunderous cheers. He acknowledged it with a smile and wave of his index finger.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 15 points to finish with a team-best scoring average of 21.8 points. He fell 0.5 ppg shy of the record for a foreigner set by the late Drazen Petrovic in 1992-93.

Finley played a season-low 24 minutes, but it was enough to make him the league leader in



Dallas' Michael Finley, left, drives against the Minnesota Timberwolves' Rasho Nesterovic during the fourth quarter Wednesday in Dallas. Finley scored 24 points in the Mavericks' 120-100 win.

minutes per game at 42, just ahead of Allen Iverson. It's the second straight year he's done that and the third time in four years.

By not playing, Garhett secured a nice statistical feat of his own. His averages of 22 points, 11.4 rebounds and five assists make him the seventh player to have multiple 20-10-5 seasons and the fifth to do it in consecutive seasons. The last was Larry Bird in 1983-84 and '84-85, the end of his record run of five straight.

Chauncey Billups led Minnesota with 21 points in 19 minutes. Felipe Lopez had 18 points and 10 rebounds. Tom Hammond, Garnett's replacement on the roster, scored four points and fouled out in 16 minutes.

"This was not the real Timberwolves team tonight," Lopez said.

Notes: A halftime tribute to Reunion Arena included appearances by former players Mark Aguirre, Derek Harper, Rolando Blackman and Brad Davis, plus former coach Dick Motta and former owners Don Carter and Ross Perot Jr. Current owner Mark Cuban got the loudest cheer and ex-Mav Jason Kidd the loudest boos when he was shown on a video. ... Minnesota's William Avery was 1-for-11, including 0-for-5 on 3-pointers. ... Dallas went 12-6 in their final 18 games, 16 of which were against teams with winning records. ... By beating Minnesota for the sixth time in nine tries, Dallas evened the all-time series at 28-28.

Playoff schedule released after Knicks lock up fourth in East

Associated Press

The NBA released the playoff schedule rather quickly Wednesday night.

For the next two weeks, that kind of haste will be missed.

All the first-round matchups became finalized when the New York Knicks defeated the Detroit Pistons 94-88 to clinch the fourth seed in the Eastern Conference and homecourt advantage in the first round.

Also Wednesday, Toronto defeated Washington 98-92 to lock up the fifth seed ahead of Charlotte.

"We are looking forward to what we think will be one of our most competitive and unpredictable playoffs in years," commissioner David Stern said.

The Western Conference matchups were finalized after Tuesday night's games, and the NBA released the playoff schedule for that conference during the afternoon.

With the best-of-five first round spread over 14 days, there will be plenty of downtime around the league.

The San Antonio Spurs and Minnesota Timberwolves, for instance, will have four full days off between Games 2 and 3. The teams play each other Saturday

and Monday, then don't play again until the following Saturday.

The Trail Blazers and Lakers will have three days off between Games 1 and 2, and Dallas and Utah will have the same amount of time off between Games 2 and 3.

In the East, the Knicks and Raptors will have three days off after Game 1 Sunday, while the 76ers and Pacers will have three days off between Games 2 and 3. The league switched to a longer first round last season to eliminate having mid-week games competing against each other for viewers.

There will be eight games played this weekend.

Saturday's schedule includes Philadelphia-Indiana, Dallas-Utah, Minnesota-San Antonio and Charlotte-Miami. Sunday's games are Toronto-New York, Phoenix-Sacramento, Portland-Los Angeles and Orlando-Milwaukee.

All the games, except Hornets-Heat and Magic-Bucks, will be shown nationally on NBC. Turner Sports will televise the other two.

Several teams placed players on the injured list Wednesday to sit them out of meaningless games.

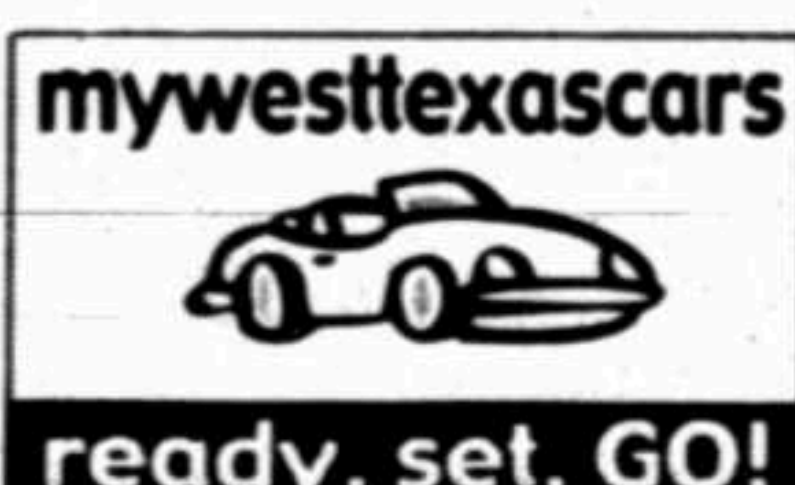
Among them were Miami's Anthony Mason, Minnesota's Kevin Garnett and Philadelphia's Dikembe Mutombo.

The Sixers, who already had Allen Iverson on the injured list, didn't fare well without them as they lost 92-86 to the Bulls. Despite the victory, Chicago still finished with the league's worst record — 15-67.

Iverson won the scoring race with an average of 31.1, with Jerry Stackhouse of the Pistons second. Stackhouse, who entered Wednesday night's game averaging 29.8 points, needed to score 130 to catch Iverson.

Reggie Miller finished with the league's best free throw percentage — 92.8 — and Mutombo finished as the leading rebounder (13.5) for the second straight season.

Jason Kidd of Phoenix led the league in assists for the third consecutive year. Iverson led the league in steals and Theo Ratliff finished first in blocks per game.



Bucs spoil Reynolds' debut

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Houston Astros pitcher Shane Reynolds isn't usually this upbeat after a loss.

Reynolds was roughed up in his first start of the season, as John Vander Wal went 4-for-4 with a home run and two RBIs to lead the Pittsburgh Pirates to an 8-4 win Wednesday night.

Reynolds (0-1) was making his first start since July 29. His 2000 season ended early because of degenerative disks in his lower back, and he was late to spring training because of surgery to repair his left knee, which he injured while jogging in December.

Reynolds allowed seven runs

— four earned — and nine hits in 5 2/3 innings. He walked two and struck out five.

"I got some pitches up in bad situations but all in all I felt good," he said. "My knee felt good, my back felt good and I felt like my control was there. I just got some pitches up at the wrong time."

A pretty good indication of Reynolds' focus came when he asked if the 24-degree wind-chill factor affected him at all.

"I didn't get cold at all," he said. "I didn't really feel it at all."

Vander Wal's second career four-hit game helped the Pirates win consecutive games for the second time this season. He hit a solo homer in the first, doubled and scored in the fourth and had

an RBI single in the sixth.

Vander Wal played in right field after spending the past couple games at first base for the injured Kevin Young. Vander Wal, who asked to be traded before the season, has improved his average to .341 on the season.

"This was the first game since the regular season started where I felt really comfortable at the plate," he said. "I felt good coming out of spring training but then I felt like I lost it in the first game of the season. Hitting is a battle."

Brian Giles and Pat Meares also hit RBI doubles in the fourth.

Pittsburgh broke the game open with three unearned runs in the sixth, helped by shortstop Julio Lugo's error on a potential double-play ball.

DIVING: Pohorenc stands first

(From 1C)

"If you get 6 1/2 to 7 on all of your dives you're going to be in the finals no matter what," said Pohorenc.

Pohorenc seemed to carry more momentum into the semis than any other competitor. She was as low as sixth in the standings after her fourth dive, but in the final dive of the quarterfinals, she had her best individual score of the day and took the second best score into the semifinals.

"After my five optional dives were over with I knew all I had to do was nail my dives in the semis," said Pohorenc. "My required dives I thought I'd nail pretty well so I wasn't as worried about the semifinals."

The 18-year-old who competes for Team Orlando Diving admits to being disappointed with a couple of dives in the quarterfinals, claiming she didn't hit a pair of back 2 1/2 dives the way she would have liked. Pohorenc vows to work on them between now and Saturday.

Although the finals are a brand new round, it's not as if what the

divers did in the semifinals won't count at all on Saturday, which helps Pohorenc.

"Your optional dives don't count and they throw those out," said Pohorenc of carrying points into the finals. "It's good to have the required dives count. I don't know how many points that's going to give me but I'm sure it will help."

As consistent as Pohorenc was in the quarter and semifinals, she looks like one of the competitors to shoot for on Saturday. It's a place she says she likes being.

"I like going in with a lead but I don't want to have a big head about it," said Pohorenc.

There was plenty of company at the top for Pohorenc as only 2.07 points separated the second and fourth place divers. Kimiko Hirai Soldati finished just behind Hunter (the youngest diver in the field at 16) with 406.05 points while Nicci Fusaro was fourth with 405.00 points.

