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## TODAY IN SPORTS



Monday, April 30, 2012 [www.thepampanews.com](http://www.thepampanews.com) Volume 108 • No. 21

**75¢** Lawmakers talk school discipline  
 \$1.50 weekend Statewide policy to be assessed | p4

Holmes keeps fingers crossed  
 Junior hopes third place finish nets trip to state | p8

## Pampa's Freedom Museum welcomes new plane

### ■ Vietnam War era F105-D is latest addition to museum's fleet of aircraft

ARNIE AURELLANO  
 editor@thepampanews.com

There's a new bird in town, and Andy Epps couldn't be happier about it.

Epps, curator of Pampa's Freedom Museum USA, was at the museum on Sunday with fellow veteran Rod Porter, admiring the F105-D fighter-bomber that they had just spent the weekend helping to rebuild. The plane, which arrived in pieces on Friday, is the newest addition to the museum's fleet of battle-used military vehicles and the fifth aircraft to grace the facility's grounds, joining an F4 fighter, a B-25 bomber and a pair of helicopters.

It came via Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, with the Freedom Museum paying \$33,000 to have it shipped to Pampa. The money was raised with the help of contributors from all around the city, according to Epps.

"We had the opportunity to get this one from the Air Force," Epps said. "We just worked with them and they finally approved one for us. Thanks to the good people of Pampa, Texas. They donated the money and we finally got it."

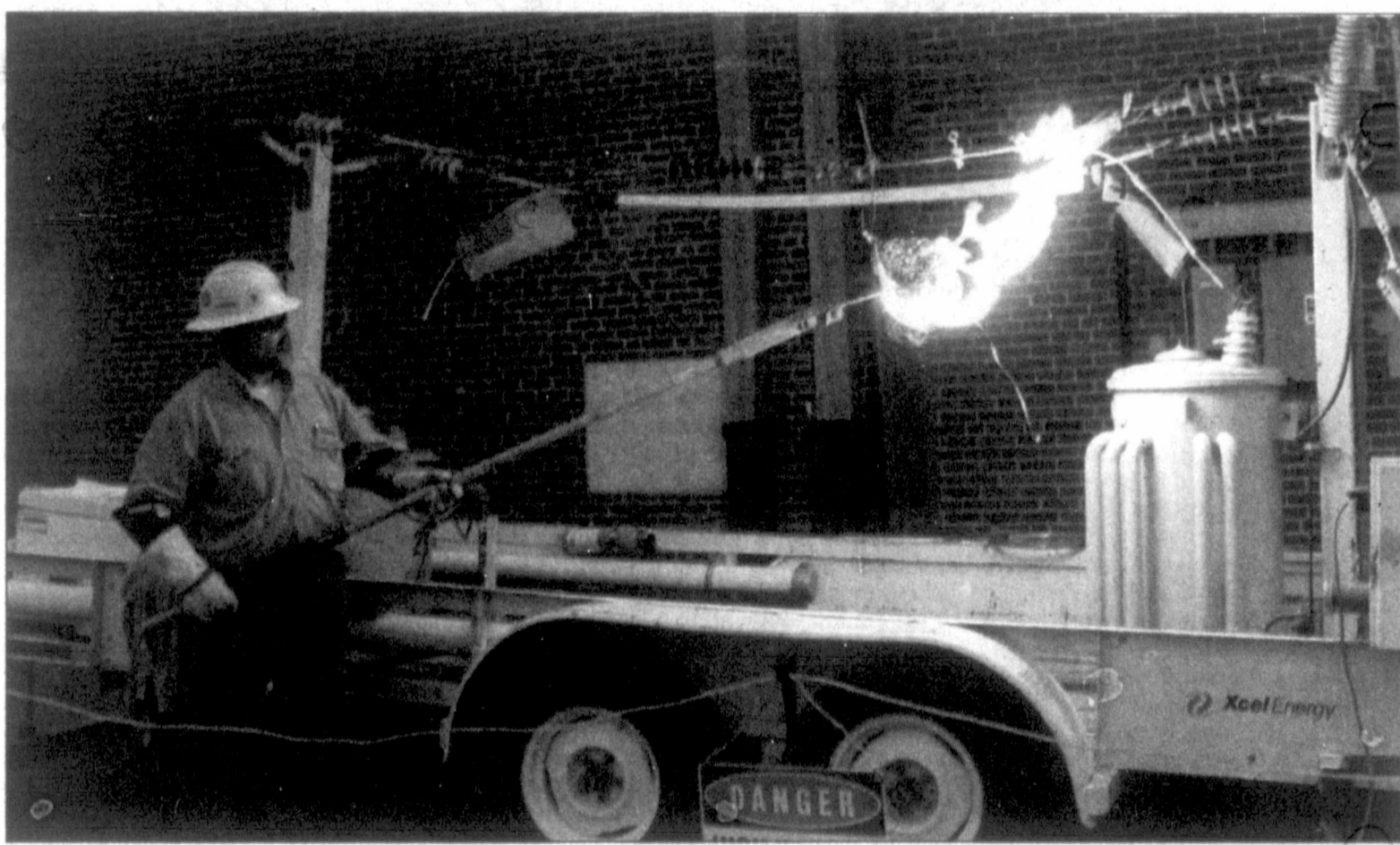
"Chuck Mosely of All Coast Aircraft Recovery, they're the ones that have moved some of our planes here before," Epps continued. "He works closely with PLANE cont. on page 2



photo courtesy of Della Moyer

This Vietnam-era F105-D fighter-bomber is the latest addition to Freedom Museum USA's fleet of military vehicles.

## SHOCKING DISPLAY



staff photo by Mollie Bryant

Kevin Davis of Xcel Energy uses the company's arcing trailer to demonstrate what happens when a balloon is exposed to hot wires.

## Reminder: Early voting starts today

ARNIE AURELLANO  
 editor@thepampanews.com

With early voting for City of Pampa elections commencing today, Karen Price, city secretary, is looking to remind Pampans to turn out and make their voices heard.

Residents of the city may cast their ballots at a voting station on the second floor of City Hall, 200 W. Foster, Price said. Early voting lasts until May 8.

"We also want people to know that the handicapped entrance is on the west side (of the building)," Price added. "We want to make sure that everyone can get to us and vote, so that's the way they can come in if they need to."

