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## Car clinic to ensure safety for students

By ASHLYN TUBBS  
STAFF WRITER

University Parking preparing to keep students safe during summer travels, road trips

In college, it is sometimes common for students to experience breakdowns especially with their vehicles.

Driving to and from college to their hometowns, students can experience car troubles that can create misery on the road.

Texas Tech University Parking Services are ensuring students are prepared to safely make a last summer road trip with a free car clinic hosted from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday at the C17 Parking Lot located at the intersection

of Indiana Avenue and Texas Tech Parkway.

"This is something we enjoy doing," said Stacy Moncibaiz of University Parking Services. "It lets us reach out to our students, employees and people in the community who may not be affiliated with Tech."

In addition to the examinations provided by mechanics from Scott's Complete Car Check, a free hot dog lunch and refreshments will be provided.

The Masked Rider and Mid-night Matador will make an appear-

ance from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and will be available for pictures and autographs.

Saddle-Up Motorcycle Training will explain about their courses for all levels of experience and will also provide a discount for Tech students and employees.

"If people are interested in learning how to ride a motorcycle," Moncibaiz said, "this is an excellent opportunity."

Representatives from Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Help Eliminate Auto Theft will be available for more information regarding

road safety and their organizations. The Texas Tech Federal Credit Union will provide a representative for anyone interested in its service.

Student Health Services will provide information about drowsy driving and postcards about the Texas Tech Parents Association's Road Raiders will be handed out.

A representative will not be available from the Office of Parent and Family Relations to discuss Road Raiders because of Red Raider Orientation, which will be going on at the same time.

"Basically we want people to

know that Road Raiders is a program for students to travel safely," said Christine Self, unit coordinator of the Office of Parent and Family Relations. "Members of the Texas Tech Parents Association have volunteered to publish their name and phone number in the Road Raiders list so students can call them if they have car trouble, need directions or need a place to rest while traveling. We have approximately 3,500 parents on the list, and they're all over the state, country and even located overseas."

Self said there have been numerous success stories from Road Raiders and they want to spread the word to other students who have not yet utilized the program.

"We want to encourage students to bookmark roadraiders.ttu.edu in their smartphone," she said. "They can also print off a PDF of the Road Raiders from our website and keep it in their glove box. We just want students to be safe on the road."

Participants who fill out a survey will have the chance to win a free ePermit.

CAR CLINIC continued on Pg. 3 >>>

## Museum of Texas Tech honors veterans, families



PHOTO BY SCOTT MACWATTERS/The Daily Toreador  
VETERANS AND FAMILY members gather during the Veteran's Family Picnic event at the Museum of Texas Tech University on Sunday.

By SCOTT MACWATTERS  
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

On Sunday, the Museum of Texas Tech University hosted an event honoring veterans and their families as a part of the Museum Association's Celebrating Our Heroes series of events.

The event primarily focused on World War II.

Eileen Johnson, the executive director of the Museum of Texas Tech, said the event helped further connect Tech and the Lubbock community.

"I think it underscores our relationship in the community, and the appreciation for veterans of all kinds and especially their families," Johnson said. "This summer's event is an outgrowth of that for our museum. Texas Tech is a veteran-friendly campus, so it is a reflection of both campus and community."

Johnson said this is the first time the museums have worked together on a series of events like this.

"I think it took something like this to bring all the museums together," Johnson said. "We hope to continue that type of collaboration in the future."

Though there were several displays inside of the museum, Johnson said she was excited about seeing the two Vietnam Era helicopters, which were on display outside the north

entrance of the museum. The helicopters were provided by the Vietnam Center and Archive.

"I like the helicopters," Johnson said. "They're pretty awesome."

Ron Damron, who just retired from Tech Athletics, said he used to fly one of the types of helicopters during his time in Vietnam. Damron said seeing the helicopter in such good condition brings back memories.

"It's incredible," he said. "It's good seeing these things because there's just not many left around."

Other than the helicopters, there were several other galleries on display inside the museum, including a gallery of images from the Associated Press archives.

Laurel Myers said the displays offered a different perspective than her own.

"My dad was not in the service; he was a mechanic for an aircraft company," Myers said. "This is very insightful to see the uniforms and all the history."