Earlier in the day, the men also held quarterfinal and semifinal rounds in the 3-meter competition, the finals for which will be

held at 7 p.m. Saturday. A pair of members of last year's U.S. Olympic team held the top two spots, as Troy Dumais led with 633.69 points followed by Mark Ruiz with 597.30. Defending champion Justin Dumais is in third with 579.57 points.

The competition resumes today with the women's 1-meter quarterfinals and semifinals starting at 10 a.m. The men's platform quarterfinals and semifinals are scheduled for 3 p.m. while the women's 1-meter final and men's platform synchronized final are scheduled for 7 p.m.

Here are the divers who advanced to the finals after Wednesday's quarterfinal and semifinal rounds at the U.S. National Indoor Diving Championships at Mabee Memorial Aquatic Center.

Men's 3-meter: 1. Troy Dumais, University of Texas, 633.69; 2. Mark Ruiz, Team Orlando Diving, 597.30; 3. Justin Dumais, University of Texas, 579.57; 4. Tom Davidson, Indiana University, 553.74; 5. Matt Bricker, Team Orlando Diving, 540.96; 6. Aaron Kirkpatrick, Unattached, 528.96; 7. Brandon Hutto, South Carolina Divers, 516.78; 8. Kyle Prandi, University of Miami, 513.66.

Women's Platform: 1. Nicole Pohorenc, Team Orlando Diving, 417.72; 2. Emily Hunter, Cincinnati Slingshots, 407.07; 3. Kimiko Hirai Soldati, Woodlands Diving Team, 406.05; 4. Nicci Fusaro, Unattached, 405.00; 5. Jamie Watkins, Unattached, 396.42; 6. Danielle Stramand, Unattached, 395.46; 7. Erin Sones, Unattached, 389.19; 8. Trisha Tunison, Woodlands Diving Team, 386.65.

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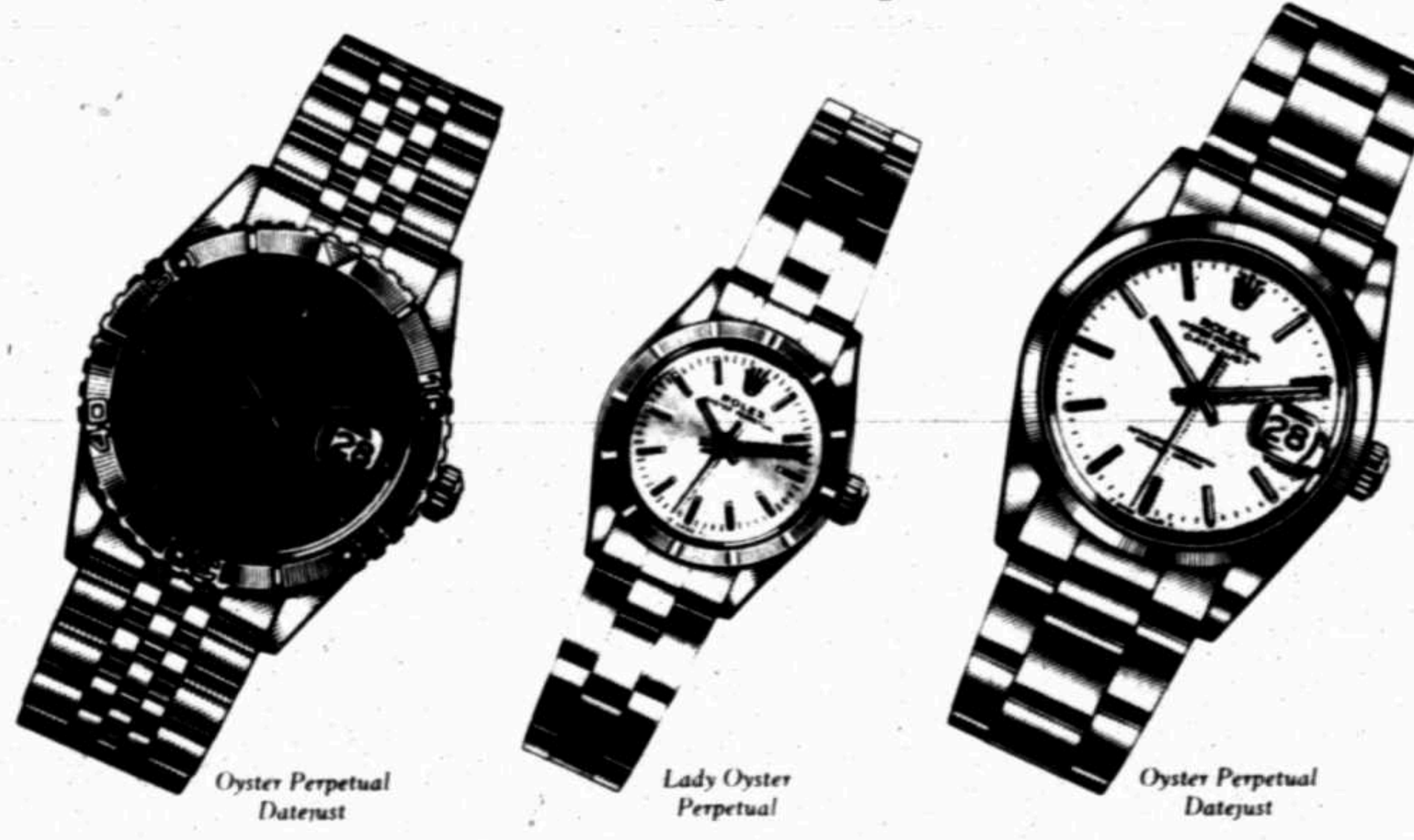
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BUSINESS BRIEFING

OIL PRICES FUTURES	
Wednesday	\$27.95
Previous	\$28.24
POSTED	
Wednesday	\$24.75
Previous	\$25.00

NATURAL GAS

Wednesday	\$5.148
Previous	\$5.248

Crude falls

NEW YORK — Crude and heating oil futures fell at the New York Mercantile Exchange Wednesday on surprisingly large inventory builds, but gasoline futures finished higher amid worries about tight supplies just ahead of the peak summer driving season.

May gasoline futures rose 1.03 cent to \$1.0605 a gallon. The May heating oil contract finished down 1.93 cent at 78.19 cents a gallon and May crude was down 29 cents to \$27.95 a barrel.

The latest inventory data did little to dispel fears over historically low gasoline inventories ahead of the summer driving season, analysts said.

Crude and heating oil futures were unable to surmount inventory reports that delivered bearish news on several fronts: near record crude oil imports; sharply rising refinery utilization rates; surprisingly large crude oil stocks builds that took total inventories to their highest level in nearly 2 years; and seasonal weakness in heating oil.

Natural gas for May delivery traded down 10 cents to \$5.148 per 1,000 cubic feet.

In London, Brent crude from the North Sea fell 34 cents to finish at \$27.29 a barrel.

Copper surges

Copper futures surged on a decision by the Federal Reserve to cut a key interest rate by a half point.

May copper rose 2.05 cents to 78.50 cents per pound on the Comex division of the Nymex.

Coffee perks

Coffee futures shot higher in the final hour of business at the Coffee, Sugar & Cocoa Exchange as trade participants began a rally that drew in speculative commodity funds.

The May future added 2.45 cents to 58.65 cents a pound. The rise was accelerated by the triggering of buy stops, or pre-placed purchase orders.

Dollar rises

LONDON — The U.S. dollar rose against most other major currencies in European trading Wednesday. Gold fell.

The euro was quoted at 88.06 cents, down from 88.18 cents late Tuesday. Later, in midday trading in New York, the euro traded at 88.74 cents.

Other dollar rates in Europe, compared with late Tuesday, included 122.35 Japanese yen, down from 123.63; 1.7404 Swiss francs, up from 1.7287; 1.5677 Canadian dollars, up from 1.5566.

The British pound was quoted at \$1.4251, down from \$1.4309. In midday trading in New York, the dollar bought 122.42 yen, and the pound was worth \$1.4315.

Based on euro rates, the dollar is worth 2.2203 German marks, up from 2.2175; 7.4464 French francs, up from 7.4372; 2.5017 Dutch guilders, up from 2.4875; 2.198.06 Italian lire, up from 2.195.32.

Gold falls

Gold closed in London at \$260.10 bid per troy ounce, down from \$260.80 late Tuesday. In Zurich the bid price was \$259.25, down from \$260.55.

Gold fell \$2.70 in Hong Kong to \$260.45. Silver closed in London at \$4.36 bid per troy ounce, down from \$4.38.

Interest rate cut propels stocks

By Amy Baldwin
Associated Press

NEW YORK — An unexpected interest rate cut and a stream of positive earnings news sent stock prices soaring Wednesday, with the Dow Jones industrials leaping as much as 470 points and the Nasdaq composite barreling back above 2,000.

