

ROUNDING UP CAMPUS NEWS SINCE 1900

THE BAYLOR LARIAT

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2008

Noose ignites tempers on campus

Jade Ortego
Staff writer

At 9 a.m. Tuesday, a rope was discovered tied like a noose hanging from a tree outside of Morrison Hall, prompting the Baylor NAACP and Baylor's Association of Black Students to hold a joint meeting to discuss racially charged events on Election Day. The groups feel the acts were indicative of a racist culture at Baylor.

Devin Culberson, Spring freshman, found a thin, white rope tied to a loop at the end, hanging from a tree. Culberson borrowed a knife from a janitor and cut it down, he said.

The rope evokes historical images of when black people were hanged from trees in the American South in the early 1900s.

The rope is now in possession of the Baylor Police. Dub Oliver, Vice President of Student Life, says that he believes it was intended to look like a noose and send a hateful message. He hopes students will continue to come forward and help with the investigation.

Culberson believes the rope was put in a tree to intimidate black supporters of president-elect Barack Obama.

"I had to cut it down to show respect for myself and other black people," he said.

Baylor Chief of Police Jim Doak said he was also disappointed in the Election Day events.

"This is irresponsible conduct to the highest degree. It was absolutely distasteful, if that was the reason it was put out there," Doak said.

Someone has come to the police department with information on who may have put it into the tree, Doak said.

After the election was called for Obama, signs were found burning in the fire pit outside of Brooks Village, Waco freshman Brad Wright said.

Boerne freshman Michael Acosta said he saw it too.

Later, verbal altercations occurred outside of Penland Residence Hall. A group of Obama supporters were walking around shouting "Obama" and then passed a group of white men outside who made threatening and racist remarks, said Emmanuel Orupabo, Arlington senior.

According to Orupabo, one the men told the group, "Any (expletive) who walks by Penland, we're going to kick their (expletive), we're going to jump him." Orupabo and the people with him stopped and responded, "Excuse me?" The groups shouted at each other until police showed up.

Doak said the police didn't witness any racist remarks, but they were told of them. There were only about 10 to 15 people involved, he said, but there appeared to be more because so many stopped to watch.

"Folks got a little tacky," Doak said. There were no arrests and no violence, he said, "but rumors have been absolutely crazy."

Parents of students have flooded the Baylor Police with phone calls

"I had to cut it down to show respect for myself and other black people."

Devin Culberson
Spring freshman

concerned with the safety of their children.

Doak said one caller heard that there were burning crosses on campus.

President Garland sent out an e-mail Wednesday condemning the Election Day conflicts on campus and the hanging of the noose.

"These events are deeply disturbing to us and are antithetical to the

mission of Baylor University," it read. "We categorically denounce and will not tolerate racist acts of any kind on our campus."

"They're not going to brush this over. This is not a stance."

Ryan Phipps
Baylor NAACP

The Baylor NAACP and Association of Black Students said they appreciate the e-mail, but believe that further action must be taken.

"They're going to brush this over. This is not a stance," said Ryan Phipps, holding up a copy of the e-mail. Phipps, Mesquite senior, is president of the Association.

At the joint meeting of approximately 50 people, committees were assigned to head various measures that the groups hope to take to address racism at Baylor.

The Baylor NAACP gave a statement Wednesday.

"We have faith that the Baylor community will come together and bridge differences to create an environment of inclusiveness, understanding and acceptance all members of the Baylor family. We look forward to campus support of forthcoming initiatives statement they issued yesterday," it read.

Last Friday, a life-sized effigy of Obama was found hanging from a tree at the University of Kentucky.

On Wednesday in Kilgore, Texas, police said they found racially charged graffiti with references to the election spray-painted on a high school gymnasium wall and at a skate park.

Prisca Anuolam and the Associated Press contributed to this report.



Courtesy Photo

Above: Devin Culberson found this rope, shaped as a noose, displayed here on a table in the Bill Daniel Student Center Tuesday.



Shanna Taylor/Lariat Staff

University Statement

Statement from Interim Baylor University President David Garland Regarding Campus Incidents

Interim Baylor University President David E. Garland released the following statement today:

Baylor police reported today on three disturbing incidents that occurred on our campus yesterday.

Late Tuesday afternoon we were notified of a single clothesline rope that had been seen in a tree on campus. The individuals who discovered it believed it had the appearance of a noose. Baylor police are now in possession of the rope and continue to speak with students who observed the rope in the tree and are gathering additional information about the origin of the rope.