Arrangements can also still be ELECTION cont. on page 3



## NRCS announces partnership to protect wildlife habitats

### ■ Lesser prairie chicken among species that benefit

MOLLIE BRYANT  
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has announced a partnership with farmers and ranchers to protect wildlife habitats, including the lesser prairie chicken, an at-risk species in Texas. With the Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative and the Working Lands for Wildlife program, landowners can receive up to 75 percent financial assistance in the installation of

conservation practices to benefit the bird. The conservation methods, which also promote healthy grazing lands, include prescribed grazing, upland wildlife habitat management, brush management, prescribed burning and range planting.

"We are excited about this partnership opportunity to work with Texas landowners and producers to advance the habitat and conservation of the lesser prairie chicken," says Don Wilhelm, state coordinator for the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in Texas.

People interested in the Working Lands for Wildlife program, which creates a \$33 million partnership with farmers and ranchers, can apply at their local NRCS office by today. If funds remain, a second sign-up period will be held through Wednesday, May 30.

The population of the lesser prairie chicken, a ground-nesting bird native to rangelands in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado and Kansas, has declined over the last few decades due to habitat fragmentation, degradation of habitat and loss of native prairie. Over 90 percent of the bird's habitat occurs on private land.

"The aim of the program is to focus available conservation dollars and wildlife expertise on the recovery of this at-risk species," says Salvador Salinas, state conservationist for the NRCS in Texas. "Our mission is to provide financial and technical assistance to help private landowners and other producers voluntarily restore or enhance their land to create a more sustainable habitat for the lesser prairie chicken, while ensuring the viability of farming and ranching in Texas."

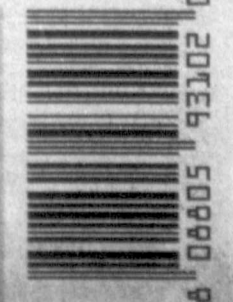
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### PAMPA FORECAST

Today	Tuesday	Wednesday
		
High 81 Low 55	High 89 Low 56	High 89 Low 56

**Today:** Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Some of the storms could be severe. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 81. South wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

**Tonight:** Isolated showers and thunderstorms. Some of the storms could be severe. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55. Breezy, with a south-southwest wind between 15 and 25 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

**Tuesday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 89. Breezy, with a south-southwest wind between 15 and 25 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

**Tuesday Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 56. South-southwest wind between 15 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

**Wednesday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 89. West-southwest wind between 15 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

**Wednesday Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 56. Southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

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TPA

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## Weather changing Big Bend landscape

**PANTHER JUNCTION (AP)** — Surrounded by large patches of straw-yellow sotol and withered prickly pear, federal botanist Joe Sirotnak summarized the causes of a massive plant die-off that has changed the Big Bend desert landscape, at least temporarily.

"This is from the freeze, and that's from the drought. It's a double-whammy," he said, with a sweep of the hand.

The first blow came when only 2.53 inches of rain fell during 2011 at the headquarters of Big Bend National Park, less than a fifth of normal precipitation. And the second was a five-day freeze in February 2011, when the mercury dropped almost to zero.

"The freeze and drought were acute events, unprecedented in living memory," Sirotnak said.

The drought extended throughout the Big Bend and into northern Mexico, and desert plants once thought to be nearly indestructible, such as creosote bush and lechuguilla — a spiky miniature agave known affectionately as "shin dagger" — succumbed in massive numbers.

The extraordinary plant mortality, first reported in the Big Bend Sentinel, extended to upland trees such as

oak, madrone, piñon and juniper. And while this spring has been somewhat wetter, bringing flowers and some regeneration, the scars might last for years.

"The question that remains is, is this a long-term landscape-changing event or not?" asked Sirotnak, 41, who has worked at the national park since the late 1990s. "There's a good indication that 20 years from now, you could still see the effects of the drought of 2011 in the plant community."

Cactus specialist Michael Terry, a botanist at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, is seeing the fatal effects of the drought on these supremely hardy desert species.

"I'm just seeing them dying. I can think of a half-dozen species at least, maybe a dozen," he said.

"And here's the tricky part: These are the species that normally would have come up and produced seed by now that are not answering the call of spring. There is no water."

Terry's main worry is soil loss caused by the demise of vegetation such as creosote bush.

"Everything that would normally hold the soil in is now dead, and it will take years for the plants to come back.

There will be this vulnerable period where horrible erosion can occur," he said.

Retired Sul Ross Professor Michael Powell, 74, who has studied the plants of the Big Bend for more than 50 years, said the biggest unknown is what the future holds.

"The million-dollar question is, will the flora change? No one really knows," he said. "I think what we're seeing is climate change, and it is expressed in these kinds of ways. It's been getting drier in West Texas for a long time."

So far in 2012, 2 inches of rain has fallen at Panther Junction, already below average this year but still wetter than in 2011. The ocotillo and surviving prickly pear are flowering.

And if the rains return to normal, and keep coming, the effects of the drought of 2011 on the Chihuahuan Desert might fade, Powell said.

"If things stay that way long enough, for years and years, then ultimately the desert plants will come back," he said.

"But if we keep having these severe droughts without fairly long periods of normal precipitation, then it's logical we will see floristic changes in the desert."



photo courtesy of Della Moyer

**Denny Parmer** (from left) and **John Macon** of All Coast Aircraft Recovery, **Les Chapman** of Les Chapman Trucking, and **Bill and Chuck Mosely** of All Coast work together to put the Freedom Museum's newest addition back together.

### Plane

the military and the federal government, moving planes for them as well as museums. He let us know that there were seven of these that were sitting out at Lackland that were going to be released."

The aircraft is in excellent shape, Epps said, with only a few missing parts that the museum is looking to acquire and install. The plane's good condition is in keeping with its reputation as a durable machine tailored to bearing the brunt of strike bombing during the early stages of the Vietnam War.

"It was ugly, it never flew very good and it was hard to get off the ground, but the pilots loved it," said a reverent Porter, who loaded munitions for F105s during his days in the Air Force. "You could shoot it all to hell and it would still come home. It was just hard to knock you down. It took a lot of punishment."

"It still to this day, as far as I know, flew more sorties than any other type of plane in history. Just that squadron that this one was in over at Korat had over 93,000 sorties, and it was only there for three years. This thing was a workhorse during Vietnam."

Porter has yet to trace the plane's tail number, but he confirmed that the plane was at Thailand's Korat Air Force Base — the air force's largest front line facil-

ity in Thailand during Vietnam — from 1966 to 1969, three years before Porter himself arrived at Korat.

