

ROUNDING UP CAMPUS NEWS SINCE 1900

THE BAYLOR LARIAT

THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2007

Golden alga killing fish in Lake Brazos

Wildlife official says fish deaths no threat to humans, animals

By Melissa Limmer
Staff writer

One fish, two fish, red fish ... dead fish?

This sight has become familiar in the section of Lake Brazos that runs through campus.

According to Joan Glass from Texas Parks and Wildlife, a golden alga bloom is responsible for the large fish kill affecting Lake Brazos in Waco.

The outbreak of golden alga was first reported on Feb. 18, and since then about 4,000 shad fish and many more game fish have been killed, Glass said.

Golden alga is an external toxin, one-celled plant that lives 6-inches to 5-feet beneath the surface of the water.

According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, this silent fish killer is common in Texas' winter season when water temperatures reach lower than 60



Chris Weeks/Lariat staff

degrees Fahrenheit and in the summer when waters reach higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

While the alga is deadly to fish, Glass said that it does not pose a threat to humans. Parks and Wildlife worked with the Waco Health Department in the past during golden alga outbreaks, most recently in 2005, and determined that the alga did not harm humans or other animals, such as pets and birds.

Glass said it is still safe to fish in the Brazos, but people should only eat fish that have been caught fresh on a hook. She said not to pick up or eat floating dead fish because they could have died from a bacterial infection, not alga.

"I don't know which is which until I test it in the lab," she said.

The golden alga still remains in the Brazos ecosystem.

"There isn't anything we can do on natural waters," Glass said.

There is a treatment to get rid of the alga, but its cost, \$2,000 per 50 acres, makes it unrealistic for a body of water as big as Lake Brazos, she said.

While Texas Parks and Wildlife deals with issues such as fish kills, Baylor students and the environmental studies department help keep the area clean.

Dr. Susan Bratton, chairwoman of the environmental studies department, said the last major clean-up, which

Please see FISH, page 8

Textbook bills gain support across Texas

Students use protest, postcards to relay message to officials

By Jon Schroeder
Staff writer

Legislators across the state have signed on to support creating textbook tax breaks for college students.

Textbooks already are tax-free in 23 states, including five that don't have state sales taxes. Nine more, including Texas, have planned legislation that would make textbooks tax-free.

Although Baylor's Student Senate has yet to sign onto the campaign, a multischool effort has been underway since a November meeting of the Texas Student Leaders Legislative Congress.

Student leaders at the conference represented more than 200,000 students statewide, said Zach Hall, a University of Texas sophomore and chairman of the university's campaign.

Getting a tax break on textbooks was one of the only issues the representatives at the meeting could agree on, Hall said.

Tuition for Texas schools has risen 110 percent between 1981 and 2001, according to

"Students need some kind of relief."

Zach Hall
University of Texas soph.

documents presented by the Texas student government. The median family income in the same period has risen only 27 percent.

Since that meeting, the campaign has grown to include community colleges as well, with more than 2,000 community and junior college students protesting in Austin earlier this week, Hall said.

"Students need some kind of financial relief," he said, adding that money saved would also hold benefits for districts which contain colleges.

"That's money going back into the state economy. That's money going into the local economy," Hall said.

Three bills related to the issue will likely come up during this state legislature session, which began in January. House Bill 1890, which was filed Friday, is attached to the similar Senate Bill 49.

The bills call for the fall tax-free books period to last 10 days, starting the second Friday in August. The spring

period would last 10 days beginning the second Friday in January.

House Bill 1434, a similar piece of legislation, calls for longer time frames, asking that taxes be exempted from the second Monday in August to the second Sunday in September and from Jan. 1 to 31.

University groups support either of the time periods. If any of the bills receive a two-thirds vote in both houses, it would go into effect July 1. If the bills don't receive the necessary votes for that date, the earliest they could go into effect is Oct. 1.

The school groups' strategy has been largely centered on postcard campaigns targeted at the leaders who represent the schools' home districts, attempting to get them to co-author the legislation, or at least support it.

State Sen. Judith Zaffirini filed Senate Bill 49. The bill is also co-authored by the senators representing Texas Tech University, the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of Texas at Dallas. Senate Bill 49 is being reviewed by the finance committee.

House Bill 1434, which was filed by Rep. Patrick Rose, D-Dripping Springs, who repre-

Please see TAXES, page 8



Associated Press

High jump, hard fall

Baylor guard Jhasmin Player battles Oklahoma forward Amanda Thompson for a rebound Wednesday in the Sooners' win over the Lady Bears at Lloyd Noble Arena in Norman, Okla.

Hundreds gather at BU for scientific conference

By Ida Jamshidi
Reporter

The last time Waco played host to the Texas Academy of Science conference was 1995, nearly a decade before Baylor completed construction of the \$103.3 million Baylor Sciences Building.

Beginning today, Texas scientists will return to Waco for the 110th annual meeting of the Texas Academy of Science. The Baylor Sciences Building will serve as the main site for the conference, which is expected

to attract as many as 400 scientists.

Dr. Rene Massengale, assistant professor of biology, is one of 20 faculty and staff members serving on the local host committee.

"The Texas Academy of Science conference is for faculty, students and staff throughout the state of Texas who are engaged in working or studying in the field of science," she said.

Alyssa Milligan, an Olathe, Kan., junior, offered her time to help with conference preparations by putting packets to-

er for people attending.

"A lot of places in the Waco community gave brochures just so people know more about Waco and so they'll have other things to do besides go to the conference," she said.

Milligan said she spent hours helping with conference duties, but some students have spent years preparing scientific research to present this weekend.

Houston senior Tim Nguyen is one of them.

Of the three years he has

Please see SCIENCE, page 8

Gov. Rick Perry, right, replaced Texas Youth Commission Chairman Pete C. Alfaro Wednesday following allegations that high-ranking officials at the West Texas State School in Pyote engaged in repeated sexual contact with inmates.



Associates Press

Heads roll after prison abuse scandal

By Liz Austin Peterson
The Associated Press

AUSTIN — Fed up with allegations of sex abuse and a coverup at the Texas Youth Commission, the state Senate unanimously called for a conservator to take over the troubled agency on Wednesday, hours after Gov. Rick Perry replaced its board chairman.

"This will not be tolerated," said Republican state Sen. Dan Patrick of Houston. "We are watching and we will be watching from this day forward."



Dewhurst

investigate and fire employees who covered up abuse.

A Texas Rangers investigation in early 2005 found that the assistant superintendent and the principal at the West Texas State School in Pyote had repeated sexual contact with inmates.

A later internal investigation found that many prison staffers had complained about the abuse to their immediate bosses and to officials in Austin, but for more than a year, no one in charge did anything to stop it.

On Wednesday afternoon, Perry replaced the board's chairman with its vice chairman

and said he wants a top official with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to become acting executive director. Former executive director Dwight Harris resigned last week, and his duties have been handled by the agency's general counsel.

Perry also wants the agency to hire an inspector general who can root out any additional problems.

"The governor has said that all options have to be on the table to address this issue," Perry said.

Please see PRISON, page 8

Concert offers chance to reach Africa through music

Four bracelets hang from my rearview mirror to remind me. They're made of yarn and plastic scraps from bottles found in the trash. One says, "I love you" in bright red and green, the second says, "John 3:16," one says my name and the last reads, "Maputo, Mozambique" in pink and black.

These are physical reminders of what I experienced on my trip to Africa this summer.

Felismina is 6 years old, but you'd never guess it. She looks about 2 because of the debilitating effects of HIV on her body. She carries her tiny frame on crooked knees, hobbling about the orphanage. The bracelets

remind me of this child and other similar stories. But they also remind me of hope.

Because she was brought to the orphanage, Felismina gets three meals a day, goes to preschool and has physical therapy. One day we sat under the jungle gym together and with the biggest smile and a great sense of curiosity, she showed me her "treasures" — coins, small toys and sticks buried in the sand.