Better-than-expected first-quarter profits had already sent stocks sharply higher in mid morning trading when the Federal Reserve announced it was lowering interest rates by 0.5 percentage point. The cut, the fourth this year, gave investors hope that the economy and earnings will rebound by the end of 2001.

The Dow Jones industrials soared 399.10, or 3.9 percent, to 10,615.83, the average's third-largest daily point gain. The blue chips were up as much as 470 points before settling back before the close.

The Nasdaq rose 156.22, or 8.1 percent, to 2,079.44, reaching the 2,000 level for the first time since March 15 and posting its fourth-best daily percentage gain.

The Standard & Poor's 500 rose 46.65, or 3.9 percent, to 1,238.18.

The market's early, earnings-inspired gains were not a surprise; stocks have been moving higher this month, including the Nasdaq's four-day winning streak last week, its first such advance since early September. Wall Street has been encouraged by the market's recent stability despite poor earnings reports.

Investors also expected stocks to recover somewhat after the major indexes suffered their worst first quarter in decades, when even the Dow industrials — considered the safest havens on Wall Street — slipped briefly into bear market territory.

However, the rate cut was quite unexpected. Analysts said the market was particularly pleased by the Fed's move because it was bigger and sooner than anticipated, coming ahead of the Fed's mid-May meeting. The Fed's decision also helped propel trading volume to record levels — an all-time best 3.18 billion shares on the Nasdaq and the second-best of 2.25 billion on the New York Stock Exchange, well ahead of 1.31 billion on Tuesday.

"It energized the market right on the spot," said Alan Ackerman, executive vice president for Fahnstock & Co. "The market was really waiting for a catalyst, and this Fed move appears to have been just that."

But analysts cautioned that the market remains vulnerable after months of losses and volatility and that it

was too soon to tell if Wednesday's momentum would last.

"You have to take a wait-and-see attitude," said Ricky Harrington, a technical analyst for Wachovia Securities.

The Fed's move came shortly after the Conference Board reported that its Index of Leading Economic Indicators, used as a forecasting tool, fell during March, signaling continued weakness in the economy. Investors have been hoping the Fed would cut rates more aggressively to stimulate the economy and ultimately send profits and stock prices higher.

Some of the Dow's lift came from General Motors, IBM and J.P. Morgan Chase, all of which released earnings Wednesday that pleasantly surprised Wall Street.

GM rose \$3.17 to \$56.80 after announcing it made 50 cents a share, well ahead of the 26 cents analysts anticipated. IBM, which reported earnings that met expectations after the market closed, gained \$6.31 in extended-hours trading, nearly doubling its performance in the regular session, where it closed up \$6.80 at \$106.50.

Banker J.P. Morgan Chase reported that it earned 70 cents a share, 4 cents higher than expectations. It advanced \$3.73 to \$49.10.

Analysts said one of the most encouraging aspects of Wednesday's rally was the fact investors were swayed more by good news than by earnings warnings from high-tech bellwethers Cisco Systems on Tuesday and Hewlett-Packard on Wednesday.

Cisco rose \$1.35 to \$18. Hewlett-Packard, which also announced it will cut up to 3,000 management jobs, rose \$2.65 to \$31.90.

"The strength in tech stocks is looking much better," said Harrington, the Wachovia analyst. "There has been a continued series of negative reports that the market has shrugged off. It is the best sign, in layman's terms, that the market is ready to move up."

Some stocks, however, stumbled on weaker earnings. Gillette fell \$2.50 to \$26.50 after saying it missed analysts' expectations due to increased costs, a decline in sales and unfavorable foreign exchange rates.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners about 2 to 1 on the NYSE.

The Russell 2000 index rose 10.93 to 466.51.

Overseas markets also made strong gains Wednesday with Japan's Nikkei stock average closing up 4.4 percent. Germany's DAX index climbed 4.0 percent,

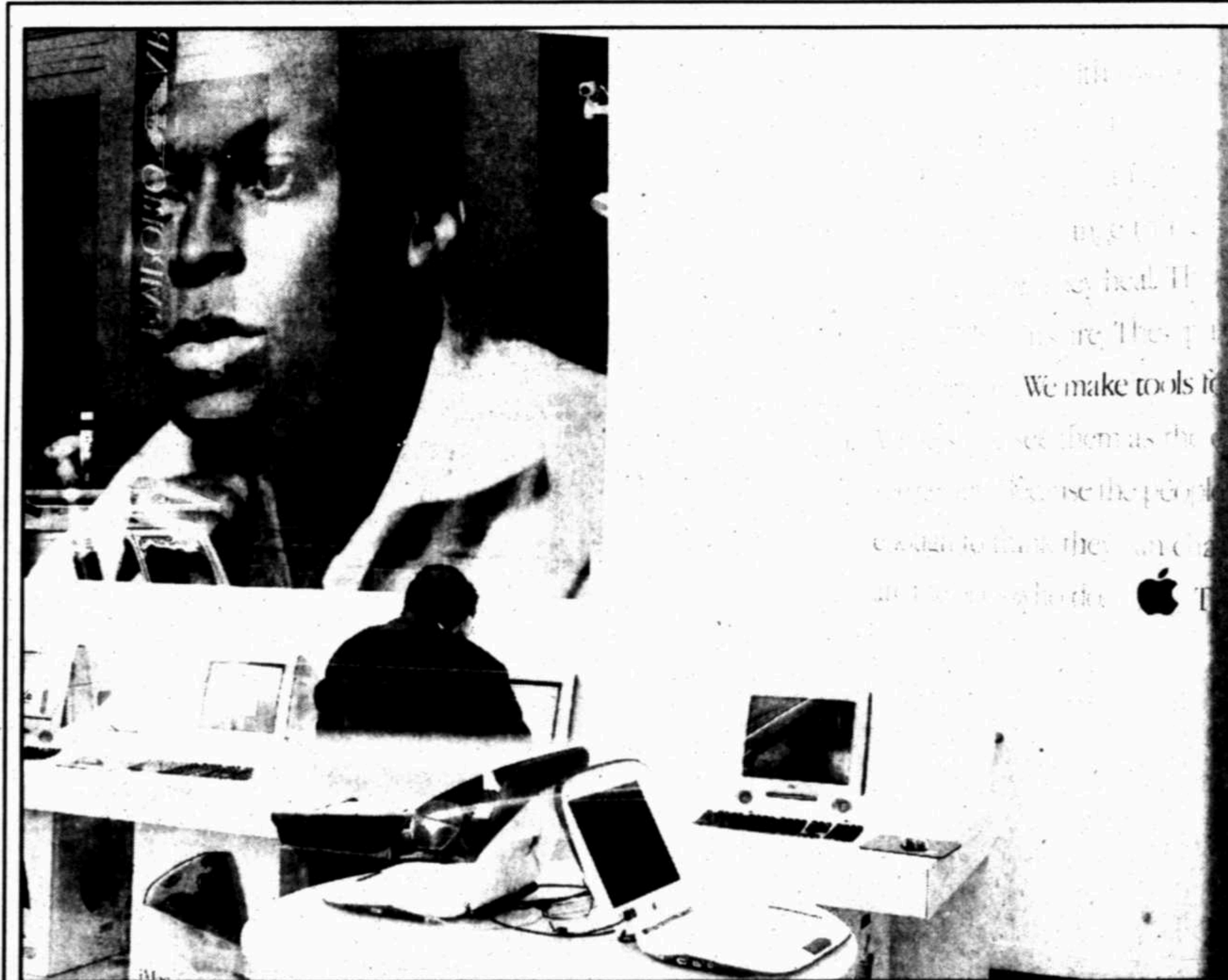


AP Photo
A stock trader, right, smiles as he looks at a monitor during the final hour of the trading day at the Philadelphia Stock Exchange Wednesday. The Federal Reserve announcement Wednesday morning that it was lowering interest rates 0.5 percentage points, and a stream of positive earnings news sent the Dow Jones industrials soaring more than 400 points Wednesday.

Britain's FT-SE 100 rose 2.2 percent, and France's CAC-40 advanced 3.1 percent.

On the Net:

New York Stock Exchange: <http://www.nyse.com>
Nasdaq Stock Market: <http://www.nasdaq.com>



AP Photo
A man looks over a number of Apple Computers on display at a CompUSA computer store in San Francisco Wednesday.

Apple reports earnings above expectations

SAN FRANCISCO (NYT) — Largely on the strength of its hot-selling one-inch-thick, titanium-clad portable computer, Apple Computer surprised Wall Street on Wednesday by reporting a net profit of \$43 million, or 12 cents a share, for its second fiscal quarter.

After a loss in Apple's first fiscal quarter, analysts had expected the company to achieve only a razor-thin profit of a penny a share, according to Thomson Financial/First Call.

The strong results, which included nonrecurring items, on revenue of \$1.43 billion, were doubly impressive because the rest of the industry is experiencing dismal declines in the wake of the end of the dot-com Internet boom.

In its second quarter, however, Apple continued its roller coast ride by returning to profitability, proving that the company is still able to generate demand by persuading its best customers to upgrade to full-featured portable computers.