"(Porter) lived and breathed with these aircraft when he was over there," Epps said. "I'm thrilled to death (to have the plane here). This is wonderful. ... You know, it's just like the F4. They're both Vietnam vintage aircraft, and what makes them special is the way you see these veterans look at them, like Rod Porter and Joe Martinez here in town and others. This means something, like a lot of special memories. It's almost like, in my mind, we're playing a role to help people understand the past and what's gone on, and we're helping folks like Joe and Rod remember some times that are awfully important in this country."

Epps paused to laugh, the fatigue from reassembling the aircraft evident in his voice.

"I'm kind of worn out," Epps chuckled. "We've been living with this thing for three days, and I'm just so happy it's here. ... I don't know what else to say about it. It's something that people need to come see. They need to know the history. This plane was designed in 1951, tested in 1955, the Air Force adopted it in 1958, and it is a beauty."

## Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips



**DEAR ABBY:** My 11-year-old niece, "Nina," has no table manners. I was surprised at her inappropriate behavior because her parents are well-educated people who were raised with good table manners.

I didn't say anything when Nina slathered clotted cream on her scone with her fingers, but I was disgusted. I did suggest she use a spoon after she scooped rice out of a communal bowl with her hand. Both of these incidents happened in restaurants.

Is there anything I can do when I must eat with this child? I know it may have been wrong of me to correct Nina in front of her mother, but we were all eating from the same bowl. Should I ignore her ignorance of basic table manners and keep my mouth shut? — **LOST MY APPETITE IN HOUSTON**

**DEAR LOST YOUR APPE-**  
**TITE:** By age 11, children should have mastered basic table manners. (Not eating with one's fingers is one of the basics.) Is your niece learning-disabled? If the answer is no, you should discuss this with your sibling. Nina is at an age when she needs to know what's expected of

her when she's out in public.

**DEAR ABBY:** My son came out of the closet last year. My first reaction was to tell him it was OK. (I had already suspected that he was.) I love him dearly and we're a close family. His brothers and sisters also accept and love him.

My husband and I are now struggling because we're not sure how God really views gays and lesbians. To listen to some religious people, my son will go to hell. I can't believe that God would create a person to be this way, then turn His back on him.

I tried reading the Bible, but the wording was hard to understand. I don't want to talk to my pastor about it because, even though I have accepted my son for who he is, I still have trouble talking to people about it because I'm not sure how they'll react. Do you believe a gay person will go to heaven? — **SOMEWHERE IN THE U.S.A.**

**DEAR SOMEWHERE:** I believe that entrance to heaven is based upon a person's character, not his or her sexual orientation. Today, because of modern scientific studies, we know more about homo-

sexuality than was known when the Bible was written, and that sexual orientation is not a "choice."

**DEAR ABBY:** Our daughter keeps hinting that we should give her money for her in vitro fertilization. We have concerns based on many issues, but the bottom line is we're not sure if she can handle motherhood.

Our daughter's marriage is shaky, and she struggles with many of her relationships and commitments in life. She is basically disabled by anxiety. Not only do we believe we should stay out of this, but we also think they can't afford the procedure themselves. We would be happy for them if they had a child, but we prefer to avoid the money connection. What do you think? — **UNDECIDED IN MISSOURI**

**DEAR UNDECIDED:** If you give your daughter money, it would be better spent on counseling and medication to help her overcome her anxiety disorder. A baby will not fix a shaky marriage, and could very well complicate it. Because your daughter and her husband can't afford to pay for it themselves, they should not be hitting you up to fund the endeavor.

# MORNINGRUSH

## Man receives life for shooting

FORT WORTH (AP) — A 20-year-old Fort Worth man has received an automatic life sentence without parole for the robbery and fatal shooting of a teenager in 2010.

Damian Lamon Murkledove was convicted Friday in the death of 18-year-old Daniel Garner, an Everman High School graduate who lived with his mother and four foster children. Because prosecutors did not seek the death penalty, Murkledove automatically received life.

Prosecutors said Murkledove and two others, who are yet to face trial, went to Garner's house to commit a burglary. Garner, who was playing a video game, was shot five times.

## Cop accused of firing gun drunk

DALLAS (AP) — A Dallas police officer is accused of firing a gun while driving drunk early Sunday when he was off duty.

Authorities say Dallas police Officer Rafael Mendoza was arrested in nearby Mesquite on charges of drunken driving, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and marijuana possession.

One 911 caller said a bullet hit his car. Mendoza is now on administrative leave pending investigations by Mesquite police and Dallas police internal affairs.

It's unclear when Mendoza returned to work after being placed on leave last summer. He'd been charged with domestic assault and unlawful restraint. A woman said after they'd been arguing, he knocked her on the ground, handcuffed her and threatened to send her to prison.

Mendoza has been a Dallas officer for more than three years.

## Body found in burned car

TEXARKANA, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas State Police and the Hempstead County Sheriff's office are working with Texas law enforcement officers to investigate the death of a man found in a burned vehicle near the Arkansas-Texas state line.

The car, registered to a Saratoga, Ark., resident, was discovered Saturday by Bowie County, Texas, sheriff's deputies who responded to a report of a burning vehicle.

Hempstead County deputies went to the home listed on the vehicle's registration and found evidence of a disturbance inside.

Bowie County Sheriff James Prince told the Texarkana Gazette that after Hempstead County officials notified them about what they found, officers returned to the scene and made the grisly discovery.

Prince says investigators believe the death is a homicide.

The identity and manner of death of the victim hasn't been determined.

## Dallas FBI chief retires

DALLAS (AP) — Robert E. Casey Jr. headed the Dallas FBI when it thwarted a plot to blow up a downtown Dallas office building and used an emergency cellphone wiretap to help bring down a notorious band of violent bank robbers.

But in his six years leading FBI operations from North Texas to the Panhandle, Casey has had to do more than fight crime. He said he's had to make decisions — some of which remain under wraps — about investigations, as well as improving public outreach and coordinating with local law enforcement.

"You have no peer in this office," Casey, 54, told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "I'm it on a lot of these decisions. And you have to grow into that job and that responsibility."

Since 2006 Casey has supervised hundreds of FBI agents and personnel in the more than 120,000 square miles of territory his field office oversees stretching from Amarillo to Tyler.