Before I went to Africa, many things came to mind when I thought about this mysterious, far-away land. I thought of phrases like "the Dark Continent," which was coined by European colonialists when

point of view



BY ALLIE COOK

they knew little about its land or inhabitants. I thought of the many statistics I've heard through the years. According to African Cultural Center USA, nearly half of Africa's population of about 800 million lives on less than \$1 a day. In some countries such as Botswana and Zimbabwe, more than 20 percent of the adult population is infected

with HIV/AIDS. Because of high death rates due to malnutrition, disease and other poor living conditions, adults in countries like Sierra Leone and Zambia are only expected to live to be about 35.

These things are undisputed facts.

Most of us know this, but how much do we really think or do anything about it?

When the genocide began in Darfur, Sudan, it took over a year to make front-page news in the U.S. Hundreds of thousands of people were being killed, but we looked the other way.

I'd say it's because we're too often driven by what we can get

out of international aid rather than considering that these are real people with real lives.

Sure, it seems there are always problems in Africa, but maybe it's because we haven't done much of anything about any of them. In light of the daunting truths about Africa, our big God has big things in store for even the darkest places. When we change the channel because we're tired of seeing scrawny children, He doesn't turn away.

There are so many different ways to get involved, but an easy way to help will be this Saturday. Omega Kids, an organization formed by students who went to Kenya last May, is hosting a

release party for a worship CD featuring voices of children they met. Popular musicians Andy Davis and Dave Barnes will help the project with a concert in Waco Hall. The cost is \$10 and every penny goes straight to the children on the CD.

Some of us have had the amazing privilege of going to Africa and experiencing both sides of the situation: the darkness and despair as well as the growing light of hope. Though you may never have a chance to travel over the Atlantic to Africa, all you have to do is walk to Waco Hall at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Allie Cook is a junior journalism major from Abilene.

Editorial

BU needs speakers like Lewis

On Friday, Sen. Barack Obama D-Ill. spoke to a crowd of thousands on a rain-soaked day in Austin. The event was much publicized, with people coming from all over the state and nation to see a man who could be the next president.

It's wonderful that the city of Austin and the University of Texas were able to attract a speaker of that magnitude to the area, but just 24 hours earlier, U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., was speaking at the Baylor Law School.

Lewis was and still is, a key figure in the civil rights movement. He was there in the 1960s when people were getting hosed down, beaten up and attacked by dogs during peaceful protests. Lewis spoke on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., before Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I have a dream" speech. He was a leader of one of the most important movements in American history.

It's great that Baylor was able to attract a speaker of Lewis' caliber to the university, but no one knew about it because it didn't receive enough publicity. On Feb. 16, Baylor public relations sent out a press release announcing he was coming to speak, but outside of this paper's advance coverage, there wasn't any significant notification.

Without Lewis' efforts, a man like Obama wouldn't even have the option of running for president in 2006. As soon as it was announced that the senator would be in Austin, a mass of e-mails, Web announcements and



advertisements sprang up all over Texas. Why couldn't Lewis get similar treatment here at Baylor? And for that matter, why can't we get more speakers like him to come?

Recently former President Bill Clinton spoke to an audience of nearly 4,000 at Rice University in Houston. The event was originally scheduled to be held in an 800-seat auditorium but was moved to Autry Court, where the Owls play basketball, to accommodate the seating demand. Rice also played

host to former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani in 2004. The poet, actor and musician Saul Williams appeared at Texas A&M University on Feb. 17.

Bill Cosby spoke to the Baylor and Central Texas communities in 2003 for a "Spirit Rally" that the two desperately needed after the tragic murder of basketball player Patrick Dennehy. More than 20,000 people attended the rally, and it's exactly the kind of event that Baylor should strive for more often. Even the com-

mencement speakers aren't what they once were. President Lyndon Johnson delivered the keynote address during graduation ceremonies in 1965. When he was governor of Texas in 1998, President Bush spoke at Baylor on the importance of abstinence.

While academic lecturers are fine, we need to be hosting speakers with a more broad appeal. After all, if Baylor wants to be a tier-one institution, shouldn't we be hosting tier-one speakers?

Letters to the editor

Sing Alliance congratulations

Upon reading my Briefly Baylor newsletter, I was overjoyed to see that Sing Alliance had qualified for Pigskin this year. After searching The Lariat archives for more Sing Alliance news, I was even more thrilled to find out that the group finally received an official charter. This is quite an accomplishment for a group that has long deserved recognition and respect.

However, I was disappointed to see it reported that this was the first time in the group's nine-year history it has qualified for Pigskin. As one of the original members of Sing Alliance from its beginnings in 1998, the truth is that the group qualified for and performed in Pigskin that first year with a fantastic routine

titled "What I'm Looking For."

Having been regarded as a long time Greek tradition, it was a massive undertaking to get Sing Alliance, a group of people who wanted to do Sing just because, started. And over the years it has oftentimes not received the respect or coverage it deserved. So I hope you can understand that this oversight, while not altogether surprising, was a little disappointing. I only hope that someone else before me noticed and made it right.

At the very least, though, it is a comfort to know that Sing Alliance has now been recognized as an official part of one of the richest Baylor traditions we have today. We always unofficially knew that Sing Alliance would make its mark. Congratu-

lations to this year's Sing Alliance for once again helping us to find "what we were looking for," another appearance at Pigskin.

Charlene Scott Gibson
Alum 2002

SBC not conspirator in abuse

I just reviewed your Tuesday editorial titled "Bring all abusers to justice." The title is good advice indeed. I was a little disappointed to see an editorial of my alma mater accept at face value assertions and questionable solutions suggested by those on only one side of the issue.

In fact, the editorial actually misstated an assertion, making what is thus far an unsubstantiated claim sound even worse.

You said, "In the last six

months, there have been about 40 complaints of sex abuse in Southern Baptist churches." If you intended to quote the AP story on the subject, you need to re-read what was reported.

In that story, the claim was that "In the last six months, SNAP (Survivors of Network of those Abused by Priests) has received reports of about 40 cases of sexual abuse by Southern Baptist ministers — with some of the incidents dating back many years." If not crafted to mislead, the statement certainly had that effect.

Sexual abuse of children is a horrible crime and the fact that it occurs in churches at all hugely compounds the shock.

Making hasty judgments about how to prevent or address

it helps very little.

A good step would be to make sure suggested solutions are really possible. SNAP highly commended an investigatory review panel used by another denomination and suggested a similar action be taken. Add to the fact that Southern Baptists disdain a hierarchical construct and it soon becomes obvious that the idea has little utility for Southern Baptists.

I have yet to understand what's meant to be accomplished by declaring a "no-tolerance" policy for something every Southern Baptist should have absolutely no tolerance for. While it may have some PR value, we should not be enamored with window dressing.

I appreciate the fact you are

concerned about the problem, but it deserves more thoughtful analysis than most people are giving it. Making the SBC out to be a co-conspirator, as SNAP implies, is completely unjustified.

Please pray for our churches and equip them with quality information. My having read your editorial is proof you are much more than a campus paper. You are informing a wide readership and even those on campus won't soon forget things they have read as they assume their occupations and take their places of service and ministry.