Myers said she thinks it is great to see so much effort put into honoring veterans.

"I think it's really wonderful," she said. "It's especially nice that a town no larger than Lubbock would go to this much trouble to honor and provide this sort of experience."

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## Red Raider Royalty

Tech law student crowned Miss Texas

By PAIGE SKINNER  
STAFF WRITER

In January, Texas Tech law student DaNae Couch will appear on national television to compete in the famous Miss America pageant.

Couch was crowned Miss Texas July 7 in Allen and will go on to the Miss America pageant.

Couch, however, was not a toddler in a tiara. Instead, she began competing in pageants four years ago because of the scholarship money.

"I got involved when I was in college because it was a great way to get scholarship money," said the third-year law student from Coppell. "The Miss America organization is actually the largest scholarship provider for young women in the world. So, it was something that really attracted me to deciding to compete."

DaNae Couch's mother, Danice Couch, said she was not sure her daughter was going to stick with pageants.

"I thought, 'This is just another thing she's talking about,'" Danice Couch said. "I didn't want to burst her bubble, but if she really wanted to do it, that's fine, but I didn't see how she would have time for it. I just thought it was a passing fantasy, I guess you could say. I did not discourage her from doing it, but I didn't think she would be able to put in the time to pursue it."

However, DaNae Couch, who got her undergraduate degree at Baylor University, kept competing in the beauty pageant. She participated three times before being crowned Miss Texas.

While preparing for the pageant, DaNae Couch said, she maintained a full-time job.

"The best way I can explain how I do everything, if you look at



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANAE COUCH  
DANAE COUCH, A Texas Tech School of Law student was crowned Miss Texas July 7 and will appear on national television in January to compete for the Miss America pageant.

my schedule, I'm very meticulous about how I organize my time," she said.

DaNae Couch woke up at 5 a.m. every day to practice her twirling for the talent portion of

the competition.

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# Tech researchers assist in efforts to discover Higgs boson

By **EFRAIN DUARTE**  
STAFF WRITER

Scientists made the announcement July 4 at CERN, in Geneva, Switzerland, that they found evidence of what could be the Higgs boson particle.

At Texas Tech University, four faculty members, five post-doctoral members, one adjunct professor and several graduate students have made contributions to the project.

"The experiment is called compact muon solenoid, due to its magnetic field and the way the magnetic field is generated," said Nural Akchurin, a professor in the

department of physics.

Compact muon solenoid is one of the experiments dealing with the discovery of the Higgs particle. This experiment is done underground in the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. The purpose of compact muon solenoid is to detect a wide range of particles produced in the Large Hadron Collider.

The roots of the compact muon solenoid design date back to 1992. It took 16 years to create the 15-meter in diameter by 29-meter long detector. This is just one of the detectors that has been trying to detect the Higgs boson particle.

"We found a particle that seems to be consistent, it's too early so say that it is the Higgs boson," Akchurin said.

The experiment consists of 200 institutions with about 3,000 people working together.

"This is a huge international scientific collaboration," said Sung-Won Lee, an assistant professor in the department of physics.

Tech members working on the experiment built a device that can measure the energy.

"We play a strong role in building and maintaining the devices," Lee said.

The Higgs boson particle is the key of unlocking why certain matter has mass and researchers have been trying to find the answer to this problem ever since Peter Higgs proposed his theory in 1964.

"If we find the final piece in the theory, which is Higgs — that explains the basic nature of our universe," Lee said.

The particle has been dubbed the "God" particle because it tries to answer the question of where the matter gets its mass. The particle has a mass around 125-126 GeV, which stands for Giga electron volt.

"The mass of the particle is

around 130 times the mass of a proton," Lee said.

Conducting the research at the Large Hadron Collider consists of scientists accelerating opposing beams of protons at around the speed of light. As the protons are accelerated, the compact muon solenoid captures what is created when the protons crash together.

"We have to measure collection of particles. It's important to do that because the energies coming out of the interaction is essential," Akchurin said.

A student reflected on the potential discovery of this new particle and what it means for the

future of physics.

"It's an amazing breakthrough for the future of the study of physics and it's vital to the existence of life in the universe," said David Beames, a senior corporate retail management major from Shal-lowater.