Last evening, police investigated a small fire in a barbecue pit adjacent to Brooks Flats in which it was alleged several Obama/Biden campaign signs had been burned.

Finally, police were called late last evening to a disturbance outside Penland Hall, where a shouting match had occurred between two small groups of white and African-American students.

These events are deeply disturbing to us and are antithetical to the mission of Baylor University. We categorically denounce and will not tolerate racist acts of any kind on our campus.

Further, we are committed to maintaining the safety and unity of our campus community. We wish to celebrate and strengthen **inclusiveness, understanding and acceptance of all members of the Baylor family.**

As they have thus far, Baylor police will respond quickly and decisively to any additional situations of this nature. Faculty, staff and students with information pertaining to any of the incidents we've described are urged to contact Baylor police at 710-2222.

Baylor has specific policies regarding expectations of civility and respect on our campus. Those policies, which we endorse and enforce, can be found at <http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php?id=39242> <<http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php?id=39242>> .

Faculty, staff and students also participate in on-going weekly meetings hosted by our department of multicultural activities called "Frankly Speaking" in which issues of the day are discussed in a respectful and civil manner. The goal of "Frankly Speaking" is for participants to feel comfortable expressing their opinions and beliefs within a safe environment. The meetings are held in the Bill Daniel Student Center each Tuesday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., and members of the Baylor community are invited to participate.

We believe that the incidents on our campus yesterday were irresponsible acts committed by a few individuals. As a community we condemn these terribly unfortunate events that do not represent the values we share as members of the Baylor family.

Rumors raised: Edwards to join Obama cabinet?

By Chad Shanks
Staff Writer

Waco Representative Chet Edwards is downplaying speculation that he might be picked for a cabinet post in President-Elect Barack Obama's administration.

An article in The Houston Chronicle Wednesday said that Edwards and former Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk are being considered for staff positions.

"I have had no contact with President-Elect Barack Obama or his staff, and have no expectation of being offered a cabinet position in the administration. I am focused on doing my job and continuing to be an effective and independent voice for our district. I am humbled each day to have the honor of representing the great people of Central Texas in Congress,"

Edwards said Wednesday in an e-mail to The Lariat.

Central Texas Democrats expressed excitement about the possibility of their representative serving the administration in Washington, but would miss his local contributions.

"At this point, it is just speculation. However, if the president asks you to serve in any position, you have to listen. I'd expect Chet Edwards to seriously consider it if he is asked. Our preference is to keep him working for Texas's 17th District, but we would respect any decision he makes," said John Cullar, McLennan County Democratic Party president.

While Obama held no public events on Wednesday, sources close to the campaign expect him to start naming his staff soon, CNN reports. Illinois Rep. Rahm Emanuel is rumored to



Christina Kruse/Lariat Staff

Sen. John Edwards is dispelling rumors that he will be appointed to President-Elect Barack Obama's cabinet. Edwards said he has not been contacted by Obama and doesn't have any expectations for a nomination.

be the front-runner for Obama's White House chief of staff.

Several other well-known figures are also rumored to be

in the running for cabinet positions.

Please see **Edwards**, page 4

McLennan sees voting increase

By Ashley Corinne Killough
Staff Writer

Reflecting higher voter turnout rates nationwide, approximately 80,900 McLennan County voters participated in this year's election, marking a nearly 3 percent increase from the turnout in 2004.

And with a 24 percent increase from the last presidential election, early voting numbers especially saw a significant jump.

Brandon Buchanan, McLennan County elections specialist, said the county's elections office had been working hard to promote early voting in order to alleviate the long lines that typically appear on Election Day.

"We were hoping that there would be less of a wait for people on Nov. 4," Buchanan said. "And, fortunately, there were less lines and less people having to stand for a long time. It was very helpful."

Buchanan said the election

process went smoothly but the final results will remain unofficial until two weeks after Election Day, as the office is still waiting on about 150 overseas ballots and as remaining technicalities are finalized.

"Typically, they are pretty close to the unofficial results," said Buchanan, referring to the official tallies.

The Associated Press reported Wednesday that the 2008 election is set to reveal a higher turnout than the record-setting 64 percent in 2004.

Sen. John McCain took 61.57 percent of McLennan County's vote, while President-elect Barack Obama garnered 37.64 percent.