D. August Boto, Alum 1974

General counsel and vice president for convention policy, executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Baylor Lariat

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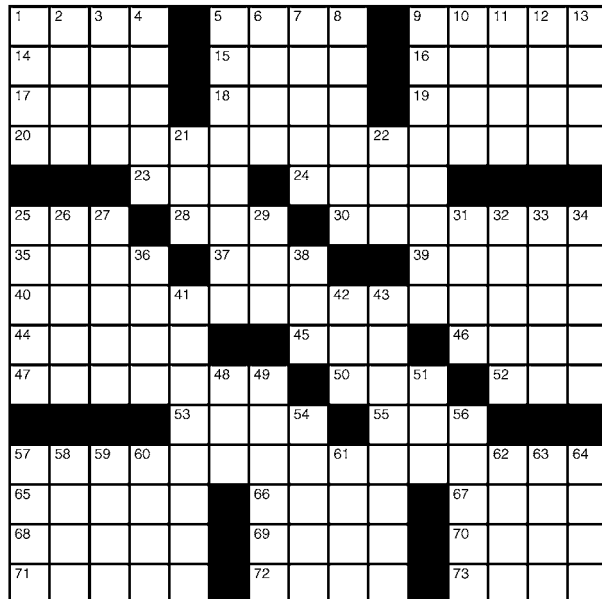
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- The March King
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- Blockade
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- Expressions of uncertainty
- Reconditioned tires
- Announcer Hall
- Repudiation
- Always, to a poet
- Marsh plant
- Batter
- Smacking blow
- Hearty's partner
- Thor's father
- Bator, Mongolia
- Victory signs
- Sal's canal
- Jurist Warren
- Recipe meas.



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

3/1/07

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

Artists paint pieces from the heart

By Bethany Poller
Reporter

Most people remember painting with watercolors when they were little. When the water was completely brown, the masterpiece was finished. Then Mom or Dad would hang it on the refrigerator.

But many adults in Central Texas have made watercolors a true art medium and have their work hanging in an art gallery instead of on the fridge.

Art Center Waco is featuring a collection of watercolor paintings by the Central Texas Watercolor Society until March 30.

The exhibit includes almost 60 paintings by 20 artists, many of whom are residents of McLennan County. The subjects of the paintings range from livestock to landscapes to lilies.

"All the pieces have something unique to them, whether I like the piece or not," Art Center Waco education director Ann Garrett said.

Even though many people try watercolors as a child, it's a much more difficult art than many think, Garrett said. Because white watercolor won't show up on top of other colors, the artist has to paint around any white parts in his or her painting.

"Watercolor is very simple and very straightforward," Garrett said. "But it's so simple that it's hard."

Artists in the exhibit show what they're feeling through their paintings. Carol Vicha, a retired teacher and one of the artists in the show, said she likes showing real emotion through her work.

"I always paint from the heart," she said. "The thing you paint that day is what's on your mind."

The different emotions that go into the work often show through the varying styles of the artists. Some of them paint things very precisely with lots of detail. Others have much looser styles that leave more to the imagination.

"There's no wrong way or right way," Garrett said. "No two hands do things the same way. Each artist is having a personal experience with each piece."

The challenge of art is to make that personal experience come through to the viewer, Garrett said.

"Artists can see everyday objects with a certain eye," she said. "The success is whether they convey the emotional part

of it."

Art Center Waco has groups from local schools come to view the exhibit.

After they look around, the students are given a chance to try their hand at painting with watercolors. Then they take another look at the paintings in the gallery.

"When they come back, they have a whole new perspective of what they're seeing," Garrett said.

In addition to the school groups, the exhibit has had many visitors since its opening in December. Art Center Waco educator Alysén Johnson estimated that a couple hundred people have viewed the collection.

"We've had a really good turnout," Johnson said.

Garrett summed up her



Melea Burke/Lariat staff

A group of local artists display their watercolor pieces at Art Center Waco.

thoughts with a quote from her favorite historian and philosopher, Ananda Coomaraswamy:

"The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist."

Seniors seek career advice from professors

By Whitney Farr
Reporter

What do I want to do after college, and how will I get there?

These are common questions that eat away at many college students. But hope may be on the way.

After discussing these plaguing concerns with Baylor alumni and graduating seniors, it was apparent that the most abundant and powerful resources are the men and women that Baylor students see every day: their professors.

"The best help has come

from my professors," said Baylor alumni Whitney Clark. "Professor (LuAnn) Soliah has been hunting down jobs all around Texas for me. She finds out the contacts and requirements for me, and then writes me an awesome recommendation. It pays to be their friend, because then they befriend you."

This proved true when Greenville senior Juli Stibbe needed somewhere to turn for advice about law school, a process in which none of her friends and family had experience.

"One of my teachers, Dr. Charles M. North, has helped me incredibly with the whole

law school application and personal statement writing process," Stibbe said.

Many professors let their students know from the beginning that they are there to help, and because of previous education and careers, many of them have connections in different fields throughout the country.

"Through the Sports Sponsorship and Sales major, the professors set me up interviews with the L.A. Kings, the Dallas Stars and the San Antonio Spurs," San Jose senior Bethany Tiffin said. "More interviews were definitely available, but I took an internship with the Spurs. It was all

thanks to Dr. Darryl Lehnus and Dr. Kirk L. Wakefield for setting up the contacts and the internships."

For students who are intimidated or overwhelmed about beginning the job hunt, each semester Baylor Career Services offers a variety of job fairs.

From noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday in the Ferrell Special Events Center, Career Services sponsored HireABear Career Fair. The event boasted more than 100 companies and organizations, including the Texas Farm Bureau, The Walt Disney Company, Dillard's, Continental Airlines and Wells Fargo Finan-

cial.

"It was a really good experience talking to people and finding out what they were looking for," Garland junior Kristen Meeks said.

"There were a variety of companies offering summer internships and full-time employment. Two companies offered me job interviews for tomorrow."

From professors to job fairs, one of Baylor's aims is to help students succeed in life. Students can also take advantage of the career services Web site, which offers a range of resources to make the transition into the business world a smooth one.

Anonymous 'administration official' sounds a lot like Cheney

By Ron Hutcheson
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — Ever wonder about the identities of those "senior administration officials" who always seem to get quoted talking about President Bush's policies? It wasn't hard to figure out who was doing the talking when the White House released

a transcript of a question-and-answer session this week aboard Air Force 2, Vice President Dick Cheney's plane. One big clue: The unnamed official used the pronoun "I" when discussing Cheney's visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"I would describe my sessions both in Pakistan and Afghanistan as very productive,"

the official said.

Even after Cheney blew his own cover, White House spokesman Tony Snow declined to lift the prohibition against identifying the unnamed speaker.

"I have spoken with the vice president's office, and the ground rules that were laid out are going to remain in effect," Snow told reporters Wednesday.

The exchange during Cheney's flight to Oman highlighted the absurdity of a practice that's damaged the credibility of journalists and government officials alike.

It's easier to believe what people say when their names are attached to their words.

The Bush administration's use of anonymous sources is a

sore spot for reporters in Iraq after many journalistic scandals involving fabricated quotes.

Yet the need for anonymity is obvious: Sources could lose their jobs if their identities were disclosed.

Reporters play along to maintain good relations or out of fear that they might miss something if they refuse to participate.

BEAR BRIEFS

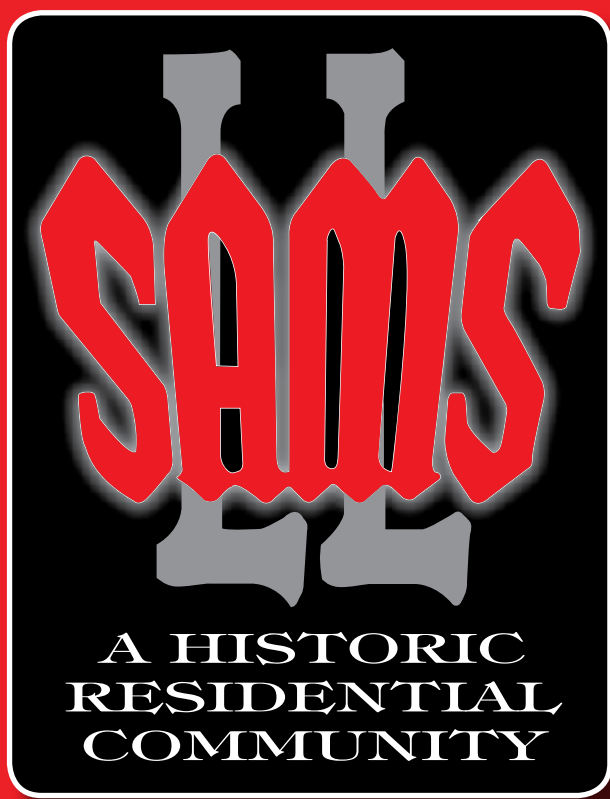
Learn about seminary
Breakfast will be served at 10 a.m. in the 104 George W. Truett Theological Seminary and classes will be open to visit at 10:30 a.m. Anyone interested in Seminary is welcome to attend.

