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THE Pampa

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2003

NEWS

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HIGH 42
LOW 13

LOCAL

API to elect officers at dinner Thursday

American Petroleum Institute's (API) Panhandle Chapter will meet at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 23, at Pampa Country Club for social hour followed by dinner at 7 p.m. Guest speaker for the meeting will be Kim Peterson of Texas Railroad Commission, District 10.

Peterson will discuss "E-Filing - Operator Bonds and Good Guy Issues."

Officers will be elected and installed during the evening which will include a barbecue buffet at a cost \$15 per person. API memberships will be available at the door. Door prizes are being donated courtesy of Curtis Well Service.

Red Cross to host CPR class Jan. 25

Gray County Chapter of the American Red Cross will conduct a Community CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) class on Saturday, Jan. 25, from 1 p.m. until 7 p.m., at the Red Cross office, 108 N. Russell. CPR for adults, children, and infants will be taught. To register, call 669-7121.

DEATHS

Phillip Dwayne Matthew, 35, services pending.

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Nurseries
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Steele to be interim PISD leader

By DEE DEE LARAMORE
Editor

Board decides to look outside the district for superintendent

Jane Steele will lead Pampa Independent School District (PISD) in the interim while school board members seek a new superintendent through the help of a consulting firm.

Board members named Steele, PISD's assistant superintendent for instruction, as interim superintendent after meeting behind closed doors for more than an hour Tuesday night.

"After conducting extensive and lengthy interviews with some of the employees of the Pampa Independent School district, the board continues to be impressed by the excellent people we have on our staff and have asked Mrs. Jane Steele to serve as interim superintendent," said Board President Lee Porter in a press release today.

In a special meeting Monday, the board interviewed district employees for more than six hours.

Porter said this morning that he will be talking with Texas Association of School Board (TASB) officials "in the next day or so." TASB contains a superintendent search section that is available to local school boards such as Pampa's. He said there are other consulting firms that could be considered by the board, also.

Dr. Dawson Orr, current school superintendent, will be leaving Pampa at the end of this month to accept the same

position with Wichita Falls ISD.

Orr's last official recommendation almost died for lack of a motion at Tuesday's meeting as the board wrestled with "effectiveness and efficiency standards" for Pampa High School.

"If my last official act dies for lack of a motion, so be it," the superintendent wryly commented.

After much discussion, the board finally set a 14.4 stu- (See SCHOOL, Page 3)

Citizens nix parolee house

By NANCY YOUNG
MANAGING EDITOR

SKELLYTOWN — What the future of the Skellytown campus of White Deer Independent School District will be is still uncertain.

A proposed request to house parolees in a rehabilitation center in the vacant elementary school at Skellytown was withdrawn during a heated council meeting Tuesday night.

A standing-room-only crowd of more than 100 Skellytown residents packed into the town's Community Center to express their feelings and views in an emotional meeting.

Claude Hooks, who is also a member of the city council, had expressed an interest in opening a faith-based rehabilitation center at the former elementary school building in the small community. After approximately 20 to 30 minutes of listening to residents express their views on the project known as the "Nehemiah Project," Hooks withdrew his proposal and suggested the meeting be adjourned. Mayor Lucille Lawrence adjourned the meeting.

The proposal was made by Hooks at

the Jan. 14 council meeting to open the facility for parolees during their first 90 days out of prison to reintegrate them back into society.

Hooks currently has five parolees in this program living at his home. One of the parolees is his son, Claude "Toddie" Hooks III.

The 39-year-old was released about a year ago after spending two years in Texas prison on a possession of marijuana charge.

"I was fortunate because I had family who never gave up on me," said Toddie. "So many of these men don't have that."

He said many of the men to be released from prison do not have a home or location to go upon release from prison. He described the program as a "reintegration program into society."

"The parole office will examine everyone who would go into such a program," he said. He said many of the men have no place to go upon discharge from prison.

Finding jobs for the parolees is a concern. The younger Hooks is employed as a dispatcher for a trucking company.