"With the PowerBook, we hit it right on the money," Steven P. Jobs, Apple's co-founder and chief executive, said in a telephone interview. "We had a lot of innovation this quarter and our customers responded favorably."

THE ECONOMIST

Texas Electric Choice Act contains flaw with disastrous potential

By M. Ray Perryman, PhD

I have learned over the years not to take myself — or the government — too seriously. I recognize that no matter how passionate I may be about a public policy issue, things generally work out. As I observe the seemingly interminable process by which "pure" economic concepts are massaged, tweaked and stretched to meet the whims of various constituencies, I have managed to gain a certain calmness as I have lost a sizable portion of my hair.

The truth is that most of the massive machinations of the legislative process are of little importance. They at times make new measures more palatable and at times even stronger. More often, they are largely inconsequential. The old axiom is more true today than ever — laws and sausages both go down better if you don't watch them being made.

There are occasions, however, when tampering is truly counterproductive. We saw it in the tax and banking changes of the 1980s; the result was a chaotic collapse in which hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands of financial institutions bit the dust.

We are in imminent danger of making a similar mistake with regard to electric competition in Texas. Senate Bill 7

(SB7), the Texas Electric Choice Act, was passed during the 1999 Texas Legislative session after extensive analysis and debate; it received widespread support from major constituencies. One of its key provisions allowed incumbent utilities to recoup their stranded costs, that is, the amounts by which the realizable value of certain assets (principally nuclear power plants) would be reduced (relative to their depreciated costs) in a competitive environment.

Since the passage of SB7, increases in natural gas prices may have caused increases in the value of these stranded assets (as the cost of operating gas-fired plants rises, alternative capacity becomes more economically viable). This situation has led to a discussion of the potential for "negative" stranded costs and a proposal (House Bill 2107) to require that these funds be immediately rebated to customers. I believe the intentions behind this Bill are only the best, but the outcome could be disastrous.

The Texas Legislature set forth in SB7 a logical and consistent framework. It offers many advantages — lower costs of electricity than would occur in a regulated environment, greater incentives for innovation, economic development benefits and enhanced consumer choice. SB7 explicitly and unambiguously rejects the notion of negative stranded costs and defines a rational procedure to ensure that no windfalls occur. This process is implemented after the transition to competition is well underway and objective, market-based information on current values can be ascertained. It is a well-conceived plan that yields a stable system and protects the interests of all parties, including consumers.

This premature rebate initiative is fraught with problems. The Office of House Bill Analysis report on House Bill 2107 cites as its rationale "the unprecedented increase in the price of natural gas." Therein lies a fundamental problem with the logic of the Bill. For this proposal to be appropriate, future gas prices would have to be both high and very likely to remain high. In fact, this interim rebate assumes not only that fuel prices will be high for the next three years (until the scheduled true-up), but also that expectations in 2004 will be for prices to remain high for the next 30 years or more. Volatile commodity markets do not rationally lend themselves to such definitive conclusions based on a single, "unprecedented" price movement. There are exceptions to be sure, but what goes up generally comes down.

A second concern relates to the role of information in all aspects of an economy and a society. The Texas Electric Choice Act set up a well-defined framework. The rules were known by all market participants and were being used by many entities in making billions of dollars in capital spending plans. Investors have also made portfolio choices based on this information. To change the rules at this point invariably disrupts this planning process.

Corporations and capital sources alike respond to increased unpredictability in a well-established and rational manner. They adjust their risk assessments upward, thus resulting in higher required returns for Texas projects and an accom-

panying decline in the relative attractiveness of investments within the state. Consequently, the growth of generation capacity to meet power needs is threatened, as are the transmission and distribution upgrades needed to maintain competition. This situation is particularly acute at present in that (1) the precarious situation of utilities in California has heightened the scrutiny of entities affected by a transition to electric competition and (2) the overall stock market is in a downward pattern with unusual sensitivity to anything that might affect corporate earnings. In fact, House Bill 2107 may have the outcome of forcing utilities to sell power at rates below their costs, precisely the phenomenon that doomed California's efforts.

When all is said and done, markets are driven by information. The devastation of the real estate market and financial crisis of the 1980s is more than ample evidence to illustrate this phenomenon. This whole situation occurred because (1) false signals were sent to the market and (2) the rules were changed in mid-stream.

The Texas Electric Choice Act is a major milestone of progress in the state economy as it faces the challenges of the next millennium. The stranded costs process ain't broke; don't fix it!

Dr. M. Ray Perryman is President and Chief Executive Officer of The Perryman Group (www.perrymangroup.com). He also serves as Institute Distinguished Professor of Economic Theory and Method at the International Institute for Advanced Studies.



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NHL
PLAYOFFS

Maple Leafs 3, Senators 1
TORONTO — Yanic Perreault scored two goals, and Bryan McCabe added another Wednesday night as the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Ottawa Senators 3-1 to complete a surprising four-game sweep in their first-round playoff series.

The second-seeded Senators finished far ahead of No. 7 Toronto, but were knocked out by the Maple Leafs for the second straight year.

Ottawa scored only three goals in the series against Toronto goalie Curtis Joseph, who made 21 saves Wednesday. The Senators were shutout in the first two games.

Defenceman Chris Phillips gave the Senators a 1-0 lead on their first shot.

Alexei Yashin, Ottawa's top scorer with 40 goals during the season, finished the series with just one assist.

Capitals 4, Penguins 3 OT
PITTSBURGH — Jeff Halpern scored Washington's first even-strength goal of the playoffs 4:01 into overtime to hold off a late Pittsburgh rally.

Steve Konowalchuk scored two power-play goals and set up Halpern's goal — Washington's first without a man advantage since its final regular-season game — as the Capitals made the series 2-2 going into Game 5 Saturday in Washington.

The Penguins are 2-7 in Game 4s when ahead, including 0-4 in their last five home playoff games.

The Penguins — 5-1 in playoff series against Washington since 1991 — trailed 3-1 midway through the third period following three Washington power-play goals, but tied it with man-advantage goals by Jaromir Jagr and Janne Laukkanen.

Hurricanes 3, Devils 2, OT
RALEIGH, N.C. — Rod Brind'Amour scored 46 seconds into overtime as the Carolina Hurricanes, missing injured captain Ron Francis and top rookie Shane Willis, avoided a four-game sweep in the Eastern Conference quarterfinals.

Sami Kapanen and David Tanabe also scored power-play goals, and Kapanen set up Brind'Amour on the first shot of the extra period.

The defending Stanley Cup champions came out flat, took too many penalties and were stoned by Carolina goalie Arturs Irbe for most of the game to send the best-of-seven series back to New Jersey for Game 5 Friday night.

New Jersey, who twice rallied to tie on goals by Jason Arnott and Petr Sykora, outscored the Hurricanes 11-1 in the first three games.

Oilers gain confidence as series with Stars continues

Associated Press

DALLAS — The Edmonton Oilers proved this year's playoff series with the Dallas Stars is different.

After being eliminated by the Stars in five games or less in the playoffs for three straight years, Edmonton heads back to Dallas for Thursday's Game 5, with the first-round Western Conference series tied 2-2.

"The confidence level is higher than the past," Edmonton defenseman Janne Niinimä said. "We know we can beat these guys. We really do know."

Rookie Mike Comrie's power-play goal 17:19 into the first overtime Tuesday night gave the Oilers a 2-1 victory. Not only did it even the series, it assured a Game 6, Saturday in Edmonton.

And Edmonton's goal wasn't just to take the series to six games. "So it looks good on paper. We want to win the series," forward Dan Cleary said.

This is now a best-of-three series, with the Stars holding home-ice advantage. If necessary, Game 7 would be Monday in Dallas.

"They had to come back and regroup, they did a great job," Stars coach Ken Hitchcock said. "Now it's our turn ... our build-

ing, our fans, our turn to respond.

"These (losses) are only devastating if you don't respond. They can either be motivators or they can be situations that make you crumble."

Said Stars forward Shaun Van Allen: "We're fine. We've still got home-ice advantage."

Just like the four previous playoff series between the Stars and Oilers, this one has been close. Three of the games have gone to overtime, and all four have been decided by one goal.

Of the 25 playoff games between the two teams since 1997, when Edmonton won the series in seven games, 18 have been one-goal games. Dallas is 13-5 in the one-goal affairs, and won their 10th straight with a 2-1 overtime victory in Game 1 before Edmonton bounced back with a 4-3 win in the second game.

"The desperation in their play is evident. When you get it slammed down your throat so many times, you want to do some good things," Hitchcock said. "We've been able to be on the winning side of these overtime, these one-goal games for a long time. Eventually, it's going to catch up to you."

The Stars couldn't take advantage in Game 5 of the absence of Doug Weight. The Oilers' captain

and leading scorer received a five-minute major penalty and a game misconduct for his blindsided hit on Richard Matvichuk midway through the first period.