Participate in Bearathon
The half-marathon will take place at 8 a.m. Saturday, starting at Fountain Mall and running through campus, Cameron Park and downtown Waco. Registration is \$60. This event is hosted by Student Foundation. For additional information, visit www.baylor.edu/studentfoundation.

To submit a bear brief, e-mail Lariat@baylor.edu.

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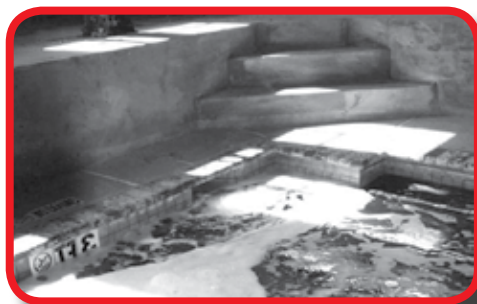
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Principal accused of selling drugs

By Michael Rubinkam
The Associated Press

BETHLEHEM, Pa. — A middle school principal accused of selling crystal methamphetamine from his office after school and on weekends was arrested after police found the drug on his desk, authorities said Wednesday.

There was no indication that John Acerra, 50, sold the drug to students at Nitschmann Middle School, where he was arrested Tuesday, said Dennis Mihaloopoulos, an agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration. Police said they began investigating Acerra in early February after an informant told them the principal was using and distributing the drug.

A letter was sent to parents regarding the arrest of Acerra, who had been principal since 2000, said Bethlehem schools Superintendent Joseph Lewis.



Chris Weeks/Lariat staff

Hanging by a thread

Dr. Bruce Hodson, chemistry professor, watches Wednesday night as Longview sophomore Stuart Kennedy climbs the rock at the McLane Student Life Cetrer.

New York City resolution ‘bans’ racial slur

By Sara Kugler
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York declared the n-word off limits to all races Wednesday in a purely symbolic resolution prompted by the increasingly casual use of the slur in hip-hop music, comedy and street slang.

“People are using it out of context,” said Leroy Comrie, a black city councilman who sponsored the unanimously passed measure.

“People are also denigrating themselves by using the word and disrespecting their history.”

New York’s resolution is not binding and merely calls on

residents to stop using the slur. Leaders of the nation’s largest city also hope to set an example.

Other municipalities have already passed similar measures in a debate that rose to a fever pitch late last year after *Seinfeld* actor Michael Richards spewed the word repeatedly at a comedy club in Los Angeles.

At New York’s City Hall, supporters cheered passage of the resolution, with many of them wearing pins featuring a single white “N” with a slash through it.

Hip-hop pioneer Kurtis Blow Walker said when the resolution was proposed that blacks need to stop using the word so “we

can elevate our minds to a better future.”

Others argue that use of the word by blacks is empowering, that reclaiming a slur and giving it a new meaning takes away its punch.

Oscar-winner Jamie Foxx, for example, said he would not stop using the word, and did not see anything inappropriate about blacks using it within their own circles.

But in the uproar over Richards’ outburst, black leaders including the Rev. Jesse Jackson and California Rep. Maxine Waters said it is impossible to paper over the epithet’s origins and ugly history of humiliating blacks.

They challenged the public and the entertainment industry to stop using the epithet.

“I forgive those young people who do not know their history, and I blame myself and my generation for not preparing you,” Councilman Albert Vann said. “But today we are going to know our history. We are not going to refer to ourselves by anything negative, the way the slave master referred to black people, using the n-word.”

New York’s action resonated far beyond the city.

In Miramar, Fla., 27-year-old Alexa Cabrera said she hopes the resolution will at least cause people to stop and think about their use of the word.

Stocks rebound some after plunge

By Tim Paradis
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Wall Street rebounded fitfully Wednesday from the previous session’s 416-point plunge in the Dow industrials as investors took comfort from comments by Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke but still showed signs of unease about the economy.

Bernanke’s remarks to Congress that he still expects moderate economic growth gave some investors confidence to look for bargains. A recovery in some overseas markets following a worldwide selloff Tuesday also lent some support to U.S. stocks, but the advance lacked some conviction — the major indexes fluctuated throughout the day, with the Dow rising as much as 137 points before pulling back and advancing again several times.

The Fed chairman allayed some of the fears about a slowdown in the U.S. and Chinese economies that fed Tuesday’s drop; remarks earlier in the week from former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan warning that a U.S. recession could take hold later this year contributed to Tuesday’s declines.

Investors parsed a series of economic reports out Wednesday, hoping to glean a sense of where stocks were headed. Bernanke’s comments and a gross domestic product reading that mostly met expectations helped bring out some buyers.

Nevertheless, investors remained cautious and didn’t rush headlong into stocks and discount the possibility of a further shakeout.

“It’s typical that you get a bounceback the next day,” said Joseph V. Battipaglia, chief investment officer at Ryan Beck & Co. “Now we’re essentially flat on the year. Can we go up from here or down? That sorting-out process will continue now.”

A recovery in China’s Shang-

hai Composite Index, which had fallen nearly 9 percent Tuesday, also helped boost U.S. stocks, although other Asian markets and European exchanges saw declines of more than 1 percent.

The Dow Jones industrials rose 52.39, or 0.43 percent, to 12,268.63.

Broader stock indicators also managed gains. The Standard & Poor’s 500 index climbed 7.78, or 0.56 percent, to 1,406.82, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 8.29, or 0.34 percent, to 2,416.15.

Tuesday’s decline, which was the largest point drop in the Dow industrials in more than five years, made February an unwelcome month for the 30-stock index.

The Dow had its worst monthly percentage drop since April 2005 and the worst monthly point decline since December of 2002.

For the S&P, February was the worst percentage and point decline since May last year. And for Nasdaq, the month marked the worst percentage and point decline since July.

Bonds fell Wednesday as stocks tried to recoup some losses. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note rose to 4.57 percent from its low for the year of 4.47 percent late Tuesday.

The dollar was mixed against other major currencies, while gold prices fell.

Light, sweet crude settled up 33 cents to \$61.79 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange as investors brushed off concerns about falling demand from China.

The market took some solace from the Commerce Department report that the U.S. economy grew at an annual rate of 2.2 percent in the fourth quarter.

The gross domestic product reading was slightly below expectations, but wasn’t as weak as some investors had feared.



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Grub goes global

By Brittany Mihalcin
Reporter

Twenty international student teams, 16 different countries and an array of ethnic food will be offered at this year's International Food Fest.

The food fest will be held at 6 p.m. Saturday on the fifth floor of Cashion Academic Center.

Started more than 12 years ago, the International Food Fest is a Baylor tradition that is now sponsored by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services. International student adviser Alexine Burke said more than 350 people attend the event every year.

"The goal is to celebrate the international student scholars community at Baylor and to celebrate the diversity they bring to our campus," Burke said.

Students and scholars involved in the food fest volunteer to prepare a dish from their home country and share a sampling of their dish with the guests. The 16 countries represented this year will include Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, India, Japan, Panama, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand and Vietnam.

Burke said a common misconception about the event is it is a fundraiser for the Office of International Student and Scholar Services. The money raised through ticket sales is actually used to reimburse participants for the money spent on ingredients, she said.

Treva Hall, administrative associate and coordinator for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, said this event is a fun time for students to show off and even dress up in traditional clothing from their home country.