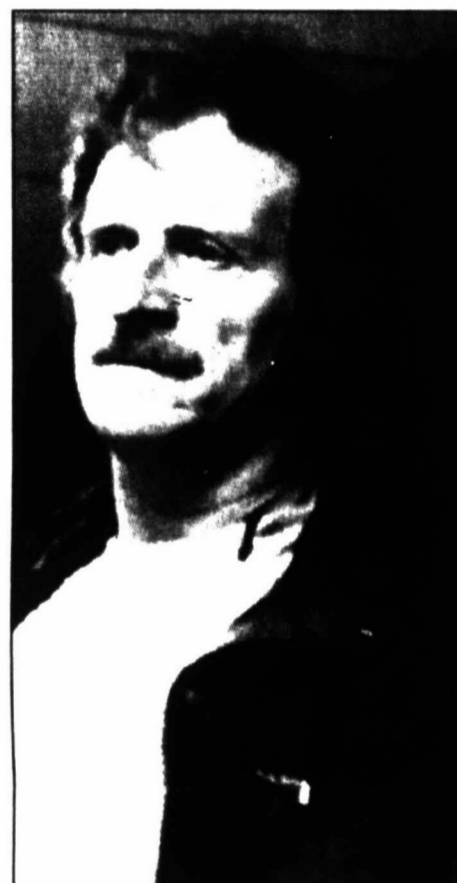
Several times while Toddie was speaking he was interrupted by members in the audience. One person proclaimed, "We don't want to help them," as Hooks spoke.

He said there are already 20-30 parolees in Skellytown, and said there are two to three registered sex offenders to which an unidentified woman said, "But they live with their families."

Several of the people who spoke in the meeting expressed fears that sex offenders and child molesters would be released to the 90-day program. A petition containing more than 200 signatures was presented to Mayor Lawrence and the city council asking the council not to consider the project.

Declining property values and lack of jobs in the area for the men were two issues brought up by citizens.

Steve Page, on parole for delivery of a controlled substance and living at the Hooks home, said there would be no sex offenders in the center because the state wouldn't allow it. He said sex offenders cannot be within certain distances of a church. One unidentified woman contradicted Page and emotion- (See CITIZENS, Page 3)



(Pampa News photo by Nancy Young)
Steve Page, one of the parolees living at the Claude Hooks residence in Skellytown, said many of the men leaving prison on parole have no place to go.

Government plans nationwide system to find bioterrorism

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government is adapting environmental monitors scattered across the nation to detect bioterrorism, hoping they will provide early warning if smallpox, anthrax or other deadly germs are released into the air.

The system would retrofit many of the 3,000 existing environmental monitoring stations with new filters to detect biological agents, administration officials said.

"It's part of our precautions to protect the country," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said Wednesday. He added that the White House has no specific information about a pending threat.

Results of the early warnings could be confirmed at a network of laboratories within 24 hours using DNA analysis.

The system was tested throughout 2002, including at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

Nightmare scenarios envisioned by bioterrorism experts include a small plane flying above a community, releasing anthrax or other germs over a large gathering of people. Depending on the winds, thousands of people could become ill, yet it could take days to figure out what happened.

The sooner health officials detect a bioterrorism incident,

the sooner they can properly treat victims with vaccines or antibiotics and protect others who might become infected.

Monitoring systems now run by the Environmental Protection Agency will be adapted to check for a number of biological agents. The systems, which filter air, were created to measure pollutants and the quality of the air.

If a station detects something suspicious, samples would be sent to the closest of some 120 labs that are part of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Laboratory Response Network. Results from these labs would be available within 12 to 24 hours, depending on the tests being conducted.

The tests involve genetic analysis using polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, techniques. They examine the genetic fingerprint of a germ sample and make a quick and accurate determination as to what it is.

These tests are considered much more reliable than hand-held devices often used by emergency responders, which often indicate the presence of a particular germ when none is there.

The new system is intended to work with existing patient surveillance systems, which monitor symptoms of (See MONITOR, Page 3)



(Pampa News photo by David Bowser)

Trooper Ron Shank of the Texas Department of Public Safety, right, and emergency workers render first aid to Debby Harris, a Skellytown woman injured in a one-car crash Tuesday afternoon west of Pampa on White Deer Creek.

Woman tuning car's radio hits guard rail, not station

A Skellytown woman suffered leg injuries Tuesday afternoon when her car veered off the roadway and into a guard rail at White Deer Creek.

The woman was tuning her car radio at the time, officials said.

Debby Harris, 47, of Skellytown was rushed to Pampa Regional Medical Center for injuries to her knees after her sedan crashed into a guard rail where Texas Highway 152 crosses White Deer Creek.

Harris was eastbound on Texas Highway 152 about 4 p.m., Tuesday, when her 1993 black Chrysler Imperial drifted toward the right side of the road as it curved down toward

White Deer Creek, according to Texas Department of Public Safety reports.