This represents a 4.1 percent decrease from the number of votes that went to the Republican candidate, President George W. Bush, in 2004 and a 3.9 percent increase from those going

Please see **Voting**, page 4

California votes to ban gay marriage in Proposition 8

By Lisa Leff
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES - Voters put a stop to same-sex marriage in California, dealing a crushing defeat to gay-rights activists in a state they hoped would be a vanguard and putting in doubt as many as 18,000 same-sex marriages conducted since a

court ruling made them legal this year.

The gay-rights movement had a rough election elsewhere as well Tuesday. Amendments to ban gay marriage were approved in Arizona and Florida, and Arkansas voters approved a measure banning unmarried couples from serving as adoptive or foster parents. Supporters made clear that gays and lesbians were

their main target.

But California, the nation's most populous state, had been the big prize. Spending for and against Proposition 8 reached \$74 million, the most expensive social-issues campaign in U.S. history and the most expensive campaign this year outside the race for the White House. Activists on both sides of the issue saw the measure as critical to

building momentum for their causes.

"People believe in the institution of marriage," Frank Schubert, co-manager of the Yes on 8 campaign, said after declaring victory early Wednesday. "It's one institution that crosses ethnic divides, that crosses partisan divides. ... People have stood up because they care about marriage and they care a great deal."

With almost all precincts reporting, election returns showed the measure winning with 52 percent of the vote. An estimated 2 million to 3 million provisional and absentee ballots remained to be tallied, but based on trends and the locations of the votes still outstanding, the margin of support in favor of the initiative was secure.

Leaders of the No on 8 cam-

paign said they were not ready to concede.

"Because Prop 8 involves the sensitive matter of individual rights, we believe it is important to wait until we receive further information about the outcome," Geoff Kors, director of Equality California, said in a statement Wednesday.

Please see **Ban**, page 4

Passage of Proposition 8 continues marginalization

Proposition 8 was just passed in California, effectively banning gay marriage in the state. The amendment was the result of tireless efforts on the part of evangelical groups.

Preachers from all over the country moved to California to join in the effort, calling people to fast and pray. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said of the passage of the measure, "It's more important than the presidential election."

So much energy expended, so much idealism for a cause would be commendable if it weren't in the interest of hate and oppression. It is disturbing that so many would rally together to ensure that so many others stay marginalized, others whose only indiscretion is to love someone of the same gender.

For a short time, California,

Maryland and Connecticut all recognized same-sex marriages as legal. Why is this a sign of the end of times for the Christian right? Imagine a scenario in which gays could marry across the country: it would be just like now, but gay couples that live together anyway would now have property and visitation rights like straight couples. They could call themselves wives or husbands. That's it. Straight marriages would remain just as "sacred" as we make them.

The same sort of rhetoric used to bar gays from marrying was used in the 1950's in support of anti-miscegenation laws: it was implied that the ability of races to intermarry threatened the sanctity of normal (straight, white, Christian) marriages.

That mentality is seen as bigoted and outdated now, as this

point of view



BY JADE ORTEGO

current debate will be seen in, at most, a few decades. Proposition 8 in California is a temporary setback in an inevitable movement toward inclusiveness.

Always instep with the Christian right, Baylor remains embarrassingly behind in its perception of gay rights. Baylor's sexual misconduct policy calls human sexuality a "gift from the creator God" to be enjoyed through "heterosexual relationships within marriage." Misuses of this gift include "sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault,

incest, adultery, fornication and homosexual acts."

It is wrong to list rape and abuse in the same sentence with consensual sex between adults. That is a stinging, personal affront to the gay community.

In 2005, Baylor kicked alumnus Tim Smith off the business school advisory board for refusing to deny his sexuality. He had personally donated \$65,000 to Baylor and raised \$60,000 more for a scholarship fund. He had an MBA from Harvard. Apparently it was his private life and not his loyalty or qualification for the job that mattered.

This is an outrage that is, frankly, a joke at other universities. At any public university, he could sue for discrimination. Baylor ought to remember that just because it can legally do something doesn't mean it

should. If an act is questionably legal at all, shouldn't we examine whether it should be done?

In March of 2007, members of Soulforce, a Christian gay rights activist group, were arrested on campus in front of Waco Hall for chalking Bible quotes that support their message of tolerance and equality. As I watched them lead away in handcuffs, I cried with admiration of their stoicism. I was furious, and couldn't imagine being led away peacefully. I also cried with disgust at the ignorant and mean-spirited behavior of institution that purports to be of higher learning.