The researchers at Tech have made contributions with their time, by going out to CERN, and developing devices used in the experiment.

"We are happy that we are part of this discovery because it's a historic moment in particle physics," said Lee.

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## Surgeon arrested in Texas doctor's death

LUBBOCK (AP) — A West Texas plastic surgeon paid someone \$9,000 — in the form of three silver bars — to kill another doctor who was dating his ex-girlfriend, police alleged Monday.

Dr. Thomas Michael Dixon and David Neal Shepard were arrested by police in Amarillo shortly after midnight, authorities announced. They are suspected of being involved in the death of Lubbock doctor Dr. Joseph Sonnier III.

An arrest warrant affidavit suggests a love triangle between Dixon, Shepard and a woman who was not identified by police. The affidavit alleges Dixon offered Shepard the three bars, each with an estimated value of \$3,000, to kill Sonnier, who was chief pathologist for Covenant Health System in Lubbock.

Sonnier was found shot and stabbed Wednesday inside his home in Lubbock, about 120 miles south

of the Texas Panhandle city of Amarillo.

Sonnier's girlfriend told an Amarillo police detective that Dixon was her ex-boyfriend and that he "insisted on seeing her, even though she was dating Dr. Sonnier," according to the affidavit, posted online by the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal.

Also, a co-worker of Sonnier told the detective that Sonnier had said that his girlfriend's ex-boyfriend "would not leave her alone," the affidavit says.

Meanwhile, Shepard was found to have sold a 100-ounce bar of silver at an Amarillo pawn shop for \$2,750, the affidavit says. His roommate told authorities that Shepard had been watching Sonnier for weeks and texting Dixon.

Shepard told his roommate that he broke into Sonnier's home and shot him several times with a gun Dixon had given him, the affidavit

said. He knew several details that investigators had kept private, it said.

Shepard tried to commit suicide in the days after the murder by cutting his wrists, the roommate allegedly told authorities. The roommate said Dixon closed the wounds and "suggested that David Shepard leave for a couple of weeks," the affidavit said.

Lubbock Police Capt. Jon Caspell said Monday that he didn't know when Dixon and the woman broke up. Dixon and Sonnier appeared to have known each other aside from the woman, Caspell said.

Dixon is a well-known plastic surgeon in Amarillo. No one answered the phone Monday at his practice, High Plains Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. No phone number was listed for Shepard.

Both men are being held in Randall County Jail pending extradition to Lubbock, Caspell said.

## Clinton broaches Syria, Iran during Israel visit

JERUSALEM (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Israel's president spoke Monday about the need to halt Syria's violence and Iran's potential production of nuclear weapons, underscoring American support for an ally in a difficult neighborhood.

Clinton met President Shimon Peres for about an hour as part of what is perhaps her final visit to Israel as secretary of state, bringing a message of solidarity to the Jewish state after three-and-a-half years of only stunted progress toward a Palestinian peace deal.

After their visit, they each issued a statement to reporters without taking questions. Peres spoke about the importance of maintaining Israel's three-decade peace with Egypt, and decried the violence in neighboring Syria.

He also voiced support for the Obama administration's pressure on

Iran to halt its nuclear activities — which has sometimes been a point of contention between a cautious U.S. keen to give negotiations and sanctions time to work and an Israeli government that has threatened military action.

Clinton said she spoke with Peres about "Egypt and Syria, peace efforts, Iran and other regional and global issues." She said she'd speak in greater detail later Monday, after meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

She returns to Washington early Tuesday, ending a 12-day, nine-country trip that included stops in Europe and Asia.

Her visit to Israel follows a week-end visit by President Barack Obama's National Security Adviser Tom Donilon. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is expected to visit Israel soon.

Although Monday's agenda is

designed to cover the breadth of U.S.-Israeli relations, the lack of action on peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians will be in the spotlight.

Negotiations have almost been nonexistent for the duration of Obama's term in office. They resumed briefly two years ago before stumbling over the same set of problems, namely Palestinian demands for a freeze on Jewish settlements in lands they seek for their future state and an Israeli insistence on no preconditions for talks.

Asked in an interview Sunday with WJLA-TV, a Washington D.C. station, what he believed he failed at, Obama cited Arab-Israeli peace efforts.