Officers said the woman apparently overcorrected in an effort to avoid hitting the guard rail on the south side of the highway and skidded across the oncoming lanes of the highway, striking the guard rail on the north side of the road.

The car came to rest, facing southwest, with the back of the vehicle against the guard rail on the north side of the highway. The crash destroyed about 30 feet of guard rail.

DPS Trooper Ron Shank, investigating officer, cited Harris for failing to drive in a single lane.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE



(Pampa News photo by Nancy Young)

More than 100 Skellytown residents crowded into the community center Tuesday night for a Town Hall meeting Tuesday night to voice concerns about a faith-based program known as Nehemiah Project. Claude Hooks III had expressed interest in establishing the program in Skellytown, but withdrew his proposal during Tuesday night's meeting.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

CITIZENS

tionally reported that a sex offender was allowed to sit at the school with the students. The issue has divided residents in this small community of just over 600 people—even the preachers. Danny Trussell, pastor of the River of Life Assembly of God, told the crowd that the men have done their time and should be given a chance. He cited from the biblical book John 8, saying "he who is without sin should cast the first stone." Trussell asked the crowd to help the people integrate back into society "in the name of God."

Cornerstone Christian Center pastor, Bob Epperson, immediately jumped to his feet responding that, "in the name of God," the center should not be allowed. City Secretary Cindy Cook said this morning that the community will continue to search for a use for the historical school building. White Deer Independent School District Board of Trustees closed the Skellytown campus in May 2002 due to the declining enrollment. Students who live in Skellytown now

ride buses to White Deer.

Cook said WDISD gave the school building and properties to the community of Skellytown in September 2002.

"We would like to have county offices and city offices in the building, but it is so big. The cost of utilities would be enormous," she said. "We'd like to have a business put their offices in there, but we have to have enough revenue to cover the cost of operations."

She said people in the community don't want to board up the windows, but they may have to do so as several windows have also been broken out.

"It's not that we don't want to do something with the building," she said. "It's that we can't afford it."

Cook said people were very afraid of what could happen to them and their children if the reintegration center was approved.

The City of Skellytown does not have a law enforcement officer. Mayor Lawrence said last night the town only had enough funds to hire one person part time.

When asked after the meeting what the future held for the faith-based Nehemiah Project, Toddie Hooks said, "I don't know. I'm going to go home and pray about it."

SCHOOL

dent-teacher ratio efficiency standard for Pampa High School, leaving school officials with the decision of how they would set up class schedules to meet that standard.

In November 2002, school board members said the school district must be in the top 20 percent of schools in the state by 2004 and in the top 10 percent or "exemplary" by state standards in 2006. Ratings are judged primarily by student test scores in four core subjects: math, English, reading and writing.

Since then, school administrators and board members are focusing on Pampa High School, which received a one-star (lowest) rating in a November 2002 Texas Monthly magazine article comparing Texas high schools.

Even before November, board member Jay Johnson had brought up what he saw as problems in the PHS accelerated block schedule, saying it was costly to the district and ineffective in preparing students for college.

Parents, students and teach-

ers had brought differing opinions about the block schedule to the board - some strongly in favor, others strongly opposed.

Orr brought a comparison of exemplary schools similar to Pampa to last night's meeting. The comparison shows each school's student population, master schedule, and student-teacher ratio.

Only one of the 27 schools had an accelerated block schedule. Most (16) were on a seven-period schedule and the average student teacher ratio for 900-1,100 student population schools was 14.4 or one teacher to approximately 14 students.

This year, PHS has a student enrollment of 1,058 and a student-teacher ratio of 13.2.

"This data, to me, says we can't really support a block schedule," Orr said. "I have to be candid. I recommend a seven-period day as the most defensible schedule if we're going to be held to effectiveness and efficiency."

He also said that for the sake of efficiency, PHS would need to go to a 14 or 14.4 student-teacher ratio which would mean seven fewer

teachers and annual savings to the school district of \$180,000 to \$240,000.

Orr emphasized that PHS Principal John Kendall and the leadership committee needed guidance from the board before going further with restructuring plans.

Porter reiterated that the school board had charged PHS and the school district to improve, but did not want to "micromanage" or "tie their hands." He also said the board wanted quarterly progress reports.

"I'm interested in attendance and discipline," he said, "but I want (student test) scores. That's how schools are being measured."

The number of teachers lost through implementing the 14.4 student ratio efficiency standard will be handled through attrition and reassignment, Orr said.

Porter said today he was satisfied with the board's action.

"Our goal is for the students to have the best education possible and at the same time be good stewards of the citizens' money," he said.