Tickets will be sold in advance at the Bill Daniel Student Center ticket office or in 208 Poage Legislative Library for \$6 for adults and \$5 for students.

At the door, tickets will be \$8 for adults and \$6 for students.



Associated Press

Virgie Arthur, (left) mother of Anna Nicole Smith, is hugged Wednesday by her Bahamian attorney Debra Rose Munnings after a three-judge panel heard arguments at the 4th District Court of Appeal in West Palm Beach, Fla. The court upheld that the starlet's desire was to be buried in the Bahamas.

Experts to place bets to predict bird flu outbreak

By Mike Stobbe
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Think bird flu will become a worldwide threat this summer? Wanna put some money on that?

In an unusual effort to better predict the advance of a potential flu pandemic, public health experts will be staked about \$100 apiece to bet on the spread of bird flu. This type of grim futures market has also been created to predict hurricanes and temporarily, a few years ago, terrorist attacks.

In this case, the goal is to develop a faster way to collect expert opinion about the potential spread of a deadly disease outbreak.

"Farmers have used futures markets for decades to make decisions about what crops to plant. We're just borrowing that concept to help people in public health and health care make decisions about the future," said

Dr. Phil Polgreen, a University of Iowa assistant professor of medicine who helped create the project.

It's being funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which is donating nearly \$250,000 to the effort. The University of Iowa, which set up futures exercises for hurricane predictions, box office receipts and presidential elections, will operate the bird flu enterprise.

Organizers hope to recruit at least 100 epidemiologists, veterinarians and other medical experts from around the world for the two-year project. They will be asked to join an online trading system in which investors buy contracts that businesses will be able to deliver certain volumes of, say, corn or pork bellies.

But in this project, the contracts represent the odds that deadly bird flu will infect a human in Hong Kong by July 1.

At issue is the deadly H5N1

Smith burial appeal dropped

Starlet's mother doesn't plan to challenge ruling for a Bahamian burial

By Brian Skoloff
The Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — The wrangling over Anna Nicole Smith's body appeared to end Wednesday when her mother's lawyer said she would not stand in the way of the starlet's burial in the Bahamas later this week.

Tom Pirtle said Wednesday night that Virgie Arthur would not challenge a Florida appeals court ruling Wednesday that cleared the way for the burial.

"It's going to be difficult to appeal the ruling, so we're not going to appeal," Pirtle said.

Arthur had fought last week's ruling from Circuit Judge Larry Seidlin that gave control of Smith's body to an advocate for Smith's 5-month-old daughter, Dannielynn. Arthur had wanted to bury Smith in her home state of Texas,

But Smith's boyfriend, Howard K. Stern, argued that she had wanted to be buried in the Bahamas next to her 20-year-old

son, who died last year of apparent drug-related causes. The 4th District Court of Appeal agreed.

The trial court concluded that Smith's "last ascertainable wish" was to be buried alongside her son. "This finding is not essentially disputed," the appellate judges said in their ruling.

Another attorney for Arthur, Roberta Mandel, had said earlier Wednesday that she was prepared to appeal to the state Supreme Court if the appeals court did not find in her client's favor.

Smith's body has been stored at a medical examiner's office since shortly after she died Feb. 8 at 39. A cause of death has not been determined.

Lawyer Richard Milstein, the baby's advocate, said in a statement Wednesday after the ruling that the funeral was set for Friday.

He declined to comment further, saying he wanted to "uphold the decorum and dignity that should be maintained throughout this process, for the sake of Dannielynn and the memories she will have of her mother's funeral."

Wayne Munroe, the Bahamian attorney for Smith's es-

tate, said Wednesday's ruling by the Florida court was "common sense."

"Everyone in this whole saga knows what her wishes were about every aspect of her affairs — custody, property, everything. Nobody seems to care about this woman's wishes," Munroe said.

Dr. Joshua Perper, the Broward County medical examiner, said that embalmers would have to take another look at the body, but that he hopes it is "in such condition that a second viewing will be possible." Stern, Arthur and others have been allowed to view the body at Perper's office.

A judge in the Bahamas is hearing the child custody dispute between Arthur and Stern, who is listed as Dannielynn's father on the birth certificate. On Tuesday, Arthur saw the little girl for the first time and left the home in tears.

Smith married Texas oil tycoon J. Howard Marshall II in 1994 when he was 89 and she was 26. The reality TV star and Playboy Playmate had been fighting his family over his estimated \$500 million fortune since his death in 1995, and her baby daughter could inherit millions.

"It might be considered controversial if it's not well understood."

Robert Hughes
Philanthropist

strain of bird flu, which has killed 167 people in 10 countries since 2003. Health officials fear it will mutate into a highly contagious form that could kill millions worldwide.

Since 1988 the University of Iowa has operated a project called the Iowa Electronic Markets (IEM), which aggregates predictions to forecast major events. Much of the focus has been elections, and the Iowa markets have generally outperformed political polls.

A predictive market for seasonal flu, operated in Iowa and North Carolina, correctly predicted the current level of flu

activity in an area 71 percent of the time, even though the predictions were made before any solid surveillance reports.

Such markets have sometimes proved controversial.

In 2003, the Pentagon dropped plans for a futures market that would have allowed traders to profit from accurate predictions on terrorism, assassinations and other events in the Middle East.

Organizers predicted the bird flu market should prove less controversial.

"It might be considered controversial if it's not well understood," said the philanthropy's Robert Hughes.

He noted that public health experts won't be gambling their own money, so opportunities for financial gain are extremely limited. Also worth noting is the buy-in of ProMed, a respected disease-monitoring program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases. ProMed, with

a staff of 30, collects disease updates and e-mails them to 40,000 international members, making it the largest such service in the world.

Betting participants must be ProMed members. "We're not just letting in Joe Blow ... These are experts," said Forrest Nelson, a University of Iowa economist who co-founded the IEM.

Dr. Larry Madoff, ProMed's editor, said the bird flu market should be complementary to the disease surveillance systems traditionally used.

"This is an experiment," Madoff said. "The hypothesis is we'll be able to harness lots of people with different viewpoints and information, and we know sooner when something is going to happen than if we wait for a report."

Each initial bet is \$2.50, and over the course of a year, the average trader is expected to make about \$100, depending on the accuracy.

U.S. to investigate N. Korean nuclear program

By Foster Klug
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chief U.S. envoy at North Korean nuclear talks told lawmakers Wednesday that the United States would be persistent in finding out how far North Korea had progressed on a secret uranium-based weapons program.

Lawmakers are pressing U.S. negotiators to make sure any such program is accounted for as North Korea declares its nuclear efforts as part of a Feb. 13 six-nation disarmament agreement. U.S. accusations on a uranium enrichment program in 2002 unraveled a previous deal aimed at stopping their nuclear bomb-making. Tensions peaked in October when North Korea exploded an underground nuclear device.

North Korea has denied the U.S. claims. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said the United States knows North Korea has bought equipment that could be used only for uranium enrichment, but he expressed uncertainty about the program's current state.

How far they've gotten, whether they've actually been able to produce highly enriched uranium at this time — I mean these are issues that intelligence analysts grapple with. But what we know is they have

made the purchases, and we need to have complete clarity on this program," Hill said.

North Korea said in this month's accord that it would shutter its main nuclear reactor at Yongbyon within 60 days in exchange for aid. A much larger shipment of aid — about \$250 million worth, Hill said — would follow if they declared all nuclear programs and began disabling them.

The accord has sparked strong criticism in Washington, especially among conservatives, who see it as rewarding North Korea for years of bad behavior. The deal has also led to a scheduled March 5-6 meeting in New York between Hill and his North Korean negotiating counterpart, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, to discuss first steps toward establishing normal ties



Hill

after decades of hostility that followed the 1950-53 Korean War. Kim was to stop in San Francisco on Thursday for talks with non-governmental groups.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack cautioned against high expectations for what he described as an organizational meeting.