"I have not been able to move the peace process forward in the Middle East the way I wanted," he said. "It's something we focused on very early. But the truth of the matter is that the parties, they've got to want it as well."

**Today's**  
**su do ku**

4	1	5				6
					7	1
3				2		
			9		5	8
6		4		8		7
1	8		2			
		2				8
6	3					
5				1	6	3

Puzzles by PageFiller

In Sudoku, all the numbers 1 to 9 must be in every row, column and 3 x 3 box. Use logic to define the answers.

9	3	6	2	8	4	1	7	5
7	8	1	6	3	5	4	2	9
2	4	5	9	7	1	3	6	8
1	2	8	7	4	3	5	9	6
3	5	9	1	6	8	2	4	7
4	6	7	5	9	2	8	1	3
6	1	3	4	5	7	9	8	2
5	9	2	8	1	6	7	3	4
8	7	4	3	2	9	6	5	1

Solution to yesterday's puzzle

**Ombuds Office**  
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~Benjamin Franklin

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**Miss Texas** ←  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
"Then, if I had any appearances or if I

to 5 p.m. every day and then I would go to meet my interview consultant and fitness trainer and do my fitting and all of the other things after work," she said. "Then, if I had any appearances or if I

was making an appearance at a school to talk about my platform or to talk about higher education or setting goals, that would be on top of everything. So, it was a little bit of a scheduling that really got it all into place."

Even with all the preparation, DaNae Couch said, she still was shocked when she was announced as Miss Texas.

"Everyone trains so hard and because I got to know the girls, I found out everyone was so qualified to do this job," she said. "You picture it in your mind so much when you train over the course of getting ready for Miss Texas, that when it actually happens, it's like, 'Oh, my gosh. This is a dream. This is insane.' I was really excited and surprised and really humbled."

Because being Miss Texas is a full-time job, DaNae Couch said, she will take a year off of law school to tour the state and promote her platform of hope for family recovery:

life beyond addiction.

"I speak to a lot of schools," she said, "and a lot of professional businesses, as well as a lot of major events."

After touring the state, DaNae Couch will compete for Miss America in January in Nevada.

"The night I was crowned Miss Texas, somebody asked me if I was ready to go to Miss America and I was like, 'Oh, my God. I get to go to Miss America, that's so awesome,'" she said. "You watch it on TV every year and you think, 'Wow, these women are so impressive, they have so much intelligence and poise and grace and talent that to be casted among the young women who compete on that stage is truly an honor, so I'm looking forward to it. I know I have a lot to do between now and then to really make sure I'm the best representative I can be for Texas and I think it's going to be an amazing adventure."

Danice Couch said she has limited access to her daughter now that she is Miss Texas.

"She's kind of instantly been propelled into sort of celebrity status," she said. "She has a business manager that books her appearances and she has traveling companions and drivers. I have extremely limited access to her, so I'll be (at Miss America) like everyone else as a spectator cheering her on. I'm her biggest fan."

School of Law dean Darby Dickerson said DaNae Couch is a great student.

"DaNae Couch is an outstanding law student and wonderful member of our community," Darby said in an email. "She represents Tech Law on our national mock trial team, the Board of Barristers and the 'Estate Planning & Community Property Journal.' I've enjoyed working with her and am proud of all that she has accomplished. We all wish her well during her reign as Miss Texas, and look forward to possibly having a Miss America in our student body."

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FILE PHOTO/The Daily Toreador  
DAVID ALEXANDER, A junior mechanical engineering major from Friendswood, waits for Scott's Complete Car Care to check his Jeep in February at the Free Car Clinic.

## Car Clinic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"We would really enjoy everyone coming out to this free lunch, free car check and to meet with organizations that promote safety and safe driving," Moncibaiz said.

The free car clinic, which originated in 1999, occurs three times a year: in July and before Thanksgiving and Spring Break.

Scott's Complete Car Check will examine the vehicle's fluids, belts, tires, batteries and other essentials to prevent potential issues.

"We see things that are a problem that they're not feeling by driving the car or not hearing any noises that would warn them or anything," said Scott Edgar, owner of Scott's Complete Car Check. "Visually looking at it, we're catching things that could be a problem they had no

idea about."