Armed Mexican soldier arrested across border

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — A Mexican soldier was arrested by U.S. Border Patrol agents after he apparently wandered onto the U.S. side of the border near Nogales, officials said.

The soldier "had become separated from his unit, became lost, and wandered into the United States in a very remote area west of Nogales," Border Patrol

spokesman Frank Amarillas said in a prepared statement.

The soldier was armed and made it more than a mile across the border, in a place about seven miles west of Nogales, officials said.

When the soldier was encountered by agents Monday, he offered no resistance and said he needed help, Amarillas said.

After discussions between

U.S. and Mexican government officials, the soldier was granted a voluntary return to Mexico Tuesday, Amarillas said.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

MONITOR

patients, looking for strange patterns of disease that may detect a biological agent infecting many people at the same time.

The system, first reported in Wednesday's editions of

The New York Times, is being created by the new Homeland Security Department. It will cost about \$1 million to upgrade each monitoring system and an additional \$1 million per city, per year, to run the system, analyzing samples that are collected.

Houston police chief's trial begins

HOUSTON (AP) — After a day of jury selection that proved frustrating for prosecutors, attorneys prepared to deliver opening statements in the perjury trial of Houston Police Chief Clarence Bradford.

Bradford, the first Houston police chief to be charged with a crime while in office, is accused of intentionally lying about calling a subordinate a vulgar name.

He has been suspended with pay and has temporarily surrendered his badge and his gun until the trial is over. Bradford maintains his innocence.

On Tuesday, prosecutors had to contend with panelists who called the case trivial and questioned its legitimacy.

Others were confused about why Bradford was on trial or suggested the case might be politically motivated.

"Are you saying that every public official who's lied has been prosecuted?" a male juror asked prosecutors as he was being questioned, drawing laughter from other panelists and courtroom observers.

Don Smyth, an assistant district attorney, replied: "Sounds like you've got your mind made up."

Bradford, who at times chuckled during the jury selection process, had about 50 supporters, including family and local black community leaders, in the courtroom.

Many black community leaders allege the charge against Bradford is racially

motivated.

"This case is nothing more than the 2003 political lynching of an African-American man and the destruction of his career," activist Quanell X said.

Defense attorneys could barely contain their glee about some of the comments from the panelists and the makeup of the jury — four jurors are black, three of whom are women.

"I think it's going to be a great jury," defense attorney Rusty Hardin said. "I think some of the panelists put the whole thing in perspective."

Prosecutors refused to comment as they left the courthouse Tuesday afternoon. Opening statements are set Wednesday.

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Students, angry farmer protest U.N. inspections

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — International arms monitors, on their daily rounds of surprise inspections, stirred up protests from angry students and a farmer on Wednesday as they pressed their hunt for signs of any Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Several dozen technical students carrying T-squares, slide rules and hastily scribbled protest signs poured out of the Baghdad Technology Institute after a U.N. inspection team arrived unannounced Wednesday morning.

"No War For Oil," read one sign in English, reflecting a common Iraqi view that U.S. threats to attack Iraq if it doesn't disarm voluntarily have more to do with American designs on Iraqi oil than with concern over its weapons.

The inspectors, sent in by the United Nations to verify Iraq's claim that it has no more banned weapons programs, have disclosed little detail about specific visits in their two months' work here.

They are believed to be checking universities and technical institutes for signs of banned military research in biological, chemical or nuclear fields, and for leads to scientists and engineers potentially knowledgeable about weapons work.

Later Wednesday, chicken farmer Sabah Anwar Mohammed was brought to the press center in central Baghdad by government officials to complain to the international media that U.N. inspectors had demolished a wall of a building on his farm on the capital's southern outskirts.

Reporters who visited the site found damage to a brick wall built over a doorway.

"I hope to file a suit against the United Nations and the inspectors," said an

angry Anwar, 59, who works principally as an industrial executive.

A U.N. statement on Monday said a biological weapons team visited "an agricultural site south of Baghdad" that day, and "completed the inspection of the remaining buildings that were sealed during their first inspection on 15 January."

"They claim that there is a biological unit in the farm," Anwar told reporters, but he said all they found behind the demolished wall was motors and other electrical equipment he stored there after he shut down the farm.

"I will ask them for an apology to my government and to me," he said. "Imagine an unwanted guest rushing into your house. Imagine the pressure."

Anwar said the inspectors, apparently still interested in the site, told him they would return.