Casey started his career in the Houston Police Department as a patrol officer, and still keeps in his office photos and news clippings of his time there from a quarter-century ago. He wears a Rolex watch he was awarded for being named "Police Officer of the Year" in 1983.

## Oklahoma legislation protested

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — About 250 demonstrators marched on Oklahoma's state Capitol to protest legislation restricting reproductive rights.

UniteWomen.org organized "United Against the War on Women" marches and rallies across the nation Saturday in response to bills that it perceives as attacking reproductive, voting and human rights.

Demonstrators said measures such as the personhood act take away a woman's control over her own body. Senate Bill 1433 would declare that life begins at conception. Protesters said they want lawmakers to focus on education and health care issues.

Demonstrator Zane Wood told KOKH-TV that women have come a long way and their rights need to be protected.

SB 1433 didn't get a hearing Thursday before the House of Representatives adjourned for the week. The Senate passed the measure in February.

## Bank freezes tribes' accounts

CONCHO, Okla. (AP) — A Clinton bank issued an administrative freeze on bank accounts of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma — prompting tribal leaders to declare a state of emergency Friday and announce that tribal assistance to the elderly, poor, children and medically needy could be drastically cut.

Tribal employees will be trimmed to a 32-hour work-week starting next week, said Lisa Liebl, a tribal spokeswoman. The tribe has several hundred employees, she said.

The tribes' Lucky Star casinos at Concho, Clinton, Canton, Watonga and Hammon are expected to continue normal operations, although that could change as tribal officials continue to evaluate the crisis, she said.

"We are presently looking at all our options and will not take our eyes off the goal of getting the funds restored and the essential governmental services provided," disputed tribal Gov. Janice Prairie Chief-Boswell said in a prepared statement.

# Ex-official's property may be seized

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Texas and U.S. authorities are trying to seize \$20 million in properties — including a San Antonio strip mall and South Padre Island condo unit — from a former Mexican government official who is accused of buying them with embezzled money.

Hector Javier Villarreal, 41, the former treasurer of the border state of Coahuila, Mexico, is wanted on charges of money laundering and engaging in organized criminal activity in Bexar County, said Tom Kelley, a spokesman for the Texas Attorney General's Office. Villarreal is also wanted in Mexico, where authorities say he falsified documents to borrow \$222 million on the state's credit, then shuffled the money to relatives in the United States.

Federal prosecutors filed lawsuits last week in San Antonio seeking forfeiture of a dozen properties — including a pharmacy, a \$1.2 million home and a storage center — the San Antonio Express-News reported.

Court documents say all were purchased with money embezzled from the government of Coahuila, and are owned by companies created by Lorenzo Schuessler Jr., Villarreal's brother-in-law and a San Antonio businessman and former real estate agent.

Authorities also are seeking forfeiture of properties owned by Villarreal's family members in the Rio Grande Valley, including a Harlingen car wash and a house and several commercial properties in Brownsville.

Villarreal, a former computer equipment salesman who went into government service in 2008, was arrested in Mexico in October and was freed after posting bail. Shortly afterward, he came to the U.S.

"The facts show Villarreal has received in excess of \$26 million in foreign exchange transactions and cross border wires since (2009)," one of the affidavits states.

In February, Villarreal was arrested in East Texas with his wife, Maria Teresita Botello, and a relative, Oswaldo

Coronado. Sheriff's deputies reported finding \$67,000 in cash in the 2011 Mercedes SUV they were driving. The three were turned over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, according to court documents. They were released, and days later the Mexican government issued Interpol warrants for Villarreal's arrest.

Villarreal's whereabouts are unknown.

Before being charged, he told Mexican media that the allegations were politically motivated and he denied any involvement in Schuessler's businesses. In March, Bexar County prosecutors filed a lawsuit seeking to keep \$6.5 million that the Drug Enforcement Administration and Texas Attorney General's Office seized from bank accounts linked to two companies that the government says Schuessler controlled for Villarreal.

Schuessler and Villarreal came to the attention of JP Morgan Chase's anti-money-laundering unit in 2010

after a series of multimillion-dollar wire transfers. Schuessler then told bank investigators he was a "front" for Villarreal, according to affidavits.

Schuessler does not face criminal charges and his lawyers deny the allegations. Attorney Van Hilley, who is representing Schuessler in the forfeiture suits, disputed that Schuessler had called himself a "front."

"We are contesting the government's theory that the money in question qualifies as contraband under the state or federal statutes," Hilley said. "My client believes that the money legitimately came out of Mexico."

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## Election

cont. from page 1

made to vote by mail. An application must be filled out and approved before a voter can cast a ballot through the mail; Pampan can contact City Hall at 806-669-5750 and request the city secretary to inquire about an application.

City election day is May 12. There is one contested race: The contest for Ward 2 Commissioner between John Ferguson and Chris Porter. Karen McLain, who is running for the commissionership of Ward 4, is unopposed.

There is also a proposal on the ballot to amend the city charter to extend the terms of office for city commissioners from two to four years, as well as a bond election on whether or not to finance the city's proposed new animal shelter.



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Sat 2:00 4:30 7:30 10:00  
Sun 2:00 4:30 7:30  
Mon/Thur 7:30

**The Pirates Band of Misfits (PG)**  
Fri 7:00 9:30  
Sat 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30  
Sun 2:00 4:30 7:00  
Mon/Thur 7:00

**The Three Stooges (PG)**  
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Sat 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30  
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# Viewpoints

## Today in History

Today is Monday, April 30, the 121st day of 2012. There are 245 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On April 30, 1812, Louisiana (formerly the Territory of Orleans) became the 18th state of the Union.

### On this date:

In 1789, George Washington took office in New York as the first president of the United States.

In 1803, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France for 60 million francs, the equivalent of about \$15 million.

In 1900, engineer John Luther "Casey" Jones of the Illinois Central Railroad died in a train wreck near Vaughan, Miss., after staying at the controls in a successful effort to save the passengers.

In 1911, a fire broke out in Bangor, Maine, destroying much of the downtown area before it was brought under control the next morning; two deaths were blamed on the blaze.

In 1912, Universal Studios had its beginnings as papers incorporating the Universal Film Manufacturing Co. were filed and recorded in New York State.

In 1939, the New York World's Fair officially opened with a ceremony that included an address by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1945, as Russian troops approached his Berlin bunker, Adolf Hitler committed suicide along with his wife of one day, Eva Braun.

In 1958, the American Association of Retired Persons (later simply AARP) was founded in Washington, D.C.