While the NHL automatically reviews checking from behind, there was no word Wednesday of any additional punishment against Weight.

Matvichuk crashed headfirst into the side boards and sustained a concussion. He felt fine afterward but said his status for Game 5 would be determined by a doctor.

Dallas got only two shots on goal during the five-minute power play and later got beat by Weight's replacement.

"Not only do we lose our best player, we've got a five-minute power play to kill," Oilers coach Craig MacTavish said. "It was a damaging blow, but the guys rallied around that."

Comrie, the 20-year-old rookie who grew up in Edmonton watching the Oilers win Stanley Cups, was playing in Weight's spot.

Comrie drew the questionable high-sticking call against Jamie Langenbrunner that provided the overtime power play. About a minute later, Ryan Smyth lost control of the puck behind the net, but it went directly to Comrie, who stuffed it past Ed Belfour for the win.

GEO WEEK

Who were the Etruscans?



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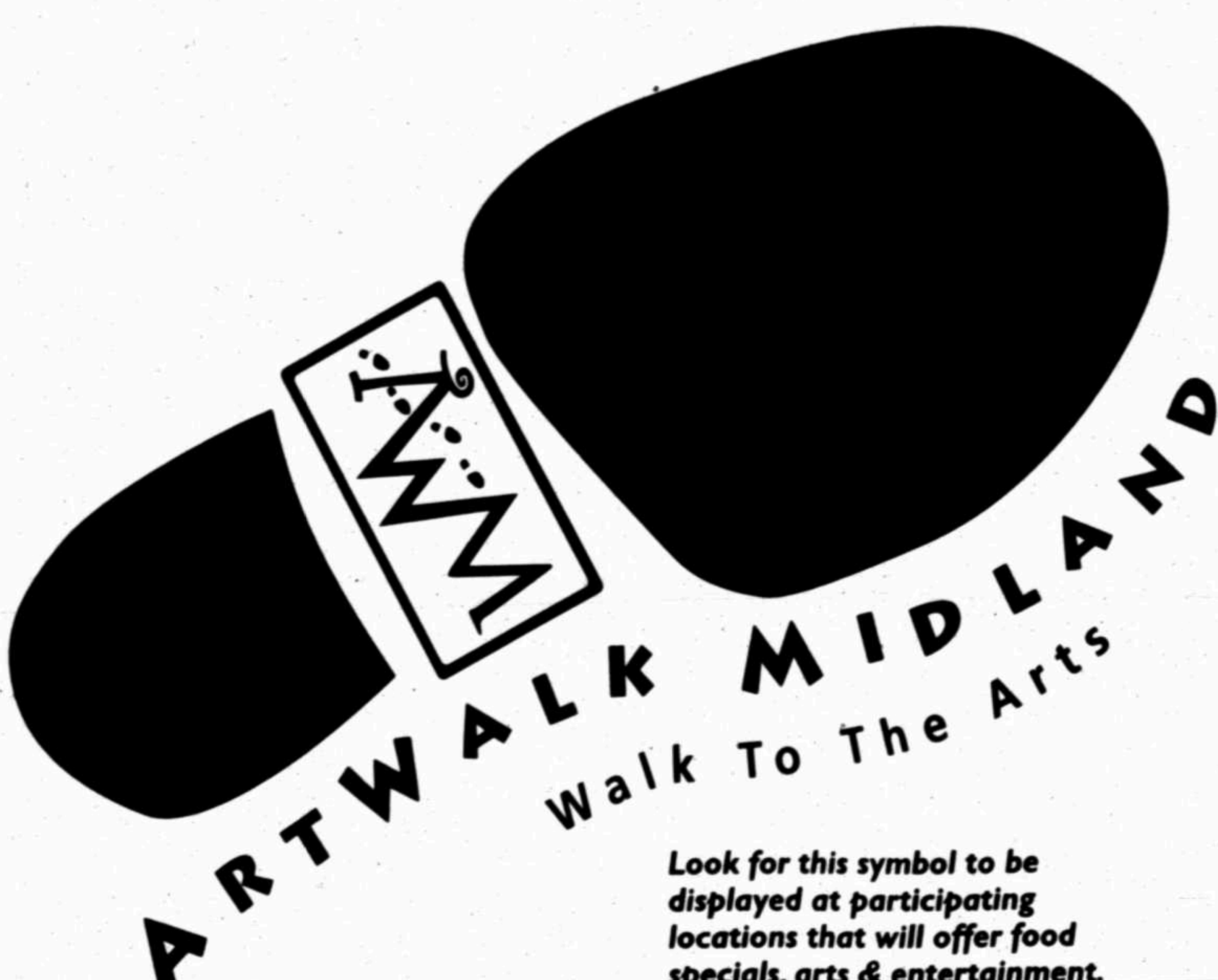
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- Go downtown on the 3rd Thursday of every month from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Walk around participating businesses and sample a variety of visual and performing arts.
- Watch for upcoming reminders and featured themes for the month in the Midland Reporter Telegram and News West 9.

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LOCATION

Ampitheatre

OFFERING

6:00 La Petite Dance Studio 6:30 Bingham Dance
Studio Midland Festival Ballet : 7 PM Words of
Spring 7:20 PM Solos from "Coppelia" I. Prayer
2. Dawn 8:00 PM Bach Suite

Chamber of Commerce
109 N. Main

Debut of the New Bush Exhibit
Midland/Bush Memorabilia available for sale.

Community National Bank
306 W. Wall

Folger's Gallery Exhibit.

Danny's Deli
306 W. Wall

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Kay Smith (Big Spring) - Watercolor
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Jon Smith (Odessa) - Photographer,
Solo & Ensemble Performances from local high
school students

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Art by Midland Artist Nancy Godsey

Hilton Hotel & Towers
Wall & Loraine

Gallery 1114 Artist
Restaurant & Bar Specials

Houck's Jewelry
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Sharon Navage (Odessa) - Collage

One Wall Plaza

A computer rendering for the Experience Music Project
in Seattle, WA by the Sky Church Concepts &
Production Designer Gerald Howland and
The Floating Company. Also, Sam Jones Pianos.

Public Library

Art display and tours.

P.B. Graduate Center
Main & Illinois

Helen Clements (Andrews) - Oil Painting

Petroleum Bldg. Pk. Lot

Permian Basin Auto Club show.

Ritz Theater Parking Lot

"The Writing on the Wall" Mural Project

Wall Towers, West

Via Media - Marketing concepts from classic to
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Sorenstam tries for 5th straight win

Associated Press

When Annika Sorenstam tees it up Thursday in search of another LPGA record, she'll be using a special new ball with the number "59" to mark the record round she shot last month.

There could have been more. But "Four wins in a row going for a record fifth to tie Nancy Lopez's record" just didn't fit.

Already the holder of one of golf's most coveted records and one major championship this season, Sorenstam goes after a mark that has stood since Lopez broke onto the scene 23 years ago.

A win in the Longs Drugs Challenge this week would give her five straight, tying the achievement of Lopez during her electrifying rookie year in 1978. It would add another stamp to the best year in golf by anyone not named Tiger Woods.

"I know what's at stake and what I want to do," Sorenstam said Wednesday. "I'm excited I have this chance when I'm playing this well."

Sorenstam, who made up a 10-shot final round deficit with a final-round 66 to win Saturday in Los Angeles, gets a chance at the record on a course she likes and where she has played well.

She's also playing with the supreme confidence of someone who knows she has to make mistakes to lose.

"It just seems so easy when things go your way," Sorenstam said. "It's kind of like driving down the street and you have a green light all the time. It's fun."

Lopez knows the feeling, though some of her recollections have faded over the years. Only 21 at the time, she gained some much needed attention for the LPGA tour by winning five straight times in '78.