The U.N. teams Wednesday also made unannounced visits to the Badr Company, an engineering facility south of Baghdad where work was carried out before the 1991 Gulf War in connection with gas centrifuges, equipment Iraq planned to use to "enrich" uranium for the building of nuclear weapons; and to Basra University, in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.

The United States continued its military buildup in the Gulf in preparation for a possible war against Iraq. U.S. officials announced this week that the Army's 4th Infantry Division, equipped with tanks, attack helicopters and artillery, is heading a group of 37,000 soldiers to the region. They will join tens of thousands of American forces already there.

Three journalists believed captured by kidnappers

PANAMA CITY, Panama (AP) — Colombian gunmen are believed to have kidnapped three foreign journalists, including the reporter who interviewed American Taliban suspect John Walker Lindh, police said.

Panamanian media said the men were seized on Sunday by a right-wing paramilitary group, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, just north of the Colombian border in Panama.

Panama's National Police identified the journalists as Robert Y. Pelton, Mark Wedeven and Megan A. Smaker.

Pelton is an American freelance journalist who lives in the Los Angeles area. The two others are believed to be an American and a Canadian.

Pelton is an experienced war correspondent and the author of "The World's Most Dangerous Places," a guide book to the world's conflict zones.

Pelton covered the war in Afghanistan for CNN and made headlines around the world with his interview of Lindh shortly after a bloody revolt by Afghan prisoners in November 2001.

Pelton's wife said she had not been contacted by any one claiming responsibility for Pelton's kidnapping.

"I'm waiting for the next step," she said. "I'm waiting for them to be home safe."

On Tuesday night, police searchers found the bodies of three people who police said had been killed in an attack by the Colombians. But it was unclear whether they were the missing journalists because authorities were also looking for three Indians from the nearby village of Paya who were believed to have been killed.

Panamanian National Police spokesman Carlos Bares said authorities were scouring the area near Paya, but that they were not sure where the abduct-

ed journalists had been taken.

"They could be in Colombia," Bares said.

A Panamanian who served as the trio's guide, Victor Manuel Alcazar, was wounded in the attack and escaped from the paramilitaries. He was interviewed by the newspaper La Prensa in the Panamanian border town of Boca de Cupe.

Alcazar told the paper the foreigners had hired him to guide them through the jungle in Darien province, on the border. Their group had passed by Paya when they ran into a column of 50 to 60 paramilitary fighters.

Alcazar said one group took the foreigners prisoners, while another group split off and asked Alcazar to show them the way back to Paya. Alcazar said the paramilitaries took him with them as they attacked Pucuro, about 12 miles from Paya, but that he later escaped.

Military sources speculated the paramilitaries wanted to attack the Indian village for its alleged cooperation with leftist Colombian guerrillas.

API to convene monthly meeting

American Petroleum Institute's Panhandle Chapter will meet at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 23, at Pampa Country Club for social hour followed by dinner at 7 p.m. Guest speaker for the meeting will be Kim Peterson of Texas Railroad Commission, District 10.

Peterson will discuss "E-Filing — Operator Bonds and Good Guy Issues."

Officers will be elected and installed during the evening which will include a barbecue buffet at a cost \$15 per person. API memberships will be available at the door.

Door prizes are being donated courtesy of Curtis Well Service.

TRIVIA DAY

1. What is the maximum height of an astronaut?
2. What is the most commonly used letter in the English language?
3. True or False. The United States has more dams than any other country.
4. True or False. Over half of the Sahara Desert is covered with sand.
5. True or False. Birmingham, England has more canals than Venice Italy.

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Good Luck!

6. What is a dactylogram?
7. What is the southern most state in the United States?
8. True or False. Lightning strikes from the ground up.
9. True or False. It is estimated that there are 3000 languages spoken around the world.
10. What is the minimum weight of a bowling pin?

Powerful earthquake rocks central Mexico

GUADALAJARA, Mexico (AP) — A powerful earthquake ripped through western and central Mexico, killing at least 21 people, collapsing dozens of houses and leaving the worst-hit state shrouded in darkness with power outages.

The death toll continued to rise Wednesday as emergency crews surveyed the full extent of the damage hours after the ground stopped shaking. The government news agency Notimex said officials put the death toll at 23, but it did not elaborate.

The quake struck at 8:07 p.m. Tuesday in Colima, a small state that includes the port city of Manzanillo, about 300 miles west of Mexico City. The government Wednesday declared a state of emergency in Colima.

Mexico's national seismological service put the quake's magnitude at 7.6, but the U.S. Geological Survey calculated it at 7.8. A magnitude 7 quake is capable of causing widespread, heavy damage.