In 1968, New York City police forcibly removed student demonstrators occupying five buildings at Columbia University.

In 1973, President Richard M. Nixon announced the resignations of top aides H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, along with Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst and White House counsel John Dean.

In 1980, Queen Juliana of the Netherlands abdicated; she was succeeded by her daughter, Princess Beatrix.

In 1997, the Senate approved the nomination of Alexis Herman to be labor secretary. ABC-TV aired the "coming out" episode of the situation comedy "Ellen" in which the title character, played by Ellen DeGeneres, acknowledged her homosexuality.

**Ten years ago:** Benevolence International Foundation, an Islamic charity based in suburban Chicago, and its director were charged with perjury; authorities accused the charity of supporting terrorists. (Enaam Arnaout later pleaded guilty to racketeering, admitting he'd defrauded donors by diverting some of the money to Islamic military groups in Bosnia and Chechnya.)

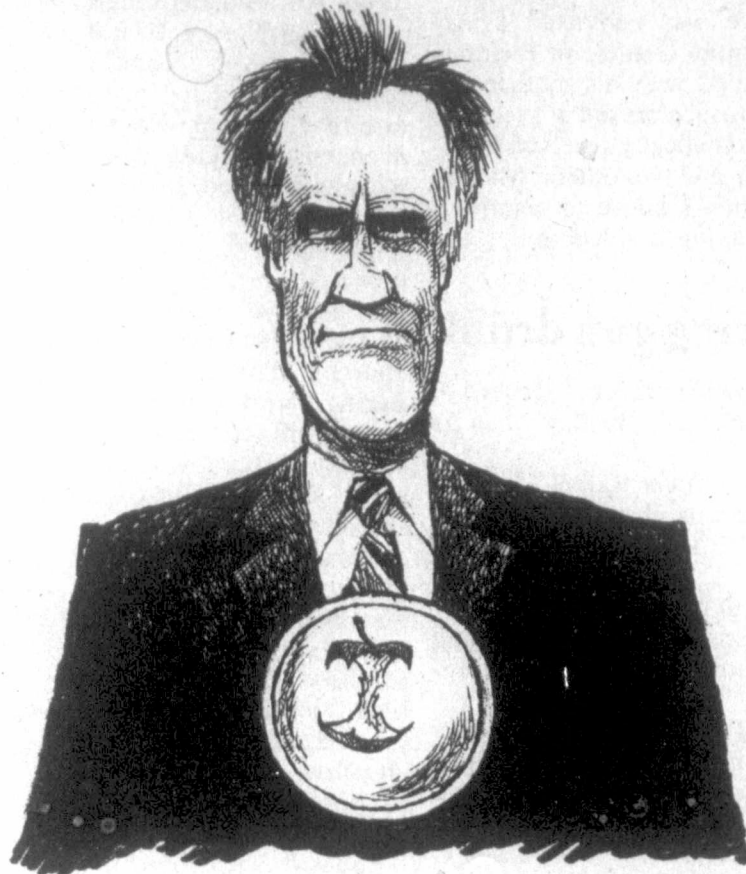
**Five years ago:** A British judge sentenced five al-Qaida-linked men, all British citizens, to life in prison for plotting to attack London targets, including a nightclub, power plants and shopping mall with bombs. An Israeli government probe faulted Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for what it called "very severe failures" in Israel's war with Hezbollah militants in Lebanon. Actor Tom Poston died in Los Angeles at age 85.

**One year ago:** A Libyan official said Moammar Gadhafi had escaped a NATO missile strike in Tripoli that killed one of his sons and three young grandchildren. (There have been conflicting accounts about whether Gadhafi's relatives even died in the airstrike.) In Moscow, Japan's Miki Ando defeated Olympic champion Kim Yu-na of South Korea at the world figure skating championships originally scheduled for Japan, which had been devastated by an earthquake and tsunami.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Cloris Leachman is 86. Singer Willie Nelson is 79. Actor Gary Collins is 74. Actor Burt Young is 72. Singer Bobby Vee is 69. Movie director Allan Arkush is 64. Actor Perry King is 64. Singer Merrill Osmond is 59. Movie director Jane Campion is 58. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper is 53. Actor Paul Gross is 53. Basketball Hall of Famer Isiah Thomas is 51. Country musician Robert Reynolds (The Mavericks) is 50. Actor Adrian Pasdar is 47. Rapper Turbo B (Snap) is 45. Rock musician Clark Vogeler is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Chris "Choc" Dalrymple (Soul For Real) is 41. Rock musician Chris Henderson (3 Doors Down) is 41. Country singer Carolyn Dawn Johnson is 41. Actress Lisa Dean Ryan is 40. Rhythm-and-blues singer Akon is 39. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jeff Timmons (98 Degrees) is 39. Actor Johnny Galecki is 37. Singer-musician Cole Deggs (Cole Deggs and the Lonesome) is 36. Actor Kunal Nayyar is 31. Rapper Lloyd Banks is 30. Actress Kirsten Dunst is 30. Country singer Tyler Wilkinson (The Wilkinsons) is 28. Actress Dianna Agron is 26.

**Thought for Today:** "There's a difference between a philosophy and a bumper sticker." — Charles M. Schulz, American cartoonist (1922-2000).

## CORE CONVICTIONS



## Lawmakers to talk school discipline

CHRIS TOMLINSON  
Associated Press

AUSTIN (AP) — This week lawmakers will examine one of the most expensive and controversial questions facing school districts: what to do with undisciplined kids.

State law requires districts to set up Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs for students from elementary to high school who are removed from their classes for "mandatory or discretionary disciplinary reasons." These programs can be inside the schools or at a different location and some school districts contact private companies to operate them.

One thing all the programs share is expense. In March, the advocacy group Texas Appleseed reported that the Dallas Independent School District spent \$11.3 million on disciplining kids, a total that does not include the \$20.3 million cost of campus security in Dallas.

Last year the Republican-controlled Legislature cut spending by more than \$500 per-student last year, a move that forced schools to cut budgets this year, and there are more cuts coming in the fall. Therefore school districts are looking for places to save money and in Dallas, special schools for kids with disciplinary problems cost the district \$9 million.

Texas Appleseed found that the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program cost the district \$57,000 per student a year, more than a veteran teacher's salary. That's about seven times more than what a Texas school district spends per student on average.

And since the state school finance system only pays when a student shows up for class, referring 22,827 students for out-of-school suspension and into alternative programs last school year cost the district at least \$2 million in state funds, the group found.