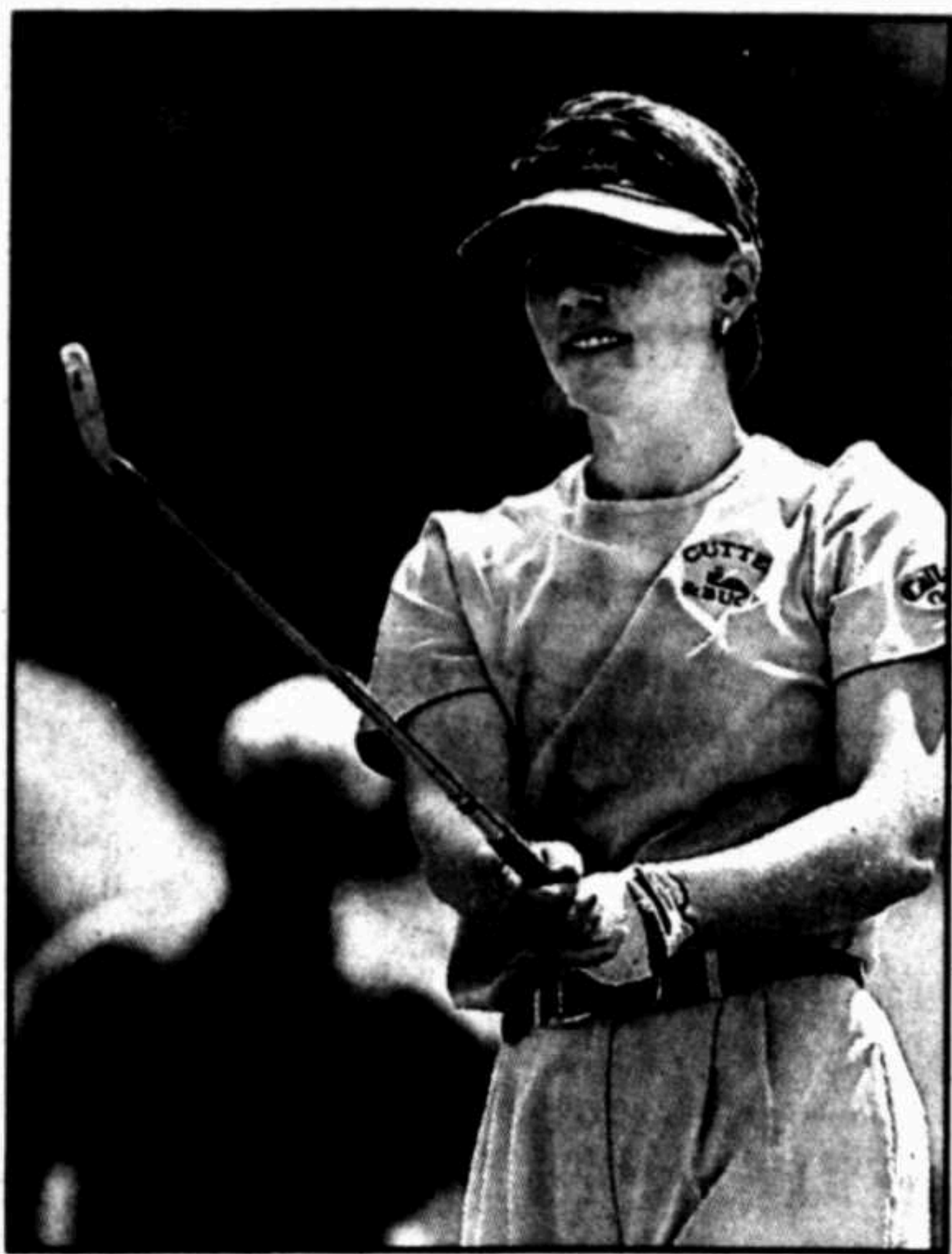
"After a while it was very easy," Lopez said this week. "I just remember playing very well and being focused on just hitting fairways and greens. You just feel so confident."

Sorenstam is not only confident, she has been dominating. The Swede, in her eighth year on tour, has played six events, finishing second in her first two and winning the next four.

Included in that streak was the first 59 ever shot in competition by a woman, in the second round of the Standard Register Ping in Phoenix, and her first major title in five years when she won the Nabisco Championship.

As good a frontrunner as she has been, Sorenstam showed she can also come from behind in overtaking Pat Hurst in The Office Depot to win her fourth in a row.

"It was quite a comeback," Sorenstam acknowl-



AP Photo
Annika Sorenstam follows her shot on the 15th hole during Wednesday's pro-am of the Longs Drugs Challenge at the Twelve Bridges Golf Club in Lincoln, Calif. Sorenstam has won four straight LPGA tournaments and is going for a record fifth win.

edged. "I was kind of shocked at the time. I didn't expect a playoff or a win, but I'll take it."

Sorenstam credits a renewed commitment to her short game for her most recent success. A look at statistics, though, shows her tee-to-green game may be what has carried her most.

Sorenstam is first in greens hit in regulation at nearly 84 percent, a key part of her being under par in 18 of 21 competitive rounds this year. At the Nabisco, she was remarkable, hitting 35 of 36 greens in regulation in weekend play.

Sorenstam faces a few different challenges this week on the Twelve Bridges Golf Club in the Sacramento suburb of Lincoln, where she finished tied for sixth last year.

Though it's a course she likes, it's also one Juli Inkster is quite fond of. Inkster has won the last two Longs Drugs Challenge tournaments here, and is trying to become the seventh player in LPGA history to win the same tournament three years in a row.

If Inkster does, Sorenstam's streak of four straight wins won't be the only streak she breaks.

No American has won on the LPGA Tour so far this year, a streak that Lopez would like to see end.

"I'm definitely pulling for her (Sorenstam), but if there's an American coming up on the last hole to beat her I'm going to have to root for the American," Lopez said. "No U.S. player has won this year and that bothers me."

Not much bothers Sorenstam, and Lopez said that has been the key to her remarkable run.

"I don't see her concentration wavering," Lopez said. "She's very focused and having a great time. You look at Annika and see confidence."

Vick prepares himself to be Chargers' top pick in draft

By Bernie Wilson
AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO — Michael Vick might not be able to dodge the rush on Saturday. He could be the one mesmerized, like so many defenders he's left behind in a vapor trail.

The most sensational college football player to come along in years says he might shed a tear or two if, as anticipated, his name is called as the top pick in the NFL draft.

Vick won't get weepy because it appears he's headed to the San Diego Chargers, who hit their all-time low last year by going 1-15.

To the contrary, the former Virginia Tech quarterback enjoyed his quick trip to San Diego last week. He says he's developing a relationship with the coaches, who've already quizzed him on plays and terminology. He called new starting quarterback Doug Flutie, whom he would sit behind for a season or two, "my man."

Vick will make millions of dollars, which he says he's eager to share with his family in Newport News, Va.

If the Chargers do indeed take Vick, he'll eventually face high expectations from a franchise and a city emerging from three years of Ryan Leaf's attitude and interceptions.

But first comes the draft.

"It's unexplainable," Vick said of his emotions as he heads toward what he calls the opportunity of a lifetime. "As a kid, I never imagined being the first pick of a draft. To hear my name called first, maybe it will bring tears to my eyes. Who knows?"

"It will be one of the most exciting days of my life and one I'm never going to forget."

There's no turning back now for Vick, who admits he has a lot to learn.

Vick is 20 and played in just 22

games at Virginia Tech — although one of them was his dazzling performance as a redshirt freshman in the loss to Florida State in the national championship game two seasons ago.

He's thrown just 360 passes, two bowl games included.

But Vick's life and the Chargers' future changed when Vick announced on Jan. 11 that he was turning pro.

"It's a level that's bigger, faster, stronger, and I'll have to play more from a mental standpoint," Vick said by phone from Blacksburg, Va., this week. "I just want to challenge myself. Of course the money is a factor, but this is more of a challenge. It was something I dreamed of my entire life. So I had to jump on it."

The Chargers have all but said they'll pick Vick. They'll listen to trade overtures, but team president Dean Spanos said it would take "an awful lot" to part with the pick.

Spanos gets so excited talking about Vick's future that it sounds like he's already a Charger.

The two sides have opened contract talks, but a deal might not be reached before Saturday.

Vick's agents, Andre Colona and Mike Sullivan, reportedly are seeking a \$15 million signing bonus. But such a sum would be virtually precluded by a rule limiting signing bonuses in certain situations.

Without offering specifics, Sullivan said the discussions are "serious and friendly, but substantial obstacles remain."

"We are asking that he be treated like the first pick and we are willing to recognize that he might not be playing as much in the first year as other highly drafted quarterbacks," Sullivan said Wednesday from Walnut Creek, Calif.

The Chargers are determined to avoid another Leaf fiasco.

Besides studying videotape of all Vick's breathtaking runs and

strong-armed passes, the Chargers checked on things like how he got along with his Hokie teammates, how kids react when he enters a room.

Nine team representatives, including Spanos, watched a private workout at Virginia Tech on March 30. Coach Mike Riley attended an open workout a week later.

If the Chargers have found any major flaws, they aren't saying.

Riley's one concern is Vick's relative lack of experience compared with other quarterbacks, such as Purdue's Drew Brees.

"But there's just some unique skills there, so that's compensated for that," Riley said. "I think we have a real good feel for him."

Riley uses words like "magnetism" and "charisma" when discussing Vick.

General manager John Butler said he found Vick "very assured of himself, a very bright-eyed youngster, easy to engage with. I really like him a lot."

"What a fine young man the way he presents himself and goes about it."

"That's just the way I am and the way I carry myself," Vick said. "I'm not a loud person. I'll remain the same, my whole career. Nothing has changed me. Money won't change me, fame won't change me. I'll be the same Michael Vick."

The Chargers have discussed using Vick in certain situations as a rookie. Vick and Flutie have similar styles, although Vick is left-handed.

Vick said he'll work hard to get ready.

"I just want to learn the offense and get out there and play a little bit and get into the flow of things before I become the starter. That would benefit me a lot," he said.

"I would love to be a Charger, as long as they give me a chance."