"Because of the size of the earthquake and its shallow depth, USGS is expecting substantial damage," said U.S. Geological Survey spokesman Butch Kinerney.

Colima Gov. Fernando Moreno Pena said 19 people were killed, nine in the capital city of Colima and 10 others elsewhere in his state. He did not provide details, but radio reports said most of the victims died after portions of office and residential buildings collapsed near the center of Colima City.

Two people, including a 1-year-old girl, also were killed in neighboring Jalisco state.

Nearly all of Colima state

remained without electricity and phone service early Wednesday, Moreno Pena said.

Melchor Usua Quiroz, head of the state's civil defense authorities, told the government news agency Notimex that the quake damaged homes and businesses and briefly left several people trapped in elevators across Colima.

In Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco state and Mexico's second-largest city, the quake leveled 40 homes and left more than 100 people homeless, authorities said.

An 85-year-old woman in the town of Zapotitan died after she rushed out of her house and was crushed by a falling security wall that had ringed her yard. A 1-year-old girl also died in the town, but the circumstances surrounding her death remained unclear, authorities said Wednesday.

President Vicente Fox ordered the military to search for damage near the quake's epicenter, a region that included remote villages in coastal areas of Jalisco and Colima.


The quake swayed buildings, briefly knocked out power and telephone service and sent panicked residents running into the streets in Mexico City, but officials said there were no reports of deaths or serious damage there.

"Fortunately there does not appear to be generalized damage in the city," said Mexico City Police Chief Marcelo Ebrard.

Immediately after the quake, police cars drove slowly through the streets of Mexico City with sirens flashing, asking people over loudspeakers: "Is everything OK?"

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Fossils with leg feathers shed light on winged creatures

By WILLIAM MCCALL
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Fossils with leg feathers discovered in northeast China suggest birds may have a four-winged ancestor that glided from ancient trees above its dinosaur cousins long before two wings took over to power flight.

The small animal called "Microraptor gui" — in honor of Chinese paleontologist Gu Zhiwei — was about 2 1/2 feet long and had feathers covering its legs that were similar to the feathers in its wings. The fossils were dated to 128 million years ago.

Other researchers hailed the discovery, but said the fossils don't necessarily mean all winged creatures share Microraptor gui as a common ancestor.

"It's a phenomenal find," said Luis Chiappe, a paleontologist at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Chiappe did not participate in the dig, but he has visited the fossil site in the Chinese province of Liaoning, northeast of Beijing. Liaoning has yielded several important specimens in recent years.

"We don't have anything that resembles this in the whole dinosaur and bird spectrum,"

Chiappe said.

Scientists say the fossils revive a debate between two theories of how dinosaurs might have evolved into birds. One theory holds that some of these apparent bird ancestors learned to flap their wings to power flight while they were gliding.

The other theory suggests they learned to fly by increasing their running speed with their wings and taking off from the ground.

Details of the fossils appear in the current issue of the journal Nature.

Paleontologist Xing Xu of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences described six fossils with leg feathers arranged in a pattern similar to wing feathers in modern birds.

"They are long and some have asymmetrical veins like flight feathers," Xu said.

The feathered legs amount to rear wings, Xu said. He speculated they could have been an intermediate stage before the arrival of the birdlike Archaeopteryx, whose flight was powered by two real wings.

Or, the feathered legs could've been an evolutionary dead-end, researchers said.

The legs probably didn't flap

Baptist church sign creates furor

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — A Baptist church's roadside sign that says Islam approves of murder has been denounced by church leaders representing worshippers around the state.

The marquee-type sign outside the First Conservative Baptist Church reads: "Jesus Forbade Murder. Matthew 26:52. Muhammad Approved Murder. Surah 8:65."

Muslims say the verse cited is not an endorsement of murder, but rather says those who believe and are steadfast in battle will overcome much larger armies.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations last week called on religious groups to condemn the sign.

On Monday, the Rev. Fred Morris, executive director of the Florida Council of Churches, which represents 3,500 congrega-

tions statewide, called Islam a sister religion and repudiated "expressions of hatred toward any person or group."

The Rev. Tom Borland, president of the Interfaith Council of Jacksonville, also rejected the message.

"As a Christian, I am disappointed at this unchristian effort to disparage Islam," Borland said in statement. "Jesus never attacked other faiths."

First Conservative's pastor, Gene Youngblood, did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

Youngblood, who also leads the Conservative Theological Society and Conservative Christian Academy, has said he's used the sign to express the church's opinion for 15 years and has no plans to remove the message.