"Don't expect anybody to come out the front door on March 6 waving a piece of paper with breakthrough agreements," McCormack said.

During the hearing, skeptical lawmakers questioned other issues within the agreement.

Issues raised included U.S. efforts to lift financial restrictions connected with North Korean money laundering and counterfeiting even though they said North Korea continued to counterfeit U.S. currency.

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Senior golfer Allison Martin follows a shot during one of the of the Lady Bears' competitions. Martin finished fourth at the Central District Invitational in Parrish, Fla., to lead Baylor to a third-place finish in its first tournament of the spring season. Martin held the Lady Bears' lowest scoring average last year at 73.86 and is one the biggest reasons head Coach Sylvia Ferdon is excited about her team's chances of having a special season.



Baylor Photography

By Justin Baer
Sports Writer

After earning a third place finish last week at the Central District Invitational in Parrish, Fla., the Baylor women's golf team has begun its spring season with high expectations. Seniors Allison Martin, who finished fourth overall, and Anna Rehnholm, who took 15th, led the Lady Bears to the strong finish, beating out top-notch programs such as Texas Christian University, Louisiana State University and the University of Michigan. But head Coach Sylvia Ferdon said she believes the Lady Bears' best golf is ahead of them. "We had a great start in Florida," Ferdon said. "I think we can do better than that. But to see them perform and beat a couple top-25 programs and go head-to-head with some Big 12 teams was just great for our first trip." Martin, who transferred to

Baylor from Georgia prior to her junior year in 2005, struggled last year. But she seems to have found her game this season, as evidenced by her top five finish last week. Fellow senior Rehnholm, on the other hand, has been called the team's "steady-eddy" by Ferdon, being one of the Lady Bear's most consistent players in her time at Baylor. Ferdon also has Hannah Burke, who is ranked second among Big 12 freshmen with a scoring average of 75. Ferdon called Burke the best freshman she has ever coached. Although Burke said she's flattered by that honor, she still worked hard on her game in the off-season to put herself into contention for Big 12 Freshmen of the Year. "We have been working out three times a week," Burke noted. "Workouts have been tougher; we have been working on our swings, technical things and as

much short game and stuff as we can do depending on the weather." The Lady Bears have a lot of things going for them entering this spring season. The biggest advantage is the warm weather Waco's had lately, which has allowed the team to work out while other schools up north are still unable to practice. "I love that advantage," Ferdon said. "I used it to motivate our team for that first tournament. We beat a lot of teams that were ranked ahead of us at that tournament. I feel it is because we have had a golf club in our hands since January, and most schools have not had that opportunity." Another huge advantage for the Lady Bears is the fact that they will host the Big 12 Championship in April at Ridgewood Country Club. After that the Bears hope to compete in the NCAA Regionals with even

more hope to qualify for the nationals. "We want to make it to regionals, which shouldn't be a problem," Rehnholm said. "We have the Big 12 Championship here in Waco, so we hope to compete for the Big 12 title as well." The Bears will have the familiarity of their own home course but will still have to deal with powerhouses such as Texas A&M University and Oklahoma State University. Ferdon said as long as her team plays its own game and the players don't get ahead of themselves, the Lady Bears have the talent to not only do well in the Big 12 Tournament but the NCAA National Tournament as well. The Lady Bears' next tournament is on March 9-11, when the team heads to Rio Verde, Ariz., for the Rio Verde Collegiate Invitational. It will be Baylor's second action of the spring season.

Raiders outgun Bears in Lubbock, 85-74

By Betsy Blaney
The Associated Press

LUBBOCK — Jarrius Jackson scored 26 points to lead Texas Tech University past Baylor 85-74 on Wednesday night. Jon Plefka had a career-high 22 points for the Red Raiders. His previous high, 19 points, came in a 73-70 loss to Baylor in Waco last month. Tech has wins in four of its last five games and needs a victory at Iowa State University on Saturday to go above .500 in Big 12 Conference play for the season. The loss was the sixth in the past seven games for Baylor (13-15, 3-12) and the Bears' ninth in their last 11 contests. Baylor has now lost 25 straight road Big 12 games, dating back to the Bears' 67-61 overtime victory over Texas A&M University on Feb. 24, 2004. Tech held Aaron Bruce, the Bears' second-leading scorer, to

two points. Tech (19-11, 8-7) got its biggest lead at 75-62 with 4:56 remaining on a bucket by Jackson. The Bears pulled within 82-74 on two free throws by Tweety Carter with just more than a minute remaining. They got no closer down the stretch. The Red Raiders trailed only briefly early in the game and withstood a couple of runs by the Bears in the first half. Baylor pulled within 53-51 early in the second half and stayed close the rest of the way only because they got the ball inside to Mark Shepherd and Josh Lomers. The Bears finished with 42 points in the paint. But fouls hurt Baylor. Lomers fouled out with just more than six minutes remaining in the game and Mamadou Diene, another of Baylor's big men, fouled out with about 13 minutes remaining in the game.

Curtis Jerrells scored 20 points and Carter added 13 to lead Baylor. Jackson, Plefka and Martin Zeno finished with a combined 22 of 36 from the field for 48 points. Together they added 17 points on free throws. Tech led most of the first half, and a livid Bob Knight was off the Red Raiders bench often. In one instance he stalked one official all the way to the baseline by the Tech bench to complain about a call. At the break, he remained on the court and shouted at more than one official at center court before he walked off the court to loud applause from Tech fans. The Red Raiders were hot early in the opening half, at one point hitting 81 percent from the field. They used a 15-4 run — including 3-pointers by Zeno, Darryl Dora and Plefka — to go up 21-9. But Baylor hung tough and slowly crept back. Down by 10

with just more than five minutes remaining before the break, the Bears went on a 12-3 run to pull within 42-41. The Bears capped the run when Shepherd got a putback bucket off a rebound following Jerrells' miss on the second of two free throws. Tech went to the free-throw line often and hit 11-15 in the first half. For the game, Tech hit with 23-of-31 from the line. Baylor concludes the regular season with a 12:30 p.m. tipoff Saturday against Oklahoma State University (20-9, 6-8). The Cowboys, who have lost six of their last eight games and all seven of their road conference games this season, will be without their leading scorer Mario Boggan, who was suspended for the Baylor game after head-butting Kansas State's Cartier Martin during Oklahoma States' 84-70 win over the Wildcats on Tuesday.



Associated Press

Freshman post Josh Lomers defends Tech's Martin Zeno during the Bears' 85-74 loss to Texas Tech Wednesday. Lomers fouled out with about six minutes remaining in the game with 8 points and 5 rebounds.

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Students' concert to aid orphans

Proceeds from sales of tickets, merchandise to help build Kenya shelter

By Ida Jamshidi Reporter

Asante mungu baba. This Swahilian phrase is translated to "Thank you, our Father," and will be featured on the cover of 5,000 CDs produced by Omega Kids.

To celebrate the release of the CD, Omega Kids will be presenting Dave Barnes, Andy Davis and other artists at a CD release party 7 p.m. Saturday in Waco Hall.

Tickets will be sold for \$10, T-shirts are available for \$15 and the newly created CD will be on sale for \$10.

All proceeds will go to an African pastor named Boniface who hopes to build a shelter for homeless children in Nairobi, Kenya.

Allen sophomore Seth Hale said Boniface gave up the leadership position he held in his church to dedicate his life to working with kids that his church refused to be associated with.

"Those kids know that Boniface loves them, and that's the only parental figure in their lives," he said.

Hale said that the Kenyan government gave Boniface land, but he has absolutely no money to build.

"All the money from the concert is going straight to Boniface to help sponsor this rehabilitation house that he wants to build," he said.

Abilene junior Mallory King visited a Kenyan orphanage for a month last summer with Baylor as part of a youth sports team.