How can Baylor expect to compete in a new century with regressive ideas of segregation based on identity? It can't, and unless some things change, it will become increasingly more embarrassing to identify oneself

as an alumnus. I don't want to be thought of as a close-minded bigot.

Baylor does nothing to foster an atmosphere of tolerance. Even in the most inviting of environments on campus, ignorant or judgmental comments can be heard. Students can hardly be blamed for their ignorance. In denying gays and lesbians the right to have a recognized group on campus (like at any other university), Baylor legitimizes notions that gays and lesbians are secondary persons, or worse that homosexuality is a choice of some sort or mental illness.

That this oppression happens in the name of a "god of love" is the biggest insult and biggest joke of all.

Jade Ortego is a senior journalism major from Sweeny and is a staff writer for The Baylor Lariat.

Editorial

Critics, publishers should give urban fiction a chance

Drive by shootings, drugs and sex fill the pages of recently popular urban fiction titles. Despite the genre's success, there has been some question as to whether these books should be allowed into public libraries or even printed.

The genre started in New York City and was written with residents of southeast Queens in mind. The books are authored mostly by blacks and contain graphic depictions of "life on the street," in which murders, drug deals and sexual situations are described in graphic detail.

Street vendors first distributed the books because book agents and publishers initially rejected them. It wasn't until librarians ventured out onto the streets and purchased the books that they were placed into libraries.

A recent New York Times article, 'From the streets to the libraries,' stated that public libraries in Queens are now embracing the genre as a new way to get more people interested in reading. The library explained that since receiving the books, they have had a flood of new readers requesting the books.

Despite their popularity, urban fiction authors are still

struggling to get approval from agents and publishers.

Publishers, agents and critics should consider giving this genre of writing a chance because these books provide a new perspective of life from different people living in a different place.

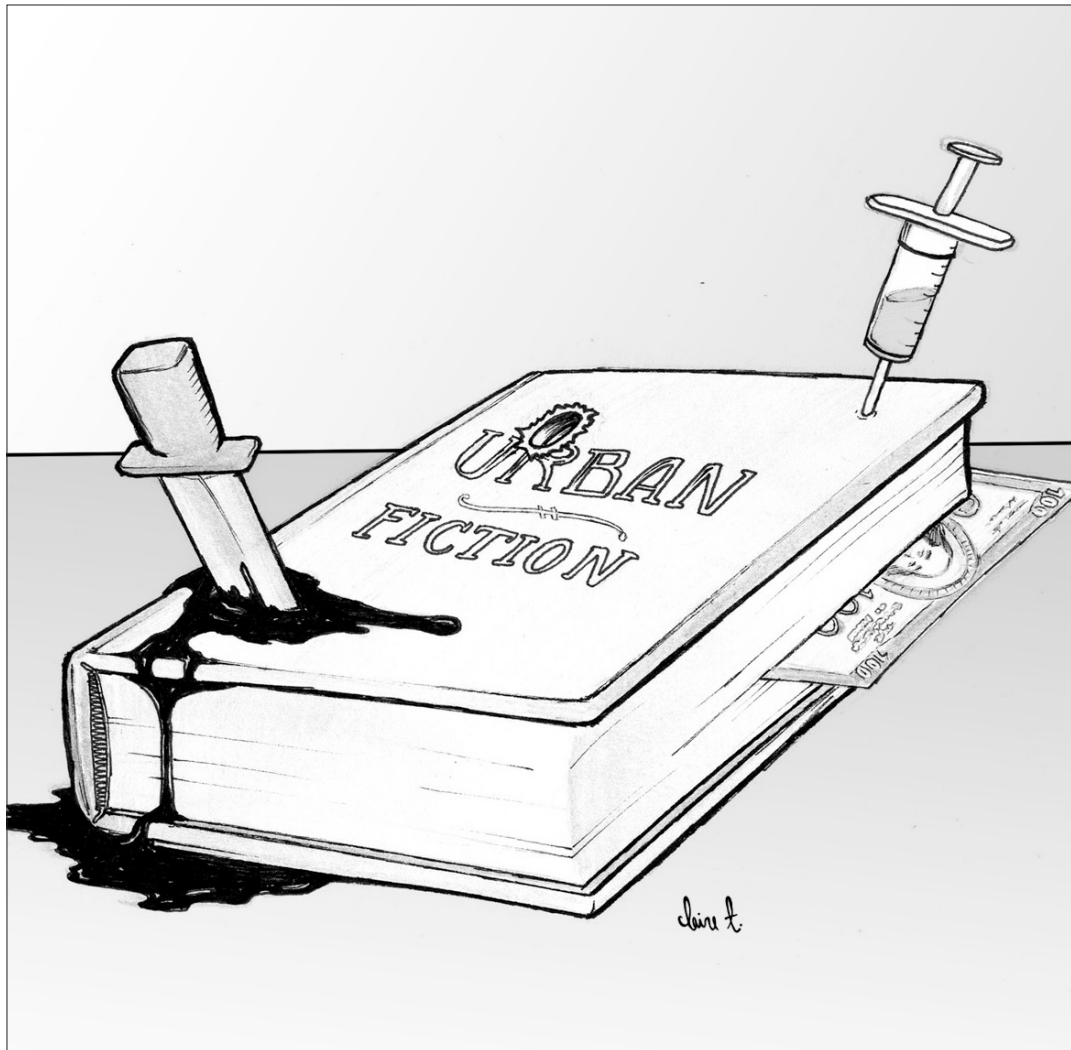
In a letter in response to The New York Times article, a freelance editor wrote about her disapproval of the genre. She felt the material was severely stereotypical to blacks. She told her publisher that she would refuse to work on urban fiction because of the content.