Chargers get kicker Richey; re-sign Moreno

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The San Diego Chargers acquired restricted free agent placekicker from the San Francisco 49ers on Wednesday.

The 49ers did not match an offer sheet that Richey signed with the Chargers last week. Richey will make \$6 million over five years.

The signing spells the end of John Carney's 11-

year run as San Diego's kicker. Carney, one of the NFL's most accurate kickers, is San Diego's career scoring leader with 1,076 points.

Although he made all 27 extra points last year, Carney made just 18 of 25 field goals and his kick-offs weren't as consistent.

Australian golfer returns to defend Houston Open win

Associated Press

THE WOODLANDS — It doesn't seem to get interesting for Robert Allenby until it's over-time.

Allenby returns to defend his title Thursday in the \$3.4 million Shell Houston Open at The Woodlands TPC course where he won a four-hole playoff last season for his first PGA Tour victory.

Allenby was known for dramatics before his Houston victory and he's been busy since then adding to his reputation.

After taking the Houston title, Allenby won the Western Open in a playoff, and last month emerged from a playoff field of six — largest in PGA history — to win the Nissan Open.

Allenby is 7-0 in playoffs, including international play.

"I love those situations but it's not like I do it on purpose," Allenby said. "But my three victories here in the States are all playoffs and, I don't know, it just seems to bring out the best in me."

Allenby lost a one-shot lead on

the 17th hole of the final round at Houston a year ago, forcing a playoff with Craig Stadler. Despite hitting into a water hazard and a grandstand, he survived for the victory that paid him \$504,000.

"I've made birdies to get into playoffs and I've made bogeys to get into playoffs. There is a lot of luck in it," Allenby said.

Allenby won the Western Open in a playoff with Nick Price on the first extra hole. And at the Nissan Open, he hit a spectacular 3-wood 225 yards within 5 feet and sank the putt for victory.

But winning the Houston tournament remains special because it solidified his comeback from a serious auto accident in 1996. Allenby was over his injuries by last year's tournament but the confidence hadn't returned.

"Before this tournament last year, I used to have the feeling, 'Would I ever win again,'" Allenby said. "This tournament settled all those thoughts and turned me around."

"After this tournament, I won

the Australian Open in December and the Nissan this year. This tournament just brought back my confidence and made me tell myself that I could still win and keep winning."

Allenby made it entertaining for the Houston fans last year. Stadler had chances to win on the first three playoff holes but couldn't put Allenby away, even though Allenby found the water on the first extra hole.

Allenby's most desperate comeback came on the fourth playoff hole when his tee shot hooked into a bunker and his second shot went into a grandstand. He took a drop, chipped to 10 feet and sank the winning putt.

Allenby followed his own credo by winning again after he took the Houston Open top prize.

"I think you have to concentrate after winning a tournament," Allenby said. "I use it to tell myself to get back out there and do it again. Sometimes you can enjoy a victory so much you go six months or two years without winning again."

"I had team goals. I wanted to win and I wanted to go to a bowl game," he said. "I never quit. We could've been getting out butts whipped and you never saw me putting my head down."

"I know a bunch of guys who came from winning schools who never produced or performed at the next level. I'm ready," he said. Baylor hasn't had a player picked earlier than the fifth round since 1996. Four Bears were drafted that year, including defensive tackle Daryl Gardener in the first round by the Miami Dolphins.

Baxter wants to change that. And once in the NFL, he'd like to leave a legacy similar to another former Tyler High School great, Earl Campbell.

"Earl Campbell was the Tyler Rose," Baxter said. "I'd like to be known as the Tyler Thorn."

"I wanted to be known for helping turn a program around. I wanted to have a huge impact," Baxter said. "What I failed to real-

ize is I can't do it by myself." Baylor never finished better than 2-9 in any of his four seasons in Waco. Instead of rebuilding, the Bears plummeted to the bottom of the Big 12, losing 21 straight conference games.

Baxter believes his game is above what the team accomplished.

"I had team goals. I wanted to win and I wanted to go to a bowl game," he said. "I never quit. We could've been getting out butts whipped and you never saw me putting my head down."

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Baxter hopes NFL scouts look beyond Baylor's awful record

Associated Press

WACO — These are the days Gary Baxter played for.

After winning just seven games in a four-year career at Baylor, this weekend's NFL draft is rapidly approaching and Baxter is counting on scouts' ability to recognize a great player on a bad team.

"Look at my size, my strength. I'm one of the best in the country," Baxter said. "Just because we went 2-9, that shouldn't stop me from being a high draft choice."

Baxter should have few worries. Scouts know he's there. Their job is to scour the college landscape for the best players, no matter which team they play for.

The question is when his name will be called in this weekend's NFL draft and just what position he'll play.

At 6-foot-2, 195 pounds, Baxter has the size scouts want in a cornerback in an era of big receivers. Yet it also has led to speculation that he would make a better safety in the NFL.

Baxter believes he's a true NFL cornerback.

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¿Qué Pasa?

Feel the beat of the rhythm



Local Tejano band still plays strong after 20 years

By Dora Ruiz
MRT Correspondent

A local Tejano band, Eddie Rey Y Los Hermanos Barela, The Bud Kings, has been making waves in the music industry for more than 20 years.

"When we got started (my dad) bought me a guitar," said vocalist Freddie Barela. "That was back in the Beatles days. I guess (my father) had it in his head the whole time to start a band — he had a place for everybody."

Their late father, Donato Barela, was also a musician and he wanted his sons to carry on some sort of musical talent.

"He made us," said vocalist Eddie Barela. "He said 'this is going to be a family group, this is what I want and this is what I will have.'"

Just like the family of Michael Jackson and his brothers, the Barelas' father ran a strict disciplined household.

"We were kind of like the Jacksons because if we had friends come home, my dad would run them off," said Freddie. "When we played in concerts we had girls run up and talk to us, and my dad would run them off, too."

Their brother Mike, the drummer, remembers when the band first started out.

"I was 12 when I started playing the drums," he said. "Whenever I'd go out to dances, I saw guys playing the drums and that's what got me into it. I enjoyed it because it was something I wanted to do."

The young Barela band first toured in 1974 and played Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Eddie said over the years their band has performed with legends of the Tejano industry such as Joe Bravo and Carlos Miranda.

"After we worked for those two artists as the Barela Brothers we went solo," he said.

Since going solo almost 20 years ago, the band has been sponsored by Bud Light, played with artists like Jimmie Hernandez, Little Joe and Roberto Pulido, and made videos for a local television program, "¿Que Onda?"

"We were the opening act for (those bands) and our job was to get the crowd warmed up for them," said manager Pete Ruiz. "It was fun; it was back in the old hey-day of Tejano singers."

Ruiz took over as manager three years ago when the musicians' father died.

"I started as a band boy at the age of 14. I was basically a roadie and I helped set up. I've known Mike since I was 14."

"I've been the best man at his marriage. Their family is like my family," Ruiz said.

Withstanding the test of time, the band has also experienced many tribulations.

"One of our biggest challenges is trying to self-promote our music," said Eddie. "We have to bring this wall down to distribute us to the United States. I'm working on finding a company to distribute our music and that's been hard."

The band also plays their own music.

"First, a melody comes to me, and after the melody comes, then the words come," said Eddie. "I have to piece the music together. Mainly I enjoy playing real music that is born right in our studio. If you are going to write a song, that's how it's going to be made."

The band plays a mixture of Tejano and oldies rock 'n' roll.

"The band has a potential to go a long way," said Ruiz. "We play the old style which is coming back — none of that electronic stuff."

Apparently the style works. Eddie said the band has always gotten a good reaction.

"Everywhere we play people love the horns and our style of play," he said. "Everywhere we go people mix us up for San Antonio bands (who also play their type of music)."

The family band displays a love for the music industry.

"The most memorable moments are when we are on stage," said Eddie. "That's something precious; you can't replace that."

Other band members are Eddie's, Mike's and Freddie's brothers and nephews:

■ Brothers: Fidel, vocalist; Don Jr., guitarist; and Gilbert, trumpet player.

■ Nephews: Freddy's son, Frankie, percussion and congas; Eddie Jr., keyboardist; Fidel's son, Tony, percussion and bass player.

Non-family members are trombonist Freddie Jimenez, trumpet player Ignacio Nafiez Jr., and bass player Frank Flores.



TOP LEFT: Freddie Barela, left, and Fidel Barela sing together during practice. TOP RIGHT: Eddie Rey, from left, Ignacio Nafiez Jr. and Gilbert Barela form the horn section of the band. ABOVE LEFT: Eddie Jr. plays the keyboard. ABOVE RIGHT: Frank Flores, who is one of the few members not related to the Barela family, plays bass guitar for the group. AT LEFT: Michael Barela, the drummer, started playing the drums when he was 12 years old.

Photos by U. Frank Williams Jr.
Reporter-Telegram

Officials caution against growing number of scams targeting Hispanics

From Staff Reports

AUSTIN — Texas Attorney General John Cornyn recently traveled to South Texas to warn the public about scams involving international collect calls. Most of the calls in question appear to originate in Mexico and are made primarily to Hispanic-surnamed consumers in Texas. The complaints received thus far center around U.S.-based businesses.