"We realized that they helped us spiritually, and they didn't need help in that area," King said.

After King returned from Africa, she shared photos from her trip with Jenne Blackburn, a San Juan Capistrano, Calif., sophomore and president of Omega Kids.

Blackburn said she wanted to find a way she could reach out to the children of Africa.

With help from her mother, Blackburn organized Omega Kids, a nonprofit organization designed to make the struggles of



Courtesy photo

Baylor students visited Kenya last summer and met some of the children who would record the music on the Omega Kids CD. Proceeds from the CD will go toward building a shelter in Nariobi, Kenya, for homeless children.

these Kenyan children known.

She said the idea for the CD started not just by looking at the situation in Africa, but by finding the joy in the children's voices.

"Omega Kids was created to give these children a voice and for giving students an outlet to help those who need it," Blackburn said.

By raising \$7,000 from friends and family, Omega Kids made it possible for 30 African children to record their voices onto a 10-track CD.

Blackburn said their efforts won't slow down after the concert ends.

"Once we have a CD release party, we're looking for different places the CD can be sold," she said. "That's our next step as a team."

King said University Ministries has played a major role in the organization's progress.

"University Ministries let us put Baylor's name on everything for credibility," she said. "All the small things we never would've thought of have fallen into place."

Hale agrees that the upcoming concert is the result of the dedication of everyone involved.

"I think what this concert represents is that when you put your mind to something and use the talents you were given, you're able to accomplish anything," he said.

Lisa Nicholson, a Hoffman Estates, Ill., sophomore, has also been working closely on this project, and she is most excited about returning to Kenya.

"We're going to be going back with really good news for them," she said. "It's like a continuation of our project by going back. We're going back with a purpose."

Common Grounds will be having an after-party on Saturday night featuring Green River Ordinance.

There also will be tables set up for students who are eager to learn more about Omega Kids.

"Come and support the children," Blackburn said. "By giving their hearts with their voices, we're receiving more than we could ever give to them."

Music grad student finalist in contest

Brown qualifies as semifinalist in national conducting competition

By Aileen Wong Reporter

He doesn't have wild hair, he isn't deaf in one ear, he's not old, and he's not going mad.

Joshua Brown, a first year Madisonville graduate student, isn't your typical conductor.

Brown is a semi-finalist in the Student Conducting Competition for the National Convention of the American Choral Director's Association. The competition will take place Tuesday in Miami.



Brown

Competitors are given two pieces of music they've never seen before and eight minutes to work with a choir they've never conducted. Under the eyes of six judges, the conductor will try to improve the choir as much as possible. From the pool of eight semi-finalists, four will advance to the finals later in the week. Then, a winner and runner-up will be selected, and the winner will receive \$1,000.

Brown said he's been busy preparing for the competition by conducting various choirs.

"A lot of conducting comes before you raise your arms. A lot of it is experience and being in front of a choir," Brown said.

Brown encountered a few obstacles in the initial application process when he accidentally misread the rules.

To enter, competitors must submit a video of themselves conducting a choir with a piece of music they've never seen before. The first time he recorded the video, he had picked the music beforehand.

He said he tried again, and the second time, he was taping in the Armstrong Browning Library when a tour group walked through the building wearing clothing with college logos. The rules explicitly state that there cannot be any indication of the school the competitor attends, he said.

At this point, it was too late to tape again, so Brown said he sent the second video in anyway.

Brown was selected as a semi-finalist for the competition, despite the mistake.

Brown said music has been a part of his life since childhood, and he found his desire to conduct when he was in choir as an undergraduate.

"I was inspired by church musicians and teachers and my undergraduate professors," Brown said.

"He is an extremely talented and musical student," said Donald Bailey, professor of conducting and director of choral activities at Baylor, said.

"His ability to convey the spirit of the music to the choir is exceptional."

Stephen Holcomb, the director of choral activities at Dallas Baptist University, served as one of Brown's undergraduate professors at Dallas Baptist University.

"He communicates well, both in gesture as well as verbally with his performers," Holcomb said.

The other semi-finalists come from Auburn University, Eastman School of Music, Houghton College, Ithaca College, University of Michigan, Sam Houston State University and Yale University.

Hepburn dress sold to build Indian school

By Manik Banerjee Associated Press

BISHNUPUR, India — A school in eastern India built with money raised in the auction of Audrey Hepburn's iconic black dress was inaugurated Wednesday by French author and philanthropist Dominique Lapierre.

Some 200 children will be able to attend the school in Bishnupur, a village nearly 30 miles south of Calcutta, the capital of the West Bengal state.

"I am very happy that my efforts are fructifying," Lapierre said to an audience of cheering students.

"Things are changing with more and more children going to school."

The school is one of 15 to be built in the state with \$807,000 paid by high bidder Givenchy, now a division of LVMH, at an

auction in December at Christie's in London.

Lapierre had received the dress as a gift from designer Hubert de Givenchy. The company repurchased it to support both the City of Joy Foundation, run by Lapierre to help India's poor, and the heritage of the brand.

Hepburn wore the elegant sleeveless sheath for her role as eccentric Manhattan socialite Holly Golightly in the 1961 film "Breakfast at Tiffany's."

The movie's opening scenes show her character wearing the dress as she emerges from a taxi with a brown-bag breakfast to gaze at diamonds and luxury goods in the storefront windows of Tiffany & Co. on Fifth Avenue.

Books by Lapierre include **The City of Joy**, set in Calcutta and **Freedom at Midnight**, about India's independence from Britain in 1947.



Associated Press

French novelist Dominique Lapierre, shown with his wife Dominique, offers a red rose to a portrait of actress Audrey Hepburn during Wednesday's inauguration of a village primary school at Laxmikantapur, India.

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Commissioner grilled over Perry's HPV vaccine order

By Liz Austin Peterson
The Associated Press

AUSTIN — A normally sedate Senate confirmation hearing turned ugly on Wednesday as lawmakers angrily questioned the state's health and human services chief about the governor's anti-cancer vaccine executive order.

Texas Health and Human Services Commissioner Albert Hawkins' reappointment was left pending in the Senate nominations committee after several members complained that he hadn't answered many of their concerns.

"There's nothing to gain from hurrying up and doing that decision right away," said committee chairman Sen. Mike Jackson, a Republican from La Porte. "We need to be sure that we're making the right decision."

Hawkins' term as executive commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission expired Feb. 1, and Gov. Rick Perry reappointed him a few days later.

The appointment is subject to confirmation by the Texas Senate, whose members are still fuming about Perry's order requiring schoolgirls to be vaccinated against the human papillomavirus starting in September 2008.

The vaccine protects girls and women against the HPV strains

that cause most cases of cervical cancer and genital warts.

Perry's order directed state health officials to adopt a rule requiring the vaccine for school attendance. Hawkins told the senators that the rule-making process hasn't started yet and probably won't start until this fall.

But Hawkins incensed Republican Sen. Kevin Eltife of Tyler when he refused to say whether he felt HPV and cervical cancer were an emergency issue for Texas.

Lawmakers have said the issue isn't an emergency and have insisted Perry should have let them decide whether to require the vaccine.

Hawkins repeatedly told Eltife that he couldn't say whether the situation was an emergency until he heard from experts on both sides of the debate during the rule-making process.

When asked after the hearing if Hawkins' ties to Perry made it difficult for him to answer, Eltife said: "That's my exact point."

"This should not be a political answer," he said. "He should not cover for anyone. He should tell us as the commissioner of the state of Texas what he believes."

Hawkins also was grilled about a strategic plan for dealing with cervical cancer that the commission was supposed to deliver to lawmakers in December.

Republican Sen. Jane Nelson of Flower Mound, who wrote the bill ordering the report, said she didn't receive a copy until halfway through Wednesday's hearing.

"I am very distressed that we're talking about this issue now when, had we had a copy of this report, I think it would have answered a lot of questions," Nelson said.