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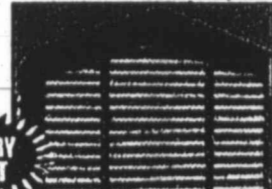
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Wednesday, January 22, 2003

DEAR ABBY

written by Pauline Phillips and daughter Jeanna Phillips

Son Placed for Adoption Kept Secret From Fiance's Family

DEAR ABBY: Almost two years ago, I placed my beautiful baby boy for adoption. His name is William. A wonderful couple adopted him. As difficult as it was for me, I knew I was doing the right thing.

My fiance's family knows nothing about William. I want to tell them, but my fiance doesn't want me to, so I've kept quiet. This has bothered me for two years, and I carry a lot of unhappiness inside because of it.

I am considering telling my fiance's family without him present, but I'm afraid I could lose him over this. Should I allow this situation to go on and wait for my fiance to tell his family, or should I be honest with them about William? Please give me your opinion, Abby.

BARBIE IN TEXAS

DEAR BARBIE: I admire you for wanting to level with your fiance's family. It's the right thing to do because "secrets" like yours have a way of coming to light eventually.

However, I strongly feel that you should not tell his family unless your fiance is beside you. It is important he make it clear to them that regardless of their reaction to the news, he loves you and you are the person with whom he intends to spend the rest of his life.

DEAR ABBY: I come from a large family. Because there hasn't been a family reunion for more than 15 years, I thought it was time. I contacted all my aunts, uncles and cousins and asked them to provide me with names and addresses of their children and grandchildren so I could send invitations.

After receiving the information, I sent everyone letters announcing the place and time of the reunion — and asked them to donate \$25 per family to cover the cost of food, beverages, paper goods, table rental, etc. Several of my relatives found this extremely offensive and said if they had to pay to attend a family reunion, they weren't coming!

Abby, do you think I was wrong to ask for some financial help?

NOT WEALTHY IN TEXAS

DEAR NOT WEALTHY: No, I do not. Perhaps this is one of the reasons it has been 15 years since the family gathered. Considering the cost involved, the amount you requested was not excessive. I hope you held the reunion without the complainers and that it was a success.

DEAR ABBY: I don't know what's wrong with me. I am an 18-year-old girl, and I date only older guys who either have a girlfriend or are engaged. It's like I can't be happy with anyone single or available. Sometimes I have even dated my

friends' boyfriends behind their backs. I'm afraid in the future this will all catch up with me. I don't want to act like this anymore, Abby. I really don't. Please help.

"SALLY" IN CINCINNATI

DEAR "SALLY": It is an intelligent person who recognizes she (or he) is engaging in self-defeating behavior — and this certainly qualifies. I don't know if you have a fear of commitment or whether "poaching" gives you a feeling of power. Whatever your motivation, some counseling to get to the bottom of it would be very helpful. Unless you're willing to examine your behavior, the pattern will continue.

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

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Crossword Puzzle

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By THOMAS JOSEPH

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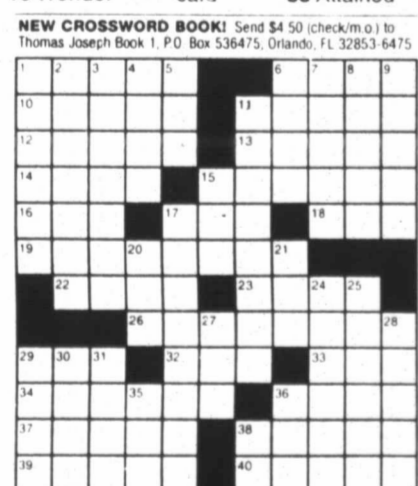
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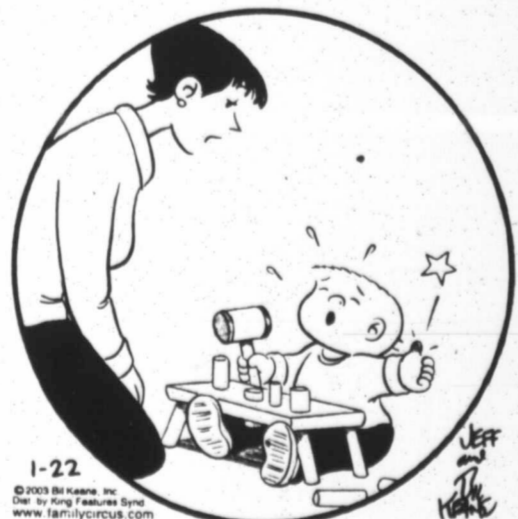
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The Family Circus



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Kennedy sings Kerry's praises

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, a powerful voice in the Democratic Party, indicates he will support fellow Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry's presidential bid.