Cornyn visited Laredo, Brownsville and Victoria to alert Texans about the international collect call scheme and a number of other scams aimed at Hispanic consumers, including home solicitations by door-to-door sales representatives operating specifically in Hispanic neighborhoods and services offered by fraudulent "immigration specialists."

"These shady characters know that more Hispanics live in Texas than ever before. The tremendous growth of the Hispanic population and its increased purchasing power has attracted the attention of bad actors who seize upon the Hispanic market simply to separate consumers from their hard earned dollars," Cornyn said.

"Under the pretense of providing a legitimate long-distance service, some companies are engaged in deception aimed at Hispanic households," Cornyn said. "Hundreds of Hispanic consumers have filed complaints regarding collect calls. We share their concerns, and we have launched an investigation. We will pursue scam artists to the full extent of the law."

Consumers reported to the Attorney General's Office, the Public Utility Commission and the Better Business Bureau that they received calls from long-distance operators asking them to accept charges for collect calls from a person with their

same last name. Callers often pretend to be a relative from Mexico who urgently needs to speak with a family member. The caller uses the Texas consumer's same last name so the consumer will accept the call. Although the calls typically last only a few minutes, even seconds, consumers have received bills for \$50 or more per call. Some consumers are targeted numerous times.

Many consumers who were billed for these calls said that they never accepted collect charges. Some even claim no one was home at the time the collect call was allegedly made and accepted.

"Hispanic consumers spend billions of dollars in telecommunications services alone," Cornyn said. "Unfortunately, it is not surprising that there are some who exploit the Hispanic market while providing little in return. Our message is clear: Texans will not be swindled on my watch, and honest businesses will not be tainted by a handful of scam artists."

Since assuming office, Cornyn has sued several companies that have specifically targeted Hispanic consumers.

The following are pending lawsuits arising from such schemes, according to the Attorney General's Office:

■ Perfect Water Solutions lawsuit filed on April 2. This McAllen-based business sold expensive residential water filtration systems through door-to-door sales personnel. After negotiating sales in Spanish, the company failed to provide required information in Spanish to its customers, including notice of their right to cancel under the terms of the Home Solicitation Act. Also, Perfect Water Solutions misled consumers into thinking that the sales price they were originally given — about \$5,000 per filtration system — included financing. Only later would consumers learn that this was false, and that they

would be paying thousands of additional dollars in interest. Consumers also claimed that the filters don't perform as advertised.

Similar water filtration system scams have been pulled in the Midland area. "A couple of Hispanics came in regarding a water softening unit a man sold to them who has now disappeared," said Terri Arellano, with consumer relations at the Better Business Bureau. "They financed about \$5,000, and now the finance company is contacting them wanting payment and the people don't want to pay because the units don't work. They're under warranty but they couldn't file a complaint because the people who sold it left. So the poor people are stuck with paying for these units that don't work."

■ Hispanic Air Conditioning and Heating lawsuit filed September of 1999. The company sold thousands of residential air conditioning units specifically in Hispanic communities through a team of door-to-door salespeople.

"We've gotten at least 400 complaints on this and suspect there are many all over the state who don't know who or where to go to file a complaint," Tom Kelley, spokesman with the Texas Attorney General's office, said in a phone interview. "The contract is in English so many Hispanics won't understand it. ... They're being hit with high-pressure sales and sold a bill of goods that they don't need."

The company failed to properly disclose to consumers that, by law, they had three business days to cancel their purchases if they changed their minds. The company also misled consumers by stating that the units were covered under 10-year warranties, when this was not the case. Units were often installed by unlicensed personnel, and had a high rate of malfunctions.

■ Ybarra Immigration Services lawsuit filed April of 2000. The company defrauded undocu-

mented immigrants in the Rio Grande Valley by selling them bogus "letters of representation." The company owner charged hundreds of dollars for each letter and assured clients that these would legalize their status, when in fact they had no legal value whatsoever.

Consumers are advised to call the Better Business Bureau to ask for a report on the business in question before signing any contract, said Ms. Arellano of the BBB. Businesses can be searched for using an address, zipcode or phone number and a legitimate business will wait instead of exerting pressure on persons. Obtaining a report is free and bilingual assistance is available by calling 563-1880.

To help address the prevention of fraud against Spanish-speaking consumers, Cornyn formed his office's Spanish Communications Group in December. This unit has developed one of the most comprehensive Spanish language public information and outreach efforts in government. By working with Hispanic media and engaging the public directly, the group has provided thousands of Spanish-speaking Texans with important information about their rights under the law and the services available through the Office of the Attorney General, including the resolution of consumer issues.

"That is the key, the attorney general wants for consumers to be aware these things are out there," said Kelley. "If people think they've been scammed, they need to contact us."

Complaint forms and applications for all services available through the Office of the Attorney General are available in both Spanish and English. The agency has also developed hundreds of publications, brochures, news releases and informative columns in Spanish that are available by calling toll free at 1-800-252-8011 or through the agency's Web site at www.oag.state.tx.us.

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TRAVELCRAFT motor
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Diesel, 52K miles, satellite,
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410 Miscellaneous Sales

NEW TODAY
BEAUTIFUL SLATE floor tile 800 sq. ft. of multicolored slate flooring cut random sizes. Will deliver at \$3.99 sq. ft. 697-0498 or 688-3212.

G.E. 16" COLOR TV. \$70. Works good! 684-0533.

WHY PAY Rent? 10x16 storage buildings \$39.00 a month. Delivery/Financing available. 915-563-3108.

SOLD
KING SIZE bed, dresser, \$185. Josco desk, \$100. 4 drawer filing cabinets, \$25. Large glass display case, \$75. Ethan Allen maple bedroom suite, \$295. Lane cedar chest, \$100. 683-7456.

12x16 Workshop/storage buildings \$56 a month. Delivery/financing. 915-563-3108.

SOLD
CRAFTSMAN 4.5 HP lawnmower, rear bag, extra blade/wheel, good running condition. \$50. XXX-XXXX.

MUST SELL this week! 14x40' barn. Night. Damage! Will deliver. 915-563-3108.

410 Miscellaneous Sales

NEW TODAY
FIRST ANNUAL (Unfinished Business) Flea Market, 1407 Garden City Hwy. Friday & Saturday May 11 & 12th. Gates open at 9 am thru 6 pm. Limited spaces available. Call for details 570-7021.

AIRFARE BARGAINS, \$149 each way and \$4 air awards. Anywhere Southwest (Unrestricted) 800-616-0846.

SET OF 4 Universal tires P185/65R14 60 spokes Craggier wheel true spoke, \$250. 699-2634.

SET OF 4-8 hole original equipment wheels for 1999 or 2000 3/4 ton Ford, center caps and lug nuts. \$350. Work 697-6089, cell 559-3266, 8 am to 6 pm.

NEW WEDDING SET. Make offer. Call 520-7900 for more information.

5 SECTION WALL Dividers- Total 17 foot, height 5 foot. \$295. Call 697-7073 or 425-8447.

60 WOODEN PALLETS \$20. Please call 520-5045.

410 Miscellaneous Sales

NEW TODAY
DISCONTINUED MODEL spa/hot tub-2 loungers, 6 person. Warranty- will deliver. 915-563-3108.

HP PAVILION Laptop, brand new in box. 550MHz 64MB, RAM, 5GB, 13" SVGA, 24X CDROM, 56K Modem. \$1,000. O.B.O. 559-7337.

USED SET of 4 P215/65R15 Road Huggers tires on set of chrome wheels with chrome lug nuts and center caps. (Used only 2 months) Will fit rear wheel drive Ford Ranger or Dodge 15X7, 5 on 4 1/2 bolt pattern. \$350. 697-6089, 559-3266, 8 am-6 pm.

BINGO, American Legion, 501 Airpark Road, Friday nights, games start at 8. Food, Refreshments. 682-5511.

PORCH SWINGS \$40. Dog houses \$35-\$45. Storage house \$350. Good tires \$10. Call 563-0452.

WANTED: Southwest- \$300 + 800-711-0612 www.mileage.com

NEW TODAY
WANT TO buy used feeding tables and chairs. Call 683-5574.

GEORGE BUSH signed items, campaign stickers and letters, etc. 800-916-1105 or 972-365-4494.

NEW TODAY
WANTING TO buy Southwest Rapid Rewards Ticket. joelae123@yahoo.com. Please call 689-4106.

STEPHANIE'S HIDDEN Treasures is looking for signment, summer clothing & plus sizes. Also furniture. Call 689-7670.

410 Miscellaneous Sales

NEW TODAY
SOUTHWEST Company Club tickets or other airline mileage awards wanted. Will pay top dollar. 687-5039.

WANTED: Southwest- \$300 + 800-711-0612 www.mileage.com

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