Hawkins said he would look into the reasons why lawmakers didn't get the report sooner.

The report discussed the HPV vaccine but did not recommend mandating it.

Instead, it said policies should be implemented to access the vaccine and other preventive health services.

More than 50 doctors, public health experts, social workers and others contributed to the plan, Texas Health Commissioner Dr. David L. Lakey said in the report. Among the members of the work group was Merck & Co.'s top lobbyist in Texas and another company official.

Merck makes Gardasil, the only HPV vaccine on the market.

Health and Human Services Commission spokeswoman Stephanie Goodman said the members of the work group served as a resource to the 25-member steering committee, which developed the report and recommendations.

SCIENCE from page 1

attended Baylor, Nguyen has spent the last two working on an organic research project.

Working under Dr. Charles Garner, professor of chemistry, Nguyen and his research partner, Houston graduate student Nathan Duncan, will present "Electronic Effects in the Formation of 1,3,5-Triarylpyrazoles" at 8 a.m. Friday.

"It's a competition of the best oral presentation between Baylor University and all the other universities for all the undergrads and grads doing research," Nguyen said.

"Since there's not really that many students from Baylor do-

ing it, I'm going to try to represent."

Baylor instructors such as Dr. Ken Wilkins, biology professor and dean for graduate studies and research, have also been awaiting this weekend's conference.

"I'm looking forward to all the papers that have anything to do with the biology of mammals," Wilkins said. "It is a great opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to give their first formal presentation of their research."

Baylor students are welcomed and encouraged to attend presentations by students and professors across Texas.

"We are hoping that students

will take the opportunity to come to the meeting and listen to presentations so that they can become better informed about science and what goes on at colleges around the state," said Dr. Ann Rushing, biology professor and one of the host committee leaders.

Rushing also will be presenting research she completed with her students.

Registration for the event is tonight at the Waco Hilton and all day Friday at the sciences building.

Since most of Friday's activities will take place in the science building classrooms, Friday classes in the building have been cancelled or relocated.

TAXES from page 1

sents the district Texas State University is in, has been co-authored by the representatives of the districts including Texas A&M University, the University of Texas at Brownsville and the University of Texas at San Antonio. House Bill 1434 is being reviewed by the higher education committee.

House Bill 1890, the companion bill to Senate Bill 49, was filed by Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Austin. The bill is being reviewed by the ways and means committee.

None of the bills has been co-authored to date by local representatives.

According to the Texas student government documents, if any of the bills pass, the average student will save about \$300 over the course of a four-year college career. That's enough money to buy about 150 gallons of gas, do 600 loads of laundry,

buy three textbooks or 3,000 packages of Ramen noodles.

In an organized protest, University of Texas students handed out packages of Ramen noodles outside the university bookstore in the fall, Hall said.

Students filled out more than 3,000 postcards to local representatives and senators. They also signed the "Starving Student Speak-Out" wall, listing their expenses and items they would buy with an extra \$300.

A "lobby day" is planned for April 11, when groups from the University of Texas, Texas Tech, Texas A&M and 11 other schools will head to Austin. Student Senator John Nicholson, a Waco senior, said a group from Baylor will also be there, even if Student Senate doesn't pass the support resolution which will enter first reading today.

Nicholson said he hopes to bring it to second reading today as well, bringing the resolution to a vote as quickly as possible.

Texas A&M junior Chris Koranek, student advocate for legislative relations, said the idea of tax-free textbooks is not a new one in Texas, but it has caught on more this year than in the past. He'll meet today with Sen. Steve Ogden, R-Bryan, to discuss tax-free textbooks.

Texas A&M students haven't held any protests, choosing instead to try to communicate their hopes and concerns to representatives through meetings and building relationships.

Koranek said it seems like the right combination of events has taken place this year to make tax-free textbooks into an issue legislators are willing to explore.

"The fact that we have a surplus just adds fuel to the fire," he said. "It just seems like we have the right combination this year."

Koranek said Texas A&M leaders have focused on the effects eliminating the sales tax

PRISON from page 1

ry spokesman Ted Royer said. "But the most drastic steps will be the last ones taken."

But Democratic Sen. John Whitmire, chairman of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, said he believes there should be a complete change of management.

"We gotta come in and clean house," added Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, a Democrat from Mission who helped bring the allegations to light.

For the Legislature, the next step involves a meeting of a committee made up of four powerful lawmakers, the lieutenant governor and the speak-

er of the House.

The resolution asked the committee to meet as soon as possible.

Dewhurst said he'd like to meet this morning.

If the committee finds gross fiscal mismanagement occurred at the agency, it can ask the governor to appoint a conservator.

Whitmire said the commission's executive director and the superintendent of the school knew employees were abusing inmates while being paid by the state and while working on state property.

"They are using tax dollars, agency budgets, to carry out their offenses," Whitmire said.

"Clearly it's gross fiscal mismanagement."

Neither of the investigations has resulted in criminal charges, although Whitmire said a special prosecutor is on the case. The officials allegedly involved in the sexual activity resigned in 2005.

Chairman Pete C. Alfaro said he would resign as soon as his removal as chairman was effective. Neither he nor Royer knew when that is.

"I've always said we serve at the governor's pleasure," he said. "It's been an honor and a privilege to serve on the Texas Youth Commission working to rehabilitate our youth and protect our communities."

FISH from page 1

about 70 people attended, was in the fall.

"I think students do a pretty good job of not littering," said Rachel Suter, president of the Environmental Concern Organization.

Suter, a senior from the Woodlands, said she had not noticed the recent fish deaths, but has noticed a lot of trash in

the river.

Bratton said when a fish kill happens the state usually intervenes, and the environmental studies department would need to get permits to pick up or study the fish.

She did say there have been "obviously hundreds" of dead fish in the portion of Lake Brazos that runs through the campus.

Bratton said Lake Brazos

provides students with the opportunity to fish, boat and study many different aquatic species from diamondback water snakes, to red ear turtles, and blue herons.

"It (Brazos) adds a lot to campus life," she said.

Until the golden algae outbreak clears out of Lake Brazos, students will just have to overlook the dead fish that litter this Baylor landmark.



Associated Press

First ladies fight heart disease

First lady Laura Bush, right, and former first lady Nancy Reagan pose Wednesday at the First Ladies Red Dress Collection at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif.

might have on local businesses, but that a tax break would also aid in "making college more accessible" to underprivileged students.

An individual student might not save very much money in a semester, he said, but on the whole it's a big impact.

Mason Moses, legislative liaison at Texas Tech, said the campaign in Lubbock has focused on postcards and meetings with representatives.

He met with Sen. Robert Duncan, D-Lubbock, whose district includes Texas Tech, about the issue in the fall. About two weeks later, the senator became a co-



Laymon

author of Senate Bill 49.

He said student leaders have taken trips to Austin, where they've talked with dozens of representatives and encouraged all Tech students to write postcards to their representatives.

"Anything that can be done to help lessen the burden should be done," Moses said, adding that the goal is "saving every possible dollar for students."

Student Body President Mark Laymon, a Richardson senior, said many students want some financial relief.

Many Baylor students don't have scholarships that cover textbook costs, and some of them don't always buy required textbooks as a result.

Textbook costs have risen 64 percent since 1994, nearly four times the rate of inflation, according to Texas student government documents.

Laymon said eliminating taxes from textbooks could have long-term, positive effects

for students buying textbooks, but that pursuing a cause like this one is also a learning experience in the lives of concerned students.

"College really does give students, on a small level, the opportunity to make a difference in their world," he said.

"They shouldn't take for granted life and the world as the way it is. If they put their minds to it they can make a difference."

Laymon said becoming aware of issues and advocating for improvement is a part of the college experience.

"I think this is one of the most important things you can learn in college," he said. "Advocacy, how to get things done, how to organize people around issues, how to go about changing things in the political process."

"It's very worthwhile. This will really make a difference in students' lives."

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