Edgar said the mechanics usually discover cracked belts, worn tires and eroded batteries on the participating vehicles.

"We have found a lot of problems on vehicles where there is no doubt they would not have made it where they were going," he said.

Edgar said he agreed to do the examinations because he has kids and would appreciate if someone would attempt to find potential problems in their vehicles in order for them to be safe on the road.

"I worry about them," he said. "So anything I can do to help other kids,

that's all for the better."

Edgar encourages everyone interested to utilize the car clinic and put the full staff of mechanics to work.

"We hope they take advantage of it because we're there to help them get home," he said. "It's an opportunity to help save misery on the road."

atubbs@dailytoreador.com

*"We hope they take advantage of it because we're there to help them get home."*

**SCOTT EDGAR**  
SCOTT'S COMPLETE  
CAR CARE



PHOTO BY SCOTT MACWATTERS/The Daily Toreador  
BROOK REEVES, THE vocalist of Impending Doom, performs at Jake's Backroom in Lubbock on Sunday.

## IMPENDING DOOM

# Heathrow handles record numbers for Olympics

LONDON (AP) — Athletes, officials and media from all over the world poured into Heathrow Airport on Monday for the London Olympics, the first wave of a record number of passengers expected to pass through Europe's largest airport for the games that begin July 27.

Heathrow says athletes from 50 nations will touch down in what is being described as Britain's biggest peacetime transport challenge. In all, the airport will handle some 236,955 passengers, breaking the

previous daily record of 233,562 set in July 2011.

To cope with the deluge, Heathrow has enlisted some 1,000 volunteers to greet arrivals — 500 were working on Monday alone — and created special teams to deal with oversized items like Olympic javelins, bikes and other sports equipment. All wore bright pink to easily stand out.

Hundreds of immigration agents were also on the job to ease the long lines that have plagued the airport and there was an increased police

presence, including sniffer dogs.

Rows of Olympic VIP buses then whisked teams and coaches to the Athletes Village in east London.

At least one athlete, two-time world 400-meter hurdles champion Kerron Clement, was less than complimentary in a tweet after the bus taking the American to the village had a hard time finding its destination.

Clement tweeted: "Um, so we've been lost on the road for 4hrs. Not a good first impression London."

Clement, who won the world title in 2007 and 2009 before losing it to Britain's Dai Greene in Daegu last year, is the defending Olympic silver medalist.

Heathrow usually handles 100,000 to 110,000 arrivals a day, but that was expected to swell to 121,239 on Monday, many of them Olympic VIPs, just 1,710 short of a previous incoming record on Sept. 4, 2011.

Another big arrival day will be July 25, two days before the opening ceremony.

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<p><b>ESTABLISHED RESTAURANT</b> Now taking applications : Operation Hours: 11am to 10pm daily. Apply in person only. El Chico 4301 Marsha Sharp Freeway next to Ottos Granary Variety of openings. Cashier, Servers, Bussers Needed. FLEXIBLE HOURS, Parttime. Mom undergoing chemotherapy needs student for shopping, cooking, cleaning, rides to treatments. Six months, maybe longer. Leave message 928-9693. GENERAL OFFICE help needed. 806-748-1305</p>	<p><b>SHIPPING &amp; INVENTORY CLERK</b> with excellent numbers sense, accuracy, neat appearance, and quiet personality. Work schedule: at least 20 hours per week. Must be able to Carry 75 lbs. unaided up and down stairs. Apply in person 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. PADDLE TRAMPS, 1317 University Avenue. No Phone Calls Please.</p> <p><b>SPECIALTY STORE</b> Flexible Hours, Cleaning, stocking, sales Store Hours 9am - 9pm daily, 12-9pm Sundays Apply in person only. Otto's Granary 4119 Marsha Sharp Freeway. Between El Chico and La Quinta.</p>	<p><b>FOR SALE</b></p> <p><b>BEST TEXTBOOK RENTAL</b> Prices Anywhere. BOOKS4LEASE.COM F250 FORD 2006 SuperDuty SuperCab Pickup Tan Longbed 4x4 Diesel 146,000 miles \$14,000 806-392-4882</p> <p><b>MISCELLANEOUS</b> ALLAMERICANSTORAGE.COM Rates \$10 and up. Free truck. 24/7 Rental station. Clean. 5839-49th 792-6464.</p> <p><b>BEST LAY IN TOWN</b> Mattress, Furniture. Huge discounts. 5127 34th Street (34th &amp; Slide). 785-7253.</p>	<p><b>AFFORDABLE MOVING</b> Quick, easy professional moving. Reasonable prices. Local or long distance. Boxes, supplies, paper, etc. Serving all Texas cities. Free estimate on the phone. 4211 34th. Call 799-4033.</p> <p><b>BROADWAY BEVERAGE</b> Tax Free Tuesdays. Will ice with purchase. 7 minutes east of campus on Broadway. Just past the frisky golf course at Mckenzie park. Broadway and Martin Luther King. Come party with us. 744-4542. This establishment, Texas Tech University and The Daily Toreador do not encourage underage drinking or alcohol abuse.</p> <p><b>EZ DEFENSIVE DRIVING.</b> Free chicken fried steak included Super Cheaptist.) Call 781-2931. More Information <a href="http://www.LubbockClass.com">www.LubbockClass.com</a>.</p>		



## Antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea spurs international concerns

By ANNA BELLEGANTE  
IOWA STATE DAILY (IOWA STATE U.)

Sexually active individuals need to be aware of growing concerns in the medical field. The World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have issued an alert warning the public of increasing strains of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea.

According to the WHO website, an estimated 62 million people around the world are infected with gonorrhea every year. A vast majority of those

infected individuals do not show symptoms, causing the infection to spread easily among the worldwide population.

Health officials are concerned that gonorrhea could be added to the list of "incurable" infections to join diseases such as herpes and HIV/AIDS. Between 2006 and 2011, the CDC saw a 17-fold increase in the gonorrhea samples resistant to cephalosporins, which are currently the last line of defense against the sexually transmitted infection.

Dr. Kenneth Fife, an infec-

tious disease expert and professor of medicine at Indiana U. Medical School, told ABC News there is an urgent need to research and develop new treatments for gonorrhea.

"A major component of the threat is that there really is no backup plan if — most likely when — these more resistant organisms become more prevalent," Fife said.

Antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea cases have been reported in Japan, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Sweden and Norway, according to the Associated Press; however, it is likely that there are undetected cases in other countries. While the United States has not re-

ported cases of drug-resistant gonorrhea, the CDC has set up a surveillance system.

Just because there are not any reported cases in the United States so far, Dr. Rebecca Fritzsche of Thiel Student Health Center said that is no reason to trivialize the severity of the situation. She says that low or no reported statistics of gonorrhea should not lure people into a false sense of security.

"If [antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea] happens to you, it's 100 percent," Fritzsche said. "We don't want to go backwards and have more and more untreatable STI's."

Fritzsche went on to say that the purpose of spreading aware-

ness is not to cause pandemonium but to inform the public so people can make informed decisions.

Symptoms of gonorrhea include burning or painful urination, frequent urination, redness or swelling of the genitals, discharge and sore throat. Mothers can transmit the disease to their children, causing eye infections or even blindness in newborns. If infection spreads to the bloodstream, fever, rash or arthritis-like symptoms may occur or it can even be fatal.

Prevention measures for drug-resistant gonorrhea include abstinence or using protection every time during intercourse, limiting the number of sexual

partners and fully completing antibiotic treatments if diagnosed with gonorrhea. It is important to seek re-evaluation if symptoms persist after completing the antibiotic regimen. Communicating with sexual partners after being diagnosed with gonorrhea is absolutely critical so they can be tested and treated and prevent further contagion.

The CDC first issued warnings about drug-resistant gonorrhea in 2010. But with an increased number of cases and the WHO issuing the same warning two years later, Fritzsche said now is the time to act.

"We need to wake up and protect ourselves," Fritzsche said.

## Ridiculous U.S. government voting rules

By GABRIEL STOFFA  
IOWA STATE DAILY (IOWA STATE U.)

Why, oh why, oh why are important votes by government representatives allowed to go through due to ridiculous loopholes in procedure?

In North Carolina, fracking — injecting fluid into cracks in rocks to further open them in order to allow more oil and gas to flow out — just became a reality because of a mistake.