In terms of the state's share, the Texas Education Agency expects 94,819 to be enrolled in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in 2012 at a cost of \$14.7 million. Schools districts across the state will spend much more. Groups across the political spectrum agree there must be more cost-effective ways to encourage good behavior, keep classrooms safe and provide a good education.

So it's no surprise the House Public Education Committee on Monday will hear testimony about Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs as well as Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs, which schools set up for students expelled from their districts. The lawmakers want to hear from experts on how these

programs are working, whether they need to be changed and whether technology could make them better.

Committee Chairman Rob Eissler, R-The Woodlands, said lawmakers will follow up to see how the laws they pass are implemented.

"Anytime you take a child out of normal circumstances it's going to be extra cost because of the extra cost of staff, not that we'd say it's too expensive and just do away with it," he said. "The question is how can we do it better, and how can it be effective so it isn't so expensive."

In July, the Council on State Government and Texas A&M University studied nearly a million Texas 7th-grade student records to see how school discipline programs affected student achievement and the juvenile justice system. They found nearly 15 percent had been assigned to the disciplinary program and 7 percent were sent to a juvenile justice program, even though only 3 percent of such referrals were mandated by state law. Nearly 75 percent of special education students had been suspended.

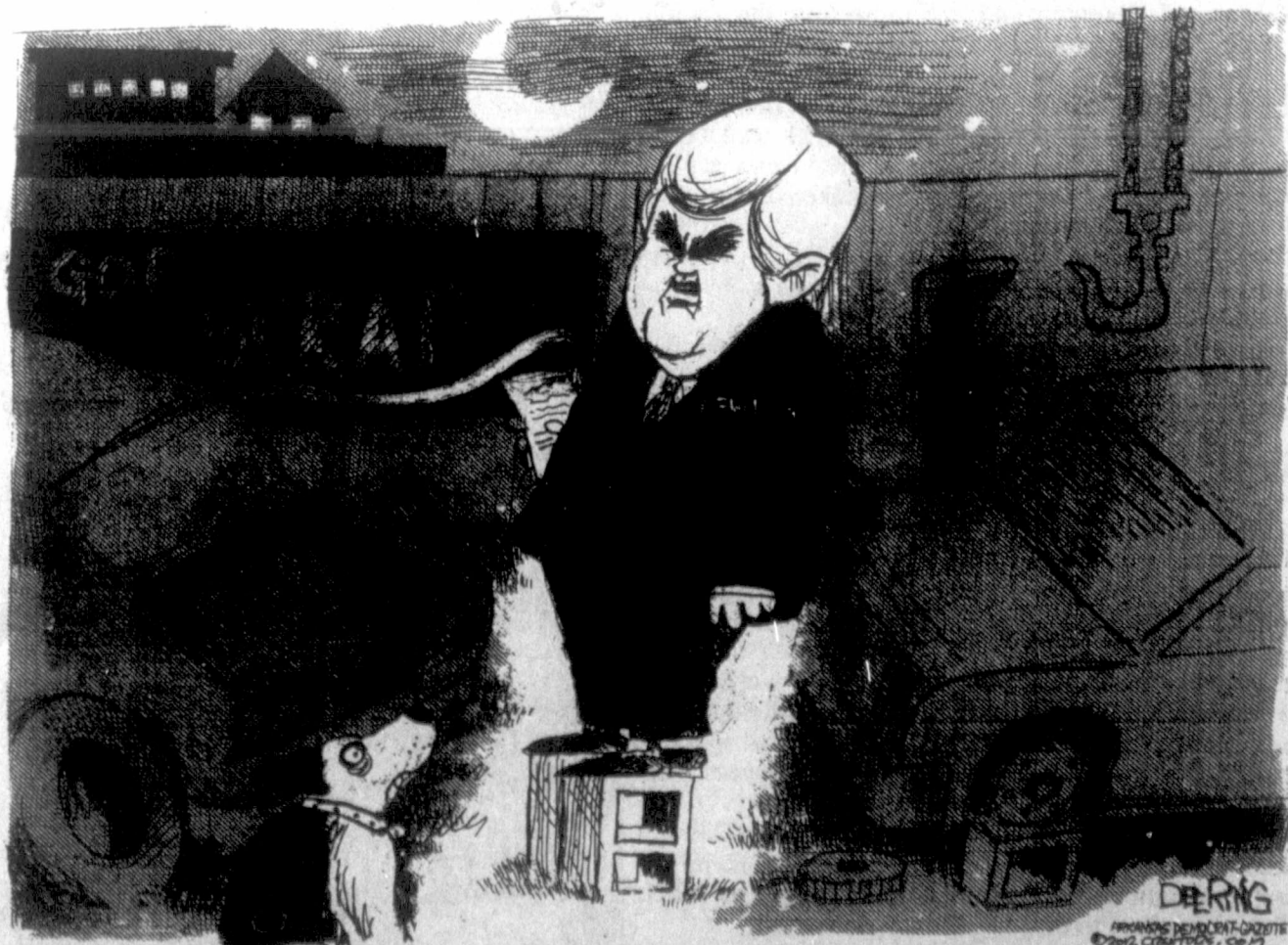
Schools expelled more boys than girls and more minorities than whites, and suspended or expelled students were three-times more likely to be in contact with law enforcement, according to the study. Lastly, while half of Texas schools enforced the disciplinary programs as expected, 22 percent had higher discipline rates than expected, and 27 percent less. The authors said this is proof that some schools are doing a better job with discipline than others.

"Nonwhite students and students with specific educational disabilities were especially likely to be removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons," the report's author's concluded. "In addition, students who were suspended or expelled were at increased risk of repeating a grade, dropping out, or coming into contact with the juvenile justice system."

While the report analyzed the problem, finding solutions will require parents, teachers, administrators and lawmakers to unravel the causes. Creating better relationships between students, parents, teachers and administrators will be vital, the authors said.

Eissler said he wants to learn more Monday about how younger children and special education students are treated and how schools are enforcing discipline. He cited anecdotal reports of police issuing citations to young children with bad consequences for the kids.