Just because these books are not a typical 'happily ever after' story doesn't mean the books shouldn't be appreciated. Urban fiction can reach out to new readers who could embrace the joys of reading, no matter the type of story or plot.

It's unfair to classify these books as stereotypical, especially if the authors have lived the reality of the stories and their interpretation is based upon true events.

The books reveal a side of life that people living outside of urban communities don't get to experience, which is the basis of the appeal.

The graphic content of these books is obviously not appro-



prate for young readers but may be a means of communicating to young adults that a life of crime is not the way to go.

Like violent movies and video games, just because readers read about a life of crime doesn't mean one will actually go out and commit a crime. It's strictly for educational and entertainment value and doesn't advocate anything to the reader beyond a juicy plot.

For some readers, the tales told in these books are a mirror image of their own lives. These readers can relate to realistic characters that have the same problems, goals and pleasures in life. These books could also teach readers that there are consequences for living a street life. The stories and plot lines depicted in these stories could convey the negative side of living a life of crime that best be

left to the fictional characters.

Just because the genre has received some content criticism doesn't mean that these books shouldn't be published.

There are not many stories that tackle life on the streets of New York City, something that a lot of people can relate to. Life isn't always peaches and cream, and it's important that others understand that people come from all walks of life.

Opinion policy

The Baylor Lariat welcomes reader viewpoints through letters to the editor and guest columns.

Opinions expressed in the Lariat are not necessarily those of the Baylor administration, the Baylor Board of Regents or the Student Publications Board.

Letters to the editor should include the writer's name, major, graduation year, phone number and student identification number. Non-student writers should include their address. Letters that focus on an issue affecting students or faculty may be considered for a guest column at the editor's discretion.

All submissions become the property of The Baylor Lariat. The Lariat reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, length, libel and style.

Letters should be e-mailed to Lariat_Letters@baylor.edu or mailed to The Baylor Lariat, One Bear Place #97330, Waco, TX 76798-7330.

Corrections

The Weekly Events sidebar on page five of Wednesday's paper listed incorrect times for a basketball and volleyball game. men's basketball Saturday vs. Tarleton State University is at 7 p.m. and volleyball vs. Colorado in Boulder, Colo. is at 4 p.m.

A subscription to the Lariat costs \$45 for two semesters. Send check or money order to One Bear Place #97330, Waco, TX, 76798-7330 or e-mail Lariat_ads@baylor.edu. Visa, Discover and MasterCard payments may be phoned to 254-710-2662. Postmaster: Please send address changes to above address.

Letters to the editor

Community must come together, take responsibility for tradition

I love tradition. Traditions can have a transformative effect on the lives of students. Traditions are often historic and seemingly permanent events that can help students to feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves, connected to the past and the future. In November of 1999, as a junior at Texas A&M University, I saw a 90-year-old seemingly permanent tradition liter-

ally come crashing down, leaving 12 fellow students dead and over 20 others seriously injured. That experience has had a profound effect on my career as a student affairs educator.

As members of this community, we share in the joys and burdens of unity, of brotherhood and sisterhood and of the Baylor spirit. Samuel Palmer Brooks in his Immortal Message to the seniors of all years asserted that "Truths do not change." He did not assert that traditions do not

change, because they do.