"I think my friend and colleague, John Kerry, is doing a great job," Kennedy said Tuesday in response to a question after he delivered a speech at the National Press Club in Washington. "I expect to support him, and I expect he'll win."

Kennedy said he expected to deliver an official endorsement of Kerry later this year.

In his speech, Kennedy attributed party losses in last November's elections to a failure to stand up to a popular President Bush.

"The lesson of 2002 is clear," he said. "We will not succeed if we fail to stand up and speak out."

Kennedy accused Bush of pursuing war in Iraq while a more imminent threat exists in North Korea, violating rights of immigrants in the name of homeland security and failing to prepare for future terrorist attacks.

The senator also maintained that Bush's \$674 billion tax cut plan only benefits the wealthy.

"The last thing we need is policies that divide us at home by race or riches," Kennedy said. "The ideals of America are not realized but denied by a relentless ideology of tax giveaways for the few — and then even more tax giveaways for the few."

DAR Contest



(Community Camera photos)

Top: Cody Snow, a Pampa Middle School student, won the local Daughters of the American Revolution "American History Essay Contest" in his age level. The topic of the contest was "A Letter from Valley Forge, 1777-78." Congratulating him is teacher-sponsor Mrs. Mary Gandy. Cody, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donny Snow of Pampa, received \$20 and a medal for his entry. He will go on to compete at the state level. Bottom: Evan Gary Aderhold, a student at Austin Elementary School, was the city-wide winner in the elementary age division of the DAR contest. Congratulating him is teacher-sponsor Sandra Prater. Evan will be officially recognized with a monetary award and a silver medal during a DAR reception next month.

Abortion rights supporters, critics march on anniversary of Roe vs. Wade court case

WASHINGTON (AP) — Clashing opinions on abortion are being heard loud and clear in the nation's capital as thousands of people mark the 30th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion.

"Most anniversaries are causes for celebration," said Philadelphia Roman Catholic Archbishop Anthony Bevilacqua. "This one is not. It is a day of mourning. Mourning for this immoral, unjust, illogical decision."

Bevilacqua, who chairs an anti-abortion committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, led an all-night vigil Tuesday night at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. About 7,000 people, including five cardinals, 36 bishops and 250 priests, attended the annual "Mass for Life" and prayer service.

Across town, meanwhile, NARAL Pro-Choice America hosted a dinner attended by 1,300 people, featuring Democratic presidential candidates, including former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri and Sens. John Edwards of North Carolina, John Kerry of Massachusetts, and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut.

The decision's anniversary comes at a flashpoint in the debate, with anti-abortion activists saying political winds have granted them sympathetic ears among lawmakers in power and afforded them their best chance in years to dent the rights granted by the 1973 decision.

Republicans hold the presidency and Congress, and a possible retirement on the Supreme Court could allow President Bush to appoint a justice who is against abortion rights.

First on the GOP's agenda is passing a ban on late-term abortions, which Congress had done in the 1996 and 1997. Then-

President Clinton vetoed the bill each time; President Bush has said he would sign it.

Abortions are becoming less common in the United States, particularly among teenagers, in part because of better contraception. The overall abortion rate fell from 1994 to 2000—from 24 abortions for every 1,000 women of childbearing age to 21—according to the nonprofit Alan Guttmacher Institute.

The issue has gained prominence in the early presidential race.

"There is nothing moral in strong-arming a personal belief, and there is nothing moral to a presidency that imposes personal morality through acts of government power," Gephardt said.

Gephardt and Edwards discussed the importance of passing a federal law to guarantee abortion rights even if the Supreme Court should overturn the 1972 Roe decision.

"The right to choose is an essential ingredient to realize the full equality of America," Edwards said.

This year's anniversary is the first since Republicans regained control of the Senate in the November elections. The GOP also holds the House and the White House.

Abortion-rights supporters are concerned that the Republican control—coupled with the possibility of a retirement from the Supreme Court this year—increases the chances that Roe v. Wade could be eroded or overturned. The high court now is split 5-4 in favor of abortion rights.

Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women, said her group's focus will be on maintaining the current Supreme Court balance and ensuring that "we will not be the generation that both won and lost reproductive rights in our lifetime."

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