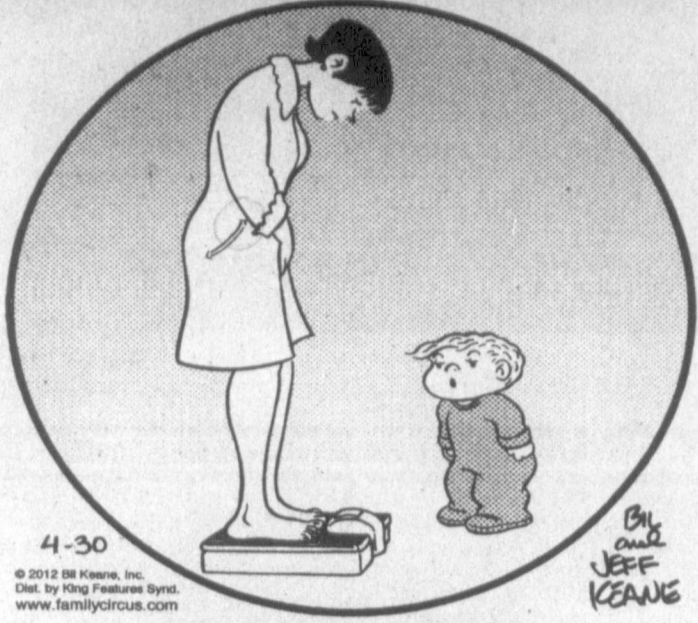
The Senate Education Committee will also investigate these issues. This is one case where everyone hopes they can find a better, more cost-effective solution.



"I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T MENTION SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED ME GET HERE..."

# comics PAGE

## THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



4-30  
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Bill Keane

### Non Sequitur



### Nest Heads



## daily horoscope

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** for Tuesday, May 1, 2012:

This year, your ingenuity seems to bypass problems. Be direct and get past any confusion or vagueness. Sometimes it might be more comforting to keep your rose-colored shades on. If you are single, know that something better lies ahead. Someone very special could appear. If you are attached, be more understanding of your sweetie's shortcomings. VIRGO nearly always agrees with you.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Your focused energy will make all the difference in the outcome of a situation. You could be overburdened by responsibilities. The good news is that you'll clear all that and more with ease. An authority figure seems to rapidly transform his or her opinions. Tonight: Know when to call it a night.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ When answers do not appear, tap into your imagination. You will gain a totally different perspective. Regroup and brainstorm, but resist the urge to push too hard. Fatigue could still be a problem. A child, new friend or member of the opposite sex could be difficult. Tonight: Let off some steam.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You could find that a domestic issue or unexpected problem within the family could keep you preoccupied. Perhaps you need to deal with it rather than let the dilemma dominate the rest of your day. Curb a tendency to be sarcastic. Tonight: Be where your thoughts are.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You mean what you say, and you are willing to act on your words. To convince someone, you might have to demonstrate this assertive quality. Be careful, as you could be accident-prone. You are too much in your head and not as observant as you need to be. Tonight: Swap the day's war stories with a pal.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Confusion surrounds a money matter. You could be stressed because you feel as if you need to find a solution. Don't. Start looking at the cold, hard facts. Only then can you instrument change of a positive nature. Also, make sure someone is

not pulling the wool over your eyes. Be a quiet skeptic. Tonight: Be aware of your budget.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Your questions show understanding but also unwillingness to be taken for a ride. With so much going on, you'll need to sort out your priorities. Be creative. Reframe. Willingly examine your feelings and a situation if you do not like what you are hearing. Know that there is always a solution. Tonight: As you like it.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★ Deal with anger before it deals with you. Go find the person involved or define the situation. Explain your reactions and feelings. Do not make judgments yet. Let the other party think about what you say. Give him or her time to digest your words. Tonight: You are your best company.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Having determined what you want from the current state of affairs, feel free to walk right in and handle a situation. Someone might be irritated or taken aback. Your sense of security and well-being become evident. Have a long-overdue discussion. Tonight: Among the crowd.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Stand up for what you want, but do not be surprised if you get some flak. Let go of needing others' approval. You might be pushed to be more available for a personal reason. You do not always need to explain. Tonight: A must appearance.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Reach out for more information. You could become sarcastic or irritable if you do not find what you are looking for. Step back and reassess the situation. It might be appropriate to try a different path. Tonight: Off to a movie.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Deal directly with a child or loved one. In a business, financial or community matter, you are better off being authentic. No one can represent you like you can. You are changing your opinion about a key person in your life. Tonight: Dinner with a pal.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Someone could be a bit too combative and argumentative for your taste. Take a detour until this phase passes. Sort through what must occur as opposed to what you most desire or want. Tonight: Just not by yourself.

### Tundra



### Shoe



### Mother Goose and Grim



### Zits



### Garfield



### Beetle Bailey



### Marvin



### Hagar The Horrible

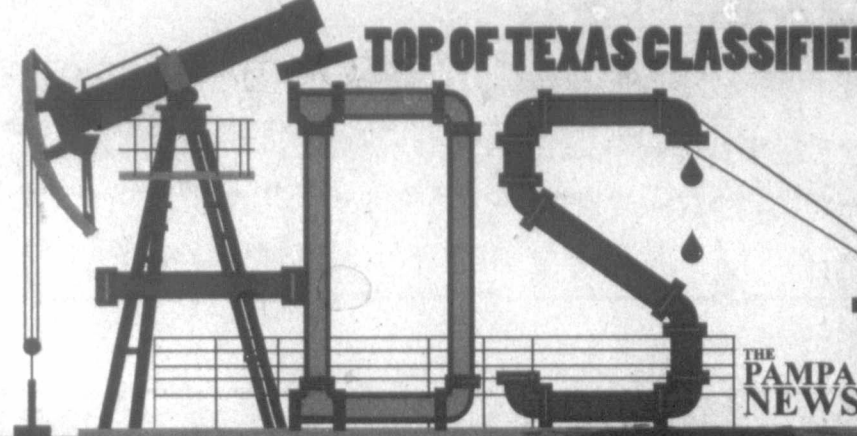


### Peanuts



### Blondie





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TNC needs LVN's, RN's, CNA's all shifts needed. 325-670-0090 texanursenconnection.com

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# Sports

## Pampa's Holmes third in regional 1600, hopes to advance

**ANDREW GLOVER**  
aglover@thepampanews.com

LUBBOCK — Junior J'Cee Holmes and Mark Elms, head girls track coach, will be anxiously awaiting results from the other regional meets.

"We are going to keep our fingers crossed," Elms said. "The top two runners from each region go and then the next fastest time. They will look at all the third place times in the state. We'll keep our fingers crossed that (Holmes') 5:37.44 is the next fastest time."