Inevitably, traditions evolve over time, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse becoming almost unrecognizable and at odds with the original intention and spirit of the event.

There are times when communities must come together and take responsibility for their tradition and the future of the tradition for the good of the community. Change is a part of tradition and we need to make sure that change is for the better.

To seek to assign blame would be to miss the point, for we are all Baylor University. We are better than the events on Founders Mall last year and on Wednesday night. We are Baylor University.

Larry R. Correll-Hughes
Director of Brooks Residential

BU students should behave like good Christians and citizens

As a recent graduate (Fall 2007), I was very saddened by

the news of the behavior of current Baylor students regarding the outcome of our national elections.

As a Christian university, not only do we have the privilege of receiving an exceptional academic education but also an education in morals and values. While I am aware of Baylor's political tendencies, I had hoped that Baylor students would apply that which we have been taught at our beloved school and acted with respect and love for one

another rather than protesting through racial slurs and burning of signs.

I hope that our current Baylor students learn that the world is not like the Baylor bubble and that sort of behavior won't be tolerated nor respected in the real world. I hope, for the sake of our school's name, those students currently carrying our school's reputation can learn to behave like good Christians and responsible citizens.

Carolina Rodriguez, '07

The Baylor Lariat

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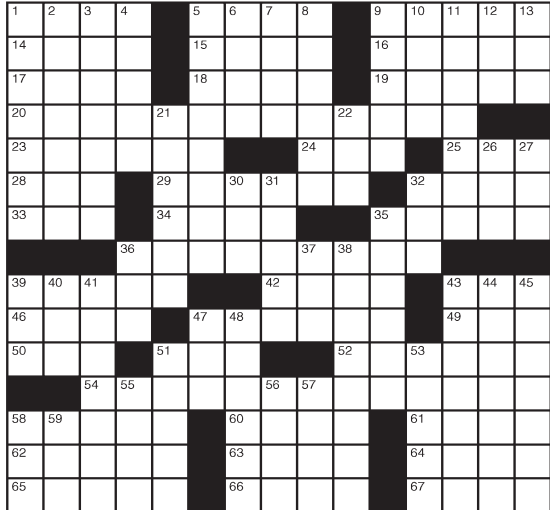
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- 12 Danson or Koppel

13 Final letter

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- 26 Period
- 27 "The One I Love" group
- 30 Most remote, briefly
- 31 Blend together
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- 35 Rumor spreader
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- 38 Ones who pine
- 39 Masseuse's milieu
- 40 Poetic planet
- 41 Associations of teams
- 43 Cushioned footstool
- 44 Truly amazing
- 45 Envision
- 47 Hail, to Caesar
- 48 Hardest to find
- 51 Big occasion
- 53 Follow
- 55 Curved molding
- 56 Amer.-Eur. alliance
- 57 Fertility goddess
- 58 Young ladies' org.
- 59 Sighs of delight



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

11/6/08

For today's crossword and sudoku answers, visit www.baylor.edu/Lariat

Bush speeds up financial rescue plan

By Martin Crutsinger
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — At a time when most administrations are slowing down, the Bush White House appears to be speeding up, at least when it comes to getting the \$700 billion financial rescue program up and running.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, President Bush's point man on the gigantic program, is pushing his staff to do everything possible to show markets that the government is getting the money out the door to bolster the financial system and get banks to resume more normal lending.

On Wednesday, one day after Sen. Barack Obama won the presidency, the Treasury Department detailed how it planned to borrow a record \$550 billion before the end of this year to back the bailout. Treasury said it would sell \$55 billion in bonds next week, including a reintroduction of the three-year note, all part of a massive borrowing effort required because of the cost of the bailout and a budget deficit that some believe could hit nearly \$1 trillion next year.

The government's surging financing needs are a stark

reminder of the challenges awaiting Obama even as the current administration moves to implement its rescue program and the Fed fine-tunes its approach to the crisis.

The financial turmoil flared anew Wednesday with the Dow Jones industrial average plunging 486.01 points, or more than 5 percent, as investors absorbed more bad economic news with a report on the manufacturing sector showing that the segment of the economy where most Americans work had dipped into recession territory in October.

The selling carried over to Asia, where Japan's Nikkei stock average retreated 5.7 percent and Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index lost 6.7 percent in early trading Thursday.

Investors were braced for more bad news Thursday with the number of newly laid-off workers filing claims for unemployment benefits expected to remain around 480,000, a level that usually signals a recession.