State Rep. Becky Carney for North Carolina was the deciding 72nd vote for a bill setting out the rules for fracking by pushing the incorrect button and could be heard on the House floor saying as she did: "Oh, my God — it won't let me change my vote," according to a story on ABCNews.com.

Ignore whether fracking is "good" or not, and look at this only as an argument of intention. Carney had voted against the bill before, and based on her words, we can assume she was still against the bill. So why could she not change her vote as long as it was reasonably demonstrated to be a mistake?

North Carolina state law says lawmakers can change their vote if they make a mistake only if the vote does not change the result.

What the hell? What is the

point? Where is the fail safe? Even Internet websites and computer programs have a backup measure asking if you want to proceed. Why don't government officials have said fail safes, being as how they are making decisions far more important than if you want to delete a file or install a program?

How many other decisions have been voted for or against because of ridiculous rules laid out that allow for mistakes or lack of information to define citizens' futures?

Some state lawmakers in Tennessee often cast more than one vote on legislation by using the votes of absent representatives around them, a process known as ghost voting, according to a NewsChannel 5 investigation.

When asked about ghost voting, State Rep. Dale Ford, R-Jonesborough, for Tennessee said: "No, this is neither illegal or immoral. There's nothing wrong with it. It's done all of the time."

Done all the time. Between no fail safes and letting others cast votes for those not present, why the hell do we have elected representatives?

Why not just let Internet users click "like" for bills and whatnot as they do when voting 100 times a day for the best football mascot? It isn't as if

folks vote for their representatives with the understanding that those people are deciding important things.

But then, how often are representatives actually informed enough to be making decisions that we the people would approve of, decisions that are shaping our and future generations' lives? A fair number of representatives have said they were unfamiliar with most of the content for Obamacare.

For example, in a CNSNews.com interview, U.S. Sen. Thomas Carper, D-Del., said: "I don't expect to actually read the legislative language because reading the legislative language is among the more confusing things I've ever read in my life."

Representatives frequently have assistance because their schedules are busy and they have a lot to do, but it is a little frightening to understand that sometimes the representatives we have put our trust in don't know what is going on or are not allowed to make corrections to obvious errors.

Maybe it is a desire for a government that is working in our best interests with informed decisions, maybe it is just myself and others being naive enough to think government representatives are worthy of holding their office, but these

instances that crop up more and more often in small news stories disgust me.

There are dozens of instances, covered by news and not, where citizens' interests are not being represented in a manner consistent with how the system "should" run.

Look for yourself. Find out how screwed up our government is, and if you are as annoyed as I am, consider doing more than being a passive voter and try to instigate change.

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**Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle**  
Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

**ACROSS**

- Not very bright
- Ride in new wheels, say
- Tattooist's supply
- Threat
- Lovers
- "Pretentious?"
- Eight-time tennis Grand Slam champion
- Unusual
- Yank out of bed
- Padded footstool
- Pear or plum
- Yosemite environmentalist and photographer
- Parakeet's home
- Gridiron play also called a sweep
- Drops on the grass
- Steak on a stick
- "Meh"
- Doc's bloc: Abbr.
- Goody Two Shoes' singer
- Env. insert
- Astronaut's gp.
- Hip-hop headwear
- Drain-cleaning chemical
- Freezer bag brand
- Ship's slammer
- American Dance Theater founder
- Quadri-doubled
- Without end
- Spirits measure
- Means to enlightenment
- Mole — and, read slightly differently, what 17-, 24-, 38- or 51-Across is
- In days past
- "What's more ..."
- Literary family name
- Spitz in your lap, briefly
- River in western Belgium
- & Hedges: British smoke

**DOWN**

- Very bright
- Pavarotti, notably
- Excessive, as pressure
- About 3.26 light-years
- Rapper-turned-actor
- Anti-narcotics org.
- Venetian blind parts
- Kindergarten adhesive
- Shoe tightener
- Upscale retailer
- Mercus
- "Can't stop me now!"
- Indicate agreement
- Kindergarten
- Like chunky milk
- Puts two and two together
- Like a prized cabinet, say
- Affected by mold or mildew
- Sound from a La-Z-Boy, perhaps
- Alias letters
- Tony of "Taxi"

By Jim Peredo and Jeff Chen 7/17/12

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