Holmes finished third in the 1600-meter run (5:37.44) Saturday at the 3A Region 1 Track Meet in Texas Tech's R.P. Fuller Track. There are four regional meets and Holmes can also advance if one of the top two finishers in Region 1 drop out.

"I'm excited," Holmes said about winning a medal. "I feel good."

Pampa's last state qualifier was Natalie Parker, who advanced in the 100-meter dash in 2010. Holmes finished six seconds behind second place. In the first half of the race, Holmes was in second.

"It was exciting and nerve-wracking," Holmes said.

Holmes also placed fifth in the 3200-meter run on Friday and scored eight points for the Lady Harvesters.

Senior Reid Miller scored the only points for the Harvesters, with his fifth place finish in the 110-meter hurdles (15.31). Miller said he was satisfied with his performance.

"I'm fine with that," Miller said. "There are some things that happen. Some people are just incredible. My goal was to make it to finals, since I didn't last year. Getting to place overall, I'm good with that."

Tad Smith, head boys track coach, said the boys ran well.

"They came down here and tried their best," Smith said. "I'm pleased with what they did. When you get down here it's a different type of race. Every one is fast. My older guys knew what was going on. My younger guys' eyes were wide open. They can come back and try again next year."

Junior Terra Truitt just missed placing in the 3200, finishing seventh.

"I didn't run my fastest time," Truitt said. "I'm not too happy about it."

Truitt said she enjoyed getting to run.

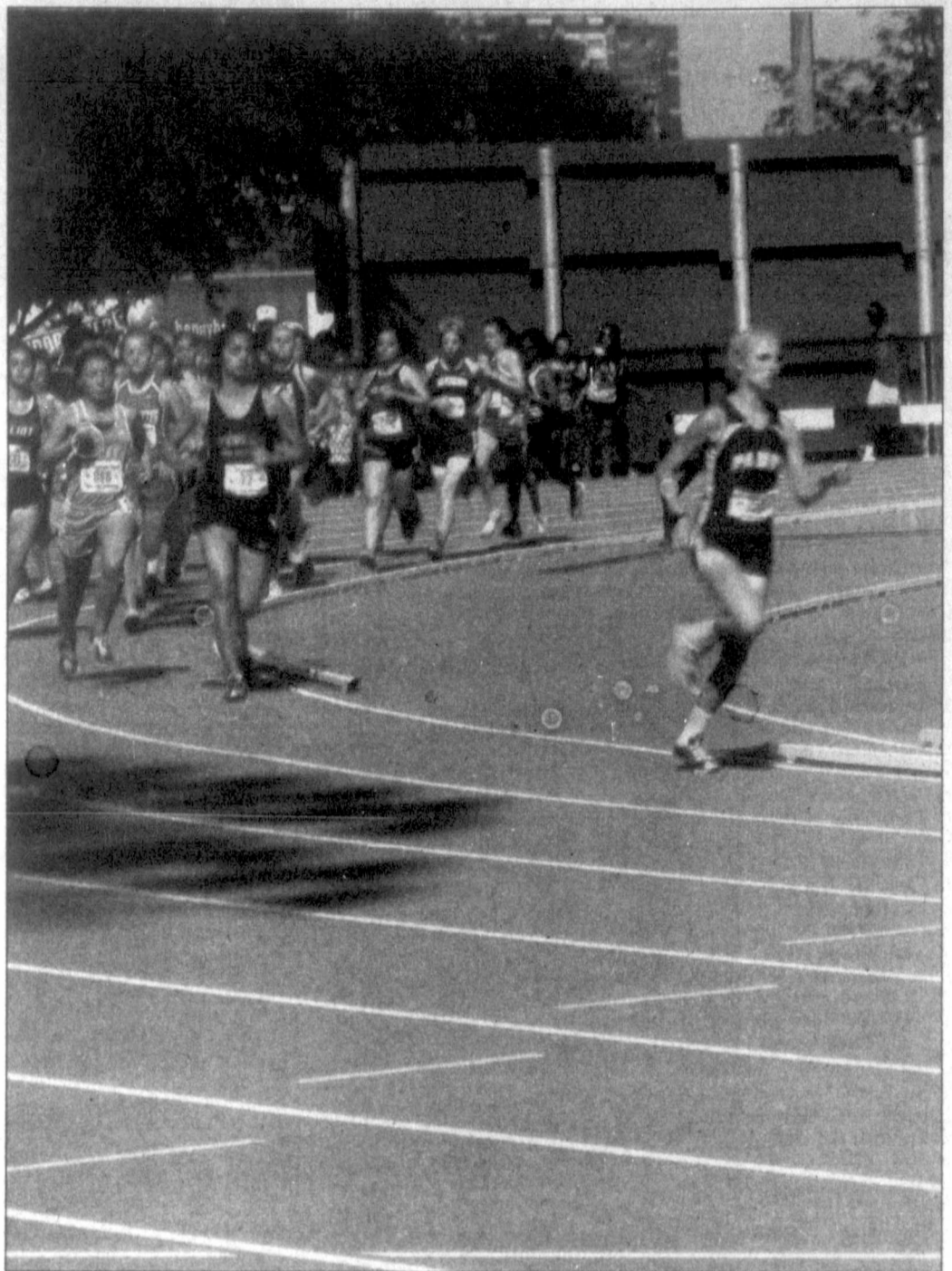
"It was quite the experience," Truitt said. "I love regionals getting to come up here with the team, and cheer people on."

Senior Rikki Earnest didn't make the finals in the discus and shot put, but enjoyed the experience.

"It was a little nerve-wracking having girls throw farther than I am," Earnest said. "I didn't perform as well as I hoped. It was a lot of fun and did a lot of hanging out."

The Lady Harvesters had two freshmen and one sophomore compete.

"Lot of learning went on here the last two days," Elms said. "We are a young bunch and we are looking forward to next year."



staff photo by Andrew Glover

Junior J'Cee Holmes leads a pack of runners during the first lap of the 1600-meter run Saturday at Texas Tech University. Holmes finished third and is hoping her time is fast enough to advance to state.



staff photo by Andrew Glover

Senior Reid Miller clears a hurdle during the 110-meter hurdles finals at regionals Saturday. Miller finished fifth ending his Harvester career.

## Mother's Day Keepsakes

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Sterling Silver \$95<sup>00</sup>

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