Economists expect a separate report will show productivity slowed to a weak 0.8 percent rate of gain in the third quarter, far below the 2.8 percent increase in the second quarter. And they were looking for the slowdown in productivity to be

accompanied by a rise in labor pressures with unit labor costs climbing at a rate of 2.8 percent, compared with the 0.5 percent rate of decline turned in during the second quarter.

And those reports were coming one day before the government was scheduled to report on unemployment for October, a report expected to show that the jobless rate shot up to 6.3 percent last month as businesses cut 200,000 workers from their payrolls, the 10th straight month of joblessness since January.

The government said last week that the overall economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, fell at an annual rate of 0.3 percent in the July-September quarter, reflecting the biggest drop in consumer spending in 28 years. Analysts are forecasting that GDP will fall by an even larger amount of around 2 percent in the current quarter. That would meet the classic definition of a recession of two consecutive quarters of declining GDP.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com, said he thinks GDP will keep shrinking through the first half of next year, pushing the unemployment rate up to 8 percent before a solid rebound can begin.

Zandi expects this downturn to produce the most severe unemployment since the 1981-82 recession, when the jobless rate jumped to 10.8 percent, the highest since the 1930s.

"I think we are through the worst of the financial panic, but I expect the recession will last through next summer," Zandi said.

While major bond trading firms are projecting that the government will need to borrow a record \$1.4 trillion during the current budget year, which began Oct. 1, Zandi expects the borrowing costs to be closer to \$2 trillion.

He noted the size of the rescue program that needs to be financed and the likelihood that Obama and a Congress with larger Democratic majorities will pass a second economic stimulus program of between \$150 billion and \$300 billion.

On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve said it will slightly boost the interest rates it pays banks on their required reserves and the excess reserves they choose to deposit with the Fed. The rescue bill authorized the central bank to start paying interest rates to commercial banks on the reserves. Policymakers hope the move will further bolster the banks' reserves.

Edwards from page 1

The Telegraph reported Wednesday that John Kerry, the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee, is being considered to replace Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State and Colin Powell is rumored for Pentagon chief or Education Secretary.

If Edwards is chosen for a position in Obama's cabinet, a special election would be held to fill his vacant Congressional seat, Cullar said.

There would be no primaries and any qualified candidate, Democrat or Republican, could run.

This is not the first time Edwards has been associated with Obama. In June, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recommended that Obama consider him as a candidate for vice president.

"Chet Edwards is a person that many of us think would

be a good person to have in the mix," Pelosi told Newsweek.

In August, The Huffington Post reported the Waco representative was a finalist on Obama's short list of vice presidential candidates. Reportedly, Edwards was one of the few Democrats whose background was checked by Obama's campaign and he was a finalist for the job.

Edwards was re-elected for a tenth term as Texas's District 17 representative Tuesday, defeating Republican challenger Rob Curnock 53 percent to 46 percent. The 17th Congressional District of Texas covers a 230-mile stretch from the suburbs of Ft. Worth through Waco and down to Bryan/Colege Station.

Edwards serves as chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee and is known as a champion for America's veterans, according to his Congressional biography.

BAN from page 1

Exit polls for The Associated Press found that Proposition 8 received critical support from black voters who flocked to the polls to support Barack Obama for president.

About seven in 10 blacks voted in favor of the ban, while Latinos also supported it and whites were split.

Californians overwhelmingly passed a ban on same-sex marriage in 2000, but gay-rights supporters had hoped public opinion on the issue had shifted enough for this year's measure to be rejected.

"We pick ourselves up and trudge on," said Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "There has been enormous movement in favor of full equality in eight short years. That is the direction this is heading, and if it's not today or it's not tomorrow, it will be soon."

The constitutional amendment limits marriage to heterosexual couples, nullifying the California Supreme Court decision that had made same-sex marriages legal in the state since June.

Similar bans had prevailed in 27 states before Tuesday's elections, but none were in California's situation. At with about 18,000 gay couples already married. The state attorney general, Jerry Brown, has said those marriages will remain valid, although legal challenges are possible.

Despite intense disappointment, some newlyweds chose to look on the positive side, taking comfort that millions of Californians had voted to validate their relationships.

"I'm really OK," said Diana Correia, of Berkeley, who married her partner of 18 years, Cynthia Correia, on Sunday in front of the couple's two children and 80 relatives and friends. "I hope the marriage holds, but we are already married in our hearts, so nobody can take that away."

Jake Rowe, 27, and James Eslick, 29, were in the midst of getting married at Sacramento City Hall on Wednesday morning when someone from the clerk's office stopped the wedding. But not all county clerks stopped sanctioning same-sex marriages Wednesday.

Grace Chavez, a spokeswoman for the Los Angeles County registrar's office in Norwalk, said weddings for gay couples were being performed in first floor chapel.

But in San Francisco, county clerk Karen Hong Lee said gay couples were asked to wait until the office received guidance from state officials.

Kate Folmar, a spokeswoman for Secretary of State Debra Bowen, said initiatives typically take effect the day after an election, although the results from Tuesday's races will not be certified until Dec. 13.

Dana Simas, a spokeswoman for Brown, said the attorney general's office has yet to decide whether same-sex marriages

conducted after Election Day would be valid.

Gay-rights legal groups filed a petition Wednesday asking the Supreme Court to invalidate Proposition 8 on the grounds that voters did not have the authority to make such a dramatic change in state law without approval from the Legislature. The court refused to hear a similar petition in June, when gay-rights activists tried to knock the measure off the ballot.

Tuesday's vote drops the number of states that allow gay marriage to one, though it will soon rise again to two.

A ruling by Massachusetts' highest court made same-sex marriage legal there in 2004. A ruling last month by the Connecticut Supreme Court will make gay marriage legal there beginning next week.

All other states specifically forbid it except for New York, which recognizes same-sex marriages performed elsewhere, and Rhode Island, where state law is silent on the subject.

Elsewhere, voters in Colorado and South Dakota rejected measures that could have led to sweeping bans of abortion, and Washington became only the second state, after Oregon, to offer terminally ill people the option of physician-assisted suicide.

A first-of-its-kind measure in Colorado, which was defeated soundly, would have defined life as beginning at conception.

Its opponents said the proposal could lead to the outlaw-

ing of some types of birth control as well as abortion.

The South Dakota measure would have banned abortions except in cases of rape, incest and serious health threat to the mother.

A tougher version, without the rape and incest exceptions, lost in 2006.

Anti-abortion activists thought the modifications would win approval, but the margin of defeat was similar, about 55 percent to 45 percent of the vote.

"The lesson here is that Americans, in states across the country, clearly support women's ability to access abortion care without government interference," said Vicki Saporta, president of the National Abortion Federation.

In Washington, voters gave solid approval to an initiative modeled after Oregon's "Death with Dignity" law, which allows a terminally ill person to be prescribed lethal medication they can administer to themselves.

Since Oregon's law took effect in 1997, more than 340 people, mostly ailing with cancer, have used it to end their lives.

The marijuana reform movement won two prized victories, with Massachusetts voters decriminalizing possession of small amounts of the drug and Michigan joining 12 other states in allowing use of pot for medical purposes.

Henceforth, people caught in Massachusetts with an ounce or less of pot will no longer face criminal penalties.

Voting from page 1

to Democratic nominee, Sen. John Kerry.

With these shifts in mind, John Cullar, chair of the McLennan County Democratic Party, is optimistic that the county might one day prove more favorable toward Democrats.

"We are hopeful not only because our neighbor President George W. Bush is not on the ticket anymore, but because President-elect Obama, we believe, is going to create an atmosphere where there's no demonization of people because of their party preference," Cullar said. "I think Sen. Obama's approach will allow folks to work together. I expect to see more moderate Republicans turning to support him."

Cullar said the county would have seen more Democratic votes this year no matter who the nominee was.

"I know that there were some folks who supported Hillary. What I really believe is this: I think for different reasons an increase would have been there because with the last eight years of the

Bush administration, I think that whether it was Hillary or Obama we were going to get a bigger turnout," Cullar said. "Either way it would have been historic."

In targeting specific neighborhoods and going door-to-door with registration cards, McLennan County Democrats were instrumental in getting more than 3,000 residents signed up to vote.

The county's Republican Party also was active in registering voters.

Beaumont senior Phillip Chaney, president of College Republicans, worked as the bilingual election clerk for Precinct 18 in Waco. He said he believes the voting shifts in this election have to do with reasons other than a change in the county's political climate.

"We saw many Democratic voters, some in their 40s or 50s, who had simply never voted before," Chaney said. "And less Republicans might have voted because, one, they didn't feel the need due to living in a red state.

And, two, there were a lot of Republicans who didn't feel like Sen. McCain was as conservative as the other nominees they had originally wanted."

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